

DV 435 Economic and Political Geography of Côte d'Ivoire

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Introduction

This poster examines the economic and political geography of Côte d'Ivoire in four distinct sections: Location and Endowment, Colonial Economy and Institutions, Economic Geography and Political Geography. It analyses both historical as well as contemporary dynamics and structures which have shaped the economics and politics of the country and continue to influence them contemporarily. Each column focuses on two main areas of comparison: importance of a dominant export commodity and the agricultural sector.

Location and Endowment

Add I.1 Location

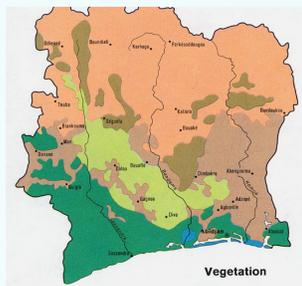


Côte d'Ivoire in Western Africa. Source: Britannica Maps

Côte d'Ivoire is centrally located along the southern coast of West Africa. It has a total area of 332,463 square kilometers, which is a similar size to Norway (CIA). It's diverse ecologically including areas of coast, forest, savannah and near desert, make it very costly to rule over (Herbst 2014).

I.2 Agro-Ecological Zone

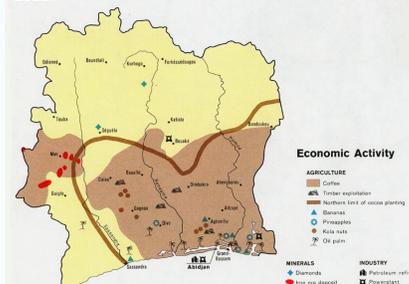
The country has three agro-ecological zones: a humid and dense forest in the South making half of the total area, the sudanian-guinean zone, providing a transition between the forest and the savannah in the centre with 19 percent of the total area, and a sudanian zone with a humid savannah in the north with 31 percent of the total area (FAO). The forest region with better soil and more reliable rainfall produces majority of the export crops like cocoa, the savannah region tends to consist of small-scale farming as well as the production of a few export crops like cotton (New Agriculturalist 2011).



Côte d'Ivoire Vegetation Map. Source: University of Texas at Austin

I.3 Natural Resource Endowment

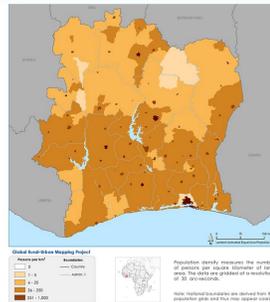
Côte d'Ivoire is a nation with exceptional biodiversity, vast mineral deposits and significant revenue from cocoa and other exports (UNEP). Majority of its cocoa production occurs in the south east region.



Côte d'Ivoire Economic Activity Map. Source: University of Texas at Austin

I.4 Population

Côte d'Ivoire has a population of 27,481,086 as of July 2020, with a growth rate of 2.2% (CIA). Further, around 65% of the population of the population is under the age of 25 (UN DESA). Although the country is experiencing massive population growth at the moment, in the past underpopulation was seen as the chief obstacle to state formation (Iliffe 1995). In 1955 it had a population of density of around 9 people per square kilometer, this number as since increased to 83 today (UN DESA). As seen on the map population tends to be denser in the southern forest coastal belt, the region where cocoa production takes place. Further, around 70% of the working population are employed in the agriculture sector (IFAD).



Côte d'Ivoire Population Density Map. Source: CIESEN Columbia University

Colonial Economy and Institutions

II.1 Colonial Division of Land

After the French assumed direct control of Côte d'Ivoire in 1893, the colonial authorities negotiated treaties with the Agni kingdoms in the Southeast and the French continued to work with the existing Agni chiefs in this region (MacLean 2010: 109). In contrast, the "pacification" of the rest of Côte d'Ivoire was prolonged and violent. In Baouleland and the Western region, the colonial authorities utilised scorched-earth tactics and ignored pre-colonial linguistic and ethnic boundaries, instead regrouping the Ivorian population into "strategic villages" that facilitated administrative efficiencies (Boone 2003: 182).



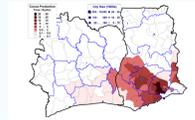
Administrative map of Côte d'Ivoire, 1909. Source: Old Maps Online.



Tribal clusters in Côte d'Ivoire, 1972. Source: University of Texas Libraries

II.2 Colonial Economy

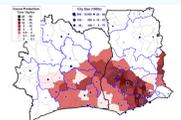
The production of cocoa and coffee was primarily concentrated in the Southeast and by the early 1930s, the southeastern region accounted for 90% of all Ivorian exports (Boone 2003: 186). In the 1920s and 1930s, French settlers played a key role in the early expansion of cocoa. By 1937, European plantations were devoting 733 hectares to cocoa, while African farmers cultivated 650 hectares of cocoa (Frankema et al 2016: 258). As cocoa production expanded, control over labour, rather than land, became a source of conflict between Africans, the colonial authorities and European settlers as forced labour schemes ensured a steady supply of workers for European plantations to the detriment of African farmers (Woods 2008: 644). European plantations, however, were never that successful and in the post-war period the French colonial authorities facilitated the expansion of small-scale African farmers by abolishing forced labour and this enabled the expansion of coffee and cocoa exports in the 1950s and 1960s (Frankema et al 2016: 257). In the rest of the country, the corvée system of forced labour and the flow of migrants to the South largely depressed the commercialisation of agriculture (Austin 2010; Hart 1982: 44). In the northern and western regions, the French forced farmers to grow cotton and food crops such as rice. In 1908 compulsory cotton cultivation was enforced on the Nzi-Comodé and the Baoulé regions, and between 1923-45 the French attempted to intensify the production of cotton in the savanna region to support the metropole's textile industry (Bassett 1988: 271). Between 1923-26, cotton exports tripled in the colony, but cotton never became a "noteworthy" export in the colonial period - its expansion hampered largely by forced labour quotas which depleted the northern region of labourers (Bassett 1988: 284).



District Density of Cocoa Production and Cities in 1931. Map credit: Jedwab, 2015, p. 50.



District Density of Cocoa Production and Cities in 1948. Map credit: Jedwab, 2015, p. 50.



District Density of Cocoa Production and Cities in 1960-65. Map credit: Jedwab, 2015, p. 51.

II.3 Movement of Labour

The northern region of Côte d'Ivoire and the Upper Volta was used as a "labour reserve" for cocoa and coffee plantations in the South (Amin 1972: 504). Under French rule, each administrative district was issued with quotas for supplying workers and the system of direct taxation prompted large-scale migration from Baouleland, the Upper Volta and the northern regions of the colony (Mitchell 2011: 127). In the post-colonial period, the continued migration of labourers and farm owners from the "cash-strapped" north to the south caused local population booms in the southeast between 1965 and 1975, and between 1975 to 1985 in the central south (Becker 1996: 509).

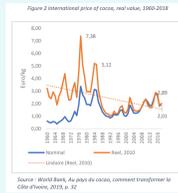
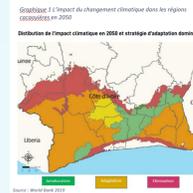


Map credit: University of Texas Libraries. Arrows added by author.

Economic Geography

III.1 Spatial Inequality: Economic Activities and Poverty Incidence

Ivory Coast is the world's leading producer of cocoa which makes it vulnerable for fluctuations of the international cocoa price. Between 1960 and 2016, the trend of the cocoa price was going downwards (see figure 2). Southern Cote d'Ivoire is also one of the largest producers of coffee. The other products are edible fruits, cotton, animal and vegetable fats, coffee, tea, and tobacco, amongst other products Agriculture in the northern part of the country consists of export-oriented cotton production and sugar cane plantations.



In 2018 agriculture represented 17% of the country's GDP and employed about half of its working population. The share of Industry in the GDP was 21 % (World Bank). Climate change (figure 1) will reduce significantly the zones where cocoa can be produced. It will entail movements of farmers and could increase social tensions (World Bank 2019). To stop deforestation to open the way for cocoa, cocoa and chocolate companies participate in action plans under the cocoa & forests initiative (Thompson 2019:8)

After its independence Côte d'Ivoire prioritized export-led growth (the export/GDP ratio in 2018 is 23 %, World Bank), reliant on foreign factors of production, particularly agricultural labour coming from the north of the country and from the neighbouring countries. President Houphouët maintained a policy of attracting foreign workers with promises of land and opportunity in exchange for their labour in the commercial agriculture sector. He also solidified advantages for his closest constituents—commercial farmers and members of his Baoulé ethnic group (an Akan ethnicity)—to ensure stability in the economic and political environment. Thus, cultivators were favoured over original landowners. Baoulé commercial farmers from the Southeast gained control of cocoa and coffee land in the Southwest (McCauley, 2013:147).

On industrial policy, an investment code that guaranteed the repatriation of profits for foreign companies established Côte d'Ivoire as an investment friendly environment for foreign firms. (McCauley, 2013:147).

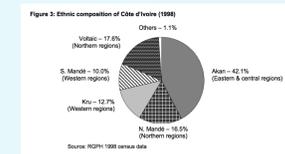
The Ivorian economy experienced booms and busts, but by the late 1980s and early 1990s both the economy and the political order built over the preceding four decades were in a clear state of decline. (Boone 2003:144). In the 1980s, the IMF imposed a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) which led to the liberalization of internal and external trade flows, privatization and deregulation of investment flows, and the retrenchment of the central state. The move to the open economy made old strategies of national integration difficult to sustain (Boone 2007:76). The SAP might have been one of the causes of the civil war. The income inequality Gini-coefficient is 41.5 (UNDP 2019). The richest 20% owns 44% of the wealth and there are stark inequalities between rural and urban workers (New Internationalist 2015). 30 % of the population lives with less than 1,90 \$ a day.

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Political Geography

IV.1 Internal Ethnic Tensions Post-Independence

As a result of the combination between pre-colonial tribal distribution and the internal labour movement within Côte d'Ivoire throughout the colonial times and post-independence, various ethnic groups dominate different parts of the country in contemporary times. Nonetheless, President Houphouët-Boigny managed to keep ethnic tensions under control through a one-party state in which he balanced the distribution of power between the five main ethnic groups (Bakary 1984: 36), yet ultimately maintaining the domination of his Akan group. His domination remained unchanged despite the economic deterioration caused by the boom and bust nature of a cocoa-dependent economy which sparked tensions between locals and migrants in the South in the 1980s (Langer 2004: 22).



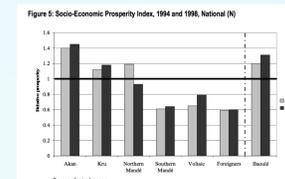
Ethnic Group	Total Political Elite		Minister		Deputy		Economic and Social Councilors		PDCI Politicians		Total Population in 1978	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Akan	163	50.9	38	53.4	100	50.0	50	56.1	43	55.1	41.4	
Kru	33	19.6	15	20.5	41	20.5	13	14.6	10	12.8	16.7	
Mandé	30	10.3	7	9.5	19	9.0	10	11.2	8	10.2	14.8	
S. Mandé	17	5.3	2	2.7	13	6.5	4	4.4	4	5.1	10.2	
Voltaic	29	9.0	6	8.2	9	4.5	4	4.4	7	8.9	15.7	
Others	13	4.0	4	5.4	6	3.0	7	7.8	5	6.4	1.2	
Unknow	1	0.3	-	-	1	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	

Ethnic Distribution within society and governmental position, Langer 2004: 10, 21

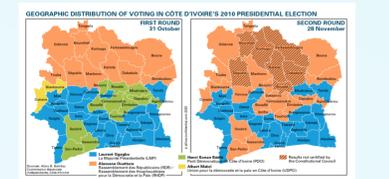
Following the creation of a multi-party state and the President's death in the 1990s frictions within the country began to resurface as ethnic dominance, xenophobia and nationalism became the main mobilisation forces for the numerous parties (Langer 2004: 24). Land issues came to the forefront of the disputes of communal conflicts between the numerous migrants from the centre and the north and the locals in both the rural and urban areas of the south (Boone 2007: 60).

IV.2 The Three-way regionalist divide and the subsequent Civil Wars

After the creation of a multi-party state the Northern groups and the foreigners were visibly lagging behind the groups from the South. In terms of socio-economic prosperity. Ultimately, after years of domination by a party from the South a "northern consciousness" emerged and was represented by a new political party, the RDR created by Alassane Ouattara in 1994 (Langer 2004: 25). Furthermore, people of the Centre-Western and South-Eastern regions felt alienated not only compared to the dominant Akan groups but also felt that the migrants from the North as well as foreigners were putting strain on their land and employment opportunities. They considered foreigners who obtained voting rights in their area as an unfair treatment impeding the well-being of locals (Crook, 1997: 222).



Ethnic Distribution of Socio-Economic Prosperity Index, Langer 2004, 18



Geographic Distribution of voting in Côte d'Ivoire 2010 Presidential Election, Bamba, Independent Electoral Commission, 2010



Map of Second Ivorian Civil War (2011) division lines, United Nations 2011



Map of First Ivorian Civil War (2002-2007) division lines, Momodu 2018

Houphouët-Boigny's death was followed by the fuelling of ethnic unrest, regional tensions and xenophobic campaigns. Ultimately, Laurent Gbagbo of the FPI was able to benefit from support in the Eastern and Western regions and take advantage of the fact that Ouattara was forbidden from taking part in the 2000 presidential elections on the basis of non-Ivorian family heritage. Consequently, the 2000s were years of extreme instability, coup d'états and political unrest and two civil wars emerged between the North and the South (which included the Eastern and Western regions supporting FPI and Gbagbo). Ultimately, after being postponed multiple times, the first post-war Presidential elections took place in 2010. They were closely contested, however ultimately Alassane Ouattara of the Northern-based RDR beat Laurent Gbagbo of the Southern-based FPI. The electoral bases of both candidates further highlight the North-South political divide, which has been a consequence of a multitude of colonial and contemporary internal dynamics.