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Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict

Political inequalities: a comparative study of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire

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HORIZONTAL INEQUALITIES AND CONFLICT: UNDERSTANDING GROUP VIOLENCE IN MULTIETHNIC SOCIETIES

Edited by Professor Frances Stewart

Chapter 8

Political inequalities: a comparative study of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire

Arnim Langer

1. Introduction

In order to unravel the linkages between the presence of severe horizontal inequalities and the outbreak of violent conflict in plural societies, this chapter compares Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Despite acknowledged differences, a Ghana/Côte d'Ivoire study has a strong foundation for comparison because of the large number of structural similarities between these two countries – including population size, location, geography and climate, variety and distribution of ethnic groups, regional developmental inequalities, economic structure and level of development. Yet while both countries were and are confronted with severe socioeconomic inequalities between their northern and southern regions, only Côte d'Ivoire has experienced a violent national conflict with a clear north-south dimension. Ghana has remained relatively stable and peaceful at the national level since the Fourth Republic came into existence in January 1993.[1] By analyzing why a north-south conflict has emerged in Côte d'Ivoire, and not in Ghana, this chapter aims to contribute to enhancing our understanding of the circumstances in which horizontal inequalities are likely to provoke violent conflict.

[1] While Ghana has experienced several serious ethnic violent conflicts in its northern regions, these ethnic conflicts were only significant at the local level and did not have any far-reaching consequences at the national level (Agyeman, 1998).

While I start from the hypothesis that the presence of severe horizontal inequalities puts a country at greater risk of having a violent conflict, it is important to recognize that 'group disparities and unequal exchange are, in and of themselves, insufficient to explain the course of interethnic conflict' (Rothchild, 1983: 172). Whether group grievances and discontent actually become an issue in the national political sphere largely depends on whether or not group leaders and political elites decide to instigate and organize the process of grievance formation and/or (violent) group mobilization. Hence, if the political elite at the centre is satisfied with the distribution of political and economic power, severe socioeconomic or developmental inequalities are less likely to become a major political issue and possibly result in group violence.

Although political horizontal inequalities particularly affect a country's political elites, they also have an influence on perceptions of inequality among the masses both symbolically and because they hope to acquire benefits from their political representatives. I argue, however, that the 'masses' are primarily concerned about their (relative) socioeconomic situation and position.[2] Consequently, people are more readily mobilized if their group is socioeconomically disadvantaged. Other things being equal, I hypothesize that a country where the three dimensions of horizontal inequality (political, socioeconomic and cultural status) are consistent or run in the same direction has a higher conflict potential than countries where this is not the case. This general hypothesis can be divided into two sub-hypotheses, relating to a more or less conflict-prone configuration. The *simultaneous* presence of severe political, socioeconomic and cultural status inequalities is likely to form an extremely explosive sociopolitical situation because in this situation the excluded political elites not only have strong incentives to mobilize their supporters for violent conflict along

[2]The hypothesis that the 'elites' are primarily concerned with political HIs, while the 'masses' predominantly care about socioeconomic HIs is more fully developed in Langer (2004, 2005).

'cultural' group lines, but are also likely to gain support among group members relatively easily.

Conversely, the emergence of violent conflict becomes less likely if a country's political, socioeconomic and cultural status inequalities do not coincide. For instance, a situation where an ethnoregional or religious group is economically deprived or disadvantaged, yet, at the same time its leaders are politically included and its cultural practices are recognized *in* and *by* the state, is less prone to widespread political instability and violent group mobilization because not only do the political leaders lack strong incentives to mobilize their group members for violent action, but also the access to political power provides peaceful ways of addressing their group's socioeconomic underdevelopment and grievances. An important objective of this comparative study between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire is to 'test' these hypotheses.

2. From Ivorian 'miracle' to violent conflict[3]

Côte d'Ivoire is a multiethnic country with approximately 40 different ethnic groups which can be grouped into five larger sociocultural or ethnolinguistic groups: Akan, Krou, Northern Mandé, Southern Mandé and Voltaic. While the largest ethnic group is the Akan, with approximately 42 per cent of the population, the two northern ethnic groups, Northern Mandé and Voltaic, together constitute about 34 per cent of the population (see Table 8.1). Although the latter two ethnic groups originate from Côte d'Ivoire's northern regions, due to extensive north-south migration both in the colonial and postcolonial period, many people belonging to these groups now live in the southern regions, particularly in the capital Abidjan and the coffee and cocoa-producing areas in the western and central parts of the country. In addition to internal migration, Côte d'Ivoire has also received a very large number of international

[3]This section draws on Langer (2005).

migrants. The French colonial administration started the international migration flows by moving forced labour from the Upper Volta, today's Burkina Faso, to the cocoa and coffee plantations in the southern parts of Côte d'Ivoire.

Although forced labour was abolished by the French Assembly in 1946, Côte d'Ivoire continued to attract large numbers of migrants from neighbouring countries. The country's first president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, promoted the influx of foreign workers by introducing liberal land-ownership laws, under the slogan 'the land belongs to those that develop it' (Gonin, 1998: 174). As a result of these extensive international migration flows, the origin of a large proportion of the people in Côte d'Ivoire, in both the current and previous generations, is from outside the country. In 1998, such 'foreigners' accounted for over 4 million people or roughly 25 per cent of the population, mainly coming from Burkina Faso (57.5 per cent of the total), Mali (20.4 per cent) and Guinea (3.4 per cent) (République de Côte d'Ivoire, 2001). However, about 50 per cent of these 'foreigners' or 'non-Ivorians' were born in Côte d'Ivoire. It is of significance that the ethnocultural and religious background of these non-Ivorians is very similar to that of the northern ethnic groups.

Religion significantly reinforces the ethnoregional north-south differences described above. While the Akan and Krou are predominantly Christian, the dominant religion among the northern ethnic groups is Islam. As shown in Table 8.1, almost 50 per cent of the people in the north are Muslim. Islam is therefore a strong unifying factor among the two northern ethnic groups. As the vast majority of non-Ivorians (about 70 per cent) is Muslim, their presence in Côte d'Ivoire tilts the religious balance in favour of Islam at the national level.

Table 8.1: Ethnic and religious composition of Côte d'Ivoire in 1998[1]

A) Ethnic composition[2] (% of population of region)					
	Akan	Krou	Southern Mandé	Northern Mandé	Voltaic
North	22.9	1.8	2.3	26.6	45.6
South	49.0	16.7	12.9	12.8	7.4
Total Ivorian population	42.1	12.7	10.0	16.5	17.6
B) Religious composition[3] (% of population of region)					
	Christian	Muslim	Traditionalist	Other religions	No religion
North	17.2	49.6	17.8	0.7	13.7
South	34.0	35.4	10.2	2.1	17.6
Total Ivorian population	33.9	27.4	15.3	2.0	20.7
Total resident population	30.3	38.6	11.9	1.7	16.7

Source: Author's calculations based on the 1998 Côte d'Ivoire population census (see République de Côte d'Ivoire, 2001).

1) The 'South' comprises the following regions: Montagnes, Moyen-Cavally, Haut-Sassandra, Bas-Sassandra, Marahoué, Fromager, Sud-Bandama, N'Zi Comoé, Moyen-Comoé, Agnéby, Lagunes, Sud-Comoé, Lacs.
   The 'North' comprises the following regions: Denguéle, Savanes, Zanzan, Bafing, Worodougou and Vallée du Bandama.
2) As the 1998 population census did not provide the ethnic background of the foreign nationals, the ethnic composition is based on Ivorian nationals only.
3) The religious composition of the 'north' and 'south' is based on the *resident* population (that is, it includes foreign nationals).

When Côte d'Ivoire became independent in August 1960, a one-party system was installed and the *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI – Ivorian Democratic Party) took control of the state institutions. The PDCI was founded by the Baoulé tribal chief Houphouët-Boigny in 1946 and *de facto* controlled the Ivorian political system between 1960 and 1999. Houphouët-Boigny was elected the first president of Côte d'Ivoire and was reelected successively until his death in December 1993. However, until 1990 Côte d'Ivoire had a one-party system and Houphouët-Boigny

was therefore the only presidential candidate in the successive elections. During the first 20 years of his presidency, Côte d'Ivoire achieved remarkable economic growth with real annual GDP growth rates of more than 7 per cent. In addition to its strong economic progress, Côte d'Ivoire also benefited from a relatively stable political environment in the first two decades after independence. In the light of these economic and political achievements, international observers often referred to Côte d'Ivoire as '*Le Miracle Africain*'.

While the favourable economic environment contributed heavily to Côte d'Ivoire's relatively stable political environment, other factors also played a crucial role. Some scholars have stressed the importance of Houphouët-Boigny's approach to politics which was characterized by a culture of dialogue, compromise, rewards, punishment, forgiveness and reintegration (see, for example, Akindes, 2003). A crucial aspect of '*Le modèle Houphouétiste*' was his use of economic incentives to co-opt and appease individuals who might consider challenging the system (Zartman and Delgado, 1984). In the first two decades after Independence, the robustness of the Ivorian economy provided sufficient resources for Houphouët-Boigny's patronage system effectively to neutralize most sources of dissent and dissatisfaction (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999). Houphouët-Boigny was, however, uncompromising about the need to maintain order and stability in order to secure national economic development (*Ibid*). His willingness to use considerable force in order to secure such order and stability was demonstrated on several occasions, most notably during the secessionist revolt of the Sanwi king in December 1969 as well as during the Guébié crisis in November 1970.

Another factor which contributed to maintaining political stability was Houphouët-Boigny's 'system of ethnic quotas,' which was aimed at establishing a balance between different regions and ethnic groups within the main state institutions

(Bakery, 1984). Table 8.2 illustrates Houphouët-Boigny's 'balancing' policy, showing the relative proportion of the different ethnic groups in the major political institutions for the period 1959 to 1980. Although the Akan dominated the political scene, the table shows that all major ethnic groups (including the northern ethnic groups, Malinké and Voltaic) were reasonably well represented in Côte d'Ivoire's main political institutions.

Table 8.2: Elite by ethnic group, 1959-80

Ethnic Group	Total Political Elite		Minister		Deputy		Economic and Social Councillors		PDCI Politburo		Total Population in 1975
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Akan	163	50.9	39	53.4	100	50.0	50	56.1	43	55.1	41.4
Krou	33	19.6	15	20.5	41	20.5	13	14.6	10	12.8	16.7
Malinké	33	10.3	7	9.5	19	9.0	10	11.2	8	10.25	14.8
S. Mandé	17	5.3	2	2.7	13	6.5	4	4.4	4	5.1	10.2
Voltaic	29	9.06	6	8.2	9	4.5	4	4.4	7	8.9	15.7
Others	13	4.06	4	5.4	6	3.0	7	7.8	5	6.4	1.2
Unknown	1	0.3	-	-	1	0.5	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Bakery (1984: 36).

While Côte d'Ivoire's outward-oriented agricultural development strategy produced impressive economic results, the concentration of investment, jobs and wealth in the southern parts of the country, especially in Abidjan and the cocoa area known as the '*Boucle du Cacao*', exacerbated the socioeconomic disparities between the north and south. In 1974, for instance, the income *per capita* of the four northern departments Boundiali (CFAF28,480), Ferkéssédougou (CFAF49,554), Korhogo (CFAF45,041), and Odienné (CFAF29,034) was significantly below Côte d'Ivoire's national average (CFAF67,679) and was 65-80 per cent lower than that of the richest department, Abidjan (CFAF142,895) (Den Tuinder, 1978). The accumulation of these inequalities began increasingly to threaten Côte d'Ivoire's ethnoregional harmony (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999).

In response to the increasing discontent of the people in the northern regions regarding their relative socioeconomic situation, Houphouët-Boigny made several highly publicized visits to the north in 1974. During these visits, he promised the local population increased public investment in order to attain equality with the south. The president fulfilled his promise by initiating the '*Programme du Nord*', which allocated about CFAF20 billion to investment programs in the northern and central regions (Den Tuinder, 1978). The increase in public investment in the north after 1974 is shown in Table 8.3. Another measure to mitigate the ethnoregional imbalances in the distribution of social services was 'to alternate Ivorian independence festivities between Abidjan and the different prefecture capitals' (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999: 137). The massive facelifts that these capitals would undergo in preparation for this event created a considerable number of jobs in the construction of new government buildings, the paving of streets and roads, the provision of water and electricity, and so on (*Ibid*).

Table 8.3: Public investment *per capita* by region, 1971-77 (CFAF thousands)

Region	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975[1]	1976[1]	1977[1]	1971-77	1973 Population[2]
North	1.3	10.8	21.3	18.4	27.0	28.8	29.4	137.0	554.6
East	5.3	0.4	0.4	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.5	11.3	266.5
South	6.5	7.7	6.3	8.2	12.3	13.2	13.6	67.9	1,193.6
West	0.3	3.4	2.3	3.7	4.6	2.8	3.1	20.2	701.9
Centre West	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.7	2.5	3.2	0.6	7.6	712.0
Centre	10.8	11.5	9.2	11.0	13.5	10.4	4.3	70.7	1,490.4
Southwest	49.4	17.9	13.5	33.3	60.3	75.0	102.6	351.9	156.0
Abidjan	11.7	14.5	23.0	31.1	41.4	33.0	22.4	177.0	840.0
Non-allocated	2.3	2.8	3.0	4.2	6.2	6.8	6.9	32.2	NA[3]
Total	9.6	11.0	12.4	16.1	22.9	22.1	19.8	113.8	5,910.0

1) Projected
2) In thousands. The 1973 population was used for all years. Thus, figures for the later years are biased upward in comparison with earlier years.
3) Not applicable

Source: Den Tuinder (1978: 151).

However, the increase in public investment in the northern regions quickly dried up with the deteriorating economic environment at the end of the 1970s. The sharp decline in the commodity prices of coffee and cocoa clearly exposed Côte d'Ivoire's vulnerability to international commodity markets. Throughout the 1980s, the Ivorian economy remained in dire straits with a *negative* average annual real growth rate of approximately 0.2 per cent.[4] As a consequence, the socioeconomic north-south divide remained as severe in the mid-1980s as it had been in the mid-1970s. Table 8.4 illustrates the persistence of the regional and ethnic socioeconomic disparities in Côte d'Ivoire in 1985.

[4]Author's calculation based on data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators.

Table 8.4: Some socioeconomic indicators for different regions and ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire in 1985[1]

Regions	Mean Expenditure *Per Capita* (CFAFx1000 yr.)	Distribution of poverty		
		Poorest 10%	Poorest 30%	All Ivorians
Abidjan	633.8	2.0	3.5	18.8
Other Urban	412.7	2.0	10.8	22.4
West Forest	296.0	8.1	11.2	15.2
East Forest	246.2	31.1	34.4	24.7
Savannah	177.7	56.8	40.1	18.9
Côte d'Ivoire	350.9	-	-	-
Ethnic groups	Mean Expenditure *Per Capita* (CFAFx1000 yr.)	Distribution of poverty		
		Poorest 10%	Poorest 30%	All Ivorians
Akan	354.6	34.0	38.4	38.1
Krou	367.5	5.2	9.9	13.9
Southern Mandé	388.9	4.8	7.6	11.2
Northern Mandé	338.5	22.3	15.4	13.0
Voltaic	244.7	26.5	16.8	9.5
Non-Ivorian	377.2	6.5	11.6	14.1
Côte d'Ivoire	350.9	-	-	-

Source: Glewwe (1988: 11-14).

1) The Savannah region depicts the situation of the northern regions; and the Northern Mandé and Voltaic ethnic groups are illustrative for the northern ethnic groups.

The negative economic environment in the 1980s not only reduced the standard of living, but it also exacerbated tensions between locals and foreign as well as internal migrants in the southern regions. As most migrants (both internal and foreign) belonged to the northern ethnic groups, the communal tensions were increasingly perceived as a conflict between north and south (Dembélé, 2003). As Dembélé (2003: 36, my translation) argues: 'The communal conflict between north and south was mainly related to land issues and the presence of too many migrants from the centre and north in the rural economy in the southwestern regions and the urban economy in the south.'

In April 1990, the economic crisis resulted in major demonstrations by the still officially illegal political opposition. In an attempt to restore social and political stability by appeasing the political opposition, in May 1990 Houphouët-Boigny decided to abandon one-party rule and legalize opposition parties. The first competitive presidential elections took place in October 1990. Houphouët-Boigny won the elections with a considerable margin against the main opposition party candidate, Laurent Gbagbo. However, the most significant aspect of these elections was the introduction of ethnonationalism and xenophobia into Côte d'Ivoire's electoral politics. In particular, during the 1990 elections, Côte d'Ivoire's main opposition party, *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI – Ivorian Popular Front), initiated a political campaign around the message that 'the PDCI was a partial regime which had systematically favoured the interests of particular Ivorian ethnic groups – Baoulé and groups from the north – and of foreigners' (Crook, 1997: 222).

In an important change, Alassane Ouattara – a Malinké, a subgroup of the Northern Mandé ethnic group – was appointed to the newly created position of prime minister following the elections. As a former Africa director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and governor of the Central Bank for West African States (BCEAO), Ouattara was chosen mainly for his economic management skills and international reputation. However, by appointing Ouattara as prime minister, 'the conflicts between the forest people from the south and the northerners in the land and economic sphere shifted to the political sphere' (Dembélé, 2003: 36, my translation). When Houphouët-Boigny died on 7 December 1993, Henri Konan Bédié, also a Baoulé, succeeded him for the remainder of the presidential term.

Although the combination of several years of structural reforms and the 1994 CFA franc devaluation led to a significant recovery in economic growth, most people did not benefit from the economic recovery (see, for example, Azam, 2004). Côte d'Ivoire

also continued to experience serious political confrontations and ethnic tensions, particularly in the lead-up to the October 1995 presidential elections. Growing northern consciousness was an important change that contributed to the escalation of ethnic tensions at the beginning of the 1990s. The distribution of an anonymous document called '*Le Charte du Grand Nord*' (Charter of the North) in 1992 illustrated the changed attitudes of the northerners regarding the sociopolitical system in general and the Baoulé group in particular. The Charter 'called for fuller recognition of the Muslim religion […], more efforts to reduce regional inequalities, greater political recognition of the north's political loyalty during the upheavals of the 1980s and […] an end to Baoulé nepotism in recruitment to public jobs' (Crook, 1997: 226).

Northern grievances and dissatisfaction were not limited to the economic and political sphere, but also had a 'cultural status' dimension. The call for greater recognition of the Muslim religion in Côte d'Ivoire clearly illustrates this. While Côte d'Ivoire's 1960 constitution had a secular character, a direct consequence of Houphouët-Boigny's long stay in power as head of state was a growing blurring in perceptions of the separation of religion and state. Though the political inclusion of the northerners/Muslims in various state institutions helped to counter this impression, the creation of an immense Basilica in Yamoussoukro by Houphouët-Boigny in the late 1980s was perceived by many Muslims as a clear indication of the superior position given to Christianity in Côte d'Ivoire. The fact that Houphouët-Boigny claimed to have paid for the construction of the Basilica (which allegedly cost around $600 million) from his own means did little to dissolve this perception.

The emergence of a new opposition party, *Rassemblement des républicains* (RDR – Republican Rally), in 1994, reflected a further split among Côte d'Ivoire's political elite. The RDR was set up by a group of disgruntled PDCI politicians under the leadership of Djény Kobina. The party aimed to draw support from people with a

northern and/or Muslim background, predominantly found among the Voltaic and Northern Mandé ethnic groups. Alassane Ouattara – in 1994 again working in Washington – would soon become their political leader. The emergence of this new party confronted Bédié with a serious challenge because the RDR was likely to reduce PDCI's electoral support in the northern regions (Crook, 1997). In response, as Crook (*Ibid*: 227) states: 'Bédié's initial strategy was familiar to any student of electoral politics: he stole the opposition's clothes, and adopted a policy of Ivorian nationalism, under the slogan of the promotion of *Ivoirité* (Ivorianness).'

Although Bédié claimed that the concept was solely aimed at creating a sense of cultural unity among all the people living in the territory of Côte d'Ivoire, it is widely recognized that it was introduced for a specific political reason: to prevent Ouattara from participating in the presidential elections in 1995. *Ivoirité* changed the electoral code, requiring both parents of a presidential candidate to be Ivorian. The new 1995 electoral code further stipulated that the candidate himself must have lived in the country for the past five years. Due to this new electoral code, Ouattara was effectively excluded from participating in the October 1995 presidential elections, which in turn disenfranchised an important part of the northern population.

The introduction of the ideology of *Ivoirité* had however an impact far beyond the political sphere because it led to a general erosion of northern Ivorians' social standing and cultural status in Côte d'Ivoire. The ethnoregional and religious similarity between northerners and most foreign migrants led to a situation where these two different groups of people were increasingly seen as one and the same. The portrayal of 'northerners' as 'foreigners' not only constituted an extreme lack of recognition *by* the Ivorian state, but it also meant and indeed 'justified' (at least in the view of those propagating the ideology of *Ivoirité*) the exclusion of the northerners from the Ivorian state.

As a result of Ouattara's exclusion, the RDR boycotted the October 1995 presidential elections. The leader of the FPI, Laurent Gbagbo, also decided to boycott the elections, claiming that the electoral process had been manipulated. Due to the absence of his main rivals, Bédié won the October 1995 elections with a landslide. Until the coup d'état in December 1999, the two opposition parties RDR and FPI together formed the *Front républicain* (Republican Front). The Republican Front attacked Bédié for giving too much political influence and economic privilege to his own ethnic group, the Baoulé. In sharp contrast to Houphouët-Boigny, Bédié almost completely stopped the efforts to balance the different ethnoregional interests and parties, and started a process of '*baoulisation*' of state institutions (Dozon, 2000). Table 8.5, showing the ethnic representation of government for the period 1980-2003, illustrates this. As well as showing the relative representation of the five major ethnic groups, the table also indicates the relative representation of the Baoulé, Houphouët-Boigny and Bédié's ethnic group. (As the Baoulé are the largest *subgroup* of the Akan, the figures in Table 8.5 do not add up to 100 per cent if one includes them.) Each ethnic group's *relative representation* (RR) is calculated by dividing an ethnic group's relative proportion in government (in per cent) by its relative size in the entire population. Consequently, 1 means proportional representation; figures higher than 1 point to overrepresentation and less than 1 to underrepresentation (Langer, 2005).

While the Baoulé were almost proportionately represented in Houphouët-Boigny's government of November 1991, under Bédié, they became increasingly overrepresented in relation to their demographic size; amounting to 1.86 times their demographic size in the August 1998 government. With regard to the most important ministerial positions, their overrepresentation was even more noticeable (Langer, 2005). The table also shows that Houphouët-Boigny's governments of the 1980s

were reasonably well balanced in ethnic terms. His government of July 1986, in particular, had an ethnically balanced outlook, with only the Southern Mandé and the northern ethnic group, Voltaic, somewhat underrepresented in relation to their demographic size. Moreover, the 'northerners' – defined here as individuals belonging to the Voltaic and Northern Mandé ethnic groups – were overall reasonably well represented in the 1980s. While the northerners were around 40 per cent underrepresented in relation to their demographic size in Houphouët-Boigny's last government of November 1991, it is important to remember that Alassane Ouattara, a 'northerner,' was prime minister and *de facto* head of the government as Houphouët-Boigny was increasingly incapacitated by illness.

Table 8.5: Ethnic composition of government, 1980-2003[1]

	Felix Houphouët-Boigny[2]								Henri Konan Bédié						Robert Gueï				Laurent Gbagbo			
	Nov-80		Jul-86		Oct-89		Nov-91		Dec-93		Jan-96		Aug-98		Jan-00		May-00		Jan-01		Aug-02	
	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR
Akan	0.49	1.15	0.41	0.96	0.47	1.11	0.61	1.44	0.52	1.24	0.52	1.23	0.59	1.41	0.50	1.19	0.30	0.72	0.46	1.10	0.52	1.23
Baoulé[3]	0.22	1.33	0.24	1.45	0.2	1.21	0.17	1.03	0.24	1.43	0.28	1.64	0.31	1.86	0.13	0.74	0.04	0.26	0.11	0.64	0.13	0.77
Krou	0.19	1.19	0.2	1.26	0.2	1.26	0.17	1.07	0.24	1.89	0.21	1.63	0.16	1.23	0.13	0.98	0.22	1.71	0.29	2.25	0.19	1.52
S. Mandé	0.05	0.42	0.1	0.83	0.13	1.08	0.04	0.33	0.04	0.40	0.10	1.03	0.06	0.63	0.08	0.83	0.17	1.73	0.18	1.79	0.16	1.61
N. Mandé	0.08	0.59	0.17	1.25	0.13	0.96	0.09	0.66	0.08	0.48	0.07	0.42	0.03	0.19	0.17	1.01	0.17	1.05	0.07	0.43	0.13	0.78
Voltaic	0.14	0.91	0.1	0.65	0.03	0.19	0.09	0.58	0.12	0.68	0.10	0.59	0.13	0.71	0.13	0.71	0.08	0.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Southerners[4]	0.73	1.04	0.71	1.01	0.8	1.14	0.82	1.16	0.8	1.23	0.83	1.28	0.81	1.25	0.71	1.10	0.69	1.06	0.93	1.44	0.87	1.34
Northerners[5]	0.22	0.76	0.27	0.93	0.16	0.55	0.18	0.62	0.2	0.59	0.17	0.50	0.16	0.47	0.3	0.88	0.25	0.73	0.07	0.21	0.13	0.38
No.	N=37		N=41		N=30		N=23		N=25		N=29		N=32		N=24		N=23		N=28		N=31	

1) To compile this table, the ethnic background of government ministers was inferred on the basis of name recognition. In this regard, I would like to thank Professor Francis Akindes and his doctoral students Moustapha Touré and Kouamé Severin for taking the time to fill in my questionnaires.
2) While the relative representation (RR) figures for the period 1980-91 are based on the ethnic composition data from the 1988 population census, those from the December 1993 government onwards are based on the ethnic composition data from the 1998 population census.
3) As the Baoulé are the largest *subgroup* of the Akan, the figures do not add up to 100 per cent if one includes them.
4) Southerners include the Akan, Southern Mandé and Krou ethnic groups.
5) Northerners are comprised of the Northern Mandé and Voltaic ethnic groups.

In addition to the *baoulisation* of the political-administrative sector, Bédié also began to change the ethnic composition of the military forces in favour of his own ethnic group. Contamin and Losch (2000) argue that Bédié progressively destroyed the internal balances in the military by appointing Baoulé people predominantly to the higher command positions. The ethnic tensions that stemmed from favouritism towards the Baoulé were compounded by a general discontent in the armed forces due to a gradual decline in the status and importance of the military during the 1990s, mainly arising from reduced expenditures following from the precarious financial and economic situation (Kieffer, 2000).

The ethnic grievances and general discontent within the armed forces triggered a coup d'état in December 1999. The coup was initiated by a group of non-commissioned officers who claimed they were owed financial compensation for their participation in an international peacekeeping mission in Central Africa (Kieffer, 2000). This protest movement quickly developed into a large-scale mutiny, at which stage more senior officers got involved. Finally Bédié was removed from power and the coup leaders asked General Robert Gueï to become the interim head of state. Although the coup d'état initially appears to have originated from individual grievances, these grievances and fears of exclusion cannot be separated from what went on in the rest of the society. As Kieffer (2000) argues, the opposition parties' discourse of exclusion and Baoulé domination of the Ivorian state is likely to have had an important impact on the views and attitudes of the young noncommissioned officers involved in the coup d'état. Importantly, at the time of the coup d'état in December 1999, both the Baoulé overrepresentation and the underrepresentation of the northerners in government were at their most severe in Côte d'Ivoire's postcolonial history up to that point.

Following Bédié's removal from power, the military forces established the *Comité national de salut public* (CNSP – National Committee for Public Salvation). The CNSP was headed by General Gueï who was a Yacouba, one of the ethnic groups belonging to the Southern Mandé ethnic group. In line with '*Le modèle Houphouétiste*', Gueï initially promoted the ideals of national integration and reconciliation, and openly opposed the ideology of *Ivoirité* (Akindes, 2003). After negotiations between the various political parties and the military junta, a transitional government was installed on 4 January 2000. This transitional government was one of the most inclusive governments of the period 1980-2003 (see Table 8.5). However, after several months in office, Gueï's political objectives and strategy changed drastically. In contrast to his earlier statements, Gueï decided after all to participate in the next presidential elections. Further, although without explicitly using the term, he also began to use the ideology of *Ivoirité* in order to gain political support and exclude political opponents, in particular Alassane Ouattara and his RDR party (*Ibid*).

The presidential elections of October 2000 were marked by chaos and violence. When the minister of interior, Grena Mouassi, proclaimed that Gueï had won the elections, this sparked off massive street demonstrations by FPI supporters as well as members of the military and security forces. The military forces supporting these demonstrations, which eventually forced Gueï to leave the country, were mainly of northern origin (Banégas and Losch, 2002). The official results proclaimed by the national electoral commission stated that Laurent Gbagbo had won the elections with 59.36 per cent of the votes (Le Pape, 2002). Following the exclusion of their presidential candidate, Alassane Ouattara, for '*nationalité douteuse*' (nationality in doubt), the RDR refused to recognize the legality of the election results and demanded new elections. To support their demands, RDR supporters started to

organize large-scale street protests which led to violent confrontations with both the FPI supporters and security forces.

On 26 October, the Supreme Court formally declared Laurent Gbagbo the winner of the presidential elections. Gbagbo originates from the western town of Gagnoa. He is a Bété, one of the ethnic groups of the Krou family. In line with his anti-Ouattara and anti-RDR and therefore *de facto* antinorthern rhetoric, Gbagbo allocated most government positions in the January 2001 government to his own party, the FPI. Northerners were largely excluded from his January 2001 government. Indeed, the northern underrepresentation in his first government was considerably worse than in any government of Bédié (see Table 8.5). This obviously aggravated the existing feelings of political exclusion among the RDR supporters. Paradoxically, the same military forces that had chased Gueï away, and thereby helped Gbagbo become president of Côte d'Ivoire, attempted to overthrow Gbagbo's regime on 7 and 8 January 2001 (Banégas and Losch, 2002). However, the coup d'état failed and the military forces involved were forced into exile, mostly ending up in neighbouring countries.

Like his two predecessors, Bédié and Gueï, Gbagbo wanted to change the ethnic composition of the military forces to favour his own ethnic group. In order to achieve this, Gbagbo planned to demobilize two contingents – called '*zinzins*' and '*bahéfouê*' – that predominantly consisted of soldiers who had been recruited during the brief reign of Gueï (Banégas and Losch, 2002). In response to the planned demobilization, however, these soldiers supported a mutiny which quickly turned into a more organized rebellion, which was led by officers that had gone into exile either because of the military purges during the Gueï regime or because of their involvement in the failed coup d'état in January 2001 (*Ibid*). It seems, therefore,

likely that the military mutiny of 19 September 2002 was part of a larger plan to overthrow Gbagbo's regime.

The serious violent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire started with simultaneous attacks against the military installations of Abidjan, Bouaké and Korhogo on 19 September 2002. Several subsequent attempts by government forces to retake the rebel-controlled towns in the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire failed. By the end of September, the rebels firmly controlled the northern part of the country. By then, they were referring to themselves as the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI – Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire). The main grievances put forward by the insurgents related to the land ownership laws, the criteria of eligibility for presidential elections, the question of identity cards and the political domination of the northerners by southerners (Dembélé, 2003). Although the majority of its forces had a northern background, the MPCI claimed to have no specific ethnic, regional or religious affiliation. Overall, it is estimated that so far around 10,000 people were killed in the Ivorian conflict and, according to the UN Population Fund, it has resulted in approximately 1 million displaced persons, of which an estimated 80 per cent are in Abidjan (Chirot, 2006).

With strong encouragement from France and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the conflict parties were brought together in Linas-Marcoussis for a round-table meeting. These negotiations resulted in the signing of the Marcoussis Agreement on 23 January 2003 in Paris. The main provision of the agreement was the creation of a government of national unity, to be comprised of ministers from all different political parties and rebel organizations. However, the transitional government failed to implement the Marcoussis Agreement fully or to restore a stable sociopolitical environment in Côte d'Ivoire. Since then the conflict parties have signed a string of other peace agreements and deals, none of which

has been fully implemented, and Côte d'Ivoire has therefore remained stuck in a 'no peace, no war' situation.

The Ouagadougou Agreement, signed in March 2007, is the latest attempt to revive Côte d'Ivoire's stalled peace process up to the time of writing. The main provisions of the agreement are the formation of a new power-sharing government, the creation of a joint army command, the incremental removal of the north-south buffer zone (known as the confidence zone), and a new timetable for disarmament, voter identification and elections. It is as yet uncertain whether this will result in a lasting peace or fail like previous agreements.

3. The peaceful management of the north-south divide in Ghana[5]

Like Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana is a multiethnic country with around 60 different ethnic groups. The four main groups, comprising together around 86 per cent of the population, are the Akan, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe and Ga-Dangme (see Table 8.6). The Akans are by far the largest ethnic group with approximately 49 per cent of the population. They are however a potpourri of around 20 smaller ethnic groups of which the Ashantis (roughly 30 per cent of the Akans) and Fantis (roughly 20 per cent of the Akans) are demographically the most important.

[5]This section draws on Langer (2007) which provides a more detail analysis of the peaceful management of ethnicity and ethnoregional inequalities in Ghana.

Table 8.6: Ethnic and religious composition of Ghana in 2000[1]

A) Ethnic composition (% of population of region)					
	Akan	Ewe	Ga-Dangme	Mole-Dagbani	Others
North	6.7	1.2	0.5	62.4	29.3
South	58.4	15.2	9.6	6.5	10.3
Total population	49.1	12.7	16.5	8.0	13.7
B) Religious composition (% of population of region)					
	Christian	Muslim	Traditionalist	Other religions	No religion
North	24.6	42.7	29.6	0.6	2.5
South	78.2	10.2	4.0	0.7	6.9
Total population	68.8	15.9	8.5	0.7	6.1

Source: Author's calculations based on the 2000 Ghana Housing and Population Census.

1) The 'south' comprises the following regions: Greater Accra, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Western, Eastern, Volta and Central. The 'north' comprises the following regions: Upper East, Upper West and Northern.

The main ethnic group in the northern regions and the second largest in the country as a whole are the Mole-Dagbanis who constitute around 16.5 per cent of Ghana's population. It is of significance however that the Mole-Dagbanis are a very loose ethnocultural grouping consisting of about 15 relatively small ethnic subgroups, which have very different histories, customs and traditions (Brukum, 1995). Indeed, quite a few of them speak languages that are unintelligible to one and other (Frempong, 2001). Moreover, different Mole-Dagbani subgroups have repeatedly had violent clashes and conflicts with one and other.[6] These ethnic conflicts 'arise from several years of relegation of certain ethnic groups, so-called "minority" groups, to "second-rate citizens" in the traditional and political administration of the region'

[6]The most serious episode of interethnic violence occurred in 1994 between the Nanumba and Kokomba and resulted in approximately 2000 casualties.

(Brukum, 1995: 138). When one includes the smaller ethnic groups from the north, such as the Gurma and Grusi, the northern ethnic groups together comprise about 23 per cent of Ghana's population. The Ewes are the third largest ethnic group in Ghana and are predominantly found in the eastern part of the country in the Volta Region where they comprise almost 70 per cent of the population. The Ga-Dangmes, who constitute approximately 8 per cent of Ghana's population, are the fourth largest ethnic group and originate from the Accra region where Ghana's capital is located.

Table 8.6 also shows the religious composition of Ghana. While Ghana is a predominantly Christian country with almost 70 per cent of the population adhering to one of the Christian denominations, Muslims constitute around 16 per cent of the population. As in Côte d'Ivoire, Muslims form a particularly important part of the population in the northern regions. Indeed, in the largest of the three northern regions (itself called the 'Northern Region'), the majority of the population (about 56 per cent) is Muslim. Ghana's religious north-south divide is however much less pronounced than in Côte d'Ivoire because Christians and Traditionalists together constitute the majority of the population (about 54 per cent) in the three northern regions (that is, Northern, Upper East and Upper West).

Like Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana's ethnoreligious north-south cleavage is complemented by a serious developmental divide between its northern and southern regions. In this context, scholars such as Smock and Smock (1975: 251) and Ladouceur (1979) argued in the 1970s that a north-south conflict in Ghana was 'latent' and could escalate at any time. However, despite the coincidence of economic, social and cultural north-south cleavages, there has been 'no development of "Northernness" as a basis of political cohesion, and no north versus south patterning of political alignments' (Brown, 1982: 42). While the north-south divide has had 'a surprisingly

limited influence upon Ghanaian politics' (Lentz and Nugent, 2000: 22), Ghana's postcolonial political history is nonetheless characterized by political instability and repeated non-constitutional regime changes as well as serious (nonviolent) ethnic tensions at times. These ethnic tensions were mainly stirred up by 'the perceived competition between Ewe and Ashanti political elites, whose constituencies are not noticeably different in terms of access to education and amenities' (*Ibid*: 13).

The first time that ethnoregional mobilization and tensions had a serious impact on Ghanaian politics was around the time of Independence. Ghana became independent in 1957 under the leadership of then-Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (CPP) had been in power since the British colonial ruler granted self-governance to the Gold Coast in 1951. In the immediate pre-Independence period ethnoregional political parties emerged, including the Gurma/Mole-Dagbani-based Northern People's Party, the Ashanti-based National Liberation Movement and the Ewe-based Togoland Congress Party.

The ethnoregional tensions and mobilization around the time of Independence were followed by a period of comparative ethnic quiet in Ghana's First Republic (1960-66) (Lentz and Nugent, 2000). Nkrumah (by then President) not only took an ethnically blind stance himself in public policy matters, but also made national unity a major objective. Coinciding with the waning of the importance of ethnicity in Ghanaian politics from the early 1960s, Ghana's political system became increasingly authoritarian. In 1964, Nkrumah and his CPP excluded the opposition parties from political participation by changing the constitution into a one-party system. In February 1966, however, Ghana's First Republic came to an end with the overthrow of Nkrumah's regime by the military and police. A National Liberation Council (NLC), headed by Lt General Joseph Arthur Ankrah, took control of the state institutions.

An important feature of the NLC period was the reemergence of ethnic tensions, in particular between the Akans (especially the Ashantis) and the Ewes. These ethnic tensions are usually argued to have started with the killing of an Ewe member of the NLC, Colonel Kotoka during an attempted coup d'état by Akan junior officers in 1967 (Frempong, 2001). The ethnoregional tensions and perceived competition for power between these two groups were not only transferred into Ghana's Second Republic (1969-72), but remained an important issue in Ghanaian politics (Agyeman, 1998; Frempong, 2001; Gyimah-Boadi, 2003; Gyimah-Boadi and Asante, 2006).

In 1969, the NLC government handed over power to the democratically elected government of Abrefa Busia, an Akan from the Brong-Ahafo Region, who was the leader of the Progress Party (PP). In order to gain political support, the PP manipulated the growing Akan hostility towards the Ewes to its own advantage (Smock and Smock, 1975). The main opposition party, the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), was led by an Ewe, K. A. Gbedemah. While the NAL won all the seats in the largely Ewe-speaking Volta Region except Nkwanta and Kete Krachi (Akan-speaking enclaves in Volta), they won no seats in the mainly Akan regions of Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Western and Central. On the other hand, while the PP won all the seats in the Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and Central regions, and a majority of the seats in the other two Akan-dominated regions (that is, Western and Eastern), they only won two seats in the Volta region (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante, 2006).

Ghana's Second Republic was, however, very short lived and came to an end through a coup d'état by a military colonel, Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, in 1972. Ghana's second military administration became known as the National Redemption Council (NRC). While Ghana's economy prospered in the first three years of the Acheampong-NRC regime, from 1975 Ghana's economic and financial situation started to deteriorate rapidly. In response to the ensuing tensions, Acheampong

decided to alter the character of his regime by establishing the Supreme Military Council (SMC) which consisted entirely of service commanders (Frimpong-Ansah, 1991). He also appointed military men to all the top public positions, including the boards of state financial institutions and the Central Bank. This reshuffle had, however, no real positive impact on the Ghanaian economy which remained in dire straits. Moreover, 'misuse of public funds … gave credibility to charges of pervasive corruption,' locally referred to as *kalabule* (*Ibid*: 111). On 5 July 1978, in a palace coup by the other members of the SMC, Acheampong was forced to resign and Lt Colonel Fred Akuffo became the new head of state. However, Akuffo himself was removed from power in June 1979 by yet another coup d'état led by Flight Lt Jerry Rawlings.

Although Rawlings handed over power to the democratically elected government of the People's National Party (PNP) headed by Dr Hilla Limann, who originated from Gwolu in Upper West Region, in September 1979, he returned to power again through another coup d'état in December 1981. Rawlings' second coming was 'particularly noteworthy for the manner in which ethnic claims were subordinated to the language of class interest' (Lentz and Nugent, 2000: 22). Illustratively, the main conflicts and internal disputes within the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), the new governing body after the 1981 coup d'état, had an *ideological* rather than an *ethnic* character, and related to the fundamental change in the economic ideology of the Rawlings regime from a radical Marxist-Leninist approach to a neo-liberal capitalist approach (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante, 2006).

In May 1992, in response to increasing domestic demands and pressures from Western donors for a return to multiparty democracy, the PNDC lifted the ban on party political activity. Presidential elections were held in October 1992. Ethnic sentiments played a major role during these elections. The continuation of the Ewe-

Ashanti/Akan rivalry is indicated both by the fact that the New Patriotic Party (NPP) leader, Adu Boahen (half-Ashanti), and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) leader, Jerry Rawlings (half-Ewe), emerged as the two main contenders in these elections, as well as the voting patterns in the two candidates' home regions (Frempong, 2001). To illustrate: While Adu Boahen won a significant majority (60.5 per cent) of the votes in his home region (the Ashanti Region), he only received 3.6 per cent of the votes in the Ewe-dominated Volta Region. For Rawlings the situation was the reverse: he won 93.2 per cent of the votes in the Volta Region and only obtained 32.9 per cent of the votes in the Ashanti Region (*Ibid*).

While Ghana has successfully consolidated its democracy since the reintroduction of multiparty elections in 1992, regional voting patterns seem to suggest that ethnicity, while not the only factor, remains important for determining political allegiances and election results in the Fourth Republic, particularly in the Ashanti and Volta regions. Further, even though the higher echelons of both the NDC and NPP showed a high degree of ethnic mix towards the end of the 1990s, and Rawlings' successor as leader of the NDC, John Atta Mills, was a Fanti (one of the Akan subgroups), the perception of the NDC and NPP as largely Ewe and Ashanti/Akan-based parties respectively persisted into the 2000 and 2004 elections (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante, 2006). Yet, the main divide from this perspective is not north-south, in line with the socioeconomic inequalities, but rather between two southern ethnic groups.[7]

[7]For a more detailed analysis of the origins and sociopolitical relevance of the Ewe-Ashanti/Akan cleavage in Ghanaian politics, see Langer (2007).

Table 8.7: Regional distribution of gross value added *per capita*, 1960

Region	Gross value added *per capita*
Greater Accra	176
Western	68
Eastern	53
Volta	43
Ashanti	68
Brong Ahafo	61
Northern	30
All regions	63

Source: Szereszewski (1966: 92).

The fact that the north-south cleavage has not become politically more salient is all the more intriguing if one considers that the socioeconomic north-south divide has hardly been reduced since Ghana gained independence in 1957. Like Côte d'Ivoire, the north-south disparities in development have their origins in differences in natural conditions and resources between the north and south, reinforced and exacerbated by 'the locating of human and physical capital in response to the economic opportunities available' (Rimmer, 1992: 98). Like the colonial economy, Ghana's postcolonial economy had an 'endogenous' tendency to favour the south over the north in terms of the location of economic activities. As shown in Table 8.7, the spatial distribution of economic activities resulted in a situation in which the gross value added *per capita* of the northern regions was less than half what it was in the three main cocoa-producing regions in the south (Ashanti, Western and Brong Ahafo) and only about 20 per cent of the level of the Greater Accra Region, where the capital is located.

Nkrumah aimed to mitigate the north-south divide by undertaking specific programmes in the historically disadvantaged northern regions, often at great expense and against economic rationality. For instance, the Nkrumah regime set up

a tomato-canning facility in Tamale in the Northern Region, even though the production of tomatoes and the main consumer markets were located in the south (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999). Another example is the commissioning by the Nkrumah regime of the construction of a $30 million international airport in Tamale in the Northern Region (Smock and Smock, 1975). This policy of regional redistribution, in which specific development programmes were undertaken in the relatively deprived northern regions, has been emulated by most governments since Nkrumah. However, arguably only the state-led development approaches of Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (CPP) in Ghana's First Republic (1960-66) and of Colonel Acheampong and his National Redemption Council/Supreme Military Council (1972-78) included a truly 'positive vision for the development of the north' and its integration in Ghana's economy (Shepherd, *et al.*, 2005: 13).

Despite Nkrumah and Acheampong's efforts to reduce the north-south divide and integrate the northern regions into Ghana's economy, at the end of the 1970s the north remained generally much poorer, in terms, for example, of income, infrastructure, education and medical services. According to Kodwo Ewusi's composite measure of development (based on a wide range of socioeconomic indicators, including *per capita* energy consumption, proportion of the population employed in nonagricultural activities, literacy rate, earnings per worker and number of hospital beds per 1000 persons), the Northern and Upper regions had levels of development equivalent to only 11 per cent and 7 per cent respectively of the level found in the Greater Accra Region in the mid-1970s (see Table 8.8). While the capital region is almost always the most developed region in a country, the northern regions only had levels of development equivalent to about 25-35 per cent of those in the main cocoa-producing regions in the south (that is, Ashanti, Western, Eastern and Central).

Table 8.8: Regional developmental inequalities in 1970-75
Measure of development for the regions with Greater Accra as base and ranked from best developed to least developed

Region	Measure of development[1]
Greater Accra	1.000
Central	0.398
Western	0.392
Eastern	0.355
Ashanti	0.340
Volta	0.306
Brong Ahafo	0.265
Northern	0.110
Upper	0.071

Source: Ewusi (1976: 89).

1) Kodwo Ewusi developed his composite index of development by applying the Wroclow Taxonomic Technique to the following ten socioeconomic indicators: 1) crude participation rate, 2) *per capita* energy consumption, 3) proportion of population in nonagricultural sectors, 4) rate of urbanization, 5) literacy rate, 6) population density per sq. mile, 7) earning per worker, 8) accessibility index, 9) number of doctors per 100,000 persons, and 10) number of hospital beds per 1000 persons (for more details, see Ewusi, 1976).

Although Ghana's economy performed well in the 1950s, achieving an average real growth rate of well over 5 per cent, it fell far short of the promise Nkrumah made in 1949 that he would transform 'the Gold Coast into a paradise in ten years' once they had self-governance (Killick, 1978). In the 1950s, Ghana's economic success was based on an open economy with the private sector as the main source of growth (particularly small-scale cocoa farming), but from 1957 Nkrumah changed this to a state-led modernization strategy based on import-substitution industrialization. The main source of funding for Ghana's industrialization came from the cocoa sector, which provided about 70 per cent of Ghana's export earnings (Dordunoo and Nyanteng, 1997). However, from 1959, as a consequence of a sharp decline in the world market prices of cocoa, Ghana was forced to draw heavily on its foreign exchange reserves to carry on its 'modernization' process. Due to the rapid depletion of its foreign exchange reserves, Ghana was soon unable to import

essential goods and services in adequate quantities needed for its economic development (*Ibid*).

The Busia government increased the pace of liberalization of the economy (tentatively started under the preceding NLC regime), but once Acheampong took over power in 1972, he returned to statism and controls (Dordunoo and Nyanteng, 1997). This approach to development, first introduced in the 1960s by Nkrumah and continued by the Acheampong regime in the 1970s had disastrous consequences for Ghana's economy. During the first 25 years after Independence in 1957, Ghana's real income *per capita* fell by more than one-third (Van Buren, 2005). After taking over power in 1981, Rawlings and his PNDC regime initially responded to the prevailing economic problems in much the same way as previous governments had (that is, they established a state monopoly on export-import trade and tried to eliminate corruption in the allocation of import licenses), but in 1983 they reversed their economic course dramatically and started implementing an extensive economic reform program with the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, locally known as the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) (Herbst, 1993).

Table 8.9: Evolution of macroeconomic indicators in Ghana (in percentages)

Period	Ave. GDP growth	Ave. consumer price inflation	Ave. exports earnings growth	Ave. gross capital formation growth	Ave. GDP *per capita* growth
1975-1981	-1.5	70.9	-7.2	-5.3	-3.8
1982-1992	3.2	34.7	5.4	3.7	0.1
1993-2000	4.2	29.5	10.6	1.9	1.7
2001-2004	4.8	21.8	1.2	23.0	2.9

Source: Author's calculations based on the World Bank's World Development Indicators database.

Ghana's economic performance recovered after 1983, and a period of sustained growth followed (see Table 8.9). Although Ghana's structural adjustment process contributed to restoring economic growth and macroeconomic stability, different regions benefited in different degrees from the recovery (Songsore, 2003). In line with the ERP's objective to restore economic growth by rehabilitating Ghana's export economy, most external funding went to Ghana's 'industrial core region', the Greater Accra Region, as well as the cocoa, timber and mineral industries in the Akan-dominated Western, Eastern, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions (*Ibid*). Ghana's northern regions largely failed to benefit from the ERP's economic stimulus.

Like Nkrumah, however, the Rawlings regime undertook specific investment projects in the northern regions, including the extension of the national electricity grid, the rehabilitation of the north-south roads and greater expenditure on education, aimed at mitigating the developmental north-south divide. Notwithstanding these and other measures, Ghana's socioeconomic north-south divide actually worsened in the 1990s with regard to certain socioeconomic indicators – for example the incidence of poverty (see Table 8.10 below). While the overall incidence of poverty decreased from 52 per cent to 40 per cent in the period 1992-99, two of the three northern regions (the Northern and Upper East regions) actually witnessed an increase in the incidence of poverty.

Soon after taking over from Rawlings in January 2001, the Kufuor government acknowledged the undesirability of regional developmental disparities and made the reduction of these inequalities a key policy objective (See Government of Ghana, 2003). The government consequently introduced several mechanisms to redress the adverse conditions in the northern regions, particularly relating to health, social infrastructure, education and economic infrastructure. For instance, the funds that were freed up as part of the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative were

earmarked to benefit the north disproportionately (Shepherd, *et al.*, 2005). But to date evidence does not show any narrowing of HIs.

Despite the limited success of successive strategies of economic redistribution over the decades in closing the north-south gap, it is important to emphasize that the impact on reducing the political *salience* of the north-south divide is likely to have been much more substantial.

Table 8.10: Socioeconomic inequalities across Ghana's regions in the 1990s

	Incidence of poverty (%)[1]		Literacy (% literate)[2]		Access to health services (%)[3]	Primary school enrolment (%)[4]
	1992	1999	1993	1998	1997	1997
Western	60	27	37	54	28	75
Central	44	48	43	55	36	72
Greater Accra	26	5	60	76	78	70
Volta	57	38	46	58	42	70
Eastern	48	44	46	66	33	78
Ashanti	41	28	31	64	43	72
Brong Ahafo	65	36	30	53	32	72
Northern	63	69	8	13	18	40
Upper West	88	84	12	20	8	45
Upper East	67	88	8	20	20	36
National	52	40	34	51	37	67

1) Data drawn from Songsore (2003). The poverty line was the same in both years, that is, ¢700,000 per adult per year.
2) Author's calculations based on data from the 1993 and 1998 Demographic and Health Surveys.
3) and 4) Data drawn from the 1997 Ghana Core Welfare Indicators Survey.

In addition to attempting to reduce the developmental north-south divide, consecutive Ghanaian regimes employed certain strategies in the political sphere which also contributed to diminishing the political salience of the north-south cleavage and helped to contain ethnoregional political mobilization more generally. As mentioned earlier, Nkrumah was the first Ghanaian leader to be confronted with ethnoregional tensions and mobilization in the immediate pre-Independence period.

His strategies to contain these divisive ethnoregional forces, and promote national integration, have to some extent become institutionalized, both formally and informally. In particular, against the backdrop of the emergence of ethnoregional political parties, Nkrumah introduced the Avoidance of Discrimination Act in December 1957 which prohibited the formation of political parties on ethnic, regional or religious lines. While the Avoidance of Discrimination Act was fiercely criticized and strongly opposed by the opposition at the time, since then successive Ghanaian political elites have also recognized the centrifugal potential of ethnic, religious or regional political parties. Consequently, the 1969, 1979 and 1992 Constitutions and the 2000 Political Parties Act all contain provisions aimed at curbing ethnic electoral politics and ensuring that political parties are national in character (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante, 2006).

In addition to the formal banning of ethnic, religious or regional political parties, arguably even more important for mitigating the north-south cleavage was (and still is) the largely informal 'policy' or convention among Ghana's political elites of maintaining ethnoregional balance in the political sphere. This convention ensured that political horizontal inequalities and exclusion at the elite level were generally very moderate, which in turn meant that the northern political elites had few incentives to mobilize their constituents along ethnoregional lines. Table 8.11 shows the ethnic composition of selected Ghanaian governments in the period 1954-2005 and also the representation of different ethnic groups in relation to their demographic size in the population as a whole. As in Table 8.5, an ethnic group's *relative representation* (RR) is calculated by dividing an ethnic group's relative proportion in government (in per cent) by its relative size in the entire population.

Table 8.11: Ethnic composition of government, 1954-2005[1]

	Nkrumah-CPP								Ankrah-NLC		Busia-PP				Acheampong-NRC	
	1954		1956		1960		1965		1966		1969		1971		1972	
	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR
Akan	0.55	1.24	0.62	1.40	0.62	1.40	0.64	1.46	0.33	0.76	0.74	1.67	0.76	1.73	0.50	1.13
Ewe	0.09	0.70	0.08	0.59	0.23	1.78	0.07	0.55	0.33	2.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.29	2.20
Ga-Dangme	0.09	1.10	0.08	0.93	0.15	1.85	0.14	1.72	0.22	2.68	0.05	0.63	0.06	0.71	0.07	0.86
Southerners[2]	0.73	1.11	0.77	1.18	1.00	1.53	0.86	1.31	0.89	1.36	0.79	1.21	0.82	1.26	0.86	1.31
Northerners[3]	0.18	0.84	0.15	0.71	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.66	0.11	0.51	0.16	0.73	0.18	0.82	0.14	0.66
No.	N=11		N=13		N=13		N=14		N=9		N=19		N=17		N=14	

	Acheampong-SMC		Limann-PNP		Rawlings-PNDC				Rawlings-NDC				Kufuor-NPP			
	1975		1979		1981		1988		1993		1997		2002		2005	
	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR
Akan	0.50	1.13	0.57	1.30	0.43	0.87	0.50	1.02	0.51	1.05	0.52	1.06	0.66	1.34	0.67	1.36
Ewe	0.38	2.88	0.14	1.10	0.14	1.12	0.30	2.36	0.11	0.85	0.11	0.87	0.07	0.58	0.08	0.61
Ga-Dangme	0.13	1.51	0.14	1.72	0.14	1.79	0.10	1.25	0.08	1.01	0.11	1.39	0.10	1.22	0.10	1.28
Southerners	1.00	1.53	0.86	1.31	0.71	1.02	0.90	1.29	0.70	1.01	0.74	1.06	0.83	1.19	0.85	1.21
Northerners	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.66	0.29	1.23	0.10	0.43	0.30	1.28	0.26	1.12	0.17	0.74	0.15	0.66
No.	N=8		N=14		N=7		N=10		N=37		N=27		N=41		N=39	

Source: Gyimah-Boadi (2003), Gyimah-Boadi and Asante (2006) and Langer (2007).

1) While the relative representation (RR) figures for the period 1954-1979 are based on the ethnic composition data from the 1960 population census, those from the 1981 government onwards are based on the ethnic composition data from the 2000 Ghana Housing and Population Census.
2) Southerners are comprised of the Akan, Ewe and Ga-Dangme. The Guan, Mandé-Busanga and all other smaller ethnic groups are excluded from these calculations. Northerners include the Mole-Dagbani, Gurma and Grusi ethnic groups.

Table 8.11 shows not only that the Akans were continuously the largest ethnic group in government, but also that throughout the post-Independence period the southerners persistently controlled most of the ministerial positions and were as a group somewhat overrepresented in relation to their relative demographic size. Nonetheless, it is important to note that most Ghanaian governments (both civilian and military) had a reasonable representation of northerners. Only on two occasions were there no northerners present in government. Excluding Nkrumah's 1960 government and Acheampong's 1975 Supreme Military Council (SMC), the relative representation in government of the northern ethnic groups ranged between 0.51 and 0.84 in the period 1954-79. Under Rawlings, who was (*de facto*) head of state from 1981-2001, they were slightly overrepresented in relation to their relative demographic size for almost the entire period.

Since Kufuor assumed power in January 2001, the northerners have again become somewhat underrepresented in relation to demographic size among government ministers. However, Kufuor appears to have compensated for this underrepresentation by appointing a more than proportionate number of deputy ministers from among the northern ethnic groups (Langer, 2007). Indeed, including the deputy ministers, the northern ethnic groups were moderately overrepresented in Kufuor's January 2002 government. The political salience of the underrepresentation of the northerners among government ministers is further mitigated by the fact that the position of vice president, the second most important position in Ghana's 1992 Constitution, was occupied by a northerner, Alhaji Aliu Mahama.

Another important strategy which also contributed to mitigating the north-south cleavage relates to the culturally inclusive character of the Ghanaian state. Indeed, most successive governments since Nkrumah have promoted cultural inclusiveness

and status equality through a range of formal, informal and symbolic policies and practices. Thus, for instance, Nkrumah's practice of alternating between suits, typically Ashanti *kente* cloths and northern smocks on public occasions was continued by most heads of state. Other measures, practices and customs that illustrate the culturally inclusive and neutral character of the Ghanaian state are, for example: the persistent refusal by consecutive Ghanaian governments to promote a particular local language (especially that of the largest ethnic group, the Akan) as Ghana's national language; active state support for the study and teaching of Ghana's major local languages; the incorporation by institutions such as the Ghana Dance Ensemble of songs and dances from all major ethnic groups (Lentz and Nugent, 2000); the conscious effort to broadcast radio and television programmes in all major languages (*ibid*); and the custom that representatives from the government attend the most important ethnic and/or traditional festivals throughout the country on a regular basis. Similarly, some (symbolic) actions and practices which demonstrate the commitment of the political elites to promoting and sustaining *religious* status equality and inclusiveness are, for instance: the practice that representatives from all major religions are present at official state functions; the state's active organizational support for the annual Hajj pilgrimage to the Muslim holy sites in Saudi Arabia; and the introduction of a new public holiday on the Muslim festival of *Eid-al-Adha* in 1996 (Langer, 2007).

4. Conclusions

Ever since Nkrumah and Houphouët-Boigny made their famous wager in 1960 about which country's development and modernization approach would outperform the other, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire's economic and political evolutions appeared to have taken opposite trajectories. While during its 'miracle' years (1960-78), Côte d'Ivoire clearly outperformed Ghana in terms of economic progress and political stability (but

not in socioeconomic development), from the mid-1980s the political and economic 'success' pendulum started moving slowly, but steadily, towards Ghana. The economic decline of Côte d'Ivoire in the 1980s, coupled with the pervasive ethnicization of its sociopolitical climate in the 1990s, formed the precursor to the emergence of the violent conflict of September 2002. Ghana's successful democratic consolidation in the Fourth Republic could hardly be more different.

The comparative study of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire provides evidence for the hypothesized relationship between the configuration of horizontal inequalities and the emergence or nonemergence of violent conflict. First, the peaceful management of the developmental north-south inequalities in Ghana throughout the postcolonial period, and in Côte d'Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny, demonstrates that socioeconomic horizontal inequalities in and by themselves are not sufficient to produce violent conflict. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the strong economic progress in the first two decades after Independence in 1960 and the specific economic 'model' on which it was based, were important factors in reducing the political salience of the north-south divide. The inclusion of the northern migrants (and foreign migrants) in the southern economy was not only crucial for achieving the impressive economic growth in the first two decades, but it also enabled the northern migrants to improve their (relative) socioeconomic position. In addition to this *private* redistribution mechanism, Houphouët-Boigny's *public* redistribution efforts also contributed to reducing the political salience of the north-south divide. It seems important that while the actual redistribution effect of the increased public investment in the northern regions appeared to have been rather limited (particularly because the extra investment dried up quickly due to the decline of the Ivorian economy at the end of the 1970s), the symbolic impact appeared to have been much more substantial.

While the inclusion of the northerners in Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa and coffee economy of the south and the (limited) public redistribution efforts were important in diffusing the socioeconomic grievances among the 'masses' as well as among northern elites (both in the northern regions and among the northerners in the south), Houphouët-Boigny's policy of ethnic quotas was a crucial complementary strategy to diffuse ethnoregional mobilization. In particular, his ethnoregional balancing policy ensured that political horizontal inequality and exclusion at the elite level was relatively small, which in turn meant that the political elites had less incentive to mobilize their constituents along ethnoregional lines.

While successive Ghanaian regimes employed very similar strategies in order to diffuse the north-south cleavage (and ethnoregional mobilization more generally for that matter), there were and are certain (structural) factors and idiosyncratic events which make a north-south conflict considerably less likely in Ghana compared to Côte d'Ivoire. For instance, while the northern ethnic groups constitute around 34 per cent of the population in Côte d'Ivoire, they constitute only about 23 per cent of the population in Ghana and are therefore less of a factor in Ghana's national political economy. Another factor that makes the mobilization of the 'north' as a group less likely in Ghana has to do with the more ethnically and religiously diverse composition of the northern regions. While the Muslim religion could be an important unifying factor among the northern ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire, this is much less so in Ghana since 24 per cent of the northern people are Christian and 30 per cent adhere to a traditional religion. An additional factor inhibiting northern mobilization as a group was the occurrence in the 1990s of several violent conflicts among the northern ethnic groups themselves. The 1994 Guinea Fowl war between the Nanumbas and Kokombas was the most serious episode of ethnic violence in this respect.

In addition to these differences between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire which made northern mobilization against the south intrinsically less likely, successive Ghanaian regimes employed similar strategies to those used by Houphouët-Boigny in order to diffuse the salience of any north-south cleavage. Moreover, in addition to the policies of including different ethnoregional groups and interests in the main political institutions and of undertaking (symbolic) economic redistribution towards the deprived northern regions, successive Ghanaian regimes also furthered national unity by promoting norms and practices of cultural equality and inclusiveness.

Secondly, Côte d'Ivoire's violent disintegration at the end of the 1990s demonstrates the conflict potential of a sociopolitical situation characterized by the *simultaneous* presence of severe political, developmental and cultural status inequalities. When the Ivorian economy started to deteriorate in the 1980s, socioeconomic grievances became more salient and provoked serious conflicts between locals and northern as well as foreign migrants in the southern parts of the country. The emergence of these localized north-south conflicts coincided with the cessation of economic redistribution by the state in the form of increased public investment in the northern regions, thereby increasing the northern socioeconomic grievances.

The divisions in the economic sphere were transmitted to the political sphere with the arrival of Alassane Ouattara and the introduction of competitive elections at the beginning of the 1990s. The new political leaders increasingly used a discourse of ethnic exclusion and grievances as a way of building electoral support as well as challenging the supremacy and legitimacy of the PDCI. Due to the precarious financial and economic situation in the 1980s, the Houphouët-Boigny regime lacked the resources to co-opt these new elites and subelites into the political-economic system. In an electoral environment characterized by new players and 'democratic' rules, the prevailing political and economic horizontal inequalities, injustices and

grievances became increasingly politicized. All three presidents who came after Houphouët-Boigny – Konan Bédié, Robert Gueï and Laurent Gbagbo – adopted strategies of political monopolization by and favouritism towards their own group. The *winner takes all* nature of politics turned the 'politics of bargaining' into the 'politics of war' (Satori, 1987, quoted in: Case, 1996: 14). The main losers in this 'politics of war' were the northerners who were increasingly excluded politically, and eventually disenfranchised, in addition to being socioeconomically disadvantaged. The grievances among the northerners were, however, not limited to the economic and political sphere, as the call for a fuller recognition of the Muslim religion in '*Le Charte du Grand Nord*' illustrates.

Considering the configuration of horizontal inequalities in Côte d'Ivoire around the turn of the century, the emergence of the violent conflict in September 2002 should not have come as a surprise. While the Ivorian north-south conflict constitutes a stark reminder for other countries, particularly in West Africa, of the inherent conflict *potential* of severe socioeconomic horizontal inequalities, Ghana demonstrates that marked developmental inequalities can be 'neutralized' by the institutionalization of politically and culturally inclusive policies and customs.