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A Socioeconomic Analysis of Francophone and Anglophone West Africa

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Jackson Gagne

Honors Project

A Socioeconomic Analysis of Francophone and Anglophone West Africa

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Introduction

As with many of humanity's attempts to characterize and label people, places, and actions, the limits and extent of "West Africa" as a region are not perfect and are subject to debate. Though there is a common "core" of sixteen countries, the borders of this region are not definite. The United Nations defines the West African region as the middle picture below, with its borders being Mauritania in the northwest, Niger in the northeast, Nigeria in the southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean providing the border in the southwest. The maps on the left and right depict other common demarcations of the region.



The climate, peoples, and traditions within this region of 396,000,000 people (Worldometers 2019) are incredibly diverse, as anyone who has studied a geographic region could guess. In the north, the Sahara Desert looms large and imposing, slowly expanding every year. Just below it is the Sahel, the "semiarid region of western and north-central Africa extending from Senegal eastward to Sudan" (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2018). Throughout the remainder of West Africa lie plains, forests, mountains, rainforests, and coastlands. The main linguistic divide is English and French due to approximately a century of colonization, though major European powers

attempted to claim African lands all across the continent after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. From that point, the so-called “Scramble for Africa” began in full force, and England, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, and Italy raced to claim territory. Besides the colonial tongues, hundreds of different languages are spoken from multiple language families; some countries, like Cameroon, contain over 250 languages themselves (Kouega pp. 3-94). And the region is cut between Muslim, Christian, animist, and a mixture of said three religious beliefs.

In this Honors Project, my aim is to analyze francophone (French-speaking) and anglophone (English-speaking) West Africa in terms of their socioeconomic performance, development, and the effects of colonization. As West Africa is too vast to examine in its entirety, especially for a project such as this, I have chosen four countries in particular to study. Two of them are anglophone (Ghana and Nigeria), and two of them are francophone (Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon). Cameroon also includes English as an official language, but it is spoken by a minority in the country and I will expand on its particular situation further on in the paper. I will be attempting to “match” Ghana with Cote d'Ivoire as well as Nigeria with Cameroon. Comparisons and contrasts will be made to determine if any trends of British versus French colonial rule or the overall path of development emerge.

The structure of the project is as follows:

- Literature Review. I will be reviewing scholarly articles dealing with the subjects studied in this research project as well as positioning my project among them.
- The selection of the countries. This will include the reasoning behind it and some basic information. Geography, history, and economy of the country will be discussed.

- Comparison, contrast and analysis. I'll be comparing economic and political indicators among the countries, drawing trends, and looking into cause-and-effect relationships.
- Interviews. I will be interviewing some individuals that are from the selected countries to gauge their perceptions and feelings of subjects approached in this project.
- Findings. I'll put my main conclusions and findings from the research and analysis in this section.

Literature Review

Postcolonial borderland legacies of Anglo-French partition in West Africa by

William F. S. Miles

This article from *African Studies Review* takes a look at how artificial and sudden border creation of English and French colonies in West Africa affected ethnic groups that suddenly found themselves split apart. It speaks of general trends but also specific ethnic group divisions along the Ghana-Cote d'Ivoire border as well as the Nigeria-Cameroon border. The article serves to enhance this project by providing insight on the differences of colonial administration and the effects on life for the people living under their regimes.

First and foremost, Miles notes the importance of analyzing the effects (if any) of such divisions. He notes the population of former French West Africa (105 million people) and British West Africa (207 million) and remarks that, "if French-British colonial legacies make a difference, they therefore do so on a very large scale." If an administration helped, hindered, or left a group of people alone, the consequences of those actions play a role in the current state of hundreds of millions of people. And Miles does insist that there are visible differences via his study of so-called "borderlanders," or ethnic groups split by colonial borders. Indeed, he states that the most important finding of the study is that "the significance of colonial and postcolonial superimposition upon lived institutional life and the shaping of worldviews has been so pervasive that a national qualifier (e.g., Nigérien, Nigerian) must be included in any such characterization." Clear differences exist, then, between these split-up borderlanders.

If Miles had to have picked a colonial empire that was better for the West Africans it ruled over, he would have likely have chosen as a result from his research the British Empire. He writes that, “Where colonial policies on one side of a line were adjudged relatively harsh or unfair, people moved to the other. (This usually meant moving from French into British territory).” Additionally, he found that there was “indisputable preference for British over French colonialism among the Ewe, who voted with their feet by moving in significant numbers from French Togoland into British Togoland (incorporated into the Gold Coast in 1957).” Thirdly, he notes that, “Centralizing, state-centric administrative policies that perpetuate colonial policies of direct rule in Francophone nations, for instance, have suppressed ethnic assertiveness more than Anglophone policies have, and thus the Ashanti, Ewe, Hausa, and Yoruba in Ghana and Nigeria have fared better than their ethnic cousins in Benin, Togo, and Niger.” Tough direct rule in French West Africa appeared to drive people over the border into the more lenient indirectly-ruled British West Africa.

A final take-away from *Postcolonial borderland legacies of Anglo-French partition in West Africa* is that, as Miles expresses it, “the major postcolonial legacies, however, are linguistic, institutional, and economic: the perpetuation of French versus English as the official language; distinctive administrative, judicial, and local government systems; and parallel economic systems and currencies, which make smuggling a way of life.” Here we see the three main effects that shape the lives and future of the people groups in West African countries. Borders are such arbitrary, artificial things; yet here, we see that they have a very real and visible impact on the lives of those who live within them.

What Drives Foreign Direct Investments into West Africa? An Empirical Investigation by John C. Anyanwu and Nadege D. Yameogo

This article, taken from *African Development Review*, analyzes the “drives of foreign direct investment (FDI) to West Africa using a paneled dataset from 1970 to 2010.” The authors note the well-known importance of the role of FDI in the development of a country, especially for African nations, as it “helps these economies move beyond overdependence on natural resources.” As we will see in the section on Nigeria, in particular, the country’s massive economy is heavily focused on the oil found naturally within the country’s boundaries. Were the oil to suddenly run out, the country’s economy would grind to a halt.

Moving forward, the authors detail the various reasons transnational corporations (TNC) choose to utilize FDI, specifically mentioning the OLI framework (Ownership, Location, Internalization). Ownership advantage has to do with “property rights/patents, expertise and other intangible assets.” These allow the TNC to retain control of the operations in the country as opposed to simply finding and working with a partner who may not have similar expectations and aligned goals. Location advantage involves “labor advantages, natural resources, trade barriers that restrict imports, gains in trade costs and strategic advantages through intangible assets.” Cheap labor, abundant resources such as oil, and an openness to foreign business draw in FDI. Finally, internalization advantage is “the reduction of uncertainty and transaction costs in order to generate knowledge more efficiently.” Having operations in a foreign country allows for TNCs to get around some trade barriers or foreign exchange transaction costs that would have arisen via direct exporting or other similar methods.

Following this, the authors conduct a literature review of the relationship between FDI and various factors, such as foreign aid and urbanization. They also constructed a model that examines this relationship. One of the more interesting results of their model is that “there is a negative relationship between FDI inflows to the sub-region and loan component of ODA [Official Development Assistance, or international aid], economic growth, level of economic development (real GDP per capita), life expectancy, and domestic credit to the private sector.” That is, the higher GDP growth rate (what they used to symbolize economic growth), the less FDI a country may receive, *ceterus paribus*. Finally, “real per capita GDP, domestic investment, trade openness, first year lag of FDI, natural resources (oil and metals) endowment and exports, and monetary integration have a positive and significant effect on FDI inflows to West Africa.”

Foreign Direct Investment Inflow, Volatility, and Domestic Investment in West Africa by Eregha, P. B.

Eregha’s study, focuses on examining “whether the inflow of FDI substitutes or complements domestic investment and as well analyzes the possible effect of FDI volatility on domestic investment in ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] countries.” The opening of this article, found in *The Journal of Developing Areas*, begins with an overview of current and recent levels of FDI in Africa in general and then West Africa specifically. It notes that while FDI percentages have been increasing in Africa, recently, they are still far below other levels of the world. For example, “Africa’s share in global inflow of FDI reached 3.1%, 3.9% and 5.2% in 2005, 2006 and 2008 respectively” whereas “Asia’s share of world FDI inflows was 20.8%,”

19.3% and 22.9%” in the same time period. Examining West African FDI, the article cites that the natural resources sector in West Africa receives nearly two-thirds of FDI in the region, followed by 31% in services and 6% in manufacturing. The oil sector in Nigeria was noted as receiving the most FDI amongst all countries and sectors in the region.

Eregha then does a detailed literature review on previous academic papers on the relationship between FDI and domestic growth or investment. The papers seem split on whether FDI “crowds in,” or complements domestic growth, or if it “crowds out,” or substitutes domestic growth. After creating his own model accounting for FDI volatility, the author finds that “contemporaneous FDI inflow has negative and significant effect on domestic investment while the lagged values had positive and insignificant effects. . . a one percentage increase in FDI inflow will reduce domestic investment by 0.96 percent which is a large negative effect.” This seems to agree with the findings of Anyanwu and Yameogo mentioned above. Eregha recommends, from his findings, that FDI be better funnelled into West African economies and diversified. If the vast majority of FDI is heading towards the oil sector, then dynamic oil prices will make FDI inflows volatile, which then has a demonstrated negative effect on domestic growth.

From rivalry to partnership? Critical reflections on Anglo-French cooperation in Africa by Cumming, Gordon D. and Chafer, Tony

This article, found in *Review of International Studies*, details the history of Anglo-French competition between the two powers as well as the more recent cooperation in Africa. It begins by noting that rivalry between the UK and France had been around

since the nineteenth century, only subsiding and turning into a shaky partnership after the Saint-Malo summit of 1998. Both countries used their colonies for their own needs, ignoring poverty reduction and welfare for most of the twentieth century. This competition was held in check, however, by the need to be on the same side during the Cold War as well as the “benign neglect of Africa” on the UK’s part for much of the twentieth century.

The desire to cooperate, though it may have been vaguely defined in the Saint-Malo Summit, has begun to increase. Interestingly, some of this Anglo-British cooperation is due to both nations preferring each other’s African policies and initiatives as opposed to the United States. A main form of teamwork appears to be in the form of silent partnership, or “where one donor funds and another agency implements a programme.” Cooperation remains limited, however, by a lack of “institutional mechanisms that bring ministers, officials and institutions together.” Differing overall objectives for the continent contribute to the potential discord as well; the authors write that “for France, Africa plays a crucial role in enhancing its rank in the international pecking order, while for the UK, Africa is much more centrally a development issue.” Concluding, Cumming and Chafer claim that “Britain and France have increased, to a significant but ultimately limited extent, their collaboration on Africa since Saint-Malo.”

Ghana



Ghana at a glance: (information from CIA World Factbook)

Capital: Accra

Independence: 6 March 1957 (from the UK)

Population: 28,102,471

Government type: presidential republic

Legal system: mixed system of English common law and customary law

Area: 238,533 sq km

Climate: tropical; warm and comparatively dry along southeast coast; hot and humid in southwest; hot and dry in north

Terrain: mostly low plains with dissected plateau in south-central area

Natural Resources: gold, timber, industrial diamonds, bauxite, manganese, fish, rubber, hydropower, petroleum, silver, salt, limestone

Population below poverty line: 24.2% (2013 est.)

Population Distribution: population is concentrated in the southern half of the country, with the highest concentrations being on or near the Atlantic coast

Median Age: 21.2 years

Ethnic Groups: Akan 47.5%, Mole-Dagbon 16.6%, Ewe 13.9%, Ga-Dangme 7.4%, Gurma 5.7%, Guan 3.7%, Grusi 2.5%, Mande 1.1%, other 1.4% (2010 est.)

Languages: Asante 16%, Ewe 14%, Fante 11.6%, Boron (Brong) 4.9%, Dagomba 4.4%, Dangme 4.2%, Dagarte (Dagaba) 3.9%, Kokomba 3.5%, Akyem 3.2%, Ga 3.1%, other 31.2% (2010 est.)

Religions: Christian 71.2% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 28.3%, Protestant 18.4%, Catholic 13.1%, other 11.4%), Muslim 17.6%, traditional 5.2%, other 0.8%, none 5.2% (2010 est.)

Major Urban Areas: 3.065 million Kumasi, 2.439 million ACCRA (capital), 855,000 Sekondi Takoradi (2018)

Life Expectancy: 67.4 years

GDP per capita:

\$4,700 (2017 est.)

\$4,500 (2016 est.)

\$4,400 (2015 est.)

GDP growth rate:

8.4% (2017 est.)

3.7% (2016 est.)

3.8% (2015 est.)

Industries: mining, lumbering, light manufacturing, aluminum smelting, food processing, cement, small commercial ship building, petroleum**Export (commodities):** oil, gold, cocoa, timber, tuna, bauxite, aluminum, manganese ore, diamonds, horticultural products

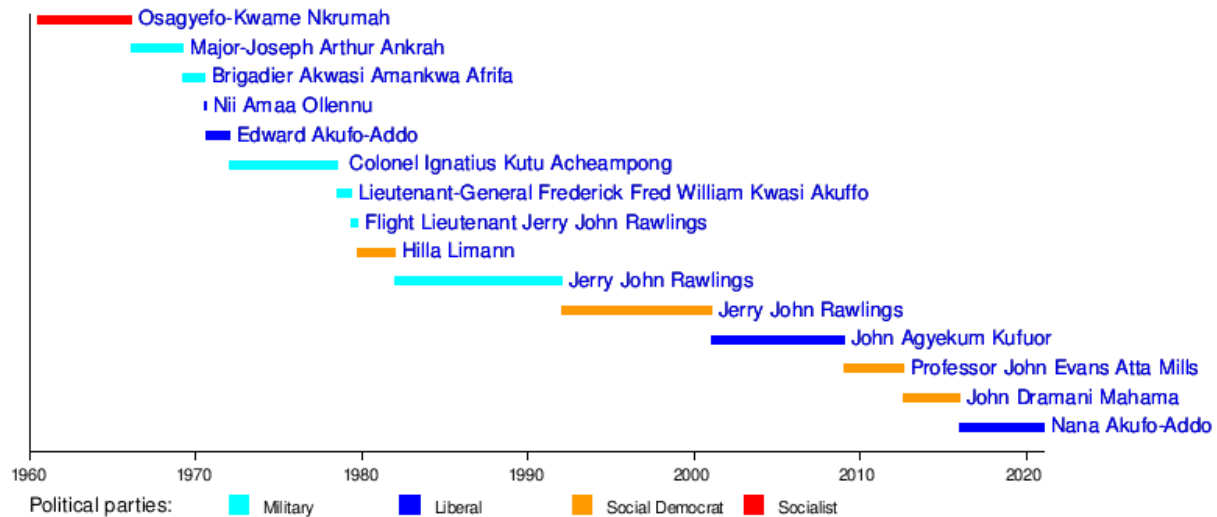
The modern nation-state of Ghana essentially emerged in 1874 when the area officially became a colony of Great Britain under the name of “the Gold Coast.”

However, the region has a substantial history prior to its colonization. As early as the ninth century, indigenous kingdoms were known and well established. The most prominent of the pre-colonization powers was certainly the Ashanti (or Asante, spellings vary) Empire, lasting from around 1670 to 1957, though the last half-century of its life it was ruled over as a protectorate by the British.

Numerous European powers established trading posts, castles and colonies along the coastline to facilitate trading and spread their spheres of influence. Gold and slaves were some of the main commodities traded. In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, Britain established firm control on the coastline of modern Ghana and began slowly working their way northward both militarily and peacefully. For nearly a hundred years, the Ashanti Empire fought against the British, but by 1900 the British claimed victory and solidified their rule over the northern provinces. As the colony became consolidated, the “gradual emergence of centralized colonial government brought about unified control over local services, although the actual administration of these services

was still delegated to local authorities, (Berry 1994)” a prime example of British indirect rule.

In 1957, Ghana became independent from colonial rule, the first country south of the Sahara to do so. A tumultuous couple of decades followed, with a military coup and several unstable administrations before Ghana’s political climate stabilized in 1981.



Gold and cocoa formed a large part of Ghana’s economy in the mid-twentieth century, and today mining and agriculture still play a large role in Ghana’s economy.

Development of these industries as well as manufacturing had very promising potential but was often “hampered by a lack of capital” and a “shortage of equipment, skilled personnel, and foreign exchange capital (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2020).” Government policies to ease doing business and relax strict standards did much to improve the economic outlook in the country, and Ghana has recently enjoyed being the fastest growing economy in the entire world as of 2019 (Fröhlich 2019).

On the political spectrum, Ghana’s relatively long history of peaceful transitions of power (especially in regards to West African states) along with concerted efforts to preserve citizen’s rights have led to it being a stable and secure country. Unlike earlier

struggles to obtain economic capital, Ghana has accumulated masses of social capital - the World Bank notes that, "Ghana consistently ranks in the top three countries in Africa for freedom of speech and press freedom, with strong broadcast media (World Bank 2019)." Ghana ranks the highest among the four countries selected in this project in the Human Development Index. Ghana aims to achieve status as a developed and industrialized country within the next two decades, and if it can continue its economic and social progress at its current rate, there is little doubt it will achieve its goal.

Cote d'Ivoire



Cote d'Ivoire at a glance: (information from CIA World Factbook)

Capital: Yamoussoukro (legislative capital), Abidjan (administrative capital)

Independence: 7 August 1960 (from France)

Population: 26,260,582 (July 2018 est.)

Government type: presidential republic

Legal system: civil law system based on French civil code

Area: 322,463 sq km

Climate: tropical along coast, semiarid in far north; three seasons - warm and dry (November to March), hot and dry (March to May), hot and wet (June to October)

Terrain: mostly flat to undulating plains; mountains in northwest

Natural Resources: petroleum, natural gas, diamonds, manganese, iron ore, cobalt, bauxite, copper, gold, nickel, tantalum, silica sand, clay, cocoa beans, coffee, palm oil, hydropower

Population below poverty line: 46.3% (2013 est.)

Population Distribution: the population is primarily located in the forested south, with the highest concentration of people residing in and around the cities on the Atlantic coast; most of the northern savanna remains sparsely populated with higher concentrations located along transportation corridors

Median Age: 19.9 years

Ethnic Groups: Akan 28.8%, Voltaique or Gur 16.1%, Northern Mande 14.5%, Kru 8.5%, Southern Mande 6.9%, unspecified 0.9%, non-Ivoirian 42.3% (2014 est.)

Languages: French (official), 60 native dialects of which Dioula is the most widely spoken

Religions: Muslim 42.9%, Catholic 17.2%, Evangelical 11.8%, Methodist 1.7%, other Christian 3.2%, animist 3.6%, other religion 0.5%, none 19.1% (2014 est.)

Major Urban Areas: 4.921 million ABIDJAN (seat of government), 231,000 YAMOUSSOUKRO (capital) (2018)

Life Expectancy: 60.1 years

GDP per capita:

\$3,900 (2017 est.)

\$3,700 (2016 est.)

\$3,500 (2015 est.)

GDP growth rate:

7.8% (2017 est.)

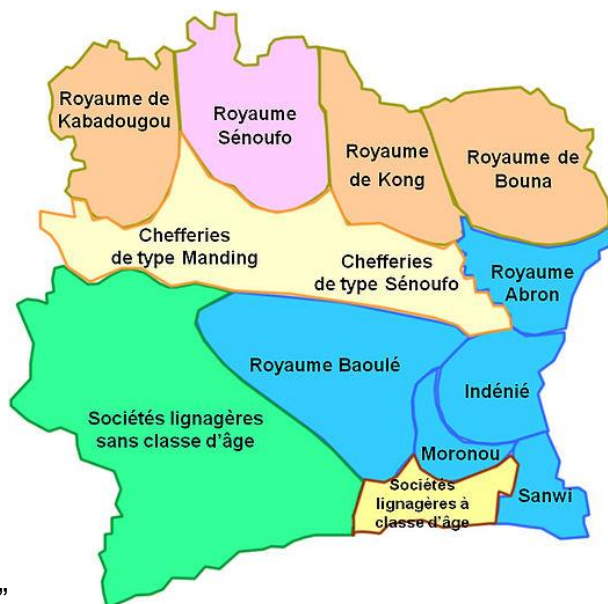
8.3% (2016 est.)

8.8% (2015 est.)

Industries: foodstuffs, beverages; wood products, oil refining, gold mining, truck and bus assembly, textiles, fertilizer, building materials, electricity

Export (commodities): cocoa, coffee, timber, petroleum, cotton, bananas, pineapples, palm oil, fish

Côte d'Ivoire, commonly known as (the) Ivory Coast in anglophone media, finds its national origin similar to many other African countries in the region. Before concerted European efforts to colonize the country, what is now Cote d'Ivoire was a collection of kingdoms based on ethnic and religious lines or unclaimed land. Some of the most important include the Baoulé, the Kong, and the Abron. However, compared to other neighboring countries such as Ghana with the Ashanti and Fanti Kingdoms, Côte d'Ivoire was rather "bereft of any substantial indigenous kingdom or civilization (Miles



2015)."

In the late 1800s, the French established firm control on the coastland, and soon after subjugated the peoples in the North. In 1893, the area officially became the French colony of Cote d'Ivoire and by 1914 the entire land was pacified of resistance. French rule in the colony was based on the concepts of assimilation and association.

Assimilation implied "extension of the French language, institutions, laws, and customs" while association "affirmed the superiority of the French in the colonies, but it entailed different institutions and systems of laws for the colonizer and the colonized (Handloff 1988)." Other than brief moments where there was a shortage of colonial governors, the French ruled directly. Westernized, educated Ivoirians could enjoy equality with their French counterparts, but for the most part the common Ivoirian had no real political rights and could at any moment be drafted into labor in the mines or serve in France's army.

Côte d'Ivoire's economy was in great shape at independence. The country was sending out 40% of all of French West Africa exports. Cocoa and coffee provided the flagship products of the country in addition to other agricultural products such as rubber and palm oil. Capital flowed in due to political stability and the economic boom. Factories began popping up in the country so that businesses could avoid importing necessary goods. Côte d'Ivoire's success could only go on for so long, however; a combination of "drought, low commodity prices, and rapidly rising debt (Handloff 1988)" brought the economy to its knees. Cocoa prices plummeted, and the country's lack of economic diversification meant that the entire system crashed. GDP fell sharply, and throughout the next decade, a roller coaster of economic ups and downs struck the country.

In 2002, a civil war lasting nearly five years rocked the country, further inhibiting its rebound into a strong and stable state. Rebels held the north of the country until 2007. As seen with many other West African countries, there is a large difference between the northern Sahel regions and the southern coastal regions. A peace agreement was reached, but after elections in 2010 were disputed, fighting was renewed for four more months. Since this second civil war, the country has been on the rebound. As seen later on in figure 4 in the Comparison, Contrast, and Analysis section of this paper, many indicators of economic growth, trust, and political stability show that Cote d'Ivoire has a bright future ahead of it. Its economy is the second-fastest growing in Africa since 2012 and the U.S. Department of State denotes it as offering "fertile soil for U.S. investment" in the present and near future. If the country's elections in 2020 proceed smoothly, Cote d'Ivoire may finally be able to put its wearied last few decades behind it and emerge as a model for other African nations to come.

Nigeria



Nigeria at a glance: (information from CIA World Factbook)

Capital: Abuja

Population: 203,452,505 (July 2018 est.)

Independence: 1 October 1960 (from the UK)

Government type: federal presidential republic

Legal system: mixed legal system of English common law, Islamic law (in 12 northern states), and traditional law

Area: 923,768 sq km

Climate: varies; equatorial in south, tropical in center, arid in north

Terrain: southern lowlands merge into central hills and plateaus; mountains in southeast, plains in north

Natural Resources: natural gas, petroleum, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, arable land

Population below poverty line: 70% (2010 est.)

Population Distribution: largest population of any African nation; significant population clusters are scattered throughout the country, with the highest density areas being in the south and southwest

Median Age: 18.3 years

Ethnic Groups: Hausa 27.4%, Igbo (Ibo) 14.1%, Yoruba 13.9%, Fulani 6.3%, Tiv 2.2%, Ibibio 2.2%, Ijaw/Izon 2%, Kanuri/Berberi 1.7%, Igala 1%, other 28.9%, unspecified .2% (2013 est.)

Languages: English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani, over 500 additional indigenous languages

Religions: Muslim 51.6%, Roman Catholic 11.2%, other Christian 35.7%, traditionalist .9%, unspecified .5% (2013 est.)

Major Urban Areas: 13.463 million Lagos, 3.82 million Kano, 3.383 million Ibadan, 2.919 million ABUJA (capital), 2.343 million Port Harcourt, 1.628 million Benin City (2018)

Life Expectancy: 59.3 years

GDP per capita:

\$5,900 (2017 est.)

\$6,100 (2016 est.)

\$6,300 (2015 est.)

GDP growth rate:

0.8% (2017 est.)

-1.6% (2016 est.)

2.7% (2015 est.)

Industries: crude oil, coal, tin, columbite; rubber products, wood; hides and skins, textiles, cement and other construction materials, food products, footwear, chemicals, fertilizer, printing, ceramics, steel

Export (commodities): petroleum and petroleum products 95%, cocoa, rubber (2012 est.)

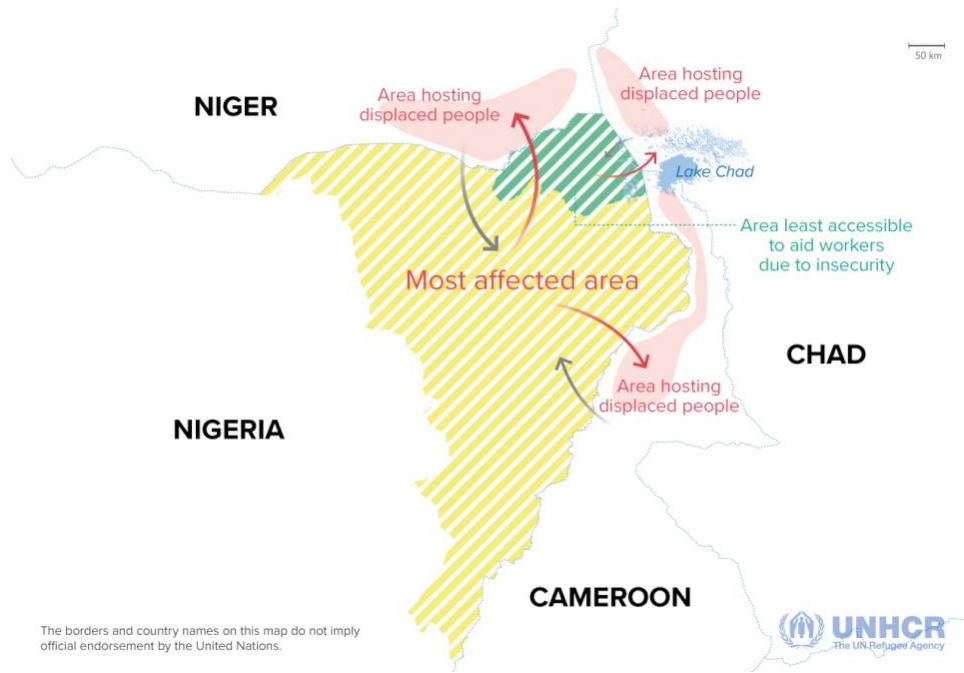
Nigeria is Africa's largest economy with an estimated GDP in 2017 of \$376.4 billion and largest population with around 203 million people. Its GDP is ranked 21st among the world countries. The country's past follows a similar pattern as Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. Various indigenous kingdoms and empires rose and fell in the many centuries before and during the early modern period. Two of the most prominent were the Songhai Empire, which stretched from modern-day Senegal to central Nigeria, and the Sokoto Caliphate, occupying much of northern Nigeria and some areas in other countries. Both of these empires were Islamic in nature, which helps explain Nigeria's (like many other Sahel countries) northern-southern divide of Muslims and Christians. When European colonization began in the 1800s, it started on the southern coast and worked its way north. By 1903, the Sokoto Caliphate, which also held the largest slave population in the world of two million, was beaten by the British and opposition to their rule was all but destroyed.

Nigeria was divided into northern and southern protectorates. In typical fashion, the British exercised indirect rule over the colony, and respected traditional Islamic rule in the north. Colonial officials were “instructed to interfere as little as possible with the existing order (Metz 1991).” Because of this, slavery in the north was not abolished until 1936. Eventually, the two protectorates were merged into one colony, and Nigeria became independent in 1960. Ethnic and religious tensions in the different regions of the country were clear and defined, and throughout most of the years from 1967-1999 the country was plagued by coups, civil war, and dictatorships, with the power often falling into the military’s hands. In 1999, democracy was restored and the political scene in Nigeria has been relatively stable since then.

Nigeria’s vast economy is dominated by oil, with 95% of the country’s exports in 2012 being petroleum or petroleum products. This wealth of a natural resource has enriched the country, but corruption and poor management by the government has meant that the standard of living has been very slow to rise for the average Nigerian, and poverty remains rampant. The CIA World Factbook lists a 2010 estimation that 70% of the population is living under the poverty line. This corruption also discourages some possible investment. Nigeria also produces a fair amount of cocoa, like its neighbors Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire.

Current major problems for the country include corruption and terrorism. Throughout the last couple of decades, Boko Haram has been active in the region, specifically the northeast, as the map to the left shows. Over two million Nigerians have been internally displaced due to the violence in the country. The Nigerian army has

been shown to be ill-equipped and not very effective in the fight against this terrorist organization.



Cameroon



Cameroon at a glance: (information from CIA World Factbook)

Capital: Yaoundé

Independence: 1 January 1960 (from French-administered UN trusteeship)

Population: 25,640,965 (July 2018 est.)

Government type: presidential republic

Legal system: mixed legal system of English common law, French civil law, and customary law

Area: 475,440 sq km

Climate: varies with terrain, from tropical along coast to semiarid and hot in north

Terrain: diverse, with coastal plain in southwest, dissected plateau in center, mountains in west, plains in north

Natural Resources: petroleum, bauxite, iron ore, timber, hydropower

Population below poverty line: 30% (2001 est.)

Population Distribution: population concentrated in the west and north, with the interior of the country sparsely populated

Median Age: 18.6 years

Ethnic Groups: Cameroon Highlanders 31%, Equatorial Bantu 19%, Kirdi 11%, Fulani 10%, Northwestern Bantu 8%, Eastern Nigrific 7%, other African 13%, non-African less than 1%

Languages: 24 major African language groups, English (official), French (official)

Religions: Roman Catholic 38.4%, Protestant 26.3%, other Christian 4.5%, Muslim 20.9%, animist 5.6%, other 1%, non-believer 3.2% (2005 est.)

Major Urban Areas: 3.656 million Douala, 3.412 million YAOUNDE (capital) (2018)

Life Expectancy: 59.4 years

GDP per capita:

\$3,700 (2017 est.)

\$3,700 (2016 est.)

\$3,600 (2015 est.)

GDP growth rate:

3.5% (2017 est.)

4.6% (2016 est.)

5.7% (2015 est.)

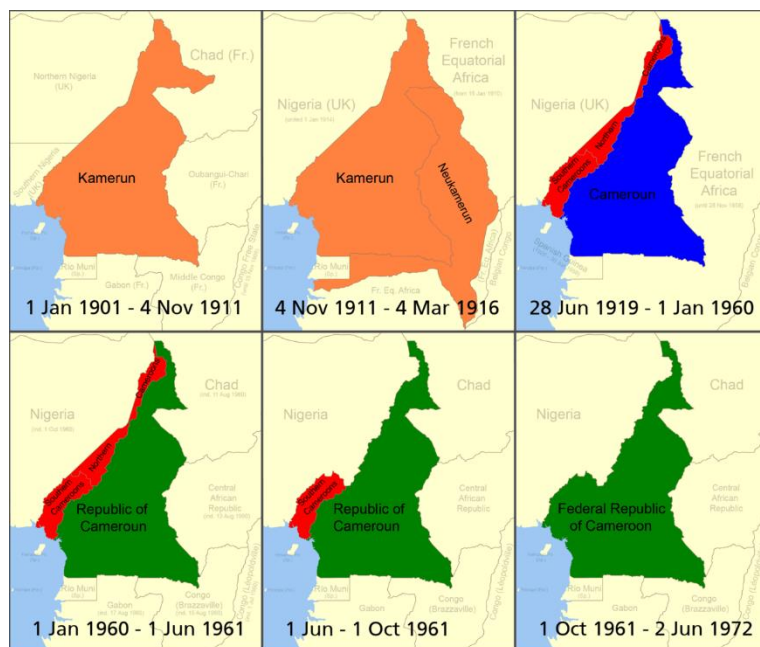
Industries: petroleum production and refining, aluminum production, food processing, light consumer goods, textiles, lumber, ship repair

Export (commodities): crude oil and petroleum products, lumber, cocoa beans, aluminum, coffee, cotton

Finally, we have Cameroon. Just like the other three countries, it has a similar historic archetype, though there are some key differences. The most important of the pre-colonial indigenous kingdoms were the Sao, who inhabited the northern part of present-day Cameroon by Lake Chad in the 9th through 15th centuries, and the Sokoto Caliphate, who were mentioned in the Nigeria section. The Caliphate islamized the north of the country, while the coastal areas were exposed to Christian missionaries. However, when the “scramble for Africa” was in full effect in the late 19th century, it was Germany, not France or the U.K., that claimed Cameroon (then called Kamerun) as a colony.

During World War I, British and French forces conquered Kamerun and split it between themselves, creating the British Cameroons and French Cameroun. French Cameroun included the vast majority of the country as it is today. The map to the left shows the development of the colony’s ownership. This partition between the English and French remained until 1960, when, just like many other West African colonies at that time, Cameroon received its independence. Some of the British territories voted to

be absorbed into Nigeria, while some remained with the new Cameroonian government.



This linguistic and cultural divide between the majority of now-francophone Cameroon and the anglophone minority in west remains an issue of contention. The country in its independence declared itself a bilingual state, but French language and customs have often been prioritized at the expense of the anglophone minority. Common law inspired by England is practiced in anglophone Cameroon, but the government has sometimes sent lawyers and judges who only have an understanding of French civil law or can only speak French. In education, as well, the government has sent teachers who can only speak French or Pidgin English to anglophone schools. Official documents, though supposed to be written in French and English, are also often only in French. In 2016, the Anglophone Crisis began when “English-speaking lawyers, students, and teachers began protesting what they saw as their under-representation in, and cultural marginalization by, the central government (Roth 2020).” Within anglophone Cameroon, a proto-state known as Ambazonia declared

independence, and since then protests, riots, and armed conflicts have taken place in this region.

Cameroon boasts a fairly diversified economy. While a majority of its exports are oil, like Nigeria, it only makes up 40% of its overall exports. Agriculture and forestry remain an important part of the economy. Agriculture in particular attracts much investment. However, Cameroon's economy is noticeably struggling. The 2019 U.S. Department of State Investment Climate Statement notes that, "Cameroon's ranking in the World Bank's 2019 Doing Business Report – 166th out of 190 countries – and Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index – 152nd out of 175 countries – accurately reflect a business climate growing more difficult." Corruption, poverty, and poor infrastructure are common problems. Additionally, like Nigeria, the Cameroonian government has been fighting with Boko Haram in the north of the country. If Cameroon wishes to emerge from poverty and join the ranks of developed countries, it has much political, social, and economic to do.

Comparison, Contrast, and Analysis

Figure 1: Human Development Index

Rank	Country	HDI	LifeExpec*	ExpecYrS	MeanYrS	GNIpc (\$)
142	Ghana	0.596	63.8	11.5	7.2	4,099
165	Côte d'Ivoire	0.516	57.4	9.6	5.2	3,589
158	Nigeria	0.534	54.3	9.7	6.5	5,086
150	Cameroon	0.563	58.9	12.7	6.3	3,291

Human Development Index

HDI = Human Development Index

The HDI was created to “emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone” (Human Development Reports 2019).

LifeExpec = Life Expectancy - values differ depending on what year and what source is used; HDI uses Life Expectancy data from UN Population Division in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs while other sources may use data from the World Bank, for example. Source values differ based on data availability, assessment, and methods and protocols.

ExpecYrS = Expected Years in School

MeanYrS = Mean Years in School

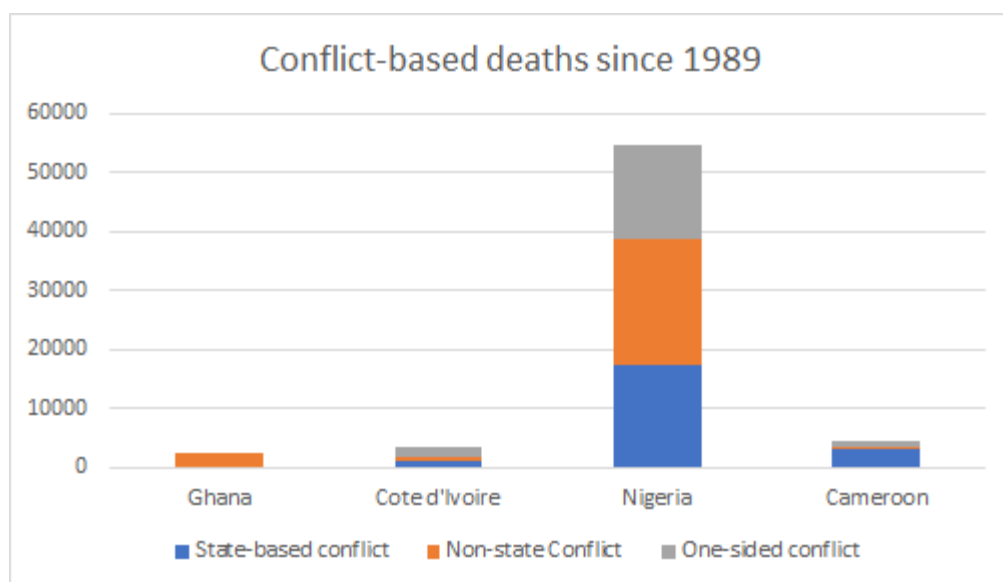
GNIpc (\$) = Gross National Income per capita in USD

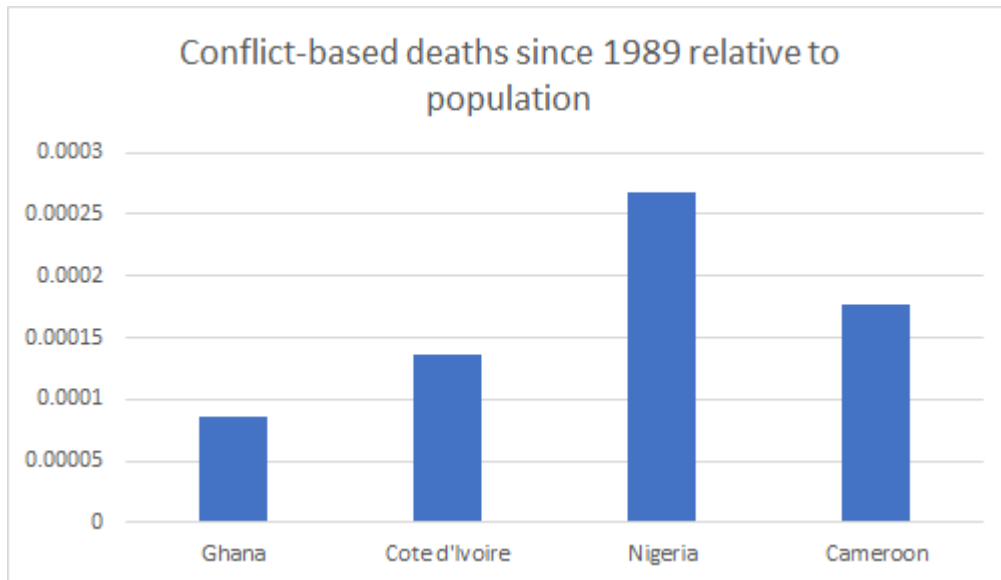
The Human Development Index (HDI) of each of the four countries tells us not only how they compare to each other, but also how West Africa is faring compared to the rest of the world. As we can see from the data, Ghana ranks the highest in regard to

the HDI, followed by Cameroon, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire. Ghana beats its "match," Côte d'Ivoire, by over 20 countries. It scored significantly higher in all metrics factoring into the HDI. Cameroon edges out Nigeria by 8 spots, out-scoring it in life expectancy and expected years in school but still performing worse in mean years in school and GNI. No doubt Nigeria's huge, oil-centered economy allows it to preside over the other 3 countries in terms of GNI.

However, the scores of all four countries are indicative to West (and, by extension, most of Sub-Saharan) Africa's economic and humanitarian plight. Of the thirty-six countries counting as "Low Human Development" (an HDI lower than 0.550), fourteen are West African countries, and fifteen others are located elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. A dismal outlook on the region, for sure. Countries such as Norway, Germany, and the USA, for comparison, have HDI of 0.954, 0.939, and 0.920, respectively.

Figure 2: Conflict-related deaths since 1989





Uppsala Conflict Data Program

These two graphs are realized with data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, which maps locations, parties involved, number of deaths, and category for conflicts around the world since 1989. The first graph plots the number and type of conflict-related deaths by country. State-based conflict is between a government and another party (often civil wars or state vs terrorists/rebels), non-state conflict is between two non-state entities (often violence between clashing ethnic groups), and one-sided violence is between one party and civilians (typically terrorism or government massacres). Clearly, Nigeria has witnessed the most violence in recent decades among the four selected countries. Much of this is due to Boko Haram and other terrorist groups as well as ethnic conflicts. Taking the amount of deaths divided by population, as the second graph shows, the trends are the same.

Since World War II, the African continent has contained the most wars. In both 1991 and 1999 alone, there were 18 simultaneous unique conflicts in Africa; between

1990 and 2005, 23 African countries were involved in conflicts. Some of these were vestiges from the Cold War, but the Cold War's ending did not end the turmoil. Many of these conflicts are low in intensity, but can last for a long time. Even with a relatively low death toll as compared to a great war such as one of the World Wars, conflicts in African countries contribute to the destruction of means of production, turning of labor force towards the war, interrupted transportation and destruction of infrastructure, prevention of accessibility of areas due to mining, poison, etc, effect of brain drain, higher mortality rate, and much more. A study by Oxfam International, RAIAL and Saferworld found that a war, civil war, or rebellion leads to an average fall of 15% in economic activity. The direct and indirect costs of the numerous conflicts that plague Africa all play a part in its slowness to develop (Bardot, Christian, et al. 2009).

Figure 3: Capital invested into colonial Africa

African Empire	Capital invested in millions of pounds
English Africa	941,307
French Africa	70,310
Portuguese Africa	66,732
Belgian Africa	143, 337
Total	1,221,886

Investment in Africa

This chart, detailing the amounts of capital invested into the colonial powers' African colonies, reveals a staggering difference between English Africa and French Africa. The British Empire invested more than ten times the amount that the French did (S. H. Frankel 1969). This appears to signify that the British colonial plan was not only to take

natural resources but also treat their colonies as a true investment, pouring in money in hopes to make a valuable return later on. This may also help explain why Anglophone African nations seem to be better off economically than Francophone African countries. Lest one think that the UK were a benevolent entity devoted to the needs of its colonies, it is valuable to know that “poverty reduction was not a priority for the UK, which typically tied around two-fifths of its aid to the purchase of British products and services. Successive French administrations tied an even larger proportion of their development assistance to French goods and accorded even less importance to poverty alleviation, giving less aid to least developed countries (LLDCs) than to upper middle-income African states (Cumming and Chafer 2011).”

In fact, French Africa received only 18% of French investments in colonies in 1914, despite it being the largest part (by area) of the French empire. And what investment it did receive, it was mainly for railroads, irrigation, and drainage. Industry was ignored so as to not compete with mainland France (Bardot, Christian, et al. 2009).

Figure 4: General Investment Suitability Model

Country	Population	Weight	Points	%Pop in poverty	Weight	Points	HDI	Weight	Points
Ghana	28,102,471	0.5	0.69	0.24	0.5	-1.73	0.60	1	10.00
Cote d'Ivoire	26,260,582	0.5	0.65	0.46	0.5	-3.31	0.52	1	8.66
Nigeria	203,452,505	0.5	5.00	0.70	0.5	-5.00	0.53	1	8.96
Cameroon	25,640,965	0.5	0.63	0.30	0.5	-2.14	0.56	1	9.45

Country	GDP per capita	Weight	Points	GDP in \$bn	Weight	Points	Ease of Business rank	Weight	Points
Ghana	4700	1.5	11.95	134.00	2	2.39	118	1.5	13.50
Côte d'Ivoire	3900	1.5	9.92	97.16	2	1.73	110	1.5	15.00
Nigeria	5900	1.5	15.00	1121.00	2	20.00	131	1.5	11.06
Cameroon	3700	1.5	9.41	89.54	2	1.60	167	1.5	4.31

Country	Political Stability	Weight	Points	Corruption Index	Weight	Points	Innovation Index	Weight	Points
Ghana	2.59	1	10.00	41	1	10.00	25.3	1	9.88
Côte d'Ivoire	1.41	1	5.44	35	1	8.54	25.6	1	10.00
Nigeria	0.56	1	2.16	27	1	6.59	23.9	1	9.34
Cameroon	1.42	1	5.48	25	1	6.10	23.9	1	9.34

Country	Total Points
Ghana	66.68
Côte d'Ivoire	56.63
Nigeria	73.11
Cameroon	44.17

Figure 4, the General Investment Suitability Model, is a simple and overarching model I made to weigh the selected West African countries against each other using a variety of indicators. These indicators include basic information such as population all the way to the aforementioned Human Development Index as well as the Corruption Perceptions Index. The model serves as a simple gauge of the general performance of

a country, factoring in development and political indicators as well as economic. This project is general and not dealing with a specific industry or product, but if it was, the model could be much more fine-tuned to include industry-specific data, export statistics to the country for a product's harmonized code, and market size.

The model was calculated by picking a quantitative indicator of some value to the research at hand, assigning it a weight due to its relative importance, and then multiplying it by ten. The "winner" of a category receives the full ten points (if the weight is 1), and the other three countries divide their results by the winner's to depict the results as relative to the best performer. The model is suggested to merely be an informative role in the comparison of these countries, not the final say.

Let us discuss, then, the results. The model shows anglophone Nigeria as being the country most suited for investment. This is in large part due to its gargantuan economy, shown by its GDP (purchasing power parity) of \$1121 billion while the other three countries range from about \$90-135 billion. Nigeria gains this hefty advantage by being oil-rich; in 2012 it was estimated that 95% of the country's exports were crude oil (CIA World Factbook). Their population also completely dwarfs any of the other contenders. Despite performing poorly in percentage population in poverty and political stability, the strength of its economy carried it to first.

Ghana, also anglophone, pulled in comfortably in second. It won four categories, those being (lowest amount of) population in poverty, HDI, political stability, and Corruption Perceptions Index. Its strengths showcase an emphasis in the country of human development and stability, and it scored very respectfully in the solely economic indicators as well. Ghana seems to be a well-rounded country for our purposes.

Côte d'Ivoire, in third, performs well in some business-oriented indicators such as Ease of Doing Business ranking and the Global Innovation Index. In other categories it performs adequately. Cote d'Ivoire is francophone Africa's largest economy as well as the second fastest-growing African economy in since 2012 (U.S. Department of State 2018). Yet even this flagship country could not surpass some of the superior anglophone countries in the region.

Finally, Cameroon finishes in fourth with a low score of 44. It scored the lowest in multiple categories, including GDP, GDP per capita, and Corruption Index. This indicates a lack of efficacy by the government to stimulate human and economic development.

Figure 5: Average growth rate

Country	GDP growth rate 2013	GDP growth rate 2014	GDP growth rate 2015	GDP growth rate 2016	GDP growth rate 2017	GDP growth rate 2018	Avg GDP growth rate 2013-2018
Ghana	7.31	2.90	2.18	3.45	8.14	6.26	5.04
Côte d'Ivoire	8.89	8.79	8.84	7.97	7.70	7.43	8.27
Nigeria	6.67	6.31	2.65	-1.62	0.81	1.94	2.79
Cameroon	5.04	5.88	5.65	4.65	3.55	4.06	4.81

The World Bank

Direct vs Indirect Rule

At the time of the colonization of Africa, both France and the U.K. were large empires that subjugated indigenous populations of Africa to expand their territory and

access to resources. Both amassed great quantities of land. Both ended slavery as they conquered further inland, but both upheld the view that the Europeans were inherently superior to their southern neighbors. However, one striking and crucial difference between the two empires' approach to colonialism is that of direct and indirect rule. France was a proponent of direct rule, which argues for "European officials should call the shots for themselves by establishing and administering the rules and regulations for their African colonial subjects (American Historical Association 2018)." Indirect rule, championed by the British, used "existing tribal structures and traditions as conduits for establishing rules and regulations while English officials worked behind the scenes and could exercise a veto power (American Historical Association 2018)."

Was one philosophy right, and the other wrong? Did they both fail, or did they both succeed? Can any conclusion be drawn? From what I have researched, it seems that British (and therefore indirect) rule was more beneficial for the subjugated peoples as opposed to French (direct) rule. The "Postcolonial borderland legacies of Anglo-French partition in West Africa" article I examined earlier has much to weigh in on this subject. Particularly, it noted that French policies were tougher on indigenous groups and that some voluntarily moved from French to British territory. Miles also writes that "direct rule affected the Mandara [an ethnic group split between northeastern Nigeria, northern Cameroon, and parts of Chad] in classical form: continuous undermining of the Mandara by the French (including an attempt to depose the Sultanate), while the British shored up the traditional rulers of 'their' Mandara." Along Direct rule's first form was the principle of assimilation. For France, the colonies were to become thoroughly French, and act "as mere provinces overseas (Boahen 1986)." The French colonial capital of

Saint Louis in Senegal was somewhat successfully assimilated and a “small percentage of West Africans came to participate in French national affairs (Ali-Dinar).” However, when this did not become realizable across all of their colonial territories, assimilation turned into subjugation via direct rule.

British indirect rule seemed to leave the country in a better position. La Verle Berry details the advantages of the system: “Traditional chiefs figured prominently in the system of indirect rule adopted by British authorities to administer their colonies in Africa. According to Frederick Lugard, architect of the policy, indirect rule was cost effective because it reduced the number of European officials in the field. By allowing local rulers to exercise direct administrative control over their people, opposition to European rule from the local population would be minimized. The chiefs, however, were to take instructions from their European supervisors. The plan, according to Lugard, had the further advantage of civilizing the natives, because it exposed traditional rulers to the benefits of European political organization and values. This "civilizing" process notwithstanding, indirect rule had the ultimate advantage of guaranteeing the maintenance of law and order (Berry 2015).” Additionally, the British African colonies were seen as completely separate entities to Great Britain itself. A clear example of this is the governance of Nigeria by British authorities. Mentioned in the Nigeria section earlier in this paper, the region was divided into Northern and Southern protectorates. The north being very traditional and Muslim, the British realized it could not force its values immediately on the people there, lest they revolt and drag the British into another armed conflict. For the most part, the British did not want to fight if they did not have to. While “the actual empire-builders in the French context were from the outset, military

men," the "British expansion was conducted primarily by commercialists and resulted in more solid economic potential than the French endeavor (Crowder, 1990)." Highlighting the difference between the British and French approach to governing their colonies is A.J. Harding, the director of Nigerian affairs at the Colonial Office in the early 1900s. He noted that "direct government by impartial and honest men of alien race . . . never yet satisfied a nation long and . . . under such a form of government, as wealth and education increase, so do political discontent and sedition (Metz 1991)."

Conclusion:

My research has driven me to the conclusion that British imperialism ended up being more beneficial for its former colonies than French imperialism did for its own colonies. From present-day indicators measuring economic and political performance to historical details about the intricacies of direct and indirect rule, the research shows that countries previously under French rule are on average worse off than countries previously under British rule. The colonial policies and practices of a century ago are still affecting African nations today.

This is not to say that either colonial empire had the African region's best interests in mind, nor that they were all that different; both powers used their colonies to enhance their economies, extend military control, build new spheres of influence, and compete with other European powers. Though both countries had differing views of colonial leadership, they both left their colonies in a rather disadvantaged state economically and politically. The nascent African countries were saddled with weak democracies, economies and infrastructure built around moving raw materials towards the coast and shipping them off to Europe (Bardot et al. 2009).

Of the four countries selected for general investment suitability, I would recommend that Ghana be the country most suited for investment. While Nigeria scored higher on my basic model, such a large portion of the economy is dependent on oil, which will steadily fall out of favor this century. Taking in as many factors into consideration as possible, Ghana, from my research, appears to be much more well-rounded in both economic and political factors and thus more suited to investment.

Interviews:

As an additional resource, I attempted to find students from the countries I selected that attended the University of Akron to ask them a range of questions dealing with their perceptions of and experiences in their home countries. UA had only students from three countries represented in my project, and from those three only students from Nigeria and Ghana agreed to be interviewed. To balance out the interviews with a francophone perspective, I had my Burkinabe friend in France pass the questions along to one of his Cameroonian friends studying in Rennes. For Côte d'Ivoire, I had to resort to finding an Ivoirian from Reddit.

As conducting a far-reaching grand survey was not the purpose of this project, I intend for these interviews to only supplement some of the more impersonal information researched above. The responses can help demonstrate a personal, tangible side of the economic and political situations in the respective countries, but they clearly cannot be used to generalize.

Where are you from in your country?

Bunmi, graduate student at UA from Nigeria: I am originally from Ekiti State in the southwest of Nigeria. I lived in Lagos for about ten years, but then I lived closer to home in Ondo State for about eighteen to twenty years. I am Yuroba.

Thelma, graduate student at UA from Ghana: Accra, Ghana.

Aurélie, a student at ENSAI in Rennes, France from Cameroon: J'ai grandi à Yaoundé.

Abou, Visual Communication and Digital Creation teacher, from Côte d'Ivoire: Je suis né dans la capitale de la Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan.

What is your city or village like?

Bunmi, Nigeria: Akure (city in Ondo State) could be kinda similar to Akron. I mean, population and infrastructure and those sorts of things. In terms of the people, of attitudes; people being laid-back and not too aggressive, they are similar to Akron in that way.

Thelma, Ghana: Greater Accra is the Capital City of Ghana. From all the 16 regions in Ghana, Accra is the most vibrant and distinctive region with 98% Head-Offices of different Companies, jobs and, a large trading center. The Head-Offices of Companies includes large banks, insurance companies, Electricity corporation, general post-Office, etc. Cost of Living (food, rent, utilities) is high in some parts of Accra and low in other parts.

Aurélie, Cameroon: C'est une grande ville, la capitale politique et administrative du Cameroun.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: Abidjan est la capitale économique de la Côte d'Ivoire avec environ 5 millions d'habitants.

What are the religious beliefs of the people in your community?

Bunmi, Nigeria: Where I'm from originally (Ekite State), my village is maybe 90% Christian and another 5% are Muslim and the rest would be traditionalists. But in Akure, since it's a larger city, it would be maybe 20% Muslims, maybe 70% Christians. Lagos, though, would probably be maybe 60% Christians, maybe 35% Muslims; few are traditionalists. For the most part, everyone gets along. When they are religious crises, they mostly come from different parts in the country, such as the north which is mostly Muslim. In the south, where it is mostly Christians, you don't see as much of it. It's there, but the crises will probably be more ethnic than religious. Although, you could say that religion cuts across mostly ethnic lines.

Thelma, Ghana: More than half of the Ghana population are Christians and a small segment are from the Muslim and indigenous religion.

Aurélie, Cameroon: Christianisme, islam, animisme.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: Je ne pratique aucune religion en particulier, par contre j'ai des amis musulmans, chrétiens ou juifs...

How do you view your country? Is it a good place? Bad?

Bunmi, Nigeria: It's a good place. Life is not nearly as expensive as it is here, and I have all of my family and friends there. But economically speaking, it's tough to make a living unless you are heavily connected to the political class or something like that. I cannot say you need to be exceptional to make it because that doesn't mean you are really going to make anything of yourself. The population is huge and there are many graduates each year. . . I feel good things about Nigeria, but there are many things that don't necessarily enhance the quality of life.

Thelma, Ghana: Living in Ghana is a beautiful experience and, a perfect place for those seeking a unique and a peaceful atmosphere. We are known for our extreme friendliness to tourists, visitors and citizens from other part of the world. Even though my country has its share of scandals and corruption within national and local politics, there

is no war. There are bad and good people in Ghana as it is in the case of every country.

Aurélie, Cameroon: J'aime bien mon pays, il y fait bon vivre et le coût de la vie y est relativement bas. Cependant nous avons accumulé énormément de retard en développement social, économique et technologique. Ce qui peut rendre la vie quotidienne parfois difficile.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: Je pense que la Côte d'Ivoire est un pays plein de richesses culturelles, avec une grande diversité en matières premières. Malheureusement la population souffre beaucoup du manque d'infrastructures solides et modernes, du manque de sérieux dans l'éducation de la jeunesse, du manque d'emploi et de travail pour les personnes actives. De la malveillance de la classe politique qui se sert de l'ignorance de la majeure partie de la population pour les leurrer et les tromper sur le partage de richesses et sur la voie du développement industrielle, économique et social.

How do you view your country's government?

Bunmi, Nigeria: Government... that's not a tricky one, the government is bad. We have a pretty high literacy rate but still a lot of people who go hungry. What politicians do in times of elections is share money and share food, and then people vote for them. Whether they are bad or good, nobody cares; they think, "Oh, well they're all politicians, they're all going to steal money anyway." The corruption is decreasing a little with the advent of social media, but the government is horrible. They can't initiate projects to save their life.

Thelma, Ghana: Ghana is Africa's second-biggest gold and second-largest cocoa producer. It recently started producing oil, which has helped fuel economic growth. The heavy concentration in the natural resources (including diamonds, manganese ore, bauxite) and commodities sectors has had an impact on the availability of jobs in the country.

Aurélie, Cameroon: Je pense que le gouvernement de mon pays fait un travail moyen. Je veux dire que les membres du gouvernement font ce qu'ils peuvent pour éviter de sombrer dans des crises, mais ne font pas plus que ça pour aider le pays à se développer.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: Le gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire compte en général des dizaines de ministres qui n'ont qu'une chose en tête: profiter de leur poste pour se remplir les poches le plus possible et le plus vite possible. Avec des mascarades de constructions parsemées ça et là pour couvrir leurs enrichissements personnels.

How do you view your country's economy?

Bunmi, Nigeria: Industries are almost nonexistent. We have the banking industry and telecommunications, so it's difficult getting jobs because how many people could they possibly employ. There's not a lot of cash to start a business, interest rates are on the

average 25%, which is crazy, and on top of that you will probably not get a loan if you apply and you don't have collateral. There is no credit system. Also, there is the human factor. Doing business in a country where most people are hungry, that is a huge risk. It's difficult for young people to start businesses or simply find jobs, so that's why many young Nigerians run away. On the whole, I don't think Nigeria's economy is that good. I don't think it's as good as Ghana's.

Thelma, Ghana: Ghana intends to achieve its goals of accelerated economic growth and improved quality of life for all its citizens by reducing poverty through private investment and establishing the need for economic diversification to create more and better jobs.

Aurélie, Cameroon: Je pense que le Cameroun a les ressources et les compétences nécessaires pour afficher de meilleurs indicateurs économiques que ce qu'on affiche actuellement. Si le gouvernement était plus sérieux et les camerounais plus travailleurs on pourrait faire partie des pays émergents actuellement.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: Il y a effectivement des investisseurs qui viennent opérer en Côte d'Ivoire, puisque le pays est en phase de développement et qu'il y a encore un certain nombre d'activité à explorer. Par exemple, ce n'est seulement que en 2020 que le secteur des médias de l'audiovisuel a été libéralisé. Avant cela il n'y avait que la chaîne de télévision de l'Etat de Côte d'Ivoire RTI (Radiodiffusion Télévision Ivoirienne) qui diffusait sur les ondes. Cela rendait les activités en matière de production audiovisuelle difficile. Alors que dans la plupart des pays démocratiques, il existe plusieurs chaînes de télévision depuis des années, la Côte d'Ivoire ouvre maintenant en 2020 les nouvelles chaînes de TV...

How do you view the future of your country?

Bunmi, Nigeria: I won't say the future is necessarily going to be bright. I'll say there will be some changes. With the rise of social media, communication is much easier and quicker, and a lot of new information is available to people. For instance if someone speaking out against the government is thrown in jail, a lot of people will shout and make noise. There will be an outcry, maybe for two weeks. But it's different from what it was ten or fifteen years ago when nobody would even bother. The trend is on the up. I cannot tell you how long things will take, but things are changing.

Thelma, Ghana: I think the future of Ghana is very bright and hopeful.

Aurélie, Cameroon: Je pense que dans l'avenir la situation ne pourra s'améliorer que si il ya un réel éveil de conscience chez les camerounais. Je suis assez pessimiste sur l'avenir du Cameroun également à cause des tensions tribales qu'il ya entre les populations.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: Je pense que la Côte d'Ivoire peut s'offrir un avenir radieux si seulement les tares et les difficultés sont relevés et qu'on y apporte des solutions durables.

Do you want to return to your country to live and work or stay here?

Bunmi, Nigeria: I would actually love to go to Nigeria to live and work, but not yet. First I need money and experience. If I'm going to Nigeria, I want to start my own business.

Thelma, Ghana: I will love to work for some time after my studies with the university of Akron before leaving for Ghana.

Aurélie, Cameroon: J'aimerais commencer ma carrière en France et sur le long terme rentrer m'installer au Cameroun.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: Après mes études à Paris, j'ai décidé de venir développer mes activités dans mon pays d'origine.

Did you ever feel threatened by a conflict when you were in your country?

Bunmi, Nigeria: Yeah, that used to happen all the time. There was sometimes ethnic strife; maybe not as pronounced where I used to live, but you could hear on the radio sometimes that groups of people were rioting or fighting at a place that you drive by for work. My father is retired now but he was a lifelong career politician. They almost burned down the house a couple of times, the opposing party sent thugs to my dad's house. The violence is there.

Thelma, Ghana: I never felt threatened by conflicts when I was in Ghana. It's a peaceful country- there's a high degree of media freedom and all types of freedom without significant restrictions.

Aurélie, Cameroon: Non je ne me suis jamais sentie menacée au Cameroun.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: Non, pas que je ne me souviene.

How do you view anglophone/francophone West Africa?

Bunmi, Nigeria: I think the English-speaking countries would probably be performing better overall. I know there is a lot of poverty in Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire. Ghana is pretty stable because of a crazy revolution and change of government that helped them. Nigeria is lucky because we have a lot of oil. Togo is a really poor place as well. Senegal is maybe not thriving, but they do ok, on the level of Ghana I think. I think what really helps the anglophone countries is that much of the world speaks English, so they can do business with South Africa or America. The French-speaking countries are more limited.

Thelma, Ghana: Even though there's high level of scams and crimes in Nigeria especially against foreign travelers, the Nigerian government, police and the entire criminal justice administration system are trying to refine and deploy improved strategies to resolve the country's current challenges of security and safety. I don't know much about francophone countries. But what I can say is that, Ghana has close economic ties with them and their relationship is mutually beneficial.

Aurélie, Cameroon: Je pense que l'Afrique occidentale francophone et anglophone ont les mêmes problèmes : l'importance du secteur informel dans l'économie, l'analphabétisme, l'instabilité politique, la corruption. Toutefois, à mon avis la jeunesse d'Afrique occidentale anglophone est beaucoup plus dynamique et entreprenante que celle d'Afrique francophone. Je pense que la fuite des cerveaux est aussi moins importante chez les anglophones.

Abou, Côte d'Ivoire: En générale, l'Afrique francophone souffre de certains complexes par rapport à leur pays colonisateur alors que les Anglophones sont plus libres dans leurs esprits et leurs visions de développement... Les pays francophones pour la plupart partagent la même devise monétaire : XOF ou le Franc CFA (rattaché à la France) alors que les Anglophone ont pour la plupart leurs propres devises. Ce qui encourage plus facilement leur liberté économique... Les cultures africaines, quelques soient leurs diversités, nous rassemble sous une même identité.

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