**Overcoming Colonial Vestiges in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana**
**By Kasia Broussalian**

*"It is far better to be free to govern or misgovern yourself than to be governed by anybody else"*

<div align="right">Kwame Nkrumah</div>

**Introduction**

Today, large portions of the world suffer from underdevelopment, resource curse, resource scarcity, inept governance, corrupt institutions, ethnic violence and much more. While the developing world's problems are certainly not all caused by previous European and Western dominance, their hands cannot be washed completely clean either.

The "Scramble for Africa" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries left a resource and culturally rich continent struggling to modernize and "catch up" to the developed world. While the great European powers at times carved colonies into nations with ethnic groups in mind, often they did not. Even more detrimental than the initial "scramble" to get in was how fast they pulled out a century later, leaving their former colonies on the verge of collapse. Once the European nations could no longer sustain their colonies, they granted their subjects independence, leaving insufficient foundations upon which to build political and social systems.

Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana are examples of nations still dealing with the aftermath of over a hundred years under colonial rule. Though each nation has had subsequent successes and failures, Ghana today looks to be a clear leader in stability and on the road to steady growth while Cote d'Ivoire is now struggling. The British colonized Ghana at approximately the same time as the French colonized Cote d'Ivoire, at which point their paths diverged. The French created a centralized bureaucratic administration focused on suppressing an African identity and replacing it with their own. The British, in seeking a self-sufficient colony, took a more hands-off approach, setting up an administration adaptable to local institutions already in place.

Today, Cote d'Ivoire is struggling to suppress flares of violence that continue from a decade-old civil war, while U.S. President Obama recently hailed Ghana as a democratic success story. These two Sub-Saharan nations started in similar colonial contexts, but the French, through their assimilation policies, failed to install a foundation of effective institutions and concrete national identity that resonated with the people and the existing government. The situation in Cote d'Ivoire today is a direct result of a country whose stability was overly dependent on French assistance. Once the French left Cote d'Ivoire, the nation began to crumble. On the other hand, the UK's policy of self-help and indirect rule reinforced traditional institutions, hierarchies, and identity, which not only made independence desirable for the people, but also facilitated its easy transition. The British system, even if unintentional, fostered nation building, a component crucial to development.

After providing a basic understanding of French assimilation and British indirect rule policies, as well as a brief history of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, this paper will compare, contrast and analyze the political and religious institutions directly affected by the two differing colonial administrations and their impact on each nation's postcolonial development.

## 1. Indirect Rule and Assimilation: Colonial Vestiges

*"The conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much."*

*- Joseph Conrad, <u>Heart of Darkness</u>, Part 1*

Beginning intensely in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the "Scramble for Africa" laid to waste a continent after a destructive takeover by the European powers. Left at the mercy of these powers, a massive population struggled to adjust from governance through traditional tribes, to being more or less forced into arbitrarily drawn nation-state boundaries. Though upon independence these

boundaries obtained international acceptance, legitimacy has, many times, been harder to come by domestically.

On either side of the Channel, both the United Kingdom and France invested significant thought, manpower and time into molding their respective colonies to enhance their own aims of resource extraction. In order to ensure the native populations produced the crop or mined the minerals most critical to the colonial powers, both the UK and France instilled a multitude of different programs. Though it is true that both powers utilized similar methods of authoritative representation as a means of governing their African empires, slight differences in the use of local and historically powerful figures fostered a divergence in the political institutions established during and after independence. Taking a brief look at the variation between British indirect rule and French assimilation policies can then be supplemented with further analysis in the case study of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.

What started as an experiment in Senegal, producing later vestiges used throughout the Empire, the French approach to colonization leaned towards assimilation policy and central administration. Grounded in the Enlightenment and French Revolutionist ideology, assimilation policy sought to integrate the native populations into French society.[1] The assumption underlying this policy held the French civilization superior to all others, and the native subjects only had to be introduced to see this and adapt. After this adaptation, all avenues and opportunities would be open to the African colonial subject.[2] France brought the whole colonial population under central

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[1] Robert Blanton, T. David Mason, Brian Athow, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa," *Journal of Peace Research* 38.4 (2001): 478.
[2] Michael Crowder, "Indirect Rule: French and British Style," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 58.3 (1964): 203.

rule, enforcing shared culture, education, and language with French ideology, regardless of ethnic group or religion.[3] Many colonial subjects even received their education in France.

It is important to note that despite the ideological mantra that all men are equal, assimilation rarely disseminated equally among the native populations, with some ethnic groups having access to better education and later acquiring high-level positions in the central administration. Many times, certain opportunities were only available in areas that held French economic interest, and not in more remote regions of the colony.[4] Thus, these differing opportunities allowed for the beginnings of ethnic and religious stratification, as well as general contempt of the French after independence.

Of particular importance is the way French colonizers stripped local chiefs of their historic influence and power, marking them as subordinates to the French administers.[5] In particular, "African chiefs were allowed to head only the lowest echelons of the administrative pyramid."[6] This demotion resulted in the centralized state replacing centuries-old traditional institutions and eroding cultural hierarchy and structural organization.

With respect to the French officer, the chief acted as a "mere agent of the central colonial government."[7] Many times, traditional chiefs were replaced by those most sympathetic to the French cause or those that had been educated in French schools.[8] Historical social structures were intentionally dissolved, and traditional powers changed with the chief acting only as the "mouthpiece for orders emanating from outside."[9]  In the French colony, the chief was responsible for such tasks as tax collection and the mobilization of labor for cash crops, thus

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[3] Blanton, *et al*, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa," 478.
[4] Ibid., 479.
[5] Ibid., 478.
[6] Ibid., 478.
[7] Crowder, "Indirect Rule: French and British Style,"199.
[8] Ibid., 199.
[9] Ibid., 200.

fulfilling highly despised operations, and because the chief rarely symbolized the traditional authority of the region, he was loathed in most parts of West Africa.[10] The chiefs became a "scapegoat…made responsible for the collection of money and men."[11]

British indirect rule is most well known for two crucial features: the expectations and encouragement of the colonies to maintain self-sufficient governance, and the emphasis of creating local policy and institutions in accordance with local customs and laws. The UK placed much greater reliance on the local elites to establish and maintain control of the territory, building institutions into the historical structure rather than uprooting and demolishing the system as seen in the French empire. The British opted to "coerce or co-opt" the local chiefs and elites to serve the colonial power.[12]

The British instilled a decentralized system governed mainly through localized and traditional institutions, overseen by a few colonial officers. While French authority and governance remained centered in Paris (indeed, some colonial subjects went on to represent the colony in the French National Parliament), colonial power in the British colonies remained in the hands of the local elite and within the historical structures. The British power rarely intervened in terms of the authority of the local chief. The British colonial officer acted merely as an "advisor."[13] Promoting and encouraging self-sufficiency, the British attempted to help sculpt and guide the local authority in the colony, acting as an addition to the local system.[14] Maintenance and creation of social services and government conduct remained mainly in the hands of the native elites and traditional structures of society.

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[10] Crowder, "Indirect Rule: French and British Style," 200.
[11] Ibid., 201.
[12] Blanton,"Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa," 479.
[13] Ibid., 498.
[14] Lauren Morris MacLean, "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa: An Institutionalists Analysis of Colonial Rule and State Social Policies in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 37.3 (2001): 70.

Leaving traditional powers and hierarchy in place, the British adopted a "divide and rule" plan by reinforcing traditional ethnic cleavages, thus dispelling any mobilization and alliances against the British colonial rule.[15] Exploiting these cleavages ensured the British would remain in power. The "divide and rule" philosophy created an unranked system of ethnic stratification, further inhibiting the creation of a dominant ethnic group and ambiguous class lines.[16] The indirect rule system relied heavily on the relationship formed between the colonial officer and the chief managing the local tribe, village, or region. The UK system pressured and supported the colonial officers to learn the local culture and confer with the native head of authority for policy prescriptions.[17]

Now, taking the previous notes on the differences between British and French colonization, we can begin to apply both to the startling differences seen in the past decade between Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. These stated differences between British and French colonization help explain the diverging historical and political routes of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. The British ruled Ghana through a decentralized state system, overseeing the many diverging ethnic groups through the reliance on the local structure and hierarchy of the chiefs. The idea was to supplement existing authority, with an emphasis on the extended family. The French in Cote d'Ivoire dismantled the existing political structure, disregarding the power and history the native subjects placed on the governing local chief. The French saw the colonial state as an extension of France, and governed with a highly centralized bureaucracy and a chief with limited authority who was cooperative to French aims.[18]

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[15] Blanton, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa," 479.
[16] Ibid., 481.
[17] Crowder, "Indirect Rule: French and British Style," 203.
[18] MacLean, "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa: An Institutionalists Analysis of Colonial Rule and State Social Policies in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire," 65.

While the French developed a direct link to the subjects of Cote d'Ivoire, the British reinforced tradition in Ghana, with limited involvement, especially after independence. As we will see in the remainder of the paper, Cote d'Ivoire remained highly dependent on economic, military, and cultural support after independence. Once this support diminished, institutions, lacking a base, began to fail, inspiring an upsurge in dormant ethnic and religious cleavages.

## 2. Historical Perspectives

*"To live is to choose. But to choose well, you must know who you are and what you stand for, where you want to go and why you want to get there."*

- Kofi Annan

In order to thoroughly analyze both Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana in terms of present day stability, or lack thereof, one must look into the recent past of both nations, illuminating not only differences, but also similarities that have evolved. Divided into three short sections, this part of the paper will discuss present day similarities seen in both nations, their respective recent histories (colonization to present), as well as a brief overview of pre-colonial times. By analyzing the history of both nations, we will see the diverging development paths both Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana have traveled despite the obvious similarities.

### 2.1 Present-Day Similarities

There are four factors that increase or help determine the likelihood of civil conflict in a nation: colonial history, religion, economy and geography.[19]

Though colonization by the French versus the British led to stark differences in institutions and ethnic stratification, both Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana spent nearly the same amount of time as a colony, during the same period. Ghana was a British colony between 1902 and 1957,

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[19] Ragnhild Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," *Center for the Study of Civil War* (2008) 2.

when the nation gained independence. The French ruled Cote d'Ivoire from 1893 until independence in 1960. It is important to note that in Ghana, independence was a welcome and celebrated event for the population, including the native leaders. In Cote d'Ivoire, on the other hand, leaders actually favored remaining a French colony for reasons of political gain, but the French, severely crippled after World War II, could not afford the extra resources.[20]

Religion, a salient polarizing factor, has shown throughout history to form extremely frictional cleavages. While religious differences in and of themselves are typically not enough to cause conflict, marginalizing one group over another further highlights animosities between groups, bringing salience to any grievances. Both Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana face similar religious fissures, dividing the northern population from the southern. Islam is dominant in the north, while the majority of Christians live in the south. Though the groups range slightly in percentage size, with Cote d'Ivoire having a 35 percent Muslim population, 25 percent Christian, and Ghana holding 16 percent Muslim, 68 percent Christian, both religions represent major groups within the total population. The remaining population, 40 percent in Cote d'Ivoire and 16 percent in Ghana, consists of indigenous or animist religions. These populations in both nations predominantly live towards the more sparsely populated interior in small villages.[21]

The two nations also have comparable levels of economic development; both being classified as low-income developing economies.[22]  Though the Western world once called Cote d'Ivoire the miracle of Africa with annual growth rates averaging upwards of 7 percent until the late 1980s, annual growth rate declined to a modest 2.3 percent in 2008. Ghana's growth rate has

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[20] Robert E. Handloff, ed., *Ivory Coast: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1988).
[21] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs: Cote d'Ivoire, 2010,
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2846.htm.
[22] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 3.

remained fairly slow but stable since the late 1980s, with 3.5 percent in 2009.[23] Both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire rely heavily on an export economy, mainly in cocoa, timber, gold and diamonds. Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire rank 14th and 18th, respectively, for countries producing diamonds.[24] Oil reserves in both nations in the past decade have further bolstered their revenue.[25]

Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana share similar geography and populations as well. Both countries share borders with one another, with a tropical south and more arid north. Small, rolling hills form in the north, though both countries are not particularly mountainous.[26] Thus, terrain is comparable in both cases. Ghana's estimated population size for 2010 is 24 million people, with Cote d'Ivoire's being 22 million. Both nations play host to more than 60 ethnic groups.[27] These ethnic groups can be classified in smaller clusters, four in Cote d'Ivoire and six in Ghana.[28] Minimized based upon shared culture, history, and many times language, Cote d'Ivoire's main groupings represent each region. The East Atlantic is home to the Akan, the West Atlantic hosts the Kru, to the northwest are the Mande peoples, and to the east of them, the Voltaic.[29] In Ghana, the five major ethnic groups include the Akan, inhabiting nearly the whole of the south and west of the Black Volta, the Ewe in the southeast, the southern coastal plains host the Guan, the Ga-Adangbe inhabit the Accra plains, and the MoleDagbane live in the north.[30] Most of the population in either country can trace their roots back to the Akan ethnic community. Historical records show the Akan groups, the most influential in both Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, as having migrated from the north to inhabit the coastal and forest regions of the south in present-day Ghana around the 13th century. The Akans then moved further into the eastern portions of Cote

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[23] U.S. Department of State: Cote d'Ivoire, 2008.
[24] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 4.
[25] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs: Ghana, 2010.
[26] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 4.
[27] U.S. Department of State: Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, 2010.
[28] Handloff.
[29] Ibid.
[30] U.S. Library of Congress, Ghana, A Country Study, 1994, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/ghtoc.html.

d'Ivoire, creating the Baoule community. Today, the Baoule accounts for 15 percent of the population in Cote d'Ivoire, while the Ashanti, the largest Akan group in Ghana, roughly 19 percent of the population.[31]

Though the cultural landscape, economic background and religious makeup have many basic similarities, the divergence seen today is a byproduct of the sense of threat groups perceive and the type of regimes implemented during and after independence.

## 3. History of Cote d'Ivoire

Today, prospects for stable democracy for Cote d'Ivoire remain relatively bleak and still far out on the horizon. Despite recent elections in November 2010 that were deemed to be fair and honest, much of the same issues that exacerbated the civil war in 2002 have not been resolved, and many of the same politicians that helped to polarize the population over those issues remain in power. Analyzing history will help to see when and where today's frictional stress points, mainly between the north and south, emerged.

### 3.1 Pre-colonization

Though the Sudanic empires of the region influenced Cote d'Ivoire through trade and instilling new traditions, the impact on historical Cote d'Ivoire was less than many of the surrounding regions. Much more sparsely populated, many living in Cote d'Ivoire prior to European colonization lived in isolated villages, predominantly in the north or the south. Because of this, the state remained more loosely organized than that of its more populated neighbors.[32] Though traditional structures were present before colonization, they did not have the same region-wide

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[31] Handloff, last modified 1988.
[32] Ibid.

recognition as in Ghana. The coast of Cote d'Ivoire, unlike that of neighboring Ghana, could not be used as a seaport, with rocky outcroppings not conducive to trade. Because of this, while pre-colonial influences such as the North African trade merchants as well as teachings of Islam did reach the northern regions of the country, the south remained relatively secluded.[33] It wasn't until the French started expanding their previous outposts into the interior of the nation that the whole nation truly felt the effects of the Europeans.

*3.2 The French Period*

Though French missionaries initially landed in Cote d'Ivoire in 1637, the country was not recognized as a colony until 1893, when France settled boundary lines with Liberia and the United Kingdom. From then until 1958, Cote d'Ivoire was administered from Paris as a constituent of the Federation of French West Africa. Gabriel Angoulvant became the first governor of Cote d'Ivoire in 1906, and, having no prior experience with governance in Africa, sought a forceful conquest (labeled as pacification) of the colony.[34] After powerful military excursions to dissipate any resistance, the local rulers (chiefs) were coerced to comply with French colonial incentives, with the perceived agreement that in return, the French would leave local structure and customs intact, and not interfere with the traditional leadership.[35] Unfortunately, the French did not abide by their agreement, often deporting and quelling local chiefs as "instigators of revolt."[36] The resulting governance system was headed in Paris until 1958, allowing little space for political participation by the Ivoirians.[37]

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[33] Handloff, last edited 1988.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

Vestiges of assimilation policy remained deeply entrenched in the rule of the native peoples. Though the natives were officially French subjects, they enjoyed only limited rights to citizenship or representation in either Africa or France.[38] French colonial officers demolished traditional power invested in the local chiefs, implementing a hierarchical, centrally administrated government that focused on the nuclear family rather than the customary importance the natives placed on the extended family and tribe.

After World War II, France granted Ivoirians the right to organize politically. The Overseas Reform Act of 1956 transferred powers from Paris to territorial governments, and abolished many inequalities in voting. Cote d'Ivoire became independent on August 7, 1960. The country's recent political history is closely tied to that of the first elected president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny.

*3.3 Felix Houphouet-Boigny's Rule*

Houphouet-Boigny first emerged on the political scene after being elected to the Constituent Assembly, representing Cote d'Ivoire in the French National Assembly from 1946-1959.[39] Heavily approved by the French, Houphouet-Boigny reigned as president from 1960 until his death in 1993. With an entrenched belief in strong management and organization of the state, Houphouet-Boigny based much of his post-colonial institutions on building upon the bureaucratic institutions left by the French.[40] Wanting to bolster and maintain ties with France, Houphouet-Boigny delayed an "Ivoirianization" of the government and economy, keeping many of the Europeans in power.[41] Though Leftist analysts and African intellectuals condemned this

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[38] U.S. Department of State: Cote d'Ivoire, 2010.
[39] U.S. Department of State: Cote d'Ivoire, 2010.
[40] Handloff, last edited 1988.
[41] Ibid.

and his rule as the essence of neocolonialism, the nation's stability and growth provided an obvious contrast to the struggling neighboring states.[42]   Marked by initial economic and development prosperity, Houphouet-Boigny's promotion of market capitalism and attracting foreign investment lead to markedly different economic policies from those seen in other post-colonial African countries.[43]

In spite of stability and success, growth stalled once cocoa prices dropped in the mid 1980s. Critics of Cote d'Ivoire's radically liberal economic policies warned of the disaster of "growth without development", claiming that an economy so dependent on so few agricultural exports could be detrimental.[44] Cote d'Ivoire's per capita GDP fell by an average of 1.9 percent per year after the cocoa price collapsed, culminating in a 38 percent decrease in standard of living.[45] This recession revealed a country rife with development problems, many fostered by Houphouet-Boigny's lax land ownership policies and regulations, plus an unhealthy dependence on French military and economic assistance.

As with many countries, Cote d'Ivoire's prosperity and stability throughout the 1960s and 70s prompted a large influx of immigrants from the surrounding countries, especially from the poor, predominantly Muslim north, as well as from France and Lebanon. In the early 1970s, of the four to four-and-a-half million peoples immigrating, about 50,000 were metropolitan Frenchman and another 100,000 were French-passport holders. Soon, about a quarter of the burgeoning population could be classified as foreigners.[46] So long as growth and stability continued, the country could sustain these demographic factors. However, once the long-standing

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[42] Daniel Chirot, "The Debacle in Cote d'Ivoire," *Journal of Democracy*, 17.2 (2006) 63.
[43] Chirot, "The Debacle in Cote d'Ivoire," 64.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

recession hit, these factors turned into major sources of friction, questioning national identity within the struggling population.

Land rights, before colonization and even up until the early 1990s, were largely communally owned.[47] This was supported and promoted by Houphouet-Boigny, through his policy of whoever cultivated the land, owned it. When land was abundant and labor scarce, this system worked well. Once immigrants poured into the country, coupled with the growing environmental problem of deforestation, and the cocoa price crash of the 1980s, the previous land management policies became disastrous.[48] The natives called for their land to be "returned", leading to a "foreigners versus nationals" mentality, where identity confusion became a crisis.

*3.4 "Ivoirite" Frame of Mind*

By the time of Houphouet-Boigny's death in 1993, the situation was dire, and the political and cultural environment was on the verge of collapse. Surfacing problems included friction in the southwest between returning original locals and predominantly Muslim immigrant northerners, a failing economy very dependent on declining yields from the destroyed cocoa trees, and heavy French support. All of these factors failed to foster the creation of efficient and legitimate institutions, and with the decrease of French assistance, the country lacked a base on which to build.

When Houphouet-Boigny died in office in 1993, Henri Konan Bedie succeeded him. Bedie sought to block many reforms Houphouet-Boigny implemented to help foster growth in the poor north, further accentuating the division between the two regions and negating any

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[47] Chirot, "The Debacle in Cote d'Ivoire," 67.
[48] Ibid., 67.

progress the previous administration had begun in alleviating those grievances.[49] It was between

1994 and 1995 that the term "Ivoirite" first came to political prominence, and it was this concept

that has disintegrated any political cohesion the country may have once had. The "Ivoirite"

concept implies that for one to be considered a native Ivorian, one has to culturally align with the

South over the North.[50] Citizenship laws demanding proof that both parents had been born within

the borders passed, a difficult task as border lines in the north had been extremely fluid during

and shortly after colonial times. As such, the new citizenship laws largely disenfranchised the

north, leaving them with little representation in the government.[51] "Ivoirite" became the ability to

participate not only in elections, but also in a share of scarce assets, such as jobs and property

ownership, along with citizenship.[52] Since 1995, the country has been grappling with a severe

case of xenophobia and religious/ethnic marginalization as each successive leader uses "Ivoirite"

as a means to rally support and promote his own ethnic group over others.

The 2000 election was held on time, only without participation from the northerners.

Indeed, Alassane Dramane Outtara, former Prime Minister under Houphouet-Boigny, was

banned from running, and subsequently became the northerners' "political champion."[53] During

this time, relations with France changed, and no help was sent to support the relatively weak

national army to dispel any uprisings. Newcomer Laurent Gbagbo won the contested election,

but northerners protested, calling for new elections with fair representation. In response,

gendarmes attacked northerners living in the southern capitol of Abidjan.[54] Further accelerating

the deterioration of stability throughout 1994-1999, Bedie purged the military and civil service of

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[49] Ibid., 68.
[50] Chirot, "The Debacle in Cote d'Ivoire," 68.
[51] Ibid., 68.
[52] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 16.
[53] Chirot, "The Debacle in Cote d'Ivoire," 68.
[54] Ibid., 71.

all northerners and replaced them with his own ethnic group and supporters.[55] Paranoia and mistrust based on national identities seeped into communities, resulting in fear of "outsiders."[56]

*3.5 Outbreak of Civil War*

Former ousted Muslim military officers banded together to attempt a coup in September of 2002. Though the attempt failed, the faction was able to take control of most of the north, and enjoyed very strong support there A series of onslaughts between the north and the south ensued; southerners openly attacked northerners living in the south, and vice versa. Fearing another Rwanda, the French sent in a force of 4,000 to quell the violence, stationing themselves between the north and south.[57]

In response to French protection of the northern rebels, not only did government-sponsored planes fire on the French base, but militias also attacked French civilians living in Abidjan. With the remaining French citizens fleeing the violence, little incentive or interests remained for France to stay in Cote d'Ivoire. French investments were no longer worth much in the war-torn economy, and, along with the deep resentment from colonial times held by many of the natives, French involvement became bitterly contested by both the rebel north and the government-held south.[58]

After several peace talks and disarmaments, both sides are now at an uneasy armistice, awaiting election results that have again been delayed until late February or early March 2011. Problems still remain, however; there is still the same economic stagnation, ethnic polarization, and political opposition that have been on the scene since 1993. Gbabgo and Outtarra face a

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[55] Ibid., 71.
[56] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 13.
[57] Chirot, The Debacle in Cote d'Ivoire," 72.
[58] Ibid., 73.

runoff election next year to decide the fate of the new government. As for the nation and its people, they continue to suffer from the after effects of ethnic and religious stratification, rampant corruption, and a failing economy.

## 4. History of Ghana

After seventeen years of slow but steady growth, three fair and open elections, and two peaceful turnovers of power, Ghana has become a beacon of hope in the devastated region of South Saharan Africa. Today, Ghana is a nation others in the area strive to imitate.

### 4.1 Pre-colonization

In the ninth century, the Arab writer Al Yaqubi designated ancient Ghana (north of present-day Ghana, near Sudan) as one of the three most organized and influential states in the surrounding area.[59] Not only recognized by the booming and developing trade partnership with the North African merchants in terms of gold, the Kingdom of Ghana was also revered for the wealth in its courts and its military might.[60] Soon, trade routes stretching from the north to the south began to include the Akan peoples settled in the south of present day Ghana, stimulating this area's development and growth, as well as establishing the Akan's dominance and influence in the region.[61]

Though the early rulers of ancient Ghana were usually not Muslims themselves, they welcomed Muslim scribes and healers, expanding trade and influence with their northern neighbors. As a result, Islamic influences became heavily entrenched in the north of present day Ghana, and some of the activities of the merchants, such as writing and certain practices, became

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[59] U.S. Library of Congress: Ghana, 1994.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

a part of the culture in the southern Akan regions.[62] The Ashanti, a subgroup of the Akans, held the most power and influence in the south, forming a highly organized state throughout the 18th century through military takeovers during the Asantehene Opoku War in 1750.[63] By the end of the 18th century, the Ashanti kingdom had expanded its rule over what is today considered Ghana. This highly organized kingdom, with an established north-south trade route and experienced military, is what the European merchants sought to control throughout the 19th century.[64] The British, upon finding such an elaborate state, shaped the new colony with these institutions in mind, and adapted some areas through coercion to better control their own economic interests.

*4.2 The British Period*

After nearly thirty years of military takeovers, the British expanded their coastal fortresses to the interior and northern regions of the country, establishing a firm control over the territory.[65] Ghana (then known as Gold Coast) became a colony of the United Kingdom in 1902. Governed through customary indirect rule used for many of the British colonies, colonial officers utilized traditional institutions, including empowering the local chiefs, to maintain control. The structure of the colonial government had its roots in traditional forms of governance, where village councils and chiefs held responsibility for the welfare of their people in their specific localities.[66] These councils and chiefs ruled with the consent of their people, not by right, and were chosen by the ruling elites with the general public's approval.[67] The British continued this tradition,

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

though occasionally unseating chiefs that were not congruent with colonial interests.[68] This indirect rule in Ghana had the distinct advantage of maintaining law and order accepted by the native peoples.

In 1925, provincial chiefs were given power in all territories of the colony, mostly to provide an overarching function.[69] Following this accord, the Native Administration Ordinance was formed in 1927 to clarify the powers of the chiefs. Chiefs and councils were given key responsibilities to govern and define customary law, as well as judicial powers. Though the British colonial government had to approve customary law, the foundations were formed in acceptance with local tradition and hierarchies. In 1957, following a stage of decolonization that somewhat reversed principles of indirect rule to more firmly implant democratic institutions, Ghana became the first African colony to gain independence under the nationalist leader Kwame Nkrumah.

*4.3 Kwame Nkrumah's "Pan-African" Movement and Decolonization*

The United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) formed in 1947 as the first nationalist movement of Ghana, and was led by educated elites in the country as part of a decolonization strategy. Their goal was to achieve self-governance as quickly as possible.[70] Though political organizations had existed under the colonial state, the UGCC sought to replace policies of chieftaincy and indirect rule with a legislature made up of educated peoples strictly from Ghana.[71] Despite being a radical departure from past policies, these educated political leaders sought to implement change incrementally, channeling the power of legitimacy the chiefs had sustained throughout colonial

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

times by first creating regional assemblies. These regional assemblies provided a forum and voice for the local councils and chiefs.[72] This slow and adaptive change, however, was abruptly halted once Kwame Nkrumah and his socialist leanings came to power, but was later revitalized with the coup and subsequent rule of Jerry Rawlings.

Following independence, Kwame Nkrumah sought modernization and development as a socialist state under one party rule.[73] While Nkrumah's reign was highly criticized by those opting for greater liberalization, the ideologies he established had lasting effects, contributing in part to the stability seen today. From the beginning, Nkrumah promoted a pan-African identity, seeking to break ties with former colonial rule and create a national identity.[74] To popularize this movement, Nkrumah established the Committee on Youth Organization (CYO) garnering political support at the grassroots level. The CYO comprised of those less privileged and sought to alleviate such common problems as unemployment, political disenfranchisement, and economic disadvantages the educated elite of the UGCC often overlooked.[75] These nationalistic ideas and later social projects attempted to better balance the previous unequal share of wealth between the north and the south. Prior to these projects, the Christian south was disproportionably wealthy and more developed then the disadvantaged and poorer Muslim north. Though Nkrumah changed Ghanaian politics in a revolutionary way by consolidating power, even at one point declaring himself "president for life,"[76] the structural base of the state that had resonated with the people during colonial times remained. For instance, the decentralization of policies and the inclusion of different classes and ethnicities at the local level still persisted. Even

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[72] Ibid.
[73] U.S. Department of State: Ghana, 2010
[74] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 18.
[75] Leslie, "Kwame Nkrumah's Contribution to the Decolonization Process in Africa", Africa Speaks, 2004, http://www.africaspeaks.com/leslie/1609.html.
[76] Ibid.

though the power at the top was consolidating under Nkrumah, his policies were aimed at maintaining unity among all ethnic groups, encouraging trade unionism, and allowing policies to vary according to different localities.[77]

One of the equalizing projects put forth by the state was the 1987 Program of Action and Measures to Address the Social Costs of Adjustment. The state thought that by enacting a strategy of social welfare programs that were evenly distributed and inclusive, civil conflict could largely be prevented.[78] Another such policy was the Avoidance of Discrimination Act of 1957, which banned political parties structured along ethnic, religious, or regional lines.[79] Though the wealth redistribution has been relatively limited, it is an emblematic policy shown to have significantly decreased the prominence of the north-south cleavage.[80]

*4.4 Military Rule Under Rawlings*

Upset by Nkrumah's further consolidation of power into what looked like an authoritarian state, coupled with an economic downturn, a military coup ended his time in office in 1966. Though a civilian government was reinstated two years after the coup, the continued recession brought about in part by a sharp decline in cocoa prices prompted military officers to again intervene, this time installing a dictatorship lasting until 1979. Discouraged by the lack of change and stimulation in the economy, younger officers, led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, revolted, took power, and created a new republic under his leadership.[81] Rawlings functioned as the chairman of the military, suspending the constitution until further stability and levels of prosperity could be achieved. Though this quick succession of military coups depicts a state of

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 18.
[79] Ibid., 20.
[80] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 19.
[81] U.S. Department of State: Ghana, 2010.

anarchy, underlying principles of democracy remained. Each military government held power relatively shortly, reinstating a civilian government quickly after purging the previous government.[82] After Rawling's coup in 1979, elections were still held on time, though the legitimacy was obviously questionable. In 1982, Rawlings and his Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) began a campaign to decentralize government from the capitol of Accra to local communities and regions through local councils.[83]

*4.5 Free and Fair*

Under domestic and international pressure, the PNDC drafted a new constitution to re-implement democracy and multiparty elections in 1992. The previous ban on multiparty elections was lifted, and both parliament and presidential elections were held in late 1992. Jerry Rawlings was inaugurated as president in January of 1993. The elections in 2000 marked the first presidential turnover, as Rawlings had to step down because of a two-term limit. The 2004 elections ushered in current president John Atta Mills. Ghana's three presidential and parliamentary elections since 1996 have all been deemed free and fair.[84]

Decentralization, beginning first with the indirect rule fostered by the United Kingdom and then further promoted by Jerry Rawlings, allowed for a greater civic Ghanaian identity. Upon independence, the nation started with traditionally based institutions and hierarchies of power. Though in general a hierarchical structure could suppress minority groups in Ghana, with British reliance on this only exacerbating the problem, the customary structure constructed a base from which to build. From this, leaders were able to stress a national identity and cultural

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[82] U.S. Library of Congress: Ghana, 1994.
[83] U.S. Department of State: Ghana, 2010.
[84] U.S. Department of State: Ghana, 2010.

neutrality, promoting shared practices, values and customs.[85] In Ghana, unlike in Cote d'Ivoire, the population has a clear national identity; they know what it means to be Ghanaian.

## 5. Political Development

This next section will turn towards the political development of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. Up to this point in the paper, I have sketched an essential base, grounded in historical factors and influential policies, from which to build an argument concerning civil conflict. Now, I will explore two primary aspects of political development; land rights and social welfare programs. In this section and the next, I will argue that French assimilation policy failed to build a foundation of well-rooted institutions in Cote d'Ivoire. Once French influence receded, Cote d'Ivoire crumbled into ethnic conflict from a confused national identity and institutions not based in any historical relevance. In juxtaposition, British indirect rule reinforced historical hierarchies and institutions in Ghana, which allowed for a solid nation-building base and the democratic success story seen today.

### 5.1 Land Rights: an imperative equalizer

In their study of institutions as a factor in economic growth, Daron Acemoglu et al (2002) claim: "Of primary importance to economic outcomes are the economic institutions in society."[86] Without a sound structure of property rights, Acemoglu, et al argue that the people will have little incentive to develop and cultivate efficient technology and promote the growth of human

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[85] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 17.
[86] Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James Robinson, "Institutions as a Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117.4 (2002): 389.

capital.[87]  Fair property rights sustain and foster efficient production procedures, which lead to "good institutions" followed by economic growth and development.

For land reform in post-colonial and developing countries, as well as institutions as a whole, there should be an appropriate blend between a socially accepted customary law and a modernized, state statutory law. This is what the IMF and the World Bank so crucially missed with their liberalization policies in the past. For laws and institutions to be effective, they must be socially acceptable, and to be socially acceptable, there must be some historical basis familiar to the people. Joseph Blocker (2006) offers this insight when proscribing policy aims for land reform in Ghana.

In Ghana today, chiefs and local councils mainly oversee and exercise land laws in each village or region. Though state overhead has made its influence down to the local level, the progress has been slow, with the effects gradually taking hold. Customary law in Ghana states that all land has an owner, or multiple owners, with the chief possessing the highest title.[88] Working down the hierarchy, all other holders have stake in lesser rights of ownership or transfer.[89]  The procedure of transfer and ownership of land has not only evolved from tradition, but takes into account the social and economic needs of the area.[90] This customary law builds on the traditional role of the chief in society, making an impact on the average Ghanaian's life.[91] Though the 1992 constitution, the most influential piece of legislation in contemporary Ghana, institutes a broad oversight of land ownership in the country, the law recognizes the chief's traditional ownership of the lands.[92] This is the key factor making all the difference.  Most

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[87] Acemoglu, et al, "Institutions as a Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth," 389.
[88] Joseph Blocher, "Building on Custom: Land Tenure Policy and Economic Development in Ghana." *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal*, 9 (2006): 180.
[89] Blotcher, "Building on Custom: Land Tenure Policy and Economic Development in Ghana," 180.
[90] Ibid., 181.
[91] Ibid., 180.
[92] Ibid., 185.

scholars agree that societal change comes incrementally, not as part of some shock therapy procedure. For a policy or law to be legitimate, it must be acknowledged by the people, and to be acknowledged there must be some customary root the people recognize. In the building process, statutory laws should decentralize, becoming flexible and accountable to local variations and thus also helping to foster social acceptance.

In Ghana today, much different from Cote d'Ivoire, land rights are legalized through the chieftaincy institution. The chief deals with local disputes and regulation. Although there are discrepancies within the state, especially around the urban areas, the people accept the customary law, and Westernized, statutory law is slowly seeping in. Working within cultural traditions, the government is even directing a new pilot program, giving chiefs the title of "Customary Land Secretariats" to more justly administer land disputes.[93]

Cote d'Ivoire today is experiencing the tragic aftereffects and consequences of lax land laws, coupled with devastating environmental degradation and an economy primarily dependent on one agricultural export. Much along the French assimilation policy lines, Cote d'Ivoire does not recognize any customary land laws. Instead, there is a centralized law and procedure that causes confusion at the local level and sparks frictions between varied ethnicities. These frictions are even further exacerbated because of the high influx of foreigners that came to the country during the economic boom time in the 1960s and 70s.

The land problems are complex and multi-faceted. Though chiefs are not used to regulate land disputes, neither are there many recognized state courts to deal with these conflicts. In the rare instances when there is a ruling, the people usually do not abide by it.[94] Due to the French centralized governance model, when a chief does exercise his authority, often the migrant

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[93] Richard Cook, "Land Rights in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, *id21 Natural Resources*, 6 (2008): 1.
[94] Cook, "Land Rights in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, " 1.

does not recognize his traditional power or his ruling, raising even more issues. Additionally, the enormous "foreign" segment of the population (most are now actually second-generation immigrants, born in Cote d'Ivoire, but still seen as outsiders) causes serious unrest in the community. Furthermore, the government disregards customary law, which is familiar with and accepted by the vast majority. Two more problems have added fuel to the fire; deforestation and fluid land laws over the past thirty years that were promoted by Felix Houphouet-Boigny.

Rent-seeking exploitation and a land competition that systematically favored migrants led to deforestation in Cote d'Ivoire, making the land produce very low yields of cocoa today.[95] The Ivorian state supported a property rights concept that treated land as an unlimited resource, allowing mass production at very low cost and as quickly as possible without consideration for long-term use impacts.[96] With so little cost (the land only had to be cleared of forest and cocoa tress planted), barriers to entry were remarkably low, promoting pioneer fronts.[97] While this worked well for a time, the drawback resulted when, after several planting cycles, the cost of planting new cocoa trees grew exponentially. The land, from bad farming practices, lost its nutrients and subsequently the yields from the trees decreased and were of lesser quality. The solution then was to fertilize, but this was a cost many farmers could not afford, and while the ability to create a pioneer front was available, little incentive remained to cultivate the land correctly.[98] These new frontiers eventually maxed out their limit, cocoa production output fell, and, since the country heavily depended upon cocoa exports, the economy sank. On top of all this, once the land became scarce, the native population clamored to reclaim "their land" from

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[95] Dwayne Woods, "The Tragedy of the Cocoa Pod: Rent-Seeking, land and ethnic Conflict in Ivory Coast," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41.4 (2003): 642.
[96] Ibid., 646.
[97] Ibid., 643.
[98] Ibid., 643

the foreigners who had for years cultivated it.[99] Cote d'Ivoire then entered a period where it became cheaper to violently fight over the land than try to mobilize labor and capital costs to maintain forest rents.[100]

From colonial times, the French operated the land in Cote d'Ivoire as "vacant and ownerless."[101] They did not establish firm property rights or use customary law to form a base. Instead, because Cote d'Ivoire was sparsely inhabited, the French encouraged migrants from the surrounding areas to come and work on the land. Once Felix Houphouet-Boigny came to power, he defined the relationship between the land and the people in a way that promoted his preferences and the preferences of his own particular ethnic group, the Baoule.[102] Houphouet-Boigny declared that the land belonged to those who cultivated it.[103] Such an idea of fluid land ownership appealed to migrants, who could then obtain land they cleared or gain access to goods in local communities. This slogan also put pressures on local communities to accept migrants. In exchange for labor migrants often were allocated land in place of other forms of payment.[104]

In just over twenty years, Cote d'Ivoire destroyed an estimated ten million hectares of forestland.[105] Not only that, but international cocoa prices significantly decreased and then stagnated in the late 1980s. This produced an outcome where an even greater emphasis was put on villages to produce more and more cocoa, fueling a viscous cycle. As forestland became increasingly rare and profits from cocoa decreased, a heightened pressure to own land emerged.[106] Next, a citizenship crisis developed: at the national level there was a push to delegitimize politicians based upon nationality and ethnicity, and at the local level, a competition

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[99] Woods, "The Tragedy of the Cocoa Pod: Rent-Seeking, Land and Ethnic Conflict in Ivory Coast," 643.
[100] Ibid.. 643
[101] Ibid., 644.
[102] Ibid., 645.
[103] Ibid., 645
[104] Ibid., 646.
[105] Ibid., 648.
[106] Ibid., 648.

for the land based upon indigenous versus foreign ownership.[107] The position of migrants began to dramatically change in the 1990s. Prior to this shift, migrants held similar rights as the natives, primarily the ability to own land and vote.[108] After this shift, however, public support increased for a strict definition of national identity, the aim being to impede foreigners from voting and owning land. As many of these "foreigners" had actually been born in the country, coupled with past fluid citizenship laws, this new aim ripped apart the previous stability and fractured society into ethnic divisions.

These two very similar nations took two different paths of governance that began during colonial times and further spread through all institutions and development after independence. While indirect rule in Ghana supported customary law and incremental change in society, assimilation policy in Cote d'Ivoire suppressed socially accepted traditions with the resulting centralized policies never becoming completely established or accepted. Very different political environments resulted; one that further increased stability and democratization in Ghana, while the other inhibiting nation building and growth in Cote d'Ivoire.

*5.2 Social Welfare Programs*

Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana exhibit a pronounced dissimilarity in their respective social welfare programs that have developed during and after colonialism. What accounts for this variation is endemic to the differences in French and British styles of colonization. Though Acemoglu, et al (2006) argue that endogenous factors influence each nation's institutions, in both Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana it was an exogenous force (the colonial power) that set in motion the type of institutions each country would later adopt and mold into their own.

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[107] Woods, "The Tragedy of the Cocoa Pod: Rent-Seeking, Land and Ethnic Conflict in Ivory Coast," 648.
[108] Ibid., 649.

In Ghana, the government uses a decentralized system to further support the pre-existing social networks aimed towards the extended family and community. In Cote d'Ivoire, the centralized bureaucratic government suppresses most traditional forms of authority.[109] These actions taken by the respective governments have their beginnings linked to either French centralized or British decentralized colonial policy. French authorities shaped Cote d'Ivoire as a central bureaucracy and focused administrated policies at the nuclear family, a concept completely foreign to the indigenous population, where the idea of extended family and community is dominant. The French disposed of pre-colonial chieftaincy and in its place sought to implement a direct link between the state and the people, mostly through the head of the nuclear family.[110] In contrast, the decentralized system of government in Ghana aimed to sustain the local community, remaining sensitive to needs that vary between regions.[111] Though state building did not begin with European colonization, both countries were greatly influenced by the differing colonial frameworks and their effects on the relationship between the state and its citizenry. Thus, these disparate frameworks led to highly different conceptualizations of the state and established such contradictory political institutions between Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.

In Ghana, the British sought to build an informal and relaxed social welfare system that supplemented the pre-existing system under the local village chief. They saw their responsibility as adapting the village organization to meet the demand of modernization while at the same time fulfilling the goal of colonial self-sufficiency. Specifically, the British expected the Ghanaians to pay for their own social welfare costs from a decentralized and traditional tax system rooted in

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[109] MacLean, "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa: An Institutionalists Analysis of Colonial Rule and State Social Policies in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire," 65.
[110] Ibid., 65.
[111] Ibid., 65.

the power of the chief.[112] Though the public safety net was strictly limited in Ghana, social welfare programs were flexible and varied in order to fit the varied social needs at the local level, making it more available to the people.

During the same period in Cote d'Ivoire, the French colonial officers took a more hands-on approach to social welfare policies, seeking to disband the traditional importance of the extended family and promote the individual.[113] The French used nation-wide tax revenues to provide for a broad level social safety net, where most medical care was free and many citizens working within the government were well provided for.[114] In direct contrast to Ghana, many Ivoirians believed it was the responsibility of the French to provide social services. Having paid their taxes to the centralized authority, they felt entitled to protection and welfare under the state.[115]

Since the 1980s, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana have each pursued official policies of decentralization, attempting to enable people to take control of community activities and development at the local level.[116] These official policies were undertaken mainly to appease international donors wanting adjustment programs that provided more transparency and accountability in the government. Regardless of the similarity in their goals, the practice and success of decentralization in the two nations has varied greatly. For Ghana, decentralization was relatively easy to implement, having colonial vestiges of the policy already in place in their current institutions. The 110 District Assembly created in 1989 created a political body for each district and region that met a few times a year to discuss local issues. Most importantly, the local population elects 70% of this body, while the state, in consultation with the traditional elite in the

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[112] MacLean, "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa," 70.
[113] Ibid., 71.
[114] Ibid., 72.
[115] Ibid., 73.
[116] Ibid., 73.

area, appoints the remaining 30%.[117]  Continuing with the decentralization policies, in 1998 the state formed unit committees at the local level that meet more frequently, usually twice a month, to discuss local issues.  The majority of these members are also popularly elected. One of the main responsibilities of the unit committees is to organize and gather local labor to work on community infrastructure projects.  The unit committees also utilize the traditional role of the chief by acknowledging his power at village meetings. Thus, though without a doubt there have been some hiccups in the process, decentralization in Ghana has progressed relatively smoothly, with each regions benefiting from the localized infrastructure and welfare programs. No one ethnic group is favored or overlooked more than another, as unit committees are present in every region and vary depending upon the local need, instead of acting from a single recipe for growth and development being implemented from a centralized bureaucracy.

In Cote d'Ivoire, no locally elected assembly exists to further decentralization policies. Despite the official role decentralization is supposed to have in the national government, decentralization looks and feels more like extending the central bureaucracy in to far-off regions, but no representative body is popularly elected in these localities.[118] The state is simply attempting to close the gap between each village and the central government. Needles to say, success has been very limited. Initiatives to expand the bureaucracy have been slow, with many officials admitting that programs have not yet reached the local level, and little change could be seen.[119] Not only has decentralization failed to bring local administrative branches to the villages, but also the traditional role of the chief still remains unrecognized. Following colonial policies, the chief is much less integral to the state than in Ghana, continuing to act as the aforesaid "mouthpiece" to the central government. In contrast, the local and national government

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[117] MacLean, "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa," 73.
[118] Ibid., 74.
[119] Ibid., 74.

still frequently consult Ghanaian chiefs, and many disputes are resolved through the chiefs' rulings.

The two models of social welfare programs implemented in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana today follow similar patterns laid out in colonial times by the British and French. In Ghana, there has been a continued policy of focusing their programs on those in most need, regardless of ethnic or religious make-up, using private providers, such as the church. Cote d'Ivoire has focused its programs in a more generalized way using state funds. This resulted in greater decentralization in Ghana than in Cote d'Ivoire. However, it must be noted that both social welfare systems nearly collapsed in the 1980s, due to an economic recession in the cocoa industry. The World Bank advised many of the structural adjustment programs that came from this recession, yet despite this similarity both countries implemented these programs based upon colonial legacies. Ghana continues to promote building relaxed social support systems that rely upon the extended family or village, while Cote d'Ivoire continues to dismantle those traditional structures in favor of more formal bureaucratic structures.[120] Furthermore, there are key differences in the implementation of these World Bank policies. Ghana has been able to respond to domestic problems more quickly by implementing cost recovery programs with ease from the late 1980s. Cote d'Ivoire, which implemented these measures more slowly, has had a more sluggish structural adjustment.

The role of the state is conceptualized differently in each country, resulting in more decentralized social network programs with local variances in Ghana that build upon existing traditional structures, as opposed to new institutions to empower the individual from a central government in Cote d'Ivoire. The key factor is the way in which decentralization has equalized the Ghanaians to one another, with institutions that equally represent and are effective at the

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[120] MacLean, "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa," 78.

local level. Whereas, in Cote d'Ivoire, the idea that the central government can introduce and force new institutions with no traditional resemblance to counter economic and social problems; the result being ineffective policies that often promote one group over another.

## 6. Religious and Ethnic Divides

Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1993) espouses the theory that cultural differences lie at the core of conflicts seen throughout the world. Though there are countless groups facing cultural differences that still coexist peacefully, these differences can serve as fodder for conflict. Both Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana must deal with a tenuous fault line that exists between a Muslim north and a Christian south. Over the past 17 years, Cote d'Ivoire's main struggle with political and social unrest has stemmed from this religious fault line, while Ghana has yet to escalate to a similar level of violence. Daniel N. Posner (2004) hypothesizes that it is the minority group size relative to the size of the political landscape that determines whether a fault line will escalate to political conflict. While size and mobilization of groups most certainly play a factor, in the case of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, the differences in religious and ethnic stability are rooted in the institutions formulated by the British and the French during colonization.

Cote d'Ivoire today grapples with two important religious and ethnic issues: 1.) The purging of the military based upon ethnic lines and 2.) The "Ivoirite" definition of exclusive nationalism that has plagued the country since its introduction by President Henri Konan Bedie in 1993. The land rights quarrel discussed in the previous section further exacerbates the situation. Moreover, all three are direct consequences of an uncertain national identity and historically irrelevant institutions erected by the French.

*6.1 Purging of the Military*

Once Henri Konan Bedie came to power in 1993 in Cote d'Ivoire, he quickly began a campaign with a priority to remove any opposition forces and replace key positions of power with people of his own ethnic group, the Baoule.[121] Bedie did this in both the government and the military, causing substantial inequalities at the elite levels. At the military level, Bedie forced both low and high ranking officers into exile in nearby Burkina Faso, dismissing them based upon ethnic and religious background. Many of these ex-militaries came from minority groups in the north where the majority was Muslim.[122] This ousted group then had a common level of grievance and identity, coupled with a geographic support base in the north. This same group later staged the coup in 1999, taking control over strong hold in the north of Cote d'Ivoire. While Felix Houphouet-Boigny was able to stave off major discontent that might have led to a group mobilization by ensuring that each group had some representation in the government, Bedie and his successors intentionally sought to stop this balancing practice.[123]

In contrast, polarization in the military in Ghana never occurred, primarily because the country's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, forged his nation on the basis of a pan-African identity with the Avoidance of Discrimination Act of 1957. State building has focused on promoting an inclusive nationalism.[124] Early laws were instated in the constitution of 1992 that even prohibited political parties formulated on ethnic lines.[125] It would be difficult for military factions challenging the state to form in Ghana, especially since there is a less clearly perceived ethnic separation between the north and the south.

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[121] Arnim Langer and Ukoha Ukiwo, "Ethnicity, Religion and the State in Ghana and Nigeria: Perceptions from the Street," *CRISE*, 2007, 25.
[122] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 24.
[123] Langer, , "Ethnicity, Religion and the State in Ghana and Nigeria: Perceptions from the Street," 26.
[124] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 20.
[125] Ibid., 17.

*6.3 Fostering "Ivoirite"*

Not only did Bedie purge the military, replacing key positions to create an ethnic composition according to his preference, but he also developed an "Ivoirite" ideology; a highly exclusive and powerful tool of political control.[126] This ideology later transcended to Bedie's successors, each molding the concept to favor their own ethnic group. "Ivoirite", in particular, stigmatizes and prohibits the north from political participation. Bedie, and now current President Laurent Gbagbo, uses this "ethnic-qua-nationalist strategy" to keep influential Northern politicians, primarily Alassane Outtara, from running for election.[127] In effect, not only does "Ivoirite" deny political representation to the north, it also limits citizenship and land ownership. This debate over national identity in Cote d'Ivoire has culminated in increasing violence against those deemed "foreign" from the north as well as northerners attacking southerners. This has generated a national panic over who is Ivoirian.[128]

The strategy in Ghana places emphasis on a civic Ghanaian identity over religious and ethnic differences. Ghana seeks to promote "cultural neutrality" in policies and elsewhere.[129] On public occasions, for example, the current standing president rotates between different cultural garbs, refusing to support any one group over another.[130] Unity has been a founding principle of Ghana since independence, and can be attributed to traditional institutions preserved by the British colonizers. These institutions protected symbolic practices, values and customs and provided a basis for acceptance by all down to the local levels, which has helped significantly to foster growth and stability today. Though this preservation of traditional institutions may have been unintentional, the outcomes have favored stability in Ghana.

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[126] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 16.
[127] Woods, "The Tragedy of the Cocoa Pod: Rent-Seeking, land and ethnic Conflict in Ivory Coast," 650.
[128] Ibid., 652.
[129] Nordas, "Identity Polarization and Conflict: State Building in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," 17.
[130] Ibid., 17.

**Concluding Remarks**

As of December 2010, renewed clashes of the government south and the rebel north continue to devastate Cote d'Ivoire. An election deemed to be free of corruption took place in early November, with a runoff scheduled in early 2011. However, current President Gbagbo and his followers declared the election results fraudulent on the basis that northern votes do not count. With the same political leaders reinforcing the same cultural and political wedge between the people for the past decade and a half, a move towards stability is tremulous at best, and most likely still years to come. This current violence and instability has not only allowed President Gbagbo to stay in power five years longer than the constitution allows, but also an economic recession and now stagnation, and a people distressed and uncertain of their national identity. Past grievances, such as a historically poor north, a purged political society, and lax land laws have mobilized groups against one another.

Ghanaians today are benefiting from a well-developed social cohesion that was fostered before independence. This social cohesion allows for the implementation of quality institutions, and is imperative for strengthening confidence in the government.[131] Citizens in Ghana trust the government, which allows for the short-term losses necessary for initial reforms, in order to implement long-term policies and institutions. The 2008 presidential elections had a very high voter turnout, were determined as corruption-free by international groups, and experienced no violence despite an extremely close victory margin of less than 1% for John Atta Mills.

Though both French and British styles of colonization left disastrous implications in their wake, in the particular case of Cote d'Ivoire, colonial vestiges have been much more difficult to overcome than in Ghana. The French, through their methods of suppressing local culture,

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[131] William Easterly, Jozef Ritzen and Michael Woolcock, "Social Cohesion, Institutions, and Growth," *Economics and Politics*, 18.2 (2006): 103.

practices, and traditions denied the Ivoirians the ability to formulate effective institutions the people would accept, further inhibiting a strong idea of national identity. This centralized bureaucratic form of government not only stifled the traditional power of the village chief, but social welfare programs implemented from a top-down approach lacked variance at the local level to truly be effective and widespread. While the French remained in Cote d'Ivoire, the country was able to economically prosper and develop, overseen by the French military to quell any dissent as well as provide economic assistance such as buying unwanted cocoa to artificially boost revenues.[132] Once French interests no longer aligned with resource extraction in Cote d'Ivoire, they left the nation to its fate, lacking the necessary infrastructure, to overcome corruption and uprisings.

After independence, Ghana was plagued by a multitude of military coups until an eventual one-party rule that lasted until a constitutional change in 1992. Though Ghana did not experience the initial economic boom that its neighbor Cote d'Ivoire experienced, the Ghanaians used the period to foster policies and institutions that were not only legitimate in the eyes of the people, but also were effective in the long run at the local level. The decentralized policies encouraged by the British during colonization utilized existing political structures that were later seen as building blocks for steady growth and stability.

After much discussion concerning the level of national identity in Cote d'Ivoire versus Ghana, one question remains: "Why would a Ghanaian identity lead to greater stability than a French identity?" Assuming that the French successfully quelled any previous cultural identity, and replaced it with their own, stability should be equally attainable in Cote d'Ivoire as in Ghana. The problem is that the French were NOT successful at fully implanting a French identity into the Ivoirians. As noted in the previous sections, assimilation policy was not distributed evenly,

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[132] Chirot, "The Debacle in Cote d'Ivoire," 65.

and though the French promulgated "all men are equal", many Ivoirians either were not given ample opportunity to integrate into French society, or were not treated as equals by the colonial officers and bureaucrats.[133] This aside, French identity could not be fully implanted because Ivoirians, and further Africans, are not French. History matters, and the same political institutions and customs that govern society so well in France after centuries of evolution, take on a new meaning, void of historical context in Cote d'Ivoire. Though it can be argued that cultural assimilation across the world can take hold relatively quickly, even within the following generation, ties to tradition and culture resonate within for many generations. For Cote d'Ivoire, a French identity is not as solid as a Ghanaian identity because of the degree of separation the Ivoirians experience from the French. Furthermore, Ivoirians have shown an intense bitterness towards France from colonial legacies, and will never be truly willing to take on such a contested identity.

Policy prescriptions to take from this case study could be that while post-colonial countries today cannot alter history and choose the system of colonization, or better, yet, to ward off colonization completely, these nations could develop and implement institutions and power structures with more attention to the local and traditional governance that are more familiar to the people. With new generations emerging since the colonial times, nations struggling today must find ways to reform old institutions that lack the resonance or acceptance by the population. This is a difficult task, as many countries face corrupt leaders wary of losing any power. But to make any real progress down the path of stability and growth, these leaders and governments must foster social cohesion and trust within the population governed before they can successfully make change and reform.

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[133] Blanton, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa," 479.

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