

**ISTANBUL TICARET UNIVERSITY
SOSYAL SCIENCES INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
MASTER OF AFRICAN STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
PROGRAMME**

**POLITICAL PARTIES AND CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY IN
COTE D'IVOIRE**

MA Thesis

Korka Diallo MAMADOU

ISTANBUL, 2023

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ISTANBUL, 2023

Dedication

I dedicate all the required information in this title, 'Political parties and challenges of democracy in Cote d'Ivoire has been written in accordance with academic manners and ethical commitment. I would clarify that all the materials, sources, data and all extra inputs have benefited well throughout the writing procedure of this thesis. All matters contained in this thesis are my personal opinion and do not reflect the official view of Istanbul Commerce University.

Student Name, Surname: Korka Diallo Mamadou

ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the role political parties play in the challenges of democracy in Ivory Coast. The researcher used content analysis to summarize information on the political party's practice of organizational democracy, internal stability and their role in the challenges of democracy in Ivory Coast. First, the research revealed that the three major political parties, Parti Democratique Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), Rally of Houphouetistis for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) and Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), have a low level of organization democracy. Second, the study revealed that the three major parties reviewed have a low level of democratic culture, which impacts their organizational stability. Third, political party's activities resulting in challenges to democracy were revealed as weak internal party organization democracy, poor party succession, the undemocratic nature of parties and leaders, the obscure internal working of political parties, weak financial structure, and depleting age of dominant political leaders and restrictions of opposition parties' full participation in the political space. Since this study's scope is limited to three selected parties among the numerous political parties in Ivory Coast, its findings cannot be generalized entirely for all political parties, but the study's findings show a specific situation of the three parties.

.Keywords: Political Parties, Democracy, Cote d'Ivoire, Content Analysis

Özet

Çalışmanın amacı, Fildişi Sahili'nde demokrasinin karşılaştığı zorluklarda siyasi partilerin oynadığı rolü araştırmaktır. Araştırmacı, siyasi partilerin örgütsel demokrasi uygulamaları, iç istikrarları ve Fildişi Sahili'nde demokrasinin karşılaştığı zorluklardaki rolleri hakkındaki bilgileri özetlemek için içerik analizi kullanmıştır. İlk olarak, araştırma üç büyük siyasi partinin, Parti Democratique Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), Rally of Houphouëtistes for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) ve Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), düşük düzeyde örgütsel demokrasiye sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. İkinci olarak, çalışma, incelenen üç büyük partinin düşük düzeyde demokratik kültüre sahip olduğunu ve bunun da örgütsel istikrarlarını etkilediğini ortaya çıkartmıştır. Üçüncü olarak, siyasi partilerin demokrasiye meydan okuyan faaliyetleri; zayıf parti içi örgüt demokrasisi, zayıf parti halefiyeti, partilerin ve liderlerin demokratik olmayan doğası, siyasi partilerin belirsiz iç işleyişi, zayıf mali yapı, baskın siyasi liderlerin yaşının ilerlemesi ve muhalefet partilerinin siyasi alana tam katılımının kısıtlanması olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmanın kapsamı Fildişi Sahili'ndeki çok sayıda siyasi parti arasından seçilen üç parti ile sınırlı olduğundan, bulguları tüm siyasi partiler için genelleştirilemez. Yine de çalışmanın bulguları üç partiye özgü bir durumu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasi Partiler, Demokrasi, Fildişi Sahili, İçerik Analizi

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEI	Commission Electorale Indépendante de Côte d'Ivoire (Independent Electoral Commission of Côte d'Ivoire)
FCFA	CFA Franc
FPI	Ivorian Popular Front
PDCI	Parti Democratique Côte d'Ivoire (Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire)
RDR	Rally of Republicans
RHDP	Rassemblement des Houphouetistis pour la Démocratie et la Paix (Rally of Houphouetistis for Democracy and Peace)
UN	United Nations

INTRODUCTION

The Ivory Coast was once a prosperous and stable nation under the leadership of its founder, President Felix Houphouët Boigny. However, the introduction of multiparty politics and competitive elections led to significant socio-political troubles that have undermined the population's rights, freedoms, and lives. Despite economic growth and relative stability under President Ouattara, recurring political party conflicts continue to plague the nation.

To understand the root causes of political violence and post-election conflicts, it is crucial to delve into the history of the country's political system, the structure of political parties, and their roles in undermining democracy. This study aims to analyze the pivotal role of political parties in the Ivory Coast's democratization challenge. Critical questions will be raised to unravel the complexities of the situation, such as the role of political parties, the impact of organizational democracy of political parties on their internal stability, and why the multiparty system and competitive nature of political parties have not promoted democracy's progress in the Ivory Coast.

By addressing these questions and examining the intricate interplay of political parties in the country's democratic journey, the study will gather valuable insights into the challenges and potential solutions for fostering a stable and inclusive democracy in the Ivory Coast.

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter provides an insight into issues of political parties and democratization in Africa as it's developed after independence. Also, the historical background of the political party system and democracy in Africa is presented, focusing on the case study of Cote d'Ivoire. Moreover, certain key issues that bedeviled Cote d'Ivoire major political parties over the years are identified for further discussion in the later chapters. The basic definitions of key terms used are also provided to help build an understanding of the research problem plus a brief profile of the study country.

1.1 Background to the study

The issues of political parties and challenges to democracy in Africa look incurable as most political parties in Africa have weak internal structures affecting the development of democracy in the continent. In addition, most African political parties that are to serve as effective agents of democracy are plagued with weak internal structures and suppression from the ruling government. This study investigates the role political parties play in the challenges of democracy in Cote d'Ivoire after decades of institutionalizing a multi-party governance system.

Democracy is a system of governance with equal representation and participation of all members of the political system (Jose et al., 2002). The principal actors of a country's democratic system, they claimed, are political parties; their conduct determines the success or failure of the democratic system. He explained that they use their political platforms as viable tools to aid distressed citizens in expressing their concerns and issues, forming a true representative of the citizens. However, political parties may conduct themselves inappropriately, such as through involvement in political violence, propaganda, corruption, and undemocratic practices, which hinder the progress of any democratic state (Jose et al., 2002).

In Africa, political parties are developing with the progress of many nations' democratic systems (Issaka, 2017). He indicated that the political system in Africa began to grow after independence in the 1960s. Although a democratic system was emphasized as the new

international governance order, most African political systems since its emergence were described by researchers in the 1960s as unitary and dictatorial (Friedrich, 2013). It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that democratic systems were being institutionalized extensively with the proliferation of numerous new independent, strong political parties (Dowuona, 2020). However, Dowuona (2020) argued that the lack of political discipline, tolerance, and violation of liberal democratic system rules and principles by most African political parties resulted in various political conflicts, wars, dictatorships, coups, international sanctions, economic decline, and other political turmoil.

The role of political parties as the custodian of democracy in the case of Ivory Coast has been devastating to the country's social-economic progress recently (Woods, 2003). Ivory Coast, after independence from its colonial masters, France has had a relatively stable political governance from (1960 to 1993) and enjoyed economic progress (Friedrich, 2013). During that period, the political system was an imposed single-party system; the Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) led by President Felix Houphouët-Boigny consistently won massively in the subsequent organized national elections after independence (Friedrich, 2013). President Felix Houphouët-Boigny's party dominance in national and legislative elections used his majority vote in parliament to institutionalize the single-party system in the 1980s (Friedrich, 2013). Although political governance was a single-party system during this period, there was a legislative election where citizens were allowed to elect town, municipal and regional representatives in the (PDCI) government (Soyinka, 2010). There was also a form of the multi-party political system introduced in the 1990s because of international pressure. However, as always, the PDCI used its authority and power to limit and suppress the activities of the opposing parties, achieving total dominance of the country's political system (Soyinka, 2010).

After the death of its long-standing leader, President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, in 1993, Ivory Coast experienced a sharp economic decline, resulting in increased civil society protests and declining foreign aid assistance. That situation mounted pressure on the existing government to return to its past multi-party political system and organized democratic elections. Henri Konan Bedie of the PDCI won the first-ever multi-party election and ruled

until December 1999 but was overthrown by General Robert Guei in late October 2000. A democratic national election was later organized, and the contestants were General Robert Guei (Military party) and Gbagbo (Ivorian Popular Front -FPI). At the same time, Henri Konan Bedie, Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI-RDA), and Allassane Ouattara (Rally of Republicans-RDR) were disqualified from contesting as not being veritable Ivorian citizens. Gbagbo won the election, and increasingly violent protests and attacks on non-Ivoirians resulted in a civil war later. This condition led the country to political turmoil and civil war in 2002-2007 and again in 2010-2011 as the political parties created divisions in the country based on ethnic and regional lines of North (Muslims) and South (Christian) regional zones (Soyinka, 2010). He further explained that these divisions created by the political parties in Ivory Coast had broken the democratic fabric of the cocoa-producing country, as future political stability looked unsustainable. In 2011, the electoral process declared President Ouattara the winner of the election, but Gbagbo refused to accept the declaration by throwing the country into another civil war. The UN and French troops' military intervention arrested Gbagbo military troops, instituted President Ouattara as the new president and later institutionalized a new constitution in 2016 (Dowuona, 2020). President Ouattara, in the year 2022, is in his third term of presidential office and not ready to step down any time soon, causing political tensions in future elections as opposing political parties are impatiently seeking political power. However, opposing parties are weak in political structure to contest in future elections and will seek other violent means to threaten the democratic system in the country (Dowuona, 2020). There is a need for a critical assessment of Ivory Coast's political structure, its nature, the activities of political parties, and their implication on the country's democratic system.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

After the 2010 contested election in Ivory Coast, the two prominent political leaders, Laurent Gbagbo and Ouattara declared themselves winners, which was impossible before the electoral commission could declare the winner. These events caused political unrest in the country, leading to a violent civil war between the southern Christians and the northern Muslims. The situation was eventually resolved through the intervention of UN and French

military forces, which helped restore stability. Ouattara's ascension to political office in May 2011 was aided by their intervention. He was re-elected in October 2015 and 2021 after amending the constitution to allow for a third term. Meanwhile, Laurent Gbagbo was arrested and exiled for war crimes. Although Ouattara successfully obtained a third term, numerous opposition political figures and the international community perceived his victory as undemocratic.

Despite the significant economic growth and stability that Ivory Coast has undergone under President Ouattara, the country's political system remains fragmented and needs unification among the various political parties. Unfortunately, there has been little progress towards substantially democratizing the current regime. The issues of the political party's rampage continued to resurface in the country before, during, and after democratic elections. The recurrent of this political violence and conflicts after post-elections can only be explained by a critical investigation of the history of the country's political system, the structure of political parties, and the role political parties play in the challenges to democracy in the country. The following critical questions are investigated?

What role do political parties play in the Ivory Coast's democratization challenge? Why did Ivorian democracy work well during the one-party system while it struggled since the advent of a multi-party? Why does the multi-party policy and the parties' competitiveness, supposed to guarantee the proper functioning of the democracy, not favor the progress of the democracy in Ivory Coast? What is the impact of the different political parties that have alternated in the executive power on the well-being of Ivorian democracy? This study analyzes political parties and their roles in the democratization challenge in Cote d'Ivoire.

1.3 Brief Profile of Cote d'Ivoire

Cote d'Ivoire is a Francophone country located in the West Africa sub-region, sharing borders with Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, and Burkina Faso, with a current population of around 27,832,000. It is endowed with significant natural resources such as gold, diamond, oil, gas, cobalt, copper, timber, water, fish, cocoa, coffee, rubber, palm oil, etc. The country has 12 districts plus two independent cities, with the two most important cities, the political capital

Yamoussoukro and the economic and largest port city, Abidjan. Cote d'Ivoire official language is French and major local dialects are Bété, Dioula, Baoulé, Abbron, Agni, Cebaara Sénoufo etc. Cote d'Ivoire comprises four major ethnic groups: Akan, Dioula, Maninka, Volatiques /Gur, Krou, and others. The citizen's religious orientation is stated as 43 % Muslim majority compared to Christianity (40%), tradition (2 %), and no religion (13%). The country covered a land area of 322,463k and a population density of 91.1/ k. The country enjoyed one of the highest per capita incomes in the West African region of \$2646 in 2021, and its currency is the West African CFA franc (XOF) (World Bank, 2021).

The French officially colonized the country in 1893 and attained independence in the 1960s. From there on, it elected its first president, President Felix Houphouët-Boigny who ruled the country for over three decades, becoming a dominant cash crop exporting country in Africa. The Republic of Cote d'Ivoire became the leading world producer of cocoa, coffee, rubber, palm oil, and other cash crops in West Africa and the world. Unfortunately, he died in 1993. His president of the national assembly (Parliament), Henri Konan Bedie, succeeded in his administration and ruled for six years but was overthrown in 2000 in a military coup because of his dictatorship rule. Afterward, numerous political instability and civil wars have been recurring pre and post-elections from 2001 to 2020. Cote d'Ivoire, formally under President Henri Konan Bedie, enacted a new constitution in 1996 to operate a democratic system based on the rule of law. The major political parties in the country currently include the Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP), the Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI), Ivorian Popular Front (FPI); nevertheless, Cote d'Ivoire is said to be one of the African countries with good prospects for economic development in Africa (World Bank, 2020).

1.4 Main Research objectives of the study

The primary aim of this study is to explore the challenges posed to democracy in Ivory Coast by political parties. Specifically, the research seeks to assess the extent to which political parties either exacerbate or alleviate the impediments confronting the democratic framework in the nation. Furthermore, the study will delve into the influence of these parties in molding

the democratic procedures and institutions, and their subsequent impact on the robustness and efficacy of democracy within the Ivory Coast.

1.5 Specific research objective

- i. To investigate the extent to which political parties practice internal democracy.
- ii. To investigate the extent to which a political party's internal democracy impacts its internal stability.

1.6 Research questions

- i. To what extent do political parties practice internal democracy and its impact on their internal stability?
- ii. What role do political parties play in the challenges of democracy in the Ivory Coast.?

1.7 Research Methodology

According to Kothari (2004), a research methodology is a systematic approach used to analyze a phenomenon, to understand its various elements and to address the problems associated with it. In this study, a qualitative methodology was used, relying primarily on secondary data. The researcher conducts content analysis by examining a variety of sources such as offline and online newspapers, articles, journals, magazines, reports, publications, and statements from various institutions. A purposive sampling technique is used to collect information and data on newspapers, articles and journals from the various online websites on the subject of the study. A content analysis technique will be used to summarize information on the extent to which political parties in Côte d'Ivoire practice organizational democracy and its impact on their internal stability as well as the role they play in the challenges of democracy in the country. The information summarized will be analyzed, reviewed, and discussed, to answer the stated research questions.

1.8 Significance of the research

The findings of the study will serve as an informative document, offering enlightening information to the Ivorian government, policymakers, and political stakeholders regarding

the challenges faced by political parties and their implications for democracy in Cote d'Ivoire. Another significance of the study is to recommend workable action plans that will provide the Ivorian government's wonderful insight to understand how to handle political instability issues caused by political parties' activities.

The study will propose a pre and post elections strategy that will monitor and regulate political parties in Cote d'Ivoire during periods of elections to reduce the occurrence of political violence, conflicts, and wars. Since most Sub-Saharan African countries are open to similar social and political structures, this proposal can be used in those countries.

The study is most valuable to political scientists, governments, political researchers, electoral commissions, political parties, and policy-makers, as it will update them on the latest strategies for a favorable political system and on how best to integrate its structure into their policy mix for the promotion of democracy. The research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and literature on political parties and democracy, thereby supporting academic research. Additionally, the study's outcomes will help assess the validity of political party and democracy theories. Academically, the research expands and updates current literature on political parties and challenges of democracy.

1.9 Scope of the study

Ivory Coast has a multi-party system consisting of several political parties. Thus there are numerous political parties in Ivory Coast. However, because of time and cost constraints, the researcher will select the dominant political parties currently participating in the Ivory Coast's political system for investigation. These prominent parties include Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP), Democratic Party of Ivory Coast-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA), Ivorian Popular Front (FPI).

1.10 Definitions of key terms

- i. Political Party: According to Jose et al. (2002), political parties actively engage in mobilizing voters based on shared interests, concerns, and goals. Across numerous countries, political parties have a strong role to play in the democratic process.

Political parties are responsible for formulating political and policy agendas, recruiting candidates, organizing election campaigns and monitoring the performance of their elected representatives. By acting as a bridge between citizens and government, political parties provide a platform for individuals to express their voice and participate in the governance process.

- ii. Democracy is a system of governance where all members of the political system have equal representation and participation. (Jose et al., 2002).

1.11 Limitations of the study

Limitations refer to the boundaries the researcher has set for the research study, which conducts the survey and collects journals for review. The researcher will only select journals published between 2000 and 2022. The journals published before 2000 are excluded, as they are seeking not to reflect the current outcomes of the issue.

1.12 Organization of the Study

The study comprises five main chapters, references, and an appendix. Chapter one looks at the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, limitation, scope of the study, the definition of critical concepts, and organization of the study. Chapter two reviews the theoretical frameworks of the study and concepts related to political parties and democratization. Also, it discusses the relationships that exist between the study variables, political parties and democracy and the empirical studies reviewed. Chapter Three examined the political party's internal democracy, funding, democratic practices, challenges, and strategies for gaining power. Chapter Four presented the data analysis collected from secondary sources and a discussion of the findings. Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY

This chapter reviews the theoretical frameworks of the study and concepts related to political parties and democratization. Also, it discusses the relationships that exist between the study variables, political parties, political violence, institutional theory and democracy and the empirical studies reviewed.

2.1 History of political parties

Empirical studies on nature, origin, structure, roles, democratization, and organization of political parties claimed that political parties are vital actors in a country's political system and significant stakeholders in a nation's democratic system. Their actions in pre and post-elections determine the level of institutionalization of a country's democratic system. Also, during the period of the liberation of states from colonial rule in the 1950s, the importance of democracy took center stage in state formation. This prompted researcher to study the role and actions of political parties in the newly independent state and its impact on democracy. This chapter's primary aim is to review the literature on the study's key concepts and their various aspects, the history of major political parties in Cote d'Ivoire, and theoretical and empirical literature.

2.2 Concept of Political Parties

Political parties are organized institutions representing a collective interest, mandated by the governing electoral body to contest in national and legislative elections (Montero & Gunther, 2002). Their roles include organizing election campaigns, protests against undemocratic practices, representing their members in parliament, presenting electorates for elections, participating in democratic governance, and providing platforms for its members to air their views (Montero & Gunther, 2002).

Political parties are also described as democratic institutions that act as viable representatives of the masses (Salih & Nordlund, 2007). They claim to be essential actors in the political

system, ensuring that the democratic transition of power is transparent and representative of the interests of the masses. They added that political parties themselves represent institutions of democracy, as their structures are built on the foundation of democratic principles. They further argued that their absence or inactivity in the political systems threatens the sustenance of any democratic state and vice versa. Moreover, their inclusiveness in the political system shows democracy and political maturity, unifying all stakeholders in the political system. According to Hicken and Kuhonta (2011), the significance of the political party's institutionalization and the emergence of a multi-party system has brought massive economic and social developments to people in the developing world.

Dix's (1992) definition focuses more on a political party's primary functions, which are to represent its members in governance, participate in the democratic process, provide political leadership, engage in peaceful political competition, participate in national and legislative elections, criticize and provide alternatives to governance policies and programs.

Jonasson (2004) established a set of requirements for an institution to be defined as a political party. He argues that a political party must be a democratic organization; it must represent a group of members with a common interest, have a political and founding philosophy, actively participates in the political life of the system, present electoral candidates in legislative and national elections, offers a peaceful and competitive opposition to the government, proposes political alternatives, participates in the parliamentary process.

For this study, political parties are defined as organized democratic institutions with members with a common interest and mandated by governing state bodies to participate in legislative and national elections.

2.3 Concept of Democracy

In Africa, there has been a shining light on certain countries that have progressed in their democratic practices over time, including Ghana, Senegal, Kenya, Morocco etc. On the other hand, democracy has been a quest that seems unachievable to certain nations in Africa as they struggled to sustain this system of governance over time; such countries including the

Central African Republic, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, and Côte d'Ivoire etc. (Ibrahim Governance Efficiency Index report, 2018).

Democracy is defined as a system of governance where leadership is represented by the people, there is responsible government, respect for the rule of law and an independent judiciary, respect for human rights, free and fair elections (United Nations, 2016).

The definition revealed five critical foundations to the building of democracy; free and fair elections, responsible government, equal participation by all citizens in politics, respect for human rights, the rule of law and an independent judiciary (Chwalisz, 2019).

Elections: Democracy principles argues that states must ensure that independent institutions are established and are mandated to conduct and regulate free and fair periodical elections to select all national representatives whether presidential or parliamentary.

Government: Good governance is the essence of democracy. It involves a government that prioritizes accountability and gives voice to its citizens. A stable political atmosphere free from violence and terrorism, effective governance, high regulatory standards, adherence to the rule of law, and control of corruption are all essential components of good governance.

Equal participation by all citizens in politics: Democracy ensures free and equal participation by all citizens in the political process that is, when can participate in national elections or stand as a candidate without any discrimination.

Respect for human rights: In a democracy, individual rights are protected without preference and discrimination. Individual rights in the political space rights such as freedom of speech, expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly, are significant in ensuring equal political participation.

The rule of law and an independent judiciary: Democracy ensures that the rule of law is adhered to by all private and public institutions, agencies, individuals, and groups in society and enforced by independent national security institutions and the courts. Its measurement involves reviewing eight factors: Ensuring limitations on government authority, eliminating

corruption, promoting transparency, upholding basic rights, maintaining public safety, enforcing regulations, providing civil justice, and ensuring criminal justice. (Carty, 2013).

2.4 Political Parties and Democracy

Political parties have a significant impact on the various aspects of democracy, and their conduct can strengthen or weaken the democratic fortunes of a state. Their role in the political space has a great influence on the state of democracy in a country. According to Chwalisz (2019), a look at this directs relationships reveals the followings;

When we look at elections political parties are the main actors in national elections and their conduct impacts the outcome of elections whether it will be free and fair. Concerning government role, political parties elected representatives are the main actors in parliament involved in legislative process and control of government. Also, political parties educate and influence citizens to fully participate in the political space by advocating to them the significance of representation in pushing their national discourse. In addition, political party's representative's works with parliament, government and the judiciary to promotes the rights and freedom of individuals, groups, institutions and their organizations'. Political parties ensure the adherence to laws and safeguard the autonomy of the judiciary through their involvement in government, parliament, and other political endeavors.

2.5 Forms of political party systems

Olukoshi (2016) claimed that there are three political party systems found around the world;

Single Party system: This is a form of the one-party system of governance where there is only one legally recognized political party with no other political party organizations allowed to function legally. This system aims to regulate political conflicts and solidify the government's political power over its citizens. This party system has been described as not promoting democracy, as it allows limited freedom of expression and gross violation of human right. This party system is not standard presently and is found in extreme cases.

Two-Party system: This is another form of party system with two dominant political parties in governance; even though there are other minor political parties, their influence is

insignificant in parliament and governance. This is the most common political party system in most countries worldwide. This party system has been described as promoting democracy, as it allows the practice of freedom of expression and protection of human rights.

Multi-party system: This is another party system with more than two dominant political parties in governance, as the other political parties significantly influence parliament and governance. This party system has been described as promoting democracy, as it allows the entire practice of freedom of expression and protection of human rights. This party system is not standard and is found only in extreme cases.

2.5.1 Political Party Strategies

Jonasson (2004) looked at the political party's classification according to their strategies for obtaining members or support.

Mass integration parties; structure their membership by allowing a formal integration of the major and minor political coalition groups through long-term and continuous work. Their members include workers' groups, civil society groups, gender groups, and affiliation groups.

Total integration party: These parties are strict in accepting new members, with maximum scrutiny done in selecting members. Their members include elite members of the society belonging to a superior ethnic group, rich and powerful. They aim to inculcate members fully to their beliefs as a measure of their willingness to go through complete integration.

Catch-all Party: These parties are liberal in accepting new members without special requirements. They appeal to members during elections for their maximum vote from their central political leadership. They convince the public to share their beliefs and party aspirations.

Clientelistic party: These political parties do not conform to strict political beliefs or principles and conduct themselves in appealing postures to obtain large voting followers and consensus for elections.

For this study, the research will assess the strategy political parties in Ivory Coast adopt in acquiring existing and new members of the party and its impact on democracy.

Jonasson (2004) establishes two linkages or relationships; political parties and their citizens, political parties and their members;

2.5.2 Internal and External Linkages

External Linkages look at the relationship between political parties and their citizens. A country's citizens influence a political party as they may share in its beliefs and principles. For example, a party consisting of majority Muslim leaders will have mass Muslim followers compared to a party with majority leadership members as Christians.

Internal Linkages look at the internal connection and relationship among party members. This connection can be family ties, favoritism, and charismatics of individual members of the party in their respective districts.

For this work, the research will measure the level of internal and external linkage in the Ivory Coast political system.

2.5.3 Role of Political Parties

Randall and Svåsand (2002) identified four unified functions of political parties;

Representation is an essential component of any democratic political system. It is the formal delegation of political power and the responsibility of the masses to elect political candidates through votes to speak of their interests and aspirations in governance. Political parties must positively represent their voters and followers to continue earning mass citizens' support and votes on Election Day. This role is a necessary framework that supports the sustenance of a democratic political system. The conception of the role is evident when political parties present electorates of the various constituents to citizens to solicit votes in the upcoming election. The elected electorates present themselves as viable political candidates capable of presenting the concerns, needs, and problems of the masses at parliament and governance for a positive response. They achieve this by putting across an objective debate on the floor of

parliament or seeking external aid from institutions and businesses to address the concerns of their constituents. Representation role in politics cuts across all members of parliament, the executive, judiciary, president, political parties, ministers, and oppositions to ensure their constituents, districts, and regions are allocated a fair share of the national resource.

According to Randall and Svåsand (2002), there are three forms of political representation: population representation, territorial representation, or descriptive representation.

Population representation is when political electorates are elected by equal population distribution. In this situation, the country's electoral constituents are equally divided according to the number of people, so every constituent is equally represented.

For territorial representation, the country's electoral constituents are demarcated according to areas with larger populations having more political electoral posts than regions with a smaller population.

With descriptive representation, the electorates do not only denote territorial or population but certain political distinct traits that connect the masses to follow the political party, which include gender, geographical linkage, ethnicity, occupation, religion, and language. Because it influenced the masses, descriptive representation is found in most political parties worldwide, including Cote d'Ivoire.

Failure of the stakeholders to ensure representation of the masses results in coups d'états, political violence, workers' strikes, wars, conflicts, a state of anarchy, and removal from political power or position. Thus, stakeholders in the political system, including political parties, must constantly monitor and assess their participation and representation in governance to maintain their political power or position.

In this study, the research will explore the organizational structure of the political system in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in relation to representative bodies. It will also analyze the extent to which elected representatives in Côte d'Ivoire's democratic system effectively represent the will of the people

Integration

This role looks at how political parties use their influence to connect the masses of the voting population under a unique political identity that transcends beyond personal attributes, such as language, ethnicity, religion, economic class, gender, and color. They aim to increase the level of participation of a country's citizens in the political system. This includes knowledge and awareness of their political rights, such as participating in governance activities, which include freedom of expression, exercising their franchise during elections, and organizing protests and strikes to cause a change in unfavorable governance policy and laws. It also looks at educating and updating public perceptions on the importance of participation in the political system, which ensures the quality of accountability of public institutions and government officials. The expression of public opinions by the public and questions are quickly directed to the head of public institutions for answers which promotes accountability. An accountable government is more likely to fulfill its promises and goals than an unaccountable one, which translates to growth channeling to the poor.

For this work, the research will examine how political parties mobilize the masses and unify groups under a single national identity in Ivory Coast.

i. Recruitment and training

Political parties are institutions that provide the platforms for the training and monitoring of members who aspire to a leadership position in government. Their system of leadership philosophy of political party leaders influences the new and existing members' forms of leadership style. There are generally three forms of leadership styles adopted by political parties recently, which are traditional, autocratic, and democratic leadership.

Traditional leadership political parties recruit and train members based strictly on family ties which defeat most of the functions of a political party.

Nevertheless, autocratic leadership parties have self-centered dictators as political leaders and force governance and power center on them. There is strict recruitment of new members based on family and loyalty to the leader.

Democratic leadership involves all party members in the decisions making and governance process. The leader attempts to ensure members have equal representation in the party and new members' admittance is made more liberal as possible. It is described as the best recruitment and training style adopted by a political party's leadership and most influential in sustaining political dominance in governance.

This study will examine how Ivory Coast political parties recruit their political leaders.

ii. Making the government accountable

Government accountability is holding public institutions, agencies, appointees, officials, and representatives responsible for using public resources to benefit the most deprived members of society. Political parties used the platforms of parliament and media to pressure the government to be transparent and open with its activities. Political parties must engage in constructive criticism of government policies by proposing better alternatives rather than opposing them as unsustainable.

This work analyzes actions political parties take to make the government more accountable.

iii. Organizing opposition

Political parties in a political system are categorized as majority and minority parties. The majority political parties are described as parties winning the elections with the most significant number of parliamentary seats compared to the opposition, who trail behind the majority with fewer seats. The opposition parties organize themselves effectively to review government policies and programs and their impacts on the citizens. They oppose any hostile policy or programs the government attempt to implement and expose its weakness for further deliberations. Their impact in ensuring the majority does not abuse its power is very significant in the development of democracy.

For the purpose of this study, the research will investigate how political parties organize the opposition party.

2.6 Political Party Organization Democracy

Political party organization democracy looks at the institutionalization of the political party's practices and procedures to achieve stability and development in the political system (Huntington, 1986). The inability of political parties to institutionalize practices and procedures in line with the political system governing standards results in party political violence, conflicts, and wars (Massari, 1994).

According to Kalua (2011), the degree of institutionalization of political parties improves the performance of the political system toward achieving democratic stability. He argued that the following vital variables measure political party organization democracy: 'the age of a party, electoral stability, legislative stability, volatility of its leaders, decisional autonomy, organizational capacity, and autonomy.

Mainwaring (1998) looked at political party organization as democratic stability in the political system where the leading political institutions adhere fully to government rules and procedures in the political system. This assertion was supported by Scully (1995), who defined the conditions for democratic political party organization as "the stability of party competition, the existence of parties that have relatively stable roots in society, the acceptance of parties and elections as legitimate institutions that determine who governs, and the organization of parties with reasonably organized structures" (Mainwaring & Scully, 1995). This study adopts Mainwaring and Scully standards of political party organization democracy, focusing on their roles, practices, structures, and actions in the political system. The study investigates how political parties' organization democracy is sustained or broken down.

2.7 Political Violence in Ivory Coast

In this section, political and electoral violence concepts are reviewed because they are critical challenge for democratic societies. They undermine fair elections, peaceful transitions of power, and the rule of law, also discourage citizen participation and can lead to a loss of trust in political institutions.

Political violence is described as a situation where there is an extreme case of disputes, conflict, violence, and chaos among members of political parties concerning disagreement decisions, actions or policies that are not favorable to an individual or a group of party members (Hyde, 2009). Political parties provide peaceful platforms for party members to make political decisions, activities, actions and policies. The political process is seen as a peaceful environment where party members discuss, plan, develop strategy and policy on issues of the party. But sometimes when the political activities becomes very intense it becomes volatile resulting in some party members getting really violent about a policy, decision or action not in their favour. These violence manifest into threat, verbal abuse, defamation, violent confrontation among political party members and their rivals.

The nature of political violence has its root cause from external or internal sources. External source meaning the violence emanates from conflict war zone countries where civilians get support from foreign countries to attack and destroyed the entire electoral process while internal source meaning the violence emanates from ethnic, religious, class rivalry instigated by political leaders to disorganise the political process and intimidate their political opponents (Edigin & Obakhedo, 2010).

The aim of political violence is to cause sudden changes in the political structure in favour of the conflicting political leader or members (Hyde, 2009). The violence, destruction of properties and lives, conflicts, wars, rebellions is a manifestation of this activity (Hyde, 2009). The conflicting political leaders motivate members of political parties to use armed weapons to create a wild environment in the political space to achieve their hidden goals. Activities such as hijacking of the political process, non-compliance to political ruling, nonattendance of political meetings, political vandalism are some of the plan activities of the political rebel leaders.

With the transformation of African countries economies after colonialisation an adoption of democratic governance and rule it was expected the time for African countries to develop massively but unfortunately this was not the case. In the early 2000, political violence occurrence was alarming the number of political violence cases recorded on the Africa

continent ,the disagreements, conflicts and political violence experience during elections has been very disastrous (Seifu, 2012) .The notable countries with increasing case of political violence include Zambia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Togo, Kenya, Burkina Faso and more other conflicting African states. In Zambia, issues of political violence had occurred consistently from 2001, the Chawama by-election, 2005 Mapatizya by-elections, and 2010 Mufumbwe by-elections, 2011 general and 2016 general elections (Ogunkalu, 2019).

Similarly, in Nigeria, in the year 1964,1993,1998,2003,2011,2015,2019 the country has experience a series of intensive political violence which root cause can be traced to its political history where a total of 2000 deaths recorded. Moving to Ivory Coast the least said the better the country political conflicts plague into a civil war after 2010/2011 elections leading to loss of several civilian life's. This political violence continue in the country in the later 2015 and 2020 elections (Ogunkalu, 2019).

In the case of Togo, 2005 elections resulted in harsh disagreement which turn to a long bloody confrontation on the street between the opposition and incumbent government supporters. This was initiated by the opposition who decide to use force to destroy the whole electoral process which led to the death of 500 civilians (Ogunkalu, 2019).

In Kenya, post-electoral violence in the 2007/2008 elections were as a result of weak electoral institutions which was not capable of reconciling political disputes properly. (Ogunkalu, 2019). On the other hand, these African countries, including Ghana, Senegal and Benin, have achieved effective transfer of political power through successive elections since 2000, following the establishment of formalised multi-party electoral systems in these countries. (Ogunkalu, 2019).

In Ivory Coast, after the country transcended from a single-party system to a multi-party system in 1993, the state of political violence in the country increased spontaneously, resulting in wars, conflicts, destruction of property, assets and loss of lives. The political violence in Ivory Coast emanates from how undemocratic and unconstitutional the electoral process has been administered by previous incumbent governments. For example, former President Henri Konan Bedie introduced the identity law to restrict his opponents from

contesting his presidency and maintaining his political power. The disqualification of Allassane Ouattara contesting in the 1993 and 2000 elections is an instance case of the malicious use of double nationality identity to restrict opponents' political presidential leaders from contesting. President Henri Konan Bedie's rebellious attitude can be traced from the nature of administration in his party, where he enforced decisions without regard or consulting his fellow party members. He was an authoritarian leader in his party, manifested in its terrorizing strategies to frustrate his political opponents. He manipulated the electoral process during the 1993 election to his favor by using the identity law, which made Allassane Ouattara and his supporters angrily attack the government, resulting in political violence across several areas of the country.

General Robert Guei, after successfully conducting a coup d'état against President Bedie, unconstitutional gained political power and also implemented the identity law restriction and age limit to disqualify Allassane Ouattara and former President Henri Konan Bedie from the 2001 elections. Though he successfully restricted his major political allies, his electoral loss to Laurent Gbagbo was not admitted. General Robert Guei was angered by the news of the loss in the election. In his response, he and his followers engaged in numerous political violence, demonstrating against President Laurent Gbagbo's government. Laurent Gbagbo also proceeded with the same strategy of identity law and disqualified Allassane Ouattara once again. This time, there was chaos in the electoral process again, and there was a violent attack by Allassane Ouattara and his followers on the government, resulting in a bloody war that continued over a decade. All this time, the extent of political violence among political parties in the country increased, becoming alarming. The French intervened in Ivory Coast to ensure peace in the country and ensure a general election was conducted in 2010, where the French supervised the election (Banégas, 2011). Allassane Ouattara won the election over President Laurent Gbagbo, who was angered over the loss and refused to leave the presidency for Allassane Ouattara. During that period, there were massively increased records of political violence in all areas of the country. Another scenario of political violence was realized in President Ouattara's unconventional third term which he changed the constitution to a contest, which he successfully won. This was disapproved by many opposition political

leaders and the international community as not democratic causing massive political violence between his political parties and opposition parties (Oyewole, 2022). Although Ivory Coast, over the years, has experienced increased economic growth and stability under President Ouattara, the country's political system has still not unified the various political parties, and all hopes for a substantial democratization of the current regime have been unprogressive with every election recording continuous case of political violence.

Electoral violence

Electoral violence has most of its roots emanating from political violence (Kuhn, 2013). Most of the protest by members of political party including disrespect of party rules or policies, use of violence by party member during its internal and external elections. These occurrence are indication of potential likelihood of electoral violence in the national elections caused by increasing the rebellion party member's activities (Kuhn, 2013). The rebellion political party members refuse to accept the loss of their party in the national elections and accused the wining party of using its power to manipulate the electoral process and express their dissatisfaction of the electoral process through demonstrations, non-compliance to electoral ruling, non-attendance of national political meetings, political vandalism and finally war(Kuhn,2013)..

From the above explanation electoral violence is defined as all those angered activities that threaten human lives and livelihood associated with the electoral process (Kuhn, 2013). Electoral violence in Africa is so rampant that within the past three decades almost each country on the continent has experienced a series of electoral violence, making the continent the most insecure during elections (Karim, 2014). This problem has distorted numerous countries on the African continent's growth in democracy and economic development.

The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire has faced persistent and deeply rooted challenges related to electoral violence, which have hindered the progress of democracy. These challenges have

arisen from prolonged political tensions and disputes that revolve around electoral procedures. The following examples are provided.

The 2000 presidential elections in Ivory Coast were marked by extensive violence and civil disturbance, particularly in the northern parts of the country, which were known for their strong opposition support (Amnesty International, 2001). The aforementioned upheavals served as a precursor to the unpredictable nature of Ivorian election politics and established the foundation for further conflicts.

The year 2002 witnessed the emergence of a comprehensive rebellion following the contentious 2000 elections and the intensifying political tensions at the time. The violent uprising, characterized by a geographical division between the northern and southern regions, resulted in widespread violence and the forced relocation of large numbers of people (International Crisis Group, 2003). The ramifications of the subsequent internal struggle and fragmentation had a deep and enduring impact on the nation.

The 2010 presidential elections in Ivory Coast were characterized by significant controversy, as President Laurent Gbagbo, the incumbent, and Alassane Ouattara, the opposition candidate, both asserted their triumph. The electoral controversy reached its climax with a subsequent post-election crisis characterized by violent incidents, so intensifying the issue at hand. (International Crisis Group 2011), The occurrence of post-election violence in 2010 is considered one of the most distressing examples of electoral violence in the history of the country.

During the period preceding the 2020 presidential election, the nation experienced an unprecedented surge in political tensions and widespread protests. Certain opposition figures advocated for a boycott, but others contested the election results, resulting in occasional instances of violence and confrontations with security forces. The electoral cycle of 2020 highlighted the persistent difficulties in maintaining political stability within the nation throughout election times. (Al Jazeera 2020)

It's important to note that Ivory Coast has made efforts to address electoral violence and promote peace and reconciliation, including the signing of peace agreements and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, the history of electoral violence in the country underscores the ongoing challenges in maintaining political stability during election periods.

2.8 Institutional Theory

In this study, institutional theory is utilized to examine political parties and the obstacles that democracy faces. Institutional theory is valuable because of its emphasis on regulations, ability to make predictions, adaptability to various situations, and multidimensional approach. By applying institutional theory, researcher can gain insight into how both formal and informal regulations affect political parties' conduct, impact democratic procedures, and determine the results of governance.

The institutional theory is built on the principle of conformity to set institutional standards, rules, roles, routines, practices, and procedures that shape an organization's internal structure (Douglass, 1990). He claimed that the degree of conformity to these institutional principles affects institutions' performance and stability. He explained further that political institutions' adherence to and motivation for adopting democratic practices in their operations is a factor in the strict implementation of institutional laws and regulations in the political system. Scott (2001) states that institutional rules and laws in democratic practices and principles are standardized in every country's political system. Although enforcement and compliance of political system practices vary from country to country and are stricter in developed countries than in developing countries. He further explained that citizens, civil society groups, political parties, government, and international laws are the drivers of institutional laws and rules with an aim at democratic institutionalization of a country's political system

Group (2013) argued that political institutions are composed of governing procedures, norms, operating practices, laws, and rules that influence human behavior. These governing political practices are regarded as constraints as they force or persuade members and stakeholders of political parties to comply with the political process. These constraints are categorized into

formal, informal, and third-party enforcement. The informal constraints include cultural heritage, conventions, behavior, norms, and conduct, which are transmitted as part of the culture. The formal constraints include governing procedures, norms, operating practices, laws, and rules that guide the informal constraints' compliance. Formal constraints also looked at political institutions' active role in legalizing governing procedures, norms, operations, laws, and rules. They ensured the positive conduct of political institutions in the political system. Third-party enforcement looks at the enforcement of formal electoral laws and rules by the state, the electoral commission, security, and legal agencies. Thus, formal, informal, and third-party constraints form the political system's institutional environment, which comprises legal governing procedures, norms, operations, laws and rules, state, electoral commission, national security, courts, international bodies, etc.

In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, the application of institutional theory offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating the influence of political institutions, norms, and rules on the behavior of political actors and the resultant political outcomes. The intricate historical and sociopolitical dynamics of Côte d'Ivoire underscore the significance of institutional factors in shaping the country's political parties and its democratic processes.

Electoral Systems and Party Systems:

The type of electoral system chosen can significantly impact political parties' political landscape and behavior within a democratic society. Ivory Coast has changed its electoral system from a single-round majority to a two-round majority-runoff system. These changes affect how parties strategize, form coalitions, and influence voter behavior. By utilizing institutional theory, we can better comprehend how these electoral rules shape the process of political parties seeking support from voters and building alliances (Bratton et al., 1997).

Ethnic Cleavages and Party Formation:

Ethnic and regional divisions have marked Ivory Coast's history. Institutional theory can help analyze how these cleavages intersect with the country's political institutions and party systems. Parties may form along ethnic lines or seek to transcend these divisions through

institutional mechanisms such as power-sharing arrangements or proportional representation. Understanding how parties navigate these divisions can illuminate the broader democratic dynamics. (International Crisis Group, 2002).

Presidential Term Limits and Executive Power:

Institutional theory can be used to explore the impact of presidential term limits on Ivory Coast's political landscape. The country has experienced debates and changes regarding presidential term limits, which affect party strategies and democratic stability. The presence or absence of term limits affects the behavior of political parties, the incumbent's systems, and the overall functioning of the democracy. (Zartman, I. W. 2007).

Legislative Rules and Policy-Making:

Institutional theory can also show how legislative rules influence policy-making processes and party behavior within Ivory Coast's democracy. The rules governing debates, committees, and decision-making in the National Assembly can impact the ability of political parties to influence policy outcomes. (Pénissard, L., & Soares, B. 2015).

In Ivory Coast, as in other democracies, understanding the interactions between political parties and institutional factors is crucial for comprehending the functioning of the political system. By applying institutional theory, researchers can gain insights into how formal and informal rules shape the behavior of political parties, impact democratic processes, and influence governance outcomes. However, institutional theory has been criticized for overburdening political institutions with conformity to all political constraints present in the political system, which may restrict party creativity and innovation in the organization.

This chapter reviewed the concept of political parties in and aspects relevant to the study, namely political parties, political party systems, political party strategies, roles of political parties, and political party organization democracy. Also, the chapter critically looks at the historical background of three main political parties in Cote d'Ivoire that have significantly influenced the political system in the last two decades. From the data provided, all the three major parties have had access to major political power, participated in election boycotts, and

entered minority position in their time of political history of the Ivory Coast. This have occurred with the same influential political leadership from the death of Ivory Coast first president till date which means these political parties have power centered to their leaders which is challenging to the development of the internal party democracy. Also, the new political parties formed apart from the PDCI have traces of violent leadership divisions or factions in their resultant formation which resulted in instability of these political organizations. Thus an undemocratic and unstable political parties in a violent political environment results in continuous political and electoral violence in Ivory Coast.



CHAPTER THREE

MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN IVORY COAST AND DEMOCRATIZATION

3.1 Major Political Parties of Côte d'Ivoire

From Ivorian political history, there has been the emergence of three influential political parties in governance, including the Democratic Party of Ivory Coast-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA), Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), Rally of Houphouetistis for Democracy and Peace (RHDP).

3.2 Democratic Party of Ivory Coast-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA)

The only political Party in Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Party of Ivory Coast-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA), was set up in 1946 and founded by Presidential leader Felix Houphouet-Boigny (Bertelsmann, 2010). Members of the African Agricultural Union initially set up the party after the Second World War to protest against the unfavorable colonial rule of the farming populace, which resulted in independence from France on August 7, 1960. Presidential and party leader of PDCI, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, was declared prime minister afterward. Legislative elections were organized later, which he won massively with no opposition and 70 out of 70 seats in the National Assembly. Eventually, he successfully sought parliamentary approval for a single-party system in Cote d'Ivoire to make the PDCI the only legally recognized political party upon independence in 1960. This made the PDCI dominate Ivorian politics for over 30 years. His success in implementing a single-party system without opposition over the years was the integration of all ethnic, religious, and economic classes as viable party members, and no nepotism and favoritism were tolerated. After the 1990s, the government legalized opposition participation in the election due to economic and social pressure from the international community.

Nevertheless, the PDCI won the election, but this time not wholly all seats, but won 163 out of 175 seats in the National Assembly (Bertelsmann, 2010). Unfortunately, President Felix Houphouet-Boigny died on December 7, 1993, causing instability in the PDCI administration as Henri Konan- Bedie, President of the National Assembly, took over the immediate vacant presidential position on December 8, 1993. He was accused by Laurent Gbagbo, an

opposition leader, as an illegitimate leader in 1994. While Prime Minister of the PDCI, Allassane Ouattara, resigned on December 10, 1993, and was replaced by Daniel Duncan, causing more tension in the PDCI administration. There were fresh elections organized in 1995. PDCI, led by Henri Konan- Bedie, won massively with 96 percent but was boycotted by the opposition, who protested new requirements, which weakened their support base. However, Bedie was overthrown by a coup by General Robert Guei in December 1999. In 2000, members of the PDCI decided to choose a leadership that Bedie disapproved of and maintain its leadership position. The PDCI party saw the resignation of executive management members of the party, forming their party, including Interior Minister Emile Constant Bombet.

Since then, the PDCI's influence on Ivorian politics has decreased, as General Robert Guei's temporary party organized new elections following the coup d'état. Presidential elections were held in 2000, but the leaders of the two main political parties - the Rally of Democratic Republicans (RDR) and the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) - were not allowed to stand. Following a conflict between supporters of General Robert Guei's party and the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), the election was won by Laurent Gbagbo's party.

Additionally, tensions arose after Laurent Gbagbo's one-year presidency due to the exclusion of the two leading political parties from elections. However, Commander Ibrahim Coulibaly and his military rebels instigated a civil war from 2002 to 2007 by declaring war on government troops because of increasingly violent protests and attacks on non-Ivorian resulted in a civil war (Banégas, 2011). This led the country to political turmoil and civil war in 2002-2007 and again in 2010-2011, as the political parties created divisions in the country based on ethnic and regional lines of North (Muslims) and South (Christian) regional zones (Soyinka, 2010). He further explained that these divisions created by the political parties in Ivory Coast had broken the democratic fabric of the cocoa-producing country, as future political stability looked unsustainable. In the 2015 presidential election, the PDCI did not contest because Henri Konan Bedie was not allowed to participate because of the age limit set by the constitution. Instead, he made the PDCI join a coalition with the RDR and formed (the Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) (BBC, 2018), which

executive members of the party criticized as not in the party's interest. This decision destabilized the party further, as some executives resigned from the party to form new parties. In the 2020 elections, the PDCI party opted to break away from the RHDP coalition and compete as a separate entity. The 85-year-old leader of the PDCI, Henri Konan Bedie, chose to abstain from participating in the elections, alongside other opposition parties. Notably, not all the members of the party were in agreement with the decision to boycott. As a result, Konan Bertin, an executive member of the PDCI, opted to run for the presidential race, ignoring the party leader's and opposition parties' call to boycott the polls.

Although the controversial decision by Ouattara to stand for a third term was not accepted, the election boycott by the opposition parties' leaders Guillaume Soro, Simone Gbagbo, and Pascal Affi N'Guessan. The PDCI is currently not doing badly and had 73 out of 255 seats in the National Assembly in 2015 (BBC, 2021)

Electoral History

Table 1: Presidential Elections of PDCI

Election	Party candidate	Votes	%	Votes	%	Results
		First Round		Second Round		
1960	Félix Houphouet-Boigny	1,641,352	100%	-	-	Elected ✔️
1965		1,867,605	100%	-	-	Elected ✔️
1970		2,003,046	100%	-	-	Elected ✔️
1975		2,404,905	100%	-	-	Elected ✔️

1980		2,795,150	100%	-	-	Elected ✓
1985		3,516,524	100%	-	-	Elected ✓
1990		2,445,365	81.68%	-	-	Elected ✓
1995	Henri Konan Bedie	1,837,154	96.0%	-	-	Elected ✓
2000		Boycotted				
2010		1,165,532	25.24%	-	-	Lost ✗
2015	Supported Allassane Ouattara	2,618,229	83.66%	-	-	Elected ✓
2020	Henri Konan Bedie	Boycotted				

Source: BBC, *Ivory Coast Profile–Timeline*, January 10, 2022,

From the data in Table 1, it showed presidential election results outcomes of PDCI from 1960 to 2020. The PDCI was a dominant force in the Ivorian political system under a single party system, achieving 100percent First round wins in national election with no opposition from 1960 to 1985. From 1990 under the adoption of multi-party system, opposition parties were not significant in obtaining a majority percentage of votes only between 4%-19% and reduce its wining rate from a little 96% in 1995 to 81.68% in 1990. In 2000, after the overthrow of PDCI presidential candidate Henri Konan Bedie, there was an organization of a new national election by the military government, PDCI decided to boycott the national election in 2000 as its leader was disqualified because of its dual identity. The PDCI resumed in the presidential contest in 2010 but has lost its dominant mass voting populace and could only

churn a little about 25% of national election votes and lost the election. In 2015, Henri Konan Bedie of the PDCI formed a party alliance with the RHDP to contest which aid it to win the election by 83.66%. From the data realized PDCI party dominance has been to weaken by its overthrown and alliance formation with opposition party RHDP.

Table 2: National Assembly Elections of PDCI

Election	Party leader	Votes	%	Seats	+/-	Position
1946–47	Félix Houphouët-Boigny			24 / 30	▲ 24	▲ 1 st
1952		66,838	71.9%	28 / 32	▲ 4	— 1 st
1957		720,828	89.3%	58 / 60	▲ 30	— 1 st
1959		1,522,324	100%	100 / 100	▲ 40	— 1 st
1960		1,586,518	100%	70 / 70	▼ 30	— 1 st
1965		1,863,005	100%	85 / 85	▲ 15	— 1 st
1970		1,997,560	100%	100 / 100	▲ 15	— 1 st
1975		2,390,566	100%	120 / 120	▲ 20	— 1 st
1980			100%	147 / 147	▲ 27	— 1 st
1985			100%	175 / 175	▲ 30	— 1 st

1990		1,324,549	71.7%	163 / 175	▼ 12	— 1 st
1995	Henri Konan Bedie			148 / 175	▼ 15	— 1 st
2000–01				94 / 225	▼ 54	▼ 2 nd
2011		564,958	28.85%	77 / 255	▼ 17	— 2 nd
2016		1,019,057	50.26% as part of RHDP	77 / 255	—	— 2 nd
2021		602,201	22.54% with EDC	73 / 255	▼ 4	— 2 nd

Source: BBC, Ivory Coast Profile–Timeline, January 10, 2022,

From the data in Table 2, it showed national assembly election results outcomes of PDCI from 1960 to 2021. The PDCI was a dominant force in the Ivorian political system under a single party system, achieving above 50 percent national assembly election results wins in national election from 1960 to 1985. From 1990 under the adoption of multi-party system, opposition parties were significant in obtaining a majority percentage of votes only around 30% and reduce its winning rate from a little less than 71% in 1990 and 1995. In 2000, after the overthrow of PDCI presidential candidate Henri Konan Bedie, there was an organization of a new national election by the military government, PDCI decided to boycott the national election in 2000 as its leader was disqualified because of its dual identity. The PDCI resumed in the national assembly election contest in 2011 but has lost its dominant mass voting populace and could only churn a little about 29% of national assembly election votes, resulting in the lowest number of seats in the national assembly. In 2015, Henri Konan Bedie of the PDCI formed a party alliance with the RHDP to contest which aid the RHDP to win

the national assembly election by 50.26% but later split the PDCI from the RHDP to contest 2020 national election with support from EDC but lost abysmally churning the smallest proportion of seats of 22.54% in its political history. From the data realized PDCI party dominance has been weakened by its overthrown and alliance formation with opposition party RHDP.

3.3 Ivorian Popular Front (FPI)

The FPI is the second oldest political party founded by historian lecturer Laurent Gbagbo and Aboudramane Sangare in 1982 in the single-party era of the Ivory Coast (Bertelsmann, 2010). With the aspiration of the socialist ideology from the French Socialist Party, FPI leader Gbagbo was very active in politics in the 1990s criticizing President Henri Konan-Bedie an opposition leader, as an illegitimate leader to take over affairs from late President Felix Houphouet-Boigny. The FPI party became prominent when Gbagbo won the 2000 national election, with 96 out of 224 seats in an intensively contested election, and ruled the conflicting country for over a decade. The FPI, unlike the PDCI, was religious and ethnically strongly supported by the Southern Christian regional zones and was described as true Ivorian. Following 2010, there was an increasing demand for the organization of new elections, which put significant pressure on Gbagbo and his government. Following the 2010 disputed election in Ivory Coast, the two influential political figures, Laurent Gbagbo and Ouattara, proclaimed themselves victorious, a premature assertion that occurred before the electoral commission's official declaration of the winner. The event precipitated a tumultuous political climate within the country, culminating in an armed confrontation between the Christian population in the south and the Muslim community in the north. The situation escalated to the point that the intervention of UN and French military forces was necessary to re-establish order and peace. The intervention in question effectively resulted in bringing Ouattara to political power in May 2011. Subsequently, he won re-election in October 2015 and 2021 after amending the constitution to allow for a third term. During this period, Laurent Gbagbo was apprehended and exiled due to charges of war crimes. It is worth noting that Ouattara's third-term victory was met with disapproval from numerous opposition political

figures and the international community, who regarded it as undemocratic. The arrest of Gbagbo destabilized the party, and many members left the party.

Consequently, a new leader, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, was elected as the new presidential leader of the FPI, who contested in the 2010 and 2015 elections. Nevertheless, he could not pull followers of Gbagbo to support the party during elections and performed abysmally in the 2015 and 2020 elections gaining 9.29 to 1.01 percent of the presidential vote (BBC, 2021). The FPI must accept Gbagbo as a presidential candidate after his release and run in the next elections in 2025, the only way for the party to regain its former dominant position

Table 3: Presidential elections of FPI

Election	Party candidate	Votes	%	Votes	%	Results
		First Round		Second Round		
1990	Laurent Gbagbo	548,441	18.32%	-	-	Lost ❌
1995	Boycotted					
2000	Laurent Gbagbo	1,065,597	59.4%	-	-	Elected ✅
2010	Laurent Gbagbo	1,756,504	38.04%	2,054,537 (CC)	51.45% (CC)	Elected ✅
				2,107,055 (IEC)	45.9% (IEC)	
2015	Pascal Affi N'Guessan	290,780	9.29%	-	-	Lost ❌

Source: BBC, Ivory Coast Profile–Timeline, January 10, 2022,

From the data in Table 3, it showed presidential election results outcomes of FPI led by Laurent Gbagbo and Pascal Affi N'Guessan from 1990 to 2015. The FPI was a minor force in the Ivorian political system under a single party system, achieving 18.32% presidential votes in 1990 national elections. The FPI boycotted the 1995 national elections but retook part in the early 2000 and was able to obtain first round wins in national election with 59.4% of the votes from 2005 there was no national election because of the conflict in the country and extended to 2010 which was highly contested but FPI lost in the second round. In 2015, FPI was led by Pascal Affi N'Guessan but lost abysmally churning the smallest proportion of votes of 9.2% in its political history. From the data realized FPI party dominance has been weakened by its change of leadership and development of rebellion factions in the party organization

Table 4: National Assembly elections of FPI

Election	Party leader	Votes	%	Seats	+/-
1990	Laurent Gbagbo	365,999	19.8%	9 / 175	▲ 9
1995				12 / 175	▲ 3
2000–01				96 / 225	▲ 84
2011	Pascal Affi N'Guessan	Boycotted		0 / 255	▼ 96
2016		118,130	5.83%	3 / 255	▲ 3

Source: BBC, Ivory Coast Profile–Timeline, January 10, 2022,

From the data on Table 4, it showed national assembly elections results outcomes of FPI led by Laurent Gbagbo and Pascal Affi N'Guessan from 1990 to 2016. The FPI was a minor force in Ivorian political system under the single party system achieving minority status as 9 seats out of 175 seats representing 19.8% of votes cast for the national assembly election in 1990, but improved to 12 seats out of 175 in 1995 and later 96 seats out of 225 seats. The FPI boycotted the 2011 election after the arrest of its founder and leader 2000, 2011 national assembly. In 2015, FPI was led by Pascal Affi N'Guessan but lost abysmally churning the smallest proportion of seats from 0 to only 3 seats by 2016.

3.4 Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP)

Now the most significant political party in Ivory Coast was founded on May 18, 2005, by Allassane Ouattara. The political party was set up by allying with other opposition parties, including (the Rally of Republicans (RDR), the Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI-RDA), the Union for Democracy, and the Party of Cote d'Ivoire, the Movement of Forces of the Future and the Union for Ivory Coast (Bertelsmann, 2010).

However, after this alliance, the political parties separated themselves from the RDR and contested independently in the 2010 national elections. The RHDP elected presidential leader Allassane Ouattara's primary support is the Northern Muslims, and immigrant workers voted massively for the party in the 2011 national elections. The RHDP took over the governance and has dominated Ivorian politics until now, but has issues finding a successor for the long-serving leader, Allassane Ouattara. President Ouattara, in the year 2022, is in his third term of the presidential office and not ready to step down any time soon, causing political tensions in future elections as opposing political parties are impatiently seeking political power. However, opposing parties are weak in political structure to competitively contest in future elections and will seek other violent means threatening the democratic system in the country (Dowuona, 2020). The RHDP is the majority political party in Ivory Coast, with 95.31 percent of vote's casts in the 2020 national election with an impressive 147 seats out of 255 seats (BBC, 2021).

Table 5: Presidential elections of RHDP

Election	Candidate	Votes	%	Votes	%	Result
		First round		Second round		
2015	Alassane Ouattara	2,618,229	83.66%	-	-	Elected ✔
2020		3,031,483	95.31%	-	-	Elected ✔

Source: BBC, Ivory Coast Profile–Timeline, January 10, 2022,

From the data in Table 5, it showed presidential election results outcomes of RHDP led by Alassane Ouattara from 2015 to 2020. The RHDP was a minor political force in the Ivorian political system from 1990. The RHDP boycotted the 2000 national elections but retook part in the early 2010 and was able to obtain second round disputed wins in the national elections in 2015, RHDP was led by Alassane Ouattara won the national election impressively churning the largest proportion of votes of 83.66% in its political history. From the data realized RHDP party dominance strengthens from alliance from other opposition parties winning the 2020 election with an impeccable 95.31% votes.

Table 6: Parliamentary elections of RHDP

Election	Votes	%	Seats	+/-	Position	Government
2011	32,041	1.64%	4 / 255		4 th	Government

2016	1,019,057	50.26%	167 / 255	▲ 163	▲ 1 st	Majority government
2021	1,313,886	49.18%	137 / 255	▼ 30	— 1 st	Majority government

Source: BBC, Ivory Coast Profile–Timeline, January 10, 2022,

From the data in Table 6, it showed parliamentary elections results outcomes of RHDP led by Alassane Ouattara from 2011 to 2020. The RHDP was a minor political force in the Ivorian political system in the 2000s. The RHDP boycotted the 2000 national elections but retook part in the early 2011 and was not successful in the parliamentary elections, obtaining 4 seats out of 255 seats representing 1.64%. In 2016, RHDP was led by Alassane Ouattara won the national election, impressively churning the largest proportion of 167 seats representing 50.26% and reduced marginally to 49.18% in 2021.

3.5 Impact of political parties on democracy in Ivory Coast.

Political parties have played major roles in the development of democracies in most states around the world. Their involvement in the political space has had greater implications for a country's economic and social progress. A review of empirical literature revealed the mixed impact of participation of political parties in Africa states on democratic progress. That is, more African countries than ever are experiencing a more of chaotic and retrogressing periods in their democratic growth in their respective states. The case of Ivory Coast is an unfortunate one as political parties have participated poorly in the country's political space, which has accounted for almost all the problems experienced in the country's political space. This chapter's primary aim is to review empirical information on the role political parties in the challenges of democracy in Ivory Coast structured through the following themes; political leaders' partisan mobilization of ethnicity, regional identity, and nationality, constant tensions around elections and formal politics; lack of reconciliation; significant deficiencies in the public financing of political parties and poor political culture.

3.6 Internal party stability and democracy

3.6.1 Internal party stability

After the inception of the multi-party system in the 1990s, opposition political parties in Ivory Coast were legally recognized and allowed to participate in the political system under constitutional requirements (Crisis Group, 2020). However, the organization of most political parties afterwards were found to be basically traced to ethnic, religious, social classes and regional lines, which was against the constitutional requirements. Also, the domination of major political parties in Ivory Coast with autocratic, charismatic political elites instigated conflicting political alliances and divisions in the political space (Crisis Group, 2020). The 2020 presidential election in Ivory Coast serves as a clear example of political conflict caused by a powerful leader's ambitions. Significant political figure Alassane Ouattara sought re-election for a third presidential term despite constitutional restrictions. This produced major issues since others disagreed. Opposing parties forged alliances but had trust concerns. Opposition groups opposed this decision, causing turbulence and violent protests that showed how influential politicians and their factions may cause political crises in Ivory Coast. A look at the major political parties and their conflicting alliances and divisions with other minor political factions are needed to justify the weak internal stability of major political parties.

The Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), a major political party player founded by former president Laurent Gbagbo, had to split into two distinct factions due to the absence of its leader, who was arrested for war crimes. The FPI party is divided into two distinct factions: The Moderate-Gbagbo led by N'Guessan, and the pro-Gbagbo led by Sangaré, who passed on in 2018 and replaced the current Laurent Gbagbo and Assoua Adou (Crisis Group, 2020). Another major political party founded by former president Felix Houphouët-Boigny, the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), saw its top officials, notably Allassane Ouattara, resign immediately after his death to form his own political party, the Rassemblement des républicains (RDR) (Crisis Group, 2020).

The Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) party, founded by current president Allassane Ouattara in 2005, was founded based on alliances of small conflicting

parties to oppose Laurent Gbagbo (FPI) dictatorship strongly. The RHDP is composed of the unification of RDR, PDCI, MFA and UDPCI but had a problem with its major ally PDCI leader Bedie, who retracted its alliances because of a breakout agreement on power alternation promised by President Ouattara. The unification of various political parties implies that RHDP loses its unifying identity and replaces it with diverse conflicting ideologies threatening party stability and internal democracy (Crisis Group, 2020).

Also, because of the RHDP's sole dominance in the Ivorian political system, most opposition parties are planning for future alliances to overthrow the RHDP out of power in the 2025 election. This has led the RHDP political elites to become weary and use ad hoc tactics to suppress political activities, resulting in political violence. Lastly, the numerous independent parties with a micro share in the political space immediately after the election form a coalition with other major political parties, deepening the fragmentation and instability in the political space. These alliances cause internal divisions in their original parties, and new alliances result in conflicting ideologies and interests in the new parties formed from the alliance.

3.6.2 Internal party democracy

Democracy has been preached by renowned political leaders in Cote d'Ivoire before and after independence, opposing the single-party rule and dictatorship system (Heitz-Tokpa, 2019). The undemocratic nature of the single-party system necessitated actions of political leaders' revolution in the political space (Heitz-Tokpa, 2019). Ironically, when these political leaders assume power, their parties' internal organization quickly transformed from its democratic system to autocratic governance, restricting the participation of party members in internal party governance. Consequently, there is the inclusion of participation on only a few party elites described as financiers of the party and family relations. This results in friction among the majority of non-elite in the party, causing intense divisions and making the party unpopular in the political space. This development has characterized Cote d'Ivoire's political space since its independence in 1960 (Heitz-Tokpa, 2019).

The internal party democracy for the three popular parties in Ivory Coast (PDCI, RHDP, and FPI) has been problematic and worsened, as party leadership is still dominated by the same

political leaders since the formal practice of a multi-party system (Heitz-Tokpa, 2019). These political leaders, Bedie, Laurent Gbagbo, and Alassane Ouattara, have practiced autocratic governance, seizing any contention against their leadership as illegal. Also, their popularity with their parties makes their exclusion from the party unpopular and weak in the political space. For example, following the arrest and trial of Laurent Gbagbo, the FPI as a party lost its dominance in Ivorian politics. This is due to the split of the party into two opposing political factions and the unpopularity of their new leaders in the party's stronghold.

Similarly, the PDCI, after allying with the RHDP and later withdrawing in 2018, has divided the party into opposing factions, such as party supporters of the alliance forming a new party and those supporters of the withdrawal. These events made the party unpopular and weak in the political space. The RHDP political supremacy will be at test after the withdrawal of important ally PDCI and the promise of its President of alternating power within the party's internal leadership is adhered to or will face a calamity of primary divisions of the biggest political party in Ivory Coast (Heitz-Tokpa, 2019).

3.6.3 Roles political parties play in the challenges of democracy in Ivory Coast

Challenges in the practice of democracy in Ivory Coast can be traced to the country's past rebellion political history, poor political culture, weak legal and institutional framework of political parties, autocratic internal party organization, unorganized party alliances and divisions, political party violent participation in the electoral process (Heitz-Tokpa, 2019). These activities inhibit the practice of democracy in the political system.

3.6.4 Poor Political Culture

As already emphasized, due to economic and social challenges, Ivory Coast unpreparedly embraced the multi-party system impromptu under a conflicting political system after the death of its first president. During that period, political parties formed are seen to have adopted a particular patrimonialism form of political culture traced from the country's political party, PDCI (Seifu, 2012). After the death of Ivorian's first president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, all the successive ruling political leaders have strategized power and authority centered on them in their various parties and governance rules to continue their

leadership forever. They have no provision to hand over political power or party leadership in the future and do not tolerate any rebellion against their authoritarian leadership, both party and governance. They appoint based on ethnic and political favoritism to gain mass supporters from their ethnic and religious affiliations. Their influence on the political space of political parties is inseparable. During their respective periods of rule, various exclusion strategies and frustration on opposition parties created an artificial single-party system. In this system of government, the president of the ruling party has the sole power to appoint or dismiss people to positions in the government and the political party. This assures him of the loyalty of government members, which he uses to consolidate the presidency—taking specific anti-democratic measures, including preventing the opposition from fully participating in the elections through constitutional amendments, including changing the age limit for presidential candidates, changing the identity status requirements for presidential candidates, imposing changes in the judicial system, adopting specific anti-democratic electoral laws, including extended political terms, partial electoral committees, unlawful coalitions of political parties, a boycott of elections. The effect of these changes by successive presidents has been to incite the opposition to violence by boycotting elections and resorting to rebellion and coups against the government.

Furthermore, political parties are based on limited ethnic and religious membership rather than on clear divisions in the population (Aalen & Tronvoll, 2009). During elections, conflicts often arise between these groups. These clashes are not necessarily related to political results but stem from internal disputes among dominant groups.

Also, there is the political concentration of economic and national power in state institutions because of the large public sector, which politicians access to solidify their supremacy and dominance in the political space (Combaz, 2020). He argued further the ruling government may want to remain in power as long as it exists because of the availability of abundant economic benefits to satisfy its party members to stay loyal and expand the party. On the other hand, the opposition party members have nothing to benefit from and face the suppression of the incumbent government, which weakens their party organization structure. This is through military actions and suppression tactics targeted at cutting the supporting base

of opposition party leaders. The opposition party may respond with a violent protestation, civil war, political conflicts against the incumbent political elite and boycott elections as being rigged.

3.6.5 Political leaders' partisan mobilization of ethnicity, regional identity, and nationality

The political parties in Ivory Coast have infancy assembled their supporting base and patrons from specific ethnic, religious, regional and national identities based on the identity of their party presidents (Crisis Group, 2020). The RHDP supporting base is mainly from the Bambara, Malinké, and Northern Manding (Mandé or Dioula) groups originating from the northern and central areas of the country, classified religion mainly as Moslems. While the FPI draws its patrons from western and central-western areas, including Krou, some southern subgroups of the Akan classified religion mainly as Christians. On the other hand, the PDCI party followers mainly originate from Akan subgroups in the central part of the country. This juxtaposed the ethnic and religious conflicts and increased violence during and after elections in this political stronghold. Political parties call their supporters to boycott elections and suppress their opposition parties from casting their votes (Combaz, 2020). For instance, the exclusion of Gbagbo and Blé Goudé is likely to put their supporters "at odds with northerners and parties most closely associated with them" (Crisis Group, 2020a, p. 8). Also, the building of party patrons on ethnic and religious coalitions instead of a national ideology has resulted in opposition clashes resulting in ethnic and religious violence. Also, the divisions by the country on ethnic and religious lines have made certain minor ethnic and regional groups disregard the political space in terms of development, e.g., the Tonkpi region (Allouche & Bley, 2017)

3.6.6 Constant tensions and violences around elections and formal politics

The political landscape in Côte d'Ivoire is characterized by constant tensions and acts of violence around elections due to formal politics. In this section, some root causes and concrete examples are provided.

Disputed elections have often been attributed to the inflammatory rhetoric used by supporters and leaders of the main political parties. This situation is exemplified by the vigorous campaigning characterized by defamatory statements, leading to increased tension, hostility, and clashes among the respective groups. During the 2010 election in Ivory Coast, Gbagbo, the incumbent president, accused Ouattara, the opposition leader, of being a foreign puppet and questioned his eligibility due to doubts about his nationality. Meanwhile, Ouattara's supporters accused Gbagbo of holding onto power through undemocratic methods and fraud. (Oyewole, 2022).

Furthermore, the incumbent party's actions have consistently suppressed and frustrated opposition parties during the electoral process. Investigative reports have identified these unacceptable tactics as the primary catalysts for electoral violence in the country (Oyewole, 2022). This suppression became evident during the 2020 elections when charismatic political leaders like Gbagbo Laurent, Guillaume Soro, and Blé Goudé were restricted from participating, leading their supporters to engage in violent attacks (Oyewole, 2022). These attacks were primarily targeted at northern regions aligned with the RHDP party. Additionally, excluding General Soro, a military-political leader, reignited old rivalries from the 2010/2011 civil wars between his Forces Nouvelles rebels and pro-Ouattara factions.

Tensions have been further exacerbated by constitutional amendments that opposition parties view as attempts by the ruling party to consolidate power (International Crisis Group, 2016). For instance, the controversial 2016 constitutional amendments, which altered eligibility criteria for presidential candidates, triggered protests and opposition from various groups (International Crisis Group, 2016). These changes were perceived as undermining the democratic process and intensifying the political divide.

The issue of electoral malpractice has also played a crucial role in escalating tensions. With widespread reports of election rigging over the years, clashes have escalated into various forms of violence, including arson, looting, murder, and destruction of property, leading to a breakdown of security (Karim, 2014).

The lack of trust in the electoral process, due to disputes over election results, has plagued the Ivory Coast. In the 2010 election, both Gbagbo and Ouattara claimed victory, resulting in a prolonged political standoff that escalated into violence and deepened political divisions. Over time, opposition parties and their supporters have consistently accused election officials of bias and manipulation (BBC NEWS 2010). This lack of trust in election officials has created an atmosphere of suspicion and increased tensions during elections.

Identity politics and ethnic affiliations have consistently played a significant role in Ivory Coast's political dynamics. Elections frequently see distinct political parties aligning with specific ethnic groups, intensifying tensions. The concept of "Ivoirité," which gained prominence in the 1990s and emphasized the idea of "authentic Ivorianness," exacerbated ethnic tensions and played a pivotal role in electoral conflicts (Appiah & Gates, 1998).

The presidential election 2010 stands out as a prime example of this strife. The prolonged contestation between incumbent Laurent Gbagbo and opposition leader Alassane Ouattara escalated into a severe political crisis. Both parties refused to concede, resulting in violence, armed conflict, human rights violations, and destabilization (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

Adding to the complexity, security forces' political involvement has further intensified tensions. Instances of security personnel aligning with political parties or actively opposing them have fostered a sense of biased enforcement and contributed to the overall electoral instability (Amnesty International, 2020). The 2020 presidential election in Ivory Coast witnessed the emergence of tensions and volatility due to the political alignment of security forces with the current President Alassane Ouattara's party, the RHDP. Amnesty International has recorded cases of partial law enforcement, infringements on human rights, and confrontations between security forces and opposition followers, thereby exacerbating a contentious electoral climate.

The political climate of Côte d'Ivoire is influenced by a complex network of factors. Among these are the deployment of provocative language, suppression of opposition, modifications to the constitution, electoral irregularities, lack of trust in the electoral process, identity

politics, and the participation of security forces. These factors create ongoing tensions and instability during elections and formal political processes within the country.

3.6.7 Lack of reconciliation

Political parties over the years have been absent at the negotiation table in peace and reconciliation council meetings. Major opposition parties have boycotted almost all reconciliations meetings, making consensus-building impossible. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is a significant player in settlement of electoral disputes in Ivory Council. However, the various opposition parties have accused it of being more aligned with the incumbent government over the years. The PDCI, a significant opposition party, has accused the IEC of its members being from the north, including its presidency, being selectively chosen by the ruling government to bias its decisions on political and electoral dispute cases (Crisis Group, 2020). Also, the FPI accused the IEC has failed to prosecute members of the Ouattara political party who engaged in the 2010/2011 civil war and only going after FPI primary party members to suppress and weaken the party (Akindès, 2017). He explained that after the 2010/2011 civil war majority members of the FPI party were arrested or exiled including its President of FPI Laurent Gbagbo, Party secretary of FPI, Laurent Akoun, Deputy secretary of FPI, Alphonse Douati, Former budget minister Justin Kone Katinan for threatening the national security which is described as politically motivated (Crisis Group, 2020). While political opposition groups who are members and supporters of the incumbent government party RDR donor face a real risk of arrest or prosecution when allegation are made of their involvement in the civil war (Crisis Group, 2020).

3.6.8 Major deficiencies in the public financing of political parties

Finance is the backbone of the political party's participation and competitiveness in the democratic process (Essis, 2020). Political parties as organization relies mainly on leaders' financing, aids, grants, members' contributions, public financing to run their participation in the political space. Most opposition political parties in Ivory Coast are too small in terms of members to fund their internal operations independently and may seek public funding to support their political campaign during elections. However, public financing of political

parties in Ivory Coast have been more political than objective as the government provides funding to opposition political parties on condition to aid it maintain its majority supporting base in the political space if not it hinders the process of public financing to them (Essis, 2020). Thus, the miniature resources of opposition parties in the Ivory Coast handicapped their effective participation in the democratic process (Essis, 2020). The incumbent government's allocation of funds to opposition parties has been poor. The requirement to access these funds puts much drain on the financial resources of opposition parties who need help to organize themselves effectively in all the polling stations. The reasons why most opposition parties have turned out fewer votes in the political space over the years, even though they have a large majority following and supporters. The media influence in the political space is strictly controlled by the incumbent government, which ensures limiting opposition access to the airwaves to popularize party followings to increase their party support base or face closed down (Essis, 2020).

3.6.9 Limited Media Power of opposition parties

Sharing information with the public through established media agencies and various channels like newspapers, TV, radio, and the internet is known as media communication (Samson, 2015). The media have played an important role in increasing public engagement and participation in political affairs in Côte d'Ivoire. This has been particularly evident since the country's transition to a democratic multi-party system and the formal liberalization of the media landscape. (Sendín, 2013). However, the media's contribution to promoting democracy in Ivory-Coast has been described as partisan to the extent that major media houses have strong trace to major parties and allies. This partisan media houses have advocated propaganda in order to obtain mass public following for their party sponsors. For example, some of the media outlets owned directly or indirectly by top political leaders and their allies include Nord/Sud by Soro; Nouveau Reveil, Bedie; Le Patriote by Hamed Bakayoko (Interior minister now) and Ouattara; Notre Voie by Gbagbo...RTI (Sendín, 2013). Thus over the years political leaders during their rule have gained mass patronage through their allied media outlet and limited opposition media parties from criticizing their mandate and intimidation (Banegas, 2011). Media houses that have criticized ruling government or show patronage to

opposition parties' activities against the ruling party are suspended, fined, banned and intimidated (Banegas, 2011). Thus the use of the media as an effective tool among opposition parties to increase its membership is limited by the ruling party implying low penetration of opposition parties in the media space and also cannot rely on its weak financing structure to achieve any great outcome (Banegas, 2011).

The review looked at the extent to which political parties' involvement in the political space has resulted in challenges to democracy in Ivory Coast. A probe in history on the political party's role in challenges of democracy in Ivory Coast revealed that the country, after independence, there was a premature implementation of a multi-party system imposed by Western nations (Europe and the United States) as a condition for receiving external financial aid. As a result, state institutions such as the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in Côte d'Ivoire had to familiarize themselves with the dynamics of the new political governance system. There were numerous shortcomings in the organization of the national elections, with state institutions failing to fulfil their responsibilities. In addition, opposition political parties were not structured to tolerate losses and did not perceive elections as a credible means of gaining access to power, only favoring the incumbent ruling party. During elections, Ivory Coast political parties resort to violent tactics to intimidate voters into taking action in their interest. The research revealed that politics' role in the challenges of Ivory Coast democracy includes political leaders' partisan mobilization of ethnicity, regional identity, and nationality, constant tensions around elections and formal politics; Lack of reconciliation; significant deficiencies in the public financing of political parties; poor political culture; internal party instability; limited media power of opposition political parties and undemocratic nature of political parties

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

This research aims to examine the extent to which political parties in Ivory Coast practice organization democracy and its impact on their internal organization stability. In addition, the role political parties play in the challenges of democracy in the Ivory Coast. The study analyzes the internal democracy of three major political parties in Ivory Coast: the PDCI, FPI and RHDP. These political parties are pivotal in democratizing the country's political system. However, over the years, their activities in the political spaces have resulted in conflicts, political violence, and civil wars. This chapter builds on the previous chapter and extends the discussion to look at the undemocratic nature of political party organization, weak internal stability and incumbent government restrictions in the democratic space in Ivory Coast.

4.1 Undemocratic nature of political parties and their leaders

Since the reintroduction of multi-party politics in Côte d'Ivoire, there has been a proliferation of paternalistic political leaders who still need to unite all party executive members in the internal party decision-making process. These parties have been formed by single autocratic political leaders who limit power and decision-making, taking on only a few loyal executive members, which weakens the party's democratic process. This breeds disunity and divisions among executive party members with conflicting views on party governance.

The PDCI has long been described as a party of disunity since the death of its first president, Felix Houphouët-Boigny. Party executives have held divergent views on issues of the party alliances and withdrew associations with the ruling political party, the RHDP. This has divided the party into two distinct factions: those supporting the alliance and those not. The reason for this development was the poor deliberation and consensus building on this issue, as its leader, Henri Konan Bedie, took a unilateral decision of alliance with the RHDP without the full consent of the party executive members (Crisis Group, 2020). To satisfy Bedie's selfish interest in power, he took an offer from the RHDP and Ouattara to promise to alternate power internally after his tenure. However, Ouattara stood for a controversial third term and did not honor his promise of alternating political leadership in the new unity party. Bedie

responded with immediate withdrawal of the PDCI party organization from the RHDP alliance, but unfortunately, not all executive members of the PDCI withdrew their following of the RHDP (Crisis Group, 2020). These members did not obey the party's founding leader because they found his decisions undemocratic and later disjoined their association with the PDCI party. This weakens the party's influence and domination in the political space, losing its competitiveness and amassing an insignificant number of votes during national and legislative elections. Moreover, Bedie has been the only uncontested leader of his party without any competitor, as he disapproves of any competitor in the party. This situation is described as problematic for the development of democracy in the party.

The FPI also faced problems in its internal organizational democracy in a peculiar function after its leader and founder, Laurent Gbagbo, was arrested for war crimes (Crisis Group, 2020). The party, one of the dominant political parties in Ivorian history, was divided on selecting a presidential candidate due to the unexpected absence of Former President Laurent Gbagbo. The party needed to be unified in selecting its new leader, N'Guessan, after the ad hoc absence (Crisis Group, 2020). Some political party members did not recognize its leadership and disputed its nomination as overthrown of Gbagbo, leading to the party's division into two distinct political factions. The selection brought more divisions in the old and new parties factions formed as Gbagbo's absence was felt in the poor election results. The FPI party lost massively, and its political dominance dwindled speedily to achieve the lowest election results in its history (Crisis Group, 2020). The FPI party organizational democracy can be described as weak, and its transition after the absence of its founder has been problematic. This has been attributed to the undemocratic practices of Laurent Gbagbo during his party leadership, where power is centered on only a few executive members, excluding the majority of its members (Crisis Group, 2020).

The RHDP, formerly RDR, was once a unified party with a singular ideology founded by President Allassane Ouattara to provide strong opposition to the undemocratic rule of President Gbagbo and successfully regaining political power in 2010 and 2015 (Crisis Group, 2020). However, its alliances with other opposition parties' leaders put pressure on its current leader to alternate leadership power in the party after his tenure as a democratic organization

operates. The resultant outcome is the formation of coalitions, alliances and divisions in the party to other opposition parties (Crisis Group, 2020). In 2018, the disputes led the PDCI to entirely withdraw its alliance with the RHDP as the promise made to the PDCI leader of being named the next presidential successor was not honored (Ogunkalu, 2019). Also, in 2019 coalitions groups formed by Guillaume Soro, a former president of the RHDP national assembly resignation from the party weakened the executive level of the RHDP, where he convinced them to join his new political party (Ogunkalu, 2019). The new party the Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI), as well as Marcel Amon Tanoh, a key figure and one of the few Southerners in the Northern-dominated RDR (Ogunkalu, 2019). Both left over disagreements about who would lead the RHDP, but as both had large constituencies, it was a major setback to the RHDP. The leader of RHDP surprisingly did not step down and stood for a third term bringing disunity and confusion to the party organization (Ogunkalu, 2019).

The RHDP strategy of organizing and supporting dissent among opposition parties is helping it regain its lost patrons after the divisions in the party. The withdrawal of party alliance and division caused by top executive members of the RHDP has weakened the party's internal organization and support base and strengthened the opposition support base, mainly FPI, led by influential political leader Laurent Gbagbo. The RHDP has responded by cutting funding to opposition parties and suppressing the activities of their leaders, such as suspending Soro's candidacy in the 2020 elections, accused of preparing a coup. The RHDP is accused of organizing internal conflicts within the UDPCI party by supporting a group of protesters to make Mabri Toikeuse unpopular with his base.

4.2 The role political parties play in the challenges of democracy in the Ivory Coast

Weak political parties' internal Structure

i. Depleting Age of dominant Political Leaders

The Ivorian political space has, over the years, been dominated by the same political leaders and parties without the emergence of any significant contesting political party (Crisis Group, 2020). The only alternate reason for the emergence of new political parties is due to rebellion

divisions breaking out from these dominant parties, which is envisioned as problematic to the development of the country's political space. This has implications for the growth and development of political parties in the country. A look at the age of the political leaders of the major political parties in Ivory Coast needs to be revised for their potential successors whose political development in the political space is weakened (Crisis Group, 2020). The foremost major political party, PDCI founder Bedie is still the party president at age 86 (Ogunkalu, 2019). There is no place for contenders, as he described them as enemies, not competitors. Similarly, the RDR presidential candidate, Alassane Ouattara, is 78 and Gbagbo, 75, is now the presidential candidate of one of the leading FPI political factions (Ogunkalu, 2019).

The only option for political members to access presidential nomination in these major parties is to resign one's position from the party or awaits the death or absence of the party president as precedent in the death of the first Ivorian president Felix Houphouët-Boigny. Also, the resignation of Ouattara from PDCI to form the RDR, Kouadio Konan Bertin, who is now an independent candidate, resigned from the PDCI, N'Guessan only succeeded Gbagbo of the FPI after his arrest, Guillaume Soro resigned from the RHDP to form his party (The Generations and People in Solidarity) (Ogunkalu, 2019)

ii. Obscure internal working of political parties

Ivorian major political parties though are organized on democratic principles have not standardized their internal organization operations to give equal access to all members in the parties in decision making (Crisis Group, 2020). From the literature, the three major parties have a low level of organization democratic culture which impacts negatively on their organization stability. The PDCI party after its alliance with the RDR party in 2010 and sudden withdrawal in 2018 impacts its internal stability as party leadership members were not fully consulted on this decision before and after taken and the resulted outcome was withdrawing from some of the affected party leadership members to form new alliances with opposing parties such as FPI and RHDP (Crisis Group, 2020). Similar the FPI organization instability after its found Laurent Gbagbo arrest and exiled in 2010 divided the party two

political factions as well as Gbagbo release and announcement to declare his presidential ambition divided the party further. Members of one faction of the FPI faction resigned from the other faction which is led by N'Guessan that weaken the internal stability of the organization. The RHDP is relatively the most stable political party in terms of organization stability among the selected parties. Until its leader Ouattara extended its presidential tenure the top executives in the party started forming coalition and resigning from the party to forming or alliance with the other opposition parties (Crisis Group, 2020).

iii. Weak financial structure of political parties

The major Ivorian political parties have leadership built on their founding members who have restricted capital to fund all the operations of their political parties all year round (Crisis Group, 2020). Their concentration of power in the party internal organization to their founding leaders do not motivate party members and external parties to show interest in contributing capital to support the parties. Also, the continuous increasing internal instability of political parties do not motivate members to contribute money to support the party (Crisis Group, 2020). This affect the performance of the political parties to serve as major opposition to the ruling party who also limit public funds to make opposition parties more weakened. Moreover, the ruling party restrict the use of media and other social media sources by the opposition to promote its campaign as threats to national security and issue arrest to opposition party leaders (Crisis Group, 2020).

Thus, potential political succession is always problematic for the three dominant Ivory Coast parties because of their founders' undemocratic governances. The opportunity for presidential succession in these parties only becomes available in the absence of its founder due to unexpected occurrences such as death, arrest, or illness. This forced members of the political executives to establish factions who withdrew from these parties to form opposing parties. This threatened the stability of the original party and weakened its internal organization. The consequence for the political space is increased political violence and conflicts whenever these two political parties clash in the electoral process. There is no political competition between these parties but intense antagonism against each other party members as betrayals.

Also the obscure internal working of political parties to exclude majority of all its members in decision making and taking makes these party unpopular to their members. This lead to disunity among members in these parties resulting in rebellion factions causing divisions in these parties. Moreover, because of the unstable nature of most political parties in Ivory Coast it does not motivate members to contribute capital to support the party operations which further weaken the internal party operations.

iv. Restriction in the Democratic Space

The ruling party RHDP has used its state powers and resources to curtail the development of the democratic space to restrict the activities of opposition parties, civil societies and the media (Crisis Group, 2020). This has resorted in tensions as opposition parties are forming strong allying forces to contest the 2025 elections (Crisis Group, 2020). The leading cause of election disputes is the opposition party's complaints about the demanding requirements and restrictions the ruling party constituted to eliminate them from competing in the elections (Crisis Group, 2020). The changing requirements, such as political leaders' national identity, age limit, constitution reforms extending the presidential term, and arrest of opposition political leaders, as discussed, a bad precedent by the ruling parties over the years (Crisis Group, 2020). This made the democratic transition of political parties and leaders impossible. For example, President Ouattara said that after the 2020 election, he would only step down if his other colleagues, Former President Bedie and Gbagbo, resigned from formal politics (Crisis Group, 2020). From the examination of the recent development in the political space, the RHDP is not ready to hand over power, and tensions are arising in the next elections as opposition parties resort to violence in the next election as the most tenable to access political power (Crisis Group, 2020).

The discussion examined the extent to which political parties in Ivory Coast practice organization democracy and its impact on their internal organization stability. In addition, the role political parties play in the challenges of democracy in the Ivory Coast. A probe into the country's history of the development of democracy revealed that the same political parties and leaders had dominated the country's political space since independence. These leaders

have yet to allow the practice of succession in their respective parties leading to the formation of rebel factions in their organization. They use undemocratic practices to limit the participation of these new political actors in the democratic space and internal organization. The repealing effect is a political space characterized by undemocratic parties who perceive violence and rebel alliances as justifiable means to access political power, which the incumbent party sees as threatening its political dominance. The ruling party responded with continuous suppression and restriction of opposition political actors' activities in the political space. The literature analyzed revealed that political parties have marked the Ivory Coast political space with weak internal party organization characterized by poor party succession, the undemocratic nature of parties and leaders, the obscure internal working of political parties, weak financial structure, depleting age of dominant political Leader and restrictions of opposition parties' full participation in the political space. Thus the country continued to experience numerous electoral disputes and violence in the electoral process. This is a significant challenge for developing the country's democratic future. There will be the need for further consultations with stakeholders in the political system, mainly the electoral commission and political institutions, to work together in structuring the volatile political space devoid of political violence and promote a culture of tolerance and peaceful co-existence among the political parties.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main aim of this research project is to examine the role political parties play in the challenges of democracy in the Ivory Coast. This chapter presents the study summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The first objective of this study is to examine the extent to which political parties practice organization democracy. Based on the literature reviewed, the three major political parties, PDCI, RHDP and FPI, have a low level of organizational democracy due to the following features of their party leaders and organization's governance as well as actions in the political space.

First, the PDCI has long been described as an autocratic party with patrimonialism leadership characterized by its first president Felix Houphouët-Boigny's to his current President, Henri Konan Bedie. These two party leaders, during their tenure, dissolve any mode of contention for party leadership as a threat to the stability of the party. The PDCI, in order to win power, excluded the participation of RDR in the 1995 national election using the identity requirements for presidential candidates. Decision-making concerning party issues is centered on their single prerogative with no opposition. For example, during the 2010/2015/2020 elections, the party executives of the PDCI held divergent views on the decisions of party alliances and the withdrawal of association with the incumbent political party, RHDP. These unresolved views after a coalition of the party caused the members to resort to two distinct political factions, those in support of the alliance and those who did not. The reason for this development was stated as the poor deliberation and consensus building on this issue by its leader, Henri Konan Bedie, who took a unilateral decision of alliance with the RHDP without the full consent of the party executive members. This development consequently weakens the party's influence and domination in the political space, losing its competitiveness and amassing an insignificant number of votes during national and legislative elections. Also, Bedie, at age 85, has been the only presidential contender in his

party without any contenders, as he disapproves of any contender as an enemy of his party is described as problematic in the development of democracy in the party.

Second, the FPI was described as a rebellious party because of the nature of the rule of its founder Laurent Gbagbo, who applied oligarchic power of governance in its party and presidential decree. All party activities are centered on him, and his unexpected absence caused a massive power gap for the FPI. The FPI, like the PDCI, made a deal with General Guei after the coup to exclude the RDR and PDCI from the 2000 elections on the basis of unreasonable demands. After winning the 2000 election, the leader of the FPI failed to organize a multi-party poll due in 2005/2010, giving the excuse of the civil war. Its leader, Laurent Gbagbo, was reluctant to organize the election after 2010 until international pressure from France forced him to do so. The party needed to be unified in selecting its new leader N'Guessan after the ad hoc absence of its founder and President, Laurent Gbagbo. Some political party members did not recognize its leadership and disputed its nomination as an act of excluding Gbagbo membership from the party indefinitely, leading to party division into two distinct political factions. The selection of a new leader N'Guessan brought more divisions to the old and new party factions formed, as Gbagbo's absence was felt in the poor election results. The FPI party lost massively, and its political dominance dwindled speedily to achieve the lowest election results in its history. The FPI party organization can be described as weak, and its transition after the absence of its founder needs to be revised. This has been attributed to the undemocratic practices of Laurent Gbagbo during his party leadership, where power is centered on only a few executive members, excluding the majority of its members.

Third, the RHDP party, described as a party of conflicting coalitions and opposing parties, is the least democratic. Its strategy of limiting opposition participation in the political space is the cause of violence in the country. From the time RHDP leader Ouattara extended his tenure from the constitutional given two terms to an additional period, there was a spiral of disastrous tensions among political parties in the political space characterized by alliances and withdrawal from political parties. The immediate withdrawal of party alliance and

divisions by top executive members of the RHDP caused the weak internal democratic culture of the party organization to diminish further.

Another specific objective of the study is to investigate how a political party's organization democracy promotes its internal stability. The study revealed that the three major parties, as discussed, have a low level of democratic culture which impacts their organizational stability. The PDCI party, after its alliance with the RDR party in 2010 and withdrawal in 2020, has its internal stability under threat as top executive members withdraw from the party to form alliances with opposing parties such as FPI and RHDP. Similarly, the FPI showed signs of instability in the party, dividing two political factions as Gbagbo announced his presidential ambition. Members of one section of the FPI faction resigned from the other, which is led by N'Guessan, weakening the internal stability of the organization. The RHDP is the most stable political party regarding organizational stability among the selected parties, until its leader Ouattara extended its presidential tenure, the top executives in the party started forming a coalition and resigning from the party to form or alliance with the other opposition parties.

The last objective is to investigate the role political parties play in the challenges of democracy in the Ivory Coast. The research revealed the following challenges caused by political parties in the country's democratic space; first, they use undemocratic practices to limit the participation of these new political actors in the democratic space and internal organization. The revealing effect is a political space characterized by undemocratic parties who perceive violence and rebel alliances as justifiable means to access political power, which the incumbent party sees as threatening its political dominance. The ruling party responded with continuous suppression and restriction of opposition political actors' activities in the political space. Second, the literature findings revealed that Ivory Coast's political space had been marked by political parties with weak internal party democracy characterized by poor party succession, undemocratic nature of parties and leaders, and restrictions of opposition parties' full participation in the political space, limitation of opposition parties' use of the media for political campaigns. Thus the country continued to experience numerous electoral disputes and violence in the electoral process. This is a significant challenge to the development of the country's democratic future.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, one major conclusion that can be drawn from the entire study outcome is that the Ivory Coast government has not done enough in promoting a peaceful democratic political space devoid of political conflicts and violence. The political parties and the populace lack confidence in the current political system, which is positioned legally, financially and socially to favor the incumbent government party. Again, most political parties may fold up sooner than later as their supporting base keeps reducing, which affects their finances and causes difficulty in accessing public political financing. Only the incumbent political parties appear to be doing well regarding membership and capitalization. The research study concludes that political parties and their members desire a transparent political space with the increased practice of democratic principles among political parties.

Also, they prefer the leadership structure of political parties always to be democratically alternating.

According to the research findings, the critical problems responsible for the low democratic culture among political parties include:

- Rebellion: political parties members' refusal to accept internal and external electoral results declared results in rebellion activities in the political space to express their dissatisfaction
- The succession of party leaders: political parties' founders' refusal to relinquish their presidential positions when their tenure is over is problematic to political parties stability.
- Use of undemocratic practices to limit the participation of political actors in the democratic space. Restriction such as unlawful arrest of opposition party leaders and closing down of media houses is problematic for the country democracy.

Thus the country continued to experience numerous electoral disputes and violence in the electoral process. This is a major challenge for the development of the country's turbulent political and democratic future.

Addressing the complex issues surrounding elections and formal politics in Côte d'Ivoire requires comprehensive and multi-faceted solutions. Here are some potential approaches:

- ***Promoting Inclusive Political Participation:*** Encourage the government to ensure that all eligible political leaders, including charismatic figures like Gbagbo Laurent, Guillaume Soro, and Blé Goudé, are allowed to participate in the electoral process without restrictions. This can help prevent feelings of marginalization and reduce the potential for violent attacks (Oyewole, 2022).
- ***Electoral Reforms and Transparency:*** To ensure fair and transparent elections, it's important to prevent electoral misconduct and manipulation by implementing measures. Political parties should commit to non-violence and follow the rule of law to maintain peace during elections. International monitoring and transparent dispute resolution mechanisms are essential to improve transparency and credibility in the electoral process. Additionally, electoral bodies like the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and the Constitutional Council should be reformed to increase their autonomy, expertise, and neutrality. (Karim, 2014)
- ***Ethnic and identity sensitivity:*** promote awareness campaigns and education programs that emphasize national unity and downplay ethnic divisions. Encourage political parties to refrain from associating themselves solely with specific ethnic groups, reducing the potential for escalating tensions (Appiah & Gates, 1998).
- ***Constitutional Reforms:*** Encourage dialogue and negotiation between ruling and opposition parties to amend the constitution in a way that accommodates the concerns of all parties. This could include ensuring that constitutional changes are not seen as consolidating power, thereby reducing tensions. (International Crisis Group, 2016).
- ***Mediation and Conflict Resolution:*** Engage local and international mediation efforts to facilitate peaceful negotiations and resolve conflicts between political parties. This could prevent disputes from escalating into violence and armed conflicts (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

- ***Security Sector Reform:*** Advocate for the professionalization and depoliticization of the security forces. This involves ensuring that security personnel remain neutral and refrain from engaging in partisan activities during elections, thus contributing to a more stable and unbiased electoral environment (Amnesty International, 2020).
- ***Civic Education and Awareness:*** Implement civic education programs to inform citizens about their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of peaceful political engagement. This can foster a more informed and engaged electorate, reducing the potential for violence (Oyewole, 2022).
- ***International Monitoring and Support:*** Encourage international organizations and diplomatic efforts to closely monitor the electoral process and offer support in promoting fair elections and peaceful transitions of power (Karim, 2014).

By implementing a synthesis of these approaches, Côte d'Ivoire has the potential to progress towards establishing a more robust and harmonious political environment. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that all proposed solutions are intricately linked and must be customized to suit the unique circumstances of the respective nation.

5.3 Recommendation for further research work

The findings, as contained in this case study, will not only be useful to the selected political parties in terms of the practice of democratic governance externally and internally but also help the political system's stakeholders frame policies and rules that inhibit the practice of these undemocratic acts.

This document and its contents aim to assist the government in adopting policy options that will contribute to achieving a higher level of internal stability among the parties, in line with the proposed plan to stabilize the political climate.

Other alternatives among the selected three major political parties have the potential to strengthen political and democratic practices. The development of the other political parties at a constant level with the selected three main parties is needed to bring stability to the

political system. Thus, future research must consider other parties and review their roles in analyzing the democratic political system.

Since this study's scope is limited to three selected parties among the numerous political parties in Ivory Coast, its findings can only be generalized partially for some political parties. Therefore, it would be advisable for additional researchers to conduct a more extensive investigation on other political parties in order to expand upon the current research and examine the limited presence of opposition parties in Ivory Coast's political landscape.



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