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The Roots of the Military-Political Crises in Côte d'Ivoire

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Introduction

After thirty-nine years of political stability, the first military coup d'état in the political annals of Côte d'Ivoire took place on 24 December 1999.¹ Ten months later, in October 2000, the country experienced two shocks. The first was a clash between government forces on the one hand, and, on the other, civilians who were resolved to impose the will of the majority in the elections that had been manipulated to the benefit of the putschist general, Robert Gueï, candidate to his own succession. The second, and rather more unusual, shock centred on acts of barbarity unleashed during the violent clashes between the militants in the two main opposition parties, the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI), backed by a fringe of the gendarmerie, and Alassane Ouattara's Rassemblement des Républicains (RDR). It is difficult not to see the atrocities resulting from this clash as anything but a thinly veiled inter-ethnic showdown. These acts of violence, which left their mark on people's minds, led to the discovery, two days later, of a mass grave containing 57 bodies. Following the invalidation of Alassane Dramane Ouattara's candidature in the general election, there was a further outbreak of violence on 4 and 5 December 2000, following a clash between the riot police and RDR militants, the latter shouting the slogan, "Enough is enough!" ("Trop c'est trop"). The outcome was twenty dead. Last but not least, two years after the October 2000 elections that ushered Laurent Gbagbo into power, Côte d'Ivoire once again experienced a mutiny that developed into armed conflict (Banégas and Losch, 2002). Three rebellions followed in quick succession, led by MPCJ,² MPIGO,³ and MJP⁴ and covered two-thirds of the country.⁵

The socio-political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire can thus be defined as the sum total of the events that have jeopardised the continuity of the state and social order, and broken the relatively long period of political stability in a country that has long been considered a model. The primary aim of this essay is to understand the meaning and significance of this socio-political crisis. First, our theory concerning the significance of the social and political disorder following the long period of political stability is that the political disorder indicates the challenges arising from Houphouët

1. McGowan and Johnson (1986) have focused on the frequency of coups d'état in African countries after decolonisation. Between 1 January 1956 and 31 December 1985, there were 60 coups in 45 sub-Saharan African countries. Sudan and Ghana hold the record, with 6 and 5 coups respectively.

2. Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire – Côte d'Ivoire Patriotic Movement.

3. Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest – Ivorian Popular Movement of the Great West.

4. Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix – Movement for Justice and Peace.

5. See the special file on the war in Côte d'Ivoire (*Politique Africaine*, 89, 2003).

Boigny's inclination to compromise prematurely with hyperglobalisation through his "model of compromise", which had been in crisis since the early 1990s, and from an imposed democratisation process. Second, we need to focus on "ivoirité" or "Ivoirité". We analyse this to be a specific expression of the reinvention of a collective Ivorian persona, in reaction to the effect of more than three decades of economic openness, which had served to neutralise the expression of any specific identity. Third, the compromise represented by adherence to free trade and the market economy brought about internal contractions and contradictions that forced the socio-political system to again endow political debate with a tribal tone, and to define new rules of access to increasingly scarce resources. Finally, what meaning can be found in the escalation of violence and its modes of justification during this socio-political crisis? Recurrent military coups in Côte d'Ivoire signify the delegitimation of the regulatory models constructed on the tontine model,¹ and point to the need to renew the political grammar and associated modalities of socio-political regulation around as yet to be determined integrating principles.

1. "Tontines" are small rotating savings and credit associations or groups, whose members make regular monetary contributions, all of which is given in turn to the members.

CHAPTER 1

The Three Parameters of the Houphouët Boigny Compromise

It is impossible to understand the present Ivorian political compromise without referring to the ideological pillars associated with Félix Houphouët Boigny's thirty-three year political rule: his charismatic figure was a determining factor in the orientation of political praxis and thought in the country. He left his mark on the destiny of Côte d'Ivoire by leading it to a negotiated independence in 1960 and by remaining as its leader until his death in 1993. Houphouët Boigny left behind a political legacy, a leadership style, or rather a form of political engineering, known as Houphouëtism, which has been variously assessed (Amondji, 1984 and 1988; Bakary, 1992; Siriex, 1987; Toungara, 1990; Widner, 1994; Diarra, 1997; Koné, 2003). Many political actors within the Ivorian political class, whether former colleagues or not of the man who personified this philosophy, claimed to be Houphouëtists during his lifetime and after his death. But, in the view of these adherents, this political philosophy can be succinctly expressed as nothing more than "the culture of dialogue and peace" as advocated by "the father of the nation". Houphouëtism, however, is best understood as a set of structuring principles and practices interpreted in various ways, which function as a system of reference and a political culture that is socially recognised but is not conceptualised. There was no escaping it, not even by General Robert Gueï, who became leader of the CNSP (Comité National de Salut Public) after the coup of 24 December 1999:¹ A pure product of Houphouëtism, he also claimed to be a follower. Understanding the political change that is under way is bound to involve an *a posteriori* deconstruction of Houphouëtism, this catch-all movement that is both mode of socio-political regulation and formalised ideology. But as an ideology, Houphouëtism imperceptibly structured political habits before the onset of the crisis. Our remarks are not intended to pass judgment on it. Instead, we wish to provide a phenomenological interpretation of Houphouëtism in order to shed light on the issues of "Ivoirité" and the ethno-nationalist rhetoric that emerged from the melting pot of democratisation, to the point of imbuing the spirit of the second republic and becoming a source of social tension and even deadly conflict.

As political architecture, Houphouëtism is a social and political construction built on a certain colonial ethnology and the process of inventing the political in

1. Following the coup d'état on 24 December, General Robert Gueï became the head of the Comité National de Salut Public (CNSP), which in turn formed two transitional governments over a period of ten months.

Côte d'Ivoire. As objective reality, its material form is a "politico-economic complex" (Fauré, 1982; Losch, 1999) within which a culture has developed through political interactions, a culture that is shared by and articulated around three parameters whose political effectiveness is entirely dependent on their synergy.

Deliberate and centralised openness policy to the outside world

After independence, Felix Houphouët Boigny inherited the colonial policy of Ivorian and country-wide regional planning and the mechanisms for this purpose.¹ The policy of vigorous agricultural development, coupled with the concentration of foreign capital since the colonial period, led to Côte d'Ivoire's becoming a sub-regional economic pole that attracted other factors of production, such as sub-regional labour, capital, and all kinds of expertise. The settlers developed the coastal area (Port-Bouët, Grand-Bassam), built wharfs and developed some transport and medical infrastructure, particularly in the southeast of the country; and encouraged the development of export-oriented agriculture, based at the outset on palm oil and rubber, coffee and cocoa. Successive waves of economic migration² satisfied the growing need for human resources on the many building sites in the lower Côte d'Ivoire. Between 1920 and 1940, this labour market was built on a mixture of both voluntary workers and those compulsorily requisitioned in Upper Volta and brought to Côte d'Ivoire (Asiwaju, 1976; Cordell and Gregory, 1982; Balac, 1997; Bliou and Bredeloup, 1997; Touré et al., 1993; Zongo, 2001). Special subsidies were granted to the railway company to transport the labour, free of charge, to the south of Côte d'Ivoire. There was tacit agreement of the inter-professional trade unions of the employers in Côte d'Ivoire and the traditional chiefs in Upper Volta to ensure the free supply of this labour (Nana, 1993). It should be noted that Upper Volta was an integral part of Côte d'Ivoire until 1947.

After independence, Houphouët Boigny's policy of openness was nothing but the continuation of the colonial development policy for the country. His choice, though not without a discrete element of nationalism,³ was for opening up the Ivorian economy to the outside world, and was given concrete expression in a particularly attractive investment code. Thus, he opted for political dependency that

1. On this subject, see O. Dembélé's (2002) spatial, ecological, and territorial analysis set in a historical context.

2. Bierwirth (1997) explains how, between 1925 and 1945, the Lebanese community wove themselves into this emerging economic fabric.

3. Before independence, while Houphouët Boigny considered this opening-up essential, he was nonetheless conscious of the need to protect national interests. The Ivorian historian Tiémoko Coulibaly (2000) provides confirmatory evidence. He links the violent attacks in 1958 on people from Dahomey, accused of holding prestigious posts in education, with Houphouët Boigny's encouragement of the belief that foreigners were exploiting the wealth of the Ivorian colony at the expense of Ivorians, and with his ultra-nationalist campaign to counter the project for a federation. See also Iheduru (1994) on Houphouët Boigny's nationalism.

contrasted sharply with the socialism that became the fashion in most newly independent African countries. Through his atypical choice of post-independence economic dependence, he hoped to derive political and economic advantages in terms of personal prestige and sub-regional leadership. His particularly opportunistic form of political philosophy resulted in the concentration in Côte d'Ivoire of capital and manpower that originated primarily in the West-African sub-region.¹ Houphouët Boigny's pragmatism undoubtedly bore fruit. Right up to the first half of the 1980s, Côte d'Ivoire consistently experienced an annual growth rate in GNP of more than 7%, a rate comparable to high-growth countries like Japan, Korea, and Brazil (Fauré, 1982:45). At the same time, and concurrent with the spread of official or clandestine recruitment of workers from Volta, there was a growing demand for skilled labour in the tertiary sector and, later, the industrial sector (Touré et al., 1993). Numerous nationals from Mali, Guinea, Benin, and Togo responded to this demand in the form of massive and spontaneous immigration.

While in the colonial period the motives for migration were mainly economic, after the granting of independence, labour migration increased as a result of the economic euphoria of the 1970s and 1980s. A factor that contributed to this flow of people towards Côte d'Ivoire was the political instability in neighbouring countries (Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali, Niger, Togo) and, above all, the agro-climatic uncertainties in the countries of the hinterland (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger). Attracted by the possibility of agricultural work, whether paid or not, the people of the Sahel made their way to Côte d'Ivoire and settled in regions with the greatest agro-economic potential. The 1998 census shows that the Ivorian regions with the highest rates of immigration are Sud-Comoé (25%), Bas-Sassandra (24.7%), Moyen-Cavally (22.4%), Moyen-Comoé (22.1%), and Haut-Sassandra (17.6%). As these figures show, in four of these regions international immigrants constituted more than one-fifth of the population. The common characteristic of these regions is that they are all in the forest zone.

The coastal migrants tend to be concentrated in the region of the lagoons, where Abidjan is situated. This region, home to 3,733,413 inhabitants, of whom 622,372 are international migrants, has more opportunities for employment and self-employment than elsewhere. The majority of the migrants there are from the coastal countries and are more interested in trade and services than agriculture.

Thus, the migratory movements towards Côte d'Ivoire gained momentum, in particular following the socio-political and economic crises in Ghana and Nigeria, which occurred in 1970 and 1980 respectively. After neighbouring countries gained

1. In certain respects, the effects of Houphouëtism were comparable to Pan-Africanism, but not identical. In Houphouët Boigny's thinking, the logic of maximising the sub-regional labour force as a basis for a solid Ivorian economy was uppermost, rather than the idea of an Africa that would be strengthened by the unity of its components, the view of one of his political competitors, Kwame Nkrumah.

independence, Côte d'Ivoire, with an annual population growth rate of 4%, became the main host country in the region, replacing Ghana and Nigeria, which till then, given their post-colonial prosperity, had been the two prime magnets for immigration. Given the economic dimension of these migrations, we can assume that the migrant earnings transferred from Côte d'Ivoire to neighbouring countries were of considerable size and significance, and posed problems.

According to the last census in 1998, the Ivorian population of 15,366,672 inhabitants included 26.03% immigrants, distributed as follows:

Table 1. Distribution of the foreign population by country of origin in different population censuses and from the migrant survey

Country	1975 %	1988 %	1993 %	1998 totals	%
Burkina Faso	52.2	51.5	52.9	2,238,548	56.0
Mali	24.0	23.5	22.2	792,258	19.8
Guinea	6.7	7.4	8.2	230,387	5.7
Ghana	3.2	5.5	-	133,221	3.3
Benin	2.6	2.8	-	107,499	2.7
Togo	0.9	1.4	-	72,892	1.8
Senegal	1.4	1.3	2.5	43,213	1.1
Mauritania	-	0.5	0.5	18,152	0.5
Nigeria	0.9	1.7	1.5	71,355	1.8
Other Africa	0.3	6.5	11.9	201,808	5.0
Non-Africa	0.5	-	0.3	32,699	0.8
Not declared	-	-	-	58,015	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	4,000,047	100.0
Numbers	1,474,469	3,039,037	3,310,000	4,000,047	

Along with the official and/or clandestine recruitment of workers from Volta, we also observe the immigration of numerous nationals from Mali, Niger, Guinea, Ghana, Togo, and Benin. These economic migrations that lead to long-term settlement allow us to predict that the natural outcome will be an intermixing of ethnic groups, an intermixing with highly topical political consequences in Côte d'Ivoire today.

The end result of Côte d'Ivoire's capitalist option and specialisation in export products such as coffee, cocoa, and wood, to whose production migrants contributed considerably, was that the country entered the circuit of international trade. The outcome, as Fauré noted (1982:34), contrary to what then current third-world ideology hastily proclaimed, was that "Côte d'Ivoire's deliberate maintaining of dependency does not lead uniquely to catastrophes, or economic and social monstrosities." Despite the unequal relations, there was still room for manoeuvre, slight though this may have been. Proof of this was the Ivorian strategy, despite its limits, of acquiring holdings in the social capital of foreign firms after the beginning of the 1970s, as well as the policy of Ivorianising executives (Chevassu, 1997) or certain

key economic sectors (De Miras, 1982). The unusual Ivorian economic policy of openness to the outside world created wealth. Notably, between 1975 and 1977, aided by the favourable economic situation (war in Angola, frost in Brazil, stagnant production in competing African countries) and of the meteoric rise in prices for its main exports, Côte d'Ivoire's performance was unequalled within its sub-region. This outcome for the political and economic architecture strengthened Houphouët Boigny's political aura abroad and in the eyes of his compatriots, and constituted a powerful instrument for the paternalistic regulation of the socio-political space, thus ensuring a degree of stability for the political system. Despite the drawbacks of the policy of openness to the outside world, especially given the modern flavour of structural adjustment, Houphouët Boigny remained attached to this principle and sang its praises till the end of his days, even if he was aware of the need to "refocus economic and financial interests in a more national direction" (Fauré, 1990:77). From his point of view, one way to implement this rapidly was to constitute a class of "peanut roasters" capable of becoming a "private sector middle class in his state".

Philosophy of the "peanut roasters"

During the first two decades of independence, Houphouët Boigny set up a carefully considered system of political patronage, combined with a system of patrimonialism. The clear aim was to create a national bourgeoisie capable of being transformed into a class of local investors and entrepreneurs. The multiplication of parastatal bodies (Sode, EPN, SEM) was a powerful instrument for regulating a political clientele. The para-public sector was the source of Ivorian patrimonialism, the basis of which was defined by Houphouët Boigny in a famous parable: "Don't look too closely at a peanut-roaster's mouth." This African parable is only meaningful in the context of specific attributes of political power in Africa, in particular Côte d'Ivoire. Roasting peanuts presumes that, at some point in the process, the cook tastes them for salt. Symbolically, the relationship between the act of roasting and tasting relates to the privilege of the roaster in belonging to a select circle of political clientele who benefit from an unequal but socially recognised distribution by the mere fact of belonging to this group. The mouth here refers to the logic of mastication that is strongly present in the social representation of the exercise of political power in Africa. In other words, it is a legitimisation of the prevarication and the primitive accumulation specific to Côte d'Ivoire. Hence, for President Houphouët Boigny it was a question of creating a state bourgeoisie. This social fringe did emerge through the patron-state at the turn of the 1970s. In the course of the 1970s and 1980s, De Miras (1982:212) observed that a high-level administrative class was present in management, decision-making, and organisational posts, and prospered through "parallel rather than clandestine" ways and means of tapping into

resources. The Grand Master justified this patrimonial economy or the fast enrichment machinery by reference to the urgent need to constitute a class of substitute investors in an Ivorian economy hitherto dominated by foreign, in particular French, capital. Against the background of overlapping state, nation and one-party system and osmosis between public and private property, the chosen members of this political caste, all members of the single party, PDCI (Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire) were characterised by huge fortunes accumulated under the political umbrella and by conspicuous consumption. Despite the crisis of the “patrimonial system”,¹ the philosophy of the peanut roaster helped structure the scheme of political regulation, which was itself forced to slim down because of the crisis in public finance in the 1980s. This whole socio-political scaffolding is based on a special form of management of social diversity, which is equally paradigmatic.

Paternalistic management of social diversity

Côte d'Ivoire is home to a mosaic of over sixty ethnic groups, which, in turn, are grouped into four major linguistic families: the Mandés (Malinké, Dan, Kwéni); the people from Volta, usually known today as the Gur (Senoufos, Koulango, Lobi); the Krous (Wê, Bété, Dida Bakwé, Néyo); and the Kwas or the Akan group (Agni, Baoulé, Abron, Alladian, Avikam and the Lagoon ethnic groups).

Houphouët Boigny was of Akan origin, and he based his power on the myth of the higher meaning of the state to the specific ethnic group to which he belonged. According to Memel Foté, this myth rests on the dual foundation of “the ethnocentric ideology of the State and the aristocratic ideology of the ethnic group.” Not only does this myth tend to justify the sources of power that considers itself to be charismatic, but it is also the basis of the legitimacy of President Houphouët to command others. It has become the ideological cornerstone of Houphouëtist management of social diversity.² According to Memel Foté, the characteristic of this myth is that it is not enshrined in formal and written political representations. Instead, it is “informal and oral” and can only be understood by an anthropological survey. It has structured the social image and nurtured the system of social representation of power in Côte d'Ivoire.

The sources of this legitimating myth are to be found in a pseudo-scientific colonial legacy ranking the races on the basis of the existence of the state, and the development of writing and of books. Between the Mandé and those assimilated to them, who are at the top of the hierarchy, and the Krous, who are at the bottom, we have the Akan in the middle. This myth comes primarily from the self-serving rewriting of history during the period of decolonisation and after independence by “an Akan

1. On the transformations of Ivorian patrimonialism, see Contamin and Fauré (1990:219–30).

2. Chappell (1989) provides an informative study of the selective management of ethnicity by Houphouët.

group in the Ivorian political class.”¹ This rewriting repositioned the groups so that, henceforth, the Akan are at the top: “At the head of the new hierarchy are the Akans, with an explicit predominance of the Baoulés and the Anyi over the ethnic groups from the Lagoons; next comes the Mandé group; the Krou are at the bottom” (Memel Foté, 1999:24).

This is the origin of the consolidation of a dual ideology – that the Baoulé ethnic group are aristocratic and have a natural propensity to rule others. Memel Foté demonstrates that there is absolutely no historical basis for this ideology. His refutation of Akan social and political supremacy is both formal and historical. However, skillfully orchestrated, the statement had a high return on investment and was undeniably effective socially and symbolically:

The state-centred focus of the Akan militants does not appear to be well founded. In the first instance, the Akan state experience comes relatively late in the history of the West African region in general and in the pre-colonial history of Côte d'Ivoire in particular ... Secondly, the state in West Africa has no universality either in the Mandé world or in the Akan world ... Thirdly, from the normative point of view, the Akan states, both in their expansionism and their domination of their subjects, have demonstrated the same types of violence and succeeded in the same types of endeavour as the Mandé and the Gur: they do not appear to present a model more humane in any way than the Mandé and Gur models. On the contrary, because they were polytheists up until colonisation, they never stopped practising human sacrifice, rites that were abolished in the Muslim Mandé world centuries ago. They share this practice with age-class societies. (Memel Foté, 1999:25)

Thus, Memel Foté seeks to explain that it was only during the colonial period that new ways of managing society began to be learned. The same is true of the development of new modes of co-operation, such as trade unionism. The governmental experience of the PDCI under the leadership of Houphouët Boigny began with a successful “instrumentalisation, limited but effective, of the colonial administration” and a “political union of the majority of the parties”. Spurred on by this capacity to manipulate men and institutions, Houphouët Boigny established *de facto* authoritarianism by means of systematic resort to repressive laws, banning of opposition parties and many organs of expression, exiling trade-union militants, and imprisoning Sanwi secessionists. As Foté notes:

At independence, which came too quickly in 1960, the authoritarian part-legal, part-political measures that the PDCI-RDA autonomous government had just set up, changed the nature of the tutelary state, which became a monolithic and despotic “sovereign” state. While they provided relative economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire, these aspects were disproportionately accentuated. The Anyi people in Sanwi, accused of wanting to “detach themselves” from Côte d'Ivoire to escape Baoulé hegemony, were subjected to a long martyrdom, the history of which has still to be written. Even more barbarous repression was experienced by Bété of the Guébié de Gagnoa sub-group, who were criminalised for being followers of Citizen Jean-

1. H. Memel Foté defines an activist group as “a group that intends, by an effort of will, to act on public opinion and behaviour to obtain political results, and thus is in the social vanguard in its community.”

Christophe Kragbé Gnébé, who had founded a legal, but non-recognised, political party. From 1959 to 1967, three false plots, which were to be followed later by other plots in the army and the police, were the pretext to remove the most valued leaders of the PDCI-RDA, mainly Mandé and Krou in origin, and both young and old. Here again, this despotism and its obvious expansion bore the same defining mark, that of Félix Houphouët Boigny, who never concealed his Baoulé origins and the Akan culture, to which he constantly referred in political speeches. (Memel Foté, 1999:26)

But, of all the above-mentioned aspects, the spontaneous “anthropological argument” based on racial prejudices is, of course, simplistic. It serves as a form of persuasion, as Memel Foté endeavours to prove, by at one and the same time establishing the subjective belief in Baoulé superiority as well as the pre-destined elitist vocation of this ethnic group to govern the state.

According to Foté (1999), this anthropological argument defines the psychological attributes and the virtues specific to genuine and worthy rulers. But, over time, it delegitimises the pretensions of others to rule, by virtue of the character traits and the vices attributed to them. This negative anthropological description of otherness mainly applies to two ethnic groups that are considered as representative of the three ethnic groups that have already been “disqualified”: these are, firstly, the Dioula, the professional name for trader and a family name in the Kong Manding dialect, but used here as a popular and pejorative reference to all Mandé and Gur people from the north and, therefore, to all Muslims. Then come the Bété, an ethnic group, it is true, but above all, despite the relative diversity of regional sub-groups, the figure of absolute negativity.

This negative characterisation, re-expressed in popular language and sometimes by way of humour, is also expressed in still clearer terms. Again, it is worth citing Foté’s work at some length:

The Dioula and the Bété are discriminated against by using dubious psychological arguments: they are “not genuine”, in the words of the ideologists – that is, their reactions are unpredictable, they are not really to be trusted, and are unsuited to successfully dominating the Akan. Secondly, in ethnic relations, significant immorality traits are associated with this psychology. According to one person, the Dioula “are lawless unbelievers” and the Bété are “violent women-chasers”; another says the Dioula are as malevolent as slaves; a third person states the “class education” which is characteristic of “the civilised Akan” is not apparent among the other two ethnic groups and their like. In the third instance, in the political relationship the claims of the Dioula and Bété constitute a danger to the state and nation: the Bété because of their cultural incompatibility with the presidential function; the Dioula for a strategic reason, given the fact that, in the last resort, they would work towards propagating and “establishing” Islam.

These negative anthropological factors define in reverse the positive qualities considered desirable in the ideal political class of the Ivorian nation, the assumption being that these are to be found in the Akan alone, particularly among the most militant Baulé and Anyi, who were the spokespersons. To begin with, there are psychological qualities: the need to be a man of one’s word, endowed with conviction, sincerity, and uprightness. Then there are moral qualities: the nobility and generosity of the free man, his spirit of peace and sexual moderation, all qualities which bear witness to a proper upbringing in the eyes of the Akan aristocracy. Finally, there are the philosophical and religious justifications of ethnic superiority. On

the one hand, there is the vocation to protect and to promote what is considered antagonistic to Islam, namely the Christian religion. On the other, the assumption that in this non-secular approach the protection of Christianity was the exclusive vocation of the Akan, not that of the Krou or Gur or even Mandé. No comparative survey has ever, even slightly, validated this falsely contrasted representation. (Memel Foté, 1999)

This construction of a positive representation of the self in opposition to others has contributed to the accumulation of a whole set of imaginary stories and psycho-sociological markers for social groups. These are naively conveyed in popular songs and ultimately act, in ethno-methodological terms, as an ordinary competence (Garfinkel, 2001), structuring the way in which the members of communities perceive one another. To this day, the force of these ethnic prejudices moulds the popular imagination and governs the relationship that the social collective imagination has with the political. In Akan, and particularly Baoulé circles, the psychologising of this spontaneous anthropology has maintained, and continues to maintain the political effectiveness of the myth regarding the race pre-destined to exercise power.

This ranked and essentially political stratification of ethnic groups has structured the minds of the majority of the Akan, irrespective of their social category. Ultimately this Akan culture has organised the national symbols of power, as well as the sociological mechanisms to exercise it, according to its own norms. Its symbolic efficiency is also demonstrated through its strong internal structuring, which is well elucidated by Memel Foté. The myth of Akan superiority has simultaneously fulfilled a number of positive and negative functions.

The positive functions are:

- unification; the re-invention of a common origin and a common identity;
- mobilisation; with a bloc attached to the PDCI by the guarantee of block voting and the votes required to preserve power;
- reintegration of those elements dispersed among opposition parties, through blandishments, such as promises of jobs and/or money, as well as veiled threats; and
- recruitment into the elite services.

The negative functions are:

- separation; excluding the Lagoon peoples from the Akan group; systematically displaying their negative differences, and seldom, if ever, their positive differences; and limiting the real territory of Côte d'Ivoire to its epicentre; and
- exclusion; sustaining an attitude of exclusion that goes beyond words, and leads to a clash between the excluders and those who feel excluded.

Until the beginning of the 1980s, the euphoria of the period of economic growth, which was favourable to informal distribution and an individual's multiple access to political favours (Crook, 1989; 1990), enabled this myth to function almost openly. Once the economic recession became structural after 1983–84, the physical exhaus-

tion of the leading player undermined the basis of this socio-political construction, with its anthropological foundations.

The paternalistic administration of this socio-cultural mosaic (ethnic groups and immigrant populations) has long rested on this mythical and ideological foundation, camouflaged behind the geopolitical mechanisms of unequal distribution of political favours. In this system of socio-political regulation, the foreigners, a silent minority, are not merely factors of production. While, through the migration of agricultural labour encouraged by a liberal policy of access to land (Zongo, 2001, Chauveau, 1995), migrants have steadily contributed to economic growth, in the socio-political format constructed by Houphouët Boigny they are also political instruments, acting at the same time as social buffers. On the political level, reliance on the votes of CEDEAO citizens (Communauté des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) to stay in power (Dozon, 1997:784) is an important indication of the instrumentalisation of foreigners for electoral ends.¹ This electoral support assured a plebiscite for Houphouët Boigny at a time when his political system was weakened by the crisis of public finances and by his illness. However, the massive presence in the political sphere of foreigners enabled a scapegoat rhetoric to emerge in a difficult economic situation and channelled resentment towards even poorer people, without challenging the system. It also enabled the construction of the political principle of "misère de position" (P. Bourdieu), relative poverty. This is intended as a rhetoric whereby the feeling of poverty is relativised by comparing the poor Ivorian with a mass of foreigners who are socially and economically inferior, thus raising the social status of the poorer nationals.

The organisation of these three parameters has ensured the PDCI-RDA thirty-nine years of control of national political life. But this politico-economic complex, which appeared to be politically stable, has been in crisis since the beginning of the 1990s, when, after the La Baule Francophone summit, the political system was forced, as in other countries, to democratise (Crook, 1997).

1. This initiative led to a controversy in the political class. The opposition accused PDCI of using foreigners, who had almost become hostages, as "voting fodder" in elections to maintain their hold on power. The opposition's hostility to the voting of foreigners contributed to the rise in xenophobia.

CHAPTER 2

Houphouetism Shows Signs of Wear and Tear under Democratisation

With the return of a multiparty system,¹ the political sphere opened up. Political parties like the FPI and the PIT (Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs), to mention the most important, legalised their participation in the political arena. FPI, after years underground, emerged into the open and was recognised. It could make political capital out of the votes of those excluded from the fruits of growth. At the same time, given the ethnicisation of political participation in Africa, the Bété origins of its leader Laurent Gbagbo made him the main focus for rallying the Bété, who were unhappy with the political exclusion that flowed from the myth of the Baoulé aristocracy. But in 1990, despite some success in recruiting Akyé and Akan in the Lagoon area, both ethnic groups relegated to the lower ranks of Akan aristocracy, the party was perceived to be a Bété party because of its leader's identity.

The forcible process of democratisation begun here as in other countries in 1990 (Decalo, 1992; Akindès, 1996), after thirty years of single-party rule, exposed the social divisions of a society whose components (ethnic groups and immigrant populations) were poorly integrated. This phenomenon was further highlighted by the unfavourable economic situation,² which considerably eroded the foundations of the Houphouetist compromise, namely integration through economic factors. The economic policy that underpinned this construction suffered numerous blows from the outside world (declining prices for agricultural raw materials, increase in dollar exchange rate and the price of oil, rise in international interest rates); there was a significant downturn in the domestic saving and investment rates, which fell from 25% of GNP in 1980 to 4% of GNP in 1990 and 8% in 1993. Furthermore, public finances were no longer balanced, and there was excessive public borrowing in a context of excessive international liquidity, hence the explosion of the public debt from 196% of GNP in 1990 to 243% in 1993. The Ivorian economy, based on cocoa and coffee, whose prices were low at the time, and strangled by domestic debt, struggled with a rise in bankruptcies and redundancies.

The devaluation of January 1994 stimulated the Ivorian economy, but its dividends were badly managed. The result was that the principal sub-regional economic

1. On the return to multipartism in Côte d'Ivoire, refer to Diégou Bailly (1995).

2. We do not intend to discuss the different structural plans that considerably affected the political system. On the scope and consequences of these reforms, see the following excellent studies: Gouffern, 1982; Duruflé, 1988; Cogneau and Mesplé-Somps, 2003.

pole, representing 40% of GNP, foundered economically (Cogneau, Mesple-Sombs et al., 2003). Increasing pressure from the regime's external backers, confronted with budgetary blunders arising from poorly managed administrative procedures for liberalisation and falling prices for its main exports, coffee and cocoa, accelerated the process. Denunciations of the corruption of the political class coincided with rising indices of pauperisation, such as youth unemployment in urban areas, multiple property conflicts, and the difficulties for households in making ends meet (Akindès, 2000). Tensions in Ivorian society were gradually rising.

On the political level, social unease increased while the PDCI-RDA's regulatory capacity diminished as the political arena was forced to open up. Within ten years, we witnessed the emergence of sensitive issues that had been repressed or evaded during the political crisis preceding the elections that were hurriedly organised in 1990. Two points stand out: the question of political representation and the question of immigration in the new context of economic contraction.

Confronting the issues: the political class and the criteria for political representation and legitimacy

The death of Houphouët Boigny in 1993 triggered hostilities between rival political clans within the PDCI. Henri Konan Bédié, president of the National Assembly at the time, was invested with the highest office in accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of the constitution, after succession disputes that for several years had brought him into conflict with Alassane Dramane Ouattara, the then prime minister. In this political confusion, RDR emerged as a political party forged from a coalition of party militants who were increasingly dissatisfied with PDCI internal practices and capitalised on the demands of part of the northern élite in Côte d'Ivoire to escape an Akan-centred state. These demands, set out in the "Charte du Grand Nord" that circulated from 1992, sought more significant participation of the northern populations in political life, a demand they felt justified in making given the imminent political exit of Houphouët Boigny, towards whom they had been prepared to be loyal. No longer accepting their position as "camp-followers" within the Akan-dominated PDCI-RDA, their project with the "Charte du Grand Nord" was to make their own entry into the political arena. The RDR, which capitalised on the resentment of both those disappointed with the PDCI and the northerners no longer prepared to be considered as second-class citizens, found in the person of the ex-prime minister, himself from the north, a leader capable of taking their ideals into the arena of political competition.

Henceforth, the political landscape was dominated by three people, each of whom represented both a region and a political group in the eyes of the people: Henri Konan Bédié, heir to the myth of Akan aristocracy, with an electorate mainly concentrated in the centre, south, and southeast; Laurent Gbagbo, prophet of a rad-

ical break with Houphouetism and, for some, heir to the work of Kragbé Gnagbé, the rallying symbol of the Bété populations and a sizeable fringe of populations in the west who considered themselves to have been marginalised in the redistribution of the fruits of growth; and lastly, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, the candidate of the PDCI dissidents and in particular of the mainly Muslim people of the north. This political positioning in the north indicated the first stirrings of a federating religious mobilisation, the south being considered a natural home of the Christians and the north the stronghold of the Muslims. As the October 2000 elections approached, the PDCI, which had a majority in parliament, attempted to manipulate the institutions and rules of the political game in its favour, as had been the case in 1995 when Alassane Dramane Ouattara was prevented from running in the presidential elections because of an insufficient number of years of residency in the country. Caught between the PDCI and the RPR, the two political heavyweights, candidate Laurent Gbagbo sought alliances that would be the most politically advantageous for him.

On the sociological level, the debate about “Ivoirité” dominated the political scene and accounted for the various positions adopted in relation to Houphouetism.

The months that preceded the coup d'état on 24 December 1999 were characterised by an ominously tense political atmosphere: an international arrest warrant was issued for Ouattara, the RDR leader, who was accused of forgery on the basis of doubts about his “mixed and uncertain” identity; some RDR militants were arrested and imprisoned; and, while the electoral lists were being updated, the Muslim people of the north complained of humiliating acts of police harassment targeted at them and of insidious challenges to their being part of the Ivorian nation. Through the expedient of nationality, the question of the full meaning of citizenship was posed, but the only political answer was the recurrent mobilisation of legitimate violence in a way that the people of the north felt was intended to frustrate them, and in a way that that served to stiffen identities.

The military coup d'état of 24 December 1999 ended the rule of Bédié and forced him into exile. This development was jubilantly welcomed by the people, because, given the poisonous political situation within the country, it was seen as an essential step to lowering tensions. It marked a point of no return in the people's expectations that a fresh compromise would be negotiated. The identity dimension in political clashes in Côte d'Ivoire could no longer be ignored: the crisis of Houphouetism had reached its peak. All the social indicators called for the development of new and different regulatory measures. Furthermore, a new actor came on to the political stage, General Robert Gueï, former army chief of staff. He hailed from the west and became the head of the *Comité National de Salut Public* (CNSP) after the military coup d'état.

But once in power and after ten months of transition, he presented two quite different political images: Gueï 1, then Gueï 2. These images can only be fully understood in light of the Houphouetist parameters outlined above. This dual identity,

after ten months in power, is an indication of the strength of the ethno-nationalist trend within the ongoing political changes.

The positioning of each of the three parties (PDCI, FPI, RDR) and of the front-line political actors (including Gueï) in relation to Houphouëtism is fundamental to the rest of our political analysis.

In the heat of the succession disputes over the highest political office in 2000 and, in particular, in the wake of the advent to power of Bédié in 1993, we witness Houphouëtism on trial, with, inevitably, a call for the development of a new political compromise. This trial took various forms – some selective, some radical – depending on the actors and groups of actors.

“Ivoirité” under Bédié, or the selective function of an ideology

Henri Konan Bédié, candidate to his own succession, introduced the concept of “Ivoirité” as a means of discrediting his main adversary in the eyes of the national public and of ensuring his own political survival. He re-opened the discussions initiated in 1994 by the opposition leader, Laurent Gbagbo, concerning the nationality of the prime minister, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, who later became the official candidate of the RDR. In the opinion of the PDCI, Ouattara was a Burkinabe. It was said that his non-Ivorian identity could be confirmed by the fact of his holding high positions in international institutions as a national of Burkina Faso. An association was immediately made between uncontrolled immigration, particularly along the northern frontiers, the possession of false identity papers by nationals of Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso, who were culturally close to the populations of northern Côte d’Ivoire, and the allegedly illegal claim by an immigrant to govern a host country.

The frightening brand of “Ivoirité” mobilised during Bédié’s rule was the first partial break with Houphouëtism. At the same time as serving as an ideological rally call to the population against a political opponent, this version of “Ivoirité” enabled the Bédié regime, faced with public financing difficulties arising from a shrinking fiscal base, to theorise the selection of who had a right to the increasingly scarce national resources. On two grounds, this defensive rhetoric was the first break with the Houphouëtist compromise as a mode of dealing with social diversity: first, the explicit theorisation of “Ivoirité” broke with the informality of political practices, which had been effective till then because they were unwritten; second, the systematisation of mechanisms of political exclusion based on an imaginary line between “true Ivorians”, “intermittent Ivorians”, and “Ivorians of convenience” led to “polarisations of identity”, which in turn were the origin of various conflictual forms of statement of identity. The country’s sudden lurch towards difference – which Houphouët Boigny had maintained but in the guise of difference as community enrichment – was linked to his successor’s assertion of his legitimacy through a

thinly disguised theorisation of the Akan matrix of power and the denial of the claims of other socio-cultural groups to exercise state power.

General Gueï's variable-geometry Houphouëtism

In the first two months after his accession, General Gueï I, as if to defuse the situation, was violently critical of the ideology of "Ivoirité" and of corruption. According to him, "Ivoirité" was a threat to national unity, and corruption was undermining Ivorian society. Justifying the coup d'état by the "younger generation" as the response to these two social scourges, he attempted to mobilise collective memory around the work of Houphouët Boigny, who had guaranteed prosperity and security to one and all irrespective of their differences. Foreigners and nationals alike were reassured as to their respective historical places in this construction of the "grandeur of Côte d'Ivoire and national unity". National television broadcast the visits and speeches of President Houphouët Boigny, stressing national dialogue and peace again and again. Confidence in the social corpus was also restored by the pilgrimage of the new leader to the tomb of the "Father of the Nation"; the restoration of Alassane Dramane Ouattara's rights on his return from exile and the quashing of the legal proceedings against him; the promise to "make a clean sweep" and to restore rights to the civilian population before the end of 2000; and by never-ending declarations of loyalty to the Houphouëtist legacy. All this gave the military junta the appearance of being upholders of the law, which recalled the scenario in Mali with Amadou Toumani Touré and in Niger with Mallam Wanké – two successful examples of the peaceful transmission of power to civilians after a coup d'état.

But from March 2000, General Gueï changed his tune and ushered in Gueï Version 2, distinguished by increasing and sustained doubts as to his will to cede power to civilians, remarks close to xenophobia, a hardened tone towards Alassane Dramane Ouattara, the re-appropriation of the rhetoric of "Ivoirité" (although without explicitly using the term), the abandoning of the "clean sweep operation", selective arrests of a political nature, and the recruitment of former PDCI-RDA office-holders into his cabinet as advisers and to other posts.

In the course of his ten months as head of state, General Gueï moved from exalting the paradigm of openness (recognition of foreigners' contributions to the development of Côte d'Ivoire and guarantees of security to increasingly anxious foreign residents) to a form of stigmatisation based on the "hold of foreigners over vital sectors of the national economy". Intent on staying in power, and with a good understanding of the strength of nationalist discourse for political mobilisation in the absence of an economic alternative, he took up "Ivoirité" again. While this reversion to the foreigner as scapegoat, linking the image of Alassane Ouattara with the foreigner as trouble-maker, meant that General Gueï was the continuation of Bédié, there was a further element in his political strategy: this was his challenging of

historical Akan predominance in state power. This new political line was based on the need for the regional rotation of power: simply put, power had to shift from the control of the Akan group to the Krou group, to which the general belonged.

In a speech at Aboisso, a town symbolically associated with the Anyi, an Akan sub-group, the general purposely stressed the loyalty he had demonstrated until 1993 and after the death of President Houphouët Boigny. He stated he had been part of a group of “Ivorian brothers”, all of whom were Akan and Baoulé, including the High Chancellor Coffe Gadeau and Léon Konan Koffi, to enable President Bédié, himself a Baoulé, to come to power. Congratulating himself on this “heroic” act (the fact that he, as a soldier, had relinquished the power he held at the time), he added: “Given that there is only one chair for the person chosen to lead the destiny of Côte d’Ivoire, it would be desirable for Ivoirians to sacrifice their ethnic or regional specificities and accept the law of reciprocity.” The reciprocity was, of course, in favour of the man from the west whom he personified. This declaration triggered clandestine opposition among the most senior Akan office-bearers in the PDCI-RDA, who were already dissatisfied with Bédié’s poor management of the Houphouëtist legacy, which had led to the clan aristocracy’s loss of control over modern forms of power.

In the first phase, General Gueï gave the impression of restoring the Houphouëtist legacy of managing diversity and economic policy. But political calculations and his ambition to remain in power led him in the second stage to renew “Ivoirité” on the one hand, thereby negating the Houphouëtist management of social diversity, and, on the other, to retreat from the moralisation of public life. and finally, to meet the requirements of his own political positioning, to attack the myth of Akan centrality.

The RDR, or Houphouëtism the wrong way round

The RDR, born in the shadow of the PDCI, became its main political opponent. Led by former supporters of the PDCI whose hopes had been dashed, the RDR capitalised on the resentment of the people from the north, which originated in the polarisation of identities, and also recruited a considerable electorate in the south. At that point, the RDR appeared to be a party arising from the interaction of two socio-political phenomena: an ongoing movement in the far north which needed a mentor in order to assert itself as a political and civic tendency, and, second, a charismatic political figure who needed a considerable electoral basis to assert himself in the political sphere. The political strength of this party lay in the religious bond, constituted by Islam, between a considerable fringe of its militants and followers. This asset was denigrated by its opponents who, to discredit the party, fomented Islamophobia based on the characteristic identity of many of its militants.

Like the PDCI, the RPR claimed to adhere to Houphouëtism, but denounced the exclusionary way it was used after the death of Houphouët Boigny. In particular, RPR complained of the Akan stranglehold on power and called for an opening up of the political sphere. Categorized and, above all, stigmatised as a potentially Islamic political party, a charge the RDR itself denied, this political movement attracted militants originally from the north who slowly found in it a place where they could come together to protect themselves and campaign against the Akan-dominated PDCI's management of power, with its "discriminatory and illegal forms of treatment", which they saw as the continuation of the colonial administration and its historical alliance with Christianity.

The FPI, or the theoretical expression of radical schism

Since the renewal of multiparty politics in 1990, the "frontists" had never concealed their aversion to Houphouëtism. They criticised all its parameters and cited as the theoretical basis of their political involvement a desire for a new political, economic, and cultural foundation, which was only possible if there was a break with what they described as a clannish, predatory, and externally oriented political culture. The new government in power since October 2000, focused on a new foundation as its governmental model. In the context of great social fragmentation in Côte d'Ivoire, it was a question of imagining the means of participation and forms of political representation that could turn the ethnic and regionalist executives into citizens. But with the armed coups of 19 September 2003 and the justifications advanced by the rebels, it would appear that the problem of imagining a means of participation as citizens has still to be resolved.

Immigration and its politicisation

The politicisation of immigration represents another aspect of Houphouëtism on trial. This problem of immigration has become a political issue and has forced each political party to define itself in relation to the policy of economic openness that was one of the pillars of Houphouëtism and that enabled the Ivorian economy to tap into a sub-regional labour supply.

Immigration has become an object of political passion for two main reasons, one economic, the other political.

On the economic level, Côte d'Ivoire's mobilisation of labour from surrounding areas by means of liberal immigration and land-access policies, also acted as a buffer to sub-regional poverty. Immigration continued despite the fact that the Ivorian economic crisis had become structural. Several indicators enable us to explain why Côte d'Ivoire's economic crisis did not slow down immigration patterns. According to the "Household Standard of Living" survey carried out in Côte d'Ivoire in 1998, 33.6% of the population were poor. During the same period, in Burkina Faso and in

Guinea the proportion of poor people was estimated at 45.3% and 40.3% respectively. In Niger and in Mali, poverty exceeded 50%: it affected 63% of the population in Niger and 64.2% in Mali. While in 2000 the Côte d'Ivoire population living below the poverty rate of \$1/day and \$2/day was respectively 12% and 49.4%, in Burkina Faso it had risen to 61.2% and 85.5% and to 72.8% and 90.6% in Mali. When we compare the poverty indicators in Côte d'Ivoire with those of the other countries in the sub-region, poverty seems to be more severe in the countries sending immigrants to Côte d'Ivoire. Despite its poor economic performance, Côte d'Ivoire has remained a pole of attraction at the sub-regional level. The numbers of people pushed from these zones of greater poverty to what remained of the relatively prosperous centre of Côte d'Ivoire increased, despite the local economic slump, accentuating the contrast between local people and immigrants and intensifying competition for jobs in hitherto devalued sectors. The social equilibrium was beginning to be threatened. The general population and housing census in 1998 revealed that the foreign community, with a labour participation rate of 57.9%, had a higher participation rate in the national economy than the Ivorian population, whose participation rate was 47.7%. This meant there was a high and increasing rate of unemployment in the local Ivorian population and an economic ranking that was relatively favourable for immigrants in rural agricultural work and especially in the informal sector in urban areas. In a long-term context, this situation was the outcome of professional choices and strategies that were different for local people and for immigrants, and it contributed to the gradual transformation of economic relationships as between local people and immigrants. The crisis in the Ivorian economy, expressed from a social point of view in the deterioration of living conditions and increased unemployment, particularly among Ivorian nationals, gradually exposed the system's inability to absorb continuing flows of migrants from neighbouring countries. Its capacity to act as a buffer to the poverty in the sub-region thus diminished.

On the political level, in the uncertain process of searching for a new equilibrium through the establishment of a pluralist democracy, the question of the distribution of increasingly scarce resources (landed property, jobs, various forms of power and their attributes, etc.) became the major issue in domestic politics. It was also central to the political desire to rethink "otherness" and "difference". This is why, for the want of an economic and political alternative to the existing crisis-ridden system, in the form of new projects for society and realistic mobilising programmes, the political class took up the issue of immigration statistics, which were gradually transformed into a political instrument. The economic integration of foreigners, formerly spontaneous, now posed a problem (Tapinos, 2001; Serhan, 2002). The image of the foreigner as "invader" (Conseil Economique et Social, 1998) emerged and sustained forms of populism whose over-simplified rhetoric easily mobilised young voters, who were vulnerable to unemployment because their qualifications

were ill-adapted (Marie, 2000) or were victims of the school selection system (Proteau, 1997). As the economic and social crisis deepened and undermined the country's relative political stability, the pressure on immigrants tended to rise. Henceforth, "foreigners" were at the centre of political debate. The dominant presence of foreign communities and "Dioula" traders in certain economic sectors was highlighted and, as a result, became a source of social tension. This dominance was referred to by a good number of actors on the political scene, who over-emphasized national preference as a basis for "Ivoirité".

CHAPTER 3

The Problematic of “Ivoirité” and the Meaning of History in Côte d’Ivoire

“Ivoirité” is the Ivorian version of modern nationalism, but as an ideology, its conceptualisation has evolved.

The social and political construction of “Ivoirité”

Contrary to situations in which hotbeds of nationalism emerge and the state is forced to take measures to offset its effects, in Côte d’Ivoire it is the state itself that is responsible for the retribalisation of the discourse and mode of participation in political life.

In fact, “Ivoirité” functions on two levels. From an internal point of view, “Ivoirité” defines the criteria for participation in the distribution of scarce resources (jobs, property, power) within the country. From an external point of view “Ivoirité” defines national preference.

The rhetoric of “Ivoirité” came into existence under the Bédié regime, and “Ivoirité” as a state doctrine was reinforced during the period of transition after the military coup d’état in December 1999. “Ivoirité” gradually gained social legitimacy through ideological, political, and economic justifications.

Ideological justification

This ethno-nationalist tendency is recognisable in the writings of its theoreticians associated with the CURDIPHE (Cellule Universitaire de Recherche et de Diffusion des Idées et Actions Politiques of President Henri Konan Bédié), and we can consider its foundations through Professor Léonard Kodjo’s (1996:82) critical study of the “Houphouëtian vision”. In his view, Houphouëtism, “gives preference to the individual rather than to the citizen. An openness to the other of this magnitude, along with genuine economic prosperity, has transformed this country (Côte d’Ivoire) into a sort of African microcosm, a melting-pot in which, even today, it is difficult to distinguish precisely the original components.” But the emerging nationalism was primarily civic in intention. In the opinion of the historian, Jean-Noël Loucou, Head of the Personal Office Staff of the former president, Bédié, “The discussion over ‘Ivoirité’ is part of the general discussion about all the questions which underlie the very existence and progress of our developing nation. The fact that it was launched during the 1995 general elections should in no way reduce it to a dispute dictated by political and electoral considerations. It is a fundamental question

which deals with what makes a people, its identity and collective soul” (Loucou, 1996). The philosopher Niamkey Koffi (1996) finds its material basis in the logic of the discrimination between “them/us”. Similarly, the ethno-sociologist, Georges Niangoran Bouah, before dealing with the criteria of belonging to a country – which refer back to the founding ancestors of the various provinces – and the conditions for being a national (*autochtonie*), defines the socio-cultural foundations of “Ivoirité” as follows: “Ivoirité’ is the set of socio-historical, geographical and linguistic data which enables us to say that an individual is a citizen of Côte d’Ivoire or an Ivorian. The person who asserts his ‘Ivoirité’ is supposed to have Côte d’Ivoire as his country, be born of Ivorian parents belonging to one of the ethnic groups native to Côte d’Ivoire.” The ethnic nature of this nationalism derives its integral meaning from the firmly ethnological and exclusive approach of this definition. This intellectual construction of “Ivoirité” has found a means of projection into the political sphere.

Political justification

In October 1998, two years after the publication of the CURDIPHE manifesto entitled “‘Ivoirité’, or the Spirit of President Henri Konan Bedié’s New Social Contract”, the Commission for Social and Cultural Affairs of the Conseil Economique et Social published a report on immigration into Côte d’Ivoire. This report evaluated the impact of immigration on the country’s natural demographic equilibrium, its political life, its economic life in terms of the rise in unemployment of “native-born” Ivorians, and on security and social cohesion. The conclusions led to radical proposals at the political, economic, and social levels.

Economic justification

The literature abounds with references to the sectors controlled by foreigners. The historian Jean-Noël Loucou (1996) is alarmed: “Foreigners occupy a dominant, sometimes hegemonic, situation in the Ivorian economy. This massive foreign presence is therefore a threat to the socio-economic balance of the country.” The Conseil Economique et Social in its above-mentioned report analyses this situation as being the consequence of the over-liberal policy of openness:

The fact is, despite their [the immigrants’] low level of education in general, they [the Syro-Lebanese, Mauritians, Malians] have a hold on the trade in this country, thus filling most of the jobs in the informal sector. The outcome is that the native Ivorians have a higher rate of unemployment (6.4%) than these immigrants (3.6%) ... The hold of these immigrants on jobs in certain sectors of national activity (trade, road transport, agro-industrial firms, butchering, etc.) is such that it prevents Ivorians from competing with them ... Immigration is increasingly becoming one of the structural causes of the growth in poverty of Ivorians ...

The schemes for Ivorianising certain economic sectors in urban areas since the 1970s, and the nativist undertones in the recent property code in rural areas, are based on this logic.

In fact, nationalism is not a new phenomenon in Côte d'Ivoire. As we stressed above, Houphouëtism, far from being synonymous with Pan-Africanism, was already a form of nationalism. But it was a nationalism that tended towards development, instrumentalising external resources in the process of constructing the nation by means of functional openness to the outside world. However, with "Ivoirité", and given the socio-political effect of economic contraction, nationalism ceased to be developmentalist and became tribal instead, moving in the direction of ethno-nationalism. Tribal "Ivoirité" under Bédié tended, without ever being explicit, to safeguard the position of the Akan. Under democratisation, they were losing influence in the increasingly competitive race to control the machinery of state. Tribal "Ivoirité" henceforth saw itself as an essentialist and nativist political construction. In its tribal version, the "Ivoritarian" project endeavoured to preserve the position of the Akan in the political arena. This first version inherited from Houphouëtism the natural predisposition of the Akan to govern others, a predisposition that tended to be legitimated socially by the more than four decades of experience of Akan power and leadership under Houphouët Boigny. To this end, tribal "Ivoirité" gave itself an anthropological foundation, at times at the expense of manipulating the history of the settlement of the population,¹ as a mode of justifying the continuity of this Akan primacy.

In its first version, tribal "Ivoirité" also valorised Christianity as the historically adopted culture, an element in the making of a positive Ivoirian identity,² to further minimise the Muslim identity as a socio-cultural component of Ivorian social diversity. The December 1999 coup that brought General Robert Gueï, from the Yacouba ethnic group, to power was a blow to the project to preserve Akan hege-

1. In the construction of "Ivoirité", its ideologists either ignore or strategically downplay the population history before the 18th century: this enables them to justify Akan centrality. Côte d'Ivoire was populated in successive waves from the Paleolithic period. The first European explorers' texts from the 15th century described the movement of population at this time. In this period, trans-Saharan trading routes crisscrossed the north of the present territory: Bondoukou and Kong were the first markets on the edge of the forest, on the road linking Ashanti country to Niger. These movements are known to have gained momentum with the emergence of large empires in Ghana, Mali, and among the Songhai, and continued until the 18th century, giving the country its present ethnic configuration: the lagoon peoples along the coast; the Mandé (Mandinke) in the north and west; the Senufi in the north; the Krou in the west; the Akan in the east; and the Gur in the northeast. In 1710, the Muslim Mandés-Dioulas created a huge state at Kong in the north of Côte d'Ivoire. The latter did not outlast its founder, Sekou Ouattara, and fell into decline as soon as he died in about 1745. Other, very numerous, kingdoms have left their mark on the history of Côte d'Ivoire, which benefited from a dynamic economy, based on the trade in gold, salt, and cola that was linked to the trans-Saharan trade. Between the 15th and the 17th centuries, Europeans explored the coasts of Grain, the Dent, and the Quaqua. At the end of the 17th century, the Akan tribes from Ghana, the Agnis, emigrated towards the Ivory Coast to escape slave hunters. The last Akan to emigrate were the Baoulé, who assumed an important place in the centre of the country, and whose kingdom, under the government first of Queen Abla Pokou and then her niece, Akoua Boni, further extended its influence.

2. This is why, in 1998, the Conseil Economique et Social, spoke of a "break in the balance" with the "inflow of immigrants of the Muslim faith".

mony that was enshrined in the first concept of “Ivoirité”. The loss of control of the state apparatus led to the ideologists of “Ivoirité” losing control of the machinery of political construction, but did not, however, put an end to the Ivorian impetus. During the transition under General Robert Gueï, “Ivoirité” underwent a change in conceptualisation.

The second version of “Ivoirité” was intended to be more selectively “civic”. It was now less Akan and more favourable to broader inclusion of peoples from the south, centre, and west, but it was no less exclusionary of the people of the north, commonly referred to as “Dioulas”, about whom there remained a doubt in the collective imagination as to the underlying reality of their belonging to the “Ivorian nation”. The term “Dioula” is a polar mode of identification for an ethnically diverse group (Maouka, Senoufo, Malinké, etc.) geographically situated in the northern region, whose members are, for historical reasons, Muslim. The doubt voiced about “Dioula” membership of the “Ivorian nation” is justified by “Ivoritarians” on the basis that “Dioula” share family names and religion with the citizens of neighbouring countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea). Moreover, Muslims account for 86% of the immigrants¹ in Côte d'Ivoire. This is the origin of the fear already referred to in 1998 by the Ivorian Conseil Economique et Social as “the inflow of Muslim immigrants” that had “considerably modified the pre-existing religious balance”. The Conseil Economique et Social goes on to say, “An upset in the balance of this sort, in such a sensitive sphere, could lead some people to endeavour to exploit religious affiliation for political ends, which is a disservice to national harmony and unity, and a threat to the social peace so dear to our country” (Report of the Conseil Economique et Social, October 1998). Coming on top of the political denunciations of the economic imbalance created by immigration, this confusion over identity in the construction of “Ivoirité” reinforced opposition to the principle of openness. At the same time this opposition increased a feeling of exclusion and marginality among the citizens in the north of Côte d'Ivoire. The outcome was that Ivorian Muslims were identified with foreign Muslims, and people from the north of Côte d'Ivoire were identified with foreigners, because over the period of ten years “Ivoirité” had not merely remained in a state of construction. Instead, it was to be concretely materialised in inter-community relations and in the relationships between the police and the people of the north, who complained of various forms of harassment during law and order operations or when national identity cards were issued.² As Mamadou Koulibaly, president of the Ivorian National Assembly, so rightly remarked, “Administrative and police harassment does not differentiate

1. The 1998 Population Census states that in Côte d'Ivoire, 70% of Burkinabés, 91% of Guineans, and 96.8% of Malians are Muslims.

2. Evidence collected in Abidjan by Claudine Vidal (2002:215–52) gives a good sense of this phenomenon.

between a Dioula from Côte d'Ivoire and a Dioula from Mali, Burkina or elsewhere. A Dioula was a Dioula and it was only a collective term for several ethnic groups in the north of Côte d'Ivoire and ethnic groups from foreign countries."¹ Finally, "Ivoirité" sowed the seeds of mutual paranoia, impoverished the foundations of community life, and produced an Ivorian society increasingly marked by fear, because it included communities who began to be frightened of each other on the basis of identities that used to be permeable but which were gradually becoming fixed.

The constitution and ethno-nationalism

The ideological, political, and economic justifications for ethno-nationalism in Côte d'Ivoire were materialised in the constitution in the restrictive eligibility clauses for the position of president of the republic. These clauses came into effect when the revised constitution was approved by referendum on 23 July 2000. According to Article 35 of the new constitution, which founded the Second Republic, "The President of the Republic must be of Ivorian origin, born of a father and mother who are also Ivorian by birth. He must never have renounced Ivorian nationality. He must never have used another nationality. He must have resided in Côte d'Ivoire for five continuous years preceding the date of the elections and have a total of ten years of effective residence." Despite the fact that this constitution legally excluded him from running, Alassane Dramane Ouattara himself called for its adoption. This somewhat strange attitude is explained in the answer he gave during a newspaper interview about the presence in the constitution of an article that excluded him from the political sphere:

I have no problems with the present constitution from the legal point of view. It was because the Supreme Court was under orders [from the junta], that it was interpreted in this way to exclude me. I am quite sure that if we have an independent judiciary, there would not be the slightest doubt about my candidature. However, I do think that it is a constitution that divides Ivorians and gives rise to frustration. This text creates different categories of Ivorians, and that is contrary to the concept of nationality. All Ivorians must have the same rights and the same duties.

While the elimination of Ouattara as a candidate in presidential and parliamentary elections appeared to many observers to be the consequence of a political process that hierarchically ranked Ivorian legal rights, the effectiveness of the ethno-nationalist discourse that socially legitimated this ranking was directly or indirectly demonstrated by other actors or groups of actors, sometimes in the form of the clash of contradictory logics.

1. Cf., Mamadou Koulibaly: Rébellion ou colonisation du territoire ivoirien. <http://19septembre2002.freefr/koulibaly.htm>

Military coups d'état as therapy for "Ivoirité"?

Politics is, by definition, a sphere of conflict and co-ordination of the plurality of interests and logics at any given time. But this conflict only operates as an opportunity and motor for social progress when there is an ethic of political dialogue, in the meaning which Habermas (1992) gives the term, and when there are suitable mechanisms for its regulation, thereby enabling the achievement of a compromise acceptable to the parties in the arena. In Côte d'Ivoire, the crisis of legitimacy of the Houphouëtist compromise created a totally new political issue. The crisis occurred in a socio-economic context quite different from the one in which the compromise originated, and was accompanied by a demand for a new social contract, reversing the predominance of the economic over the political.

Faced with this new situation, it would appear that the political responses since the end of the 1990s did not correspond to social expectations. The consequences were the multiplicity of acts of unrest and distrust vis-à-vis the state, particularly in reaction to that ideology of "Ivoirité" that had survived successive regimes. The capacity of the political class not only to renew itself, but also to offer political and economic alternatives to a society threatened with the disintegration of a governance model, is seriously challenged.

Elsewhere, I have defended the idea (Akindès, 2000b) that with the coming of pluralist democracies to Africa and elsewhere, military coups tend to be justified in terms of the corruption of the new, or re-established, democracies, which are very frequently content with the constitutional legality conferred by pluralist elections but do not bother to renew the political grammar of the systems they are supposed to replace. By this I mean the perversion and corruption of the rules of the political game, which are always linked to the "politics of self-interest", the perpetuation of predatory practices, and the political use of identity definitions that sometimes extend the legitimization of exclusion, as is the Côte d'Ivoire case with "Ivoirité". In 1999, the military junta accused the Bédié government of all these wrongdoings, before General Robert Gueï in turn decided to manipulate the rules of the game to his advantage. He mobilised the same political grammar to these ends. In 2002, a good number of the actors in the military branch of MPCCI turned out to be the same as those who had orchestrated the December 1999 coup. In their opinion, they had been betrayed in their project to put an end to "Ivoirité". They were persecuted by General Gueï, who accused them of fomenting new plots against him, and went into exile, only to come back two years later with the same project. The arguments of the MPCCI and the supporters of the rebellions lend credibility to this hypothesis: coups d'état tend to be justified as a mode of resistance to democracies that are perceived from within as corrupt. The president of the Ivorian National Assembly, Mamadou Koulibal, summed up this argument: "There are several types of criticism. Some are legal, others are political, but a multiform coalition that brings

all these criticisms together under the same umbrella has found financing to commit crimes against Côte d'Ivoire. This coalition includes those who accuse the Ivorian regime of promoting and following the ideology of 'Ivoirité'. This group also includes those who do not want a constitution, a nationality code, or a rural landed property code, or any law concerning identity."¹ It is on the basis of this line of argument that the three rebel movements formed a coalition to deny the constitutional legality of Laurent Gbagbo's power, the motive being that he had been incorrectly elected and that elections would have to be re-run. To this end, the main rebel movement, the MPCI, based its argument on the criticisms of the UN, US, France, South Africa, and the European Union regarding the limits placed on the choices available to voters during the 22 October 2000 presidential elections, which were described as "an electoral hold-up". The MPCI also referred to the calls for new elections.²

Obviously, the recurrence of reference to "Ivoirité" as a source of social and political malaise is evidence of a crisis in the re-thinking of the political grammar once the Houphouëtist compromise had become structurally dysfunctional. Political rhetoric had difficulty in going beyond the ethno-centred schema that functioned as a register of attack on one hand and defence on the other. In other words, in post-Houphouëtist politics in Côte d'Ivoire, the new political positioning seemed to some (RDR, FPI) to be unfolding as a reaction to the restrictive party positions regarding "second zone" ethnic groups, the second zone being the zone in which the Akan ideology, contained in the Houphouët compromise and tribal "Ivoirité", had attempted to confine them. For others, namely the PDCI, the new political positioning was posed in terms of the detribalisation of party life in a political environment undergoing total change. The political class was confronted with an absence of political markers that could harness social energies in more citizen-like and mobilising political projects, projects that could serve as bearers of a "shared public culture". This obvious absence of any civic ethic and reliable mechanisms for political dialogue seemed to justify the permanence of the crisis of confidence between the ethnic groups, the recurrence of coups since the end of the 1990s, and the incursion of rebel movements into the regulation of socio-political workings. The FPI, in the wake of Gueï, was accused of exploiting the doctrinal fund of "Ivoirité".³ The ghost of "Ivoirité" recurs in the forms of argument used by the military putschists who, in 1999 as in 2002, accused all regimes from Bédié to Gbagbo, including Gueï, of political partiality which had become structural, the use of the

1. Mamadou Koulibaly, Rébellion ou colonisation du territoire ivoirien. <http://19septembre2002.free.fr/koulibaly.htm>.

2. Elections présidentielles 2000. Ce qui s'est passé et ce qu'ils ont dit. http://www.supportmpci.org/elections_presidentielles2000.htm

3. Cf. Mamadou Koulibaly, Rébellion ou colonisation du territoire ivoirien. <http://19septembre2002.free.fr/koulibaly.htm>

exclusive monopoly of legitimate violence in the service of partisan interests, and the systematic extension of mechanisms of social exclusion vis-à-vis the “people from the north”. The two military putsches were intended as a challenge to the legitimacy of violence conferred on the state in democracies. This dis-oligopolisation of violence operated through attempts to remove some of the instruments of this violence (the army) from the state in order to force it to renegotiate new rules for the working of national politics. In attempting to justify their actions by the imperative of justice for all, the authors of the 24 December 1999 coup revealed their intentions. The coup was then defined as an attempt to deal a deathblow to “Ivoirité” and its various manifestations under Bédié’s government. But on the socio-political level, since this coup had not curbed the “evil”, it apparently did not live up to its promises. The question of “Ivoirité” was once again at the heart of the armed conflict that pitted the armed rebel movements¹ against the government of Laurent Gbagbo that came to power in October 2000. The banishment of “Ivoirité” was still on the agenda, and an end to the immunity for the armed forces associated with the mass grave in Yopougon and various exactions (attacks and burning of mosques, assassinations of imams, etc.) remained the main demand of the armed rebel movements.

When set in the Ivorian socio-economic context, the ideology of “Ivoirité” implicitly poses the question of citizenship and, therefore, of the definition of the sociological divide between those who do, and those who do not belong to the Ivorian nation, of which the sociological contours were still poorly defined. As a local expression of the political need to select those who had the right to ever more limited local resources, it was a consequence of the crisis in political regulation linked to the shrinking the fiscal base (Akindès, 2000a). The uprising of 19 September 2002 once again brought the problematic of citizenship to the fore in a society with a complex socio-anthropological configuration, in which “Ivoirité” actually denies the possibility of the plurality of forms of expression. The missing link here is the federating political project that will have to take the place of integration by economic means inaugurated in a totally different socio-political and historical context by Houphouët Boigny. The limits of this model of integration by economic means, now subject to a structural crisis, are clearly demonstrated. The political class is now forced to see the necessary re-invention of a collective self in a historical perspective.

1. We should point out that several of the known MPCİ military leaders, such as Tuo Fozié, Ibrahima Coulibaly (IB), and Chérif Ousmane had taken part in the first coup in 1999 that brought General Robert Guéï to power. But the latter’s political ambitions led him to ride the “Ivorianness” horse in a way that excluded an important political opponent, Allassane Dramane Ouattara. This was to lead to disagreement between him and these young soldiers. General Guéï accused them of plotting against him in 2000. Some of the soldiers were tortured and even eliminated and others, who had returned to participate in the 19 September coup, organised from Burkina Faso.

CHAPTER 4

The Course of History, or the Need for the Invention of Another Social Contract

Political historicity in Côte d'Ivoire is rooted in a rather distinctive history of an economy, which is itself now experiencing its own setbacks four decades on. There is almost a need to invert that predominance of the economic over the political that served as the mechanism for social integration under Houphouët Boigny. But this compromise had reached exhaustion point in a society profoundly transformed by economic, demographic, and political movements. Today the question is the political construction of new pillars of citizenship. In the absence of this political endeavour, there are areas of uncertainty in the development of a notion of citizenship that leave popular imagination to its own devices as to the meaning of being Ivorian today. A sociology of the impassioned debates around the figure of Alassane Dramane Ouattara is an indication of the political issues associated with identity and the risks they present when there is no consensus on the meaning of citizenship on the horizon, and no political endeavour to include specific identities.

Alassane Dramane Ouattara (ADO): symbol of the reality underlying the question of being a national

The political ambitions of ADO gave free rein in the popular imagination to the plurality of meanings in today's social representation of being Ivorian. The multiplicity of conceptions of the Ivorian national indicates the way in which areas of uncertainty created by the lack of political elaboration of the concept of citizenship were re-appropriated.

Essentially, the meaning of the political discussion in Côte d'Ivoire lay somewhere between the search for and the assertion of control over its political, economic, and cultural life. This discussion was focused on the legitimacy of ADO's participation as a candidate for the highest office. The invalidation of his candidacy first in the presidential elections and then in the parliamentary elections increased the frustrations of his supporters, with their slogan "Enough is enough!", and left his opponents feeling they were making some progress in their search to control political life. The invalidation was a strong political indication of assertion of control, conceived on the basis of multiple representations but focusing in the imagination of the anti-Ouattarists on a core of shared meanings of exclusion (ADO, the foreigner). Opposition between pro- and anti-Ouattarists developed around differ-

entiated constructions of ADO's identity in the people's imagination. The arguments advanced give a sufficiently good idea of the absence of a political definition of the citizen, his rights and duties.

Between 1992 and 1995, in both north and the south, ADO was perceived as a technocrat, whose lifestyle set him at a distance from ordinary people. He was also perceived as a symbol of modernity, having developed away from the spheres of socialisation (generation, membership of associations of citizens or circles of political activism, etc.) that mean something in Ivorian society. His professional career abroad made him a "man of the world". Also, in the eyes of the people, in the Ivorian imagination, ADO's matrimonial alliances made it impossible for him to claim ethnic attachment by marriage and added further to his cultural distance. But from 1995, political mobilisation gradually developed around his person. This mobilisation must be linked to the political effects of "Ivoirité", which encouraged the northern populations to more and better political organisation to resist what they saw as a spiral of exclusion. In identifying the representations of the "enigmatic" ADO in the collective imagination, we can therefore posit a mental geography in which the poles of identity and politics were associated with the social and subjective configuration of these representations.

Identification with the "political victim" was constructed around two specificities of identity, ethnic group and religion. "ADO is a Dioula brother and a Muslim", said the people of the north. "He is a son of the Far North, worthy of the name." The need for a federating political mentor meant that the plurality of the dimensions of his identity was disregarded, and only these two specificities remained. He did not personally assert these, but in the ongoing ethno-nationalist context, they bound him to his community of origin. In response to the resolutely ethno-nationalist configuration of democratisation at the time, the main political parties also contributed to the ethno-nationalist escalation, so that ethno-nationalism increasingly structured both participation and representation in Côte d'Ivoire.

But this affective and geographically specific representation of ADO gradually changed as one went down towards the centre and south of Côte d'Ivoire. The psychic markers of difference, as opposed to self, gained force and vigour again, since the first rallying cry of identity, Islam, ceased to pertain. Behind the figure of ADO were various constructions of his identity, corresponding to varying definitions of his nationality:¹

1. We set out the various versions and extracts regarding the construction of ADO's identity at length, because they do not lend themselves to arbitrary cuts, which might obscure the basis of the argument, the identity issues they convey, and their links to Ivorian political life. The presentation of the arguments allows free rein for the reader's thought, judgment, and analysis.

Version One: On the basis of the origins of his father, who was even said to have been a chief in a village in Volta, and his brief primary schooling in former Upper Volta, ADO was said to be Burkinabe. ADO's defence was as follows:¹

My father was called Dramane Ouattara and my mother was called Nabintou Ouattara, maiden name Cissé. My father, Dramane Ouattara, is Ivorian. He came from Kong in Côte d'Ivoire, and is a descendant of the Emperor Sekou Ouattara, well known to the historians of our country. After having been a teacher, he became a representative of the CFAO and a trader. He left Kotobi and settled in Dimbokro, where I was born and where we still have our family house, which is occupied today by my brother, Sinali Dramane Ouattara, who is well known in the cocoa belt in Bongouanou, in Kotobi, where my elder brother, Gaoussou, present in this room, was born. My father had to carry out the functions of the traditional village chief in Sindou, not far from the Ivorian frontier. Sindou was part of the former empire of Kong, which, at that time, included part of Côte d'Ivoire, of Mali, and of Ghana. I come from the lineage of the Emperor Sekou Ouattara, the founder of the Kong Empire at the beginning of the 17th century. The first of my ancestors to tread our soil in the years 1700 was called Tieba. He was accompanied by his children, Sekou (of which I am the sixth generation descendant), Famagan, Dabla, and Karakara. It was his son, Sekou, who founded Kong. Sekou Ouattara, the ruler of the Kong States, was the father of Djoridjan Ouattara, who in turn was the father of Soumaoulé Ouattara, who in turn was the father of Aboubacar Ouattara, my grandfather. My father, Dramane Ouattara, was born around 1888. You know that I am speaking of a period when frontiers did not exist. Our traditions and our rules of succession in these kingdoms knew nothing of the frontiers inherited from colonisation. This is how, in keeping with the rules and procedures of succession specific to each community, my father, a genuine Ivorian, descendant of Sekou Ouattara, became a chief in Sindou. Although he was chief in Sindou he never ceased to be an Ivorian. The proof is that each time he crossed from Upper Volta to Côte d'Ivoire, the frontier authorities stamped his comings and goings in his Ivorian passport. Our Akan relations are well aware of what I am saying. Thus, Ivorians rule villages located in Ghana, and in Côte d'Ivoire Ghanaians are chiefs. This is the case for the King of Krinjabo in Samwi, who was a captain in the Ghanaian army ... Do I have to say it again? My father, Dramane Ouattara, was never a citizen of Volta or a Burkinabe. As proof, I also have his national identity card issued on 20 March 1963 at Dimbokro by the commissioner of

1. Ouattara's remarks are taken from a speech made at the Forum de la Réconciliation (November 2001) available on the web at: <http://19septembre2002.free.fr/ado.htm>

police at the time, and not in 1952. Here it is! The directoire of this Forum has seen it.

Version Two: ADO is said to be Burkinabe through his father,¹ and the filiation to his mother is challenged so that only his Burkinabe nationality remains. ADO explained this as follows:

My mother comes from Gbéléban in the county of Odienné. She was born in Dabou, where my grandfather, Ibrahim Cissé, lived for a long time in the Dioulabougou district, between the bus station and the mosque. My Adjoukrou compatriots know him very well. He had plantations in Akakro where I often went to see him. One of uncles is even called Mamadou Akakro. I was lucky enough to have a mother whose parents travelled a lot outside Côte d'Ivoire because of their activities. For that reason, they had to have identity papers. By way of example, my mother gave me the passport of my grandfather, Ibrahim Cissé't. He was born in 1868 in Gbéléban – here it is. It is available and can be seen at any time. Thus my maternal grandfather is well and truly Ivorian. Therefore, Nabintou Cissé, his daughter, is Ivorian also. She is still alive, and thanks be to God, she is well. She is here in this room. Can you imagine that in the campaign of defamation that was mounted against me, some even said that she was not my real mother! So, we all voluntarily submitted to a DNA test, my mother, my brother Ibrahim, nicknamed “photocopy” because he looks so like me, my two sisters of the “same mother and father”, as we usually say, Rockya and Sita. The DNA test is positive. It confirms beyond doubt that Nabintou Ouattara, née Cissé, is effectively my mother and that I am her son. The DNA test is at the disposal of the Directoire. Similarly, Ibrahim, Rockya, and Sita are recognised as being her children and therefore effectively my brothers and sisters. Now, they have all been recognised as being Ivorians. I have other brothers and sisters. I do not wish to name all of them. One of my older brothers is called Yssouf. He lives in Treichville. He is in this room. He is Ivorian. His mother is Adjoukro. She comes from Kosrou. To conclude, my father is Ivorian by birth, and my mother is Ivorian by birth. Here is the original of my mother's Ivorian birth certificate. My grandparents are Ivorian by birth, my brothers and sisters are all Ivorians by birth. They all have Ivorian certificates of nationality except

1. In Côte d'Ivoire, Burkinabe have traditionally done jobs (plantation labourers, odd jobs, and domestic employees in urban areas) for which Ivorians had little liking. As a result of this “inferior” professional status in the imagination of Ivorian people, Burkinabe immigrants are a social underclass. The passionate nature of the opposition to ADO's candidacy must be linked to this social construction of his identity as Burkinabe. To put it plainly, the ordinary Ivorian considers being ruled by the offspring of former labourers unthinkable. The fact that ADO's father was not a labourer but a trader until his death, after having first been a teacher, is simply denied.

me. What am I, then? What have I done to be different? What is the justification for this conspiracy against me?

On his schooling:

I began primary schooling at Dimbokro and then I followed my father to Sindou. There, at primary school, and later at the lycée in Bobo Dioulasso, I was called the “little Ivorian”. After my secondary studies, when I had passed the Baccalauréat in 1962 in Ouagadougou, I was awarded an American scholarship. The question that sceptics often ask is: if he is not from the Volta, how could he have been awarded a scholarship in the name of Upper Volta? The answer is simple: the scholarships granted to study abroad were, at the time, linked to the territory and not to the nationality of the bearer. Thus there are hundreds of citizens from neighbouring countries who studied with the aid of scholarships awarded to Côte d’Ivoire. Those who are chosen in a class or a school are not necessarily nationals of the country, but the best students, even if they are not nationals. At their point of entry, they are automatically classed in the contingent of the sending country. Today, many of these people are settled in their country of origin. This is my situation.

Version three: ADO is an Ivorian, but has already taken advantage of another nationality to occupy high posts at the IMF and the BCEAO. ADO replied:

As an economist, I began my professional career with the IMF. This was an enriching experience since I had the opportunity to visit numerous countries and benefit from many experiences all over the world. A few years later, I was lucky to be recruited by the BCEAO, of which the head office at the time was in Paris, because this gave me the opportunity to at last work for my country. I rose through the ranks of the central bank and became director of studies and special adviser to the governor, Abdoulaye Fadiga. I would like to remind you that during my time at the BCEAO, I gave modest assistance to Governor Fadiga regarding the transfer of the BCEAO from Paris to Dakar and for setting up the Central Bank’s human resources policy, administrative framework, and monetary policy. It was in Dakar, in the context of an agreement between the then Volta authorities and President Félix Houphouët Boigny, that I was appointed vice-governor of BCEAO in 1982, a post which should have gone to Burkina Faso. President Houphouët Boigny certainly had his own reasons. But as soon as President Sankara came to power in Upper Volta, he demanded that I be replaced by a Burkinabe. This was done. In the course of my functions at BCEAO, Upper Volta issued me with a diplomatic passport. Everyone knows that a diplomatic passport is not an identity certificate. It can be provided by a sovereign state to foreigners in the exercise of

their function. Thus, in Côte d'Ivoire, many foreigners, including French, Angolans, South Africans, Malians ... hold one legally. Furthermore, other Ivoirians, including important people, have used Burkinabe or Togolese diplomatic passports as travel documents. Everyone knows this, and nobody apparently asks any questions about these people. I am accused of having used an Upper Volta diplomatic passport so that a solicitor could make the necessary arrangements for me to purchase property and open a bank account. Ask any lawyer: he will explain that these are purely commercial actions and of no effect in establishing a nationality. This is the truth. This is the place to point out that while I held a diplomatic passport issued by Upper Volta, I was never a civil servant in the Burkinabe civil service. I have never worked in the private sector in Burkina Faso. This can be checked. To conclude this presentation, I occupied the position of African Director of the International Monetary Fund from 1984 to 1988. My return to this institution was done after consultation, not with the Burkinabe government, but with President Félix Houphouët Boigny, who encouraged me to accept this offer, because, for him, it was a matter of national pride that an Ivoirian be promoted to this level in such a prestigious financial institution. He even compared this situation to his own personal political experience in the French government. When Governor Abdoulay Fadiga, to whom I owe a lot in my career, died, President Félix Houphouët Boigny did me the great honour of recalling me, this time to take over the functions of governor of the BCEAO, a post which was reserved to Côte d'Ivoire.

These various constructions of Ouattara's identity, making him a "foreigner" or "second class Ivoirian", considerably sustain anti-Ouattarism and strengthen the idea that there is only one truth in identity. The political ambitions of ADO, who was perceived by the political elite as being tantamount to a foreigner, enable the recourse to such ethno-nationalism. His candidacy tends to be seen as one of the drawbacks of opening the Ivoirian frontiers. ADO comes to symbolise the son of an immigrant who, in the words of the report of the Conseil Economique et Social sur l'Immigration en Côte d'Ivoire, uses "the political liberalism characteristic [of Côte d'Ivoire] to claim political rights." He is the personification of the impure identity that should be expurgated in the purist approach to identity. While for his opponents, Ouattara is the prototype of the "false Ivoirian" who claims that to which he has no right, for the inhabitants of the north, he is a symbol of their loss of status as citizens, having been constantly deprived of his civic rights by governments in the hands of "people from the south", "Bushmen".

Assigning an identity to ADO not only enables the "Ivoritarians" to root their fears of the dangers of an "invasion of Côte d'Ivoire" in a concrete case, but also gives substance to a "pie-chart" concept of citizenship. Pie-chart citizenship is a

local construction of social inclusion, according to which being Ivorian no longer confers a legal status. “Ivorianism” is primarily anthropological: descent from the same founding ancestors in the various provinces of the country. An individual’s relationship to this “original stock” is the criterion par excellence for full rights, and allows for the conferring of quarter, half, or three-quarter rights, analogous to a pie-chart. The conjunctions “and/or” in Article 35 of the Basic Law institutionalise the variable geometry of these rights and institute the ranking of citizens in accordance with this philosophy of pie-chart citizenship. The “or” is Alassane, the “and” represents the Ivorians, in the words of an FPI militant in Abidjan in an interview for a sociological survey (Vidal, 2002:222).

The political deficit in any reification of citizenship means that in the collective conscience there is a form of denial of the fact that Ivorian nationality includes people of local origin but also those of mixed parentage – that is, nationals who have only one locally born parent – and naturalised Ivorians. This explains the suspicions of and predominantly negative social perception of foreign names on the Ivorian identity card. What poses problems today is this linking of citizenship identity to an underlying essence in the sub-region’s most genetically and culturally mixed society, as a result of the ethnic intermixing arising from a long tradition of hosting immigrants.

An alternative to “slice” citizenship

The formation of the second republic and the escalation of violence associated with the malaise induced by “Ivoirité” means Côte d’Ivoire faces a dual challenge, political and economic.

On the political level, in the first instance we have the challenge of citizenship. The latter can be seen in the invention of tools for national integration. The old democracies understood this. This political requirement justifies the extensive discussions taking place in Europe and North America, with the adepts of republican or assimilationist integration, Dominique Schnapper and Jürgen Habermas, and the liberal exponent of human rights, John Rawls, on the one side, and, on the other, communitarians like Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer and the liberal theoretician of minority rights, Will Kymlicka, whose ideas are in many respects the basis for the Canadian approach to the political management of minorities. From this point of view, crafting an immigration policy of the type we have described is important but, in itself, insufficient. Any discussion on the management of diversity must begin with the conviction that integration demands, above all, setting up a policy of recognition, the various aspects of which are dealt with in the works of the philosopher Charles Taylor.

The invention of this philosophical and political melting-pot and its translation into reality also depend on the capacity to produce wealth and ensure its judicious

redistribution or, at least, to ensure the equality of citizens in the face of the effects of poverty. Anything else is a source of social tension. Therein lies the economic challenge.

On the economic level, since its accession to independence, Côte d'Ivoire has, given its economic choices, been characterised by a specific integration into the international economy. Its current socio-political and economic crisis originates in the fact that the modes of regulation have not kept pace with the sometimes radical changes in the international economic environment. The outcome has been a lack of articulation between international agreements, which are constantly being reconstituted, and local agreements, which suffer from structural rigidity, to such an extent that the "narrow way" has gradually become an "impasse". The challenge ahead is, therefore, to recreate a quality standard for the Ivorian economy by creating conditions of confidence, that intangible factor in social cohesion without which it is almost impossible to create wealth.

The return of investor confidence in the Ivorian economy is strongly correlated to the country's internal political capacity to regulate political uncertainty. In the new process of inventing the political that is now called for, the Ivorian political class more than ever needs to develop a discussion of what Michael Walzer calls the "forms of co-existence" that make possible the existence of difference. The answers to this question are always a function of national particularities. But at the same time, they explain how national societies have the capacity for self-institutionalisation over time, within the specific framework of political modernity. The function of the state is fundamental to the invention of a "regime of tolerance" in an always unstable equilibrium and to maintaining mechanisms of justice for the parties.

In conclusion, we can say with a few minor qualifications, that the crisis of Houphouëtism is in many ways comparable to what was observed with Tito's Communism in Yugoslavia. Authoritarian models set up by charismatic political figures do not outlive their architects. Ignatieff (2000:39) puts it differently: "The states whose legitimacy is based on the charisma of an individual are bound to disintegrate when they go." The political engineering initiatives of Tito and Houphouët Boigny, despite their ideological differences, have much in common. In their respective countries, they succeeded in getting ethnic groups to live together, by using fairly similar methods of government. Before 1990, Houphouët Boigny in Côte d'Ivoire, just like Tito in Yugoslavia, only tolerated a cultural opposition that in no way threatened his regime. As in Yugoslavia, the possibilities for travel the Ivorians were allowed enabled them to maintain the illusion that, in the last resort, things were better than elsewhere under Houphouët Boigny, despite his authoritarianism. The presence of a numerous colony of West African citizens reinforced this political relativism. As long as economic resources were available, the system could endure. But after the death of Houphouët Boigny and with the deepening of the economic crisis, the political elite who succeeded him understood that they had to invent a new

rhetoric capable of mobilising the masses, just as their Yugoslavian counterparts did after the death of Tito in 1980, when they confronted the advanced deterioration of communism. This political logic produced ethno-nationalist populism, as witness Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and “Ivoirité” in Côte d’Ivoire. But differences emerge between countries in the effects and the functions of such nationalist discourse. If in Yugoslavia, discourse was merely a language game and an oratorical strategy to organise electoral survival, in Côte d’Ivoire, “Ivoirité” has served to launch a serious trend to reshape participation in the life of the republic, based on roots in the soil. This radical ethnicisation of the republic has created a social malaise in a very mixed society, especially as it damages the idea of the republic as a source of integration.

Confronted with the crisis in the Houphouëtist compromise, Côte d’Ivoire is at a crossroads of its own making. The present political crisis seems to originate in difficulties of self-institutionalisation, in the most Castoriadian meaning of the term. This self-institutionalisation depends for its relevance on taking into account the social, political, economic, and cultural configurations of Ivorian society, which is profoundly mixed both genetically and culturally. The socio-political crisis seems to have sprung from the paradoxical fact that the political class is retreating into an identity logic that engenders exclusion and banishes any notion of a forged citizenship and shared political culture. The future of Côte d’Ivoire lies in putting this paradox into perspective. In such a complex sociological context, it is the project for citizenship rather than the search for a radical identity that should function as an integrating fiction, conceived on the basis of values and virtues and brought to life by rallying institutions, symbols, and myths around this project, and by community dreams. In the face of the danger of a long cycle of socio-political instability, the Ivorian political class can no longer evade the philosophical questions that face complex societies like Côte d’Ivoire. These questions arise as soon as the central question of relevant societal projects is posed, because they are questions that federate and can positively and lastingly channel individual and collective energies.

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