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France as a Negative Influence on the Côte d'Ivoire: The Consequences of Foreign Interference

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France as a Negative Influence on the Côte d'Ivoire:
The Consequences of Foreign Interference

A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of the International Studies Major
In Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of
A BA in International Studies

by
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Newport, RI
December, 2010

Abstract

The Côte d'Ivoire, like many African nations, has been greatly influenced by the presence of foreign powers. However, the case of the Côte d'Ivoire is unique because of the country's contemporary and continuous relations with France – despite the many negative consequences that this relationship has produced. By examining the presence of the European colonial power throughout the history of the Côte d'Ivoire, it is clear that a direct link between the French and the modern problems of the Côte d'Ivoire, specifically when addressing unfair and authoritative rulers, weighted social stratifications, issues with economy, trade, and the Ivoirian Civil War of 2002, is unmistakable.

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Introduction

The Côte d'Ivoire, a country in North-West Africa, has experienced a great deal of unrest as a direct and indirect result of the French inside their borders. From their very first mission in the area (1687) until today, the French have had a negative impact on all aspects of Ivoirian life.

Colonial rule forced unnatural boundaries and limitations on the African continent. It forced people to be group together as a new territory but did not take into consideration the lifestyles they depended on. During colonial rule, the French established a provisional government that forced Ivoirians to become dependent on both the French and trade. This dependency also encouraged a large number of French settlers to move to the Côte d'Ivoire. In addition to governmental changes, the French created social issues by introducing Christianity and a French system of education. These variations resulted in a stratified class system and drastic differences between the "ruling" and the "ruled." France used their presence in the Côte d'Ivoire to exploit both the land and the indigenous people of the colony. They introduced plantations and required forced labor. They also over-cultivated the land to the point that foreigners were given citizenship in order to fill positions on Ivoirian plantations. During the World Wars, the French viewed Ivoirians as a support force. They demanded natural resources and troops in order to reinforce their war efforts.

Even after the Côte d'Ivoire gained independence, on August 7, 1960, the French continued to have an influential and negative impact on Ivoirian life. They continued close ties with authoritarian rulers and encouraged the use of French troops to reinforce these rulers' policies. The French emphasis on Christianity helped to spur tension between northern Muslims and southern Christians. These problems caused nationality disputes and laws that limited

Muslim involvement in national politics. In addition, French education remains one way that Ivoirians distinguish upper class, "Ivoirite"s, from typical Africans. Employment, representation, and personal advancement opportunities are more available to those who are educated by the French and in their language. The plantations that the French brought to the Côte d'Ivoire have led to child slavery, poor work conditions, and problems between people who were born Ivoirian and those who were given citizenship in order to work. When the French economy no longer demanded Ivoirian resources, the market dropped and the GDP of the economically successful nation sank to record lows.

Ivoirians did not know how to respond to the changes that were forced upon them and found themselves enveloped by civil war. It is clear that without the presence of European colonization, the country that we now know as the Côte d'Ivoire would not have the turmoil that currently exists.

Pre-Colonization

History

Before outsiders reached Africa, the continent lay in peace and prosperity. Little is recorded about the lifestyles of those who inhabited the land and no property boundaries existed. We do know that people lived in small, concentrated communities and that respect and honor increased with age. Social units had distinct practices and traditions that helped them find peace in life and pass on history and education.

The Côte d'Ivoire, a medium-sized country in North-West Africa (just larger than New Mexico), has a very interesting and rich history. Before it was a country it was an area of land with four independent and naturally created regions.

> The coastal fringe consists of a strip of land, no more than 40 miles
> (64 kilometres) wide, studded with lagoons on its eastern half.
> Behind the coastal fringe lies the equatorial forest zone that until a
> century ago formed a continuous area more than 125 miles (200
> kilometres) wide. It has now been reduced to an area roughly
> triangular in shape, with the apex lying a little to the north of
> Abidjan and with the base lying along the Liberian border. The
> cultivated forest zone, which lies to the east of this triangle,
> consists of forest land that has been partially cleared for
> plantations, especially along the Ghana border and in the area
> around Bouaké. The fourth region, the northern savanna, consists

of a sparsely populated plateau, offering open ground favourable

for stock breeding. (Côte d'Ivoire Encyclopædia Britannica)

The location of the current Côte d'Ivoire is "just 400 miles (644 km) north of the

equator" (Rotberg 13). "The entire southern border of the Ivory Coast is formed by the Gulf of

Guinea, which is a part of the Atlantic Ocean. … In the west, Ivory Coast is bordered by Guinea

and Liberia. … To the north, Ivory Coast is bordered by Mali and Burkina Faso, and on the east

by Ghana" (Rotberg 11 – 12).

Small kingdoms took power across the lands that are now called the Côte d'Ivoire. In the

savannah regions, trade dominated everyone's life. Kong, "A trading center founded no later

than the 13th century, occupied by the Dyula[i] under the Ouattara dynasty in the sixteenth

century" (Mundt 93), represented the lifestyle for the majority of people living in pre-colonial

Côte d'Ivoire. Dyula, who were skilled gold and kola nut traders, lived in the northern regions of

the present-day country and achieved continent-wide success by acting as a link between the rich

forests of the south and the intricate trading routes of the Mali and Ghana empires that spread

throughout the western Sudan.

The collapse of the Mali Empire in the 16th century inspired many traders to move south

and search for new goods. The indigenous people who had already taken up residency in the

central and southern forests of the Côte d'Ivoire were displaced or forced to assimilate into the

traditional ways of the Dyula and others who spread across the area.

In the late 17th century the Asante Empire took control of much of Africa. The wars they

inflicted on neighboring communities caused a remarkable migration of Akan people into the

protection of the Côte d'Ivoire's forests. Many of these small groups came to be under the rule

of the Asante. However, after the 1750 death of the well-known Asante ruler, Asantehene

Opoku Ware, a battle for succession took place. Queen Abla Poku and her followers were forced to leave their kingdom and move to the north-central portion of today's Ivory Coast. This group is credited with founding the Baule kingdom. The Baule strongly opposed colonization, a stance that gained them African support and a lasting presence in Ivorian politics.

At the same time that the Asante Empire gained unprecedented support, during the late 17th century, the Bouna kingdom came into power. Bounkani, an immigrant from Dagomba, moved to the region in order to create another center of Islamic education. His empire was "organized into four provinces under the Bouna Massa, or king. The social structure was based on three groups: the aristocratic Dagomba, who sold slaves and taxed farming and commerce; the Kulango (and later Lobi) peasants; and Dyula merchants" (Mundt 35). This kingdom is often referenced as a strong example of African power. The Bouna kingdom "was the *chef-lieu* of an administrative district, a sub-division, a sub-prefecture at independence, and then a prefecture" (Mundt 35 – 36).

The Bouna kingdom and Kong survived and prospered until 1897 when Samory Touré successfully built his own empire. Touré was a warrior and chief from Mali who wanted to expand the Malian empire. Touré "detested what the Ivory Coast stood for. [He] felt threatened by its economic success while at the same time offended by its status as an instrument, almost of a plaything, of France" (Schwab 10). He was successful in his early attempts to retain and build his tribe but experienced conflict as a result of the increasing presence of the French in West Africa. The French wanted to keep local rulers in control of small areas while clearly demonstrating their ultimate power. After being forced to relocate his headquarters, twice, the ruler decided to fight the French. He received arms support from the Baule and requested support from Kong. When Touré learned that Kong had allied with the French he attacked and

burned the community. Touré was captured by the French on September 29, 1898 and put into exile on Gabon. He died in exile in 1900 but continued to serve as an example for all Africans. His extensive influence and radical solutions are remembered by many as a fight to preserve African life. More importantly, Touré's opinions and actions prefaced the relationship that France and French-Africa would display for years to come; reasons for war, hatred, disgust, and the defense of conflicting ideas.

The late 19th century resulted in an unexpected increase of Ivoirian residents, both Ivoirian and French. In order to continue controlling all aspects of colonial life the French switched to a semi-direct, semi-indirect system of governance. They indentified specific indigenous leaders as African governors but always held control. These rulers were only allowed to act after receiving approval from French administrators and were quickly replaced if they decided to go against French orders.

As French power in West Africa became stronger and more centralized West African rulers were fazed out of power. Ivoirians continued to lose their independence and, "In 1895 France grouped the French West African colonies of Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey (present-day Benin), Guinea, Niger, French Sudan (present-day Mali), Senegal, Upper Volta [present-day Burkina Faso], and Mauritania together and subordinated their governors to the governor of Senegal, who became governor general" (A Country Study 13). Under this political structure each colony came to be known as a *cercles*. Each had a French district commander who dealt with local issues without limitations. "Most of the inhabitants of the colonies were subjects of France with no political rights. Moreover, they were drafted for work in mines, on plantations, as porters, and on public projects" (A Country Study 14).

The French used a combination of assimilation and association to administer control over Ivoirian colonists.

> Assimilation presupposed the inherent superiority of French culture over all others, so that in practice the assimilation policy in the colonies meant extension of the French language, institutions, laws, and customs. The policy of association also affirmed the superiority of the French in the colonies, but it entailed different institutions and systems of laws for the colonizer and the colonized. (A Country Study 12)

Ivoirians experienced more pressure from assimilation than from association but sacrificed aspects of their identity for both. They were allowed to practice their culture as long as doing so did not interfere with the interests of the French.

Assimilation and association brought education and strict social constraints to the Côte d'Ivoire. However, it also brought a distinct system of social stratification. Ivoirians who were trained in French administration came to represent a new class of African elites. One aspect of Ivoirian assimilation involved granting French citizenship to "Westernized Ivoirians" (A Country Study 12). Only a few of the most elite Africans were given citizenship while most remained classified as French subjects. "This dynamic was due most likely to the increasing awareness by the French of the unlikelihood that the African peoples they were colonizing would be 'suitable` French citizens" (Ali-Dinar)

Although colonial rule was lax during 1936 and 1937, the Vichy regime quickly replaced it with a government that "was more authoritarian and racist than any before it, causing intense animosity toward colonial rule during World War II" (Mundt 10). "Ivoirians resented Vichy

policies and began to express feelings of Ivoirian nationalism" (A Country Study 16) that led to

the birth of many Communist Study Groups in French West Africa. These groups challenged

political thought and helped to educate and groom many influential Ivoirian leaders.

During French Rule

European Powers Enter the Côte d'Ivoire

In the 15th century the Portuguese began sailing the coast of West Africa in search of trading ports and new goods. These explorers became "the first modern Europeans to chart the coasts of the Ivory Coast" (Rotberg 19). A lack of sheltered harbors kept the Ivoirian people from participating in European trade but also helped to protect them against the possibility of being used as European slaves. For many years, the people living in the Côte d'Ivoire had very few direct relations with Europeans.

The French used the area as a means to protect their traders. The Côte d'Ivoire's location, along with its borders and varied resources provided the perfect African-hub for the already strong nation of France. From this spot on the Atlantic Ocean the French could branch out and meet with local chiefs while keeping a constant watch on Ghana, an area under the control of the British[ii]. Foreign settlers tried to gain the support of locals by creating community centers. "The *Compagnie de Saint-Malo* landed five French missionaries at Assinie in 1637. Europeans found the coastal area inhospitable however: three or these five died within short while, and the other two took refuge at the Dutch trading post of Axim" (Mundt 3). The French established their first permanent settlement in the current Côte d'Ivoire in 1687. This settlement was a religious mission located in Assini. In exchange for the religious group in the area, a young African prince was sent to France to be educated at the court of Louis XIV. The French king served as the godfather to the prince and then sent the boy back to Africa with two missionaries, two officers, and 30 men. This settlement remained an important tie between France and Africa.

During the 17th century ivory became an extremely desired commodity in the European world. A large population of African elephants lived in the Côte d'Ivoire; "In fact, this much-prized resource gave the region its name" (Rotberg 19). Native Ivoirians were against the slaughter of elephants and the presence of Europeans and refused to participate in the trade. European powers were not discouraged and, "by the early 18th century hunters had virtually wiped out the entire elephant population in the Ivory Coast" (Rotberg 19).

In addition, the French began to notice that the Côte d'Ivoire had a wealth of exotic and rare material goods. The French, like most Europeans in Africa, decided to take these goods as their own. "French settlers found and began cultivating cocoa, coffee, bananas, and palm oil for export back to France" (Rotberg 20).

By the end of the 1800s Europeans began to fear that their national neighbors would gain too much power in Africa and, ultimately, take land that they had already claimed as their own. They decided to hold the Berlin Conference of 1885, a meeting at which European leaders divided Africa into pockets of control, called colonies. This conference was called by France and Germany and "its principle objective was to rationalize what became known as the European scramble for colonies in Africa" (A Country Study 9). Initially, the agreement only covered coastal areas and 80 percent of Africa was left to local rule. The Brussels Conference of 1890 extended power for colonial rulers as long as they agreed to participate in civilizing missions. The two conferences did not create an international authority: "Since the Berlin and Brussels conferences set up no international authority to which France could be held accountable for her fulfillment of the civilizing mission, such theoretical contradistinctions could easily be ignored" (Mortimer 35). France was offered additional power in Africa during the League of Nations Mandate in 1919 but refused as a way to avoid submitting reports. France saw the integration of

these territories as a destructive force to their presence in French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa. They believed that "they [Cameroun and Togo] could not be legally integrated into the French Republic without damaging its indivisibility; [and that] they could not be assimilated to French Africa without jeopardizing the hoped-for assimilation of French Africa into France itself" (Mortimer 36). Therefore, France did not fully embrace power in Cameroun and Togo as it did in the Côte d'Ivoire.

During the Berlin Conference of 1885, France was given colonial rule over the Côte d'Ivoire[iii], a move that reassured the French that other European powers would not invade their African territory but an action that began the systematic destruction of the African lifestyle. By dividing Africa into colonies and creating artificial boundaries throughout the country the Berlin Conference "frequently divided members of the same ethnic group between two or more countries, or brought ethnic groups that had been traditional enemies into the same country. When they redrew the map of Africa, the Europeans gave no consideration to the needs or desires of the African people" (Rotberg 21). The Côte d'Ivoire became an official French colony in 1893. Grand Bassam[iv], a previously established French administration fort, became the official capital.

 Permanent Presence

The Côte d'Ivoire as a French colony felt strong resistance from Ivoirians. Thousands of soldiers were sent into the region to subdue local Africans. Most of the tribes they met fiercely opposed French colonization through force and many fought to the death. Samory Touré, a Maninka leader who held control over the majority of north-eastern Africa, led an impressive

resistance group against the French. It was not until the French exiled Touré to Gabon[v] and destroyed the Baoulé Empire[vi] that they gained true colonial power over the Ivoirians.

In addition, the French made their powerful presence known by forcing Ivoirians to participate in the French way of life. After establishing their administration fort in Grand Bassam, the French decided that their language would be the official language of the colonial government and, therefore, the colony: "French is the official language and is used throughout the country. … French is used in schools and commerce and is spoken more frequently by men than by women. Most publications, including government documents, are also printed in French" (A Country Study 50 - 51). Like the arbitrary boundaries set in place by the French, the eradication of Ivoirian languages also helped to destroy the African identity and build Ivoirian disdain for the French. Today, "Most Ivoirians speak two or more languages fluently, but no single African language is spoken by a majority of the population" (A Country Study 51).

Exploitation

The French, like many Europeans, saw their opportunities in Africa as a mutual exchange. They strongly believed that they had the right to exploit the goods and people of the Côte d'Ivoire as repayment for "spread[ing] 'civilization', in the sense of putting an end to tribal war, human sacrifice and the slave trade" (Mortimer 32). The French also believed that Africans owed them for their efforts to spread Christianity and trade routes.

Africans in the Côte d'Ivoire were treated as inferior peoples and used for forced labor on French plantations and work sites. They were given irrefutable assignments to construct buildings, railroads, and roads for the new colonial government. The Africans who performed these tasks were given little to no pay (Rotberg 22).

The French created a system of state obligation in which Ivoirian males were required to work without compensation for 10 days a year. This labor was always focused around the betterment of the French state. For example, Ivoirians were often used to exploit the natural resources of the Côte d'Ivoire. If Ivoirian men objected to the annual 10-day system they were given physically painful punishments to encourage their participation.

World War I

France saw West Africans as an easy and quick solution to many problems. When the European nation found itself involved in World War I (1914 – 1918), they forced Africans to fight for France. Mandatory military service "only increased their [Ivoirians] resentment when they returned home and were once again required to work for the French" (Rotberg 22). In all, "The Ivory Coast contributed 15,000 – 20,000 troops to the war effort. Their return caused social disruption, in that they readjusted poorly to rural life and moved in great numbers to new cities" (Mundt 136). In addition, the war brought shortages to those still in the Côte d'Ivoire. France demanded that most of the cotton, rubber, rice, and cocoa produced be sent to the soldiers in support of the war effort. During the war over 12,000 people[vii] fled the Côte d'Ivoire as a way to escape French rule.

World War II

"A typical colonial economy was established in the Ivory Coast between the two world wars. A keystone in the development of a transportation infrastructure was the completion of a railroad, begun from Abidjan in 1903, to open up the interior for development" (Mundt 9).

Colonial rule seemed relaxed under the 1936 – 1937 rule of the Popular Front[viii] but the ease of life quickly faded with the establishment of the Vichy regime in July, 1940.

The wake of World War I left French West-Africa in worse conditions than when the war began. Even the smallest fluctuations in French product prices managed to cause drastic and lasting effects on the plantations of the Côte d'Ivoire. In addition to price changes, new policies also began to take effect. One of the more influential policy changes had a major impact on plantation owners.

> From 1925 onwards special decrees regulated the canalization of
>
> forced labour on to private plantations. At first, both African and
>
> European planters profited from this, but from 1941 when the
>
> labour shortage became acute, the supply was reserved for
>
> Europeans; the latter moreover were paid much higher prices for
>
> their crops, as well as having priority rights to imported goods.
>
> (Mortimer 62)

Over the next few years, the French placed a heavy emphasis on the idea of increasing production; "Premiums were declared for all planters who had 25 or more contiguous hectares (about 60 acres) under cultivation. This neatly included all the European plantations, but only the 50 largest African ones" (Mortimer 62). Many African plantations were destroyed by French "Sanitation Teams" (Mortimer 62) in order to restrict African success and limit French competition. These teams would justify their actions but pretending that the plantations were infected with diseases that could ruin the country's agriculture. In addition, Ivoirians still faced the possibility of being forced into labor on a European plantation.

On January 30, 1944, four years after the French handed over their government to Nazi Germany, Charles de Gaulle, the chairman of the Free French[ix] "Committee of National Liberation," proposed the idea that "France was not defeated, he [Charles de Gaulle] based this assertion not on the hope that she would eventually be liberated by her allies, but on the existence of a French empire as yet untouched by the German attack, from which France herself could continue the struggle" (Mortimer 27). The "France" he referenced was French-Africa. The opinion that colonies were an extended portion of a mainland had always been a strong argument in favor of colonization but this concept became reality for the Free French during WWII. In fact, Brazzaville[x], the capital of French Equatorial Africa, was used as the provisional government of France for more than two years.

The Vichy regime, which was created as a way to preserve the French image while allowing Nazi Germany to rule France, forced all French colonies to declare support for their regime or for the Free French. In French West-Africa, there was a split between the loyalties of the French and that of the Ivoirians; "All the AOF [*Afrique Occidentale Française*, French West Africa] governors remained loyal to the Vichy government, [but the] Ivoirians largely favored the Free French" (A Country Study 16).

Vichy France was known for "espousing Nazi racial theories, subjected French West Africa to economic exploitation and overt racism" (A Country Study 16). African farmers were required to meet production quotas in order to send food and supplies to Vichy troops in France. Africans had already begun suffering from a lack of French imports that had become essential to their lifestyle when they realized that they would not receive compensation for their contributions to the French army. "Vichy-appointed officials and the French colonists made few distinctions among the various African socio-economic categories, [which] facilitated a sense of

unity among the wealthy planters, small farmers, the urban *évolués*, and others" (Mundt 10).

Life, for Ivoirians during World War II, was far from comfortable.

The abrupt surrender of France to the Nazis and the negative impact of the Vichy regime in the Côte d'Ivoire led to strong feelings of Ivoirians nationalism. Anti-Nazi movements and Marxism became popular concepts in the Côte d'Ivoire. "In 1943 branches of an organization known as Communist Study Groups were established in the principal cities of West Africa, including Abidjan" (A Country Study 16). Many of the Africans educated at these institutions became major post-war leaders.

Post WWII

Ivoirian economy drastically regressed by the end of World War II. The Côte d'Ivoire lost a large portion of their sea-trade and international travel (which limited political and educational endeavors). In addition, the average tonnage[xi] that each ship could carry dropped to record lows. The internal state of the colony plummeted and internal problems, such as roads and building repairs, were not addressed. The desperate conditions of the nation made it less desirable to tourists and hurt the economic market that Ivoirians depended upon heavily. The Ivoirians thought that France would quickly win the war and the conditions of living in the colonies would improve. However, four years of fighting caused the colony to fall into disrepair.

Back in France

Although many Europeans boast that Africans gained independence when Europeans realized colonies were no longer needed after World War II, it is more realistic to believe that the uprising of the British colony in America inspired them to give independence.

>The ideological belief of the right of self-determination for
>
>colonial peoples was deeply ingrained in the minds of Americans,
>
>for after all they had once been colonists themselves, and the
>
>appeal of liberating those under imperial rule had great popular
>
>sympathy in the United States, which mobilized the power and
>
>influence of America to oppose the continuation of the subjection
>
>of Africa to Europe. … The Europeans found it to be in their best
>
>interests to tolerate and even encourage the ambitions of the
>
>Africans for independence rather than risk alienating the United
>
>States, upon which they had become dependent for aid, trade,
>
>defense, and diplomacy. (Collins 6)

In addition, the African liberation movements that took place in the early 1900s also had a large

impact on the possibility of independence. Collins says that, "They [Africans] were totally

national in composition, transcending regional, ethnic, and class divisions. Workers, the

bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the peasants, and even African chiefs all came to regard

colonialism as a baneful influence upon their collective existence" (Collins 7).

In the 1930s, many French citizens (in France) realized that independence was inevitable.

They began to create reforms and policies in favor of African independence. While the British

focused on development and welfare through self-governance the French put a heavy emphasis

on economic and social changes, practically ignoring political policies (Collins 8). However, as

the World Wars came to a close, the French switched their focus from colony advancement to

local progress. The 1930s also brought economic depression to Western Europe. France, like

many colonial powers, began to take profits from African farmers and producers while

continuing to collect taxes from those in colonies. The French reduced public funding and granted large loans to the colonies; loans that were necessary for progress but which were always accompanied by additional charges.

In October 1946, French territories became a legitimate part of the French Union. All subjects became citizens but, accompanying the change, citizens were split into two distinct classes. The French-educated, high class citizens became a class with many privileges and access to exceptions. This group dominated government life and social decisions. Ivoirians without a French connection became a low-class group of plantation workers and laborers.

> By about 1960, those controlling policy in Britain, France, and
> Belgium had come to regard the possession of colonies (with a few
> strategic exceptions) as a positive hindrance to their new national
> objectives … [T]hey now hastened to liquidate the remains of their
> formal empires with the greatest speed compatible with an
> appearance of responsible trusteeship, sometimes without much
> concern about future relationships. (Collins 9)

Independence

The Beginnings of Independence

January of 1944 brought change and reform to French-Africa. Free French politicians met at the Brazzaville Conference to establish social, economic, and political reforms in Africa. The conference leaders drafted a plan to create a French Assembly that would include African representatives and more legislative voting rights for colonies. At the Brazzaville Conference the Free French "committed the French government to respect local customs, abolish the *indigénat*, adopt a new penal code, end labor conscription, improve health and educational facilities, and open positions in the colonial administration to Africans" (A Country Study 17).

The Brazzaville Conference met with good intentions but only one immediate effect was seen. In August of 1944 workers were given the right to organize. That September, a group of Ivoirian planters realized that the French and Ivoirian systems of farming were far from equal or fair. They noted the forced labor required by Europeans and the lack of help Africans received. The group formed a union, the *Syndicat Agricole Africain* (the *Syndicat* or SAA), as a way to break apart from the French-controlled *Syndicat Agricole de la Côte d'Ivoire*, and were successful in winning support and benefits from left-wing administrators[xii]. Members of the *Syndicat* were given cars and were declared exempt from forced labor. Suddenly, everyone wanted to belong to the group. The party established guidelines to make sure that only plantation workers could access the benefits of the *Syndicat*. They decided that "Anyone could join who was cultivating two hectares of coffee or three of cocoa and this meant some 20,000 people" (Mortimer 62). Members of the SAA were promised and given workers in return for a huge portion of their crops[xiii]. The successful Ivoirian harvest of 1944 and 1945 served as a

reminder to the French that forced labor was not necessary. The French viewed this achievement

as a threat against their control. French planters returned to Paris to object to the changes and

were successful in their attempts to have Governor Latrille, of the Ivoirian provisional

government, replaced with a man who shared their views, the Comte de Mauduit.

However, after the 1945 defeat of Germany and end of World War II, it was decided that

France would create a new Assembly. Elections were held to select two Ivoirian delegates for

the French Constituent Assembly[xiv]. "French citizens residing in Côte d'Ivoire elected one

delegate, and a restricted African electorate chose Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a wealthy African

planter and French-educated physician" (A Country Study 17). Houphouët-Boigny won the

election based on the fact that he was a co-founder of the *Syndicat Agricole Africain*, who held

the most financial power out of all of the African unions in 1945. However, "Various groups

came together in the *Bloc Africain*[xv] to contest the Abidjan elections, and a less stable coalition

narrowly sent Félix Houphouët to the Constituent Assembly" (Mundt 10).

Houphouët-Boigny proved himself to be a strong defender of African pride by

succeeding "in obtaining the abolition of forced labor" (Mundt 10). Houphouët returned to the

Côte d'Ivoire and created the *Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI).

October of 1946 brought more than just a union between France and French Africa, it

also brought the birth of the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA), a regional political

party that had branches in each colony. The RDA in Paris quickly associated themselves with

the French Communist Party. Such severe support brought opposition from the *Parti*

Communiste Français (PCF) in Africa. Colonial administrators in the Côte d'Ivoire worked to

create policies that would degrade the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*. Houphouët

helped to lead the group and undoubtedly, his "warm relationship with Paris allowed him to emerge as undisputed leader in the Ivory Coast" (Mundt 11).

Until the late 1950s, governors from Paris were used to exert French power in the Côte d'Ivoire through direct rule[xvi]. This government instituted divide-and-rule policies and provided education to the elite. For a while, the elite were happy with this system and believed that it would make them equals to the French. Over time, even the elite realized that assimilation would not produce equality. They became determined to achieve independence.

In the year 1956 the *loi-cadre*, a reform plan created by the French to combat universal suffrage, and a single electoral college were established in France. As the leader of a new France, DeGaulle was in full support of the *loi-cadre* and, in 1958, renamed the French Union the French Community. The *loi-cadre* created an Executive Council that included the heads of government in France and African colonies. The council was led by the French president but each colony was governed by its own cabinet.

In 1960, the Gaullist government made an offer of full independence to all colonies in the French Community. Although Houphouët and other members of the *Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire* were opposed to the idea of a break from France, he was forced to accept the offer. The Côte d'Ivoire declared independence on August 7, 1960.

"The transfer of power from the colonial rulers to the Africans, commonly known as decolonization, is not without different interpretation and controversy" (Collins 5). As in many African nations, the French left Ivoirians without the proper skills and training to run a previously colonized nation.

Post Colonial Rule

"In Côte d'Ivoire, as across Africa, national boundaries reflect the impact of colonial rule as much as present-day political reality, bringing nationalism into conflict with centuries of evolving ethnic identification" (A Country Study 49). Cultural groupings have led to the presence of more Ivoirians outside the country than inside. In addition, "The French presence in Côte d'Ivoire became even more noticeable than it was during the colonial era. The number of French residents rose from 10,000 at independence to 50,000, one of the largest French communities living outside of France" (Meredith 287). Ruling separate, distinct, and divided groups of people throughout multiple countries has always "provided a challenge to political leaders in the 1980's, as they did to the governors of the former French colony" (A Country Study 49).

Dictatorial Rulers

Félix Houphouët-Boigny

After representing Africans, specifically Ivoirians, in French matters for many years, Félix Houphouët-Boigny proved his ability to lead. "Houphouët was re-elected to the French National Assembly in 1951. In 1956 he was named mayor of Abidjan and also entered the French government at the ministerial level. In 1957 he was elected President of the Grand Council of French West Africa, as well as President of the Ivory Coast Territorial Assembly. Thus, he held office at four levels: municipal, territorial, French West Africa, and French" (Mundt 84). In 1958, he resigned from his position on the French cabinet and became Prime Minister of the Côte d'Ivoire.

The first Ivoirian Presidential elections were held in November, 1960. Houphouët-Boigny was a proud member of the Baoulé (primarily Christian) group and "has used his Baoulé identity pragmatically to pursue political goals" (A Country Study 55). Houphouët won without opposition and became the first president of the new country. He was fairly re-elected[xvii] in 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, and 1985. Houphouët-Boigny ruled until his death in 1993.

The first five years of Houphouët's leadership were characterized by a plethora of challenges. In 1963, a group attempted to overthrow his government. The group failed in their attempts and over 120 arrests and secret trials commenced. All of the people involved in the attempt to end his rule were imprisoned but on the fifth anniversary of Ivoirian independence Houphouët released three former ministers and 93 other people involved in the plot. He also reduced the life sentences of nine people involved and shortened the sentence of one other.

Houphouët was able to maintain power in the Côte d'Ivoire by using a multitude of corrupt strategies. First, he divided power between three lieutenants (August Denise, Jean Baptiste Mockey, and Philippe Yacé). By doing this, Houphouët was able to make each of the three wonder which was the favorite and, thereby, he built a constant tension among the three.

In addition, the President used his close ties to France to make sure that economic stability was not an issue. "In the first two decades after independence, Côte d'Ivoire's economic annual growth in real terms was more than 7 per cent a year, placing it among the top fifteen countries in the world" (Meredith 285). He managed remarkable economic growth by using French monetary aid, taking advantage of connections with French personnel, and by ensuring the continuation of French business investments. He would contact France for military and financial backing as well as support in fending off strong and radical neighboring countries.

"He relied on French aid, on French personnel and, above all, on French investment to secure economic prosperity" (Meredith 285).

The 1980s brought trouble for Houphouët when the world demand for Ivoirian products (sugar, coffee, cocoa, bananas, etc.) fell. Unemployment rose, protests and riots broke out, and violence swept across the nation. At this time, Houphouët was also trying to relocate the capital of the Côte d'Ivoire from Abidjan to Yamoussoukro, the village in which he was born. In his efforts to make this change he showed the world that he supported the Catholic faith: Yamoussoukro is home to not only hotels, and airport, governmental buildings, and the Presidential Palace of the Côte d'Ivoire but also to one of the largest Roman Catholic cathedrals in the world. People across the country were hurting for money and saw this drastic change of 1983 as a waste of money. The protests grew and Houphouët felt pressure from opponents.

Houphouët decided to open the elections of 1990 to more than just his political party. He faced an opponent but still managed to win 85 percent of the vote. He continued to rule as an authoritative force over the Côte d'Ivoire until he died at the age of 88 in 1993.

Houphouët's reign was described by many as a one-man dominated way of life; "You find at the head of the government a chief, Houphouët-Boigny; at the head of the elected bodies a leader, Houphouët-Boigny; at the head of the party a President, Houphouët-Boigny. … His influence is probably more extensive than that of any other West African leader" (Schwab 53).

Henri Konan Bédié

The next ruler of this Sub-Saharan country was Henri Konan Bédié. Bédié managed to win the 1995 election by preventing his opponent from running. He accomplished his goal of eliminating the competition by accusing Alassane Ouattara of not being an Ivoirian. He said that

since the man was born in a part of the Côte d'Ivoire that was once Burkina Faso (a primarily Muslim, rebel-ruled area) that the man did not have Ivoirian nationality. At this time, he began to increase the requirements for Ivoirian nationality. In 1995, "Anti-Muslim fervor was marshaled, the economy went into a tailspin, and in 1999 the military took over. Lawlessness, rioting, religious mêlées, and calamity ensued" (Schwab 10). Bédié silenced protestors by using his close ties to the existing government to send leaders of other influential groups to jail. He used his position to suppress any political activity that negatively portrayed him.

Bédié was known for continuing to support French power in the nation and for his involvement in the French National Assembly. "Henri Konan Bédié, had been a supporter and ally of Houphouët-Boigny. He was also a member of the same ethnic group (the Baoulé) and was a Christian" (Rotberg 26). In September 1998 President Bédié revised the constitution in order to increase the amount of power he held. Political rallies and opposition groups sprang up throughout the country and were only controlled through the use of military force. Many attempts were made by the French and by the government of the Côte d'Ivoire to make amends for injustices caused by military control but rebel groups kept these from having a lasting impact. Rebel groups would raid French operations and keep people from attending programs sponsored by the French.

In 1999, less than a year before the next presidential election, Bédié announced that his opponent, Alassane Ouattara, could not run in the next elections despite his attempts to prove his citizenship. The man, a popular Muslim and a well-known leader from a different ethnic group, was unfairly kept from participating in the election. Muslims in the nation of the Côte d'Ivoire were enraged and hate crimes between religious groups became popular.

Robert Gueï

In 1999, Robert Gueï conducted a coup in order to take power over the nation. He continued Bédié's hatred of Muslim's but decided to cut ties with France. He scheduled unfair elections and enforced a great number of laws to keep foreigners in check.

Gueï tried to hold power over the nation but was forced to hold the 2000 elections. Gueï attempted to rig the election but Laurent Gbagbo, a socialist, was elected. Ouattara, who ran again, was disqualified for nationality discrepancies. Gueï, Ouattara, and Gbagbo were all from opposing political groups and tension between the groups sparked the 2002 Civil War. In the end, "Hundreds of Ivoirians were killed in violence associated with the 2000 election" (Rotberg 27).

Effects of Rulers

The first major problem of the Côte d'Ivoire that can be linked back to the French is unfair and authoritative ruling. From before colonization all the way to the Civil War of 2002, the French government played a large part in the encouragement of policies and laws that constantly sparked further problems. Even to this day, the political systems that have control in this country are non-sustainable and usually, have long-lasting negative effects.

Overall, these rulers have supported the injustices of the Ivory Coast with high taxes on imports and exports, limitations on the work force, and unmanageable stratifications between workers and those who work for the government. The first two rulers funded their programs and changes with French money and ensured the continuation of their "peaceful" ruling with French support.

Without the French, the Ivoirians might not have had such a strong tie to the Roman Catholic faith. This distinction would have kept them from having many of the problems that are linked to both Muslim groups and Catholic groups in the nation. In addition, the economic crash that hit the nation in the 1980s reflects the dependency that Ivoirians continued to have on the French after gaining their independence. Without the constant demands of France, the Ivoirians dropped into a period of existence that they were not able to manage because they were not involved in the production of the problems and, therefore, did not know how to compensate for or reverse the issues.

Social Issues

Religious and Ethnic Distinctions

Another major problem caused by the French in the Côte d'Ivoire is disputes caused by social differences. One major division includes religious and ethnic disputes in the nation. According to the CIA World Factbook, the Côte d'Ivoire is comprised of 38.6% Muslims, 32.6% Christians, 11.9% belonging to indigenous religions, and 16.7% without a defined religion. However, it is important to note that "a preponderance of the migratory workers (70%) are Muslims" (Mimiko 193). The Catholic faith in this country has always had strong ties to the French. Its supporters tend to live on the coastline and in more urban areas of the nation. Muslims tend to live in the northern areas of the Côte d'Ivoire and relate more with other north-Africans. Typically, these groups are also represented by opposing political groups.

Many authors have recorded a lack of success in the Ivory Coast as a result of social divisions that cause pockets of loyalists and destroy the possibilities of successfully holding elections or government hearings. One such example of these problems is the anti-Muslim

movement supported by the government during the 1980's. Femi N.O. Mimiko has attributed Ivoirian failure with nation-building to differences between these loyalist pockets. He described the problems by saying, "The service of a strong state is required to bring together the pockets of loyalists into a single whole thus facilitating the crucial purpose of nation-building" (191). Another important division was clearly seen during the September 1999 presidential elections. In this election, President Henri Konan Bédié ran against his opponent, Alassane D. Ouattara. The election unfolded a slew of problems between Muslims and Christians. Bédié supported the idea of a race of pure "Ivoirite"'s while Ouattara rooted his political ideologies in Muslim principles. In 2000 Ouattara was unjustly removed from the presidential elections. This act caused a new wave of uprisings in the nation.

Loyalist groups remained active during the next few years but were not as violent as in years past. During the Civil War of 2002 these groups became more than political entities and instigated up-risings. Fighting along the western border became so bad that many people in the area fled their homes in search of safety in Guinea. The New York Amsterdam News reported that between September 27 and December 17, 2002, "about 2,000 Ivoirians, 1,118 Malians, 1,100 Liberians, 786 Burkinabe, 286 Niger nationals and 73 Senegalese" (The New York Amsterdam News) left the Côte d'Ivoire.

The breakout of actual warfare is best summarized by Michael Peel, a British journalist who visited the Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 on a mission for the *New Republic*. He wrote:

> The anger at France is hardly the main story here, and the recent
> Western media coverage of white foreigners fleeing Cite d'Ivoire,
> formerly the region's most stable state, is actually just a sideshow.
> In September 2002, rebels in the Ivorian army launched a coup

against the nation's president, Laurent Gbagbo. When that failed,

they took over the northern part of the country, sparking a war that

was halted last year by a French-brokered peace agreement. Now

that agreement is failing, violence is erupting again, and the real

danger is that the country could be heading toward pogroms

against opponents of the regime and those not deemed sufficiently

Ivorian. This is all the more dangerous because of Cite d'Ivoire's

history as a nation built on immigrant labor. Unless the world acts,

the country's millions of immigrants may now be in grave danger.

(Michael Peel)

With the presence of the French came a system of government very foreign to the

Ivoirians. Power, suddenly became centralized and concentrated in the south of the country.

"The politics of exclusion that is a natural follow-up of centralization, bad enough on its own,

was also badly delivered, giving rise to feelings of ethno-regional, and religious persecution and

marginalization" (Mimiko 193).

The Côte d'Ivoire consists of just over 21 million people today (CIA World Factbook).

However, right before the Civil War of 2002, the country had an estimated 16 million people

living within its borders. Of these, 42.1% were Akan and the rest were group less than half its

size (Gur – 17.6%; Northern Mandes – 16.5%; Krous – 11.0%; Southern Mandes – 10.0%, and

others – 2.8%) (Mimiko 193).

Mimiko, like many authors, blames ethnic divisions on the borders created during the

Berlin Conference. He says, "Many ethnic groups ended up being bifurcated between two or

more colonial powers. This is the critical basis of the diffusion in ethnic composition among

post-colonial African states" (Mimiko 193). These divisions have also led to changing identities, as can be seen through the Akan that live along the border of the Côte d'Ivoire (French) and Ghana (British), which cause state-to-state ethnic issues.

As the Côte d'Ivoire expanded under the power of Houphouët-Boigny, many immigrants entered the country. Houphouët had an extremely liberal immigration policy and was known to recruit Francophones from other West-African nations for high-ranking positions in his own. He created special laws and citizenship requirements in order to protect these French-influenced pockets of foreigners. The actions of Houphouët enraged Ivoirians who would have liked to have bettered themselves before giving careers to others. However, Houphouët's plan turned the Côte d'Ivoire into an international hub and economic pocket of success. In comparison to the nations surrounding the Côte d'Ivoire, it excelled in human capital and GDP as opposed to unskilled labor force. Many of these workers fled to the nation in search of jobs. They have come to control the bulk of the agriculture in the Côte d'Ivoire. These less-educated individuals found jobs working in cocoa, coffee, and palm oil fields.

French-African Education

Another big issue that has separated people into stratified class systems was the introduction of French education into the Ivory Coast. The French decided to use missionaries to educate people but they only did so in French. If people lacked the time needed to learn the French language or the monetary funds required in order to provide for a family while still educating a youth they had no hope of accessing high education.

Over time, the educated group became a middle class of people distinctly hovering between the French and the uneducated Africans. Theses Africans gained "good" employment

(government positions, educators, plantation managers, etc.) and worked as high-ranking directors. They learned to control systems and were regarded as a group who could relate more closely to the French than to Africans.

As the French moved out of the Ivory Coast they left the educated and employed as a group of rulers who reflected their image (spoke French, were educated in a French manner and based teachings on French history, etc.). Tension between the educated class of African elites and the people who were under the control of this new group sparked riots and oppositions.

Most importantly, people without the means to access education could not represent themselves in the government and the ruling class remained heavily rooted in French principles. The cycle still continues as the presence of French-inspired education limits the freedom of Ivoirians.

In 1969, tensions between students and the *Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI) sparked protests by university students. Many students who had spent time studying in France "rejected the PDCI's ideological movement away from socialism that had begun in 1950. They rejected what they perceived as the regime's neocolonial policies vis-à-vis France" (A Country Study 27). That May a student group, *Mouvement des Etudiants et Elèves de Côte d'Ivoire* (MEECI), presented demands to their government. They called for educational reforms at the Abidjan University and held a strike. Of the 150 students who participated, every Ivoirian was arrested, all foreigners were expelled, and the university was closed for two weeks.

Other frustrated groups, especially the *sans-travail* and other college students, came together to support the MEECI. Hostilities between the educated in the Côte d'Ivoire and the Ivoirian government continued to grow.

Negative Impact

The Civil War of 2002 was fueled by northern rebel groups and southern loyalists. These problems stemmed from the heavy French influences that were instilled in West African life and the large number of Christians who were converted by French missionaries. Without a Muslim-Christian divide through the middle of the country, Ivoirians would not have created the anti-Muslim laws that limited the government and sparked unrest.

Without the presence of the French, loyalist groups would not have developed ties to the European country and would have focused their political organizations more on politics than on religious beliefs and loyalties. In addition, the presence of French missionaries needs to be blamed for the large number of southern Ivoirians supporting the French mindset. In places such as Abidjan and Yamoussoukro, French has had such a powerful influence (in education, business, development & planning, and culture) that it has caused Ivoirians to forget the similarities with others that they could once see. Clearly, the nation has gone from being filled with distinct but peaceful tribes to a land filled with two opposing religious groups.

The ethnic issues in the Côte d'Ivoire can be traced back to the French in Berlin Conference (1884 – 1885). Without the orders that were forced upon Africa, ethnic groups would have been able to move as a group and evolve or change together. However, the strict divisions that were enforced and a new "French identity" caused ethnic issues both internally and across nation-states. In addition, the struggle of Houphouët-Boigny to create a Francophone state including people from across West-Africa also led to ethnic problems. He encouraged the growth of the Catholic religion, made it nearly impossible for those without knowledge of the French language to work in the south, and limited the number of agricultural jobs Ivoirians could have by freely allowing immigrants into the country.

In addition, the French educational system produced a group of Ivoirian elites. This process continues to cause tension between the two cultures. "The curriculum of both primary and secondary schools is based on French schools, and the language of instruction is French" (Rotberg 55). The elite of the Côte d'Ivoire often opt to send their children to universities abroad. By continuing the support of the French system of education the Ivoirians have sacrificed their unique history, languages, and unity.

These underlying social factors have had a major influence on the formation of Ivoirian political parties, unrest, and the 2002 Civil War.

Economy, Trade, and Plantation Issues

The next major issue facing the Côte d'Ivoire is the economy, trade, and plantation problems caused by ties to the French. These problems are rooted in French interference and can be clearly traced to Arthur Verdier's coffee growing plantations and techniques. Verdier, "A French naval officer turned business-man, established the Compagnie de Kong, a private trading company in the 1860s" (Mundt 133). His business monopolized European establishments in the area and stopped the British from extending their power into the Côte d'Ivoire.

This French citizen provided a new way of life and a new group of problems for Ivoirians from the late 18th century onward. He influenced the native Africans by making them dependant on a sole industry, based on coffee, and cocoa, which forced people to rely on plantations for mass production. From this point forward the Cote d'Ivoire has become extremely dependent upon cocoa and coffee bean production.

In the late 1960s a wave of unskilled Africans entered the Côte d'Ivoire to work on plantations. Their cheap labor was endorsed by the Ivoirian government and led to tensions

between unemployed citizens and employed foreigners. In September and October of 1969 violence reached a new level and massive attacks on Mossi (mostly from Upper Volta) workers happened in Abidjan. The success of this industry also made the demand for slave labor rise. Today many people, especially children, are being taken and forced to work in the fields.

Agriculture continued to grow until 1980. As land became more and more cultivated, the importance of and dependence on agriculture increased. "Cocoa production grew from 204,000 tons in 1960 to nearly 300,000 tons in 1980; coffee production doubled. Food production also increased, at an average rate of 4 per cent a year, a higher rate than population growth" (Meredith 287). During this twenty year span, the agricultural production of the Côte d'Ivoire tripled and the country became Africa's largest producer of cocoa and a major power in the exportation of pineapples, bananas, palm oil, and hardwood.

As agriculture grew, an increase in limitations and a distinct division of power became clearer. Prosperous exporting resulted in large sums of money for the government who supported it. Houphouët-Boigny once bragged about the billions of francs he had earned through the pineapple business. In fact, "a French investigation disclosed that he kept at least one-tenth of the country's cocoa export revenues in his personal bank account for distribution to his cronies and supporters" (Meredith 288).

In 1969, enraged Ivoirians who found themselves unemployed (*sans-travail*'s) began to protest against the government. They wanted the president to re-establish low-level jobs strictly for Ivoirians (Ivoirianization). Houphouët had approximately 1,600 demonstrators arrested. This action inspired the *sans-travail* to resent their government and foreign workers.

In 1978 the price of coffee, bananas, and cocoa dropped drastically. From 1979 to 1980 the state revenue receded by more than $1 billion. The year 1980 marked the first time in history

that the Côte d'Ivoire had an adverse trade balance and balance of payments. "The flaw in the model came to be seen some years later. As French investments receded in the 1980s, and as the anti-Muslim policies of the Christian-dominated political elites became more pronounced and more rancorous, the economy and political order began to crack" (Schwab 10). In addition, the French took advantage of trade with Ivoirians by selling their goods to Africans at extremely high rates. Debt rose and crime spread. The population continued to grow and poverty reached a new level.

In addition, the business sector of trade continues to suffer from problems that arose when the French left the Africans to learn and trade without training or assistance (such as hidden costs, trafficking, technological changes, etc.). "The French colonial system introduced modern technology and economic development" (A Country Study 4), but did not provide locals with the skills needed to manage them. This forced-dependency helped establish a secure economic tie between the French and the Ivoirians. When the French decided to reduce trade routes with the Côte d'Ivoire many European foreigners also stopped visiting the country. Tourism had been a major way that the Côte d'Ivoire earned money and, without its continuous presence, the country's GDP dropped.

After independence, major cities began to grow. "Abidjan and its growing economic status as the administrative center of the country consequently attracted even more French private investment and personnel" (A Country Study 26)

Harmful Consequences

As the Côte d'Ivoire quickly gained economic wealth, their nation became filled with the negative presence of urbanization, unemployment, and civil conflict.

Although the Ivory Coast demonstrated a small improvement in gross national income directly after gaining independence in 1960, it all fell apart as soon as the leaders who had close ties to France were removed. At this point (the early 1990's), the country began to plummet into a state of unbearable taxes and economic decline.

These unavoidable problems in economic life were the final spark in igniting the Ivoirian Civil War of 2002.

The Ivoirian Civil War of 2002

In March, 2002, a faulty political system and series of deprived living situations encouraged the mass riots, huge numbers of deaths / casualties, and fighting that we now refer to as the Ivoirian Civil War of 2002. "Once a proud island of stability and economic growth, over the past decade [1997 – 2007] the country has descended into a toxic mix of civil conflict, violent xenophobia, and political stalemate – with youth as major actors throughout" (Lyman and Dorff 78).

After the unfair disqualification of Laurent Gbagbo in the presidential elections, huge numbers of people stormed the Presidential Palace and forced the self-proclaimed winner, General Gueï, to flee his post. Gbagbo was deemed the new president. Soon after, Ouattara's supporters demanded a re-election (Ouattara had also been unfairly disqualified and they did not want Gbagbo take power without an election).

By September, the conflict had become a separation of forces, with groups of unhappy, Northern, Muslim rebels (who felt that the government was not representing them), known as the New Forces, and the governmental groups of the south. In a matter of days, hundreds of people

were killed and in a few months thousands were proclaimed victims of the civil war. Finally, Ouattara acknowledged the new government and the fighting settled.

In January 2003, Gbagbo attempted to solve the problem by meeting with heads of the rebel groups in Paris to form a truce. The group came to an agreement and a new government, one with leaders from all the country's factions, was established. However, by September of the same year, Gbagbo had started to reassert his power and the rebel leaders removed themselves from the government. The Ivoirian national army threatened to initiate war if the rebels turned to acts of violence.

In February 2004, in an attempt to prevent another major war, the United Nations decided to send 6,500 peacekeeping troops to the Côte d'Ivoire. These international troops joined the 4,000 French troops already stationed in the African nation. The primary mission of these troops was to disarm both the rebel and the national Ivoirian army.

Connections to France

Gbagbo's peace strategy meeting, which was held in Paris, further exaggerated the Ivoirian view that France would always have some control over the well-being of the Côte d'Ivoire. After the crash of Gbagbo's temporary government, the French came back into play as a major peacekeeping force in the country.

The Ivoirian Civil War of 2002 is the ultimate marker of the negative effects of French colonization in their nation. Without the presence of the French the issues that sparked political, social, and economic problems would not have existed.

Conclusion

Present Day Developments

On October 31, 2010, the first round of the latest Ivoirian Presidential Election was held. This round ruled that the two candidates eligible to run would be Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara. On November 28, the second round of the election took place. The results were delayed for many weeks but, finally, on December 2, 2010, the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) announced that Ouattara had won the vote. However, on December 3, the Constitutional Council declared Gbagbo the winner.

The head of the Constitutional Council and a close friend of Gbagbo, Paul Yao N'Dre, said that since the CEI missed their deadline for providing results (December 1, 2010 by midnight), that the Constitutional Council had the right to step in and appoint a candidate to power. He told reporters, "From that moment [December 1 at midnight], the CEI [Independent Electoral Commission] is not in a position to announce anything" (Radio France Internationale (RFI)).

Saturday, December 4, 2010 was a historic-first for the Côte d'Ivoire. Both Gbagbo and Ouattara, each backed by different electoral bodies, were sworn into the position of Ivoirian President. Immediately following Gbagbo's ceremony, Ouattara's supporters entered Abidjan and began to demonstrate their opposition. They set fire to several trees and created wooden barricades throughout the streets of Abidjan.

"The United Nations, European Union, and United States have all urged Gbagbo to accept the result and make way for his rival" (Radio France Internationale (RFI)) but Gbagbo refuses. Former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, was flown to the Côte d'Ivoire to act as

an African Union mediator. Despite pressure from the international world, "Gbagbo said that he would not allow interference from other countries in Ivoirian affairs" (Dixon).

CNN reported that, "The U.N. advocacy director for Human Rights Watch, Philippe Bolopion, called on the Security Council to 'put Gbagbo on notice that he will be held personally accountable if he allows the kind of gross abuses that have characterized past crack-downs of his security forces against political opponents'" (CNN). On December 2, 2010 at 8pm, in an attempt to keep violence limited, the Ivoirian army closed all borders (land, sea, and air) and blocked all international media broadcasts.

   Possibilities

       Today, the Côte d'Ivoire continues to struggle for peace. France, the European power that "helped" the nation, can clearly be connected to the major faults that have caused authoritative ruling, social stratifications, religious hate-crimes, limited education, economic dependency and depression, and civil war in the Côte d'Ivoire.

       With the recent release of the controversial election results, many analysts and world leaders wonder if the country will slip back into civil unrest. If colonization had not introduced Christianity, an elite class, and international economic dependencies, the nation could remain a peaceful, tribal area. Each group would continue to provide for and govern their own people and "nationality" issues would not exist.

       Without the presence of this colonizing nation, what would the world be like today? We will never know. However, we do know that without the interference and reinforced power of the French in this African country – to this day – that the Côte d'Ivoire would not have a fraction of the major problems they now identify as their most extreme hardships.
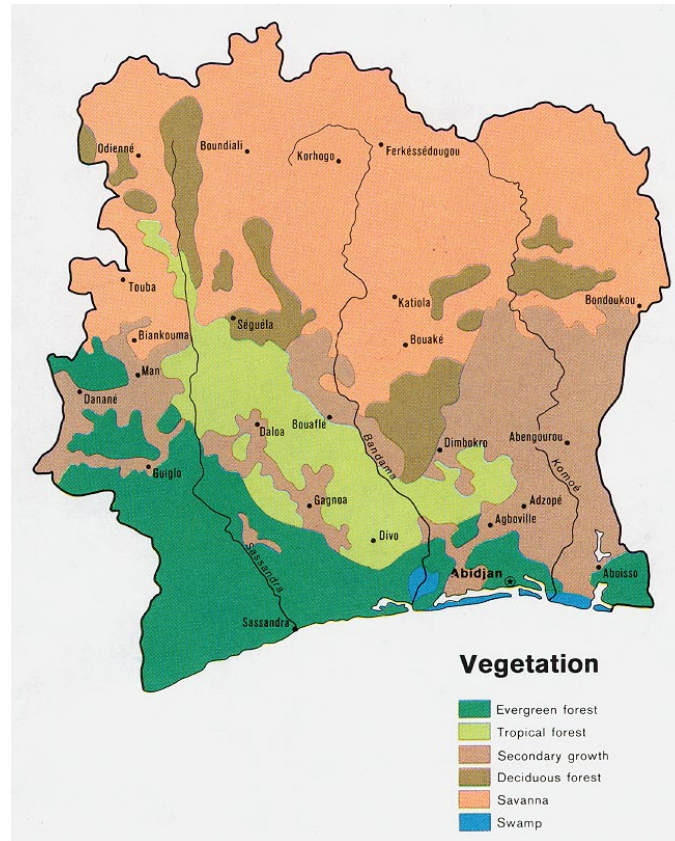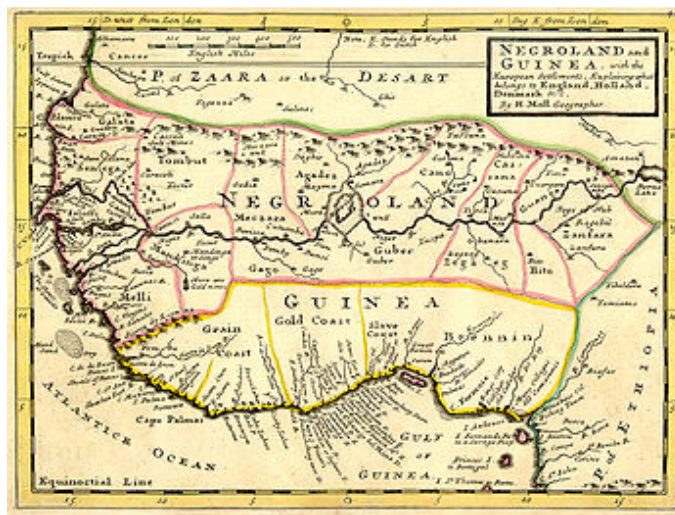
Appendix

Present Day Africa

Source: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iv.html
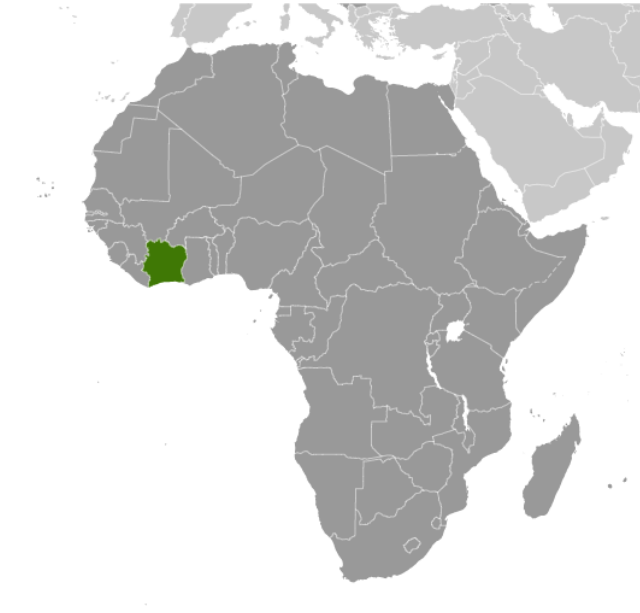
Political Map of the Côte d'Ivoire

Source: http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/Ivorycoast/IvoryCoast.htm

Major Regional Biotic Characteristics (see key)

Source: http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/Ivorycoast/IvoryCoast.htm

Pre-Colonized Borders of North-West Africa

Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/derami/with/287840559/

The Changing Presence of Europeans in Africa (1885 - Present)

Source: http://www2.volstate.edu/kbell/Figures/BerCon2.gif
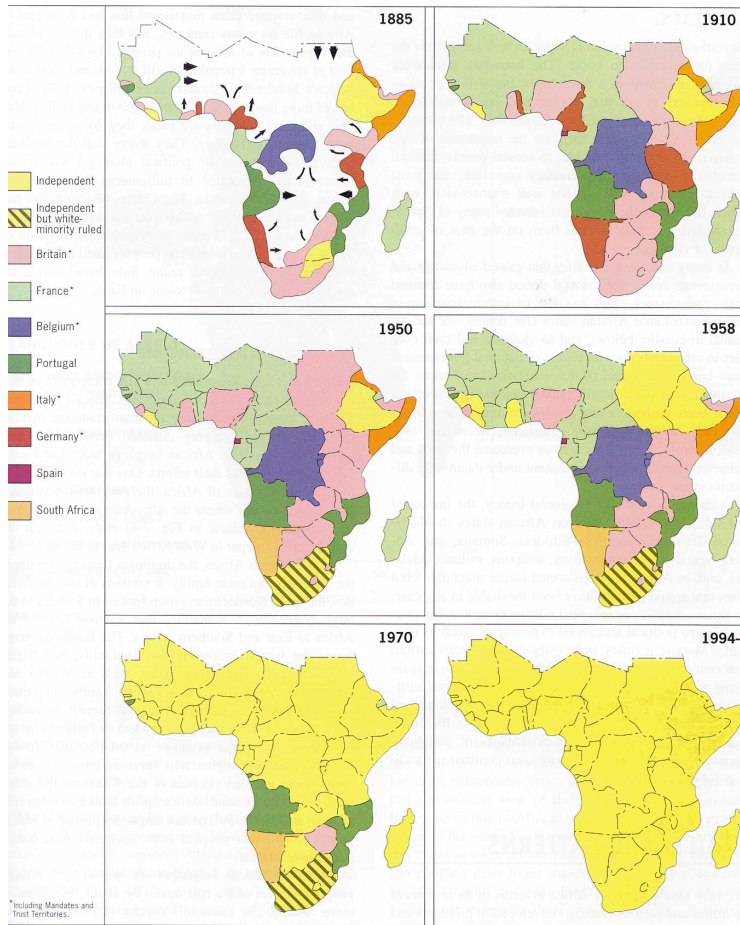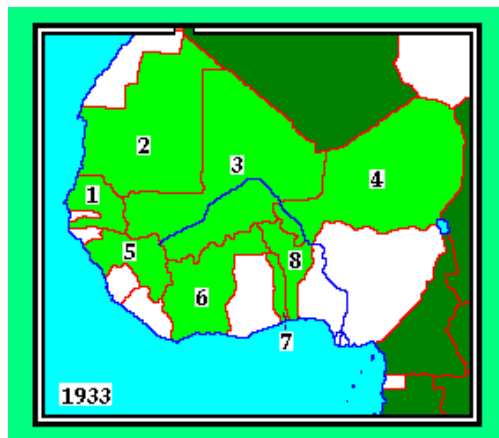
French West Africa at its Peak (1933)

Source: http://www.zum.de/whkmla/histatlas/westafrica/frwestafrica1933large.gif

Major Political Parties

Source: http://www.electoralgeography.com/new/en/countries/c/cote-d-ivoire/cote-divoire-presidential-election-2010.html
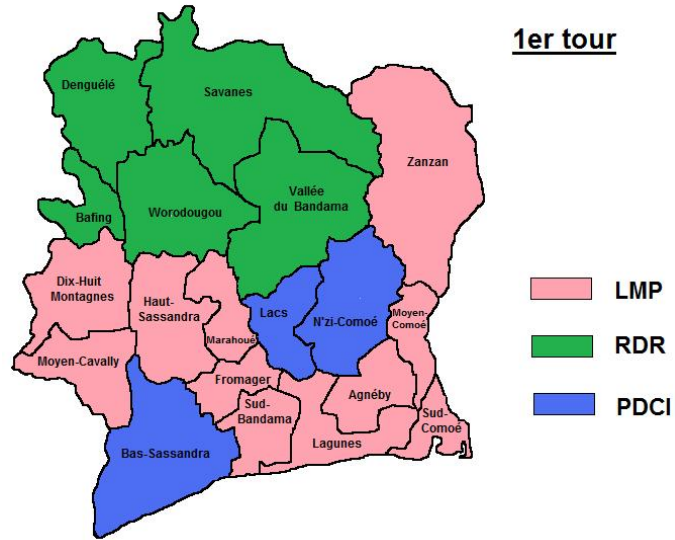
Civil War Divides (Northern "New Forces" and Southern "Governmental Forces")

Source : http://michael-niemann.com/blog/2010/02/22/some-background-on-the-ivorian-crisis/

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Notes

[i] "The Dyula are Islamic and are mostly traders; in pre-colonial times they had commercial networks from Senegal to Nigeria and from Timbuktu to the Northern Ivory Coast. … Because of their prominence in trade, the Dyula language is the common language of commerce in much of North West Africa and is a second language for a large proportion of the Ivoirian population" (Mundt 59).

[ii] The British were considered an opponent and rival of the French throughout the time that both held power in Africa.

[iii] Although Portugal had power over most of coastal West-Africa, France was given the Côte d'Ivoire because of their strong presence in Senegal.

[iv] Grand Bassam was a French fort that was strategically placed very close to the English colony of Ghana.

[v] Samory Touré was captured and sent into exile in 1898.

[vi] The Baoulé Empire officially fell in 1917.

[vii] Primarily, Anyi people fled to the Gold Coast.

[viii] The Popular Front was a left-wing, communist group in France.

[ix] The Free French were a group of French fighters, led by Charles de Gaulle who fought against the Axis powers in World War II. They relocated to North Africa in 1940, just after France was occupied by the Germans and the Vichy regime came into power.

[x] Brazzaville is present day Congo.

[xi] Tonnage is a measure of the cargo carrying capacity of a ship.

[xii] These left-wing administrators were appointed by the French Provisional Government.

[xiii] Africans produced four times the goods that Europeans contributed.

[xiv] Assembly included 600 representatives, 63 of which spoke for African colonies. All 63 African delegates were part of the educated elite and fought for liberal reforms in French-Africa.

[xv] "Ivoirian electoral list formed to contest a French settler slate in the Abidjan municipal elections of 1945. The African Bloc managed to attract the large majority of African voters … and won the election. Afterward, in the absence of a common program, the loosely knit organization disbanded" (Mundt 19).

xvi A system of government in which a central power, in this case the French, controls the states or provinces.

xvii Houphouët was elected through a democratic vote. Unlike later elections in the Côte d'Ivoire, this election was open to opposition from the masses. However, no one decided to run against Houphouët-Boigny during his 33 years as president.