

Ethnic Conflict and UN Peacekeeping Operations in Cote d'Ivoire

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Abstract

The article critically examines the effectiveness of the UN (peacekeeping) Operation Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). In doing so, it elucidates the challenges associated with employing Chapter VI and Chapter VII (i.e., non-military coercion [Article 41] and forcible military action [Article 42]) to resolve the ethnic conflict amongst the disputed parties. In particular, it considers the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as 'forcible military action' and argues that the implication of the framework has resulted in effective peace enforcement (i.e., UNOCI completed its mandate in June 2017). The article also illuminates several underlying factors that led to the eruption of violent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. The analysis has been presented through the hourglass model and conflict triangle to realize the engagement of R2P encompassing relevant stakeholders for sustained peace in a conflict-ridden country.

Keywords

Côte d'Ivoire, United Nations, Peacekeeping, UNOCI, Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

Introduction

The agenda of the UN faced a drastic change, duly vetted by its member states, towards the closure of the Cold War. The changed agenda focused on redefining the contours of the ideological thought process of state sovereignty and how it could be intervened in under an internationally sanctioned legal framework. By 1993, this debate had led to the adoption of an extraordinary UN Charter Chapter VII interpretation. The adopted provisions focused primarily on the legal framework for enforcing international peace and ensuring civilian protection (Doyle, 2006). Alongside this, three additional clauses in different chapters of the UN Charter gained substantial importance, as elaborated below.

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The first clause is Article 2(4) of Chapter I of the UN Charter. This clause binds the member states to abstain from conveying a threat to another state while conducting their international dealings and using physical force (armed action) against any other country in the international community, thereby undermining the state boundaries or political independence of any state (U.N. Charter art. 2, para. 1). Whereas the second clause in Article 39 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter establishes the Security Council as the only authority to determine the presence of a threat or peace endangered by physical armed action and recommend corresponding action required to restore peace in the affected region (U.N. Charter art. 39, para. 1). Finally, the third clause, Article 43 of Chapter VII, puts an obligation on all member states of the UN to provide resources required by the Security Council for maintaining or restoring international peace. These resources may include the availability of armed forces, logistical support needed for the sustenance of troops, including the right of passage, and any other necessary assistance. (U.N. Charter art. 43, para. 1)

The clauses mentioned above in the UN Charter provide the legal framework for using force internationally and further specify that the UN is an organization committed to maintaining global peace and security. An aspect to note here is that the UN also responds to humanitarian crises, including climate change-related disasters (Leandrit, 2021; Sommaruga, 2004). Therefore, Articles 41 and 42 of Chapter VII call for necessary action to counter the violence and maintain peace. (Ford, 2012).

To further understand the implications of the mentioned UN charters, this paper explores the ethnic conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. It identifies the underlying causes that led to the eruption of conflict, the practice adopted by the UN for enforcing peace, the role of regional players (in addition to the UN), and the effectiveness of R2P vis-à-vis conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. The utility of Johan Galtung's Hourglass Model has also been discussed to comprehend its utility in similar conflict-ridden contexts (Galtung, 2013; Ramsbotham et al., 2017).

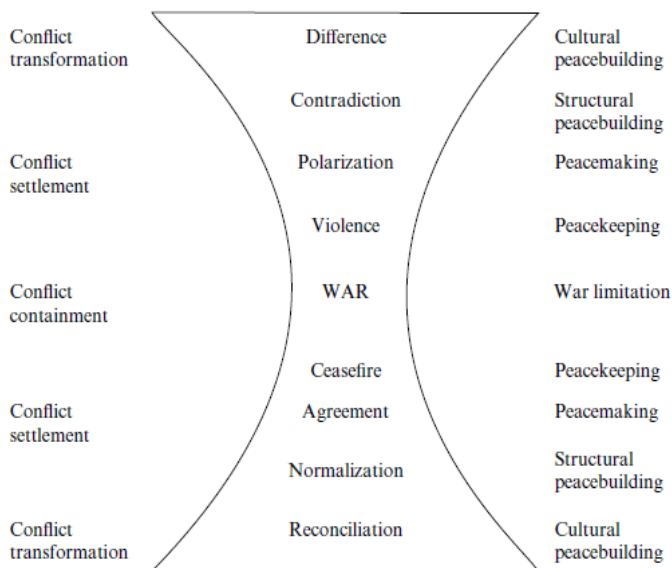
Theoretical Framework

Though the UN Charter does provide the legal framework to employ force for the peaceful settlement of conflicts, it is imperative that an in-depth understanding of the issue at hand be taken into account before the induction of troops in the conflict-ridden country. In this vein, the Conflict Triangle (attitude, behavior, and contradiction) (Galtung, 2013) and the Hourglass Model (Ramsbotham et al., 2017) provide an ideal framework for analyzing conflicts in different contexts.

The hourglass model provides an ideal theoretical framework for studying the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire across different stages. The model elaborates on the nine different stages of conflict with the widening and narrowing of the hourglass. These stages correspondingly describe the conflict resolution methods that can minimize the escalation factor in the conflict. In addition, the mentioned stages also refer to the combination of appropriate responses that need to be worked on together to attain peace (see Figure 1).

The application of the hourglass model further ascertains the efficacy of the framework in explaining the dynamics of the ethnic conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. It also represents different approaches to conflict and violence with respect to the escalation or de-escalation phases of conflict (Ramsbotham et al., 2017).

Figure 1: Hourglass Model



Brief History: Côte d'Ivoire Conflict

Since 1843, Côte d'Ivoire has remained a French colony. Later in 1960, it received the status of an independent country. Soon after its independence, Côte d'Ivoire was recognized as one of the wealthiest countries in West Africa, owing to the establishment of cordial diplomatic ties with France and the production of cocoa, which included exports to international trade markets. As a leading country in the production and exports of cocoa, Côte d'Ivoire attracted significant foreign investment and accounted for substantial national GDP (Amoro & Shen, 2013; Eberhardt & Teal, 2010).

Though the nascent leadership laid the foundation for the state to prosper, the country plunged into political chaos after the death of its first leader, Félix Houphout-Boigny (who served from 1960 until 1993). The political unrest in the country led to a military coup d'état in December 1999. Later in January 2000, the military commander, General Robert Gué, became the country's leader. However, the people of Cote d'Ivoire opposed the military takeover through widespread protests, forcing him to resign from office in October 2000 (Sidibe, 2013).

Another election brought Mr. Laurent Gbagbo as the next president of Cote d'Ivoire. However, the Presidency witnessed a failed military coup in September 2002, which paved the way for a civil war. Once the peacekeeping forces established a buffer zone after the ceasefire in 2003, the country seemed to be divided into two parts: the rebels in the north of Cote d'Ivoire and pro-government forces in the south (Sidibe, 2013). In March 2007, President Gbagbo and the former rebel leader, Mr. Guillaume Soro, agreed to a power-sharing agreement between the two parties. Most notably, as per the agreement, Mr. Soro would join the government as prime minister. Other provisions of the agreement included accepting general elections in the nation and reunifying the country by removing the UN peacekeeping forces' buffer zone. The fate of the rebel forces on both sides was also decided with the aim of integration

into the national mainstream through a well-developed disarmament, demobilization, and rehabilitation program. However, the general election in Côte d'Ivoire took three years (from 2007 to 2010) owing to the required electoral preparation and related formalities. Nevertheless, the elections were successfully held in 2010, resulting in the victory of Mr. Alassane Ouattara. But Mr. Gbagbo refused to accept the election outcome, resulting in another spell of chaos and violence in the entire country for the next five months (Sidibe, 2013).

Only armed supporters of Mr. Ouattara were able to remove Mr. Gbagbo from power in 2011, though the UN and French peacekeeping forces gave their approval in secret. Mr. Ouattara remained in power from 2011–2015 and also retained his second and (present) third terms, i.e., from 2015–2020 and 2020–2025. The constitutional court's decision allowing President Ouattara to continue in office made the third term possible.

Political unrest and the consequent civil war in Côte d'Ivoire (1999–2006 and 2010–2011) led to serious consequences for efforts to maintain peace and stability in Sub-Saharan Africa. The case of Côte d'Ivoire tragically demonstrated how quickly unresolved underlying issues and/or structural determinants could lead to a downward spiral of violence (Background: United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, 2003).

Côte d'Ivoire: Stages of Conflict

The conflict resolution strategy for Côte d'Ivoire has progressively incorporated national, regional, and international actors and thus provides one of the most recent examples of 'hybrid' UN peacekeeping operations in Africa (Bovcon, 2009). The undermentioned paragraphs discuss each stage of the Côte d'Ivoire conflict, as per the hourglass model. With regard, an attempt has been made to ascertain how successfully the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire justifies the model.

Difference

The first stage of the Hourglass Model (Ramsbotham et al., 2017) deals with identifying the differences that create a sense of animosity, or 'us' vs. 'them' between or among the states or groups. As mentioned earlier, Côte d'Ivoire gained independence from France in 1960, and Mr. Félix Houphouët-Boigny remained president until he died in 1990. With his death, the country's political and economic conditions started deteriorating. More importantly, several studies have viewed the violent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire a religious lens between the Muslim-dominated region of the north and the Christian-led south (Langer, 2008; Nordås, 2014).

The conflict in Cote d'Ivoire has also been recognized as an ethnic struggle between the farmers holding agrarian lands in the Savannah (northern) region and those with almost no lands in the forest of the southern region (Chauveau & Richards, 2008; Colin, Kouamé, & Soro, 2007). Here it is important to mention the label 'Ivoirité' coined by President Bédié, which presented a blemished and stigmatized image of other ethnic identities living in Cote d'Ivoire (Background: United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, 2003).

Nevertheless, the Cote d'Ivoire conflict is incredibly multifaceted; hence, it must not be overly simplified through a mere religious and/or ethnic lens. Therefore, understanding the structural determinants (socio-economic and political) and issues related to land, migration, and succession struggle is important (Bah, 2012; Sidibe, 2013; Kirwin, 2006).

Tracing the history of the economic crisis in the country takes us back to the 1980s, when the world market was flooded with products made of cocoa and coffee.

Consequently, the market hegemony of Côte d'Ivoire and its international competitiveness were challenged. Accordingly, Côte d'Ivoire began producing cocoa-related products. This resulted in the collapse of world price markets, and thus a downward trend in export-based revenues was witnessed. By 1987, the worsening economic situation had seemingly hurt Ivorian society, and structural stresses became more visible at the community level (Kirwin, 2006).

The passing of Mr. Félix Houphouët-Boigny (in 1993) and the subsequent succession and political instability had further effects on socioeconomic development. The Ivorian law made the Speaker of the National Assembly in charge of county affairs in the event of the in-office death of the serving President of the country until the end of a presidential term. However, there was a visible change in the country's domestic politics, whereby the presence of other democratic actors challenged the one-party system. The important ones included Mr. Laurent Gbagbo (leader of the opposition), representing Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI), and Mr. Alassane Ouattara, representing Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI). A reformist agenda drove PDCI's political struggle (Bovcon, 2009).

Mr. Bédié further fueled the economic differences in Ivorian society and the domestic political instability. In order to win popular support and legitimize his tenure, Mr. Bédié coined the infamous yet contentious ideological term 'Ivoirite'. This term underpins the concept of 'true Ivoirians', implying that only those living in Côte d'Ivoire at its creation have the right to rule the country and are the actual contenders for power. The term referred to the Akan ethnic group (more precisely, the Baoulé), and not surprisingly, the ruling President, Mr. Bédié, and his party identified themselves with the same ethnic group (Bovcon, 2009). The military coup by General Gueï during the year 1999 ousted Mr. Bédié from power. The concept of 'Ivoirite' was further changed by General Robert Guéï. As a non-Baoulé leader, Guéï 'crystallized' the concept by introducing the clause of differentiating southern non-Dyula people from northern Dyula people. This further transformed the ethnic divide between the people living in the north and south of Côte d'Ivoire (Sidibe, 2013; Tompihe, 2007).

Polarization

The political marginalization in the country resulted in one-party rule while exploiting the issue of being 'non-Ivoirite'. According to the hourglass model, at this stage of the conflict, opposing parties attempt to damage each other in every possible way, but without any violence. The political leadership of the North was polarized in the same context by the ethnic divide propagated officially at the state level. To further compound the problem, the land rights of the 'non-Ivoirite' were also questioned by the original owner of the lands. Hence, this resulted in violence, making people in the North even more aggravated (Kirwin, 2006).

Furthermore, as mentioned above, the national integration of the Ivorian people was severely affected owing to the country's worsening economic conditions, primarily caused by the increasing fluctuation in market prices of cocoa-related commodities. This looming economic crisis was further exacerbated owing to the corruption of the ruling political elite (Special Report of the Secretary-General on Côte d'Ivoire, 2018).

Violence

The Hourglass model explains that 'violence' erupts with the intent of physically hurting or damaging each other (Ramsbotham et al., 2017). The beginning of violence

in the Côte d'Ivoire ethnic conflict started with the decision of Junta leader General Robert Guéi to go for a military coup against the ruling government. This forced then-President Bédié's exile in France; however, the same period witnessed the return of Mr. Ouattara to Côte d'Ivoire. There was another irony in the matter: the military coup was initially planned by the lower commanders of the Ivorian Junta, but they had no share in the newly formed government. The top military brass ran the affairs of the state, while the junior officers were allegedly found to be involved in 'managing' the criminal gangs. This led to further chaos in the country; hence, the law and order situation worsened with a direct impact on the local and national economies (Kirwin, 2006).

General Robert Guéi did announce the general elections; however, he effectively kept Mr. Ouattara (the leader of the northern Muslim-dominated region) out of elections in the year 2000 based on 'non-Ivoirite'. It is pertinent to highlight that Mr. Ouattara, from northern Côte d'Ivoire, received full support from the Savannas region. Being the agrarian basket of the country, the farmers in the north showed reluctance towards filling the national exchequer and anger over their branding as 'non-Ivoirite' (Cook, 2011).

The period between the military coup and the conduct of the election for the new government was extremely violent throughout the country, including in Abidjan (the capital city of Côte d'Ivoire) (Zounmenou & Lamin, 2011; Banégas, 2011). The increasing violence during this period killed over fifty young men in the suburbs of Abidjan. The investigation revealed this to be an outcome of the political rivalry, as these young people mostly supported RDR. There were other cases where killings of RDR supporters took place owing to their alleged involvement in the abduction and killing of Gendarmerie individuals (Cook, 2011). The violence also included the politically motivated killing of eighteen FPI supporters by Ébrié Lagoon, and another six became targets near the Blocosso suburb. A surge in violence was observed during October and December 2020, as 140 people were reportedly killed during October 2020 and 42 during December 2020 (Kirwin, 2006).

War

This phase is the most critical stage of the conflict, as violence turns into an open war between the involved groups and/or states (Ramsbotham et al., 2017). Analyzing the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire through the hourglass model reveals that it was in the month of September 2002 that the tension between the opposition parties intensified. The beginning of the military coup on September 18, 2020, started with pro-Guéi soldiers going on a mutiny once they were expelled from the National Army by the government of Gbagbo. However, the exact figures regarding the strength, military capacity, and network are still hard to quantify due to the lack of data. Another important aspect to consider is that, in the beginning, they demanded to be reinstated in the armed forces along with financial compensation. However, later, their demands shifted to a more politically motivated agenda. The rebels branded themselves as the 'Forces Nouvelles' (a political coalition) while demanding the resignation of President Gbagbo, new elections, and the reversal of only the 'Ivoirite' political scheme. As mentioned previously, Mr. Ouattara could not participate in the election owing to the 'Ivoirite' slogan. This was the beginning of the first Ivorian civil war, and correspondingly, the situation necessitated the international community's intervention to restore peace in the conflict-ridden Côte d'Ivoire (Special Report of the Secretary-General on Côte d'Ivoire, 2018).

The overall security situation and crime rate in the capital of Côte d'Ivoire worsened greatly; however, the resultant curfew imposed in the aftermath of the military coup did bring some normalcy to the security situation. After 2003, organized crime again started rising due to easy access and an increase in the number of weapons in Abidjan. During this time, Abidjan was regarded as the second most dangerous city owing to the threats to expatriates, followed by Baghdad (Iraq). The region became highly militarized and securitized, marked by several security checkpoints, impacting local mobility and the standard of living for the people of Abidjan (McGovern, 2011).

Hybrid employment of all law enforcement agencies (police, gendarmes [a paramilitary force], and soldiers) was deployed at the checkpoints. However, the local communities perceived that the 'strict security' checks were functionalized only to target Mandé and Gour ethnic identities. The labor class of the northern region was more vulnerable during these security checks owing to its frequent passage on a daily basis (Starus, 2011; McGovern, 2011; Zounmenou & Lamin, 2011; Banégas, 2011).

Ceasefire

According to the hourglass model, conflict containment is needed to make talks and peace possible at this stage (Ramsbotham et al., 2017). In the same context, the country saw the arrival of the French Licorne forces just three days after the attempted military coup. In the beginning, the French forces were mandated to evacuate French nationals and other foreigners interested in moving out of the ongoing civil war. The action of French forces was dubbed a legitimized one, as the aim was to save the French nationals in Côte d'Ivoire once the government could not provide security owing to the worsening law and order situation. The US Special Forces came to the rescue of the Americans on Ivorian soil, but other foreigners were helped evacuate by the French forces as per the demand of the other countries. (Bovcon, 2009).

As the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire was limited to rebel groups in the north and south of the country and was termed a localized problem, the French forces did not help one party particularly. Instead, French forces formed a buffer zone by positioning themselves between the two halves of the country, i.e., the north and the south. The mandate of French troops was thus the Protection of Civilians (PoC) as a peacekeeping force, and this neutral stance did make both parties in the conflict angry.

Besides France, another actor entered the conflict zone and tried to ease the situation. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had organized the mission back then. The response by ECOWAS was regarded as quick and prompt in the international community with diplomatic engagements. The community group conducted an extraordinary summit on the prevailing situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The summit was held in Accra on September 29, 2002. This resulted in the formation of a contact group tasked with paving the way for a peace dialogue between the warring parties (Peacekeeping: United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d.).

Agreement

The hourglass model highlights that the agreement reached should be able to address the grievances of both parties. The efforts were made in the same context and yielded positive results. The cease-fire agreement of October 17, 2002, was reached between

the warring factions of the North and the South with the help of France and ECOWAS (Bovcon, 2009).

The next step towards peace was the organization of roundtable talks between the conflicting parties to reach an agreement on peace. These roundtable talks were successful and saw the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis accords. The main cardinals included the preservation of the territorial integrity of Côte d'Ivoire and the formation of a transitional government with representatives of all parties. The transitional government was tasked with holding a free and fair election; however, binding conditions were put on all warring factions to let go of their arms and complete the combatants' disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program (Kirwin, 2006).

The noteworthy removal of the clause of 'Ivoirite' (Article 35), which led to the ethnic divide of the country as part of the agreement, made Mr. Outtara (barred in two previous elections) eligible to contest the next elections. (Adebayo, 2012).

Normalization

The hourglass model explains the calming down of violent relations between adversaries in this stage of the model. Different stakeholders made an effort to improve the country's security situation and restore peace to Côte d'Ivoire, which is currently in a state of conflict. In the same context, a third actor entered the scene of conflict, i.e., the UN. Based on the security assessments and realizing the potential threat to the people of Côte d'Ivoire, a political mission named MINUCI was formed on May 13, 2003. The mandate of MINUCI was to create favorable conditions that would urge the warring factions to work towards implementing the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The peacekeepers of MINUCI were also to complement the already working peacekeepers of ECOWAS and the French troops (Peacekeeping: United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d.).

In April 2004, UN Operations in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI) was established on the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General. The resolution passed by the Security Council was named Resolution 1528 (2004). The mandate of the MINUCI was terminated with the formation of the ONUCI. To bring unity of command and effort, the MINUCO and ECOWAS forces came under ONUCI. The UN noted the resistance as a coordinated and dedicated effort towards bringing peace and normalcy to Côte d'Ivoire while ensuring the POC (Resolution 1528: United Nations Security Council, 2004).

Like MINUCI, implementing the agreed-upon points between the warring factions became UNOCI's leading objective, thus working towards peace and ending the civil war in Cote d'Ivoire. Besides, other cardinals of the ONUCI's mandate include the implementation of the agreements between the conflict parties, the pre-election enforcement of DDR programs, and supporting the conduct of free and fair elections in the country. The Security Council gave ONUCI permission to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate throughout the deployment area, unlike other actors. The mandate of the mission was initially stipulated by Resolution 1528 and subsequently further developed and modified by the Security Council on several occasions to reflect on the evolving situation on the ground and the needs of the mission (UNOCI Mandate: United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 2015).

Another important step towards normalizing the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire was the 2005 summit in Addis Ababa. During this summit, an International Working Group (GTI) was formed. The representation in GTI included several African countries, including France, the US, and Britain. The assigned mandate to the

group included assessing, monitoring, and facilitating the peace processes between the conflict parties in the country. The participation and contribution of France in this process as an independent party through the UN and ECOWAS were noteworthy (Bovcon, 2009).

Reconciliation

Owing to the slow progress of the DDR program, elections could not be held in the country until 2006. The mandate of ONUCI and LICORNE (French UN Operation) was prolonged by adopting Resolution 1739. The power invested in the transition government was enhanced by the smooth conduct of the agreed-upon pre-election formalities. The diplomatic situation worsened once Mr. Laurent Gbagbo declined to accept the provisions in the resolution, as he saw these provisions as attacking Ivorian sovereignty (Security Council Resolution 1739, UN Security Council, 2007).

Nevertheless, again thanks to the efforts of regional and international players in the shape of ECOWAS, LICORNE forces, ex-France, and UNOCI, general elections were conducted in 2010. Mr. Alissane Outtara, leader of the North, won the election. However, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo refused to step down from power. With the alleged assistance of ONUCI and LICORNE forces, Alissane Ouattara's supporters violently removed him from power (Post-Election Crisis: United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d.).

The efforts of regional and international players have been critical in bringing sustained peace to Côte d'Ivoire. Mr. Alissane Outtara once again won the second political election in Côte d'Ivoire in 2015. The conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has reached its post-conflict structural and cultural peace-building efforts. The democratic process is well on its way, and the rule of law has been established throughout Côte d'Ivoire. The UN has played a progressive role in bringing back normalcy in Côte d'Ivoire. The R2P (though in a nascent stage at the beginning of the conflict) has performed well under the auspices of UN Peacekeeping Operations in Côte d'Ivoire.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P), UN Charter, and Côte d'Ivoire Conflict

Considering the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in Côte d'Ivoire under the overall framework of the UN Charter and, in particular, R2P, if peaceful means are not yielding the desired results, then as per UN Chapter VII, the use of non-military coercion (Article 41) and forcible military action (Article 42) can be employed. The R2P has forcible military action as a last resort (Ramsbotham et al., 2017). The theoretical discussion on R2P brings out the need for states and the international community to protect populations at risk and take collective action to protect people under threat of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (Orford, 2011).

The prevailing situation in Côte d'Ivoire was perfectly ripe for the international community to protect the population of the country, which was at risk of major violence being divided into ethnic lines by the adopted 'Ivorite' at the state level. Further considering the notion of R2P, on September 14, 2009, the General Assembly passed its first resolution on R2P, and most members widely accepted it. Due to this, the work in the conceptual domain shifted towards the operationalization of R2P. According to the Secretary-General, implementing the R2P now 'demands a system-wide UN effort', including efforts in human rights, humanitarian affairs, peacekeeping, and political affairs. (Orford, 2011).

The R2P today boasts widespread state support and has become firmly embedded at the highest levels of international political discourse. Fifty-nine states

have appointed an 'R2P Focal Point', and forty-nine states and the European Union have joined the 'Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect'. More significantly, R2P has been invoked by the Security Council in 67 resolutions, by the Human Rights Council in over 30 resolutions, and affirmed by many inter-state regional bodies (Hehir, 2018).

The aforementioned highlights that R2P is widely accepted amongst many UN General Assembly member states, and the international community must act to protect the populations of those countries under threat of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The African regional countries, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), played a significant role in identifying and recommending the need for PoC under the UN Charter (Peacekeeping: United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d.).

The United Nations Mission in Cote d'Ivoire could be seen as the manifestation and operationalization of the concept of R2P, even though it was not widely discussed in 2003. Although R2P was nascent, different regional and international actors visualized and implemented its contours. The hybrid employment of French forces (ex-colonial power in Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS), the regional actor, and UNOCI sanctioned under the auspices of the Security Council all point towards operationalizing the R2P in the country. At the time, R2P was evolving in nature, and intelligentsia and peace experts were working around the globe to lift the fog and crystallize such hybrid peace efforts under a term, i.e., coined in the future as R2P.

Conclusion

The hourglass model ideally covers all the stages of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. The model highlights the political struggle fueled by an ethnic divide lasting over a decade. Although the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire is multi-layered, the origin of the ethnic divide could be traced back to the introduction of the contentious concept of Ivoirite. President Bédié introduced this for the persistence of his regime, which further laid the foundation of the worst political, economic, ethnic, and social implications for the Ivorian society. Not only this, but it also secluded almost half of the country's population from the national mainstream. The underlying social discontent of the masses came to the surface with the failed military coup in 2002. The ideological underpinnings behind the coup were the disreputable Ivoirite concept and Mr. Laurent Gbagbo's illegitimate government. (Bovcon. 2009).

The operationalization of the concept of R2P in Côte d'Ivoire is hybrid in nature. Firstly, France, one of the past colonial powers controlling Côte d'Ivoire, took the initiative to resolve the ethnic conflict. Though there were reservations expressed by the international players regarding the chances of a Rwandan genocide getting repeated in Côte d'Ivoire and an increase in the worsening security situation in West Africa, it was France that reluctantly came forward and placed its forces for the establishment of a buffer zone between the warring North and South. The action taken by France to establish the buffer zone and not be a party in the conflict assisted in putting a halt to the worsening security situation, and the resultant stalemate brought the warring factions to the desired peace talks (Hehir, 2018).

After France, the peace initiative to settle the violence in Côte d'Ivoire was also led by regional (ECOWAS) and international (UN) actors. ECOWAS and the UN played a positive role in the R2P in the case of Côte d'Ivoire. This implies that if the efforts towards peace attainment are carefully employed with regional actors and organizations on board, these efforts will yield fruitful results. The peace in Côte d'Ivoire was only possible after adopting a multi-pronged strategy (the French Force,

ECOWAS, and the UN Peacekeepers) as part of the more prominent conception of R2P. All actors played their roles in conflict resolution. However, it is also important to consider the nature and background of the conflict during peace attainment, as it is equally important, and, if carried out objectively under a comprehensive theoretical framework, would yield rich dividends. It would pave the way for smooth conflict resolution (Bovcon, 2009).

The ethnic conflict in Cote d'Ivoire resulted in chaos in the country, which lasted for over a decade; however, peace and normalcy in the land returned owing to the application of the UN Peacekeeping Operations at the required time, i.e., once the conflict was ripe. Furthermore, the hybrid approach also led to the success of the peacekeeping operations and the successful resolution of the ethnic conflict in the country (Zartman, 2008). In conclusion, Johan Galtung's Hourglass model is useful for studying a violent ethnic conflict in its entirety and has allowed the consideration of a multidimensional approach to be used for conflict resolution. Thus, this model is recommended as a theoretical lens for studying other ethnic conflicts across the globe.

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