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(CÔTE D'IVOIRE)

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Conflict, Cooperation and Integration: A West African example (Côte d'Ivoire)

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Abstract:

The paper deals with some interrelations between Fulbe pastoralists and Senufo agriculturalists in northern Côte d'Ivoire; especially the role played in these relations by hunters' associations whose intervention is closely linked with the growing loss of confidence in the state structures to bring security. The conditions and types of Fulbe migration from western Burkina Faso and Mali to northern Côte d'Ivoire are described. Côte d'Ivoire is regularly confronted with the meat shortages due to the urban growth. In the mid 1970s, the Ivorian state launched a number of livestock projects seeking to increase the national livestock production and to reduce the dependence on external markets. This policy increased pastoral migration in northern Côte d'Ivoire.

Conflict and cooperation, two faces of the same coin, occurred. Most conflicts between Fulbe pastoralists and Senufo farmers derive from crop damage and competition over natural resources. The state intervention to promote pastoral production exacerbated tensions between the two groups. Inter-ethnic conflict or the eviction of the Fulbe, for example in 1993, are described and analysed as a symptom of this political crisis that culminated in violence and attacks against foreigners after the recent presidential elections. The political sensitivity of the north is further explained in the light of particular historical events and as a result of the ethno-regional policy. Finally the recent political crisis is analysed as a global and identity problem that affects not only the northern region, but the country as a whole.

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Introduction

Inter-ethnic conflict, either non-state or state violence, often leading to Fulbe deaths, their eviction and the confiscation of their livestock (Tonah 1993; Schmitz 1999) are two tragic consequences resulting from farmer-herder competition over natural resources. Recent literature on farmer-herder relations shows that the presence of the Fulbe -*Fulani* in English, and *Peuls* in French literature- in some West African coastal countries, like Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and their integration into modern nation-states have become issues of political concern (Bernardet 1999; Bierschenk 1997; Diallo 1999; Hagberg 1998) or even matters of global concern (Agyepong 2000).

This paper² aims to analyse some modalities of the relations between the Fulbe pastoralists and the Senufo agriculturalists in the sub-humid savannah area of Côte d'Ivoire, and the role played in these relations by hunters' associations as a form of security police. It tries to contribute to the current debate on the political integration of Fulbe people in Côte d'Ivoire. Rather than giving premature answers to questions connected with the relatively recent phenomenon of pastoral migration in northern Côte d'Ivoire, i.e. struggles over resources, land rights and citizenship, the paper intends to draw attention to some crucial questions.

The political economy of cattle husbandry in northern Côte d'Ivoire

The Ivoirian savannah encompasses the Northern and Central regions of the country. The Northern region, the area under study, is made up of four administrative districts: Boundiali, Tengrela, Korhogo and Ferkéssébugou (see Map 2). It is the main settlement zone of pastoral Fulbe from Burkina Faso and Mali, the neighbouring countries of Côte d'Ivoire. The northern region is a multi-ethnic setting in which

² This paper is a revised version of a paper presented at the West Africa seminar of University College London on 02 February 2001. I thank Stephen Reyna and Tadesse Wolde for their comments.



adopted from the Map Collection of Perry-Castañeda Library at The University of Texas at Austin

Map 1: Côte d'Ivoire and the neighbouring countries

ethnic affiliation corresponds roughly to an ethnic division of labour. Thus there are the Senoufo agriculturalists, the Dyula traders³ and the Fulbe pastoralists, to which one can add cast groups such as blacksmiths, woodcarvers, etc. The Senoufo and the Fulbe are the two groups which will be discussed here.

The Senoufo, whose language belongs to the *Gur* family, constitute the largest ethnic group in northern Côte d'Ivoire. In Boundiali district, for example, they account for 64 % of the total population according to the 1988 national census. Several groups of Senoufo people live in southern Mali and south-western Burkina Faso. In northern Côte d'Ivoire, they are considered to be the first settlers or autochthonous group. Although they invest surplus in livestock, Senoufo farmers do not consider themselves to be cattle herders. Agriculture remains the most

³ The Dyula, who are one of the oldest Muslim groups in West Africa, have been cohabiting with the Senoufo for a long time. They represent the second largest population in northern Côte d'Ivoire where they are involved in trading activities. The distinction Dyula/Senoufo has an economic, cultural and religious basis. Most Dyula people primarily define themselves or are defined by their neighbours as traders and Muslims, while the Senoufo agriculturalists are considered to be pagans. Due to their social prestige, to their experience in trade and Muslim allegiance, many Senoufo have adopted the Dyula language and culture and changed their ethnic identification.

highly valued activity among them. Since they are mainly involved in subsistence farming and cash crop production, they welcomed occupational groups with the intention of diversifying their economy. Senoufo oral traditions show how socio-professional groups such as blacksmiths, weavers, traders and Fulbe herders were encouraged to settle among them.

One of the most important pastoral settlements from where many Fulbe cattle-owners dispersed throughout modern Côte d'Ivoire is Foulabougou (D. "Residence of Fulbe")⁴, a village located in the district of Tengrela. The Fulbe expansion in northern Côte d'Ivoire is not a mere spread of members of this ethnic group, resulting in changes in residential patterns, it is also a spread of herding activities in the sub-humid savannah. Thus far the West African coastal zone depended on the Sahel zone for its meat supply. Côte d'Ivoire is one of those coastal countries regularly confronted with meat shortages due to the growth of the urban population. In the mid 1970s the Ivoirian state launched a number of livestock projects (Agro-Pastoral Units, Tandem Project, etc.) with the intention of promoting national livestock production and reducing the country's dependence on external markets. As part of this ambitious policy, the parastatal organisation for livestock, *Société de développement de productions animales* (SODEPRA), was established in 1974 and dissolved in 1994. It encouraged Fulbe immigrants to settle in special grazing areas (e.g. La Palé) by offering them pastoral infrastructures (dams) and free veterinary care. The national livestock policy implemented during the decades 1970-1990 contributed to an increase in pastoral migration from the neighbouring countries to the Ivoirian northern region. As a result, the presence of Fulbe in this region makes it the first cattle-rearing zone in Côte d'Ivoire, where the *Zebu* and the *Ndama* species account for 96% of the national livestock. In 1994, the number of livestock in Côte d'Ivoire was roughly estimated at 1,300,000 head, including the *Ndama* cattle owned mainly by local farmers (Ministère de l'Agriculture 1994). According to these estimates, Fulbe cattle, made up primarily of *Zebus*, account for one-third of the national livestock, and this represents approximately 50% of milk and beef production.

By contrast, the size of the Fulbe population living in the Ivoirian savannah is not exactly known. According to some estimates, they number roughly 50,000 people, representing a very small percentage of the total Ivoirian population (Arditi 1990: 139). The difficulty one has in drawing up an estimate is closely linked to the distribution of the Fulbe settlements in northern Côte d'Ivoire. Their pattern of settlement is always changing due to their pastoral way of life, which is based on the continuous mobility of people and herds. Although it is

4. The letters F, D and S in brackets refer to the Fulfulde, Dyula and Senoufo languages.

largely a theoretical and analytical appraisal which obviously needs further elaboration, the following section tries, after an analysis of the typologies of pastoral migrations, to shed light on the conditions and types of current Fulbe expansion in the sub-humid savannah of Côte d'Ivoire.

Expansion, conflict and complementarity

The concept of “expansion” is used here to describe the *general* and long-term migratory movement of Fulbe cattle-owners in the Ivoirian sub-humid zone⁵. It must be understood as a *slow* and *continual* process of displacement.

Little is known about the mechanism of the Fulbe expansion in the West African sub-humid zone and their integration into new ecological and political contexts (Schlee 2000). Since the herding activities were limited to the Sudano-Sahelian zone, early authors, dealing with cattle economy, have naturally focused on the dynamic patterns of pastoral mobility in this zone. Classic studies of pastoral migration deal generally with the causes of the movements of peoples and herds (Stenning 1959; Dupire 1970). These studies also include such relevant characteristics as geographical orientation, distances, duration of cycles, etc.

Stenning (1959) distinguishes three types of mobility among the pastoral Fulbe in northern Nigeria: transhumance, migratory drift and migration⁶. “Transhumance” is a seasonal movement, whereas “migratory drift” is a long-term process through which cattle-herders gain access to new pastures. Stenning defines “migration” as a flight of pastoral groups resulting from ecological constraints or political pressure exercised by powerful states. Such a perception is historically correct. In the past, migrations occurred as massive movements following critical historical events such as conflict, warfare or cattle diseases. However, experience shows that there is no clear-cut division between the three different processes described by Stenning. In reality, these pastoral movements are interrelated.

⁵ The best definition of the term “expansion” is probably that of Irwin (1981) who studied the history of movements and patterns of settlement among the Fulbe of Liptako in what is today north-east Burkina Faso. As Irwin has shown, expansion is a very complex process that involves both demographic and territorial aspects. He defines expansion as a specific “type of movement which leads to the enlargement in area of a lineage’s territory. It may eventually lead to a change in geographical location of the lineage territory; it does not affect the overall juxtaposition of lineage areas”. In sum, it is a slow movement of neighbouring lineages who gradually expand and occupy new land and they move in such a way that they remain neighbours.

⁶ Anthropologists working in East African pastoral societies have developed a quite similar analysis. Galaty and Bonte (1991), for example, have described three processes that are closely related: mobility, expansion and conflict. Mobility is a form of nomadic, semi-nomadic or migratory movement of humans and herds. According to them, expansion might be used to describe change in a controlled domain. Furthermore it reflects distributions of power.

In a comparative study of conditions of pastoral migrations Dupire (1970) has suggested a dichotomy by making the distinction between “internal migration” and “external migration”. In other words, migration considered as a pastoral mode of life should be distinguished from migration as “flight”. While the former concerns only seasonal movements (ecological) within the same bounded unit, the latter might have ecological, political and administrative causes as well. It might concern pastoral groups who flee tax or any kind of administrative pressure. However, a central notion to which Dupire pays attention is that of the “migratory group”, which has been re-examined recently (Burnham 1996; Botte et al. 1999). From recent pastoral studies, and following Dupire’s argument, it appears that the notion of migratory group involves not only a territorial dimension, i.e. access to pastures and water points of a new territory through perpetual migration (Galaty & Bonte 1991; Bonfiglioli 1988), but also a lineage dimension that implies a kind of flexibility of lineages which are constantly reconstructed.

In analysing here the mechanism of the southerly expansion of Fulbe from the Sudano-Sahelian region to the Ivoirian sub-humid zone, it seems important to distinguish between two types of mobility: on the one hand, direct or intentional migration, and on the other, indirect or non-intentional migration.

It is in the 1940s that the first Fulbe pastoral families moved out of Barani, a Fulbe historical and political centre, located in the Nouna region in north-western Burkina Faso (Benoît 1979; Diallo 1997). The large majority of the Fulbe cattle-owners initially lived in the regions of San, Koutiala and Sikasso, in Mali, where some of them spent two decades before being established in the north of the Côte d’Ivoire (see Map 2). Essentially their migration was a slow process carried out in successive stages. Their arrival in Tengrela, the border district of northern Côte d’Ivoire, took place in the early 1960s.



adopted from the Map Collection of Perry-Castañeda Library at The University of Texas at Austin

Map 2: *Migration routes of the Fulbe*

The degradation of local ecological conditions and the pressure on grazing resources in the northwestern region of Burkina were the source of pastoral migration in the decade 1940-1950. Besides this ecological factor, the Fulbe migration also occurred in a context of political and social change. The abolition of the chiefdom of Barani by the French colonial administration, the emancipation of former slaves who became cattle-owners and the shift of some of their descendants into herding activities led some Fulbe (former slave owners) to move out of the region, while other Fulbe groups left the chiefdom because of the heavy cattle tax raised by the then chief of Barani, Belko Widi (1937-1959). The initial and indirect migratory trend (through Mali) was followed by another migration which was direct and intentional in its destination (i.e. northern Côte d'Ivoire). Such a movement occurred in the wake of the Sahelian drought (1974), when pastoral Fulbe came through southwest Burkina

and entered the Ivoirian savannah with a view to joining other members of their group already installed in the districts of Ferkéssédougou and Korhogo.

Although the two types of migrations mentioned here differed in their duration, their phases and the rhythm of their achievement, there is no sharp line between them since direct migration and indirect migration are both called *eggugol* by Fulbe who also have the potential for direct unintentional migration and indirect intentional migration. The boundary between the two types of migration also fluctuates because of strategies of pastoral groups. One of the Fulbe strategies in northern Côte d'Ivoire is conflict avoidance characterized by the withdrawal from a given area. But fluctuations are also due to circumstances, which govern the displacement of Fulbe. During the process of pastoral mobility, Fulbe migrants always split or are joined by other groups. As a result, indirect migration can be pursued sometimes as direct migration, particularly, as I mentioned, when a household undertakes to join other members of the lineage group settled in a new zone with the intention of exploiting its fodder potential favourable to cattle-herding. Many case studies in northern Côte d'Ivoire show the combination of the two forms of migration. Direct migration or indirect migration, whether intentional or unintentional, as part of strategies and pastoral behaviours, have been undertaken in the decades 1960-1980 in response to political pressure (persecution, exaction) and ecological constraints (problem of water, overgrazing).

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Fulbe immigrants do not live in isolation from local populations. They are involved in different types of relations with sedentary farmers ranging from cooperation to conflict. In fact, the Fulbe presence in the new ecological context generates a number of problems and their presence has become a matter of concern for sedentary farmers. Crop damage, to mention just one example, is one of several major sources of conflict between Senufo farmers and Fulbe pastoralists.

Conflict and complementarity

In farmer-herder relations, conflict and complementarity are two faces of the same coin. "Conflict" is often employed in a general sense to describe not only struggle over resources, but also struggles over values and power (Hagberg 1998: 20). Hussein (1998) has pointed out that "conflict" is an umbrella term used by several authors to describe a wide range of interactions between farmers and herders. For this reason he stresses the necessity for clarification. In the same line, Hagberg (1998: 20) has also suggested making a distinction between different levels of tension in farmer-herder relations. At a minimum there are

disputes between individuals or groups, conflicts of interest, and violent conflicts. While *dispute* is a disagreement between two persons or parties, *violent conflict* refers to destruction, murder, i.e. killing of humans or livestock. Since farmers and herders in West Africa, or elsewhere, usually belong to different ethnic groups, authors talk about ethnic conflict in this type of confrontation. *Conflict of interest* is seen as an oppositional relationship between different actors, which can take the form of non-violent *competition* for control over resources in a given area. As such, competition may exist between any users of resources, farmers vs. farmers, herders vs. herders and farmers vs. herders. In northern Côte d'Ivoire, competition for controlling crop land due to land scarcity also exists between farmers. Besides these types of violent conflicts, one might take into account state violence by analysing oppressive measures like confiscation of livestock or the eviction of Fulbe for political purposes (Braukämper 1993: 100; Tonah 1993: 130).

The difference between dispute, conflict of interest or competition and violent conflict is a matter of degree, and the boundary between them is rather fluctuating due to the motivations and strategies of resource users and the wide range of actors involved in peasant-herder relations. But such fluctuations are also due to socio-political and financial factors. Consequently, it is not easy to predict *when* and *where* a dispute between a pastoralist and a farmer may escalate into a violent conflict involving members of their respective ethnic groups. Moreover, the outbreak of violence depends on how the Fulbe handle the dispute with farmers. In northern Côte d'Ivoire ethnic conflicts between Fulbe and Senufo are properly speaking rare, because the avoidance of conflict and withdrawal from a region are the strategies adopted by the Fulbe. From some studies, it appears that conflict is not necessarily negative. In East African pastoralism, for example, clashes of interests resulting from conflict seem to be the normal state of relations between different clans or segments of a single group (Galaty & Bonte 1991, Schlee 1994).

Complementarity implies difference in occupation. From the development experts' viewpoint, conflict between pastoralists and farmers is the result of a lack of sufficient complementarity or integration of agriculture and cattle husbandry. Development experts generally think that crop-livestock integration should permit different groups working close to each other to live in harmony. The philosophy of SODEPRA in northern Côte d'Ivoire was to reduce conflict between the local Senufo agriculturalists and the Fulbe pastoralists by enhancing the already existing forms of cooperation. Indeed, a set of contracts and institutional arrangements exist

between the Fulbe and the Senufo. The most classical example of cooperation in Senufo society remains the practice of farmers entrusting their livestock to Fulbe. Cattle husbandry is considered to be the prerogative of the Fulbe whose herding work is paid for in cash. They also have the usufruct of the milk. Other forms of cooperation include the loan of draught animals to farmers, the classical exchange of milk for cereals and the use of or payment for manure. This kind of farmer-herder interaction is also taken to refer to “symbiosis”, a biological term that implies mutually beneficial relations between pastoral and agricultural productions. However, experience shows that cooperation between the two groups, through the integration of crop and livestock, does not prevent the Senufo farmers from being hostile to the Fulbe. Therefore, the philosophy of development experts is somewhat simplistic. Such a philosophy does not take into account the complexity of farmer-herder interactions and the wide range of actors or interest groups (politicians, administrative officials, hunters, civil servants, etc.) involved in these relations and trying to obtain political, financial and social advantage from these relations. Conflict between farmers and pastoralists over crop damage and land use have become a matter of political debate because of the many groups and interests involved in cattle husbandry in northern Côte d'Ivoire. Local politicians and candidates looking for votes told Senufo farmers they would expel the Fulbe strangers if elected. In 1978, President Houphouët Boigny went on a trip round the north, during which he appealed for calm. He told Senufo farmers to keep calm and promised that the government would find a better solution to crop damage.

Conflict situation, administrative intervention and dispute settlement

The Fulbe are considered to be anarchic users of resources. Environmental degradation has become a matter of concern for some Senufo farmers who blame the Fulbe, with their large herds, for land degradation. From the farmers' point of view, the poverty of the soils is due to the fact that cattle trample the earth and therefore grass does not grow (Diallo 2000). However, recent studies show that local perceptions of environmental change and the feeling of such change are relative. Thus, some farmers declare that the savannah landscape had become more wooded over the past two decades (Basset 1999).

But environmental degradation is not the only grounds for complaint. Most conflicts between the Senufo farmers and the Fulbe pastoralists derive from crop damage. The Senufo are highly involved in subsistence farming (maize, rice, yam) and cash crop production (cotton). The lack of protection of their fields and the conservation of agricultural products on fields,

particularly yams, and the increase in the number of Fulbe livestock are the principal reasons why damage easily occurs. In Boundiali district, for example, cotton and sorghum fields were the most severely damaged in 1993 and 1994. For this reason, some farmers stopped sorghum cultivation, while continuing to produce cotton, a cash crop. Crop damage takes place between the months of November and January and they outnumber field deteriorations during the rainy season. During harvest time, from October to December, conflicts and legal proceedings between the Senufo and the Fulbe pastoralists drastically increase. In a dispute, a farmer may injure a Fulbe herder and his cattle. Normally, a farmer has no right to kill cattle trespassing on his fields. But a dispute beginning as tension or a confrontation between a farmer and a Fulbe on the edge of a field may escalate into a violent conflict involving entire village communities of the two ethnic groups. Such an ethnic conflict evolved in Dikodougou, in the Korhogo region in 1986, when a Fulbe herder killed a Senufo farmer after a dispute. In consequence of that, several Fulbe were killed and injured in Dikodougou, while others fled the region and returned to Burkina and Mali, their home countries.

Adjudication and negotiation are the two procedures in dispute settlement. Compensation is generally paid after negotiation. The criticism and the accusations of bribery made by farmers against the administrative officials led some Senufo farmers and Fulbe pastoralists to adjudicate disputes in their own villages. The Fulbe pastoralists and the Senufo farmers both see the administrative adjudications as disfavoured to them. Some administrative officials are also accused of making financial gains from conflicts. The slowness of official reports and financial compensations for damages contribute to exacerbate the farmers' frustration. Statistics on crop damage are available in the subprefectures. But they must be regarded with care: first, these statistics are sometimes incomplete and, second, the administration records only cases brought to the subprefecture or to the court. Diagram 1 is therefore only an estimate of crop damage and issues connected to it (injury, killing of cattle, compensation in FCFA⁷, etc.).

⁷ Franc CFA (Communauté financière africaine) is the regional currency in West Africa.

Diagram 1. *Evaluation of the situation regarding crop damage in Kolia subprefecture (Boundiali district)*

| YEAR | CROP DAMAGE | CATTLE KILLED | INJURED PERSONS | COMPENSATION |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1991-1992 | 26 | 1 | 1 | 1,313,780 FCFA |
| 1992-1993 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 590,160 FCFA |
| 1993-1994 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 680,585 FCFA |
| 1994-1995 | 05 | 0 | 0 | 239,690 FCFA |
| Total | 73 | 1 | 1 | 2,827,615 FCFA |

The compensation paid by the Fulbe for crop damage is high. They no longer want to bear compensation individually and have tried to form associations (“Groupement des éleveurs peuls”), in the northern districts, with the objective of protecting cattle-owners’ interests. But this form of unionisation of Fulbe has not been successful.

In 1994 the Ivoirian government held a national conference to discuss disputes due to cattle crop damage in farmers’ fields. Solutions drawn up after this conference included the construction of night corrals or the establishment of an agro-pastoral calendar. This calendar determines the periods during which farmers should remove their harvest or protect it from cattle to enable Fulbe herders to roam without causing damage. Since farmers considered it to be coercion, this agenda has not been put into practice. The Senufo farmers say they have no means to transport the harvest from fields to village and from their point of view it is quite impossible to keep the whole harvest in the village. However, the local farmers invented their own solution to crop damage by appealing to hunters. The increasing role played by hunters’ association, from the 1990s up until now, marks a turning point in farmer-herder relations.

The hunters' associations

In northern Côte d’Ivoire, farmer-herder relations have worsened not only because of crop damage, but also due to a growing population and land scarcity. Access to land is ensured through arrangements, but in some localities, the Fulbe pastoralists have no grazing rights. The competition for controlling resources is becoming more and more acute and such

competition induced the Senufo landowners to expel the Fulbe from their village space with the help of hunters' association.

Hunters' associations, often described as “secret societies”, are a very old institution which goes back to West African pre-colonial history. Oral traditions in most West African societies dealing with traditional hunters mention the esoteric nature of their knowledge. In the ethnography the emphasis is rather on the image of the hunter as a civilizing hero acting as mediator between humans (in the village) and divine entities living in the bush. It seems that the first appearance of hunting cults, in the savannah environment, is concomitant with the emergence of medieval state formations or empires (Ghana, Mali) or even before (Cissé and Kamissoko 2000). Indeed the hunters' associations played a military role in the past protecting their respective villages against invaders and wild beasts. Nobody is a hunter by birth. Becoming a hunter (D. *donso*) and, subsequently, member of an association (D. *donsoton*) is a matter of choice (Traoré 2000). The *donsoton*, also called *dozobele* in the Senufo language, are constructed brotherhoods extending beyond ethnic belongings. Thus members of different ethnic groups might be members of the same hunting cult, and this is an integrative aspect considered to be the common ground of these associations.

More striking today is the exploitation of traditional hunters by politicians in Côte d'Ivoire as well as elsewhere in West Africa such as Sierra Leone, where the *Kamajors* hunters are implicated in the ongoing civil war.

It was in the early 1990s that a local administrative official in Korhogo, incapable of bringing security to northern Côte d'Ivoire characterized by a criminal atmosphere, appealed for the first time to the traditional hunters⁸. At the district's level, they were responsible for keeping order and security, stopping cars and public transport or controlling identity and participating in the hunt for robbers.

The intervention of hunters is closely linked to the growing loss of confidence in the state structures to bring security. The first change that marked a turning point in the activities of

⁸ A report, written by Sergicaud de Oliveira, in the newspaper La Voie on 13th September 1994, says that: “Face à cette situation difficile (...) le colonel Issa Diakité alors préfet de la région à Korhogo convoque une réunion avec les sous-préfets du département, les chefs de services, les commandants de la région militaire de Korhogo, de la quatrième légion de gendarmerie, de compagnie de la gendarmerie, de brigades, le directeur régional de la police, les commissaires et le directeur régional de la douane, en vue de trouver une solution rapide à la recrudescence du banditisme dans le Nord du pays. Après une journée d'entretien, il a été décidé que, seuls les chasseurs du nord s'organisent pour prêter main forte aux forces de l'ordre dans leur tâche combien délicate. C'est ainsi qu'est née aujourd'hui cette « armée » appelée « Association des chasseurs de Vendougou » (A.C.V), qui ne couvre que la partie Nord de la Côte d'Ivoire”.

hunters occurred when the Senufo farmers themselves decided to organise their own local system of protecting their fields from damage caused by Fulbe cattle. On behalf of farmers groups village authorities mobilized, traditional hunters to police the fields and expel Fulbe pastoralists and other seasonal transhumants coming from Mali. With the help of the hunters' associations, some Senufo peasants have forbidden the pastoralists to use grazing land located within the confines of their village territory. The hunters' task also consists of searching for the Fulbe whose cattle are supposed to have caused damage and to bring them to the village. To find a supposed herder, the hunters follow the tracks of the cattle. Since they possess not only guns, but also magical power, the *Donso* are feared by the population. Some of the *Donso* have in the past endangered the life of young Fulbe herders. Their strong intervention as a security police and the abuse of their power has obviously led to violence and the administrative officials eventually complained about the fact that the hunters were acting as a substitute for the local administration.

The shift from the regional to the national level occurred when the government turned its attention to the hunters' associations whose role had expanded. According to some estimates there are 40,000 traditional hunters in Côte d'Ivoire. The role played today by the traditional hunters, colloquially called *Dozo*, became an issue of national concern and a matter of great controversy among politicians. In the Ivoirian public opinion, the *Dozo* are associated with the savannah, a "cultural zone" to which they must restrict themselves. This is probably the reason why the former president Henri Konan Bédié tried, when he was in office, to confine the hunters' intervention to the savannah zone of northern Côte d'Ivoire, the "area origin" of the hunters' associations. Since the military coup on 24th of December 1999, the hunters' associations have become an instrument of political organization and competition. Politicians from the north are now suspected by their rivals of appropriating these groups considered to be a parallel security police, which plays into their hands. This suspicion was aroused after a statement made by Balla Kéita, a politician from Korhogo. Kéita, one of the influential members of the former ruling democratic party (PDCI), who became a special adviser to ex-military leader General Robert Guéi, after the coup, declared that the traditional hunters would form part of General Guéi lifeguards. He also declared that the National Committee of Public Salvation (CNSP), the ruling committee, had ordered the hunters to carry out routine checks. But Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the ruling Ivoirian Popular Front (FPI), declared that he could not accept the fact that the country was "ruled" by the hunters. The Security minister also warned the hunters against any interference in public office and declared public order and

security to be a mission which falls strictly under the competence of the police and the national *gendarmerie*. The situation became worse in February 2000 when the hunters accidentally killed a student in Abidjan. The Ivoirian students' association (FESCI) protested for the first time against the fact that the government let the traditional hunters keep order in the country. They threatened the hunters with confrontation. Many think that the hunters are endangering national cohesion. As already noted, they also restricted the access to land of Fulbe pastoralists.

Land use, ethnicity and national integration

Some authors have defined ethnicity and citizenship in terms of access to resources and services. Following this suggestion, we will focus in this section on ethnicity and political integration at two levels of analysis, local and national, which are interrelated. The recent electoral crisis, to which the rest of the section will be devoted, refers to a global political and identity problem that affects not only the northern region, but the country as a whole. To analyse this problem partly connected with the ethno-regional factor, i.e. north-south division, we should take into account the historical and economic context of northern Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, historical factors and the poor economic situation contributed to sharpen the struggles over land and resources between Ivoirians and non-Ivoirians in northern Côte d'Ivoire, and recently also the struggles over citizenship between Ivoirians at the national level.

Control and land access

Access to land is among other things (acquisition of offices, participation in common rituals, etc.) one of the means by which ethnic or professional groups of different origin are integrated in the Senufo village communities. In the northern savannah, the land use of Fulbe and their relations with Senufo are today highly politicised. First of all, let us describe briefly the control and access to land in Senufo society.

Among the Senufo, the basic socio-political unit is the village composed of quarters whose members are identified by origin, status and occupation. The property in land is communal, but each Senufo peasant or household cultivates his own plot, and families can not be evicted from the land they exploit. Land is vested in groups (villages, lineages, quarters) represented by chiefs and elders. The Master of the Earth, who plays a ritual role, acts as mediator

between the local divinities and the members of the village including newcomers. In most West African societies, foreigners or later immigrants gain access to land through their belonging to the village. But the fact that foreigners in Senufo society have access to land shows that rights in land cannot be obtained only by membership in local villages, chiefdoms, and lineages or quarters, but also by political arrangements or friendship. However, instead of property rights, foreigners have only the usufruct of land. In some villages, a service is performed on an annual basis for the clan or lineage owner of the land and the one who allocated it, but such service is not regular.

Besides seasonal migrants coming from Mali, some of the Fulbe cattle-owners who live in Senufo society have become sedentary. They farm and they practice only dry season transhumance from November to May. Between them and the Senufo there is no ritual arrangement regarding the land issue, but rights of access to land are obtained through friendly arrangements. To obtain such rights the Fulbe pastoralists must ask the permission of the Senufo customary landholders. These are village chiefs (*S. fanfolo*) or Masters of the Earth (*S. tarfolo*). In most cases the Fulbe newcomers are allowed to settle in a given place. The Senufo do have a cultural ideology relating to land, according to which they can not, as first settlers, refuse to later immigrants or foreigners the right to use a piece of land. The Fulbe cannot obtain land ownership rights, they have only usufruct rights. They do not pay anything to the Senufo, but show their gratitude by giving presents to the village heads.

Besides crop damage, access to and use of land are the problems with which the Fulbe are confronted today. Faced with growing land scarcity, the alternatives for the autochthonous farmers are either internal migrations or eviction of the Fulbe from their residences, whereby they appropriate corrals fertilized with manure. Yet, the land scarcity and the competition for access to arable land also occur between farmers. The current land scarcity in northern Côte d'Ivoire is due to extensive agricultural methods, demographic growth and soil poverty. But the competition between Fulbe pastoralists, considered as strangers, and farmers, who are landowners, also has a political dimension. As is the case in most West African countries, land in Côte d'Ivoire has been declared "national". But state control over land is more nominal than real. Moreover administrative intervention does not prevent Fulbe from being evicted. In most cases, the pastoralists have to make arrangements with the Senufo landowners in order to stay and keep their grazing rights.

In 1994 the Ivoirian government launched a new project called the Plan Foncier Rural (PFR) or Rural Land Plan to find a solution to the land crisis. This project is part of the national program of land management (PNAGER). With the assistance of local populations and the use of aerial photographs, the Rural Land Plan has carried out a new registration of plots of land for entitlement. The World Bank, the main financial partner of the Ivoirian government, wanted to establish land tax after having secured land property for Senufo peasants. According to the originators of the project, in the northern context, the new land policy will have a positive impact on Senufo-Fulbe relations. The relations between farmer and pastoral communities will take a contractual nature in the future. After the pilot phase of the project, a new law, according to which only Ivoirian citizens can be landowners, was passed on December 1998.

The ethno-regional factor

In Côte d'Ivoire, language remains the principal criterion for defining groups and classifying them. The inhabitants of the country speak languages that are classified into four major groups, which are geographically localized: Akan (southeast), Kru (southwest), Mande (northwest) and Gur (north).

Diagram 2: *Language groups and political organisations in Côte d'Ivoire*

| REGION | LANGUAGE GROUPS | ETHNIC GROUPS | EARLIER ORGANIZATIONS | POLITICAL | REMARKS |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------|
| Southeast | 1. Akan | -Agni -Baule -Abron | -Kingdoms and states (Gyaman, Akwamu, Denkyra, etc). | | Political hegemony over other groups |
| | 2. "Litoral" groups (in the vicinity of Abidjan) | - Ebrié - Alladian - Appolon | Age class-systems in the framework of the village | | Assimilated to the Akan group |
| Southwest | Kru | -Bété -Dida -Guéré -Kru | "Ethnic enclaves" in the forest | | Some Kru groups live in Guinea and Liberia |
| North | Voltaic or Gur | -Senufo -Lobi -Kulango | Village communities | | Senufo and Lobi live also in Burkina |
| Northwest | 1. Northern Mande | -Dyula -Malinke | State formation (Kong) | | Muslims, traders, warriors |
| | 2. Southern Mande | -Gouro -Yacouba -Gagou | | | |

The Akan, originating from present-day Ghana in the first half of the eighteenth century, exercised political hegemony over other groups from within the framework of powerful kingdoms. Three groups of the Akan people live in Côte d'Ivoire: Abbron, Agni and Baule. In defining their identity, contemporary Akan elites, holders of the political power since independence, make reference to this historical situation. The "litoral" subgroups of the Akan family include Ebrié, Alladian, Appolon, Adioukrou, etc.

The Mande are divided into two branches: southern Mande speakers such as Yacouba, Gouro, Gagou and a northern subgroup including Dyula and Malinke. The Malinke also live in Guinea and Mali. In pre-colonial times, the Dyula were settled along the trade routes, extending from the middle Niger (present-day Mali), in the north, to the savannah in the kola-producing regions in the south (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire). With the Malinke scholars, traders and warriors, they contributed to the expansion of Islam across the West African savannah during the eighteenth century.

The Kru-speaking groups live in the southwest of the country and beyond the Ivoirian border in northern Liberia. Due to historical circumstances, in particular the incursions of slave traders, some Kru groups took refuge in the forest and offered resistance to the activities of invaders. Gur-speaking groups (Senufo, Lobi, Kulango) occupy a large part of the Ivoirian savannah, but some of them, namely the Senufo and Lobi are settled in southwest Burkina.

The northern Côte d'Ivoire is one of the most sensitive areas of the country. There is no industry in the north compared to the relatively more developed south. Successive governments formulated policies to restore the balance between the north and the south. They created the livestock development agency and tried to promote the cotton cultures by establishing the Ivoirian cotton company (CIDT). As a result, the north became the cotton belt, but it is still characterized by the weakness of its economy. Some Senufo civil servants complained about the fact that the Ivoirian state did not promote Senufo village cattle production, but had invested money in Fulbe cattle husbandry in the framework of expensive projects. The death of Houphouët Boigny also worsened the situation of Fulbe people. In Boundiali district, some Fulbe were harassed and attacked by Senufo farmers one week after the death of Houphouët. The aborted eviction in December 1993 against pastoralists worsened the situation of the Fulbe. Several administrative officials declared that local politicians were behind the attempt to evict the Fulbe from Côte d'Ivoire. The eviction of the Fulbe was the symptom of a deeper social and political crisis that culminated in political violence and attacks against foreigners in general after the 2000 presidential elections.

The political sensitivity of the north can also be understood in the light of particular historical events. People from the north, particularly the elites, defined their identity in terms of ethnicity, but also in terms of prestige derived from historical participation of the northern region in the resistance against the French in colonial times.

By the time of Côte d'Ivoire's independence in 1960, the ruling Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), under the leadership of Houphouët Boigny, was the sole party. The PDCI was an urban and rural-based party that had a national character. Houphouët, who was a charismatic person, presented himself as the leader of the Ivoirian peasantry. From independence to the middle of 1990, date of the first pluralist elections, the northern region was one of the strongholds of the PDCI. Thanks to Korhogo's support, the regional capital of the north, Houphouët won his first parliamentary seat in the 1956 elections for the French Constituent Assembly. The death of Houphouët in 1993 represented a turning point in three respects. First, a new political party, the Rally of Republicans (RDR), headed by Djeni Kobinan and later by Alassane Ouattara, the former Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, emerged after a scission within the PDCI. Secondly, the divorce between the north and the PDCI took place under the new leadership of Konan Bédié. In 1995 the Korhogo region became the RDR's stronghold and the PDCI lost control of the greater part of the savannah. Since that time, the PDCI tried to win the confidence of people from the north by any means.

Thirdly, although the three major political parties in Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI, RDR, FPI) shared the goal of bringing together the Ivoirian citizens, each party is identified today with the ethnic group of its leader. The ethno-regional factor became manifest in the interior of the country. The dispute concerning the nationality of major opposition political leaders in contemporary Africa, as part of a strategy of ruling parties to exclude political rivals, must be understood in these terms. In Côte d'Ivoire, the former president Konan Bédié has introduced the notion of "Ivoirity" to eliminate the RDR leader, a Muslim from northern Côte d'Ivoire. Alassane Ouattara was first disqualified from the 1995 presidential elections and recently from the 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections on the grounds that he is not an Ivoirian. President Bédié declared that Alassane Ouattara is a Burkinabe (citizen from Burkina), and he represented Burkina Faso in some international organizations, and particularly the central bank for West African countries (BCEAO). Intellectuals, who belong to the Akan group, took up the notion of "Ivoirity" and tried to elaborate on it within the framework of a working group, the Cellule universitaire de réflexion et de diffusion des idées du président Bédié (CURDIPHE). Influential political leaders began to talk about "Ivoirians

from the south” (i.e. Akan people), “Ivoirians from the north” (i.e. “Moslems Dyula”) and “Ivoirians from the West” (i.e. Bété group). For the public, such a simplistic classification is attractive. The former ruling PDCI is considered the “party of the Akan people” to which its Baule leaders belong; the Ivoirian Popular Front (FPI) of the new president Gbagbo is said to be the “party of the Bété” and the RDR the “party of Dyula Moslems”. The latter, to which the Senufo group belongs, are labelled “the Northerners” and considered second-class citizens. They are “uncivilized” and “underdeveloped”. In the public discourse of people who define themselves as Akan, “the northerners” are not “true” Ivoirians, they are Ivoirians “by chance”.

The ethno-regional factor was the major source of the recent electoral crisis in October 2000 and the killings that happened during and after the elections. Since independence, Côte d'Ivoire has been the country famous for the integration of foreigners (Senegalese, Guinean traders, Mossi farmers, etc.) who today account for 40% of the total population (16 million). Houphouet was the promoter of the political integration of foreigners who had become a component of the Ivoirian nation and identity. The post-Houphouet party not only created the tension between Ivoirians, but it exacerbated the already existing tension between Ivoirians and foreigners.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to analyse the situation of the Fulbe migrants in Côte d'Ivoire, their relations with the Senufo farmers and the problem of their political integration in this country. The Fulbe benefited first from the generous pastoral policy implemented by the Ivoirian state. Since the presence of Fulbe in northern Côte d'Ivoire and their relations with Senufo local farmers are highly politicised, the state intervention to promote pastoral production later exacerbated the tensions between the two groups. Senufo farmers and intellectuals considered the state intervention to be favouritism towards Fulbe strangers. Host-stranger relations are one of the means by which some Fulbe are admitted into Senufo village communities. But a larger number of pastoralists are not socially integrated in the Senufo society where they constitute a separate group. The ethnic boundary between the Fulbe and the Senufo seems to be more rigid than in the past.

The exclusion of (Fulbe) foreigners in the northern region and the ethno-regional factor that led to the exclusion of “Ivoirians from the north”, who are considered to be

“underdeveloped”, “uncivilized” or second-class Ivoirians citizens, are closely interrelated. It should be noted that in spite of the exclusion of some of them because of conflicts with local farmers, the Fulbe pastoralists have never been exposed to oppressive measures or any kind of violence by the Ivoirian state.

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