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THE FOREIGN POLICY OF COTE D'IVOIRE (IVORY COAST) IN WEST AFRICA

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
MALAYSIA

JULY 2000

**THE FOREIGN POLICY OF COTE D'IVOIRE (IVORY COAST) IN
WEST AFRICA**

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DOUKOURE SEKOU OMAR

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

This study examines Cote d'Ivoire's foreign policy in West Africa between 1960 and 1993. It addresses itself to the following questions: what have been Cote d'Ivoire's foreign policy objectives in West Africa since 1960? And what have been the means used to attain these objectives? The study addresses these questions by applying the structural realism theory to explain Cote d'Ivoire's foreign policy. Structural realism argument proposes that the decision makers' actions are determined to a considerable degree by their environment, whether it be that of the international system or an organization.

The data was collected from secondary sources, namely books, articles, journals, magazines, newspapers and publications from the internet.

According to our examination the principal foreign policy objectives of the country had been to enhance economic development and political stability in Cote d'Ivoire. These objectives were manifested in a foreign policy that sought; first, to maintain an organic relationship with France Cote d'Ivoire's principal and constant donor, and second, to control the regional environment in order to guarantee access to cheap labor from the neighboring countries. To attain these objectives the country had engaged in an active bilateral and multilateral foreign policy in West Africa. Cote d'Ivoire alternatively befriended or attempted to isolate rulers of its neighboring countries depending on their attitudes and ideological inclinations.

The findings suggest that it is only structural realism theory that could give a comprehensive explanation for the foreign policy of Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) in West Africa. In addition, it claims that continuity rather than change was the major characteristics of the country's foreign policy.

ملخص البحث

هذا البحث يتعلق بدراسة العلاقات الخارجية لساحل العاج مع دول الجوار في غرب أفريقيا في الفترة ما بين ١٩٦٠ إلى ١٩٩٣ ويحاول أن يعطي إجابات موضوعية للأسئلة التالية :

ما هي الأهداف الرئيسية للسياسة الخارجية لساحل العاج منذ عام ١٩٦٠م ؟ وما هي الوسائل التي استخدمت لتحقيق هذه الأهداف ؟ وقد طبق الباحث مذهب الواقعية البنوية "structural realism" لتفسير العلاقات الخارجية لساحل العاج مع دول الجوار.

اعتمد البحث بصورة رئيسية على المصادر الثانوية من الكتب والمقالات المنشورة في مختلف الصحف والمجلات العلمية بالإضافة إلى تلك المنشورة على الإنترنت .

أكدت نتائج البحث أن الأهداف الرئيسية للسياسة الخارجية لساحل العاج تتمثل في السعي لتطوير البلاد اقتصاديا مع تحقيق الاستقرار السياسي الداخلي . ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف فقد سعت ساحل العاج للمحافظة على علاقتها الودية مع فرنسا ، المانح الرئيسي لمعظم المساعدات لساحل العاج منذ الاستقلال . بالإضافة إلى ذلك فقد عملت ساحل العاج على إيجاد دور إقليمي لنفسها عبر بناء علاقات ثنائية ومشاركة مع مختلف دول الجوار الإقليمي مما مكنها من استخدام الأيدي العاملة الرخيصة من هذه الدول .

نتائج الدراسة تدل على أن مذهب الواقعية البنوية وحدها هو الذي يعطي تفسيرات موضوعية للسياسة الخارجية لساحل العاج . وتدلل أيضا على أن عامل الاستمرار في هذه السياسة يظهر دائما بصورة أكثر من عوامل الانقطاع والتغير.

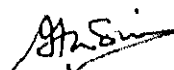
APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Science in Political Science.



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Supervisor
Date:

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Science in Political Science.



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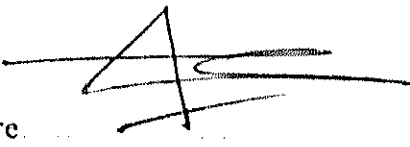


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DECLARATION PAGE

I thereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Name. Doukoure Sekou Omar

Signature. 

Date 21/09/2000

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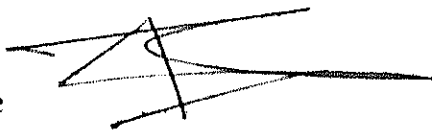
The Foreign Policy of Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) in West Africa (1960-1993)

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents Omar Doukoure and Korotum Bardji, to my uncle Yaba Traore and to my brother Muhammad Mustapha Doukoure, to all my teachers and instructors, and to the Muslim community and all knowledge loving people

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All praise is to Allah (swt) The Lord of the worlds, The Most Merciful and the Most High. Peace and blessings be upon his messenger Muhammad (SAW). Praise to Allah who has enabled me to realize this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem:

Cote d'Ivoire presents a success story of a capitalist solution to the development crisis of West African states. As such it is an influential source of both intellectual and developmental attraction that presents a challenge to the search for new developmental models and theories capable of explaining the industrialization of peripheral social groupings in Africa and the Third World

Much have been written to explain Cote d'Ivoire's domestic policy, but despite fascinating insights into Cote d'Ivoire's society and domestic economic and political systems, there have been few attempts to create an overall framework to explain its foreign relations.

Although its foreign policy is neglected in academic circles, Cote d'Ivoire has continued to be an active trouble-shooter in Africa. In the past it has been controversial in its recognition of Biafara, its advocacy of 'dialogue' with South Africa and its maintenance of trading and diplomatic links with the Apartheid State. Though Cote d'Ivoire tabled the motion for Africa in 1973 to sever diplomatic relations with Israel, it maintained strong commercial links with the Zionist state, and by the end of the 1990s it resumed full diplomatic relations with Israel. It has been militantly anti-Communist. It tried to undermine any African regime that flirted with the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s, while facilitating foreign military and

economic activities and Western influence more generally in Africa.¹ It has openly welcomed ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) in contrast to the OAU (Organization of African Unity), while holding in reserve the 'francophone' associations in which it exercises effective influence.

In foreign policy analysis ideological considerations are paramount to provide explanatory clues for understanding some aspects of foreign policy of a country. Decision makers, particularly presidents and prime ministers, are the major players in shaping, guiding and directing the foreign policy of their respective countries. Cote d'Ivoire is no exception. It is impossible to study the Ivorian foreign policy without speaking of Houphouët-Boigny, the former president of Cote d'Ivoire who led the country for more than three decades.

At the core of Houphouët's ideology was the belief that man must be understood primarily as homo economicus, not exclusively but irreducibly. Homo economicus, in Cote d'Ivoire, is embodied in the wise practical peasant. He is the referent of Houphouët's appeal to improve Nkrumah's utopian "political kingdom" and to seek instead a more earthly kingdom based on coffee and cocoa production: "they will fetch a good price and you will become rich."

The self-interest of the Ivorian must be enlightened. He must place his career in the context of service to his country and eschew personal ambitions. His political role is to encourage support for a wise leadership, which knows how to maximize the use of expertise to promote well being

¹ Dadieh, Cyrilik, 'Ivory Coast' in Shaw, Timothy M. and Aluko, Olajide, The Political Economy of

By contrast, homo politicus is an unnatural character type distorted by excessive pride, it causes leaders to place personal ambitions above every thing else² For the Ivorian regime such immoderation has special name: Asceencionisme, the attempt to gain public recognition, not through patience and merit, but " by some miraculous pole vault " Its spread is regarded as the greatest ill, which could befall a country ³

Houphouet's interpretation of Ivorian interests, reinforced by ideological affinity and cultural familiarity, led him to seek close cooperation with the West as the key to a strategy of development." Solidarity with the Third World is to be rejected, because these other new states " cannot, given their present state of affairs, offer us any thing other than sharing their own poverty "In other words, Ivorian development is not only linked to significant Western assistance, it is also oriented to the West as a model for this development

The relationship with West Africa, where the bulk of Ivorian diplomatic initiatives were concentrated, has been mediated by the ideological bent of the particular regime in power in these states. This was particularly apparent in the case of relations with Ghana. The mood of relations with Ghana during Nkruma's era was clouded with an atmosphere of hostility because of ideological differences. But when Bosia assumed power after overthrowing Nkuruma, and geared the Ghanaian economy toward a laissez-faire capitalism and endorsed dialogue with apartheid, close bilateral relations were restored between the two countries.

African Foreign Policy, Comparative Analysis. (Gower, England 1984) p. 124

² ibid., p 124

³ The term ascencionisme was coined publicly for the first time by former Party Secretary General Auguste Denise at the 1965 PDCI congress. His speech is cited in a provocative study by Lyman Drake, *The Anxious Generation* (PHD Dissertation, M.I.T., 1968). pp 381-385

However, the subsequent political change in Ghana and Upper Volta, i.e. the Rawlings and Sankara coups, the radicalization of their political process and their perceived alliance with Gaddafi revived old insecurities and put relations on edge for some time ⁴

Similarly, relations with Nigeria, which were perhaps never too cordial to start with, had to be broken as a result of Ivorian recognition of Ojukwu's Biafara on 15 May 1968. Houphouet committed his country to advancing the cause of Biafara in the international arena and successfully was able to persuade De Gaulle (the french president then) to come to the support of the Biafra's separatist movement

The overwhelming size of Nigeria posed a potential threat to the sub-imperial interests of Cote d'Ivoire, with strong implications for Ivorian growth prospects. It is assumed that independent Biafara with close ties to Cote d'Ivoire would certainly scale Nigeria down to a manageable size. Furthermore, the Ivorian state had an additional reason for its unquestioning support for Biafara: Nigeria's flirtation with the Soviets caused grave concern. It feared that Soviets would use Nigeria as a base for exporting their revolution throughout Africa. However, since October 1971, the Ivorian relations with Nigeria shifted from antagonism to rapprochement. The active participation of Abidjan in the formation of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) has allowed the forging of close ties. Ivorian active support for the formation of ECOWAS was interpreted as being motivated by Cote d'Ivoire's desire to find an outlet for its manufactures in order to sustain its growth.

⁴ "Delirant, Accueil Aman," Fraternité" (5feb 1960)

Cote d'Ivoire has also tried to use its resources to promote francophone regional organizations in such a way as to enhance Ivorian economic growth, prestige and influence⁵. Such foreign policies orientation have sometimes been pursued in opposition to other potentially more powerful integration to be led by Senegal or other rival states.

Cote d'Ivoire has experienced a bitter bilateral relationship with Guinea. Their divergent responses to de-colonization and continental unity, the arrogant hostility of De Gaulle's France, the latter's privileged relations with Cote d'Ivoire coupled with Sekou Toure's intimate engagement with Nkurumah, intensified tensions between the two Francophone countries. But after a decade of accusations of plots to overthrow each other's government, a process of reconciliation began in 1971 which brought about the famous summit of reconciliation in March 1978 in Monrovia. Then the two countries decided to exchange embassies.

As has been made clear from the above background, Cote d'Ivoire's foreign relations deserve a specific academic investigation and analysis. For that purpose this study attempts to analyze Cote d'Ivoire's foreign policy in West Africa between 1960 and 1993. It addresses itself to the following questions: What have been Cote d'Ivoire's foreign policy objectives in West Africa since 1960? And what have been the means used to achieve these objectives? Is there consistency or change in Cote d'Ivoire foreign policy strategies in the region? How did foreign policy of Cote d'Ivoire conform to the theoretical contentions of structural realism? The sort of bilateral

⁵ Turteng, P-Kiven, 'External influence and Sub-imperialism in Francophone West Africa' p 224 in Gurkind, Peter C. W., and Wallerstein, I., (eds) The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa. (Beverly, Hills: Sage, 1976)

relations and multi-lateral diplomacy Cote d'Ivoire pursued in its foreign policy conduct in the sub region of West Africa is the major focus of this study

In this paper I consistently use Cote d'Ivoire instead of Ivory Coast (the English translation) because the authorities in the country have requested through the United Nations that the original French name of the country should be maintained, instead of translating it into different languages.

The period of 1960 to 1993 was selected as a time frame for this study, because the country has experienced only one president during this period and in the bulk of this epoch Cote d'Ivoire was a unitary political system.⁶ The first multi party contest in the country was held in 1990

Justification:

This study has immediate, significant contributions. It identifies and discusses those factors that condition Cote d'Ivoire's foreign policy posture, both domestic and vis-à-vis other West African states. This has both theoretical and practical implications. At the theoretical level, the linkage of constraints to policy issues assists to explain and understand the past foreign policy decision-making and also represents a guide for projection into future trends for prediction of policy. At the practical level, it serves as a guide to policy formulators in Cote d'Ivoire and West African states, sensitizing them to Cote d'Ivoire's imperatives

Radich, Cyrilk, op.cit . p.123.

Despite Cote d'Ivoire's popularity in the West, there is a major lack of academic debate on the country's foreign policy⁷. Therefore this study is a major contribution, since it will expose academicians and policy makers to a unique foreign policy perspective on a provocative country in a dynamic region, that has been unjustly neglected in academic circles.

Moreover, given the fact that the IIUM has very few, if any serious academic works on Africa, this study is a significant contribution towards filling that gap.

Objectives of this study.

The present study envisions the realization of the following objectives, to

First- explain the nature and the evolution of relations that existed between Cote d'Ivoire and the other states in West Africa.

Second- delineate the goals of Cote d'Ivoire foreign policy in West Africa.

Third- evaluate the instruments used to achieve foreign policy goals

Forth- explains the spheres where Cote d'Ivoire exercises influence in the sub region.

Here, the focus will be on Francophone West Africa, where Cote d'Ivoire has used its resources to promote Francophone regional fora in such a way as to enhance its influence. A regional fund and regional monetary institutions, to which Cote d'Ivoire is the leading contributor, are sources of political leverage. With a higher proportion of the total contributions coming from Cote d'Ivoire, its ability to manipulate and dominate the politics of other member states is clear

⁷ Deddich, Kofi C., 'Ivory Coast', in Timothy M. Shaw and Olayide Aluko, eds. Of The Political Economy of African Foreign Policy: Comparative Analysis, (England, Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1983)

Fifth- analyze issues of conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire's bilateral relations with other countries in the region.

Sixth- explain the attitude of Cote d'Ivoire towards the multilateral initiatives of ECOWAS, particularly, the latter's peace making initiatives in Liberia.

Seventh- analyze the above points in the light of the theory of structural realism.

The study will address the following issues:

- 1- The type of interaction that existed between Cote d'Ivoire and the individual countries in the region before independence
- 2- Cote d'Ivoire's post independence bilateral relations with different Countries in the region, bearing in mind that the countries involved in this discussion will be selected according to their vitality and significance to the foreign policy agenda of Cote d'Ivoire
- 3- Cote d'Ivoire's interaction with different countries through the regional organizations of West Africa, and the opportunities and constraints these organizations present to the Ivorian foreign policy objectives will be elaborated. Most specifically the discussion will focus on Cote d'Ivoire's policy regarding the regional peacekeeping forces in Liberia, and the multilateral diplomacy it has used to achieve those objectives.

Conceptual Framework:

As has been indicated earlier, this study attempts to answer these questions: What have been Cote d'Ivoire's foreign policy objectives in West Africa since 1960? What instruments has it adopted to actualize these objectives? The international relations theory known as structural realism will be used to examine these questions. This

theory is a natural offspring of the earlier political realism of Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Reinhold Niebuhr, and others.⁸

Kenneth Waltz, the principal advocate of structural realism,⁹ made many of the basic assumptions as did the founding fathers, however the concepts put forth by Waltz were in answer to the major critiques that were leveled against Morgenthau and others. Neorealism emerged in the 1970s, partly as a response to the challenges posed by interdependency theory and partly as a corrective to traditional realism's neglect of economic forces.

In the field of international relations, Kenneth Waltz has attempted to bring what he sees as the scientific and methodological rigor of disciplines such as anthropology and economics to the study of international politics. Waltz's neorealism 'or' 'structural realism' is both a critique of traditional realism and a substantial intellectual extension of a theoretical tradition which was in danger of being outflanked by rapid changes in the domain of global politics. Waltz presents a more sophisticated theory than his predecessors in the realist tradition do and his theory has often been referred to as occupying a position of intellectual hegemony.

The key question, which Waltz poses and then proceeds to answer, is: why do states exhibit similar foreign policy behavior despite their different political systems and contrasting ideologies? Waltz frequently cites the example of superpower behavior

⁸ Morgenthau, Hans, J. *Politics Among Nations*, 5th ed. (Alfred A Knof, New York, 1973), Niebuhr, Reinhold, *Christian Realism and Political Problems*. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1953).

Kennan, George F. *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, (WW Norton and Co., New York, 1966)

⁹ Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics*. (Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass. 1979), p 88

during the Cold War¹⁰ to refute the argument that it is possible to infer the condition of international politics from internal composition of states¹¹.

The former Soviet Union and the United States presented quite different political and social orders. Yet, as Waltz points out, their behavior during the period of East-West tension is remarkably similar. Their pursuit of military power and influence, their competition for strategic advantage and exploitation of their respective spheres of influence was strikingly parallel. The explanation, says Waltz, can be found in the systemic constraints on each state rather than their internal composition. These systemic forces homogenize foreign policy behavior by interposing themselves between states and their diplomatic conduct¹²

As Waltz argues, "realists cannot handle causation at a level above states because they fail to conceive of structure as a force that shapes and shoves the units"¹³

Whereas realist such as Morgenthau argued that power is rooted in the nature of humankind, neo-realists such as Waltz point to the anarchic condition of the international realm which imposes accumulation of power as a systemic requirement on states. The former account relies on human nature to explain conflict in international politics¹⁴. The latter abandons such a reliance on reductionism, preferring to treat the international system as a separate domain, which conditions the

¹⁰ Burchil, Scott and Linklater Andrew, Theories of International Relations, (Macmillan Press LTD, 1996, p.83

¹¹ ibid., p.83

¹² ibid. p.85

¹³ Waltz, K. N., Op.Cit (1979)pp.1-17

¹⁴ Burchil and Linklater, Op.Cit p 87

of all states within it. For the purpose of explaining its determining properties and distinguishing it from domestic political systems, Waltz believes that the international system has a precisely defined structure with important characteristics. These are (1) the ordering principle of the system, (2) the character of the units in the system, and (3) the distribution of the capabilities of the units in the system.¹⁵

In domestic political systems the ordering principle is hierarchic, with power and authority exerted through the compulsory jurisdiction of political and legal processes. The ordering principle of the international system is anarchic with an absence of any single authority regulating the behavior of nation states toward each other. Nation states, unlike individuals in domestic society, exist in a self-help environment where the quest for survival requires them to seek security in the creation of military power. This security dilemma is common to all states, regardless of their domestic or cultural compositions.¹⁶ To be more precise, the ordering principle of the international system forces states to perform exactly the same primary function regardless of their capacity to do so.

According to Waltz, the characteristics of the units in the system are identical, or in other words, all states in the international system are made functionally similar by the constraints of the structure. The anarchic realm imposes a discipline on states: they are all required to pursue security before they can perform any other functions. In fact, their concern about their own survival conditions much of their behavior. However, although they are functionally similar, states differ vastly in their

¹⁵ Waltz, K. N. (1979) Op. Cit pp 88-97.

¹⁶ Burchil and Linklater. Op Cit P.87

capabilities.¹⁷ There is an unequal and constantly shifting distribution of power across the international system. States are alike in the tasks they face, though not in their capabilities to perform them. The differences are in capabilities not in the function.¹⁸ The capacity of each state to pursue and achieve its common objectives varies according to its placement in the international system, and specially its relative power. As a key to understanding the behavior of states, the distribution of power in the international system overrides consideration of ideology or any other international factor. Hence, the important distinction neo-realists make between great and small powers.¹⁹

Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

The first assumption of realists and structural realists is that the nation-state is the most important unit of analysis. This study deals with Cote d'Ivoire as the point of focus of analysis, viewing the foreign policy of Cote d'Ivoire from its own perspective - that is, in terms of its own perception of what constitutes its interest²⁰

The second assumption of traditional political realists is that international politics is a struggle for power and that states seek to maximize their power. Structural realists contend that definitions of power by theorists such as Morgenthau are obscured because they fail to distinguish between power as ability to influence the behavior of others and power as a resource. The concept of power that will be used here is that of the Structural realists' who see power as a resource or as a state's national

¹⁷ Waltz, K. N., (1979) Op.Cit. P.66

¹⁸ Ibid., p.96.

¹⁹ Burchil and Linklater, Op.Cit p.87

²⁰ Dougherty, James E., and Pfaltzgraff, Robert L., Jr. *Contending Theories of International Relations* (J B. Lippincoll. Co, Philadelphia, 1971) pp.65-101

capabilities. How these capabilities are used then to influence the behavior of others and achieve national objectives will vary in time and place.

Power will be used in this study to refer to a means to realize certain objectives, not as an end in itself,²¹ and states will be viewed as seeking to maximize their capabilities in order to achieve or defend these goals. National capabilities include territorial, military, economic, and demographic capabilities, level of development, strategic location; and natural resources.

A third major assumption of realists and structural realists is that a balance of power exists in any regional context. Within a balance-of power framework states are perceived as unitary actors within a larger system. Each actor within that system seeks its own preservation at the very least and hegemonic domination over other actors involved at the most. In order to achieve these goals; states use internal and external means. Internal means include efforts to develop economic resources and increase military capabilities, external means involve " moves to strengthen and enlarge one's own alliance or to weaken or shrink an opposing one."²²

In this framework Cote d'Ivoire is viewed as a unitary actor within a broader system of west African states pursuing the goals of self-preservation of its regime and territorial integrity and using both internal and external means to achieve those goals

I will refer to the notion of balance of power to mean a dynamic process by which states seek to prevent any one state within a system of states from becoming so

²¹ Waltz, K.N., (1979) op.Cit p.192.

²² Ibid, p.191.