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Côte d'Ivoire: Socio-political Crises, 'Ivoirité' and the Course of History

Introduction

The socio-political crisis in the Ivory Coast consists of the sum total of military coups, coup attempts, civil war, and the series of violent clashes in the country since December 1999. These events have jeopardised the continuity of the State and the social order, and have thereby led to a break in a relatively long period of political stability in a country long considered a model. The aim of this article is primarily to understand the meaning and significance of this socio-political crisis. First, following on a long period of political stability, our theory is that this political disorder is indicative of the challenges arising from Houphouet Boigny's premature opting for hyperglobalisation. This entailed his 'model of compromise', which had been in crisis since the beginning of the 1990s, and an imposed democratisation process. Second, we need to focus on 'ivoirité', or 'Ivorianness'. We analyse this phenomenon as being a specific expression of the re-invention of the collective Ivorian persona, in reaction to the effects of more than three decades of economic openness that has served to neutralise the expression of any specific identity. Third, this compromise, through its adhesion to free trade and the market economy, brought about internal contractions and contradictions which forced the socio-political system to re-tribalise the political debate and to define new rules governing access to increasingly scarce resources.

In this socio-political crisis what meaning can be attributed to the escalation of the violence and its modes of justification? As a sign of the delegitimation of the regulatory models constructed on the 'tontine' model[1], the recurrence of military coups d'état in the Ivory Coast is a call to renew the political grammar and associated modalities of socio-political regulation around integrating principles which remain to be invented. 'Ivoirite' or 'Ivorianness' is the Ivorian version of modern nationalism. But there has been an evolution in its conceptualisation as an ideology.

1.   The social construction of Ivorianness

Contrary to situations in which hotbeds of nationalism emerge and the State is forced to take measures to offset its effects, in the Ivory Coast it is the State itself which is responsible for the retribalisation of the discourse and mode of participation in political life. In fact, Ivorianness functions on two levels:

- From an internal point of view Ivorianness defines the criteria for participation in the distribution of scarce resources (jobs, property, power) within the country;

- From an external point of view Ivorianness defines national preference.

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

1.i   Ideological justifications

Recognisable in the writings of its theoreticians associated with the CURDIPHE ('Cellule Universitaire de Recherche et de Diffusion des Idées et Action Politique' of President Henri Konan Bédié), we can consider the foundations of this ethno-nationalist tendency through Professor Léonard Kodjo's (1996: 82) critical study of the 'Houphouetian vision'. In his view, 'Houphouetism gives preference to the individual rather than to the citizen. An openness to the other of this magnitude, along with genuine economic prosperity, transformed the country into a sort of African microcosm, a melting-pot in which, even today, it is difficult to distinguish precisely the original components'. But the emerging nationalism was primarily civic in intention. In the opinion of the historian, Jean-Noël Loucou, Head of the Personal Office Staff of the former President of the Republic, Henri Konan Bédié, 'The discussion over Ivorianness is part of the general discussion about all the questions which underlie the very existence and progress of our developing nation. The fact that it was launched during the 1995 general elections should in no way reduce it to a dispute dictated by political and electoral considerations. It is a fundamental question which deals with what makes a people, its identity and collective soul' (Loucou, 1996). The philosopher Niamkey Koffi (1996) finds its material basis in the logic of the discrimination between 'them/us'. Similarly the ethno-sociologist, Georges Niangoran Bouah, before dealing with the criteria of belonging to a country, which refer back to the founding ancestors of the various provinces, and the conditions for being a national (*autochtonie*), defines the socio-cultural foundations of Ivorianness as follows: 'Ivorianness is the set of socio-historical, geographical and linguistic data which enables us to say that an individual is a citizen of the Ivory Coast or an Ivorian. The person who asserts his Ivorianness is supposed to have the Ivory Coast as his country, be born of Ivorian parents belonging to one of the ethnic groups native to the Ivory Coast'. The ethnic nature of this nationalism assumes its integral meaning in the firmly ethnological and exclusive approach of this definition. This intellectual construction of Ivorianness has found a means of projection into the political sphere.

1.ii Political justifications

In October 1998, two years after the publication of the CURDIPHE manifesto entitled 'Ivorianness, or the spirit of President Henri Konan Bedié's new social contract', the Commission for Social and Cultural Affairs of the Conseil Economique et Social published a report on immigration into the Ivory Coast. This Report evaluated the impact of immigration on the country's natural demographic equilibrium, its political life, its economic life in terms of the consequences for the rise in unemployment of 'native-born' Ivorians, and on security and social cohesion. The conclusions led to radical proposals at political, economic and social levels.

1.iii Economic justifications

The literature abounds with references to the sectors controlled by foreigners. The historian, Jean-Noël Loucou (1996) was alarmed: 'Foreigners occupy a dominant, sometimes hegemonic, situation in the Ivorian economy. This massive foreign presence is therefore a threat to the socio-economic balance of the country'. The Conseil Economique et Social in the above-mentioned Report, analysed this situation as being the consequence of the over-liberal policy of openness: 'The fact is, despite their (the immigrants) low level of education in general, they (the Syro-Lebanese, Mauritanians, Malians) have a hold on the trade in this country, thus filling most of the jobs in the informal sector. The outcome is that the native Ivorians have a higher rate of unemployment (6.4 percent) than these immigrants (3.6 percent) ... The hold of these immigrants on jobs in certain sectors of national activity (trade, road transport, agro-industrial firms, butchering, etc.) is such that it prevents Ivorians from competing with them ... Immigration is increasingly become one of the structural causes for the increase in poverty of Ivorians'. The schemes for the Ivorianisation of certain economic sectors in urban areas since the 1970s and the nativist undertones in the recent property code in rural areas are based on this logic.

In fact, nationalism is not a new phenomenon in the Ivory Coast. As we stressed above, Houphouetism, far from being the same thing as Pan-Africanism, was already a form of nationalism. But it was a nationalism which tended towards development, instrumentalising external resources in the process of constructing the nation by means of functional openness to the outside world. But with Ivorianness and under the socio-political effects of economic contraction, nationalism ceased to be developmentalist and became, instead, tribal, moving in the direction of ethnonationalism. Tribal Ivorianness under Bédié tended, without ever explicitly saying so, to safeguard the position of the Akan. Under democratisation, they were losing influence in the increasingly competitive race for the control of the machinery of State. Tribal Ivorianness henceforth saw itself as an essentialist and nativist political

construction. In its tribal version, the 'Ivoritarian' project endeavoured to preserve the position of the Akan in the political arena. This first version inherited from Houphouetism the natural predisposition of the Akan to govern others; a predisposition which tended to be legitimated socially by more than four decades of experience of power under the leadership of an Akan, Felix Houphouet Boigny. To this end, tribal Ivorianness gave itself an anthropological foundation, at times at the expense of manipulating the history of settlement of the population[2], as a mode of justification of the continuity of this Akan primacy.

In its first version, tribal Ivorianness also valorised Christianity as a historical culture of adoption, an element in the making of a positive Ivoirian identity[3], to further minimise Muslim identity as a socio-cultural component of Ivorian social diversity. The December 1999 coup d' état which brought General Robert Guei, from the Yacouba ethnic group, to power was a blow to the project of conservation of Akan hegemony enshrined in the first concept of Ivorianness. The loss of control of the State apparatus led to the ideologists of Ivorianness losing control of the machinery of political construction. But it did not however put an end to the Ivoritarian impetus. During the transition under General Robert Guei, Ivorianness underwent a change in conceptualisation.

The second version of Ivorianness was intended to be more selectively 'civic'. It was now less Akan and more favourable to a broader inclusion of peoples from the South, the Centre and the West. But it was no less exclusive towards the people from the North, commonly referred to as 'Dioulas', about whom, in the collective imagination, there remained a doubt as to the underlying reality of their belonging to the 'Ivorian nation'. The term 'Dioula' is a polar mode of identification for an ethnically diverse group (Maouka, Senoufo, Malinke), geographically situated in the Northern region, and whose members, for historical reasons, are Muslims. The doubt voiced about the 'Dioula' belonging to the 'Ivorian nation' was justified from the point of view of the 'Ivoritarians' by the fact that they have the same family names and religion as the citizens of the neighbouring countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea). Almost exclusively Muslims, the latter account for 86 percent of the immigrants[4] in the Ivory Coast. This is the origin of the fear of what the Ivorian Conseil Economique et Social had already referred to in 1998 as 'the inflow of Muslim immigrants', who had 'considerably modified the pre-existing religious balance'. The Conseil Economique et Social went on to say, 'An upset in the balance of this sort, in such a sensitive sphere, could lead some people to endeavour to exploit religious affiliation for political ends, which is a disservice to national harmony and unity, and a threat to the social peace so dear to our country' (Report of the Conseil Economique et Social, October 1998). Coming on top of the political denunciations of the economic imbalance created by immigration, this confusion over identity in the construction of Ivorianness reinforced opposition to the principle of openness. At the same

time it increased a feeling of exclusion and marginality amongst the citizens in the North of the Ivory Coast. The outcome was that Ivorian Muslims were amalgamated with foreign Muslims and people from the North of the Ivory Coast were amalgamated with foreigners because over the period of ten years Ivorianness had not remained merely in a stage of construction. Instead it was to be concretely materialised in inter-community relations and in the relationship between the police and the people from the North who complained of various forms of harassment during law and order operations or when national identity cards were issued.[5] And, as Mamadou Koulibaly, the President of the Ivorian National Assembly, so rightly remarked, 'Administrative and police harassment does not differentiate between a Dioula from the Ivory Coast and a Dioula from Mali, Burkina or elsewhere. A Dioula was a Dioula and it was only a collective term for several ethnic groups in the north of the Ivory Coast and ethnic groups from foreign countries'[6]. Finally, it sowed the seeds of mutual paranoia, impoverished the foundations of community life, and produced an Ivorian society increasingly marked by fear. It included communities who began to be frightened of each other on the basis of identities which used to be permeable but which were gradually becoming fixed.

2. The constitution and ethno-nationalism

The ideological, political and economic justifications for ethno-nationalism in the Ivory Coast found a locus for materialisation in the restrictive clauses for eligibility as President of the Republic. These clauses were introduced during the revision of the Constitution approved by referendum on 23 July 2000. According to Article 35 of the new Constitution which founded the Second Republic, 'The President of the Republic must be of Ivorian origin, born of a father and mother who are also Ivorian by birth. He must never have renounced Ivorian nationality. He must never have used another nationality. He must have resided in the Ivory Coast for five continuous years preceding the date of the elections and have a total of ten years of effective residence'. Despite the fact that this constitution visibly included legal arguments which excluded him from running, the key figure of Alassane Dramane Ouattara (widely known as 'ADO') himself called for its adoption. This somewhat strange attitude on the part of Alassane Dramane Ouattara is explained in the answer which he gave during an interview granted to a newspaper about the maintenance in the Con-stitution of this article which excluded him from the political sphere. 'I have no problems with the present Constitution from the legal point of view. It was because the Supreme Court was under orders [from the junta – author's note) that it was interpreted in this way to exclude me. I am quite sure that if we have an independent judiciary, there would not be the slightest doubt about my can-didature. However, I do think that it is a constitution which divides the Ivorians and gives rise to frustration. This text creates different categories of Ivorians,

and that is contrary to the concept of nationality. All Ivorians must have the same rights and the same duties'.

The elimination of Alassane Dramane Ouattara from standing as a candidate in the presidential and parliamentary elections appeared to many observers of Ivorian political life as being the consequence of a political process whereby Ivorians had hierarchically ranked legal rights. However, the efficiency of the ethno-nationalist discourse which socially legitimated this ranking was relayed directly or indirectly by other actors or groups of actors, sometimes in the form of the clash of contradictory logics.

3.   Military coups d'Etat as Therapy for Ivorianness?

Politics is, by definition, a sphere of conflict and co-ordination of the plurality of interests and logics at any given time. But this conflictuality only operates as a time and motor for social progress when there is an ethic of political dialogue, in the meaning which Habermas (1992) gives to the term, and when there are suitable mechanisms for regulation, enabling the production of a compromise which is acceptable to the parties in the arena. In the Ivory Coast situation, the crisis of legitimacy in the Houphouetist compromise created a totally new political issue. It took place in a socio-economic context quite different from the one in which it originated, and was accompanied by a social demand for a new social contract, reversing the predominance of the economic over the political.

Faced with this new situation, it would appear that the political responses provided since the end of the 1990s do not correspond to social expectations. The consequences are the multiplicity of acts of incivility and distrust vis-à-vis the State, in reaction in particular to that ideology of Ivorianness which had survived through successive regimes. The capacity for the political class not only to renew itself, but also to offer political and economic alternatives to a society threatened with the disintegration of a model of governance is being severely challenged.

Elsewhere, we have defended the idea (Akindès, 2000b) that since the coming of pluralist democracies in Africa and elsewhere military coups d'état tend to be justified by the corruption of the new, or re-established, democracies which, very frequently, are content with the constitutional legality conferred by pluralist elections but do not bother to renew the political grammar of the systems which they are supposed to replace. By these I mean the perversion and corruption of the rules of the political game which are always linked to a 'politics of self-interest', the perpetuation of practices of predation, and the political use of definitions of identity which sometimes extend to the legitimation of exclusion as is the case in the Ivory Coast with Ivorianness. In 1999, the military junta accused the Bedié government of all these wrongdoings before General Robert Guei in turn took the decision to manipulate the rules of the game to his advantage. He mobilised the same political grammar to these ends.

In 2002, a good number of the actors of the military branch of the MPCI turned out to be the same as those who had orchestrated the December 1999 coup d' état. In their opinion, they had been betrayed in their project to put an end to Ivorianness. They were prosecuted by General Guei who accused them of fomenting new plots against him and went into exile only to come back two years later with the same project. The arguments of the MPCI and the supporters of the rebellions lend credibility to this hypothesis: coups d'état tend to be justified as a mode of resistance to democracies which are perceived from within as corrupt. The President of the Ivorian National Assembly, M. Mamadou Koulibaly summed up this argument: 'There are several types of criticism. Some are legal, others are political but a multiform coalition which brings all these criticisms together under the same umbrella has found financing to commit crimes against the Ivory Coast. This coalition includes those who accuse the Ivorian regime of promoting and following the ideology of Ivorianness. This group also includes those who do not want a Constitution, a nationality code, or a rural landed property code or any law concerning iden-tity'.[7] It is on the basis of this line of argument that the three rebellions united in coalition to deny the constitutional legality of Laurent Gbagbo's power as well, the motive being that he had been incorrectly elected and that the elections would have to be re-run. To this end, the main rebel movement, the MPCI, based its argument on the criticisms of the UNO, the United States, France, South Africa and the European Union relative to the limits placed on the choices open to the voters during the 22 October 2000 Presidential elections, which were described as 'an electoral hold-up'. The MPCI also referred to the calls for new elections.[8]

Obviously, the recurrence of the reference to Ivorianness as a source of social and political malaise is evidence of a crisis in the re-thinking of political grammar once the Houphouetist compromise had become structurally dysfunctional. Political rhetoric had difficulty in going beyond the ethnocentred schema functioning as a register of attack on one hand and of defence on the other. In other words, in post-Houphouetist politics in the Ivory Coast, while the new political positioning seemed for some (RDR, FPI) to be unfolding as a reaction to the party positions of 'second zone' ethnic groups in which the Akan ideology, contained in the Houphouet compromise and tribal Ivorianness, had attempted to confine them, for others, the PDCI, it was posed in terms of the detribalisation of party life in a political environment under-going total change. The political class was confronted with an absence of polit-ical markers which would harness social energies in more citizen-like and mobilising political projects, bearers of a 'shared public culture'. These indica-tors of an obvious absence of any civic ethic and reliable mechanisms for polit-ical dialogue seemed to justify the permanence of the crisis of confidence between the ethnic groups, the recurrence of coups d'état since the end of the 1990s, and the incursion of rebel movements into the working of socio-political

regulation. The FPI, in the wake of Guei, was accused of exploiting the doctrinal fund of Ivorianness.[9] The ghost of Ivorianness is recurrent in the forms of argument used by the military putschists who, in 1999 as in 2002, accused all the regimes in turn from Bedié to Gbagbo, and including Guei, of their political partiality which had become structural. This phenomenon embraced the use of the exclusive right to the monopoly of legitimate violence in the service of partisan interests and the systematic extension of mechanisms of social exclusion regarding the 'people from the North'. The two military putsches were intended as a challenge to the legitimacy of violence as conferred on the State in democracies. This 'disoligopolisation' of violence operated through attempts to remove a part of the instruments (the army) of this violence from the State with a view to forcing it to renegotiate new rules for the working of national politics. In attempting to justify their actions by an impera-tive of justice for all, the authors of the 24 December 1999 coup d' état revealed their intentions. The coup was defined as being an attempt to deal a death blow to Ivorianness and its manifestations under the Government of Henri Konan Bedié. But on the socio-political level, since this coup had not curbed the 'evil', it had apparently not lived up to its promises. The question of Ivorianness was once again at the heart of the armed conflict which opposed the armed rebel movements[10] to the government of Laurent Gbagbo which came to power in October 2000. The banishment of Ivorianness was still on the agenda, and the rebels also demanded an end to the impunity of the armed forced involved in the production of the mass grave in Yopougon and in various exactions (attacks and burning of mosques, assassinations of imams).

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

4.   The course of history, or the need for the invention of another social contract

Political historicity in the Ivory Coast is rooted in a rather distinctive economic history which is now producing its own problems four decades later. There is almost a sort of need for the inversion of the predominance of the economic over the political which acted as the crucible for social integration under Houphouet Boigny. This compromise had reached saturation point in a society profoundly transformed by economic, demographic and political mvoements. Today the question posed is that of the political construction of new pillars of citizenship. In the absence of this political endeavour, there are areas of uncertainty in the formation of the notion of citizenship which leave popular imagination to its own devices as to the meaning of being Ivorian today. A sociology of the impassioned debates around the figure of Alassane Dramane Ouattara is an indication of the political issues associated with identity.

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

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

Essentially, the meaning of the political discussion in the Ivory Coast lay somewhere between the search for and the assertion of control over its political, economic and cultural life. This discussion was focussed on whether or not the participation of ADO as a candidate for the highest office was legitimate. The invalidation of his candidacy first in the presidential elections and then in the parliamentary elections increased the frustrations of his supporters with their slogan 'Enough is enough', and left his opponents with the feeling that they were making some progress in the search for control over political life. It was experienced as a strong political indication of assertion of control, conceived of on the basis of multiple representations but focussing on a core of a shared meaning of exclusion (ADO, the foreigner) in the imagination of the anti-Ouattarists. This opposition between pro- and anti-Ouattarists was developed around differentiated constructions of ADO's identity in the imagination of the people. The arguments advanced give a sufficiently good idea of the absence of a political definition of the citizen, and the associated rights and duties.

Between 1992 and 1995, in both the North and the South, ADO was perceived as a technocrat, whose life style set him at a distance from ordinary people. He was also perceived as a symbol of modernity, having developed far from the spheres of socialisation (generation, membership of associations of citizens or to circles of political activism, etc.) which mean something in

Ivorian society. His professional career abroad made of him a 'man of the world'. Also, in the eyes of the people, it would seem that in the Ivorian imagination, ADO's matrimonial alliances had also made it impossible for him to claim ethnic attachment by marriage and added further to his cultural distance. But, as from 1995, political mobilisation gradually developed around the person of Alassane Dramane Ouattara. This mobilisation has to be linked to the political effects of Ivorianness which encouraged the populations in the North to organise politically in order to resist what they considered as being the spiral of a process of exclusion. As far as the identification of the representations of the 'enigmatic' ADO in the collective imagination were concerned, we can therefore posit a mental geography in which the poles of identity and politics were associated with the social and subjective configurations of these representations.

Fraternisation with the 'political victim' was constructed around two specificities in identity: ethnic group and religion. 'ADO is a Dioula brother and a Muslim', said the people from the North. 'He is a son of the Far North, worthy of the name'. The need for a federating political mentor disposed of the plurality of the dimensions of his identity, retaining only these two specificities which he did not personally assert but which, in the ongoing ethno-nationalist context, bound him to his community of origin. In response to the resolutely ethno-nationalist configuration of democratisation at the time, the main political parties at work also contributed to the ethno-nationalist build-up which increasingly structured both participation and representation in the Ivory Coast.

But this affective and geographically located representation of ADO gradually changed as one went down towards the Centre and the South of the Ivory Coast. The psychic markers of difference as compared with self returned to the fore because the first rallying sign of identity, Islam, ceased to function. Behind the figure of ADO were to be found various constructions of his identity, corresponding to varying definitions of his nationality. Version One asserted that on the basis of the origins of his father who was even said to have fulfilled the functions of chief in a village in Volta, and his brief period of primary schooling in the ex-Upper Volta, ADO was really Burkinabe. Version Two claimed that ADO was Burkinabe through his father[11], and the filiation to his mother is challenged so that only his Burkinabe nationality remains. Version Three states that ADO is an Ivorian but has already taken advantage of another nationality to occupy high posts at the IMF and the BCEAO.

These various constructions of Ouattara's identity, making of him a 'foreigner' or a 'second class Ivorian' sustain anti-Ouattarism and add strength to the idea that there is an esence inherent in identity. The political ambitions of ADO, perceived on the political drawing board as tantamount to those of a foreigner, enable the recourse to such ethno-nationalism. His candidacy tended to appear as one of the drawbacks of the opening of the Ivorian frontiers. ADO

is attributed the symbolism of being the son of an immigrant who, in the words of the analysis of the Report of the Conseil Economique et Social sur l'Immigration en Côte d'Ivoire was 'using the political liberalism character-istic (of the Ivory Coast) to claim political rights'. He is the personification of the impure identity which the purist approach to identity at work would like to expurgate. While, for his opponents, Ouattara is the prototype of the 'false Ivorian' who is claiming something to which he has no right, for the inhabitants of the North he is symbolic of their loss of status as citizens, having been constantly deprived of his civic rights by governments in the hands of 'people from the South', or 'Bushmen'.

The assignation of a foriegn identity to ADO enables the 'Ivoritarians' not only to base their fears of an 'invasion of the Ivory Coast' on a concrete case, but also to give substance to a 'pie-chart' concept of citizenship. Pie-chart citi-zenship is a local construction of social inclusion. According to this local construction, being Ivorian is no longer a legal status. It is primarily anthropo-logical, and indicates descent 'from the same founding ancestors as the various provinces of the country'. An individual's distance from this criterion which defines the original 'stock', (and this is the criterion par excellence for full rights), allows us to conferr a quarter, a half, or three-quarters of the rights, with rights analogous to a pie-chart. The function of the conjunctions 'and/or' in Article 35 of the Basic Law institutionalises the variable geometry of these rights and institutes the ranking of citizens linked to this philosophy of pie-chart citizenship. The 'or' is Alassane, the 'and' represents the true Ivorians, in the words of an FPI militant in Abidjan in an interview for a socio-logical survey (Vidal, 2002: 222).

The political deficit of any reification of citizenship means that, in the collective conscience, it is denied that Ivorian nationality includes not only people of local origin, but also those of mixed parentage – that is, nationals who have only one locally born parent – and naturalised Ivorians. This explains the suspicions and, in most cases, the negative social perception of foreign names on an Ivorian identity card. In what is the most genetically and culturally mixed society in the sub-region as a result of its intermixing of ethnic groups due to a long tradition of hosting immigrants, it is this linking of citizenship identity to an underlying essence which poses problems today.

4.2 The challenge of an alternative to pie-chart citizenship

The formation of the second republic and the escalation of violence associated with the malaise induced by Ivorianness means the Ivory Coast is faced with a dual challenge, one that is both political and economic.

On the political level, in the first instance we have the challenge of citizen-ship. The latter resides in the invention of tools for national integration. The old democracies have understood this fact. This political requirement justifies the extent of the discussions currently taking place in Europe and North America,

with on one side the adepts of republican or assimilationist integration (Dominique Schnapper, Jurgen Habermas), and the liberal exponent of human rights, John Rawls, and, on the other, the communitarians like Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer, and the liberal theoretician of minority rights, Will Kymlicka, whose ideas in many respects are the basis for the Canadian approach to the political management of minorities. From this point of view, crafting an immigration policy of the type we have described is important but, in itself, insufficient. Any discussion on the management of diversity must begin with the conviction that integration demands, above all, the setting up of a policy of recognition, the various aspects of which are dealt with in the works of the philosopher Charles Taylor.

The invention of this philosophical and political melting-pot and its transla-tion into reality also depends on a capacity both to produce wealth and to ensure its judicious re-distribution or, if not, to ensure the equality of citizens in the face of the effects of poverty. Anything else is a source of social tensions. Therein lies the economic challenge.

On the economic level, since its accession to independence the Ivory Coast, given its economic choices, has been characterised by a specific integration into the international economy. Its current socio-political and economic crisis also originates in the fact that the modes of regulation in force have not adjusted in keeping with the sometimes radical changes which have occurred in the international economic environment. The outcome has been a lack of articula-tion between the international agreements which are constantly being reconsti-tuted and the local agreements which are the victims of structural rigidity – to such an extent that the 'narrow way' has gradually become an 'impasse'. The challenge of the years to come would therefore be to recreate a quality standard for the Ivorian economy by creating conditions of confidence, this intangible third party, a factor in social cohesion without which it is almost impossible to create wealth.

The return of investor confidence in the Ivorian economy is strongly corre-lated to its internal political capacity to regulate political uncertainty. In the new process of inventing the political that is now called for, the Ivorian political class is more than ever called on to develop a discussion on what Michael Walzer calls the 'forms of co-existence' which make the maintenance of differ-ence possible. The answers given to this question are always a function of national particularities. But at the same time they explain how national soci-eties have a capacity for self-institutionalisation over time, while coming within the specific framework of political modernity. The function of the State is fundamental to the invention of a 'regime of tolerance' in an ever unstable equilibrium and to maintaining mechanisms of justice for the all the parties involved.

Conclusion

With a few nuances, the crisis of Houphouetism is in many ways comparable to what was observed with Tito's communism in Yugoslavia. Authoritarian models set up by charismatic political figures do not outlive their architects. Ignatieff (2000: 39) puts it as follows: 'The States whose legitimacy is based on the charisma of an individual are bound to disintegrate when they go'. The political engineering of Tito and Houphouet Boigny, despite their ideological differences, had much in common. In their countries they succeeded in getting ethnic groups to live together, by using fairly similar methods of government. Before 1990, Houphouet Boigny in the Ivory Coast, just like Tito in Yugoslavia, only tolerated a cultural opposition which in no way threatened his regime. As in Yugoslavia, the possibilities of travel which the Ivorians were allowed enabled them to maintain the illusion that, in the last resort, under Houphouet Boigny, despite his authoritarianism, things were better than elsewhere. The presence of a numerous colony of West African citizens reinforced this political relativism. As long as economic resources were available, the system could endure. But after the death of Houphouet Boigny, and with the deepening of the economic crisis, the political elite who succeeded him understood, as in Yugoslavia after the death of the dictator, Tito, in 1980, that they had to invent a new rhetoric capable of mobilising the masses. This political logic produced ethno-nationalist populists like Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and Ivorianness in the Ivory Coast. But from one country to another, differences emerge in the effects and the functions of such nationalist discourse. If, in Yugoslavia, discourse was merely a language game and an oratorical strategy to organise electoral survival, in the Ivory Coast Ivorianness has served as a launching pad for a serious tendency to reshape participation in the life of the republic, based on roots in the soil. This radical ethnicisation of the Republic has created a social malaise in a very mixed society.

Confronted with the crisis in the Houphouetist compromise, the Ivory Coast is at a crossroads of its own invention. The present political crisis seems to originate in difficulties of self-institutionalisation in the most Castoriadian meaning of the term. This self-institutionalisation depends for its relevance on taking into consideration the social, political, economic and cultural configurations of Ivorian society which is profoundly mixed, both genetically and culturally. The socio-political crisis seems to be taking root in the paradoxical fact that the political class is retreating into an identity logic which engenders exclusions and banishes any perspective of a definition of a forged citizenship and a shared political culture. The future of the Ivory Coast lies in putting this paradox into perspective. In such a complex sociological context, it is the project for citizenship rather than the search for a radical identity which should function as an integrating fiction, conceived on the basis of values and virtues, a fiction which is brought to life by rallying institutions, symbols and myths around this project and by community dreams. At the risk of a long cycle of

socio-political instability, the Ivorian political class can no longer elude the philosophical questions facing complex societies like that of the Ivory Coast. These questions emerge as soon as the central question of relevant societal projects is posed because these are questions which federate and are capable of channeling individual and collective energies positively and enduringly.

Notes

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

2. In the construction of Ivorianness, the ideologists of this form of nationalism either ignore,or strategically grant little importance to, the history of the population before the 18th century. This enables them to justify the centrality of the Akan position.

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

4. The 1998 Census of the Population stated that in the Ivory Coast, 70 percent of the Burkinabés, 91 percent of the Guineans, and 96.8 percent of the Malians were Muslims.

5. Evidence collected in Abidjan by Claudine Vidal (2002: 215-252) gives a good account of this phenomenon.

6. Cf. Mamadou Koulibaly, 'Rebellion ou colonisation du territoire ivoirien', http://19septembre2002.freefr/koulibaly.htm.

7. Mamadou Koulibaly, 'Rebellion ou colonisation du territoire ivoirien', http://19septembre2002.free.fr/koulibaly.htm.

8. Elections presidentielles 2000. 'Ce qui s'est pass et ce qu'ils ont dit', http://www.supportmpci.org/elections_presidentielles2000.htm.

9. Cf. Mamadou Koulibaly, 'Rebellion ou colonisation du territoire ivoirien', http://19septembre2002.free.fr/koulibaly.htm.

10. We should point out that several of the known MPCI military leaders, such as Tuo Fozié, Ibrahima Coulibaly (IB) and Chérif Ousmane had taken part in the first coup d'Etat in 1999 which brought General Robert Guei into power. But the political ambitions of the latter which led him to ride the Ivorianness horse as a way of excluding an important political opponent, Allassane Dramane Ouattara, was to lead to a disagreement between him and these young soldiers. General Guei accused them of plotting against him in 2000. Some of these soldiers were tortured and even physically eliminated and others, who had returned to operate the 19 September coup d'Etat, organisd from Burkina Faso.

11. In the Ivory Coast, the Burkinabe have traditionally done jobs (labourers in the plantations, odd jobs and domestic employees in the urban areas) for which the Ivorians had little liking. As a result of this 'inferior' professional status, in the imagination of the Ivorian people, Burkinabe immigrants are socially an underclass. The political passion in opposition to the candidature of ADO is to be

linked to this Burkinabe social construction of his identity. To put it plainly, the ordinary Ivorian considers it quite unthinkable to be ruled by the offspring of one of their former labourers. The force of prejudice is such that the fact that ADO's father was not a labourer but a trader until his death, after having first been a teacher, is denied.

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