

# Natural Resources and the Cote Ivoire 2010 Political Conflict; the Lesson to African Contemporary Society

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**Abstract:** *In most developing countries of the world especially Africa, the politics of natural resources management has been a contentious issue. The struggle for the control of natural resources instigates sometimes ethnic politics that results to conflicts. In the cause of this political conflicts by different political actors from different regions, cultural and ethnic background, tend to lead to breakdown of laws and order, unnecessary destruction of private and government property, killing of innocent citizens and displacement of peoples home and business centers. The paper therefore discussed the history of Cote d'Ivoire's political economy and how the struggle for the control of the resources resulted to the political crisis. The paper discussed the relationship between the natural resources and political conflict. The paper also highlighted the socio-political implications of the crisis and the lesson for Africa. Resource curse theory was used to explain their action. The paper recommends an evenly distribution of a country's economic proceeds irrespective of the peoples religious and ethnic background by the African leaders.*

**Key word:** Struggle for resource control, political crisis and the lesson for African.

## I. Introduction

Natural resources are those economic resources that are deposited either by nature or nurture at a particular place for economic usages or purpose. They may be extracted from the soil/land, sea or planted for the purpose of satisfying human needs and economic gain. Sometimes, such natural resources serves as the main sources of a country's economy or foreign export. Natural resources can as well be seen as those mineral resources and other related economic resources deposited by nature which a particular country ha\*, a comparative advantage over others.

Essentially, revenue from the natural resources such as oil, gas, gold, etc. the royalties, license fees, profits and export taxes from natural resource is expected to be used to maintain the area of exploration. But in most of the developing world, the politics of natural resources management is always a contentious issue. Contentious in the

sense that its management had resulted to untold hardship, hunger, environmental degradation, unemployment, poverty, social insecurity and disaster among other challenges. In the process of distribution of the resource proceeds, leaders usually fall the victim of political, economic and financial marginalization of some ethnic group at the expense of the other which sometimes results to political conflict (Kew and Lewis 2010) Cote d'Ivoire experienced such crisis in 2010 political conflict (Delube 2010).

### **The History of its Political Economy**

Most countries in West African sub-region usually experience one conflict or the other, sometimes, it may come as a result of ethnic or religious clashes, sometimes unevenly distribution of natural resource or the issue of political elites interest. Whichever that generate the trouble, it does not give room for any meaningful development in such country. The struggle for the control of the natural resources usually determine the nature of the democratic dividend that come to a particular region which determines the leadership style of a leader. The natural resource issue in Cote d'Ivoire latter became an issue in West Africa that attracted the regional and sub-regional political attention for conflict resolution and conflict management in 2010. The crisis erupted as the result of the struggle for economic control. The literature on the resources curse control theory suggest that natural resources abundant state is associated with the onset of civil war and influences the duration and intensity of the war (Obasi 1997). After experiencing of 98 studies about cases of countries resource control 27 civil wars, Collier and Hoeffier (1998) found that natural resource abundance, defined in terms of the ration of primary exports to GDP, is a strong and significant determinant of the onset of civil war, although they also found that the relationship between the variable was curvilinear. Sometimes natural resource wealth does increase the risk for civil war, Delube (2011), while sometimes it reduces it. In some studies, such as Collier and Hoeffier, (2000) observed that natural resources increase the risk of both secessionist and non-secessionist civil wars, but the former was three times more likely to be associated with natural resources than the later.

Lena et al (nd) conducted a study examining the relationship between the natural resources and the onset of ethnic and non-ethnic war, using data from a sample from 138 countries between 1960 and 1995, it was found that natural resource abundance states as a variable was as an important variable in explaining the incidence of political conflict and of non ethnic civil war but not in the incidence of ethnic civil wars, Kwaje (2011).

Some researchers also suggested that natural resources may lengthen the duration of civil war. Sidibie 2013:40. In another development, Collier and Hoeffier (1998) found that natural resources abundance and the duration of civil war had a curvilinear relationship, while Duyle and Sambanis (2000) observed that natural resource wealth was significantly and negatively correlated with the success of peace-building initiatives. Rose (2004) observed that between the failure of such initiatives and the duration of civil war, natural resources contribute to political conflict and war.

### **The History of Cote d'Ivoire Political Economy**

Land tenure in Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa regions was characterized by the dichotomy between first comers' called autochthones and late comers the allogenes (coming, from foreign countries) or allochtones (from other regions of cote d'Ivoire) the authchtorities migrant relationship regarding access to land was most often characterized by the social embeddedness of land rights transfer in the tutorat institution (Colin et al 2006:34). The tutorat sustains a patronage relationship between the autochthon (tufor) and the migrant to whom the land right is transferred together with social benefits and obligations towards the local community. In exchange for this, the migrant owes his tutors gifts at important occasions, which could come as part of the harvest as in kind goods or more common over time money. The new migrant labourers usually enter into share cropping relationship with the autochthones, meaning that they were allowed to sell part of the crops they helped to produce. Sometimes some migrants gained access to land for their own production. By way of those informal agreements with, migrants, the autochthones sometimes conceded the land for next to nothing as they originally were more used to hunting and fishing and often not interested in clearing the forest to grow cocoa themselves but rather interested in benefiting from migrant labour in averting claims to land by relatives or neighbouring communities and in benefiting from renting land to alleviate pecuniary difficulties (Chauveau, 2006:236, Centze 2006:20). The

ceding of land to migrant was also legitimized on grounds of valid principles of justice guiding the access to land, the principle of entitlement to rights by virtue of invested labour (and noting by "virtue of descent). They were fostered by Houphouet-boigny's policies. This principle of labour creating rights to land can create conflict with the principle of inter-generational justice that guarantees the younger generation appropriate access to family land. If the family plots are ceded to those working in it (often migrants) but the younger generation or politician questions the issue of labour that create rights to land; Chauveau 2006:226. Tension started when the rapid growth of cocoa economy increased in 1980s where migrants were residing. Cocoa later became the bone of contention, the land where cocoa is produced at large quantity and exported as the major foreign export for Cote d'Ivoire became an issue for ethnic politics and conflict which degenerated into the exclusion of those who were not original Ivoirians. The defacto choice of an ethnic group, or allogenes are the scapegoats of the situation. In reality, it was a much deeper conflict between political factions even more than ethnic factions (BICC interview 28 February 2008), observed, that in 1990s, the three main cocoa producing groups, the autochthones Bete in the central west, the migrant Boule from the center Cote d'ivoire and the Burkinable typically pursued different production strategies. The Bete (the ethnic group of president Gbagbo) who had coffee farmers increasingly turned to cocoas in the mid- 1990s after years of low return in the coffee sector. The Baoule migrants were fully involved in cocoa obtaining high yields from clearing primary forest and dense secondary forest. Burkinable produced by far largest quantity of cocoa per household Ruf 2007, Wood (2003).

The economic success of these foreigners which was associated with their effective social organization and abundant pool of migrant workers of the same origins efficient credit and marketing ethnic (network) and their ability to make a profit on cocoa farms also became a sources of tension (Colin et al 2006). In Cote d'Ivoire many farmers livelihood depend on cocoa, nearly a million farmers work in the cocoa sector and up to four million out of 17 million Cote d'Ivoire's inhabitants depend on the cocoa trade for their living (www.cipedxeci) the farmer grew small plantations that covers 2.5 million hectares of land. This cocoa sector was the backbone of the flourishing Ivorian economy from 1950s onwards, The cocoa boom started in the south-east and then shifted to the center-west and the south-west of the country. The cocoa money helped to build skyscrapers and develop the regions busiest container points, Balint-kurt: 2007:25 Ivorian associated with instability, corruption, conflict and poverty among farmers. Some observers called it conflict cocoa. The government of the Ivorian cocoa sector encountered problem both with the regulation and management of the production and trading processes and the redistribution and reinvestment of cocoa revenues. Two Important dimensions include the access to land to grow cocoa trees and the revenues from cocoa production and their use are collaborated upon the following sector: The first dimension is located at the national politics. The second dimension, is at the national level, but of course has repercussion on Ivorian state offered technical support, developed infrastructure and subsidized transport (Wood 2003) Houphouet\_Boigny issued a decree in 1967 stating that the land belong to the person who cultivates it Balini Icut (2005). This crisis of owners of the land, who cultivates and enjoys the revenue became a national question that crept into the nations politics in Cote d'ivoire. When Gbagbo in 2010 refused to cede power to who was the internationally recognized winner of the election by name Quattara, this refusal of Gbagbo to hand over power led to the Cote d'Ivoire 2010 political crisis with its resultant effect of attracting international communities, for peace and conflict resolution. While Gbagbo claimed to be the son of the soil who should continue to be in control of the natural resources in their nation, over a, migrant, Quattara who was the rightful winner of the election whose major economic power of the country belongs to the region refused to accept in time election and defeat before the international community helped to restore people and installed him as president by the international community, (Time Report, 2011 Nov.2) and Ocha (2011).

After his first tenure, he was equally re-elected into the office for the second time, having seeing his leadership stylistics and developmental agenda for the entire nation.

Kwuiwin (2006), Fearon (2004) are of the view that countries that are rich in contraband resources such as opium, diamonds, or cocoa tend to experience longer civil wars while Haltantine (2003) found that natural resource rich developing countries usually experience wars. Finally, Ross (2004) noted that several observers of Africa's civil wars saw that natural resources worsen the intensity of civil wars, thereby causing combatants to

fight for territory that would otherwise have little value when compared to cost of life and property caused by war in that environment.

Natural resources generate what the economist term 'rents' - meaning profits that are much higher than the minimum level needed to keep the activity going. The trouble from natural resources stems from these rents seekers (Rogetic, Noar and Expino 2007). There are six routes by which natural resources rents increase the risk of violent conflicts: Four relates to economy and two are straight economics.

The obvious route is that natural resource rents are a honey pot politics comes to be about the contest for the control of these revenue. This produces a politics of corruption-aided and abetted by foreign corporate behaviour and sometimes directly a politics of violence. The stakes are highest in low-income control countries because the control of the state implies massive revenues relative to other income-earning opportunities, Deluba (2011).

Further, this politic arena from its function of achieving the collective action that is necessary to supply public goods-the social and economic infrastructure that all societies need diverts attention. The society thus loses out twice over; in the struggle for resources rents, while other resources are dissipated and the supply of public goods decline the second route by which natural resource increases-the risk of war in it and finance the war. The prolonged viability of UNITA in Angola 7 and the RUF in Sierra Leone, the Vialent gangs in Niger Delta in Nigeria and the successful rebellions of Laurent Kabila in Zaire and of Denis Sassou Nguesso in Congo Brazzaville, were all assisted by one or the other of these methods of natural resources, financing. Rebel groups gain access to natural resources rents in several ways, one is to run protection rackets against the companies or people who export, another is directly to operate extraction business and test, another is to sell concessions to mineral rights in anticipation of subsequent control of the citizen, Ibrahim (2008), Delube (2011) and Kwaja (2011).

In addition to the above political economy effects, these two other economic effects that increase the risk of civil war, is that the resources rents appreciate the real exchange rate causing Dutch disease, whereby the export economy contracts. Usually, in Africa the non-resource export economy is based on agriculture so that small farmers in some areas face sharply declining income, despite the influx of wealth into the economy. Finally, the prices of natural resources are usually volatile, so that the economy/becomes subject to booms and busts. This pattern depresses the long term growth rate. The resource curse literature contains a number of studies that suggest that natural resources abundance is associated with, low level of democracy and development Wenthenkon (1999) in Africa. For instance, the examined data related to 141 countries between 1950 and 1990 found that one percent increase in natural resource dependence as measured by the ratio of primary export to GDP, increased the probability of the authoritarian government by nearly eight percent, he also found that countries that were rich in natural resources were most likely to experience failed or slow transition to democracy as well as low development and high corruption level more especially in developing economies.

Similarly in an article that was published in 2003 edition of the foreign services journal, author by Thomas Palley explains that the natural resources curse occurs because the income from these resources is often misappropriated by corrupt leaders and officials, instead of being used to support growth and development. Moreover such wealth fuel internal grievances that causes conflict, violence and civil war. He noted that perhaps, the most oft-cited example of the natural resource curse is Nigeria, whose incredible oil wealth has caused a lot of hunger and hardship, social insecurity, youth restiveness and failed to bring growth and development to the country. Many people in Nigeria live on less than \$1 a day from 30% before oil discovery to the current 70%. Some countries rich in natural resources such as Botswana has seemingly have escaped the curse while other like Cote d'Ivoire remains in resource funded conflict. In an article of natural resources and conflict in Africa, Collier posed a question why has Africa had so much civil wars. According to him in all other region of the world the incidence of civil war has been on a broadly declining trend over the past 30 years: but in Africa it increases. He went furthermore to say that every civil war has its own story. The personalities, social cleavage, the triggering event, the inflammatory discourse, the atrocities and others, Onumajuru (2009).

Unevenly distribution of natural resources or proceed of natural resources usually generate political violence and war.

In Cote d'Ivoire, undemocratic condition gave serous restrictions on good resource governance that is apt ay avoiding conflicts and contributing peace. On the other, hand transparency in revenue distribution was impeded, Ocha (2011).

### **Resource Curse Theory**

It is very clear to note that sometimes countries with abundance of natural resources like oil, gold, diamond, platinum etc. usually encounter low economic development Ikein (2010), Rebert and Oladeji (2005) Etekepe (2007), They also find it very difficult in providing basic social amenities. Among other countries that experiences such challenges are Nigeria, Sudan, South Africa, Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe etc. They tend to have more internal conflict, lack adequate mechanism and are afflicted by Dutch disease, that is an economical phenomenon in which revenue from natural resource export damage a nations productive economic sector by causing an increase of the real exchange rate and wage increase engage in excessive borrowing, with revenue volatility, lack capacity of diversification of economy among other undermine variable. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/resource+curse>. As a result of the above issue instead of being blessings turns into a terrible curse to the nation that have them. Obi (1998), Banon and Collier (2003) and Omoweh (2005) are of the view that reason for the paradox of plenty are not unrelated to corruption of the leaders, government mismanagement of resources volatility of revenue from the natural resources sector due to exposure to global commodity market swinging and declining in the competitiveness of other economic sector, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/resource+curse>. In most developing nations resource abundance ones suffer under development challenges as result of mismanagement of the resources.

### **Natural Resources and Under-development**

Most of the African countries with abundance of natural resources are poor and under developed as a result of poor leadership and mismanagement of resources. Lack of visionary leadership, corruption among the leaders, selfish interest and lack of focus and amongst other things. The leaders do not consider national interest rather, they defend their personal interest, ethnic, or regional attention in development and poverty reduction. Majority of the population of the people from resource abundant nations like Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire suffer poverty at maximum level and social insecurity. Most of the state or ethnic groups where the resources are gotten suffer serious neglect, with high rate of unemployment, environmental degradation, ecological problem, destruction of farm lands and lack of social amenities, hunger, health problem as a result of pollution and other associated challenges. No attention is given for infrastructural development, recreational service, and substandard educational facilities and materials observed. The resultant effect of such neglect are poverty and under development in these resources abundant nations, other social challenges include youth restiveness, increase in rape, armed robbery, kidnapping especially the foreign nationales that come to help to work in oil areas. When there is situation of youth restiveness, violence, wars, and political crisis, loss of lives and property will be experienced, people will run to far and near neighbuoring states as refuges in search of livelihood or means of surviving. Social and political conflict is infectious and need to be avoided by the developing countries (Global witness by (2009). Democracy should be associated with peace and development, trust, accountability and transparency, Sidibe (2003).

### **The Lesson for Africa.**

Most of the African countries should learn to use the mistakes of one country to tackle a related issue in another country. The neglect and marginalization of one ethnic group by another by leaders should be avoided in African polity.

Unevenly distribution of a country's resource proceed which can lead to an escalation of conflict, violence and war should be handled with care before it result to a serious case that will attract international attention. Africa is the continent that experience low rate of underdevelopment, therefore, their leaders should avoid war and its resultant effect.

West African countries are not developed enough to waste their limited resources for peace and conflict management by the African soldiers, they do not have arms and ammunition for war and therefore should always manage their conflict and crisis internally before it escalate into full war that will attract fully armed international soldiers for its- management. Ordinarily, the nature of the level of education and economic condition of most West African countries is not encourageable enough to call for tension, violent and war, since a great population of them are suffering from one economic problem or the other. Refugees and illegal immigrants from Africa to Europe, America and other advanced world are too much, therefore the ones that have decided to stay in their nations to manage themselves should not be discouraged by intra-state and inter-state conflicts and wars.

This discriminative Ivorian incident repeated itself in the 2010 Ivorian election that brought Quattara into power as the incumbent Cote d'Ivoire's President; objected by the outgone President Laurent Gbagbo who wanted to use political corruption of Africa to retain the political position should be a lesson. This he wanted to achieve his principle of Ivorite pure Ivoriness practices, a principle that states that for one to vote or be voted into power in Cote d'Ivoire, he must have the following requirements:

- a. Present his parent citizenship certificate in order to ensure that the person is of Ivorian parents.
- b. The person contesting for Presidential election must have lived in the country for five years before the date of the country's election.
- c. Must have not used any other country's national identity as amended in Article 11 and 35 of Ivorian constitution (Momoh 2006:76, Ibrahim and Ganibe 2008:80).

This constitutional amendment was seen by many as a desecration nfo the legacy of Houphouet-Boligny who maintain a relative stable and inclusive political environment in a significant way if is sharpened political differences, depends ethnic, religious and communal divisions between the north and the south, which also paralyzed the once vibrant socio-economic and political life of the nation (Ali 2006:90).

In view of the light of provision identified above, he argued that Quattara, a Muslim from the northern Cote d'Ivoire was a Burkinabe from Burkina Faso. The October 2010 presidential election led to a major political crisis where the incumbent president, Laurent Gbagbo refused to cede power despite the electoral commission declaring his main rival Alassane Quattara the winner of the election with 54.1% of the total vote cast which ended with a run-off in November, 2010. The United Nations office for the coordination of humanitarian Affairs according to Ocha (2011) stated that ensuring political violence led to widespread human right abuse forced over one million Ivoirians to flee away from the country into neighbouring countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, with over eight hundred thousand people as internally displaced.

Africa and other leaders should understand that any intrastate or inter-state matters in Africa disturbs the entire region and attracts the world powers and UN in general and should be as a matter of fact, control themselves to avoid international attention.

### **Conclusion**

Amiable and God-fearing leaders should be given opportunity to emerge as leaders. Accountability, honesty, sincere and people of integrity must be considered by the electorate before voting in anybody as a leader. There must be a law stating strictly on the measure or modality for an evenly sharing of the country's natural resource output. The area of concentration of the natural resource must be given proper definition and attention while sharing the revenue and proper compensation should be given to the ethnic groups of the resource.

The outcome of the civil war or political conflict is never palatable for any country's consumption because no meaningful economic development can occur in a chaotic state.

### **Recommendations**

- a. African countries with abundance of natural resources in their countries should embark upon an evenly distribution of the proceed of the resource to the entire nation without corruption and selfish interest.
- b. Religious and ethnic politics should be properly addressed among the West African countries while electing their leaders in their democratic dispensation.
- c. Leaders with national interest must be allowed to context for their presidential election, in order to protect the nation's national interest and not an ethnic and religious interest.
- d. Developing nations should encourage politicians with powerful political will and sound administrative knowledge to context for a Presidential election.
- e. The policy of Elitism should be eradicated in African polity, (Elites leaders destroy economy). The Elites do not like change in governance and may decides to cease power all the days of their life without any meaningful economic and developmental change. Political powers should always revolve on a particular group of people or on their relations.
- f. Regulation which should guarantee environmental protection, decent working condition, adequate compensation for resettlements and participation of the local population in negotiating the term of extraction should be considered. National Resource abundance areas should be given special economic and developmental attention and job consideration in order to address youths restiveness in such region.

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