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An assessment of impact of neglect of history on political stability in African countries: The case of Cote d'Ivoire

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African countries had been engulfed in political crises soon after they regained independence from their respective European colonial masters. Almost all the conflicts witnessed in post-independence Africa were blamed on the former colonial Powers. This article argued that rather than blaming the West for political instability, African political leaders should be blamed for neglecting the discipline of history that should have guided them to enact laws and formulate policies that would play down on negative ethnic differences. African countries went adrift because of neglect of history or refusal to learn from the lesson of history. The paper used Cote d'Ivoire as a case study. In order to go into the distant past, a descriptive historical analysis method was adopted to interrogate relevant sources of information about Cote d'Ivoire. The paper argued against the claim that France instigated the political crises in that country. Rather, the article submitted that the political crises originated from the claims by political leaders that some persons were "aborigines"/ "true Ivoirians", and others "settlers" or "non- citizens" of Ivory Coast. The article revealed that almost all the ethnic groups in Ivory Coast migrated from various parts of West Africa into the country. Using the case of Alassane Ouattara to illustrate the problem of national identity, the article submitted that people whose forebears had lived in the present-day Ivory Coast, since about 600 hundred years ago should not be denied the universally recognised political and nationality rights. The article finally called on African leaders to borrow a leaf from other countries of the world such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and Malaysia that had been managing their citizenship issue without fighting civil wars.

Key words: History, migration, settlement, citizenship, aborigines.

INTRODUCTION

A few years after independence, many African countries went through political turmoil that threatened their existence. There were sit- tight syndromes, coups and counter- coups. The continent did not only suffer political

instability, but also economic recession. Africans blamed their woes on the West, particularly the former European powers that colonised the continent. In this paper, it would be argued that African countries had the problem

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of political instability because the leaders did not make use of history in the judiciary, politics and governance of their respective countries. Ivory Coast otherwise referred to as Cote d' Ivoire, was one of such countries. In recent times, Ivory Coast had been facing protracted political crises. It was a known fact that during the late President Felix Houphouet- Boigny's 33 years rule (1960-1993), Ivory Coast was the most stable polity in the West African sub-region. It had a robust economy based on agriculture. However, shortly after Houphouet- Boigny's death in 1993, the political and economic situations changed for the worse (*The Nation* April 12, 2011:3). The world cocoa producer fought civil war in 2002 to 2007. The country appeared to be virtually divided into two, based on ethnic line of north (Muslim) and south (Christian) (*Tell Magazine* December 27,2010:20-26). It went through post- presidential election crisis in November 2010- April 2011. The main contenders were the opposition leader, Alassane Ouattara, a northern Muslim and the then incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo, a southern Christian. Although Alassane Ouattara had been recognized by the international community (*Daily Sun* December 8, 2010:15), Gbagbo refused to hand over power to Alassane Ouattara¹. Ivory Coast was one of the African States that experienced internal displacements that were primarily conflict-induced (Biegon and Swart 2009/2010:21).

Some Ivorian political leaders and youth activists blamed "foreign powers" (*Newswatch* January 17, 2005:23), particularly the French for the crises in Ivory Coast. The immediate past Prime Minister of Ivory Coast, Pascal Affi N'Guessan who was the President of Gbagbo's party, Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) and spokesperson to Gbagbo, told the Press in December 2010 that the real problem of this crisis was the desire of foreign powers, particularly France, to dominate Ivory Coast. They said France wanted to use Ouattara, as "a puppet in their hands" to continue to "manipulate the same policy" of domination (*Newswatch* January 17,2005: 23).

This article would reject the claim that the political crises in Ivory Coast were caused chiefly by France or any foreign power. Such claim follows Rodney's thesis of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Rodney 1972:7-316), which had become the traditional way of Africans blaming the West for their economic and political woes. This thesis was debunked by Igwe's (2010) *How Africa Underdeveloped Africa*. The central argument in the present Article would be that the neglect of history, especially by the southern Ivoirian political leaders had misled them to introduce discriminatory terms and constitutionalised nationality clause that denied the northern Ivoirians the right to become the president of the country. It is believed that the 2010 political crisis came as a result of the nationality clause which was used against Alassane Ouattara, a northern Ivorian Muslim who won the 2010 presidential election but the then outgoing

President Gbagbo refused to hand over power to him, a situation that warranted the intervention of the international community. Ivorian political crises could be said to be based on the question of who was an aborigine/true Ivorian and who was not.

Split into ten sections, this article would first examine migrations and the peopling of Ivory Coast (section 1) immediately after discussing the concept of history upon which the study would be based. Section three to section eight would be discussing other factors that led to the political crisis. The travail Alassane Ouattara went through would be recounted as a case study of denial of political right in section nine, the paper ending with summary, conclusions and recommendations in section ten.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: USEFULNESS OF HISTORY

This article is built on the concept of history, its meaning, its usefulness and the likely consequences of ignoring it. According to Collingwood (1950: 9) history is a kind of research or inquiry. History is the science of *res gestae*: That is, a research or an inquiry into the actions of human beings that have been done in the past, the forms of thought whereby one asks questions and tries to answer them (Collingwood, 1950:9). However, history is not about the past alone, because according to Carr (1961:30), history is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past. To Croce (Cited in Carr, 1961: 21) history consists essentially in seeing the past through the eye of the present and in the light of its problem. The task of the historian is to not only record but also more importantly, to evaluate the past, comparing with the present and projecting into the future. No wonder Barraclough (1955:29-30) saw history as the attempt to discover on the basis of fragmentary evidence the significant things about the past. In this sense, history is "a series of accepted judgments." Thus, as the renowned German historian, Leopold Von Ranke puts it, "to history has been assigned the office of judging the past, of instructing the present for the benefit of future ages" (cited in Carr, 1961: 21).

In spite of "history being the supreme discipline that trains dynasties" (Carr, 1961: 10), some rulers and potential rulers in Europe treated history and historians with disdain. The Duke of Cumberland is reported to have accused historian Edward Gibbson of being "at the old trade again – scribble, scribble, scribble" (cited in Marwick, 1979: 10). To Philip Bagby, the writing of history is "a semi-rational activity" (cited in Marwick, 1979: 10). Henry Ford is quoted to have said, "history is bunk" (cited in Marwick, 1979:22), that is senseless or purposeless talk.

Despite the criticisms, the usefulness of history is overwhelming not only for an individual but also an

indispensable tool for nation building. It is only through the knowledge of history that a society can have knowledge of itself. As Professor Collingwood put in, "history is for human self-knowledge" (Collingwood, 1950:10). In the words of Arthur Marwick, "history is the necessary recollection (and evaluation) of the past activities of men and the society to orientate themselves amid the bewildering currents of human diversity." In his *The New Nature of History*, Marwick (2001: 31-32) asserted that history is a *necessity* and that "[i]ndividuals, communities, societies could scarcely exist if all knowledge of the past was wiped out." Marwick likened a community memory to that of an individual. As individuals without memory find great difficulty in relating to others, in finding their bearings, in taking intelligent decisions so is a society without history. History is for pleasure, for training the mind, and for practical guide to solving problems of human society. "It familiarizes us with variation in social forms, and cures us of a morbid dread of change" (Langlois and Seignobos, 1966, cited in Marwick, 1979:17).

If society needs to know and understand its past, it must certainly need history, so also must its leaders and administrators. Moreover, as Levi-Strauss (cited in Marwick, 1979:18) rightly observed, "[t]hose who ignore history condemn themselves to not knowing the present because historical developments alone permit us to weigh and to evacuate in their respective relation the element of the present."

The consequence of ignoring history would be disastrous. Any nation that ignored history certainly went adrift, because as Marwick (1979:13) rightly observed, "As a man without memory and self knowledge is a man adrift, so a society without memory and self knowledge would be a society adrift". In his *The New Nature of History*, Marwick (2001:32) re-emphasized the importance of history to human societies when he said, "[i]t is only through a sense of history that communities establish their identity, orientate themselves, understand their relationship to the past and to other communities and societies. Thus, [w]ithout history (*knowledge of the past*), we and our communities would be utterly adrift on an endless and featureless sea of time." History is indeed "a teacher of life", teaching those who cared to learn be he a king or subject, a nation or individual, rich or poor so that he/she or it would not remain a child forever. For as the Greek Philosopher, Cicero, once said, "Not to know what took place before you were born is to remain forever a child" (cited in Marwick, 1979:13). Evidence of a nation remaining a child would include political instability, discriminatory constitutional clauses, economic underdevelopment, religious strife and ethnic conflict, because the people of that nation had either forgotten their history or they had at all not learned from the lesson of history (including histories of migration and settlement, occupations, institutions, war, natural disaster, external influence, etc.).

Immigrations and the peopling of Ivory Coast

This section seeks to show the various groups, including Alassane Ouattara's ethnic group that migrated from their original homeland and settled in Ivory Coast. The groups to be discussed are the Akan and Gyaaman, Boule and Anyi, Kru and Bete, Kankan Senoufo, Mankono, Mossi, Macina, Malian and Burkinabes. Since about the 13th century people had been migrating from various parts of West Africa and settled in the present-day Ivory Coast (Trimingham, 1962:142). Historical notice must be taken of certain place-names and ancient kingdoms like Akan, Fante, Baoule, Anyi, Sanwi, Kru, and Kua-Kua, Bettie, Moronou, Senoufo, Mankono, Kadioha, Bong, Gyaaman, Kong, Mossi, Dafina, Bobo, Kankan, Gonja, Assinie, Dioula, and Macina. As will be shown in this section, these places are very important in this discussion, at least for two reasons: First, people migrated from some of the places into the present-day Ivory Coast since about five centuries ago. Second, some of the kingdoms and chiefdoms in Ivory Coast were founded by these immigrants. There is a need, therefore, to discuss some of these places with a view to linking them to their founders and people of modern Ivory Coast.

The Akan and Gyaaman

The Akan is one of the immigrant ethnic groups in Ivory Coast. It originated from Old Ghana, and spread to not only Ivory Coast, but also almost the entire West African sub-region (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akan-people>). With 20 million members, the Akan are one of the biggest ethnic groups in both Ghana and Ivory Coast. Historically, prior to its colonization by the French, Ivory Coast was home to several pre-colonial West African states, including Gyaaman, the Kong Empire, and the Booule, Anyi and Sanwi kingdoms (Muhammad, 1983:242-258). "Various West Africa empires occupied the present day Cote d'Ivoire before European colonization" (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). Gyaaman, also spelt Jamang (1450-1895) was a medieval African state of Akan people, located in what is now Ghana and Ivory Coast. In the 19th century Gyaaman was subjugated by the Ashanti, though it briefly regained its independence following the Ashanti's defeat by the British (Muhammad 248).

Akan sub-groups include Ashanti, Akyem, Akwamu, Anyi, Baoule, Ndyuka people "and other peoples of both modern day Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire or of origin in these countries" (Muhammad, 248). In the region that is now Ivory Coast, the Akan did not form empires like the Asante of Ghana (Muhammad 248). On 6th March, 1957, by efforts of Kwame Nkrumah, Akan lands in West Africa including those in Ivory Coast, rejected British rule, and were joined with British Togoland to form the independent nation of Ghana. When Ghana became independent on

7th August, 1957, some of the Akan groups moved to join Ivory Coast (Muhammad 248). Ghana's *Origin of African Identity*² has through research on histories of ethnicities, forced and voluntary migrations, contemporary national politics, and culture revealed the connections between Ghana and other West African States in particular, and African Diasporas generally³.

The Baoule and Anyi

The Baoule and Anyi are Akan groups in Ivory Coast. Also spelt Bwule or Baule, the Baoule, is the largest Akan (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). At the beginning of the 20th century, the French administrators Nebout and Delafosse described Baoule inhabitants as "a state of perfect anarchy adjusted by the traditions, the customs, and the common sense" (<http://www.african.cart.com/africanethnicgroup>).

The Akan people began to migrate to Ivory Coast, probably in the 18th century. They moved in order to escape the domination of Ashanti Confederacy. The Akan immigrants moved into hinterland where they founded the kingdoms of N'Denice, Bettie and Moronou and Baoule. Baoule was a fusion of two waves of emigrants from modern Ghana. Queen Abla Pokou played a legendary role in the foundation of Baoule. The Queen had a quarrel with Ashanti king, Opoku Ware and consequently led the Assabou group and migrated across the Comoe River in modern Cote d'Ivoire and found Baoule. In order to cross the Comoe River, Queen Abla Pokou had to sacrifice her child to the spirit of the river hence the origin of their name "Baoule", which means "the child is dead" (Uwechue, 1991: 779). This account did not specify the sex of the child that the powerful Queen sacrificed. However, in another account, which carried basically the same story, the sacrificial lamb was said to be a boy-child:

The Baule (Baoule) of which a million individuals at the beginning of the century were counted, is a member of the Akan group of Ivory Coast. In the course of the Century xv111, Queen Abla had to lead her town towards the west to the borders of the Comoe River, between the Senoufo. In order to cross the river she got to sacrifice her only son, a sacrifice that gave origin to the name Baule, because Baule means 'the boy is dead'. (<http://www.african.cart.com/africanethnicgroup>).

Although the Queen's "child" or "boy" "is dead", Baoule became an existing ethnic group in Southern Ivory Coast, producing eminent sons and daughters who had left their imprint on the sand of time as political leaders, diplomats, administrators, academics, doctors, farmers, etc., in the country. The first President of Ivory Coast, Felix Houphouët Boigny hailed from Baoule (Zollberg 1964:18).

As will be shown later, Baoule was one of the groups that gave the French the stiffest resistance, village by

village, during their initial penetration into Ivory Coast. Little wonder, therefore, that in Baoule power was inherited through matrilineal descent. The kingdoms of Baoule and Agni grew rich through trade with the European merchants at the Coast. Political authority was based on wealth, which was the monopoly of about ten extremely rich chiefs. Political organization was restricted to a single village or group of villages.

The Kru or Kua-Kua and Bete

The Kru people were probably the oldest ethnic group in Ivory Coast. The Kua-Kua or Jack-Jack people in Ivory Coast were fishermen and producers of salt. They acted as middlemen between the inhabitants of the interior and the European merchants who had established on the coast. The Kru or Kua-Kua did not constitute large states. Whereas the Kua-Kua was ethnically very diverse, the Akan group was very cohesive. The Akan group had a more structured organization. The Kru or Kua-Kua traced their relationship through the male forest forebears (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). The largest Kru population is the Bete, who made up about 6 per cent of Ivory Coast population. The immediate past President, Lauernt Gbagbo does not only hail from Bete, but a paramount "chief of Bete" (*The Nation* April 17, 2011:3). These groups appeared to be the most indigenous groups in the Southern Ivory Coast.

The Senoufo, Mankono, and Mossi, Kankan, etc:

From the north of the Cote d'Ivoire came the large indigenous savanna group, called the Senoufo (Uwechue 779-80) who, because they did not form a strong centralized state, they fell prey to the slave traders and suffered plunder and massacre at the hands of Samory's troops. This further resulted in migrations into Ivory Coast. The Senoufo made up about 10 per cent of the total population of Ivory Coast in the 1980 census. "The Senoufo migrated to their present day location from north-east between the 16th and 19th centuries" (<http://country studies. us/ivory>).

Macina and Kong

It has been documented that in the 18th century, Sekou Ouattara, a native of Macina founded the Dioula kingdom of Kong, which situated in the Savanna between the N'Zi and Comoe Rivers. The aim was to protect the trade routes of the region, which was frequented by the Doioula people. Kong was a great commercial and religious city. It made huge profits from the Camel Caravans which took kola nuts and gold from the forest south to the Sudan and returned with trade goods, e.g. salt, to the South. The city

was greatly influenced by Islam, as several small theocratic states grew up around it in the 19th century (Uwechue 780).

The Burkinabes

According to a source, the largest “non- Ivory Coast Africans” in Cote d’Ivoire were Muslim (70 per cent), speaking French and migrated from Burkina Faso (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). As of the 1980s, there were about 5 million “non- Ivorian Africans”, approximately one third to one half of which was from Burkina Faso, whereas the remainder (30 percent) came from the other parts of the West African nations. Among the 30 percent were 60,000 Lebanese and 10,000 French nationals (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). The Mande peoples including Malinke, Bambara, Juula and the smaller related groups made up about 17 per cent of the population of Ivory Coast (<http://countrystudies.us/ivorycoast/20.htm> Senoufo).

The Malians

The Malians, like the Burkinabes had, for economic reasons, migrated from the north and settled in Ivory Coast since about 300 to 600 years ago. Evidently, migration had always been southwards, across the border into Ivory Coast, where an estimated three million Malians had headed over the past few decades to find work and income they could send to their families back home (*BBC Focus on Africa* January-March 2003:16). Thus, as one authority had noted,

Cote d’Ivoire is populated by peoples who migrated from the savanna to the north and of forest peoples coming from the east and west. There is diversity of languages. The Ivoirians living on the Atlantic Coast and in the immediate hinterland comprise three groups, namely, the Kru (Krous), Kua-Kua, and the Akan group which includes the Agni, the Baoule, the Asante and Fante in modern Ghana (Uwechue 779).

A brief statistical analysis of ethnical religious composition of groups popularizing Ivory Coast is necessary. The ethnic composition by population in Ivory Coast shows that the Akan people constitute 42.1 per cent (comprising Baoule 24 per cent, Bete 18.1 per cent), the Krou 11.05 per cent, Senoufo 15 per cent, Malinke 11 per cent, Burkinabe and Malians, about 3 million), non-Africans 130,000 to 330,000 (comprising French 30,000 and Lebanese 100,000 to 300,000). The religious divide is as follows: Indigenous 25 per cent, Muslim 60 per cent, and Christian 12 per cent (Duodu, 2002:16). Most of these “Migrants” were in fact born and bred in the Ivory Coast. The major languages include Senoufo (13 per cent), Baoule (10 per cent), Bete (2 per cent); French being the official language (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast).

The numerical strength of the northern Ivorians and their contributions to the national economy could not be overlooked. It should be noted that out of the population of a little over 16 million, 6.4 million people have links to neighbouring countries bordering northern Ivory Coast (*News Africa* January 31, 2011:21). It is also instructive to note that about one-third Ivorian Coast’s population is made up of “migrant” workers from other West African nation, namely, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. It was their parents who had carried out the migrations at the time when Ivory Coast was more prosperous than many of its neighbours in the rest of West Africa. These migrants worked as labourers on the Ivorian cocoa, palm plantations, in the timber industry, at the docks and in the markets. Much of the prosperity of the Ivory Coast was due to their hard work; but because they were poorly paid, they lived in the slums of cities like Abidjan (Duodu, 2002:15). One may ask: what factors necessitated the movements of the culturally diverse peoples into the pre-modern Ivory Coast?

Factors that necessitated immigrations into Ivory Coast

As already hinted above, a number of factors motivated people to migrate to Ivory Coast. The factors included trade and trade routes, gold mines, wars, agricultural activities, Islam, European imperialism and availability of statesmen. Islam was an important factor in the migration and peopling of the pre-colonial Ivory Coast. According to Trimmingham, “a religious revolution during the fifteen and sixteenth centuries completely transformed the relationship of the Berbers of Western Sahara towards Islam... Islam had touched the cultivators but lightly. Pagan rulers were tolerant of Muslims in their midst. Their form of reaction was not persecution but neutralization...” (Trimingham 142-143). The Muslim clerical – trading class within the Negro world formed trading villages over a vast area. They were less attached to the land than other Negroes. Their agriculture being done by the slaves, their trading activities enabled them to purchase, and could make long expeditions or transfer their whole family with ease. Sometimes, they formed permanent settlements in various parts of West Africa, including Ivory Coast.

Apart from the Islamic factor, Samory’s political and military influence played a decisive role in the migration and settlement of the people in Ivory Coast. Samory fought many wars of conquest against his fellow African neighbours and also put up stout resistance against the French. In the 1890s the Mandinka trader, Almamy Samory carved out a new state for himself and moved it eastwards when the French attacked its original area and captured its capital, Bissandugu. In 1894, the state had been reorganised from a new capital at Dabakala. Samory’s state was very powerful; his troops used modern firearms, some of which were home made. With

these firearms, he conquered or raided many of the indigenous states in what is now Cote d'Ivoire. Successful French attacks on Samory's kingdom brought to it an end. The states of the Upper Senegal in the 1850's saw the French as potentially less oppressive alien rulers than Al Haji Umar of the Tokolor Empire. For example, Sikasso made alliance with the French against Samory, but clearly valued its own independence so greatly that when the French actually tried to assert the right they claimed to have gained by this alliance, it joined force with Samory against them.

Many groups preferred the apparently lighter burden of the French rule to that of Samory (Crowder 1968:72-3). In all, Samory fought thirteen major engagements with the French and moved his empire constantly eastwards. "Of course the peoples into whose lands he moved suffered terribly..." (Crowder 87-88). The combination of his strategic retreats to the east outside French control and his maintenance of supplies of modern weapons, were largely responsible for his ability to hold out against the French for so long and against his African rivalries (Crowder 87). Samory got his supplies of weapons mainly from French shops keepers in Free Town, Sierra Leone (Legossick, 1966:95-115). While the French had occupied the Tokolor Empire to the North, they harassed Samory from Ivory Coast (Crowder, 1968:88). By 1879, Samory Toure controlled an area from Sierra Leone in the West to Ivory Coast in the East, and from a point near Bamako in the north to the Liberian frontiers in the South (Omer-Cooper, 1968:171). This situation caused movements and intermingling of people, especially in Ivory Coast.

Similarly, gold mines and trade routes contributed to the migration of people to Ivory Coast. In the north-east, the Bouna kingdom occupied land originally cultivated by the Lorhron people. In early 18th century the Lorhron were invaded by their neighbours, the powerful Dagomba kingdom beyond the Volta River. The Dagomba colonised the Lorhron country, founded a kingdom and took the name Koulango which means "those who do not fear". It owed its wealth to the Lobi gold mines and the important Dioula trade route which linked the important commercial towns of the north to those of the south. Dagomba was one of the northern vassal states of Ashanti, conquered by the British in 1874 (Kimble, 1963:282). The entire area was occupied by France after it defeated Samory in September 1898.

Furthermore, early European imperialism and completion among the European nations had engendered migrations and settlements of people in the region. Early contacts with the Europeans began with the Portuguese navigators, who were the first Europeans to land on the Coast of Cote d'Ivoire in 1470. The area was rich in Ivory and pepper, hence the name "Ivory Coast" or "Tusks Coast" or "Malaguetta Coast" (Pepper Coast). Ivory and pepper formed exports which were greatly appreciated in Europe. The Portuguese erected no fort at the Tusks

Coast because it was inhospitable. Their principal landing base was Elmina, now in Ghana. It was trade in gold and slaves that attracted other European nations such as the Dutch, Britain and France, who fiercely competed among themselves for the goods. The British of the Royal African Company had frequent contact with the coastal peoples of Cote d'Ivoire in the 1750s. Frenchmen had been there and took two young Ivoirians back to Europe. One of two Ivoirians named Aniaba was presented to Louis XIV as the Crown Prince of the kingdom of Assinie. Although the French could not maintain relations with the kingdom of Assinie and evacuated the post in 1703 due to the wars of Louis XIV, the kingdom became the bridgehead of the French penetration into the interior of Cote d'Ivoire in the 19th century. The French began occupying and colonizing Cote d'Ivoire during the 1500s and officially established a colony in 1893 (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). It was Louise Gustave Binger (1856-1936) who seized Cote d'Ivoire as a colony for France. Indeed, the French occupation of the colonies of Western Sudan – Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, Mauritania and parts of Guinea – was primarily a military one and very little of it was acquired by treaty (Hargreaves, 1967:100-2). The French started signing treaties with Africans kings and chiefs there in 1843/4. According to Michael Crowder, "the military conquest of French West Africa was achieved at great expenditure of human life, the destruction of many towns and villages, the break-up of traditional systems of government, and the movement of populations, but most of all it was achieved against stubborn resistance of the Africans themselves, both those of the savanna and the forest" (Crowder 111). The entire area was occupied by France after it defeated Samory in September 1898. The French military conquest and subsequent colonial rule caused dispersal of peoples into Ivory Coast. Another set of people from Alassane Ouattara's ethnic group was no exception to the European-induced massive migrations and settlements. From the analysis under section one of this paper, it is believed that the groups from Northern Ivory Coast including Alassane Ouattara's had already settled in Ivory Coast before the arrival of the French and their subsequent colonization of the territory.

It had been reported that Southern Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania as well as South-eastern and the Plateau of Northern Nigeria were good examples of the nations that gave the Europeans stout, bitter, stiffest, and skillful resistance. "Not only was resistance bitter, it was often skilful... the peoples of the Southern Ivory Coast provided some of the stiffest resistance the colonial forces of occupation experience" (Crowder, 1978:1-2;4). Apart from the war that the French fought against Samory, the longest war fought by the Europeans in West Africa "was against the peoples of Southern Ivory Coast, in particular the Baoule, who resisted occupation village by village, using to maximum advantage, the dense forest of the area"⁴.

Unity and integration of Ivory Coast had commenced

early enough due to the French colonial rule. Like the Samory's military influence, the French military conquest engendered a southward movement of populations into Ivory Coast. Similarly, the French colonial rule consciously or unconsciously attempted integration of the various groups that had moved and settled in the country. For example, in 1932, two thirds of the Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) was joined to Cote d'Ivoire. The French used Africans to construct rail ways from Abidjan to Upper Volta. The white entrepreneurs also needed the colonial Ivoirians' labour for the construction of sea ports and for development of plantations in Ivory Coast. The capital was established at Abidjan in 1935 (Uwechue 782). Like the southern groups, Alassane Ouattara's ethnic group and other groups from the northern parts of Ivory Coast contributed to the colonial economic development in the country and there is no evidence to show that they were excluded or discriminated against by the French or by those who now claim to "aborigines" or "true Ivoirians."

GOVERNMENT'S OPEN ATTITUDE TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

Undoubtedly, government's open attitude towards immigrants during the colonial rule and up to Boigny's regime (1960-1993) was a significant factor that encouraged influx of people from other parts of West Africa into Ivory Coast. During these periods, Ivory Coast economy had been opened to citizens of other West African countries. Ivory Coast had always claimed to be different from its neighbours in terms of providing employment opportunities to citizens of other ECOWAS members. Its claim might not be baseless because, it is on record that, After independence from France in 1960, it invited the citizens of its less fortunate neighbours to come and grow cocoa and coffee, or to work as domestic or security staff for the prosperous villas of Abidjan. It took in refugees from Liberia's civil war, and housed them in villages among its own people, not in camps (Griffiths, 2003:12).

One must be grateful to pioneer President of Ivory Coast for sustaining the age-long culture of unity and integration of the Ivorian people. However, it must be emphasized that Alassane Ouattara should not be seen as a beneficiary of President Boigny's generosity because it has been historically established that Ouattara and his forebears had occupied Ivory Coast from the time immemorial. Boigny's generosity to the immigrants was a recent event. Therefore, accepting that recent event means accepting the fact that Ouattara's grandparents or parents or Ouattara himself arrived Cote d'Ivoire some few years before independence in 1960, whereas as shown above, his forebears had already settled there even before the 18th century.

Immigrants, including both Christians and Muslims, were offered employment opportunities as farm-hands,

miners, clerks, domestic servants, and so on, because Ivory Coast had "an open attitude towards foreigners (which) made it a magnet for workers from neighbouring counties like Burkina Faso, Mali, and Ghana" (<http://beeafrika.com/pt/A-Brief-History-of-Ivory-Coast-crisis>), especially during days of late President Houphouet Boigny. However, things began to change to the disadvantage of the northerners/Muslims after the death of Houphouet Boigny in 1993. There were ethnic, political, administrative, and religious discriminations against the northerners/Muslims.

The pre-1990 Ivory Coast positive attitude towards immigrants appeared to have been influenced by its former colonial master, France. Like the Ivory Coast's natural resources, France's economic miracle of sustained growth and rapid modernization between 1945 and 1975 attracted immigrant labour from South Europe and former French colonies, in northern and sub-Saharan African to do the least skilled and most poorly paid work in industry, construction and agriculture⁵. Agricultural revolution was one of the chief factors that attracted people during the colonial times and immediately that period to that country. The French colonial government had encouraged the Ivoirians to take to agriculture. Consequently, Cote d'Ivoire became the world's largest producer and exporter of cocoa beans and a significant producer and exporter of coffee and palm oil. Until 2006, when oil and gas production became more important engines of economic activity than cocoa, agriculture and related activities engaged about 68% of the country's population. This explained in part why the government allowed nationals from other countries to come to Ivory Coast and work in the plantations. According to the IMF statistics, the earnings from oil and refined products were \$1.3 billion in 2006, while cocoa-related revenues were \$1 billion during the same period. The Ivorian oil and gas exploration provided sufficient natural gas to fuel electricity exports to Ghana, Togo, Benin, Mali and Burkina Faso. This arrangement further boosted international economic relations among these countries.

Cote d'Ivoire's agricultural and mineral sources of income had some disadvantages that accompanied the influx of immigrants. It was reported that due to the economic revolution Cote d'Ivoire became "a source, transit, and destination country for women and children trafficked for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation." It was also reported that trafficking within the country was more prevalent than international trafficking and that the majority of victims were children. Women and girls were trafficked from northern areas to southern cities to serve as domestic servants or serve in restaurants. Young girls were also brought in to serve as prostitutes. On the other hand, boys were trafficked internally for agricultural and service labor. The boys also served as forced labor in agriculture, mining, construction, and in the fishing industry. From Cote d'Ivoire,

women and young girls were trafficked to and from other West and Central African countries for domestic servitude and forced street venturing. Considering all this one could say that modern Ivory Coast was a loose society that was bound to generate social and security problems, especially as the Ivorian law did not prohibit all forms of trafficking as it had not ratified the 2000 UNTIP Protocol (2008). The influx of people from Ivorian northern neighbours swelled up the northern population and might have generated fear among the southern politicians that Alassane Ouattara being a northerner or any other northerner would win any presidential election in the country, hence the exclusionist citizenship clause in the constitution.

President Félix Boigny's Legacy

Some Ivorians blamed the crisis on the legacy the pioneer President, Félix Boigny, had left. Tiemoko Coulibaly (Coulibaly <http://mondediplo>) wrote that "the figure of Félix Houphouët-Boigny still dominates the political landscape in Ivory Coast (and that) the cult of the former president is universal" (such that) even his old opponent, Laurent Gbagbo, claimed that his differences with the man he once called a dictator were not really that serious and were now best forgotten. Although Ivorian including "any rising politician" had been making pilgrimage to Boigny's tomb in Yamoussoukro a sacred rite of passage, some said "Houphouët-Boigny's legacy is a major tragedy for Ivory Coast and that "the triumphant resurgence of Houphouët worship, accompanied by the rise of Ivorian power signals the failure of a system that always relied on tribalism, xenophobia, corruption and prevarication" (Coulibaly <http://mondediplo.com>).

The political frustration of the northerners appeared to have started during the pioneer government of President of Boigny. There were reports that many northern Ivorians were usually disenfranchised. They regularly complained that they could not obtain identity papers and that they were refused entry on the electoral register because their names were said to sound foreign. This had been a constant bone of contention between north and south, and it sharpened the northerners' painful sense of exclusion. "Their frustration is another poisoned legacy of Houphouët-Boigny and his discrimination against different religions: the Muslim majority felt frustrated by the preferential treatment given to Christians by the Father of the Nation." However, after Boigny and especially during Ouattara's presidential ambition, northern Muslim leaders openly accused the authorities of harassment and did not hesitate to join in the political debate, an attitude which was unthinkable during Boigny's government (Coulibaly <http://mondediplo.com>).

President of Boigny was also accused of instigating violence against Dahomey, the Ivorian southern neighbour. Boigny was said to have done this by wiping the sentiment that the Ivorian wealth was being exploited

by foreigners to the detriment of Ivorians was that year, orchestrated by, a Houphouët-Boigny was said to have used his henchman, Pepe Paul, "to fuel violent attacks against Dahomeyans (under) the pretext that Dahomeyans held the best teaching posts" in Ivory Coast (Coulibaly <http://mondediplo.com>).

President Boigny favoured the French citizens more than northerners and the Dahomeans in terms of appointments. As would be shown later, Boigny's favouritism to the French might have been one of the factors that contributed to the political problem Ouattara had faced because he married a French woman. Boigny's favoritism towards the French could be explained on two grounds. First, by favouring the French, Boigny equally attracted the much-needed support from the French government. Two, Boigny had nothing to worry politically about the French citizens because they would never contest any presidential election in Ivory Coast.

WEAK CONSTITUTION AND STRONG PRESIDENT

Up to the 2010 when another protracted political crisis broke out, Côte d'Ivoire has had only two constitutions in its history. These were the 1960 Independence Constitution and the Second Republic Constitution (2000). As the preamble of the 1960 Constitution could show, the Ivorians sought to create a democratic state and so they based their independent construction on the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As approved by the National Assembly of France on August 26, 1789, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was a product of the French Revolution (Anderson, 1908:59-61). Accordingly, the preamble of the 1960 Constitution proclaimed its dedication to liberal democratic principles and inalienable human rights as expressed in the two Human Rights Declarations. Articles 3 through 7 of the 1960 Constitution delineated the fundamental rights and principles pertaining to Ivorian citizenship, universal suffrage, popular sovereignty, and equality before the law.

However, the Constitution made the legislature and judiciary subordinate to an individual. That one individual was the president of the country. The Constitution neither established nor protected the independence of the judiciary nor did it make provision for opposition. The Constitution did provide for the Supreme Court and a subordinate court system. It did not stipulate the exact structure of the judiciary but rather left such a task to be handled by the National Assembly. This constitutional lacuna made the National Assembly to approve simply whatever the President sent to them. As Handloff (1988) succinctly put it, [i]n fact, the assembly simply approved the president's plan... for most of Côte d'Ivoire's brief history as an independent republic, nearly all legislative programs have originated with the president and have

been rubber-stamped by the assembly.” Thus, the Ivorian independent Constitution *ab-initio* created a dictatorship, the president going with unchecked powers.

One would have expected the Second Republic Constitution to be departure from the independence Constitution by providing for democratic provisions and rule of law, including independence of the judiciary. But that was not the case. The Republic Constitution (2000) which was drafted following General Robert Guei's bloodless coup in 1999 provided for a strong presidency within the framework of separation of powers. The executive was personified in the president, elected for a 5-year term. Provision was made for establishment of an independent Constitutional Council with seven members. All the members were to be appointed by the president. Among other sensitive political duties, the Constitutional Council was responsible for the determination of eligibility of candidates in presidential and legislative elections; announcement of final election results; conduct of referendums; and determination of the constitutionality of legislation. The past presidents capitalized on the weakness of the constitution to manipulate presidential elections such that Ivory Coast was a one party state from 1960 to 1990. From 1990 to 1999, the country experienced restricted democratic practice and military regime from 1999-2000. While restricted one party system elections were held six times- 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980 and 1985, multi-party elections were held only in 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2010. The country held its first departmental elections in 2002 to select departmental councils⁶ to oversee local infrastructure development and maintenance as well as economic and social development plans and projects (African Elections Database, 2011).

Institutionalization of discriminatory terms

After Houphouet-Boigny discriminatory terms were introduced into the political lexicon of Ivory Coast. Unlike Houphouet-Boigny, his successor, Henry Bedie popularised the concept of “Ivoirite” or “Ivorianness” as a way of excluding potential opponents, such as Alassane Ouattara (Griffiths 2003:12). Ironically, “as a son of so-called immigrants, Ouattara prospered politically under the avuncular despot (Houphouet Boigny), rising to the top post of Prime Minister...” (*The Nation* April 17, 2011:3). Boigny's successor, President Henry Konan Bedie coined the term ‘Ivoirite’ or ‘true Ivorian. These discriminatory terms created ethnic tensions among a population that included many immigrants (<http://beeafrika.com/pt/>). Gbagbo, like his predecessors Bedie and Guei also wanted to “dis-Ivorianse” Ouattara by declaring his Ivorian nationality invalid, so as to prevent him from the presidency against them (*BBC Focus on Africa* January-March 2003:16). Ouattara's home was pillaged and later burned by gendarmes during the curfew hours (Griffiths, 2003:12). Constitutional

amendments were made requiring presidential candidates to have two Ivorian-born parents. Obviously, this had been a tall order in a country with a very high percentage of migrant-turned citizens. As *The Nation* (April 12, 2011:14) put it, “...nationality clause seeks to enforce an aborigine/settler dichotomy, thereby excluding rivals from political competition. Of course, whipping such bogey was intended to raise the bar against Alassane Ouattara whose parents are believed to be settlers in the north”.

Were all the Presidents of Cote d'Ivoire aborigines or autochthones of the country in the true meaning of the word? Henry Bedie, who succeeded Boigny usually emphasized his similar background to Boigny. Ironically, Laurent Gbagbo who went to jail in the 1980s for protesting against Houphouet-Boigny's government was himself having recourse to the promotion of “nationality clause” in the country's constitution to consolidate his political power. Interestingly, history has revealed that both Presidents Boigny and Bedie hailed from Baoule said to have originated from Akan cocoa planters in modern Ghana. Ralph Uwechue, one of African scholar-diplomats who studied Africa societies, wrote in his book titled *Africa Today* (Uwechue 1991) that,

“Cote d'Ivoire is populated by peoples who migrated from the savanna to the north and of forest peoples coming from the east and west. There is diversity of languages. The Ivoirians living on the Atlantic Coast and in the immediate hinterland comprise three groups, namely, the Kru (Krous), Kua-Kua, and the Akan group which includes the Agni, the Baoule, the Asante and Fante in modern Ghana”(779).

Nationality Clause or Citizenship Clause

Article 35 of the Ivorian Constitution (2000) introduced the discriminatory nationality clause or citizenship clause by providing for two conditions of eligibility pertaining to the citizenship of the candidate to presidential election. The two conditions a presidential candidate are that “He shall be Ivorian by birth, born of father and mother who are themselves Ivoirians by birth.” The provision has an express meaning that candidate to the presidential election should: (i) be an Ivorian by birth; and (ii) have both his mother and father themselves being Ivorians by birth. The use of the conjunction “and” rather than “or” has made the Ivorian Constitution different from other African countries' constitutions. Some Ivoirians protested that they found it “...difficult to understand the criticisms to which Cote d'Ivoire has been subjected when one knows that condition of citizenship remains a major obstacle in most Constitutions around die world and Particularly those in Africa” (<http://faculty.george.town.edu>). The use of the conjunction “and” in the Ivorian Constitution seemed to have been deliberately inserted to target some ethnic groups in the country. To all intents

and purposes, this particular condition had made the Constitution discriminatory and exclusive. It created two classes of citizens in the country, to wit: first class citizens and second class citizens.

What were the reasons for discriminatory and exclusionist citizenship clause? Those Ivoirians who were trying to defend the discriminatory and exclusionist citizenship clause in the Constitution of their country explained the reasons for the clause and efforts that were made to expunge it from the Constitution. In an essay titled "The Political Situation in Cote D'Ivoire", they wrote: "In try(ing) to look for the causes likely to explain it", the Ivorian apologists mention "the desire to preserve the presidential post" as number one reason. According to them, ...the desire to preserve the presidential post is a reflection of a sentiment deeper than it appears. This sentiment is incontestably imposed by the people on their representatives. In fact, how can one explain it otherwise that the discriminating clause could survive the transition and then the Second Republic? Of course, the BEDIE Government was the initiator of the clause, but it so poorly handled it by diluting it with its theory of Ivoirite, and right from the very first debate at the Constitution subcommittee, the issue came up on the agenda and the discriminatory clause imposed itself with an overwhelming majority (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>. Retrieved 10/8/14).

Reportedly, General Robert Guei, had made efforts to put an end to the discriminatory clause "by getting rid of it once and for all, (but he) had to quickly change his mind." In fact, the leader of the military junta had used his authority to substitute the 'AND' with 'OR' before undertaking a nationwide campaign to explain the draft Constitution to the Ivorian people". Surprisingly, out of the 18 regions visited, 16 called for the return of the 'AND' to the Constitution. This implied that majority of the Ivorian people finally made their decision to retain the clause in the Constitution. Therefore, "the first government of the Second Republic had no choice but to respect the wish of the people" (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>. Retrieved 10/8/14).

Several other factors were said to have intermingled and combined to explain such a discriminatory attitude. The factors were listed to include the high rate of immigration and its attendant consequences, the political and economic crises that were going on in many other African countries. The southern Ivoirians justified their act of discrimination when they wrote: "These factors, undoubtedly led our country to a reflex of self-protection. It is clearly indicated that the singular post of President of the Republic must be protected by voting to it only the people with certain intrinsic qualities, of which citizenship is only one (important) element" (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>. Retrieved 10/8/14).

Outtara's Personal Relationship with the French

Without ignoring the above reasons, is believed that

Outtara's cordial personal relationship with the French was a major reason the elite did not want him as the president of Ivory Coast. As hinted above, Boigny's legacy of favoritism to the French might have been worked against Outtara's presidential ambition. Outtara is related to the French by marriage. Since the days of the Boigny's government, many Ivoirian elite had been complaining bitterly about French domination of their economic life. They said the French were indirectly re-colonising the country through their economic domination. They therefore saw Outtara's success as President to be in support and in furtherance of the French re-colonisation agenda. The following quoted passages would give credence to the assertion the elite hated him because of his personal relationship with the French, his in-laws. The immediate past Prime Minister of Ivory Coast and head of Gbagbo's political party, Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) Pascal Affi N'Guessan spoke the minds of those opposed to Outtara when he said, The real problem of this crisis is the desire of the foreign Powers to dominate Ivory Coast... They want to ambush the emancipation of Ivory Coast... 50 years of independence and poverty has proven this and this is because African countries do not have the real independence, they are not the masters of their own destiny, their politics is controlled and imposed by foreign powers and they are not in tandem with reality or development. African states are used as markets for finished goods... The current President of Ivory Coast has decided to liberate Ivoirians and it is because of this the foreign powers are supporting Ouattara who is more like a puppet in their hands and who they can manipulate to continue the same policy...(Newswatch January 17, 2005:23).

Similarly, the youths' representative Abyou Elvis said in January 2005 that the French were going to re-colonise the Ivoirians by detecting the socio- economic and political policies of the country:

We are not going to allow the French to re-colonise us. We are against the French policies in Africa. The French are behind the rebels in many African countries. Look at Rwanda, Congo, Burundi and many others. The French are against any leader that opposes their policy of re-colonisation. That is why they staged the coup to remove Gbagbo. We elected him and we are going to fight to protect him and our motherland. Please help us tell the French to leave Africans alone to develop their countries. We are tired of their domination (Newswatch January 17, 2005:23).

Earlier in October 2004, the President of the Ivorian Parliament, Ibrahim Coulibaly had claimed that the French government was against the president Laurent Gbagbo government simply because he (Laurent Gbagbo) was against the French re-colonisation of Cote d'Ivoire. He further enthused: "If we want to enter into agreement to construct a road, the French government

wants us to ask for permission. If we want to privatise, you must ask the French for permission. For us, this is a new colonisation. This time of rebellion, France says we are too free and want to organise the state in a way that suits them. They say we are Francophone and Anglophone. This is our crime. We want to be free". (*Newswatch* January 17, 2005:23).

Undoubtedly, due to Boigny's favorable attitude to the French, Ivorian sentiment against the French had been deep-seated. To the Ivorians, it was painful that under Boigny's government, most of the approximately 30,000 French workers were in the private sector in the late 1980s. The French citizens held the majority of all jobs requiring postsecondary education in Ivory Coast, while some also worked in middle-level white-collar and blue-collar jobs. There was evidence of French citizens working with lower qualifications than that held by the Ivorians but they received substantially higher salaries than the Ivorians with higher qualifications. The French men and women controlled the important aspects of the Ivorian economic sector and bureaucracy, such that "throughout the country there were French mechanics, foremen, plantation owners, storekeepers, clerical workers, and supervisors. French women filled many of the top secretarial positions and thus became special targets of nationalist resentment" (Votaw, 1988).

Even though Boigny's appointment of a French national named Antoine Cesareo to head the Directorate of Public Works in the 19180s had generated heated controversy, the President did nothing to indigenize such sensitive appointment. Antoine supervised virtually all government contracts and construction projects amounting to US\$3.3 billion as at 1987. Ivory Coast under Boigny was condemned by those in Ivorian political establishment as the only country in Africa to have accorded foreigners a stranglehold over sources of internal finances (Votaw, 1988). What irritated many Ivorians more was that, under Boigny's government some French workers were paid higher salaries than Ivorian cabinet ministers were. However, the Ivorian political elite usually demanded for replacement of French workers with Ivorians, a demand that became a political issue. Eszti Votaw (1988) reported that popular resentment of the French presence, particularly as the competence of Ivorians increased, emerged periodically in the form of student strikes and anonymous political tracts.

ATTEMPTS TO DIS-IVORIANISE ALASSANE OUATTARA

The use of Alassane Ouattara as a case study of victims of the discriminatory nationality clause could be justified by the fact that in spite of his contributions and that of his forebears to the development of Ivory Coast, he and his ethnic group were seen as non-Ivorians. For many times, Ouattara was denied the right to occupy the Presidential seat. The last attempt to deny Ouattara his political right

was in 2010 when he contested and clearly won the Presidential election but the outgoing President, Laurent Gbagbo adamantly refused to hand over power to him. It took the intervention of the international community to flush Gbagbo out of power and swear in Ouattara as President in April 2011. One commentator who erroneously wrote that "[Alassane] Ouattara whose roots are embedded in Burkina Faso" however admitted, rightly, that he (Ouattara) "had been done by an electoral system that disenfranchised Ouattara and other northerners (*News Africa* January 31, 2011:20)". The political discrimination suffered by the northern Ivorians could better be demonstrated by looking at what Ouattara⁷ went through to become the President of Ivory Coast.

Thus, the case of Alassane Dramane Ouattara, now the incumbent President of Ivory Coast, illustrated the political problems created by some southern political leaders who coined and used discriminatory terms such as "aborigines", "true Ivorians", "settlers" and "foreigners" against the northern Ivorians. Contrary to the claims by some Ivorian political leaders, Alassane Ouattara and his kinsmen were not "settlers" or "foreigners". As shown above, their forebears had been indigenized by permanently living there for more than five hundred years ago. According to Trimmingham (1962:142-3) by the 15th / 16th centuries, the Muslims had formed hundreds of settlements all over Western Guinea from The Gambia to Liberia. Their settlements in northern Ivory Coast included Kankan, Mankono, Kadioha, Bong, and Kong and in the Voltaic region (Mossi, Dafina, Bobo, Senoufo, and Gonja countries). They were accommodating Muslims. They adopted many customs and married wives from the local people. They did not regard themselves as living a particular life in a pagan environment but as sharing in its life (though they preserved Islamic characteristics and remained a distinct element). Thus, as it had also been reported, the Muslims were not a band of disturbing elements among their hosts in Ivory Coast (Trimingham 142-3). This implied that the Muslim groups including Alassane Ouattara's forebears had founded settlements in the present-day Ivory Coast as far back as more than 500 years ago. The name "Ouattara" is not a new name in African history. Ouattara is a root-name known to be not only one of the prominent founders of polities, but also an outstanding nation builder in pre-colonial Africa. Like other groups of people who migrated from elsewhere into the present day Ivory Coast, Ouattara's group had, for economic and religious reasons, moved further south, from Burkina Faso since about five centuries ago. Like other groups from north and south, Ouattara's groups had integrated with the groups through marriages, religion and trade relations.

The profile of Alassane Dramane Ouattara shows that before he became president, he had held top political and administrative offices nationally, regionally, and globally as a free citizen of Ivory Coast. He was a staff of International Monetary Fund (I M F). He was the Prime

Minister of Ivory Coast during the last regime of Houphouët Boigny (1990 – 1995). Being a reputable international financial manager, Alassane Ouattara was appointed by late President Boigny as Head of Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee for stabilization and economic recovery, a post that was created by the National Assembly on November 6, 1990. Alassane Ouattara was also appointed as Ivorian Governor of the Banque Centrale de Etats de l' Afrique L' Ouest (BCEAO)⁸ to work out new economic measures for the country.

In spite of these enviable positions, Alassane Ouattara was politically discriminated against by the politicians from the southern part of the country, including the immediate past President Laurent Gbagbo. The southern citizens saw the northern citizens as foreigners/ settlers who should not be allowed to hold important political and administrative offices in Ivory Coast. Ethnic politics was widened during the 1995, 1999, 2005, and 2010 presidential elections that were organised to return the country to a true democracy.

Both the discriminatory terms of "Ivoirite" / "Ivorianness" / arborigine and the nationality or citizenship clause were used against Ouattara. In order to dis-Ivorianise Ouattara and disqualify him from running against Robert Guei⁹, in the 1999 presidential election, the latter appointed a high-ranking member of his own party as the Judge, who, of course, solemnly ruled that Ouattara was not an Ivorian citizen at all but a Burkinabe (*Africa Today*, October 2002:15). Alassane Ouattara had been involved in the struggle for presidency in Ivory Coast for nearly two decades. He contested presidential election in 1995 and in 2000 as a nominee of Rally of a Republican opposition party. "But the new politician who was viewed as a technocrat and too western by critics, was disqualified both times (1999 and 2000) because of a ruling that the presidential candidate could not have a foreign parent. A court in 1995 had ruled that Ouattara's mother was from Burkina Faso..."¹⁰ Ouattara had denied the claim. At a point, he was even denied citizenship of Ivory Coast. Having narrowly escaped political assassination during the 2003 crisis, Ouattara whose wife is French had been sheltering at the French embassy on condition of silence. He was widely believed to have won the 2010 presidential elections, but again it was overturned. The UN, which had access to voting results, confirmed that Ouattara won the election. The European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as the United States, France and Britain were strongly in support of Ouattara. These international organizations and world leaders urged Gbagbo to step down and hand over power to Ouattara but he refused to yield. A report from *Reuter Africa* (16 October 2011) was apt when it said "Gbagbo refused to step down after losing a U.N.-certified election to Ouattara in November. He then used a force of soldiers, paramilitaries and youth militias to entrench his position and crush dissent, re-igniting civil war."

One cannot but agree with *The Nation* (April 17, 2011:14) that, "the obscure (nationality) clause was constitutional effort to prevent the so-called aliens from voting or being voted for... In post colonial Africa, this was clearly unprecedented; an act of civil and electoral genocide. Ouattara became a virtual unperson in his own country". One Ivorian political commentator rightly wrote that one of the consequences of the discriminatory and exclusionist constitutional provision was "tantamount to the pure and simple elimination of the 'most important', the 'most competent' of the candidates in the person of Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara from the presidential race" (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>).

However, Ouattara himself might be blamed for the political crisis because he was part of constitution making process. As reported, the constitution was adopted by referendum, with over 86% support across all parties, including that of Ouattara, the main target of xenophobic attacks. Ouattara and his people were said to have backed up their support of the constitutional amendment on the ground that it represented some progress in electoral transparency, especially as it allowed Ivorians at the age of 18 to vote in elections. Ironically, "[h]istory plays funny tricks. These short-sighted politicians were to be the first victims of their own stupid and disgraceful conduct" (<http://mondediplo.com/2000/10/08ivorycoast> Retrieved 10/8/14).

However brief, it should be mentioned that the consequences of the attempts to deny Alassane Ouattara his right to occupy the presidential seat were enormous and disastrous. Apart from ruining the economy, rising death toll and refugee problems, the political crisis provoked tensions that went beyond Cote d'Ivoire itself to neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso and Mali where Ouattara had strong supporters. Ethnic affinity and irredentism¹¹ could be noticed amongst the northern Ivorians and citizens of Mali and Burkina Faso in favour of Ouattara during the nearly six months of (November, 2010 – April, 2011) power struggle between the President – elect Alassane Ouattara and the then incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo. In fact, the Rebel forces or New Forces that supported President Ouattara were largely made up of two ethnic groups - Dioulas and Senoufo – who were predominantly Muslim and had close ethnic ties with Mali and Burkina Faso. The two counties are lying to the north of Ivory Coast. In 2003, a group called Collective to Defend Malian Abroad in support of Alassane Ouattara staged a protest marched against the much criticised "Ivoirite" that excluded Ivorian opposition leader Alassane Ouattara from presidential elections. They believed they were being discriminated against in Ivorian politics. They wanted fair elections. The south of the country was considered more developed than the north. The predominantly southern region profited from the former boom times of the cocoa industry and generations of political patronage (<http://beeafrica.com/pt>, <http://cumorah.com>. Ivory Coast).

Many of the poor shacks and houses inhabited by

northern Muslim workers and traders in Abidjan's poor slums were looted, and burnt down and 1,700 of the northerners rendered homeless in just one day, shortly after the 2002 coup attempt had failed in Abidjan.

Following the attempt to deny Ouattara the presidential slot, there appeared to have been a very strong plan by the North to secede from the rest of the country. The northerners began to implement the secession bid when their Representatives, including the Prefects were reportedly trampled upon and chased out. It was reported that workers in public services were also ordered to leave certain localities, thus interrupting the smooth running of these services in the country. "This irredentist idea was scrupulously pushed to its logical end to the extent of hoisting the flag of a third country in the town of Kong, where Alassane Dramane Ouattara claims to be his native town" (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>).

Former President and Professor of History, Laurent Gbagbo appeared to have found himself guilty. The point to demonstrate this assertion is that after being arrested and handed over to the internationally recognised President-elect Alassane Ouattara, Ex-President Gbagbo said "I want us to lay down arms and to enter the civilian part of the crisis, which should be completed rapidly for life in the country to resume" (*Daily Sun* April 12, 2011). This seems to be a mission statement that came too late to the suffering masses but certainly not useful to the massacred Ivoirians.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article traced the origins of the various ethnic groups in Ivory Coast and analyzed the factors that caused the dispersal of the people into the country making it a multi-cultural nation since the pre-colonial times up to the post-colonial period. The analysis proffered reasons for political instability in Ivory Coast. It explained why and how unsuccessful attempts were made by some Ivoirian political elite to deny Alassane Ouattara his right to become the president of that country, especially during the 2010 presidential election. Contrary to the popular opinion held by many who blamed the Ivoirians political crisis on France, this paper revealed that the sources of conflict originated from the Ivoirians themselves because the political leaders neglected the discipline of history and its lessons in politics and governance of the country. They forgot where they came from. Nevertheless, history could remind that since the 13th century, Ivory Coast had been receiving immigrants from other West African countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Togo, The Gambia, Liberia, Senegal, Niger, Mauritania, Guinea and Nigeria, thus gaining the status of "melting pot in West Africa." Socio-economic, religious, military, imperialist and colonial factors, openness of both colonial and post colonial governments to foreigners as

well as abundant opportunities in agriculture all combined to engender mass movements of peoples into the present-day Ivory Coast. Those who arrived early formed permanent settlements and intermingled. The Akan groups from modern Ghana and the Bete group to the south and the hard-working immigrants from the modern Burkina Faso, and Mali to the north have had the most tremendous impact on the socio-economic development of Ivory Coast. The Akan and the Bete ethnic groups appeared to have dominated the political life of the Ivoirians more than any other groups in the country. Almost all the past Presidents of Ivory Coast originated from the Akan and Bete ethnic groups. Late President Houphouet Boigny and his successor, Henry Bedie, hailed from Baoule founded by Queen Abla of the Akan/Ashanti ethnic group that originated from Old Ghana. The immediate past President Laurent Gbagbo originates from Bete, which though an indigenous group, had for centuries intermingled with the Akan and other groups.

Such a multi-cultural country would have needed the lesson of history to teach the principle of unity in diversity, respecting each other group's culture. The apparent neglect of history was a factor that led political instability in the country. The paper uncovered other factors that caused instability: Government's open attitude towards immigrants during both the colonial period and under Boigny's government, though helped to have supply of labour that worked in the plantations, industries, restaurants, hotels, etc., the open migration policy posed social, political and security problems. Political leaders often used new immigrants to balance ethnic population equation, especially during national elections. President Boigny's legacy of favouritism towards French was also a factor because it had laid a foundation for anti-French resentment that later threatened the presidential ambition of Alassane Ouattara who got married to a French woman. It is incorrect to say, as some writers had written, that there was no evidence of ethnic, political or religious discrimination during Boigny's government. The truth of the matter was that Boigny was able to manage emerging ethnic conflict successfully taking advantage of the French influence, the agrarian nature of the economy that engaged about 70 per cent of the population in agriculture, and the low literacy rate of the people. This implied that during Boigny's time majority of people had neither interest in politics nor could they question the government of their country.

Since the political leaders could not make use of history, they formulated discriminatory policies and enacted exclusive laws that sought to deny citizens from the northern part of the country some political rights, including the right to be president of the multi-cultural nation. Since independence in 1960, Cote d'Ivoire has had only two constitutions that were very weak but made provision for a powerful president who could manipulate the judiciary and the legislature to his advantage. Institutionalisation of discriminatory terms of "Ivoritness"/

“aborigine” and constitutionalisation of exclusive nationality clause combined to work against the presidential ambition of the northern Ivoirians, including Alassane Ouattara whose marital relationship with the French woman fueled and extended the anti-French sentiment to him.

Had the Ivoirian leaders studied the history of migrations and settlements of the peoples of their country, such a lesson would have informed them that those who had migrated and settled there for over 500 years ago had no other place to their home except Ivory Coast. An elementary knowledge of the pre-colonial history of West Africa would leave no one in doubt that it is an act of ignorance or selfishness and therefore useless to, in this 21st century, talk of “aborigine Ivoirians” or “true Ivoirians” in Ivory Coast, where the majority of the population had become immigrants-turned citizens. Therefore, the claim by some southern political leaders that Alassane Ouattara and other northerners were not “aborigines”/“true Ivoirians” or citizens of Ivory Coast was like “a pot calling kettle black”.

African political leaders should learn from history and borrow a leaf from other multi-ethnic countries such as America and Canada that had adopted the principle of *jus soli* (right of the soil) better known as birthright citizenship. A law similar to the 14th Amendment¹² of the U.S. Constitution stipulating that a person physically born in the U.S. or a U.S. territory was a citizen of the U.S. should be enacted and put use by African countries. Americans’ acceptance of a black American, Barack Obama as their President should serve as a good progressive example to other peoples of the world, particularly the Africans. Yet this was America where in 1857, its Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that African-Americans were “beings of inferior order” (and as such) “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect” (Stengel, 2011:32). It is unfortunate that whereas a descendant of immigrant parents or liberated slaves could contest presidential elections and was allowed to take the highest political office in the world’s most powerful nation, but in Ivory Coast, a potential political opponent was labeled “foreigner” even when history had revealed that as far back as the 13th century people moved from various parts of West Africa into the country, now the world’s number one producer of cocoa. Indeed, like America and Canada, Ivory Coast should follow the birthright citizenship (*jus soli*) principle so that the Ivorian citizenship would be based on residency rather than place of birth or ethnic origin. This principle, coupled with equitable allocation of resources and enforcement of the rule of law, might promote cultural pluralism and co-existence thereby intensifying the process of nation building not only in Cote d’Ivoire but also the entire African continent.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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