

COTE D'IVOIRE

Agni

Activity: 1960-1970; 1991-2011

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- The French took control of the Agni kingdoms in 1887 (Minahan 2002: 149). During WWI, the Agnis rebelled against the French over French land taxes and demands for forced labour. The rebellion was suppressed in 1916. Agni self-determination activity re-erupted in 1948, when “severe rioting erupted over French attempts to interfere in the succession to the throne of Indenié. The Anyi claimed that their treaties with France covered only military matters and demanded the separation of the Anyi homeland from the Ivory Coast as a separate Anyi state in French West Africa” (Minahan 2002: 149). Minahan (2002: 149) reports that Agni nationalism grew rapidly in the 1950s. In 1959, the Agni king asserted the Agnis’ right to separate independence (Minahan 2002: 149). Violence erupted in 1959 (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 264). Since that demand was not met as Côte d’Ivoire moved to independence, the Agni mobilized for secession from the new state. We code the movement from 1960, the year Cote d’Ivoire attained independence. In line with the above narrative, we peg the start date to 1948. Minahan and Hewitt & Cheetham report violence in 1948 and 1959, respectively. We found no casualty estimates related to the those events and therefore do not indicate prior violence.
- In February 1960 the Agni king declared Sanwi independent of both France and Côte d’Ivoire. Unable to halt Ivorian soldiers moving into the region, many Agni fled to Ghana, but the king and over 400 supporters were arrested. The king and his head of government were sentenced to 10 years of prison, plus 20 years of banishment. But in 1962 the government released them, in an attempt to quell ongoing separatist disturbances. The Ivorian recognition of the Biafran secession in Nigeria provoked a new crisis in Sanwi. Agni nationalists claimed the same right the government acknowledged in Biafra and prepared to declare independence, but Ivorian soldiers moved in to crush the movement. It does not appear to be known how long the operation lasted or how many Agni were killed. A second secessionist attempt took place in 1969, but was definitively put down in 1970 and the Agni movement ended. We thus code the end of the first movement in 1970. [start date 1: 1948; end date 1: 1970]
- According to Minahan (1996, 2002), Agni nationalists, suppressed for nearly two decades, reorganized in 1991 and asserted that the Agni kingdoms, which were separate French protectorates until forcibly incorporated in the Ivorian state in 1960, had the legal right to decide democratically to continue their ties to Côte d’Ivoire or to separate under the protectorate agreements of the nineteenth century. According to Minahan (2002: 151), a leading member of the Agni exile community in Ghana called for increased autonomy for the Agni as a prelude to independence in November 2001. We could not find further evidence of self-determination activity. Based on this we code a second phase of activity from 1991-2011 (10-years rule). However, it has to be noted that the only evidence for the second phase of activity starting in 1991 we came across is from Minahan (1996, 2002, 2016). [start date 2: 1991; end date 2: 2011]

Dominant claims

- Re the first phase of activity: it is not fully clear whether the Agnis aimed at independence or union with Ghana (Touval 2007: 284), but independence seems more likely given that the Agni

King declared independence in 1960 and 1969 (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 264; World Statesmen). [1960-1970: independence claim]

- In 1991 the movement re-emerged. Minahan (1996) and Minahan (2002: 151) both appear to suggest an independence claim. For instance, Minahan (2002: 151) notes that “[i]n November 2001, a leading member of the Anyi exile community in Ghana called for the establishment of an autonomous Anyi state as a prelude to a future referendum on reunification and sovereignty.” No other claim was found. Hence, we code a claim for secession also in the second phase. [1991-2011: independence claim]

Independence claims

- See above. [start date 1: 1948; end date 1: 1970; start date 2: 1991; end date 2: 2011]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The cross-border territory claimed by the Agni consists of the fallen Kingdom of Sanwi (Minahan 2002: 146). The Kingdom of Sanwi is practically congruent with the contemporary province of Sud-Comoé. We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database (GADM 2019).

Sovereignty declarations

- In February 1960 the Sanwi King declared independence from both France and Côte d’Ivoire. The other Agni Kingdoms decided to follow suit (Minahan 2002:149; World Statesmen pegs the declaration to May 1959, but says that a provisional Sanwi Government in exile was declared in February 1960). That declaration was made prior to Cote d’Ivoire’s formal independence (in August), but Cote d’Ivoire was well on its way towards independence by then. [1960: independence declaration]
- In 1969, there was another attempted secession, with the Agni king again calling for the secession of the Sanwi Kingdom (Handloff 1988: 27). Minahan (2002: 150) argues that an independence declaration was prepared but never issued.

Separatist armed conflict

- Minahan (2002: 150) reports that the 1969 uprising was violently crushed, but we could not find evidence on casualties. Since we did not find evidence of violence that would qualify as LVIOLSD, both phases are coded with NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Agni established four distinct kingdoms in 1740, which often were indirectly ruled by the Ashanti and Baule peoples (Minahan 2002: 148). In the 19th century, the Agni Kingdoms became French protectorates. The Agni Kingdoms were administered as part of the French Ivory Coast after WWI (Minahan 2002: 149). In 1959 the autonomous status of one of the traditional Agni Kingdoms, Sanwi, was formally abolished (World Statesmen). Agni calls for separate independence were ignored (Minority Rights Group International). [1959: autonomy restriction]

2nd phase:

- The Sanwi (Agni) king was allowed to return from exile in Ghana in 1981 (Valsecchi n.d; it is not clear when the Agni king was exiled). We do not code a concession since the Agni kingdom does not appear to have significant autonomy (see above).

Concessions and restrictions

NA

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

- Cote d'Ivoire attained independence in 1960, implying a host change. [1960: host change (new)]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Agni
<i>Scenario</i>	n:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Other Akans
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	43704000

Power access

- The Agni constitute a sub-group of the Akans. EPR includes two Akan groups, the 'Baule' and the 'Other Akans'. The Other Akans (of which the Agni make up around 18%) are coded throughout as junior partner. However, Valsecchi (n.d.) reports that the Agnis suffered from "repression and enduring marginalization" at the period. [1960-1970: discriminated]
- In the 1991-2011 period the Agnis are coded as junior partner. The Other Akans (of which the Agni make up around 18%) are coded throughout as junior partner. Information on the exact government constellation is scarce, but Valsecchi (n.d.) suggests that the situation normalized after the Sanwi king returned in 1981. This makes it likely that the Agnis were – at least temporarily – part of the government. [1991-2011: junior partner]

Group size

- Estimates of the number of Agnis differ widely. Minahan (2002: 146) counts almost 1.4 million Anyis in Cote d'Ivoire. According to Minahan (2016: 34), a 2015 estimate puts the Agni population to around 1.8 – 2.6 million. In contrast, the World Directory of Minorities counts around 610,000 Agni living in the far south-east of Côte d'Ivoire (in 2007). The latter yields a group size of .0339 if combined with the CIA 2007 estimate of Cote d'Ivoire's total population

(18 million). The figure provided by the World Directory appears more realistic and is e.g. supported by Handloff (1988). [0.0339]

Regional concentration

- According to Minahan (2002: 146), the Agni homeland has a population of around 1.8 million. We could not find information on the percentage of Agni living in their homeland but from the narrative in Minahan (2002: 146) it appears that the threshold for territorial concentration is met. The only Agni community mentioned by Minahan that lives outside their homeland are the Agnis Abidjan. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- According to Minahan (2002: 146), there were approximately 240'000 Agni in neighboring Ghana back in 2002, making this a large enough kin group to be coded here. [kin in neighboring country]

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