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**The nation state confluence and conflict in post soviet and post colonial countries –
Ivory Coast and Tajikistan as 'non-nation' conflict cases**

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Preliminary Note for Discussants

The following paper should be read as a research design rather than an article. The cases, Ivory Coast and Tajikistan, are not proper case studies but serve as an illustration to test our major variables and refine the research project.

I. Introduction

“New Nations in the 20th century have faced a great struggle in constructing national identities for themselves” (Beeman, 1999).

“In many African states, social cohesion and identification of the population with the state are tenuous at best” (Chazan, 1980).

Nation making and state building are often considered as major factors of political instability but very few studies attempt to analyze how both processes lead to conflict (Van Evera, 1994).

This paper will focus on the underlying causes of conflict in the onset of nationalistic conflicts. The literature on path dependency has tended to focus on the colonial legacy of African or Asian states or the impact of the soviet ideological regime on post soviet states. In this paper, we would like to propose a new hypothesis in terms of path dependency in domestic conflicts. At independence, countries have few of the nationhood and statehood characteristics that they later have and most of these countries could be termed non nation-states (Migdal, 2004), either as non-nation, non-states, former empires or other categories. Each of the countries went through a process of nation-state confluence, and this process itself might help to explain the differences in the types and intensity of conflicts occurring across the world. This process is not specific to countries gaining independence in the 20th century but the state building and nation

making process of the 20th century was clearly different to the European nation-state process as we will see later on.

In this project, nations will be seen as real or imagined group identities and we will define nation state confluence as the construction of a spatial correlation between the nation and the state. In the literature on nationalism, this process may be referred to as the nation-state making process, nationalizing state (Brubaker, 1996: 9) or state building nationalism (Hechter, 2000: 15). Finally, state building will be understood as the process of constructing political institutions symbolizing the society.

The major question of this project will be to see how the desire of state-nation builders to attain nation state confluence may create situations of domestic (if not transnational) instability and lead to civil/ethnic conflicts. Our study will compare conflicts occurring in post-colonial and post-soviet countries in the 20th century. In this project, nation making and state building are seen as major imperatives for newly-independent countries and their outcome may either lead to stability or conflict.

The main originality of this research is three fold: 1) it highlights an additional explanation in nationalistic conflicts during the 20th century, 2) it compares the nation-state confluence in different types of institutional systems (similarities/differences), 3) it distinguishes state building and nation making which have often been understood as the same process.¹

This article will be divided into four parts. The first one will introduce the historical context and the major hypothesis of the project. The second part will set up a typology of the different countries following independence in terms of statehood and nationhood. The third part will define more precisely our dependent variables, the nation-state confluence variable and the institutional regime one. Finally, we will look at the first category of our

¹ US policy makers usually equate nation building with state building as it reflects the national experience, in which cultural and historical identity have been heavily shaped by political institutions like constitutionalism and democracy (Fukuyama, 2004: 99).

typology, 'non-nation' and test both of our variables in two cases studies, one from the post colonial world (Ivory Coast) and the other one from the post soviet one (Tajikistan).

II. Context and Hypothesis

The First World War, rather than the Second World War, was chosen as a major turning point due to: the disintegration of the of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, the independence of a number of Middle Eastern countries (Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon), and the impact of Wilsonian principles (Erez, 2007).

After the First World War, the primary goal of state builders in post-colonial countries and then post soviet ones was to make the nation and the state coincide.² This can be explained along several lines. Firstly, the leaders in these countries consider nation-states as a major norm in international relations and their country should be recognized as such (Bull, 1977; Spruyt, 1994). The second reason relates to the fact that state building is ultimately linked with the so-called modernization process of the country. For Gellner for example, the rise of the national state is a necessary corollary to the industrialization of society (Gellner, 1983). In fact, most African specialists from Ivory Coast (see for e.g. Akoto, 1978; Kone, 1978, Boa Thiemele, 2003) link the idea of constructing a nation with modernity³. Thirdly, the nation state confluence is perceived as an important security prerogative (Buzan, 1991: 78; van Evera, 1994: 8). The developments of communication and of mass warfare are certainly additional drivers. Finally, one could also presume that leaders need to shift the identity of the country from an anti-colonial one to a new one embracing the nation and the state.

² For example, the first president of Ivory Coast, Houphouët-Boigny, believed in the necessity of building a strong state in order to reach economic independence and a nation to achieve the unity of its people. This is actually made very clear by his former minister of education, Paul Yao Akoto, when he stated that the necessary consolidation of our national unity can only be made with our economic independence (« *Pour l'heure, le problème demeure la consolidation de notre nécessaire unité par l'acquisition de l'indépendance économique* » Yao Akoto, 1978: 98).

³ Boa Thiemele sees nation making as a modern step in opposition to tribalism. A modern nation state is characterized by the rule of law and human rights.

State-seeking nationalism in post-colonial and post-soviet countries is different to that of nationalism in Europe⁴. Firstly, one can see that the nation state confluence after the First World War was more voluntary, there was an intention of creating a nation state after independence. In Europe, this was not the case. European states were not the product of a conscious design; they emerged as a consequence of historical processes, and in particular of a complex interplay between capital and coercion (Tilly, 1992). Secondly, the nation state confluence is also different in the sense that war making is ensured by colonial/US/Soviet powers (Tilly, 1985). The third major difference between European states and post colonial and post soviet ones is that, in the latter case, borders had been defined by colonial powers. This means that the construction of the nation or of the state was constrained by externally imposed borders. The last major reason in the difference between the nation state confluence before and after the First World War is the structure of international trade. The colonial legacy meant that the countries' economic development was modeled according to the colonial power's need. This process undoubtedly favored greater interdependence and the growth of international trade. The impact of such a process on the nation state confluence is difficult to evaluate but this structural characteristic may place a certain type of constraint in terms of building the state and/or the nation.

One can formulate two major hypotheses underlying the design of this project.

Hypothesis 1: If countries gained independence after the First World War, they cannot be considered as nation-states and consequently nation making and state building are seen as major imperatives for newly-independent countries.

In the current literature in political science (and especially in international relations), the independence of countries makes them automatically nation-states since they become sovereign entities in the international system. However, to what extent could these new

⁴ We consider that Latin America is clearly distinctive both from the European experience and the nation state confluence in the 20th century. If one compares Latin America to the nation state confluence in the 20th century, one can see that (1) the idea of the nation (the nation imperative) and (2) the idea of fixed borders were less important in the Latin American context of state formation.

independent countries be characterized as nation-states? Were they really nations? Were they really states? And how can we evaluate statehood and nationhood? Finally, if these countries cannot be termed nation-states, how can they be defined?

Hypothesis 2: If a nationalistic conflict occurs in a post colonial or a post soviet country, the type of conflict will be defined according to their characteristics of nationhood and statehood following independence rather than the post colonial or post soviet nature of these states.

There has been a strong assumption in ethnic conflict literature that the different conflicts can be related to the post-colonial characteristics of these regimes. Ethnic conflicts in Central Asia or in the Caucasus are inevitably understood as post soviet conflicts (Cutler, 2000; Drobizheva et al, 1996; Hajda, 1993; Horowitz, 2001; Hughes & Sasse, 2002; Kosto, 2002; Lynch, 2002, Tishkov, 1997). The same stands for post colonial countries, and especially Africa (Azarya, 2003; Blanton et al, 2001; Lindgren & Wallenstein, 1991). However, to what extent do these institutional models (i.e.: post soviet, and post colonial) constitute important variables in these conflicts?

In his discussion of the Post-Soviet political order, Jack Snyder argued that the Soviet collapse gave rise to three security challenges:

- First, the security of the individual was endangered by the disintegration of coercive structures and the rise of semi-private structures.
- Second, the widening of political participation allowed for large-scale social mobilization without clear channels of organization and mediation.
- Third, the collapse of the Soviet economy ended the command system and central subsidies, resulting in a desperate search for economic survival (Snyder in Rubin & Snyder, 1998: 7-8).

These three security challenges are highly relevant for post Soviet countries but could certainly be applied to post colonial countries in general. There are in fact many reasons

to believe that both models have a lot in common (a colonial history, externally defined borders, low population density⁵ and security dependence on colonial/US/Soviet powers). Their major difference of course lies in the legacy of the ideological system in place. However, it is not clear how this legacy can be linked to the conflict per se. It seems that other factors should be highlighted in the triggering of these conflicts. The conditions therefore identified in our first hypothesis could constitute an important variable in nationalistic conflict. However different the historical trajectories and cultural contours of the two types of countries, some powerful similarities exist in their contemporary situation that renders the comparison meaningful and insightful (see for e.g. Gammer, 2000). Furthermore, the distinction between post soviet countries and post colonial one is dubious to the extent “*nearly all of Africa and the non-Russian areas of the Russian empire and its soviet successors were profoundly marked by the experience of subjugation to an imperial center*” (Beissinger & Young, 2002: 19).

In sum, the starting point of this paper is therefore to determine the major characteristics of countries at independence both in terms of nationhood and statehood and then see if the institutional model variable or the nation-state confluence variable predominates in the explanation of these conflicts.

III. Typology of nation-states

The first major question of this paper is to see how these countries can be defined if they are not already nation-states. These non-nation-states, that is to say countries where the nation state confluence is currently being put into place or where it has not operated successfully (i.e.: failed states), can be divided into two categories. Indeed, one can draw a first important distinction in the post-colonial and post-soviet world: between countries that were under direct colonial administration and those under the sphere of influence of colonial powers (such as Eastern Europe in the post-soviet world, or Persia and China for example in the post-colonial one). In making this distinction, one can deduce five types of non-nation-states.

⁵ See table 1.1 by Herbst, 2000.

1st category: Post Colonized countries

1st case - State without a nation: these countries were managed by colonial powers with a strong bureaucratic administration and had their borders defined randomly according to colonial needs (economic or strategic) rather than according to ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious criterion. As a result, these countries at independence may be defined as states without a nation since the newly independent state is a direct heritage from colonial bureaucracy but the national identity of the state is ill-defined.

2nd case - Nation without a state (synonyms: weak states – the lack of effective institutions): these countries at independence had a certain national identity but the state institutions were not strongly developed/ or were inexistent as these were dependent upon direct control from the colonial power.

3rd case – No state, no nation: these countries had only a small part of the territory (usually the coast or the territory with important natural resources) managed by the colonial administration while the rest of the country was left without control. At independence, the country had no real state structure and the national identity was even less marked.

2nd category: Non colonized countries after the imperial period

4th case - Former empire: these countries are historical empires. There are emerging as modern nation states but still have important characteristics of empires (core and periphery, first and second class citizens).

5th case – Historical nation states: these countries when gaining independence from imperial influence had a long history of nationhood and statehood. The nation state confluence basically meant the revival of ancient traditions, symbols and myths.

In order to validate this typology, this project will seek to classify all the post colonial and post soviet countries in one of these categories.

A list of variables for each category will need to be defined in order to justify the categorization of each country. For example, how can we argue that country X is not a state (so what are the characteristics of a state)? Or that country Y is not a nation (what are the characteristics of a nation)?

If one turns one's attention to the literature on weak states, one can deduce a number of important variables in order to measure statehood. According to Rice, weakest states are poor states that lack the capacity to fulfill essential government functions, chiefly: 1) to secure their population from violent conflict; 2) to competently meet the basic human needs of their population (i.e. food, health, education), and; 3) to govern legitimately with the acceptance of a majority of their population (Rice 2006: 1). For Migdal, the relative strength of a state must be considered in light of its capacity to "*penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources and appropriate or use resources in determined ways*" (Migdal, 1988). Buzan has added in terms of state strength the importance of the 'idea' of the state in terms of perceptions of its nature and legitimacy. If widely held, this idea may act as an organic binder, linking the state and its parts with coherence and mechanisms to allow for popular subordination to its authority (Buzan, 1991). Statehood could therefore be measured according to the state's ability and willingness to provide the fundamental political goods associated with physical security, legitimate political institutions, economic management, and social welfare.

Let us now turn to the concept of nation. Nation building is about the strong identification of the peoples with the state. Basically, the existing geopolitical boundaries should be congruent with the national aspirations and identities of the people. There is no nation if there is not a community of mores, basically shared cultural habits. Furthermore, while many groups hold common myths, values and symbols (including ethnic groups), nations are unified by a sense of purpose: controlling the territory that the members of the group believe to be theirs. As noted by Ayoob, in this process of nation-building there is a merging of the population into a more cohesive people with a common history, leading to the evolution of a national identity and the transformation of a centralized state into an integrated nation-state (Ayoob 1995: 30). But how can we measure nationhood?

One has to acknowledge that nationhood is very difficult to assess. Citizen's loyalty to the state could constitute a first measure. This could be done by examining the preponderance of one identity over other ones. So to what extent is the national identity developed compared to ethnic, religious, or ideological identities? Another similar indicator would be the citizen's levels of identification. Localism and sub-national loyalties and awareness could reveal the importance of ethnics groups, clans or tribes. Supra-national consciousness could show the significance of transborder identities (for e.g. religion, pan-Turkism). A second measure would be to look at the importance of national myths (the observation of national holidays, especially Independence Day, the designation of national heroes, and the commemoration of those who fell in the defense of the nation-state).

IV. Nationalistic conflicts in the 20th century

Let us then define the two major variables identified in our second hypothesis. These will be used to study various nationalistic conflicts, according to our typology, in the post colonial and post soviet world in order to explain the underlying causes of these conflicts.

The nation state confluence variable

In order to test the different categories of countries identified above, the level of variation within each category should be non-existent or weak. If one observes no variation, each category will be self-explanatory. Do different types of non nation-state lead to different types of conflicts? Can we observe a variation in the type and intensity of conflict according to the different categories of countries following independence identified previously?

Another key aspect of this variable will be to identify the major tools used by state-nation builders to make the nation and the state coincide and see which policy may lead to conflictual situations. Are these tools and policies linked to a particular type of nation

state making process (civic, ethnocultural or other types of nationalism), to a certain type of assimilation strategy (whether a nationalism of exclusion⁶ or a nationalism of resistance⁷) or to different discriminatory policies (economic, political, or cultural)?

In post colonial security studies, Ayooob is certainly the author that presents also a very interesting theory on the linkages to be made between state building and the third world state security (Ayooob, 1995). One of Ayooob's main arguments is that state building in these countries may lead to conflict since these states are relatively young and their legitimacy is often questioned within the state's territory. The third world security predicament is clearly an illustration of the nation state confluence dilemma. As emphasized by Ayooob, "*state-making strategies adopted by state elites to broaden and deepen the reach of the state clash with the interests of counterelites and segments of the population that perceive the extension of state authority as posing a direct danger to their social, economic, or political interests*" (Ayooob, 1995: 32). He further argues that the state building process undertaken concurrently by contiguous states in the Third World may lead to transnational conflicts as the simultaneous nature of this process frequently includes the assertion of political and military control over demographic and territorial space contested by neighboring states (Ayooob, 1995: 50).

The recent book by Benjamin Miller actually also follows this research agenda, arguing that the state-to-nation imbalance in a region is the underlying cause of regional war proneness. Miller's state-to-nation balance includes two dimensions: 1) the extent of congruence between geopolitical boundaries and national identities and (2) state strength in the region (Miller, 2007: 36). Miller incorporates revisionist ideologies in his nation-to-state ratio in order to include conflicts that go beyond the actual nation-state. In this research project, we will just focus on the nation state confluence variable since borders in the modern era are becoming increasingly immovable. Indeed, since the end of World

⁶ that is "a dominant group within society [...] that seeks to impose its own values on the various other groups within that society or seeks to exclude, sometimes violently, other ethnic groups from the portals of power (through the form of enforcing language, religion or culture via control of the state, or excluding groups from the basis of ethnic characteristics only (Varhsney, 2003: 86).

⁷ That is a dominated group which opposes to this nationalism of exclusion and seeks to preserve its cultural identity and resist the hegemony and power of the dominant group (Varhsney, 2003: 86).

War II, the norm of 'fixed borders' proscribes any important changes in terms of territorial sovereignty across the world. (Atzili, 2006/2007)

The Institutional regime variable⁸

By Institutional regime variable, we mean the differences in ideological regimes that have led to a distinction within the colonial world between post colonial states and post soviet ones.

In this project, we would like to argue that the colonial legacy has certainly shaped the different pathways to conflict in modern conflicts in post colonial Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia or the Caucasus. Drawing on Beissinger and Young, one can distinguish three major aspects in linking the colonial legacy to conflict:

- 1) Autocracy is seen as the essence of the colonial state heritage (Beissinger & Young 2002: 29). As Barrington Moore (1954) observed, it was an institutionalized social and political system in which the authoritarian, arbitrary and fundamentally violent exercise of state authority was reproduced locally and in the workplace.
- 2) The territorial heritage of colonial partition is also seen as an important path dependent variable in the evolution of post colonial and post soviet states. This notion has been reinforced especially since the end of World War II with the norm of fixed borders. (Atzili, 2006/2007)
- 3) The widespread practice of subversion of state power towards personal ends and the negative public attitudes towards the state are also seen as important path dependent variables in the evolution of post colonial and post soviet states.

Although it is clear that each empire has its own characteristics⁹, we consider that there is probably as much differences between the legacy of the French and the British empires that there is between the French and the Soviet one.

⁸ This section draws especially on Beissinger & Young, 2002.

The major question we would like to address is to what extent nationalistic conflicts in post-soviet countries are so different than nationalistic conflicts in post-colonial countries. Both have been dealt in a separate way and this can be explained by area studies which rightly emphasize the very significant differences between for instance the African and Eurasian political experiences. On the one hand, post-communist societies share their own set of problems emerging from their communist heritage (see for e.g. Bunce 1995). On the other, the African postcolonial state represents a “singular historical personality” (Young 1994). The different level of industrialization and the activity and scope of the state in post-Soviet and post-colonial ones also creates an important distinction in understanding and comparing both regions. Indeed, the penetration of Soviet state institutions undoubtedly exceeded substantially that of African colonial regimes, though the Soviet penetration was far from complete, and subversion was widespread (Beissinger & Young 2002: 27). However, both have a shared legacy of imperial subordination that can, according to Young and Beissinger, be understood as an underlying cause in explaining state crisis in both post-colonial and post-soviet countries (Beissinger & Young, 2002: 25). This project therefore wishes to test whether the institutional regime variable (that is the difference between post-colonial and post-soviet ones) is well founded in explaining the underlying causes of modern conflicts in post colonial Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia or the Caucasus.

V. “Non-nation” conflict cases: Ivory Coast & Tajikistan

Non-nation states may be defined as newly independent country whose state apparatus is a direct heritage from colonial bureaucracy but whose national identity of the state is ill-defined. Government in these countries would be expected to build the national identity of the country as non-nation states are characterized by:

⁹ A study by Goldstone, Bates, Gurr et al for example points out that colonial heritage makes a notable difference in stability, with countries that were not formerly French colonies having odds of instability roughly four to fifteen times greater than French possessions.

- A high risk of secession on ethnic grounds.
- The fragile legitimacy of the leader.
- Ineffective mass mobilization.

Nation making is therefore an imperative that may lead to conflict. We will therefore examine the case of Ivory Coast and Tajikistan to understand if nation making was an underlying cause in these conflicts and then seek to understand if the institutional regime variable provides a sufficient variable to explain each of these conflicts.

Ivory Coast and Tajikistan

It is interesting to note that Tajikistan and Ivory Coast were colonized during the same period, the late 19th century. In general, the length of experience under Russian rule was far greater than that of African under European rule. However, Central Asia is a notable exception in that its conquest occurred during the same time as colonial expansion in Africa.

At independence, Ivory Coast and Tajikistan are considered as states without a nation for the following reasons.

To recall, we have defined statehood according to a state's ability and willingness to provide the fundamental political goods associated with physical security, legitimate political institutions, economic management, and social welfare.

Firstly, state institutions in Ivory Coast and Tajikistan had the capacity to regulate their own domestic market. In Ivory Coast the state institutions were relatively well developed and the new independent government could rely on the former colonial administrative structure to set up its own state (Cohen, 1971). In the Tajik case, the state enjoyed a strong control over economic policy. However, Tajikistan was experiencing as a transition economy many challenges in terms of economic policies, and especially important tensions between the state-controlled sovkoze and the more autonomous kolkhoze following the Perestroika (Roy, 1994).

Secondly, both had a social welfare system that met to a certain extent the basic needs of their population. In Tajikistan, tremendous technical progress was made in terms of state building under soviet rule¹⁰. Railways and roads were built, hydroelectric dams raised and agriculture, education and medical care developed. On its side, Ivory Coast was a relatively old French colony as it was attributed to France in 1893¹¹. The French then developed the administrative apparatus and the logistics to govern effectively the territory. The public works programs undertaken¹² by the Ivoirian colonial government and the exploitation of natural resources required massive commitments of labor. The French therefore imposed a system of forced labor under which each male adult Ivoirian was required to work for ten days each year without compensation as part of his obligation to the state. The system was subject to extreme misuse and was the most hated aspect of French colonial rule. In addition to the political and economic changes produced by colonial rule, the French also introduced social institutions that brought about fundamental changes to Ivoirian culture. Catholic missionaries established a network of churches and primary schools, which in time provided the literate Ivoirians needed by government and commerce. Some of the wealthier and more ambitious Ivoirians continued their educations at the few secondary schools and at French universities, adopting European culture and values and becoming members of a new African elite (Handloff, 1988).

Thirdly, the physical security of the state was ensured. In both cases, this was done by the former colonial power, the Soviet armed forces were stationed in Tajikistan with bases in Dushanbe, Qurghonteppa and Kulyab (the 201st Motor Rifle Division, a regiment of the Air Defence Forces, and KGB Border Guards, along the Afghan and Chinese frontiers) while the French had a military base in Abidjan (the 43rd *Bataillon d'Infanterie de Marine* - BIMa)

¹⁰ Tajikistan became an Autonomous Oblast within the Soviet Union in 1924 and then a Republic in 1929.

¹¹ Décret du 10 mars 1893. The whole territory was rapidly under complete control in 1899 following the destruction of the last important resistance movement headed by Samory Touré.

¹² Like for example the construction of a railway line that would connect the South to the North. The construction started in 1904, arrived at Bouake in 1912 and Bobo Dioulasso in 1933.

Finally, political institutions were considered as legitimate (not to be confused with the regime). Undoubtedly, the fact that both countries were not yet nations with strong local identities clearly undermined the political institutions' legitimacy. However, both cases were substantially different. In the Tajik case, the legitimacy of the regime in the late eighties – early nineties was very low due to a high level of corruption. In Ivory Coast, the regime was viewed as more legitimate in that leaders fighting French imperialism (not forcibly independence) benefited from a higher rate of popularity.

Let us now see why both countries could not be considered as nations following independence. Most Africanists consider that Ivory Coast was not as a nation following independence (Dozon, 2000; Kipré, 2005). This was even recognized by the first President of Ivory Coast in the 1970 party's congress when he declared that the Ivory Coast nation still needed to be constructed¹³. One could argue that the artificial partition of this country by colonial powers clearly limited the sense of nationhood at the time of independence as there were many transboundary ethnic groups¹⁴, many languages and many tribes (more than 60). To recall Houphouët-Boigny's words about his country: "*our weakness is the dusts of all our tribes that are part of the Ivorian Coast nation but it is also our strength*" (quoted in Akoto, 1978: 97).¹⁵ As aptly put by Pierre Franklin Tavares, Ivory Coast in 1948 was a country, not a nation, and was becoming a state (Tavares, 2005: 11).

In terms of nationhood, the same stands for Tajikistan. Most Central Asians specialists consider that Tajikistan cannot still be considered as a nation (Akiner, 2001; Akbarzadeh,

¹³ « *Parce que nous affirmons, sans crainte de mentir, que l'unité est un préalable à tout développement harmonieux de notre pays, nous pensons qu'il est de notre devoir de répondre, sans détours, aux préoccupations que ce noble idéal suscite en chacun d'entre nous. Dans quelle mesure dans ce domaine de l'unité, avons-nous progressé ? Quels résultats indéniables avons-nous obtenus dans notre action ?... Certes, l'unité, l'unité totale sera l'œuvre de plusieurs générations, la nation Ivoirienne, fruit de l'unité, reste à construire. Mais nous nous devons de reconnaître que nous n'avons pas avancé dans la voie de l'unité aussi loin qu'il était souhaitable* » (quoted in Akoto, 1978: 87).

¹⁴ Akan (also in Ghana), the Voltaique (also in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo, Benin and Ghana), Krou (also in Liberia and Guinea), Mandingue / Mande du Sud (also in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Senegal, Gambia).

¹⁵ Author's own translation, « *notre faiblesse, c'est la poussière de tribus que comporte la nation ivoirienne mais cela constitue aussi notre force* ».

1996; Beeman, 1999; Lynch, 2001; Roy, 1995)¹⁶. The various specialists on the region emphasize:

- ✓ The lack of shared history, in part due to the physical environment (over 90% of the republic is mountainous – above 1500 meters) (Akiner, 2001; Akbarzadeh, 1996).
- ✓ The importance of localism, and in particular the primacy of the local and/or religious identities over the national one (Lynch, 2001; Roy, 1995; Rubin, 1993/1994).

It is important to understand that it is the Russian scholars who took up the cause of the Tajik nation at the beginning of the 20th century. The regions had always been a kaleidoscopic mosaic of empires, kingdoms and local khanates whose frontiers and rulers frequently changed and whose rulers usually spoke both Persian and Turkic. The language was therefore not seen as major factor in building its own identity. By the first half of the 19th century, while the Turkish peoples still thought of the Tajiks as a separate group, the general consensus seems to be that after centuries of living together ethnic distinctiveness was much less important than differences in ways of life (i.e.: settled as against nomadic communities, urban versus rural, or various religious affinities). In many communities, the notion of ethnicity, as later defined under the Soviets in linguistic or ethnic terms, was either very vaguely formulated or did not exist at all (Bergne, 2007: 7). In some urban areas, the lines separating Tajiks and Uzbeks up to recently are far more fluid than the mutually exclusive juridical categories of nationality would suggest (Rubin 1993/1994). As noted by Rzehak, ‘the founding of Tajikistan was not the result of Tajik nationalism but the hour of its birth’ (Bergne, 2007: 103). Most soviet observers from the early 20th century to the 1950s noted that there was no clear national identity for tajik¹⁷. The nationness of Tajikistan was still an issue in the Gorbachev era (The renewal movement - Rastâkhez).

¹⁶ Other specialists like Charif & Roustam Choukourov (1994) challenge this assumption. They consider that there is a Tajik nation due to Tajik’s shared Persian culture.

¹⁷ Lt Colonel Snesyareff of the Russian General Staff observations in 1906, Dr. M. Gabrielyan of the Institute of Tropical Diseases in Bukhara from 1928 to 1930, Soviet sociologist O.A. Sukhareva in the 1950s (Bergne, 2007: 11-12).

At independence, Tajikistan and Ivory Coast could therefore be categorised as a state without being a nation.

Ivory Coast

The key question of the following section is therefore how nation making may be seen (or not) as a major explanatory variable in the ongoing civil war in Ivory Coast.

Nation building in Ivory Coast

For Houphouët-Boigny, the first prerogative for nation building was the establishment of internal stability and confidence. This consolidation of the state and its political power is formed around the old ruling elites. The relationship with France is therefore based on important economic rather than cultural or political ties. National unity of the country following Houphouët-Boigny's accession to power was mainly based on the French language, the establishment of continued ties with the economic colonial ruling elite, and the one party system. The state and the nation were constructed around the party, the *Partie démocratique de la Cote d'Ivoire – Rassemblement démocratique africain* (PDCI-RDA) whose role served to prevent the creation of social and cultural distinctions through the force of its role in politics as the vehicle of upward mobility (Zolberg, 1963; Bishop, 1968: 18). Government-owned newspapers and state radio had a similar mission. The single party was therefore a major tool used to break tribal loyalty (or at least overcede them in favour of the national identity). The creation of municipalities in 1985 clearly was conceived in the same way. The school curriculum was also designed in the same way.

State building was used to create a sense of national unity with various equity and social justice measures. The government decided for example to fix a unique price for the agricultural products (e.g.: cocoa, coffee) across the territory. The granting of academic scholarships for students was also seen as a way to favor social promotion, irrespective of ethnic, linguistic or social considerations. As emphasized by Beissinger and Young, the

state thus represented itself as a political rather than merely an alien bureaucratic agency whose campaign was to establish the 'nation' as the sole legitimate expression of identity in the public sphere, with religious and ethnic consciousness assigned to a private sphere (Beissinger & Young, 2002: 39).

Although Houphouët-Boigny's policy can be regarded as successful, its premises were based on the positive economic development of the country. The major drawbacks on the primary commodities markets in the eighties and early nineties had a major impact on Ivory Coast who essentially relied on cocoa and coffee production. The country was therefore faced with drastic choices and the death of Houphouët-Boigny in 1993 triggered an important political/economic/social crisis. As a result, nation making soon became linked to nationalism following Henri Konan Bedié's rise to power.

Conflict

The modern history of Ivory Coast has been marked by three important conflicts¹⁸ but the last one is undoubtedly the most serious one. Bedié's popularity was low. The conflict started in 1999 with the coup d'état by General Guei. Guei in fact promised the organization of presidential elections. These were held in 2000 with the victory of Laurent Gbagbo (representing the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* - FPI). Like in the 1995 elections, the former Prime Minister, Alassane Ouattara, was not allowed to run. On September 19, 2002, the regime of Gbagbo was threatened by a rebellion in the North and the West and the country became divided into three parts. A reconciliation process under international auspices started in 2003. Several thousand French and then West African troops intervened under UN mandate to maintain peace in the country. Tensions between Côte d'Ivoire and France increased on November 6, 2004, after Ivorian air strikes killed 9 French peacekeepers and an aid worker. In response, French forces attacked the airport at Yamoussoukro, destroying all airplanes in the Ivorian Air Force. Violent protests erupted in both Abidjan and Yamoussoukro, and were marked by

¹⁸ The first incidence was the Sanwi crisis in 1966. The second conflict is the Guebié crisis in 1970.

violence between Ivorians and French peacekeepers. Thousands of foreigners, especially French nationals, evacuated the two cities.

There are clearly two major phases in the current conflict. The first period between 1999 and 2002 concerned a domestic crisis around leadership and identity issues. The second period becomes more complex as the crisis becomes regional, if not international. The identity crisis in Ivory Coast has led other countries to become involved in the conflict as many of their citizens were living and working in Ivory Coast. This is especially the case for Burkina Faso¹⁹. The president of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, had strong ties with the leader of Liberia, Charles Taylor, and both became active participants in the current conflict supporting the different rebellions in the north (Dozon, 2006). France also decided to play a greater role with the deployment of additional military troops in Ivory Coast. Some authors (Tavares, 2005) argue that the conflict also involves major multinationals who have an interest in destabilizing the region to access cheap resources and were strongly opposed to Gbagbo's economic program against French interests.

How can we explain the conflict?

The current crisis has been explained along many variables²⁰. Most specialists have tended to focus on leadership and identity. One could however deduce four important factors in the underlying causes of this conflict: an economic crisis, multipartism, leadership succession, and an identity crisis. As we will see, the first three variables lead to various state-nation building measures that will contribute to a more profound identity crisis.

In the late 1980s Ivory Coast faced a social and economic crisis provoked by stagnant commodity prices and stringent structural adjustment measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Duruflé, 1988). The question of

¹⁹ According to Dozon (1997: 780), people originating from Burkina represent 15% of the total population in Ivory Coast.

²⁰ Pierre Franklin Tavares for example highlights four important structural factors that could explain the current crisis: 1) the decline of the presidential institution, 2) the crisis of the youth, 3) the crisis of the executive management within the army, and 4) the question of nationality (Tavares, 2005: 86).

immigration has been a crucial question since the creation of Ivory Coast. With the economic boom following independence, labour was very much needed for agricultural purposes. The following statistics are revealing: in 1965: 17% of the total population were foreign workers, in 1975, this share increased to 22%. Today, it is estimated that foreign workers represent 26% of the total population. In the context of the economic crisis hitting Ivory Coast, the Prime Minister, considered at the time that the introduction of working permits would constitute an important measure to increase the state's revenues. Obliging people to have working permits was the first measure that placed a distinction between foreigners and people from Ivory Coast. This measure (although this was not intended) was the first one to introduce a sharp distinction between Ivory Coast citizens and West African workers. 1990 is the first crucial date in the Ivory Coast crisis as it leads to the introduction of working permits but also to the organization of the first multi-party elections.

Following civil unrest, the first multi-party elections were organized. The major party in Ivory Coast was the PDCI-RDA. The major opposition party was the FPI, headed by Laurent Gbagbo. Opposition parties were suspicious of the local administration (mostly headed by people that were connected to the PDCI-RDA) and they feared the instrumentalisation of foreign votes in the election process. The country had given important civic rights to foreigners, most notably the right to vote at the municipal and presidential elections (for all African residents since 1959). However, these votes were considered by opposition parties as more difficult to control. As a result, the FPI political party in its political program called for the abrogation of the vote of foreigners. This issue received more attention following the elections as the FPI realized that Houphouët-Boigny had won the 1990 presidential election in part because of the vote of foreigners (see Dozon, 1997: 783). In 1991, Laurent Gbagbo declared that the vote of foreigners were unconstitutional (Gbagbo, 1991). This campaign will have important consequences in the 1994 electoral laws as we will see in the following paragraphs.

The third factor in the underlying cause of this conflicts concerns leadership succession. Following the death of Houphouët-Boigny, National Assembly President Henri Konan

Bedie became President by constitutional succession and served out the remainder of Houphouet's term until the 1995 presidential elections. The Prime Minister at the time, Alassane Ouattara, who was also from the same party, contested this succession. The personal rivalry between both figures was well-known and had in fact been entertained by the former President. Nonetheless, Bedié stayed in power and introduced in 1994 new electoral laws namely to neutralize his main political opponent, Alassane Ouattara, on the basis of his nationality and to increase his legitimacy (see for e.g. Dozon, 2000). The 1994 electoral laws are clearly the pivotal landmark in this crisis. The 1994 electoral laws lead to two major dispositions: the concept of political ivoirity²¹ and the abrogation of the right to vote to African citizens.

Economic measures, multipartism and electoral maneuver in fact led to a much deeper crisis in terms of identity. Boa Thiemele's book addresses a major question in asking whether the identity question now in Ivory Coast should be understood simply as a particular ethnic strategy to conquer state power or as a visible part of an identity in construction (Boa Thiemele, 2003). The political concept of ivoirity introduced by Bedié is seen by partisans of Alassane Ouattara as a way to impose the ethnic predominance of the southern elites. Those who criticize this concept see ivoirity as a synonym of the Akan's culture and its dominance (see for e.g. Dozon, 2000 or press declarations by Cissé Ibrahim Baongo, the spokesman of the *Rassemblement des Républicains* - RDR the political party of Ouattara). For Boa Thiemele, the President's intention was not only about electoral politics but laid in the willingness to construct an identity that was not sufficiently developed.

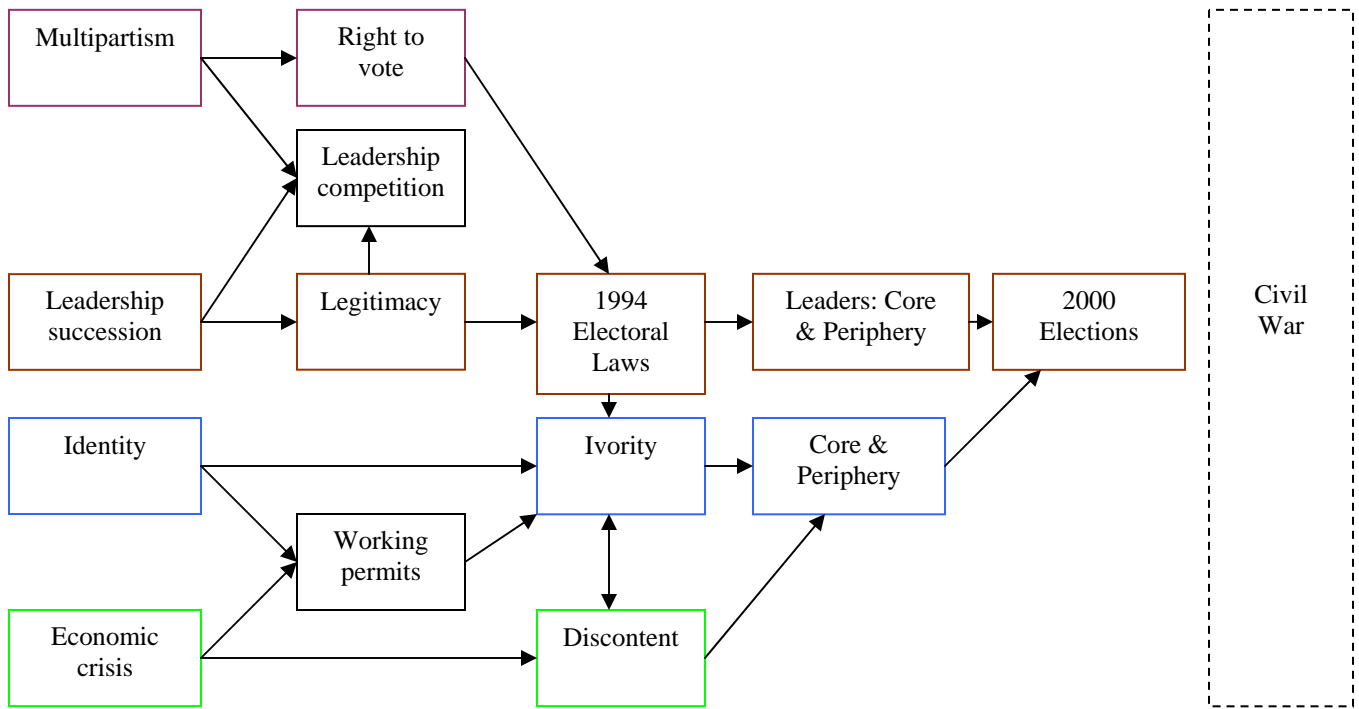
²¹ Ivoirity started as a cultural concept. Its paternity has been attributed to Niangoranh Porquet by Pierre Nioba. Porquet was an artist from Ivory Coast who felt that his own culture was not valorized. It was believed that Houphouet-Boigny had a strong mistrust of artists within his home country as he saw them as important potential partners for the political opposition. As a consequence, Houphouet-Boigny was favorizing, at least from Porquet's point of view, other West African artists. The creator of the concept saw a great injustice in this policy and tried to create a movement in favor of a certain Ivorian culture that was poor at the time compared to other important African countries. This cultural project, which took the form of an African type of theatre, was also a political project in that it would, at least according to the creator of the concept, serve the construction of the nation by going beyond clanicism, tribalism, sectarianism (Boa Thiemele, 2003: 125). This project was also seen as a way to valorize Ivorian and African culture (seen as mutually dependent) in a battle against cultural imperialism. This concept reappeared in the early nineties and was used by Henri Konan Bedié, the second President of Ivory Coast.

The current crisis is undoubtedly to Bedie's accession to power. However, this does not hinder the fact that the identity question is central to the Ivory Coast crisis. Indeed, what makes the different waves of legislation on nation making so conflictual? Why is the concept of ivoirity a matter of conflict?

The question of ivoirity in its political version was not just perceived as an electoral maneuver to exclude Ouatarra but also as a long-term policy that was excluding large segments of the population within the country. All of the measures identified above (working permits, electoral rights for foreign African workers, and the concept of political ivoirity) enable us to argue that the crisis and competition for leadership would not have turned into an important political crisis if the government (irrespective of the political party in power) had not alienated an important part of the population living in Ivory Coast. This situation proved to be explosive in a country with a large number of transboundary ethnic groups and whose national identity was ill-defined. The criteria for defining a pure Ivorian created important tensions and led to a polarization of society between those in the centre and those on the periphery.²²

The following table attempts to stretch the mechanism leading to the current crisis in Ivory Coast.

²² Professor Niangoran-Bouah for example defines the criteria for being a pure ivoiran as 1) être originaire du même pays (descendre des ancêtres fondateurs des différentes provinces du pays), 2) avoir comme langue l'une des langues des 5 grands groupes ethnolinguistique, 3) avoir les mêmes habitudes de vie (culture et civilisations), 4) partager le même vécu socio culturel. Les cinq groupes socio culturels sont le Twi des Akans, le Made-Tan du Malinke et Bakrou (?), le Madifou des Dans, le Sienefo ou Sinafo des Gur (Senoufou-Lobi-Dagari), le Mangue des Krou (Boa Thiemele, 2003: 191).



Tajikistan

Nation building in Tajikistan

Nation building in Tajikistan started in 1929 with the creation of the Tajik SSR²³. This was the result of the fear of forced uzbeization of Tajik society during 1924 and 1929 which led Tajik from the plains to create a union with Tajik from the mountains (which they had been unwilling to do up to this point)

The chief architects of the concept of the Tajik nation were Sadriddin Aini and Bobojon Gafurov²⁴. Both attempted to show how the Tajik shaped the cultural and intellectual life of the region (the Perso-Tajik character of Central Asia). The origin of national statehood stretched back to the empire founded by Saman, in the late 9th century. The Samanid

²³ This point is debatable. Guissou Jahangiri (1995) considers that this process started earlier.

²⁴ Aini worked on Tajik literary genealogy while Gafurov wrote a history of the Tajik

rulers of Bukhara could qualify as their co-ethnic heroes of the distant past (see the celebration of the 1100th anniversary in Beeman, 1999). The works by both authors were included in the school curricula and in the rhetoric of political activists especially as a way to counterinfluence the ideology of Pan Turkism that was dominant at the time. The communist party, the university, and newspapers were also important relays in diffusing these ideas. The building of infrastructure (e.g. Dushambe Temrez railway, extension of roads and aviation routes) in this mountainous region also fulfilled a process of national unification

Nation making was unsuccessful during the Soviet period²⁵. National unification was not a major prerogative for the successive First Secretaries of the Tajik Communist Party²⁶. The question of the Tajik nation and nation making became an issue during the Perestroika. The renewal movement - Rastâkhez – for example was launched by the Tajik intellectuals to legitimize the Tajik nation around neo-zoroastrim and the official status of the tajik language²⁷. However this movement was a failure leading the Tajik intellectuals to call the Tajik people a *millat-i kâmil nashuda*, an imperfect nation (Dudoignon, 1994). The Tajik intellectuals then took a more nationalistic overtone just before independence questioning the borders of the Tajik state (especially after the Acht and Isfara incidents), defending the oppressed Tajik minorities in Uzbekistan and emphasizing the need to free Bukhara.

Overall, the Soviet-created national identity was not assimilated among the historically settled population. The ‘region of residence’ (*mahalla*) has been (and remains) a principal axis of identity that has probably been reinforced during the soviet times (Rubin, 1993/1994).

²⁵ This can be explained by the fact the Soviet central authorities were unwilling for a Tajik identity to develop – see Roy, 1997

²⁶ For Lynch (2001), the lack of unifying idea is reflected by the fact that most investment and industrial efforts were devoted to the northern region and that no investments in terms of infrastructure were made to improve the isolation of the various regions.

²⁷ A 1989 law promulgated Tajik as the official language of the Tajik SSR.

Conflict²⁸

The conflict started several months after independence. The fact that the province of Gorno-Badakhshan proclaimed its autonomy in December 1991 constituted a first indicator of the lack of trust in the new independent Tajik state and of competing identities²⁹. Secondly, the organisation of elections was a major point of competition and discord between the former communist party and the newly created parties (the Islamic Rebirth Party, Rastokhez National Front, the Democratic Party of Tajikistan - DP and Lali Badakhshan - the Ruby of Badakhshan). The crisis reached a climax when the Leninabadi speaker of Parliament, Safarali Kenjayev, attacked the Pamiri Interior Minister, Mamadayaz Navjuvanov. This immediately sparked-off anti-government riots initiated by Lali Badakhshan and joined by members of the other opposition parties. At the same time, pro-government forces essentially composed of Kulobi groups started to mobilize. President Rahmon Nabyev and Speaker of the Supreme Soviet Safarali Kenjayev orchestrated the handing out of weapons to pro-government militias while the opposition turned to rebels in Afghanistan for military aid. Important clashes occurred between both groups. Under intense pressure, Nabyev agreed to a government of national reconciliation (GNR).

The GNR was not seen as legitimate in the Kulobi region (declared as unconstitutional by the kulobi regional authorities) and the Leninabad authorities threatened to secede. On 7 September 1992, Nabyev was captured by opposition protesters and was forced at gunpoint to resign his presidency. The country was clearly in a state of anarchy. Chaos and fighting between the opposing factions reigned outside of the capital Dushanbe with the Kulobi groups on the one hand against the IRP-DP-Rastokhez alliance. In extremis, a special session of the coalition parliament was convened and the GNR defeated and Rahmonov (a Kulobi) became elected head of government and state. By late 1995, Tajikistan was virtually portioned between government-held territory in the south and

²⁸ This section draws especially on Akiner, 2001 & Lynch, 2001.

²⁹ Although the region was already an autonomous oblast under the Soviet Union.

opposition-held territory in Karategin-Darvaz (mainly around Tavildara); the rest of the country was to a greater or lesser extent de facto under the control of local leaders.

How can we explain the conflict?

For Lynch, the civil war erupted as a result of a weak national identity, combined with disintegrating institutions in circumstances of economic collapse and political mobilisation (Lynch, 2001: 52). We would like to add a fourth factor, the struggle between the central government and the local elites.

Tajikistan was the poorest union republic, almost entirely dependent on the union and other republics for food, raw materials and financial subsidies. In 1991, Tajikistan received an estimated 46% of its total revenue in transfers from the union budget (Rubin, 1998: 140-1). Youth unemployment was already important and the economic collapse therefore provided the ground for an important crisis and anti-social behaviour³⁰ (Akiner, 2001).

The second major factor in the Tajik crisis is linked to the issue of multipartism. As emphasized previously, the organisation of elections was a major point of competition and discord between the former communist party and the newly created parties (the Islamic Rebirth Party, Rastokhez National Front, the Democratic Party of Tajikistan - DP and Lali Badakhshan - the Ruby of Badakhshan).

The third major factor is linked to the struggle between the central government and the local elites. This factor is one of the most crucial one in the crisis in that it underlies the major tensions behind multipartism. Resistance against centralization had already emerged before independence where the apparatchiks (in hold of political and economic power at the party level) were in clear competition with young recruits nominated as heads of kolkoze who were getting more power due to the Perestroika. The sovkhoses

³⁰ The age of the population is clearly a vital component as 60% of population were under 16 years old in 1980.

were attached to the Tajik ministries while the kolhozes were autonomous (Dudoignon, 1994; Roy, 1994). It seems very likely that the system did not explode due to soviet coercive powers, especially through its secret services and its military base. Following independence, these movements were political alternatives to communism but also searched to modify the state's economic policy in favour of more autonomy for each region. These movements were not against communism, nor in favor of Islamism but fighting the technocrats.

The last factor relates to national identity. There was no national movement against soviet imperialism and there was clearly a weak national identity. It is important to understand that independence was not a desired outcome but rather a fact forced on them (Roy, 1997). Localism (*mahalgari*) has a large explanatory power in this conflict (Roy, 1995). As shown by Lynch, localism has been accentuated following the appointment of Babajon Gafurov as First Secretary of the Tajik Communist Party in 1946. Under Gafurov and until independence, the party structures became dominated by elites from Leninabad. The coalition had clearly regional overtones. On the one hand, the islamo-democrat faction was composed of the Garmi³¹, the Pamir³² and intellectuals from Pendjikent in the Zerafshan valley. On the other, the conservatives were essentially those from Leninabad and the Kulobi.

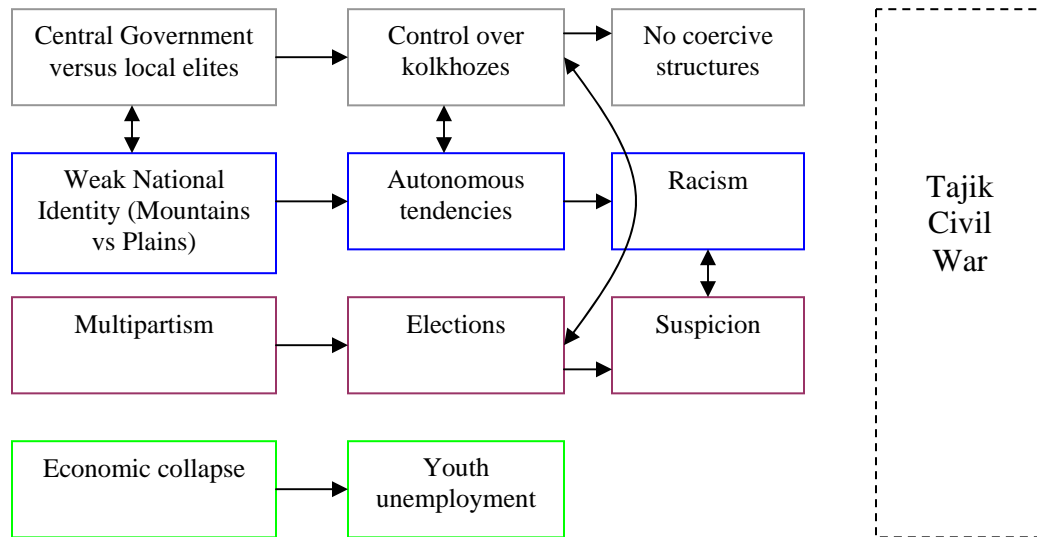
If one turns to the grievances put forward by the islamo-democrat faction, and in particular the proclamation of the autonomous republic of Gorno-Badakhshan and the similar autonomous tendencies for the Yaghnob upper valley, one can see that identity was also a major issue. The autonomists from the Pamir Mountains were echoing the renewal of Pamirian identity and refusing the assimilation of the Tajik culture from the plains. Both have a very distinct culture and language from the Tajik from the plains. Both regions also have considerable resources. They were clearly fighting against centralization policies. As national identity was ill-defined, the transfer of important

³¹ people from Karategin, the upper valleys of the Vakhsh and Kafirnehon linked to the Islamic Rebirth Party and those that were behind the Basmachi movement in the 20s

³² from the Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous province and usually Ishmaelite

resources from these regions to the state governed by Leninabad and Kulobis technocrats and apparatiks was resisted.

The following table attempts to stretch the mechanism leading to the current crisis in Tajikistan.



Conclusion

Both cases in fact share a number of important similarities in the onset of the conflict: economic crisis and state failure, competition over leadership, state building strategies and post-colonial legacies. Nonetheless, the case of Ivory Coast provides a better case for understanding the nation state confluence variable than in the Tajik one. Indeed, the Tajik case shows that nation-making was not a prerogative, at least in defining a common identity between the Tajik from the plains and the Tajik from the mountains. State building and centralization policies were the major factors in this conflict, policies that were contested and resisted by peripheral identities. Although peripheral identities remained important and strong, the major conflict was about power. In the case of Ivory Coast, nation making was seen as an imperative and the question of national identity is

certainly the major underlying cause in this conflict. In this case, the nation state confluence shifted from a state building logic under Houphouet-Boigny to a nationalism of exclusion.

It is too early at this point of the project to highlight important differences between nationalistic conflicts in post-colonial and post-soviet countries (due to the limited number of case studies). However, one important difference between Ivory Coast and Tajikistan is the impact of economic structures, and in particular the impact of the economic transition that started since the Perestroika on the civil war in Tajikistan. The tension between sovkhoses and kolkhoses may perhaps constitute a significant difference in the conflict patterns in post colonial and post soviet countries.

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