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The Media and the Political Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire

Researched and Written
by
Zio Moussa



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P O Box LG 730, Legon, Ghana — West Africa
Tel.: 233 (0)302-242470
Fax: 233 (0)302-221084
E-mail: mfw@africaonline.com.gh
Website: www.mediafound.org

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Introduction

The history of the post-independence Ivorian print media begins with *Fraternité Matin*. As the first national daily newspaper, its first issue came out on December 9, 1964. On that date it replaced *Abidjan Matin*, the newspaper of the French [media] group, De Breteuil. During the ceremony marking the birth of this first national daily, Philippe Grégoire Yacé, who was then Speaker of the National Assembly and the country's number two personality, defined its vocation as: "A well illustrated modern daily newspaper, which follows events on an hourly basis, which endeavours to present life in Côte d'Ivoire and in the outside world." On page 16 (the last) of this first issue of December 9, 1964, the report (without a by-line) of the inaugural ceremony stated clearly: "*Fraternité Matin*, the newspaper of Ivorians, made by Ivorians and for Ivorians." Though its policy direction (editorial) was thus defined, *Fraternité Matin* of the early post-independence decades was not, unlike *Fraternité Hebdo*, the official newspaper of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA), the sole party. It would, however, play two main roles: serve the economic development of Côte d'Ivoire and fight for national unity, and serve as conduit (a "driving belt", which was the parlance at the time), first for Félix Houphouët-Boigny's policy directions, then for his party and ultimately for his successive governments (of which there were 11 from 1958 to December 7, 1993, the day he died). From December 9, 1964, the date of appearance of the first issue to the restoration of the multi-party system in April 1990, this national daily newspaper would remain faithful to its editorial policy from which it nearly never deviated. Or, at any rate, very little.

In 1990, a number of African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, reverted to the multi-party system. Numerous political parties were established. Speech became free. Freedom of expression and opinion was established. This marked the birth of what is called pluralistic media or media pluralism, of a media sometimes touted as free and/or independent. This also was the springtime of the media. Its numbers increased prodigiously. Here is a notable and well observed fact: in just six years, 178 newspapers swarmed the Ivorian market, where in 26 years (1964–1990), there were only 4 newspapers: *Fraternité Matin*, *Fraternité Hebdo*, the official newspaper of the party of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, first president of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, *Ivoire Dimanche*, a weekly entertainment newspaper which brought into the limelight some great Ivorian journalists (the late Jérôme Diégou Bailles, Jérôme Carlos, Justin Vieyra, etc.). On Monday May 11, 1987, *Fraternité Matin* introduced onto the market the first evening newspaper, *Ivoir' Soir*, a daily newspaper which dealt exclusively with societal issues, culture and sports, conspicuously leaving out politics.

In 1990, the return to the multiparty system saw the establishment of many newspapers. Thus in the space of just six short years, that is from 1990 to 1996, 178 papers, dailies and periodicals were paraded on the national newspaper market. Currently in 2011, some twenty years later, there are only about thirty left. This period of prosperity which saw the establishment of newspapers was referred to as the springtime of the media. It coincided also with the springtime of political parties. Over the same period of the first six years or the first half of the decade of the 90s, there were in Côte d'Ivoire about one hundred officially registered political parties.

This was a near perfect synchronisation of two "springtimes". It was also a synchronisation of a definite backward slide or even a certain decline which could account for what some have called the connivance between the media and political parties, or by others as a dangerous proximity of one side to the other. This has thus eventually led some to assert that the media had become a tool in the hands of politicians.

Since 1958, Côte d'Ivoire has gone through socio-political crises. There were the events of Dimbokro, Daloa, Bouaflé, Gagnoa, Man, Yamoussoukro, etc. These were recorded in the *Damas Report* (three volumes) as prepared by a French Parliamentary Commission which conducted an inquiry into those events. The media of the time bore some traces of them. However, the so-called "Dahomey" crisis of 1958 can be considered as the one which received (this is relative) the widest media coverage from the colonial newspaper *Abidjan Matin*. Other socio-political crises have rocked Côte d'Ivoire after the proclamation of independence on August 7, 1960. These were the so-called black cat plot of 1963; the revolt of Guébié with Kragbé Gnangbé, of Sanwi, of Captain Sio, of General Robert Guéi's coup d'état in 1999 and finally the armed conflict, to be more precise, the war since 2002 to date. How have the Ivorian media, from *Fraternité Matin* of the one-party period to the newspapers of the multi-party system, which describe themselves as free and independent, covered those events?

Crises have generally been a test for journalists and the media. They demand of them to demonstrate beyond the ordinary, their social responsibility through their professionalism, respect for moral values and cardinal virtues, as well as the code of ethics of their profession. Currently in Côte d'Ivoire, several voices have risen to criticise the entire Ivorian media for being partisan and therefore prejudiced and biased in the exercise of their profession, particularly during the period of the crisis which includes the elections. Journalists and the media as a whole have been accused of numerous blunders and excesses such as incitement to xenophobia, tribalism and racism. The various peace agreements signed by the parties in the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, since Linas-Marcoussis through Lomé (no political agreement was signed in

the Togolese capital), Accra and Pretoria to Ouagadougou, have made it a point to lay particular emphasis on what was considered to be the responsibility of journalists and the media from the outset, the crystallisation (radicalisation) of the crisis and its transformation into a war. Is this a well-founded accusation? How did matters get to that? How does one measure the responsibility of journalists and the media in the long Ivorian conflict?

CHAPTER ONE

The First Three Decades of the Ivoirian Media Under the One-Party System (1960–1990)

ABSTRACT

The Ivorian media have always been the political combat media. During the first thirty years, that is the period of the one-party system, the few newspapers (there were in all 4 newspapers: Fraternité Matin, not a newspaper of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA) but rather of Houphouët-Boigny and some of his companions of the early days; Fraternité Hebdo, the official newspaper of the PDCI-RDA; Ivoire Dimanche, an entertainment newspaper; Ivoir'Soir, newspaper of the Fraternité Matin group specializes in short news items, cultural and societal issues) were, to some extent, newspapers committed to a struggle. This was particularly true of Fraternité Matin and Fraternité Hebdo. This chapter will give an idea of the Ivorian media before the return to the multi-party system.

The history of the colonial media in Africa has been generally determined by the type of colonisation found in the various parts of the Black Continent. In French West Africa, it was in Benin, as some would rather insist, that the first newspaper was established in 1920. That was a long way after the first newspaper of English-speaking West Africa, which appeared in Liberia more than a century before that of French-speaking Africa. Direct rule, which we [francophones] call "local colonial dictatorship", was the trademark of the French colonial empire and proved to be highly repressive against the slightest inclination towards freedom of expression. Ownership of a newspaper was at the time a matter of race: only a French citizen had the right to own a newspaper. It was only about 14 years before the assembly-line-style mass independence of West African countries that the new Constitution of France (1946) considered the aborigines worthy to establish political parties. Better still, to form or join a trade union. And there was an unexpected icing on the cake: the blackness of their skin, in other words their race, was no longer considered by the French coloniser as a congenital defect which should consign them to silence: they were authorised to establish newspapers. Thus, came into being some newsletters of the time. Some of them declared war on the colonial government through uncompromising criticisms. One can mention *La Voix du Cameroun*, *Lumière*, *Etoile*, *Vérité*, all of which belonged to the Union of the People of Cameroon (UPC) of Ruben Um Nyobé.

As was almost predictable, the mass proclamations of independence sounded the death knell of what passed for private media. That was a godsend for the French colonial empire: "The French," writes Marie-Soleil Frère, "encouraged this authoritarian trend and only state newspapers and radio stations survived." There was an exception, though perhaps not the only case: in Côte d'Ivoire, *Abidjan Matin* survived beyond August 7, 1960, the date the country's independence was proclaimed. This was not so surprising: the paper belonged to De Breteuil, a Frenchman.

The first 50 years of the Ivorian media can generally be divided into three stages: first, the colonial period, which is before independence. It spans between the establishment of Côte d'Ivoire as a French colony in 1893 and its attainment of national and international sovereignty on August 7, 1960. This period can be extended up to August 7, 1963 when the national television was established. During those years, some newspapers appeared in Côte d'Ivoire. They belonged generally to colonial settlers. This was in its own way a militant media. It took sides with the coloniser, owned by colonial settlers or whites from France (it amounts to the same thing). Its mission was first and foremost to defend the colonial enterprise. Sometimes, it was to support colonisation by acting as conduit for ideas favourable to this "mission" of the French Empire: civilise the colonised people and promote and support the development of the colonies.

The 1st Period of Independence: 1960–1990

New fronts were opened. The former colonised people, now newly emancipated, quickly launched another, a new struggle: that of national development and unity, the latter also being national. The one party was imposed as the ideal instrument by those who proclaimed themselves as "Founding Fathers", "Fathers of Independence" or like others "Helmsmen" and "Enlightened Guides". The former French coloniser on his part merely recycled and adapted his repressive policy against the freedom of expression of the indigenous people. Thus, concerning this issue, nothing changed fundamentally. One party and one line of thinking, authoritarianism of the Empire and repression of all freedom of expression: "the enlightened guides" of independence and the colonisers of yesterday in some way joined forces against the so-called independent media. Consequently, private newspapers disappeared quickly to the advantage of the state-owned media. Thus, were established among others *Cameroun Tribune* in Cameroon, *Le Soleil* in Senegal, *L'Union* in Gabon, *Fraternité Matin* on December 9, 1964 in Côte d'Ivoire, etc.

In Côte d'Ivoire, 27 years after independence, there were only four newspapers: *Fraternité Matin* (the supposed public service newspaper which some called Houphouët-Boigny's unofficial newspaper, at any rate which was

established by him and some of his right-hand men of the early years), *Fraternité Hebdo* (the PDCI-RDA's official newspaper) and *Ivoire Dimanche*. *Ivoir'Soir* was established in the second half of the 1980s, more specifically in 1987.

The 2nd Period of Independence: 1990–2004

The year 1990 is important in the history of Côte d'Ivoire in general and its media in particular. On the political level, it marks the return to the multi-party system. This is a break with the first 26 years which followed independence. Once the barriers of the one-party system were broken under external and even more, from internal pressure, this period left wide open the floodgates to a certain frenzy and a political enthusiasm which would rapidly lead to a remarkable swarming of political parties. It was from that year that a hundred odd political organisations claiming mainly to belong to the opposition were founded. Currently, in 2011, nearly one hundred political parties have been formed officially and are legally recognised.

The first six years of the decade of the 90s were the founding years of the media in Côte d'Ivoire. Two major events have so positioned them. First of all, on December 31, 1991, the first Ivorian media laws were promulgated. These are Law 91-1034 of December 31, 1991 pertaining to the status of professional journalists, Law 91-1001 of December 27, 1991 on the legal framework of broadcast communication, and Law 91-1033 of December 31, 1991 on the legal framework of the print media. Before the late President Félix Houphouët-Boigny promulgated these laws, the four newspapers which made up the Ivorian media were implicitly governed by the French Law of July 29, 1881 which includes a "*post no bills*" clause. Above all it is, as its title indicates, the great "*law on press freedom*". The December 1991 law on the legal framework of the media brought in some improvements. Among them is the abolition of the licensing regime in preference for the regime of declaration. It states in Title I, Article 2 that "*Any newspaper or periodical may be published without prior licensing and without the deposit of a guarantee after the declaration prescribed by Article 4.*" Article 4 itself stipulates that: "*Before any journal or periodical is published, two copies of the publication shall be registered at the office of the State Attorney under whose jurisdiction is located the registered office of the newspaper or periodical.*" This thus marked the fall of the fortress of arbitrariness held by the regime of licensing. By adopting this law, the National Assembly endorsed the conquest of media pluralism. By promulgating it, the President, the late Félix Houphouët-Boigny, no doubt unwillingly, gave a boost to press freedom for Ivorian media practitioners.

However, in December 1991, Côte d'Ivoire had barely emerged from its stupor from three decades of the one-party system and one-track formatting and standardising of thought: everyday *Fraternité Matin* carried on its front

page, like an epitaph on the tomb of freedom of expression and of opinion, "The thought for the day," that of the first President of Côte d'Ivoire. Such a long sheet of lead over freedom of expression could not disappear in two short years without leaving any after-effects. The spirit of the law of December 31, 1991, would be one expression of them. And the letter did not betray the spirit. This law was therefore strongly decried by journalists, some legal minds and even part of non-politicking persons and for that matter not yet partisan civil society. They considered it liberticidal. The Ivorian lawmaker, to tell the truth, invited the harshest of criticisms. December 1991 seemed to have gone back in time to take the Ivorian media back to the days when the French colonial empire furiously cracked down on the freedom of expression of the indigenous people. The Ivorian lawmaker seemed to have dipped his pen in the same ink. An impressive array of punitive measures "for media crimes and offences" served as backbone to the 69 articles.

However, the severely repressive nature of the law of December 31, 1991 could not wipe away what we like to call media fertility. Six short years — 1990 to 1996 — were enough for an explosion of the number of newspapers to happen: 178 newspapers appeared on the nation's market, a rather tiny market. This was a birth rate fit for the Guinness Book of Records. Ibrahim Sy Savané, former Director General of *Fraternité Matin*, Minister of Communication and currently the Chairman of the High Authority for Broadcast Communication (HACA) and above all a well known media economist, explained this phenomenon in 1996: "In a few years, the Ivorian media have seen a real explosion. Though spectacular, the phenomenon was in no way a surprise. With the exception of a few variables, the same thing was observed in some Eastern countries which, as they did away with communism, found pluralism of opinions and modes of expression. This was particularly the case in Poland, in Czechoslovakia. It had already happened soon after the Second World War in several European countries, as in France and Belgium. It can be observed, though, that there existed already in these countries, an old media tradition. The fact still remains that the great movement of liberal transformations always encourage the establishment of newspapers." However, there is a dialectical situation to contend with: such vibrancy in the birth rate bears within it its own contradiction. Still according to Sy Savané, "in nearly all cases, it can be observed that the newspaper boom, after the period of euphoria, slow down and rapidly so. This, after all said and done, is normal. Thus spontaneity or sheer will by themselves are not enough to ensure the viability of newspapers. So very quickly, the birth rate of new newspapers drops, while the mortality rate goes up significantly, right from the second year of existence." Currently, even if the small national newspaper market remains highly glutted, the hard and implacable law of demand and supply (some would call it natural selection)

has, to a relative extent, imposed its rules: only about thirty newspapers have survived.

The 3rd Period of Independence: After the Law of 2004

Koné Dogbémin Gérard, Barrister-at-Law, a Legal Consultant and Legal Officer for the Observatory for Press Freedom and Professional Code of Ethics (OLPED) criticises, with legal arguments, the law of 2004. Among what he calls "the shortcomings of the innovations referred to as progress," he mentions "the categorisation of journalists: professional journalists and non-professional journalists; the need to explain the content of the refusal of the state prosecutor to issue an acknowledgement note [for a declaration publication]; the absence of rules guiding any dispute arising from a declaration [of publication] and issuance of acknowledgement note; proclamations of freedom as pious hope; the removal of the absolute protection under the conscience clause as well as the decriminalisation that never was."

These are well founded and therefore admissible criticisms. Even so, some other legal experts have a dissenting view also based on legal arguments. Be that as it may, one cannot challenge 2004 as the year of a turning point. Law 2004-643 of December 14, 2004 on the legal framework of the media marks some significant advances. Koné Dogbémin Gérard acknowledges and enumerates them: "Innovations to promote good quality newspapers, with the requirement that newspapers or periodicals be set up in the form of business enterprises; the requirements for the composition of editorial teams; the situation of the professional journalist; the right of reply and correction; innovations towards the reduction of arbitrariness against media enterprises, with the setting of a deadline for the State Attorney to issue the acknowledgement note for the declaration to publish a newspaper; the obligation on the State Attorney to give justification for a refusal to issue the acknowledgment note as well as the regulation of pornographic newspapers or which offend public decency" (Gérard Koné Dogbémin, *L'Observatoire*, quarterly review of OLPED, No.1 of September-October 2005).

One could, and indeed should, add to these the abolition of custodial sentences for media offences. The very heading of this part of the law is indicative of the spirit of the entire text: the notion of "media offence" which might explain, among others, the severe nature of the repression under the law of December 1991, has disappeared. Though Koné Dogbémin opined that it was "the lost opportunity for decriminalization," the letter of this Law 2004-643 of December 14, 2004 clearly explains the lawmaker's desire to abolish imprisonment for offences committed by journalists in the exercise of their profession.

In practice, after this law was promulgated, there has, strictly speaking,

not been any imprisonment of journalists as had been the case in the 90s. This does not mean that the 2004 law put an end to attacks on press freedom and the physical integrity of journalists. Assaults against journalists, media enterprises, and even against news vendors and newsstands increased. Right from the outset of the rebellion of September 19, 2002, many newspapers were barred from areas labelled as Central North-West (CNO) held by the rebellion and warlords. Local stations of the Ivorian Broadcasting Corporation (RTI) were either destroyed or taken over for propaganda purposes by the rebellion which established its own newspapers. Journalists died: Jean-Hélène, Radio France International correspondent in Abidjan, was gunned down by an Ivorian gendarme. Ivorian journalists were killed or attacked and injured during this long armed conflict.

The fact remains, nonetheless, that the abolition of custodial sentences for offences committed by journalists in the exercise of their profession, despite the justifiable reservations it gave rise to, is considered by the entire body of journalists as a major achievement. It is the fruit of long battles of which the landmarks were, for the last 20 years, media pluralism, the establishment of the National Union of Ivorian Journalists (UNJCI), of the Observatory for Press Freedom and the Professional Code of Ethics (OLPED), the shift from the licensing regime to that of declaration, the establishment of the Commission for the professional journalist's identity card, the National Council for Broadcast Communication (CNCA), of the National Council for the Print Media (CNP), the Guild of Newspaper Publishers of Côte d'Ivoire (GEPCI), the National Union of Private Newspapers of Côte d'Ivoire (SYNAPPCI), etc. The promulgation of this law of 2004 of the 2nd Republic came to crown all these various gains.

CHAPTER TWO

The Springtime of Media Proliferation (1990)

ABSTRACT

Very often people talk of the springtime of the media as an unavoidable reference in any study of the French-speaking Sub-Saharan African media after 1990. The Ivorian media is no exception to this rule. However, does what is referred to as the springtime of the media, which was also the springtime of political parties, not explain, to some considerable extent, the much decried content of the Ivorian media? The perfect synchronisation between the two springtimes is startling and raises questions on the partisan political commitment, in other words, the exploitation, of the thousand petals of the media's springtime.

As we said earlier, the 90s are an important period in the political history of Côte d'Ivoire as well as that of its media. The establishment of numerous political parties coincided with the rash of newspapers. The period between 1990 and 1996 saw the birth of ninety political organisations, and 178 daily newspapers and periodicals. (*The State of the Media in Côte d'Ivoire, 1990–1996*, UNJCI/OLPED document, which appeared in the second quarter of 1996). Did it all happen by chance or as a result of connivance between political parties and newspapers? The first answer to this question goes back to 1991. It was given by Ibrahim Sy Savané whom we have already quoted earlier: "Some newspapers even appeared only once, just the time for their painstakingly accumulated small capital to be dissipated. Meanwhile, the great majority have managed to struggle along under conditions which defy the rule book. To continue, one had to, and as has been the case, must always either remain close, to say the least, to a political party with activists and a good following, or benefit from the generosity of a hidden sponsor, who has some small grant, and who wants to project himself or has some scores to settle" (Ibrahim Sy Savané, in *The State of the Media in Côte d'Ivoire 1996*). To be close to a political party is an euphemism for expressing the dependency between politicians and the media. Economic dependency echoes ideological dependency. A double dependency can only influence the content of newspapers. Ibrahim Sy Savané thus explains: "The much decried content of newspapers has been influenced by the situation in which one must offer activists what they wanted to read, or please a sponsor in the background. Newspapers which did not have any of these "assets", disappeared quickly or perhaps, settled down to "poaching". They appear occasionally, to rant and rave before falling back into silence." Behind the irony of words lies the tragedy of the Ivorian media: exploitation.

Proximity-Subservience

To express the proximity-subservience of Ivorian newspapers with and by political parties and politicians, Ivorians group them by colour: those which are for Laurent Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), are the blues; those for the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA) of Henri Konan Bédié, the greens . . . such classification is obviously not scientific and limited. It nonetheless expresses a certain reality: the Ivorian consumers of news who are referred to as "*strange users*" are not ignorant of the relationships of dependence between the media and power blocs.

In the early 90s, Ivorians saw the end to the one-party system. Just as other African people did during the same period, they restored pluralism of opinions and expression. The media explosion is the best yardstick to gauge the surge of free speech. Free speech? The media which are the conveyors of this free speech are themselves not free. One of the expressions of this dependence is the trench warfare among colleagues. This has been strongly condemned by Diégou Bailly: "You see, Mr. President (Author's note: Henri Konan Bédié), if journalists have often been used as 'cannon fodder' by political parties, it is more for economic rather than political or ideological reasons. Like a hungry pack, journalists face all sorts of temptations. They are at the mercy of the first sponsor who can pay water and electricity bills or help keep the pot boiling. Like the 'sofa' and 'skirmish contingents' they are found in all battles where they shoot at anything that moves on the orders of party leaders. Things would have been different if majority of journalists were not living by their wits or if they were aware that they practised a profession which could enable them live decently" (Diégou Bailly, *The Ivorian Media in 1996, Two Days for Freedom*, document published by OLPED, UNJCI and the Canadian International Development Agency CIDA in 1997).

One of the key excesses on the list of the breaches of the professional code of ethics is anti-confraternity which has been rife since the beginning of what was too quickly named "the springtime of the media." The results of the monitoring done by the Observatory for Press Freedom and the Professional Code of Ethics (OLPED) attest to this. As a persistently committed offence, it occupies the second position (717, or 16.39%) after insults (1997, or 45.67%) on the list of offences committed by journalists from October 1995 to December 31, 2003. *L'Observatoire* (a quarterly review of OLPED), No. 1, September-October 2005.

Typology of Cases of Professional Misconduct and Occurrence in the Media

Since it was established on September 24, 1995, the OLPED, in many reports

of its daily monitoring of the media, and the National Council of the Print media (CNP) in its activity reports have highlighted this painful barometer of the national contest in unprofessionalism. Here is a little sample (of offences) picked up without any effort from the columns and from the stations. This is courtesy of the OLPED.

Table 2.1 The Offences in the Daily Newspapers, Periodicals Radio and Television Stations

<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Points on Listening or Reading Scale</i>	<i>Number of Times Recorded</i>
1	Non-observance of the spirit of confraternity	61
2	Insult	32
3	Incitement to tribalism, racism and xenophobia	21
4	Incitement to revolt and violence	18
5	Non-observance of balance in the treatment of information	10
6	Breach of public decency and morality	6
7	Incitement to religious fanaticism	2
8	Incitement to debauchery	1

Brief Analysis of Figures for 4 Years: 1998 and 1999; 2002 and 2003

From 1998 to 1999, the offences went from 544 to 714. This huge increase in the breaches of the professional code of ethics of journalism in this period which preceded the first coup d'état in independent Côte d'Ivoire (1998), the year of the coup by General Robert Guéi and his young men on December 24, 1999), shows the link between the moments of heightened socio-political tension and the increase in the excesses and blunders in the media. In 1997, the OLPED recorded only 79 cases of professional misconduct.

During those two years, 4 types of misconduct were more prevalent in the columns of the newspapers and on the television and radio stations. These are the insults: 230 in 1998 and 295 in 1999; anti-confraternity: 118 and 98; incitement to revolt and violence: 51 and 107; and incitement to tribalism, racism and xenophobia: 90 and 147.

Table 2.2 Offences in Daily Newspapers, on Radio and Television Before and After March 1996

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Points on Listening and Reading Scale</i>	<i>Before March 7, 1996</i>	<i>After March 7, 1996</i>	<i>Number of times recorded</i>
1	Non-observance of the spirit of confraternity	23	8	31
2	Incitement to revolt and violence	14	1	15
3	Insult	9	2	11
4	Incitement to tribalism, racism and xenophobia	10	1	11
5	Non-observance of balance in the treatment of information	9	1	10
6	Breach of public decency and morality	0	6	6
7	Incitement to religious fanaticism	0	0	0
8	Incitement to debauchery	0	0	0

In 2002 and 2003, there was no reversal in the trend: on the contrary, there was a kind of upsurge in the explosion of the cases of gross professional misconduct. The Observatory recorded 402 insults in 2002 and 385 in 2003; 146 and 105 breaches of anti-confraternity; 135 and 143 cases of incitement to revolt and violence; 82 and 72 cases of incitement to tribalism, to racism and xenophobia.

With the increase in the breaches of the professional code of ethics, the moral sanctions body has had to adapt their typology on three occasions: from six during the first four years of the existence of the OLPED, the points on the listening and reading scale went to 10 then to 21.

In its 4th and 5th communiqués of October 26 and November 2, 1995 (the first was made public on October 12, 1995), the moral tribunal of peers had already recorded cases of incitement to tribalism, xenophobia, religious fanaticism, revolt and violence, among others.

A Study Conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INS)

In 2007, the National Institute of Statistics (INS) conducted a survey at our request for OLPED on the first 11 years of existence (1995 to 2005) of the regulatory body. Figure 2.1 gives the results.

Table 2.3 Occurrence of Offences on Radio and Television and in Daily Newspapers

<i>Listing/Reading Grid Media Outlet</i>	<i>Lack of confraternity</i>	<i>Insult</i>	<i>Tribalism, racism, xenophobia</i>	<i>Revolt and violence</i>	<i>Lack of balance</i>	<i>Debauchery</i>	<i>Public decency and morality</i>	<i>Religious fanaticism</i>	<i>Number of times recorded</i>
<i>La Voie</i>	3	3	2	3	1	0	0	0	12
<i>Le populaire</i>	6	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	11
<i>Le Républicain ivoirien</i>	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	10
<i>L'œil du peuple</i>	3	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	9
<i>Fraternité Matin</i>	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	8
<i>Actuel</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	6
<i>La Nouvelle République</i>	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<i>TV1 ère chaîne</i>	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
<i>Soir Info</i>	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
<i>Ivoir'Soir</i>	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
<i>Le jour</i>	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
<i>Radio C.I</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
<i>TV2</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
<i>La Nouvelle société</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Fréquence 2</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Le Bélier</i>	7	6	4	1	0	0	0	0	19
<i>Le nouvel Horizon</i>	5	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	8
<i>Le Direct</i>	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
<i>Notre Chance</i>	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
<i>Le Combat</i>	1	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	7
<i>Le Journal de la semaine</i>	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
<i>Le Démocrate</i>	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	5

Table 2.4 Offences Committed by Journalists from October 1995 to December 31, 2003

<i>Items Monitored</i>	<i>Years</i>									<i>Overall Total</i>	<i>%</i>
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003		
Insult	07	22	18	230	295	177	461	402	385	1997	45.67
Lack of confraternity	19	28	48	118	98	67	88	146	105	717	16.39
Incitement to revolt and violence	10	07	16	51	107	37	51	135	143	557	12.74
Incitement to tribalism, racism and xenophobia	11	10	11	90	147	69	241	82	72	633	14.47
Bad treatment of information	04	02	Nil	04	03	15	21	34	32	115	02.63
Breach of public decency and morality	00	00	03	17	05	01	07	12	11	55	01.25
Assault on human dignity	00	00	00	00	16	13	15	07	12	63	01.44
Incitement to religious fanaticism	01	01	00	10	06	25	07	07	06	63	01.44
Incitemet to debauchery	00	00	00	24	37	05	03	00	02	71	01.62
Total	52	70	96	544	714	409	894	827	768	4372	100
Submissions	00	04	15	13	18	39	68	25	11	193	

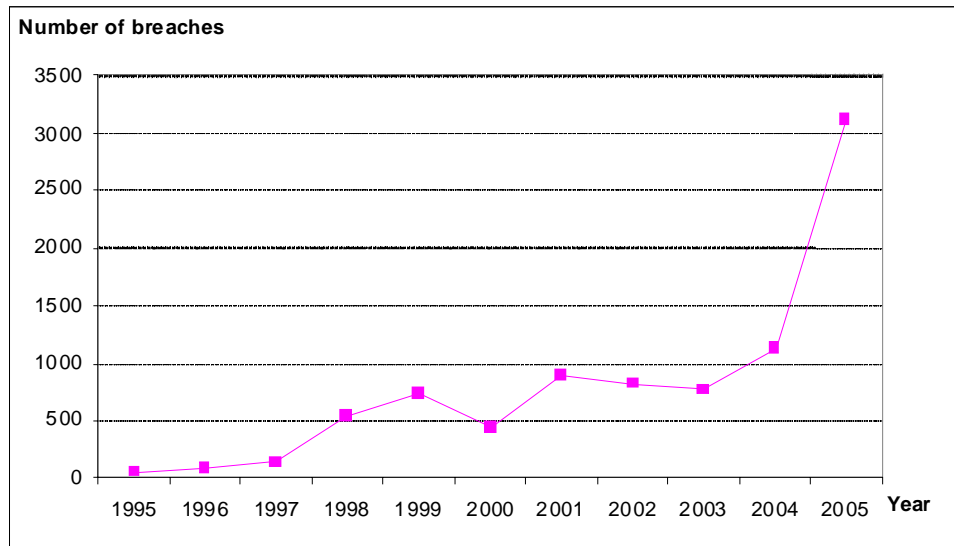
Table 2.5 Offences Committed by Journalists in 2003 (One Year After Outbreak of Rebellion)

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Points on Listening and Reading Scale</i>	<i>Number of Offences Committed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Insults	385	50.13
2	Anti-confraternity	105	13.67
3	Incitement to revolt and violence	143	18.61
4	Incitement to tribalism, racism and xenophobia	72	09.37
5	Bad treatment of information	32	04.16
6	Offence against public decency and morality	11	01.43
7	Assault on human dignity	12	01.56
8	Incitement to religious fanaticism	06	00.07
9	Incitement to debauchery	02	00.02
Total		768	100
Submissions		11	

General Trend of Breaches

Before any other consideration, this section looks at the general trend in the breaches without distinction of type or newspapers. Thus, Figure 2.1 shows that apart from 2000, the breaches have seen a constant increase. This general increment can be seen through three phases. The first phase goes from 1995 to 1997. This part is characterised by both a low level of breaches and a relatively slow increase. The number of breaches thus goes from 56 in 1995 to 135 in 1997, that is to say an average annual increment of 55.2%. The second one covers the period 1998–2004. From 1998, not only is the number of breaches high but it also shows a slow increase. First it goes from 135 in 1997 to 535 in 1998 and at the end of this period, in 2004, to 1131, in other words an annual increase of 19.7%. The third phase is constituted by the change from 1131 breaches in 2004 to 3124, that is 2.8 times.

Apart from the undoubted influence of OLPED's techniques of collection on the number of breaches recorded each year, the general trend seems to follow the national socio-political situation. Thus, the years from 1995 to 1999 are "normal" years with an elected government in power without any particular tensions. After a long period of economic crisis which led to the devaluation of the CFA Franc in 1994, the Ivorian economy was in full recovery with a GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth rate between 4 and 7% over the period

Fig. 2.1 Trends in the Number of Breaches (1995 to 2005)

1995–1999. Also the monitoring of breaches in the national media was at its early stages and improved from year to year.

Following the 1999 Christmas coup, the country was under a military regime for 10 months during the year 2000. This unconstitutional regime was a little inclined to excesses in the media. The number of breaches which were going up constantly since 1995 then dropped.

The October 2000 presidential elections brought the country back to a normal situation which would cover the year 2001 and a good part of the year 2002. The number of breaches which had dropped to 439 in 2000 went up this time to 894 in 2001. This level was maintained generally with a slight drop up to 2003.

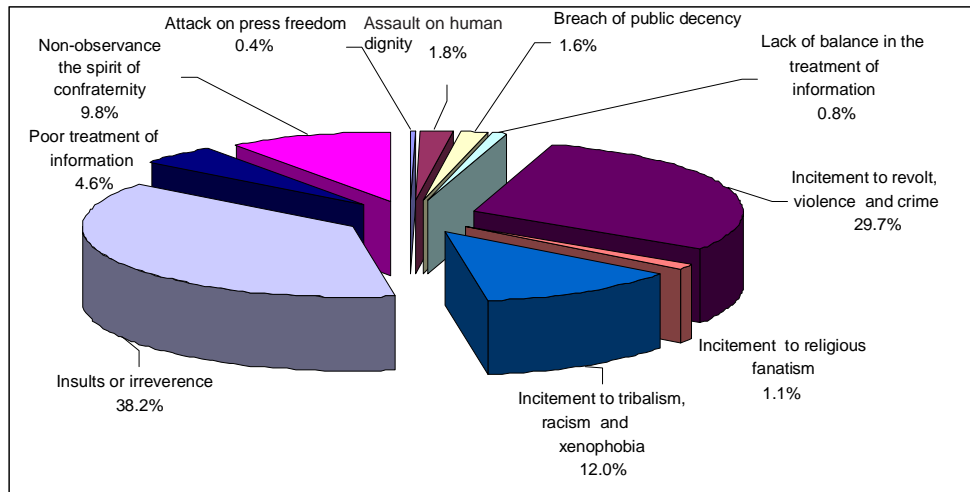
From September 2002, a rebellion emerged in the north of the country, and exacerbated the socio-political tensions with moments of calm. The number of breaches resumed its previous trend under those conditions, a rapid increase which went from 768 in 2003 to 1131 in 2004, then to 3124 in 2005, which means the breaches had quadrupled in 2 years.

Typology of Breaches

This section is concerned with the nature of the breaches and their variations in time. Thus, the analysis will make a distinction between the relative significance of the breaches in relation to each other, and the pattern of each one of them.

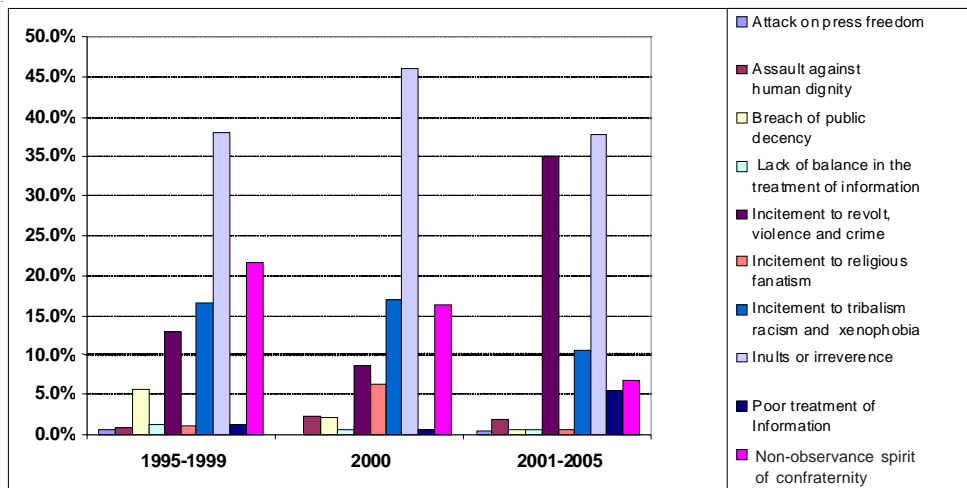
Relative Significance of the Breaches from 1995–2005

An overview of the breaches, Fig. 2.2 shows that during the 1995–2005 period four types of breaches out of the 10, accounted for about 90% of all the breaches. Among these breaches, “insult or irreverence” is by far the most common with nearly 4 breaches out of 10, i.e. 38.2%. The second most common breach is “incitement to revolt, violence and crime” with 29.7%, way ahead of “incitement to tribalism, racism or xenophobia” (12.0%) and the “non-observance of the spirit of confraternity” (9.8%). The other breaches account for less than 5% each.

Fig. 2.2 Distribution of Breaches Over the Period, 1995–2005

The general situation described above obscures the changes that have taken place in the relative significance of the breaches from 1995 to 2005. In order to appreciate the changes that have taken place in the breaches committed in the Ivorian media, the period of the study was divided into three parts based on Côte d'Ivoire's socio-political situation. The relative significance of the breaches has been represented as shown in Figure 2.3, which indicates that insult or irreverence has always been the most common breach, that is, more than 35%. However, its significance has varied in time. It went from about 38% over the period 1995–1999 to 46% in 2000 before falling back to its initial level during the period 2001–2005.

Over the period 1995–2000, incitement to revolt, violence and crime was relatively low (8% to 13%) but assumed great significance, over the period 2001 to 2005 when it rose to 35%. This situation could be explained by the corollaries of the crisis which gave rise to regular and massive calls to join

Fig. 2.3 Distribution of the Breaches According to the Period

forces to defend the nation in danger, which is often difficult to distinguish from an incitement to violence and crime.

Poor treatment of information has followed a similar trend as that of incitement to violence, except that it is a much smaller part of the breaches. Before 2001, its share of the breaches was from 1.3% and 0.7% respectively in 1995–1999 and 2000. Over the period 2001–2005, this share moved to 5.5%.

The trend for the non-observance of the spirit of confraternity is encouraging. Its share of this category has, in fact, dropped consistently from the first period to the last one. This share therefore dropped by 21.6% in 1995–1999 to 16.4% in 2000, then to 6.8% in 2001–2005.

Pattern of Breaches According to Type

The analysis of the breaches could not be limited to the relative significance. The nominal proportion in which each breach was committed (for example the number of times a particular breach is committed divided by the number of media outlets) shows the level of professionalism of the national media. Changes in the number of times a breach, however small, is committed can help predict the future situation if nothing is done. For these reasons, the pattern of each breach shall be examined from the Table 2.6.

Attack on Press Freedom

Attack on press freedom is the least common breach. It is mentioned only for 4 years. These are 1997, 1998, 2004 and 2005. Attack on press freedom among the offences went from 5% in 1997 to 0.3 in 2005.

Table 2.6 Trends in the Offences According to Type from 1995 to 2005

<i>Type of offence</i>	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	<i>Total</i>
Attack on press freedom	0	0	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	16	9	35
Assault on human dignity	0	0	0	0	13	10	15	7	12	30	68	155
Breach of public decency	0	5	6	30	48	9	10	12	13	1	8	142
Lack of balance in the treatment of information	5	2	11	2	0	2	0	0	0	23	23	68
Incitement to revolt, violence and crime	8	9	16	49	117	38	51	135	143	519	1500	2585
Incitement to religious fanaticism	0	1	0	9	7	28	7	7	6	8	23	96
Incitement to tribalism, racism and xenophobia	10	11	9	80	146	75	241	82	72	118	206	1050
Insults or irreverence	8	21	17	237	304	202	461	402	385	319	981	3337
Bad/poor treatment of information	0	0	12	3	5	3	21	34	32	59	227	396
Breach of spirit of confraternity	25	38	57	122	92	72	88	146	105	38	79	862
Total	56	87	135	535	732	439	894	825	768	1131	3124	8726

Assault on Human Dignity

Assault on human dignity appeared in statistics of the OLPED only in 1999. For each year it accounted for a small proportion of the breaches (less than 3%). However, the number doubled each year from 2004. Having remained between 10 and 15 between 1999 and 2003, the number of breaches actually went up to 30 in 2004 and 68 in 2005.

Breach of Public Decency

Breach of public decency is among the less represented offences. However, it is much higher than the first two types mentioned. Its trend over the period 1995–2005, has two phases. From 1996, it remained stable around an average of 10 breaches per year (between 8 and 12, except in 2000).

Lack of Balance in the Treatment of Information

In nominal terms, the lack of balance in the treatment of information was relatively less committed. At the beginning of the period (from 1995 to 1998), the number of this type of breach was between 2 and 11, which is to say between 0.4% and 9%. Then over the period 1999 to 2003, no breach of this type was recorded except 2 in 2000. During each of the years of the period (2004 and 2005), the lack of balance in the treatment of information was mentioned 23 times.

Incitement to Revolt, Violence and Crime

The pattern of incitement to revolt, violence and crime has been the most disturbing for at least three reasons. First of all, the media places human life, public order and social cohesion in danger as soon as it commits this offence on account of its nature. Secondly, this offence appeared in greater numbers and proportions every year. Thirdly, the increase in the number of offences from 2000 was very rapid since it went up from 38 to 1500 in 5 years, that is, an average annual increment of 108.6%. In other words, the number of offences more than doubled in average terms from one year to the other.

Incitement to Religious Fanaticism

To analyse incitement to religious fanaticism, it must be pointed out that in Côte d'Ivoire, no religion owns a general information print media outlet which would be the platform for the expression of its convictions. This has reduced the possibility for a good number of those who would want to incite to religious fanaticism to do so. This type of offence was generally mentioned 1 to 8 times except in 2000 and 2005 when it attained 28 and 23 respectively.

Incitement to Tribalism, Racism and Xenophobia

Incitement to tribalism, racism and xenophobia, is relatively high in the Ivorian media. It appeared between 72 and 241 times a year between 1998 and 2005. On the average, it is the third most committed offence (an average of 12%).

The number of offences of this type over the last three years of the period of the study shows that it is assuming greater proportions as it increased from 72 in 2003 to 118 in 2004 in 2004 and 206 in 2005.

Insult or Irreverence

Insult or irreverence is the most committed offence. From 1998 to 2005, with the exception of the year 2000, OLPED recorded more than 302 offences of this type in the media. This amounts to at least one offence a day of appearance, excluding public holidays when the print media do not appear. The downward slide which was observed between 2001 and 2004 was suddenly interrupted in 2005 by a leap of more than 200%. The number of offences thus went from 319 in 2004 to 981 in 2005.

Bad Treatment of Information

Bad treatment of information appeared from 1997 onwards. From that date to 2000, the number of offences reported was between 3 and 12 years. From the year 2001, the number of offences increased, slowly at first going up from 21 in 2001 to 59 in 2004. Then it made a jump in 2005 with 227 cases of bad treatment of information.

Non-Observance of the Spirit of Confraternity

The non-observance of the spirit of confraternity has seen a series of fluctuations between 25, the lowest number of breaches, and 146 the highest level. The lows and highs alternate every 3 years. The pattern in the number of breaches thus shows an increase from 1995 to 1998, going from 25 to 122. From 1998 to 2000, it recorded a drop to settle at 72 breaches. A new high was observed from 2000 to 2002. The number of breaches was then 146 in 2006. From 2002 to 2004, the number of breaches dropped to 38. Finally, a new phase began from 2004 since the number of breaches was 79 in 2005.

Typology of Newspapers

The typology of newspapers seeks to characterise newspapers whose issues contain the offences recorded. Unfortunately, the databases hold very little information on the media outlets. Only their names are mentioned.

Number of Newspapers Involved in the Offences

As in most Sub-Saharan African countries, the Ivorian media saw the birth of several newspapers soon after the return to the multi-party system in 1990.

From that date, about fifty have been appearing more or less regularly. The proportion of this multiplicity of newspapers involved in the offences would be the best indicator to measure the manner in which breaches in the media are distributed in this sector. Since the total number of the outlets is unknown, the number of newspapers which have been mentioned at least once in connection with the offences has been listed by year in Table 2.7.

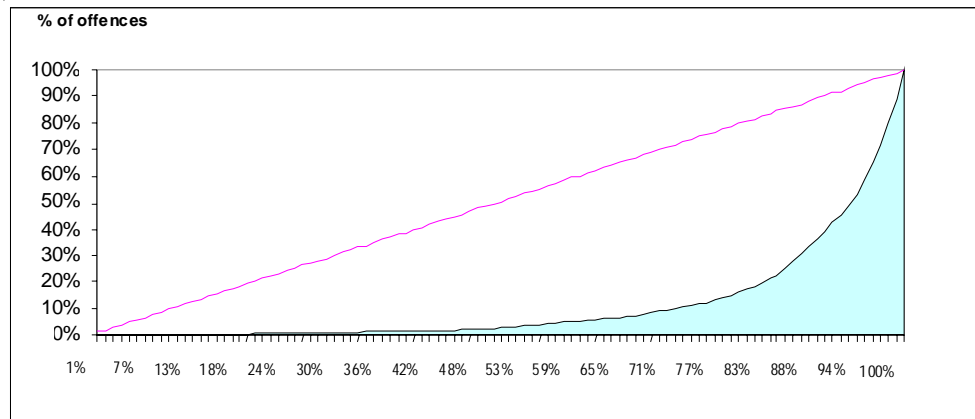
Table 2.7 Number of Newspapers Involved in the Offences

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Newspapers having Committed at Least One Offence</i>
1995	19
1996	24
1997	20
1998	39
1999	38
2000	34
2001	32
2002	
2003	
2004	12
2005	28

Generally, the number of newspapers which have committed at least one offence is high, taking into consideration the total number of newspapers which actually appear regularly. Table 2.7 shows that the number of newspapers involved in the offences dropped from 1998 to 2004. It went from 39 in 1998 to 12 in 2004. An upsurge began in 2005.

Concentration of Offences

The analyses of the typology of newspapers looked at the concentration of the offences. The idea was to determine if the offences were mostly committed by a small number of newspapers or if it was the case of a large number of newspapers committing a lower number of offences. To this end, a Gini curve, Fig. 2.4, and the share of the first 5 and 10 newspapers involved in the offences were represented.

Fig. 2.4 Gini Curve of the Newspapers Present in the Offences

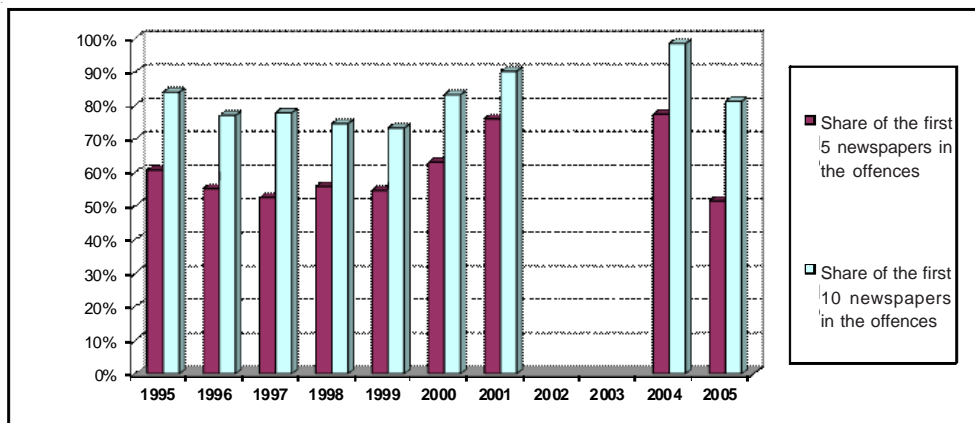
The Gini curve helps to evaluate the concentration of an observation. It represents on the abscissa the proportion of newspapers classified by increasing number of offences. The proportion of offences is represented along the axis of ordinates. For example, if the curve passes through the point of abscissa 20% and of ordinate 30%, then 20% of newspapers which commit fewer offences account for 30% of the offences. This also means that the remaining 80% of newspapers (complement of 20% to 100%) have committed 70% of the offences (complement of 30% to 100%). In a situation of perfect equal distribution of offences among the newspapers, then $\alpha\%$ of newspapers also have $\alpha\%$ of the offences. The Gini curve would then be reduced at the first bisector of equation to $y=x$.

Thus, the more the Gini curve moves away from the first bisector, the more the phenomenon observed is unequally distributed. It is all about offences committed by the newspapers. The Gini curve actually shows that 20% of the newspapers were responsible for 84% of the offences over the period 1995–2005.

The Gini curve as it is used above could conceal reality by virtue of the fact that the years are considered together. Newspapers do appear and disappear every year. Hence, newspapers which have existed throughout the period are more likely to be mentioned as having committed many offences even if they committed few in a year, as compared with newspapers which may have existed for only a part of the period of the study. To avoid that, the above analysis will be made complete by a representation according to year, of newspapers and the corresponding proportion of offences.

To construct Fig. 2.5, the newspapers have been classified in descending order of offences. The total number of offences committed by the first 5 (respectively the first 10) was divided by the total number of offences for the year. Fig. 2.5 confirms the concentration of offences for a relatively limited number of newspapers. It shows, for example, that the first 5 newspapers were responsible for more than 50% of the offences. This rate is more than 70% when the first 10 are considered.

Fig. 2.5 Share of the First 5 and 10 Newspapers in the Offences

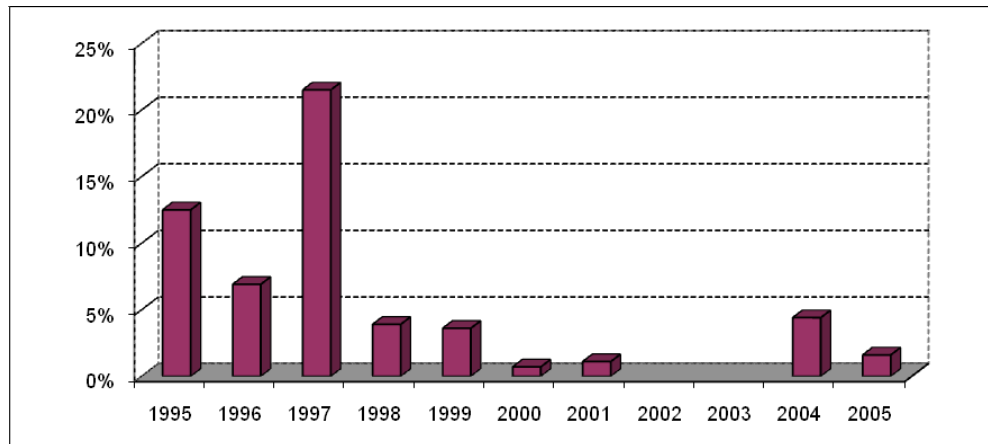


Contribution of Newspapers to Offences

As indicated above, there are very few variables at the base, which makes it possible to classify the newspaper. In spite of this, the [media] outlets were classified in two broad categories which include the state-owned media and the others. The state-owned media outlets are:

- RTI La Première.
- TV2.
- Radio Côte d'Ivoire.
- Fréquence 2.
- Fraternité matin.

The part of the offences which can be attributed to the state-owned media is relatively low (0.7% to 6.9%) outside of 1995 and 1997 with 12.5% and 21.5%, respectively. Moreover, most of the official media have generally seen a drop between 1995 and 2005.

Fig. 2.6 Contribution of the National Media to the Offences

A study of Table 2.8 was carried out according to the division of the period based on the socio-political situation and the known or generally admitted leanings of the newspapers. This study leads to several observations. First of all, all the newspapers on the list of the first 10 newspapers which have committed more offences are of the general information domain. There is no specialised newspaper (sports, music, religion, etc.).

La Voie which later became *Notre Voie* remained in the Top 10 over the entire period. The pro-FPI (Ivorian Popular Front) newspaper could really have changed since this political party's accession to power from 2000. The observation made of offences attributed to this newspaper helps to understand this apparent absurdity. Before the period preceding 2002, insults or irreverence as well as the non-observance of the spirit of confraternity made up more than 70% of this media outlet's offences. After 2002, on the one hand, these offences maintained a very high position, while on the other hand, incitement to revolt, violence and crime added up to it.

Some newspapers were already on the list of the first 10 newspapers for offences before 2000, and then disappeared from the list come 2001. This group concerns *Le Démocrate* and *L'Œil du Peuple*. On the contrary, some newspapers which were absent from the list before 2000, appeared from that date. These are *Le Patriote* and *Le Temps*.¹

Some newspapers stand out by their high contributions to the offences. By deciding on a standard of 20%, that is 1 offence over 5 for any year, the list includes *Le Béliér*, *Notre Voie*, *Le National* and *Tassouman*.

¹ This newspaper came into existence after 2000.

Table 2.8 List of the First 10 Newspapers by Year

1995		1996		1997	
Name of Paper	Offences	Name of Paper	Offences	Name of Paper	Offences
<i>La Voie</i>	9	<i>Le Belier</i>	21	<i>La Voie</i>	28
<i>Le Populaire</i>	8	<i>L'Œil du Peuple</i>	8	<i>Fraternité Matin</i>	16
<i>Le Nouvel Horizon</i>	6	<i>Le Journal de la Semaine</i>	7	<i>RTI 1ere Chaine</i>	10
<i>Notre Chance</i>	6	<i>Le Direct</i>	6	<i>Soir Info</i>	9
<i>Le Républicain</i>	5	<i>Le Nouvel Elan</i>	6	<i>Le Jour</i>	8
<i>Fraternité Matin</i>	3	<i>Actuel</i>	4	<i>Le Populaire</i>	8
<i>L'Œil du Peuple</i>	3	<i>Fraternité Matin</i>	4	<i>Le Républicain</i>	
<i>Le Combat</i>	3	<i>Le Démocrate</i>	4	<i>Ivoirien</i>	8
<i>La Nouvelle</i>				<i>Ivoire Soir</i>	6
<i>Le Démocrate</i>	2	<i>Notre Chance</i>	4	<i>République</i>	6
<i>RTI 1ere Chaine</i>	2	<i>La Nouvelle République</i>	3	<i>Le Démocrate</i>	6
1998		1999		2000	
Name of Paper	Offences	Name of Paper	Offences	Name of Paper	Offences
<i>Le National</i>	109	<i>Le National</i>	208	<i>Le National</i>	92
<i>Le Libéral</i>	66	<i>Le Défi</i>	66	<i>Le Patriote</i>	50
<i>Notre Voie</i>	44	<i>Le Libéral</i>	44	<i>Le Libéral</i>	48
<i>La Nouvelle République</i>	34	<i>Le Démocrate</i>	42	<i>Le Défi</i>	45
<i>Le Démocrate</i>	30	<i>Le Patriote</i>	40	<i>Notre Voie</i>	42
<i>L'Œil du Peuple</i>	28	<i>Notre Voie</i>	33	<i>Le Bucheron</i>	41
<i>Le Démocrate</i>					
<i>L'Œil du Plus</i>	18	<i>L'Œil du Peuple</i>	28	<i>Peuple</i>	17
<i>Le Démocrate Argument</i>	17	<i>Plus</i>	26	<i>L'Agora</i>	12
<i>Actuel</i>	16	<i>Star System</i>	25	<i>La Référence</i>	10
<i>Soir Info</i>	16	<i>Fraternité Matin</i>	24	<i>Bucheron</i>	8
2001		2004		2005	
Name of Paper	Offences	Name of Paper	Offences	Name of Paper	Offences
<i>Tassouman</i>	180	<i>Notre Voie</i>	291	<i>Le Front</i>	388
<i>Le National</i>	154	<i>Le Temps</i>	180	<i>Le Temps</i>	370
<i>Le Nouveau Notre Voie</i>	30	<i>Réveil</i>	174	<i>Notre Voie</i>	316
<i>Eholé</i>	27	<i>Le Patriote</i>	123	<i>Le Nouveau Réveil</i>	274
<i>Le Patriote</i>	26	<i>L'Intelligent</i>		<i>Le Courrier</i>	
<i>Le Libéral</i>	23	<i>d'Abidjan</i>	107	<i>d'Abidjan</i>	260
<i>Le National Hors-série</i>	163	<i>Soir Info</i>	83	<i>Le Patriote</i>	225
<i>Le Temps</i>	15	<i>Heures</i>	57	<i>Le Jour Plus</i>	205
		<i>Fraternité Matin</i>	50	<i>L'Événement</i>	186
		<i>Les Echos du</i>			
<i>L'Agora</i>	14	<i>Matin</i>	25	<i>DNA</i>	174
<i>Le Nouveau Réveil</i>	10	<i>L'Inter</i>	23	<i>24 Heures</i>	139

CHAPTER THREE

Responsibility of the Ivorian Media in the Crisis

ABSTRACT

The number of cases of grave professional misconduct committed by journalists and the Ivorian media is huge and disturbing. This is even more so, in spite of the harshness of the first law (December 1991) on the media framework, the August 1992 professional code of ethics and the December 2004 law which empowers journalists and the media through the abrogation of custodial sentences for media offences. This lack of professionalism and especially ethics on the part of a sizeable number of members of the profession has convinced many users of the media to argue that the media bear some significant level of responsibility in the Ivorian socio-political crisis and the onset of the war.

Conditioning or Psychological Training

At the time of its establishment in 1995, the Observatory for Press Freedom and the Professional Code of Ethics (OLPED) was given a road map based on five main tasks:

1. Promote and defend press freedom.
2. Protect the public's right to free, complete, honest and accurate information.
3. Ensure the observance of the professional code of ethics of journalists in Côte d'Ivoire.
4. Ensure the observance of the norms of social ethics.
5. Ensure the security of journalists in the practice of their profession.

The date of the establishment of the Observatory is as symbolic as it is a valuable indicator: 1995. That year marks a turning point between the death of Félix Houphouët-Boigny and his succession through the ballot box. Right after Houphouët's death in 1993, serious tensions followed the arrival in power of Henri Konan Bédié, constitutional heir apparent, who should continue the term of his predecessor. Furthermore, 1995 is close to 1994, which recalls, from sad memory, the Rwandan genocide. Some media outlets — more especially the Mille Collines radio and television stations (RTML) — of that country took an active part in the massive killing which left at least 800,000 dead; some say between 1,500,000 and 1,800,000 victims.

The theme of the seminar during which 200 Ivorian, African and European journalists ushered in the Ivorian media self-regulatory body is quite revealing: "The responsibility of the journalist in an electoral period."

Just five years after the return to the multi-party system in Côte d'Ivoire, the socio-political situation became highly tense. First of all, on the political front, through the exacerbation of antagonisms, so perceptible in public speeches and also private statements by political actors; then in the content of the media of which the springtime synchronised perfectly with the swarming of political parties. Between 1990 and 1996, there were, as has already been stressed above, 178 newspapers on the media market against four (*Fraternité Matin*, *Fraternité Hebdo*, *Ivoire Dimanche* and *Ivoir'Soir* established as at 1987) during the first three post-independence decades. During the same period, the political landscape filled up considerably: About a hundred political parties were established as against only one from 1960 to 1990.

The newspapers, those referred to as general information media, some of which were too quick to proclaim themselves as independent, would in most, if not all cases, begin to be their masters' voice: the voice and amplification box of political parties and their activists. The journalism of unified political struggle and activism of the period of the one party system gave way to a different journalism of dispersed political struggle and activism of the multi-party system.

Political violence, verbal and physical violence, found a platform in the newspapers: it is the increase in power of "armchair journalists." As the combat wing of political cliques, armed with pen, camera and microphone, they will carry the fight to the opposing camps. They fight the cause of politicians who are their hidden financial backbones and inspirers. The late Jérôme Diégou Bailly, journalist, former Chairman of the National Council for Broadcast Communication (CNCA), in a tribute to the early newspapers of 1990 would all the same write in his book *La réinstauration du multipartisme en Côte d'Ivoire ou la double mort d'Houphouët-Boigny* [Reintroduction of multiparty politics in Côte d'Ivoire: the second death of Houphouët-Boigny], l'Harmattan, 1995: "If it is not possible in the absence of an opinion poll to evaluate in an objective manner, the impact of the local unofficial media and the international media on the course of the struggle of the forces of change, it is at least possible to attest to their effective contribution in relating events, propagating the ideals of nascent political parties, spreading the ideas of the new labour and political leaders." And he adds: "Operating behind masks, journalists of *Papillon* (Félix Henri Grégoire Papillon, the Editor in chief, Jacques Sauterelle, Jean-Louis Tsé-Tsé, Mathieu Criquet, Camille) manipulated ferociously humour, rebellious spirit and impertinence. Hardly concerned about the accuracy of the issues and journalistic truth, the articles written along the tract mode, met with the total approval of the Ivorian public in a context where any act capable of embarrassing the party, the

government and the president was considered heroic" (emphasis ours). Between the "tracts" of the early 90s and the articles of the newspapers which appeared later, there is no difference either in tone or substance. A press review of the 90s is enough to ascertain this.

"Headline Spinning" so celebrated by the "zougrou" [Translator's note: a musical rhythm popular among Ivorian youths including university students] as a science and denounced by a speaker at the Forum as "a bad and dangerous science" is a manifestation of "Radio Treichville," which is a mill and transmitter, as well as recipient of rumours. Every day, the "headline spinners" take newsstands and stalls by storm. They only read the "front pages" of all the newspapers. These display posts meant to attract the customer are enough to satisfy their need for information, but above all, of the interpretation of the news. Thus, they transform themselves into "conveyors" of information of which, in the best of cases, they only have some vague idea, through headlines too often contradictory from one newspaper to the other, which are partisan, partial and biased, generally committed and militant, inordinate, and extremist. From the "front pages", the "headline spinners" manufacture or rewrite the information which initially is never accurate, verified, nor verifiable, interpret it and inject it into the most powerful communication network of all time: word of mouth. The "front-pages" thus serve as sources for rumours which, in the particular case, become truth because it is written in the newspapers. Fascination of the written word . . .

Beyond the fraud which consists in blowing out of all proportion any pieces of information which may belong to the news in brief or the tit-bits in order to turn them into front page headlines, the display windows of Ivorian newspapers adopt nearly the same tone in the opening page as in the inner pages. Thus, here and there, can be found the same professional lapses, the same excesses and the same blunders.

War Drum Beating Showcases (Front Pages)

Le National No. 291 of September 1999 run the headline, with writers as Gbagbo (nothing to do with the former President) Pascaline and Charles Kouassi: "Lotény's Télécel Saga, Miko a Dangerous Man"; "Amadou Gon Coulibaly, the man with a short memory"; *Libération* No. 90 of October 1, 1999 carried the headline: "N'Koumo Mobio: the stupidity of a follow-my-leader" (Author's Note: N'Koumo Mobio was then Mayor of the city of Abidjan); *Le Défi* No. 025 of October 11 to 17, 1999, in its headline, attacked his colleagues of the media who backed Alassane Dramane Ouattara, leader of the Rally of Republicans (RDR): "The 'Alassanist' media: the blind stand of a starving bunch." *Le National* No. 298 of October 13 of the same year for its part is not particular about details: "National identity cards, nationality certificate, birth certificate... the

Ouattaras, a family of forgers." In issue No. 0069 of August 31, the front page of *Libération* which reported on statements by Guédé Guina carried the headline: "Determined activists shout in a chorus: "Bédié can only get at ADO over our dead bodies." These headlines, in the inner pages of the newspapers, lead articles which on their part deliver an all-out attack on citizens. The reasons for such practice are first and foremost political. The political opponent of the party the newspaper sides with, or claims to belong to and defend must be disqualified. With this desire to disqualify opponents, it is no holds barred. Thus, the letter and spirit of the newspapers slide from the political field to areas which have nothing to do with politics: emphasis is laid, even with caricature, on (alleged) human defects as in headlines mentioned above "Miko, a dangerous man"; "Amadou Gon Coulibaly, a man with short memory"; "N'Koumo Mobio: stupidity of a follow-my-leader", etc. The aim of the manoeuvre is to get at the opponent turned into an enemy and hurt him morally. Hence, the write-ups turn to be vulgar. And never, in this comment and analysis and freely partisan media, is there a place for balanced, courteous and civilised debate, where only ideas are defended or fought against.

However, one must not underestimate these breaches of the professional code of ethics of journalism, by passing them off as minor. Behind what at first sight could be likened to ordinary insults, precedes, certainly masked, political disqualification, and above all a form of negation of the humanity of those who are attacked by the media. Relatively speaking, this approach was resorted to with cynical effectiveness in Rwanda where Tutsis, in statements by Hutu extremists, were reduced to cockroaches. In the Ivorian newspapers, it is generally human virtues which are denied political opponents: he who has a short memory is ungrateful; a follow-my-leader lacks character and personality; a dangerous man necessarily must have if not all the faults, at least the major ones. This was beautifully put by Séry Bailly, among others, former Minister of Communication, editorial writer-columnist, university lecturer, researcher, former mayor of Daloa (a city south-west of Côte d'Ivoire): "The antagonistic logic drives towards two objectives by developing two paradigms. For some, it is to legitimise in order to mobilise while others seek to mobilise by denying legitimacy. The two sides of the same coin . . . We often talk about the Rwandan Radio 'Mille Collines' [The Thousand Hills], however the media landscape here (Author's note: in Côte d'Ivoire) is so hilly, everyone stands on a hill. Sometimes without knowing it.

"Things are simplified and reduced to two paradigms: courage or cowardice, heroism or treason, love or hatred. Killing becomes execution or assassination. The media are great manufacturers of heroes and villains. This certainly has an influence on the actors who know the eyes of the public are set on them, and believe that their excesses will quickly earn them a place in the minds of their fellow citizens and of their opponents," Séry Bailly, *Médias*

et Crises en Afrique: Actes du Colloque Forum des Arts et de la Communication, Revue des Arts et de la Communication – [Media and Conflicts in Africa: Report of the Colloquium, Forum of Arts and Communication] Review of Arts and Communication, No.1 special, 2009.

In the Ivorian media, the excesses and blunders of journalists are often the expression of the desire to legitimise or deny the legitimacy of a ruling government or of the one who is out to conquer power. It is practically a central issue. Manufacturing opinion, within the context of political antagonism, does not burden itself with a debate over ideas where one's position is subjected to thorough debate to demonstrate their relevance, their interest and their importance. Membership of an ethnic group can also be marshalled to establish legitimacy or deny it.

Columns Turned into Cemeteries

However, though the headlines in the inner pages of the newspapers may be just as bad, they are accessible only to those who go beyond the display windows which the front pages are. Yet, it is precisely the front page of newspapers, the part most exposed, the most looked at, and the most read both by those who buy the newspapers and the "headline spinners" or the simple bystanders who merely give it an abstracted look, that is the window to all the breaches of the professional code of ethics. While the "headline spinner" is content with the front page headline, the consumer of information who buys a newspaper is generally attracted by this window in the first instance. Then, he discovers the headings of the inside pages. Generally, these are the exact replicas of the front page, more particularly in the spirit which is and remains that of bias, partisan position and political activism of which here are a few examples picked at random over the years: *Le Démocrate* No. 427 of August 31, 1998, well over a year before the December 99 coup d'état, does not burden itself with subtleties: an article written by Djigui Maoulé, which reproduced a quotation takes a clear-cut stand and points to an armed insurrection, tribal violence with a front-page headline as it makes explicit reference to the takeover of state power by a tribal community: "Abou Cissé: 'The Malinke people must take over power with arms if need be.'" The President at the time, Henri Konan Bédié, was not left out. On the contrary, he was one of the choice targets of the newspapers which support the other political clans. Méité Sindou, in issue No. 284 of April 20, 1999, of *Notre Voie*, takes it out on Henri Konan Bédié irreverently in a headline on the first page: "Visit by the President to Bédié's Zanzan like a rebel." [Translator's note: Zanzan is the name of the region in the north-eastern part of Côte d'Ivoire]. A journalist with *Notre Voie*, before becoming the director of the newspaper *Le Patriote* and then of *Nord-Sud* newspaper, Méité Sindou was spokesman for Prime Minister Kigbafori

Guillaume Soro, himself former secretary of the New Forces (ex-rebels). He is currently in Alassane Ouattara's first government of the post-election crisis of 2010, as Chief Executive of the Directorate for Good Governance. In this proxy trench warfare, the activism of journalists and their zeal are among the surest source of support for politicians, their party and activists. The intermediaries in the media sometimes play their role beyond the expectation of the masters and inspirers who have made them their tools. Thus, *Le Patriote* No. 257 of May 13 and 14, 2000, from the vitriolic pen of Charles Sanga, carries the front page headline: "Threats and intimidations, base manoeuvres, violation of the January 21 decree, desire to exclude ADO, return to Bédié's system: Guéi Robert daydreaming!" But that is not all. According to Diégou Bailly: "The daily newspaper, *Le Patriote* of the Mayama publishing group has been the most committed and the most determined of the pro-rebel national media. That newspaper, which supports the RDR (Rally of Republicans) and its leader Alassane Dramane Ouattara had, already on November 12, 2000, during the parliamentary elections, presented on its front page the map of Côte d'Ivoire divided between the North and the South from Bouake. Subsequently, the division of the country brought about by the war more or less faithfully conformed to the outlines drawn earlier by *Le Patriote*. *Le National* in its issue No. 455 of May 2000, on its front page also puts out a headline equally marked with the seal of insulting irreverence, when it sets into the Senegalese head of state: "Ramblings of an African head of state: Alassane soon Prime Minister in Senegal. Where is Wade with the Casamance problem?" In *Réveil Hebdo* No. 331 of January 31, 2000, the incredibly bellicose tone is set on the front page with the headline of an article written by Hervé Ahossy: "The leader of the RDR provokes. Indignant Ivorians answer back: 'Alassane will rule this country over our dead bodies'."

The many breaches of the professional code of ethics of journalism for which the front pages serve as highlights, range from anti-confraternity to incitement to xenophobia, to revolts, tribalism, religious hatred through insults and irreverence (insult against heads of state). Front page headlines thus remain the reflection of the content of the media, as far as cases of professional misconduct are concerned. However, the front pages alone do not give the full measure of the magnitude (quantity) and seriousness of the breaches of the professional code of conduct of the Ivorian media.

For, as a matter of fact, unlike the "headline spinners," the consumer of information, the potential reader, who is baited and rimmed in by the display, crosses the threshold of the "shop" to enter and do what is decisive for every newspaper: buy. But what does he find inside the "shop"? The famous Ivorian "springtime of the media" has given birth to a comment and analysis media to the detriment of an information media. Investigation and reportage have disappeared, giving way, too often, to only "comments," or more precisely

opinions, which is more of the activism and politicking characteristic of the combat media. Here are some samples:

As we go back in time three months before the December 24, 1999 coup d'état, we find newspapers at the service of political parties, their leaders and activists who boost up, for example, incitement to xenophobia. In *Le Nouvel Elan* No. 75 of September 22, 1998, Flint Miguel (obviously an assumed name), writes under the headline "Debate on the nationality of Alassane Dramane Ouattara," an article which is both insulting and incites to xenophobia: "Houphouët gave them daughters of the land in marriage. In fact, they were given everything. Yet these foreigners think that these acts of philanthropy were crimes. And it is to let Houphouët-Boigny and his compatriots pay for these "crimes" that they decided to lay hold of Côte d'Ivoire. In choosing his 'lettered boy' Alassane Ouattara as Prime Minister, Houphouët only wanted to make use of the competence of a son of Africa for a well-defined mission ... thus, it is not a citizen of the world, Phoenician in his official capacity, scaling a rainbow of nationalities as his tastes would direct him, who could become President of Ivorians. Never." *Le National* No. 40 of September 21, 1998, in an article entitled "National Development: are Ivorians the authors of their own death?" written by Yao Dinard, goes one notch further and achieved the feat of inciting to xenophobia, tribalism and insults in a few phrases: "*The Ivorian*," writes the journalist, "no longer feels secure in his own country. Haunted and tracked down by the foreign legion, with the backing of his other Ivorian brother who only behaves thus to satisfy his pecuniary appetite and petty politicking ... In the area of Mathematics, for example, the ex-minister Saliou Touré, then Director of the IRMA and president of the Mathematics Society of Côte d'Ivoire (SMC) pushed young Ivorians off scholarship programmes in order to offer them to persons with northern-sounding names whose nationality is unconfirmed. ... The halt to economic activities which occurred during the past week is proof that the ill-fortune of Ivorians will come from these foreigners who were given everything." This very headline will increase the incitement to xenophobia during the course of 1998.

On September 18, Yapi Solange would thus write in her column under the heading: "Côte d'Ivoire, a rag-bag?": "One can understand Mr. Blaise Compaoré's concerns for the Burkinabes. It is for these very concerns for her population that Côte d'Ivoire has taken this measure (increasing the residence permit), to protect the life of the Ivorian. What would a jobless foreigner come and do in our country with his whole family? Is it that Côte d'Ivoire has become a rag-bag which must welcome the jobless coming from elsewhere?" On September 19, in its issue number 39, the newspaper adds one more serving of it, by A. A., in an article headed: "Strike action by *wôrô wôrô* taxis. Adama Champion clarifies the situation": "Apart from these foreign drivers' desire to cause harm because they have no interest nor love for our country, the strike

action in the transport sector persists for political reasons.” In *Le Démocrate* No. 392 of December 29, Yao Noël writes, under the headline “The true mother and the one brought by Father Christmas”: “Mrs Henriette Konan Bédié, the First Lady of Côte d’Ivoire, the mother of the disabled and socially deprived, has nothing to do with those white comedians who land on Ivorian soil and who pretend, they too, really, that they care for street children . . . If you see the white woman driving around Abidjan these days, give her your devastating smile. She and her folks will understand that this country is not a Far West.”

Ivorian Media in the Elections

In October 2010, Reporters Without Borders monitored 4 Ivorian newspapers: *Fraternité Matin*, *Le Nouveau Réveil*, *Notre Voie* and *Le Patriote*. The title of its report after this work gives an indication of the behaviour of the media in general and, more particularly, the private media during this very tense electoral period. Under the title: “Monitoring the media: Worrying blunders in the private print media,” Reporters without Borders writes: “Reporters without Borders expresses its serious concerns about the verbal excesses and exaggerations used on October 27, 2010, four days to the first round of the presidential election in Côte d’Ivoire, by private daily newspapers *Le Nouveau Réveil*, *Notre Voie* and *Le Patriote*. The organization believes that the use of the terms ‘mass graves and killings’ to denounce an alleged ‘unpunished genocide’ committed by Laurent Gbagbo on the first page of the daily newspaper *Le Patriote*, as well as the accusation of ‘those who cheated the farmers’ made against the party of candidate Alassane Ouattara on page 7 of *Notre Voie*, or that ‘the plans of attack’ by pro-government former soldiers who are preparing ‘troubles for the night of October 29 to 30’ published on page 11 of *Nouveau Réveil*, are excessive and do not meet the standards of professional information.

“Reporters Without Borders recalls that it is acceptable for a private media outlet to lend its support to a candidate in its editorial policy and criticise his opponents, but the freedom to express opinions does not exonerate the journalist from observing the rules of professional code of ethics. This implies that he should never and under any circumstance use hate or inflammatory language, should not publish biased or libelous write-ups and that he should always treat with due consideration and scrupulous attention to the rules, issues liable to fuel tensions within the community.

“Reporters Without Borders therefore calls on *Le Nouveau Réveil*, *Notre Voie* and *Le Patriote* to immediately change their approach to the electoral campaign so as to offer balanced and responsible information to their readers, and thus contribute positively to the plurality of democratic discourse in Côte d’Ivoire.”

The October 2010 presidential election was proclaimed in every tone and

in nearly every language by politicians, and unanimously by the international community to be the key to ending the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. The Ivorian media were particularly called upon to play a key role towards the smooth running of this so important and much awaited election. Thus, there were numerous training seminars, roundtables and fora; in short, everything was done in order to let the media take up their social responsibility and end the crisis through a professional coverage of the elections, more particularly the presidential. All the peace agreements on the Ivorian crisis, since Linas-Marcoussis to Ouagadougou, have dwelt on the responsibility of the media in the crisis and the important and indeed decisive role they have to play towards a happy outcome. Professional organisations threw in their lot, supported by international partner institutions and organisations in media development, and increased meetings and discussions. What Reporters Without Borders denounced "four days to the first round of the presidential election" had been at the heart of the concerns of the Ivorian professional organisations for years to be precise, since the beginning of the 90s. The set aim was the observance of the rules of professional ethics, the banishment of hate or inflammatory language, biased, skewed, partisan, partial and prejudiced reporting, in favour of due consideration and scrupulous treatment, in order not to transform this presidential election which has been considered as the keystone to the exit from the crisis into a presidential election for the radicalisation of petty political antagonisms, crystallisation of hatred, which could irrevocably lead the country towards a more serious crisis: a second civil war. Inevitably, the worst happened: a post-electoral crisis caused — officially — 3000 deaths.

Are the media to blame? Not wholly, for sure. However, it can be stated unequivocally, that their role in what happened was not a minor one. They were not just docile instruments at the service of hate speeches made by politicians and their supporters. They appropriated for themselves the hate or inflammatory language of those people. When the presidential election was announced for 2008, one could read some of these selected extracts from the private media, those slammed by Reporters Without Borders only "four days to the first round of the presidential election":

Presidential election 2008. SAGEM prepares for fraud. "Sagem is highly suspected of wanting to play into the opposition's hand. Our sources explain that, away from prying eyes, the French company would have all the chance to produce first and in sufficient quantity, cards for opposition voters. To this end, it has already identified areas with a high concentration of opposition voters. On the other hand, it will produce an insufficient quantity of cards with deliberate errors for voters favourable to the president's camp. The legalised fraud would have been a perfect one and the FPI would only be left to count its losses," *Notre Voie*.

November 30, 2008 Presidential election. "No, Gbagbo cannot win! The five plagues of his FPI term: a minority party. This is the truth from the ballot box. Why Gbagbo cannot be re-elected President. A disastrous running of the state. The real father of the war. Why Gbagbo cannot be re-elected President. Trivialised the post of president. The war hasn't changed anything in favour of the FPI. FPI: a minority party . . . "As a matter of fact the ruling party through some ploys has succeeded all the same in eliminating a large number of voters, under the pretext that they did not have the required documents to enable them vote. Thus out of 5,413,212 who registered, there are only a 1,516,307 voters, in other words a turnout rate of only 28.01%. Nearly 4 million voters therefore did not take part in the local council elections. Those people who were denied their vote were mostly in the areas which supported the RDR"; *Le Patriote*.

Presidential election seriously threatened. Mambé sabotages INS, Sagem . . . "In all, it would be difficult to imagine that the registration of voters would start any sooner. This would be the fault of the Chairman of the CEI who no longer hides his desire to throw the INS out of the circuit. If Beugré Mambé has decided to create a problem where SAGEM and INS are in agreement, he will have to assume full responsibility for any stalling of the process which is looming on the horizon." *Notre Voie*.

Some statements by politicians taken up by the newspapers. "Where are the great moments of the FPI's rallies? And after Gbagbo's fall, you will see that this party will belong to the past. That they are losing in all elections concerning the setting up of CEI committees, it's the normal order of things. And that gives you an idea of what future elections will be like. I tell you, the FPI will be reduced to its original 18%.

"What with the disastrous management, after those thousands dead, after the blood which flowed, after the dangerous politics of the FPI activists, I am not sure if they will be able to even retain the 18%." KKB in *Le Nouveau Réveil*.

"If people try to prevent you from voting, defend yourselves as one would defend his life in the face of some danger." A statement allegedly made by President Henri Konan Bédié. And now for the journalist who reported it to interpret it as follows: "In other words, Bédié is now calling on the Baoulé of Soubré to engage in confrontation with the Bétés who welcome his relatives at Soubré, with whom they live in perfect harmony. It is exactly as if he was telling them: "Henceforth, do your best to survive. Fight at the risk of your life! Today the Bétés are a threat to you" (*Notre Voie*).

"Bédié at the gates of the palace" (*Le Nouveau Réveil*).

"Bédié opts for chaos" (*Notre Voie*).

"Gbagbo's three schemes for fraud" (*Le Patriote*).

These newspapers and the selected items are, in fact, only a minute sample of a vast field of dishonour which for nearly 17/18 years, has been ploughed by newspaper articles and statements by politicians (men and women) set around partisan and antagonistic vociferations. These newspapers and statements which we have had no difficulty in picking up, and which, in no wise are the worst of the species of the national media, have been a valuable indicator which allows us to anticipate what the treatment of information could be like during the electoral period when it would have been finally fixed. These are only the visible side of the iceberg, and were setting the tone for these elections. A sinister and, perhaps a hardly reassuring tone.

This is because since that strange "springtime of the media" of which the fruits turned out to be as poisonous as the promise held by the flowers, the pronouncements of politicians and political schemers and the pronouncements by journalists and the media have synchronised perfectly. Verbal violence and war mongering seem to form the framework of the pronouncements from these two sides. That the elections are already — 3 years before they are actually due — the object of such treatment in the newspapers, is hardly surprising. Even before the kick-off of the electoral campaigns, "results" were proclaimed in the columns of the nation's newspapers.

The institutions in charge of the elections were vilified and held up to public reproof, according to the set rules and dogmas of the morals and ethics of petty politicking with highly variable geometry. All the candidates known and labelled as significant, which some newspapers claim to support, were declared victorious in elections which were yet to be held. Even the virtual candidates, leaders of political parties with activists as many as the fingers of the armless were announcing that their days of glory had finally dawned. The newspapers, depending on the political and financial leaning or subjugation of their editorial policy — he who pays the piper calls the tune — had already long ago and with finality, proclaimed the results. Thus at the end of the crisis, Côte d'Ivoire, the one represented by the media, would become the only country in the world with as many presidents as there were candidates, proclaimed or not proclaimed. Even non-existent. Since the time transparent ballot boxes have been introduced, thus stopping the earlier stuffing of boxes, journalists and the media seem to have assumed the role of stuffing brains. An Ivorian journalist, lecturer and researcher called these activists by a lovely name of "flat heads of political parties."

The Ivorian electorate, in the national political game of 2008, through the columns of Ivorian newspapers are, to borrow the beautiful imagery of Jean-François Revel in his book, *Comment les démocraties finissent* [The End of Democracies], not a continent, but they are an archipelago. The radicalisation of positions, the clamouring for a President who can only be the leader of their party, the tribal brother, that is the demands of an anti-democratic originality peculiar to each island of this archipelago, prevailed over the feeling of belonging to a national group and more, to a country, the same country. And the deadly struggles for accession to state power or its conservation, the entrenched antagonisms, the culture of the largest common divider and war against any form of consensus, the desire for political hijacking of everything and nothing, have in the Ivorian society, come to supersede the defence of the archipelago itself, of what is referred to as the general interest. Ivorian journalists and media are not, unfortunately, different from the Ivorian society, more especially its political fauna which carry across their shoulders their partisan quarrels, its lack of political ethics, the ripping apart and the cracks, excesses and political blunders. Ivorian journalists and media are unfortunately, once more like this Ivorian society which is not always exemplary. This observation does not absolve the information professionals and does not excuse their faults.

Whether they are held in normal time, or during a period of crisis or at the end of a crisis, elections are always a moment of crisis and potential conflict. Freedom constitutes one of the indispensable and foundation levers of journalism, the profession which seeks to inform. As a matter of fact, the fourth estate that is so much talked about when referring to the media, calls for some clarification. Journalism is a profession, it is not a power. The journalist who might consider himself as holder or invested with some power similar to the three other powers, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, must needs subject his pretensions to the close scrutiny of greater modesty, of a greater humility. He as a journalist has no mandate by election or appointment. He is not invested with legislative power, unlike a member of the National Assembly; he has no elective mandate as in the case of the President. Let it be granted, however, that there is a power to inform, which derives from the public's right to information and the duty of the journalist to be accountable to the user of the media. By demanding freedom and making it the essence of his profession the journalist makes sacred the responsibility. And that responsibility is greater during an electoral period, a period when passions are easily exacerbated, a fertile ground for the irrational, for lost reason, where stupidity reigns and is preyed upon by disinformation and all the techniques for misleading the user of the media who is also a voter.

In *L'art de la désinformation* [The Art of Disinformation], Claude Julien writes: "To influence public opinion by dissemination lies which resemble truths, such is the aim of disinformation." Thus, in order to deceive the media

user — the citizen voter — to subjugate minds, newspapers are particularly effective and formidable, too often with all the appearances of good faith and objectivity. In an electoral period, they are also and too often the propaganda agencies, which some intelligence services, some political activists or even some political party leaders who use journalists employ to pass on tendentious information, infiltrate a newspaper respected by the public; in doing this, care is taken not to compromise it openly so that the rest of the media can follow in its steps. It is a great piece of excellent work, full of subtle details. Thus, the first aspect of disinformation consists in the fact that those whose profession it is to inform confuse too often, willingly or otherwise, the froth with the substance, that is, if they do not ignore the very existence of the substance. Values and good sense are thus corrupted.

Too often, disinformation goes hand in hand with manipulation of information. It sometimes takes its source from the postulate that communication is a science. The world is teeming with examples. However, it is with Ronald Reagan, in the United States that great heights were attained. "By analysing the reactions of the media after every event, wrote Mark Hertsgaard in *How the White House Manipulated the Media*, Mr. Reagan's advisers became convinced that they could foresee the attitude of journalists. Through pressure, lies and well calculated dramatic events, these advisers have often misled the media. By this, they deceived public opinion and American voters on sometimes very serious issues." *Manière de voir* [Translator's note: A thematic bimonthly magazine based on articles published in "*Le Monde diplomatique*"].

The Ivorian 2010 presidential election does not seem to have been an exception to the rule of manipulation. First of all, it was pollsters and opinion polls who took over and almost absorbed the information profession. Pollsters bombarded public opinion with polls. And pollsters, the new charlatans of the global village and modern day diviners, succeeded in making us believe they had the results of the elections. The aim of the operation is to guide the behaviour of voters. They have also throughout the long period of the crisis, more particularly from 2005 to 2010, overwhelmed the people with their certainty laced with the rigid posture and self-assurance of those who never go wrong, and for whom doubt is a stranger. They have become the sources from which journalists are served. There was even a poll's war among colleagues. Publication of results of polls was in any case in contravention of the provisions of the platform established by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and ratified by representatives of journalists.

Other texts, charter or code of good conduct, guides to elections were jeopardised. As a period of exacerbation of antagonisms, of potential . . . conflicts, the favourable moment which marks the harvest time for the political machines for propaganda, disinformation and manipulation, elections which demand caution, professionalism and above all responsibility were nevertheless

treated with blatant lack of responsibility by journalists. This came to prove that closeness to politics and money which influence media content is an insurmountable obstacle, a permanent mortgage on the credit and credibility of journalists and the national media.

The Stranger in the *Sophist* urges: "We must needs put up a parricidal hand against our father, Parmenides." The elections should perhaps have been the right moment for Ivorian journalists. The right moment. So that with the same filial sentiments of a parricide, as Proust writes, they can examine and question their ties with politicians, and put up a hand against them to snatch their independence!

The Other Side of the Iron Curtain

"Like a strong urge long held back, speech suddenly swept over the continent. Some saw in it the miasma of a wind from the East, for others it is the outcome of the political struggles which began right from the early years of independence. Two spectacular phenomena have at any rate marked the return of the multi-party system on the continent: the national conferences and the boom of the print media. Phenomena, which moreover are similar in nature, because they both met a need for expressiveness which for too long was held back. Depending on the countries, the national conferences were more or less virulent. Other countries rejected it. On the other hand, none was able to hold back the explosion of the media. And it is very possible that there is a correlation between the absence of national conferences and the denunciatory violence of newspapers. Everything happened as though the media assigned itself the task of making up for the absence of a forum" (Ibrahim Sy Savané, *State of the Media in Côte d'Ivoire*, 1996). Though this analysis explains the situation 5 or 6 years after the re-establishment of the multi-party system in some African countries, it is not enough to decipher the state of the Ivorian media two decades later. Jérôme Diégou Bailly, on his part, argues that "since the restoration of the multiparty system in 1990, a greater part of the national media lined up behind parties and politicians for whom they have become the mouthpieces. Thus, at the outbreak of the crisis on September 19, 2002, it was simply for them a matter of following their natural propensity towards servility and take up position in battle order behind the belligerent elements. Therefore, there were two opposing camps: on one side the rebel and pro-rebel media, and, on the other side, the patriotic media" (Diégou Bailly, *L'Autoregulation face au défi de la liberté de la presse* [Self-Regulation and the Challenge of Press Freedom], *Journal of the OLPED*, June 2004).

Since the beginning of the rebellion, these different components saw the need to equip their organisation with powerful means of communication. In addition to the two websites as at October 21, 2002, i.e. barely one month

following the outbreak of the rebellion, the Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI) launched from their capital, Bouake, in central Côte d'Ivoire, a television channel named *Télé-mutins* [TV-Mutiny]. This is perhaps a controlled appellation but some words such as fatherland, for example, no doubt make things look whiter: *Télé-Mutins* was sooner christened *TV-Notre Patrie* [TV-Our Fatherland]. Its programme schedule consisted mainly in speeches by leaders of this movement and coverage of their meetings. While it may still not be possible now, in the absence of documents, to do an objective appraisal of the content of the media outlets established during the crisis in what was conveniently referred to as Center-North-West zone or CNO zone, it can be argued rightly, that they did not do things differently, at any rate not professionally better, than the much decried media of all editorial persuasions, in the zone declared to be under government control. Their influence extended over only the zones under siege, the part of the national territory declared prohibited zone to all the other media outlets, print and broadcast media. *TV-Notre Patrie* borrowed without asking, in its own way, the equipment of the Ivorian Radio and Television Broadcasting Service (RTI). Katiola, Korhogo and Odienné, Séguéla, towns in the North and Man in the West all had radio stations: *Radio-Mutins*. "In these towns the rebels seized the equipment and premises of either local radio stations or faith-based radio stations. Finally the rebels were publishing from Katiola, a town in the North, a bi-weekly newspaper named *Liberté* and at Man in the West, another called *Tam-Tam*" (*Diégou Bailly, L'Olped face au défi de la liberté de la presse, Les cahiers de l'Olped, juin, 2004*) [OLPED and the Challenge of Press Freedom].

Strange Users of the Media

In his book, *La mort de l'information* [Death of Information], Stock, 2007, Albert du Roy writes: "To you all, readers, to be well seen, the elected and the media repeat: 'You are being deceived!' Maybe you should sometimes be told: 'You are deceiving yourselves!'"

"Voters-citizens-taxpayers, thanks to universal suffrage, you decide by whom and how you want to be governed. Are you making good use of it? Readers-listeners-viewers, by reading, listening to, viewing this rather than that, you decide by whom and how you want to be informed. Are you making the right choices?"

"The trouble with the car is that it is not the vehicle, it is the driver, careless, carefree, inconsiderate, rude, intrusive, polluter . . . The trouble with the media is not only the newspapers and those who make them; it is also, and even above all, their consumers, fickle, thoughtless, not demanding enough . . . The first problem of democracy, is not the system, it is the citizen.

"You are a supreme decision-maker, you collectively have all the powers:

of life and of death over the information media; that of success or of failure over those you elected, over the public authorities. Are you the 'weak link'?"

Users of the media: "fickle, thoughtless, not demanding enough." For the Ivorian consumers of information, we must add: fanatical activists who have turned themselves into captive readers. These few words of Claude-Jean Bertrand which describe users of the French media seem tailor-made for Ivorians: "Apathetic or unorganised, ignorant or intolerant, users sometimes constitute an obstacle to press freedom, and seem often little prepared to fight to defend it" (Claude-Jean Bertrand, *La déontologie des médias*, PUF, 1999).

Faced with such an overwhelming number of cases of serious professional misconduct, which have been acknowledged and denounced by journalists themselves, readers, listeners and viewers, one is right to expect from the latter a sanction which will hurt the media where it matters most: the act of buying for newspapers, and satisfaction of audience rating for the broadcast media. The behaviour of users of the Ivorian media (print media) rather confirms a paradox: the worse the newspapers are ethically, the more they receive the anointing of the consuming public of information in Côte d'Ivoire. In Five years following its establishment, OLPED identified five newspapers which held the Palme d'Or of violations of the professional code of ethics of journalism. Yet they were the high-ups on the sales chart: *Le National* grossed 438 violations; *Le Libéral* 167; *Notre Voie* 117; *Le Patriote* 89; *Fraternité Matin* 58. During the five years after it was established, these newspapers picked on by the self-regulatory body OLPED, were riding high ahead of the others on the readers list of preference. The worse they are professionally, the more they prospered commercially. Their commercial success seemed then to be tied to their position in the rating for breaches of the professional code of ethics : in July 2000, the results for the sale of newspapers were as follows: 1st *Notre Voie*; 2nd *Le Patriote*; 3rd *Le National*; 4th *Fraternité Matin*; 5th *Soir Info*. In December 2000, the readers' order of preference did not change much: *Le Patriote* moved to the first position followed by *Notre Voie*, then *Soir Info*, *Le National* and *Fraternité Matin*.

CHAPTER FOUR

Unanimous Opinion Against Ivorian Media

ABSTRACT

There has been a definite unanimity, since the beginning of the socio-political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, against the Ivorian media. Ordinary citizens, high ranking citizens also, international bodies have denounced the exploitation of journalists and the media by politicians of all stripes. Is this a well deserved indictment or a disguised desire to undermine press freedom? The answer lies in the analysis of the content of the Ivorian Media. While all Ivorian journalists and the entire Ivorian media may not be condemned wholesale, it would, however, not be appropriate to assert that they do not share any responsibility in the Ivorian socio-political crisis and its consequences.

The Media: So Young, Yet So Much Decried

"The French have a tendency to mistrust their newspapers, which they generally consider as hardly credible, ill-informed and very indifferent to the facts . . . Polls conducted periodically on the issue confirm the suspicion with which the press continues to be regarded. No, obviously, if one goes by the polls, French journalists, on the whole, do not consider the veracity of information their major concern," (Thomas Ferenczi, *L'invention du journalisme en France*, [Journalism made in France] Petite bibliothèque Payot, 1999). The press have a bad press. A decade later, it still stands in the dock: the substance of the charges has not changed. Albert du Roy, in *La mort de l'information*, [Death of Information], Stock, 2007, goes back over this "final verdict, harsh sentence regularly revived by events." He writes: "There is no single all-encompassing term for consumers of information; they are defined by the media they use. However, they do not go into details, their mistrust is general and concerns television, radio and the print media. A barometer established by SOFRES repeats year after year this nagging and always ever so painful mistrust. Its last edition, in February 2007, shows that 63% of the French people think that journalists are not independent from political parties and the government, and, for 60%, that they do not resist monetary pressures."

Officially, the French media came into being in 1631, with la *Gazette* of Théophraste Renaudot. The first Ivorian newspaper, *Fraternité Matin*, was established on December 9, 1964. This chronological gap (333 years) does not stop the Ivorian media from being already decried as much, if not more. An Ivorian media so young and yet too often systematically accused by its real patrons: the users. In fact, in spite of the difficult economic conditions of the

70s and 80s, there were times of perfect love between the users of the Ivorian media and the media. The severest critics will conclude, though they may not be totally right, that one party, one newspaper, one thought, a captive electorate, hence more than 110,000 copies daily of *Fraternité Matin* in the early 80s. Good times, indeed, which should set the imagination going even today when for some years now, as it is well-known, the leading newspaper which will be 47 years on December 9, 2011, while it still leads in terms of sales, circulation and advertisement, no longer goes beyond the threshold of 30,000 copies daily. The situation of the nearly thirty newspapers still present on the national market gives no cause for joy: not more than 300,000 copies a day. Though most of the newspapers of the "generation of the springtime of the media" achieved honourable circulations (around 10,000 to 15,000 even 20,000), they have for many years now (those which have survived) been staring in anguish as the unsold stock accumulates with terrifying regularity, while copies coming out of the printing machine go through a worrying involuntary slimming course", (Zio Moussa, *Etude sur la formation des journalistes ivoiriens de 1990 à 2005* [A Study on the Training of Ivorian Journalists from 1990 to 2005], [Ivorian Media Support Programme]).

The Ivorian newspapers on the whole have gone through five particularly cruel years: 2001 to 2005. Sales collapsed like a castle built with bad newsprint. They dropped from 35, 984, 611 copies in 2001 to 29, 501, 504 in 2005. Nearly 8 million purchases lost! And this just in 5 short years! A real nightmare. Dark years which unfortunately are not yet a bad memory but seem to have come to stay. Newspapers continue to sell poorly. A loss of interest which cannot be dissociated from the bad editorial behaviour of newspapers. Already, on June 23, 2003, in a special report published in *Fraternité Matin*, we wrote: "First. The journalism of comments and struggle is marking time and seems to be running out of steam because it appears to be trailing behind the intellectual, and indeed the political level of readers. It has relied basically and right from the start, on antagonisms, conflicts of interest borne of petty politicking.

"Secondly. The partisan media, by its autism, the violence and the extremism and excesses in its tone, its technique of recruitment and brainwashing (propaganda), paves the way for its rejection. By arguing that there is only one truth, that of its political party or the party it supports, it ends up sowing doubt in the mind of the public, be it the mind of activists or of citizens without any ties with petty politicking.

"Finally. One of the signs of the decline of the partisan media came in the form of real slaps, of the unexpected but enduring success, of two weekly newspapers with very original editorial policies: *Top Visages* and *Gbich*", (Zio Moussa, *Fraternité Matin s'impose, et la presse partisane recule* [Fraternité Matin excels, as the partisan media retreats], *Fraternité Matin* of June 23, 2003). The flurry of reproaches which met our article in 2003 (just under one year after

the outbreak of the rebellion, and the soaring up of *Fraternité Matin*, state-owned newspaper, which climbed from the 6th position for sales early 2002 to the 1st during the same year) did not change anything about the truth held by the figures.

Table 4.1 Copies Sold or Bought from January 2001 to December 2005

<i>Year</i>	<i>Dailies</i>	<i>Periodicals</i>	<i>Total for Entire Media</i>
2001	29,749,109	6,235,502	35,984,611
2002	27,547,022 (-7.4%)	5,260,369 (-15.6%)	32,807,391
2003	31,982,422 (+ 16.1%)	5,105,167 (-2.9%)	37,087,589
2004	29,316,439 (-8.3%)	4,666,437 (-8.5%)	33,982,876
2005	25,543,900 (-12.8%)	3,957,604 (-15.1%)	29,501,504
Total	144,138,892	25,225,079	169,363,971

The National Council for the Print Media (CNP) noted without mincing words in its annual report 2003–2004: “Disenchanted by the biased treatment of information and the untruths, readers are increasingly turning away from newspapers being offered them. The reader understands that he can exercise his right to have his privacy respected, his right to reply and to make corrections as well as sue, without any of that being an act of heroism.

“Even the Ivorian Army, when it had had enough of the bad treatment of information, had to call the media to order.

“Ivorian newspapers have remained constantly and persistently comment and analysis newspapers. By the way they treat information, they contribute to reinforce their dependency on political parties and favour selective opinions to the detriment of diversity of opinions.

“Following a general call not to buy newspapers, which according to the initiators, was to denounce the bad treatment of information by some newspapers, the arbitration of the CNP was decisive in the resolution of that conflict.”

Ivorian consumers of information did not only tie strong knots with the strings of their purses, the better to close them to the act of buying newspapers, they also had arguments. Some seized the opportunity offered them by the meeting organised by journalists themselves. Thus, Mrs. Virginie Kouassi, a university lecturer, researcher and director of studies at the Institute of Communication Sciences (ISTC) in Abidjan, during a seminar on the theme “What do Ivorians think and say about the media and journalists?”, had this to say:

"Most journalists are activists. Their writings are too partisan, too biased, too lopsided . . . The initial enthusiasm one feels at seeing a diversity of newspapers on the market fizzles out quickly when one tries to dig deeper. When one wants to be genuinely informed, when one wants to form one's own opinion of events and situations. One gets the impression that you, journalists, do not trust our ability to judge, you want to tell us everything, but in your own way."

The Forum for national reconciliation which was held from October 10, 2001 to November 30, 2001 brought together the entire Ivorian political class, non-governmental organisations, labour unions and several other associations said to be of the civil society. Most of the speakers, during this grand catharsis, denounced the excesses of the Ivorian media. Thus, the International Association for Democracy (AID-CI), Ivorian Chapter of this non-governmental organisation which works towards the promotion of democracy and the rights of the individual, in a statement made on October 17, 2001 asserted that "Some media outlets have not always acted in the interest of ensuring a peaceful social climate. There are newspapers which wilfully propagate rumours. If 'headline spinning,' is a science, as the 'zouglo' sings it, it must be said that it is a bad and dangerous science, because very often the headlines do not reflect the content of the articles. Furthermore, these articles incite to hatred and excite base instincts." Only a day before the AID-CI, The National Union of Public Primary School Teachers of Côte d'Ivoire (SNEPPCI) argued: "It must be acknowledged that they (the media) share a great part of the responsibility in the current socio-political crisis. As proof of this, we refer to the inflammatory front pages of some newspapers which have turned themselves into tools, behaving like intermediaries of political parties. The advent of the National Union of Ivorian Journalists (UNJCI) and the Observatory for Press Freedom and Professional Code of Ethics (OLPED) was hailed by all, but unfortunately we observe that in spite of the numerous publications denouncing the excesses, no sanctions were meted out to newspapers which chose to freely defame honest citizens."

On October 23, still at the Forum for National Reconciliation, the Association of Moslem Pupils and Students of Côte d'Ivoire expressed indignation at, and denounced the gratuitous defamation of Moslem dignitaries "which is ever on the rise in some newspapers," before accusing the state-owned media: "The manipulation of the state media and the partisan treatment of information are attitudes for inciting to revolt and hatred." Mr. Jules Hié Néa, spokesman for Côte d'Ivoire's Ambassadors, on his part, made particular mention, on October 25, 2001, of the subservience of the media to politicians: "With new information and communication technologies, our major media outlets are on the Internet in real time in Moscow, Beijing or New York. With the political cleavages, politicians clash through the media as intermediaries,

attacking each other and by that they destroy the image of our country abroad." The National Union of Trainers of Technical and Vocational Education of Côte d'Ivoire (SYNAFETP – CI) has, on October 26, 2001, stigmatised "the negative role of the national media of all persuasions in weakening the social fabric." In Chapter V, point 1, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreements had a statement on the Ivorian media: "The Round-Table condemns the incitement to hatred and xenophobia which have been propagated by some media outlets." (Common Programme of Ivorian Political Forces). On the platform offered by the Forum for National Reconciliation of October to November 2001, several other official voices have had to tell a few home truths about the media.

Professor Francis Wodié's Ivorian Workers' Party (PIT) did not beat about the bush and stated that "The excesses which nearly plunged the country into chaos were carried on by the national and international media. Journalists have the tendency to behave more like activists than as agents of information charged with enlightening public opinion in an objective manner. We believe there is the need to organise and improve the training of journalists so that they can observe better the code which governs their profession. I commend the initiative of the OLPED (the Observatory for Press Freedom and the Professional Code of Ethics) which consists in educating and imposing sanctions for the breaches and excesses noted in connection with the practice of the profession. It would be necessary to take measures to achieve and strengthen the independence of journalists and their sense of duty and political awareness. This is why the PIT, in its proposed draft constitution, had suggested the institution of another Authority for Broadcasting, which unfortunately was not taken into consideration."

The Higher Council of Imams on its part, stood up against the tarnishing of the image of Islam "in the state-owned media which are supposed to belong to all Ivorians." During this Forum, The Ivorian Association for Women's Rights (AIDF) called on "the public and private media to strive to preserve national cohesion. Journalists, it advised, would gain a lot by building their capacity so that they could practise their profession without identifying with politicians." The Ivorian Human Rights League (LIDHO) and General Robert Guéi, former head of state, like many other organisations and participants at these two months of African palaver for the reconciliation of Ivorians did not fail to have a word for the Ivorian media and journalists.

For the human rights activists, "the shocks which our country has experienced and which have seriously affected the grassroots are multifaceted. The causes are also many. Thus, if we go back to 1990, we can note, among others, the exploitation of the media." The General and former head of state made a real plea for the professionalization of journalism in his own characteristic style: "As I turn towards you, ladies and gentlemen of the media, I would like to repeat my strong advice about good manners, the manners

which bring people round, manners which, in one word pacify, manners which reconcile, without preventing you from saying the truth. You must never forget that you are the fourth estate, which is heavy to carry, and confers enormous obligations. Undisputed witnesses of time, undisputed arbiters in political and social battles, it is you and you only, ladies and gentlemen, who have the most beautiful role. Therefore help us to improve the public image of our country, by being bigger and more responsible. I believe I can count on your public spiritedness, and on your patriotism. And the people of Côte d'Ivoire also count on you. And our beautiful country Côte d'Ivoire will come off the greater."

Peace Agreements Denounce

The various peace agreements on the Ivorian crisis contain, in most of the cases, with the notable exception of that of Lomé where the first meeting among Ivorians took place, reproof of Ivorian journalists and media. The first salvo was fired from Linas-Marcoussis. The agreements which came out of this meeting held at a rugby training centre in the Paris suburb use terms which recall what was said about the Rwandan media in 1994 and afterwards. "The round-table (it reads) condemns the incitements to hatred and xenophobia which were propagated by certain media. The government of national reconciliation shall take up within a year the general economy of the media regime so as to strengthen the role of the regulatory authorities in guaranteeing the neutrality and impartiality of the public service and to promote the financial independence of the media. These measures may receive the support of international development partners. The government of national reconciliation shall immediately reestablish the free transmission by international radio and television stations."

Even the appendix of the programme of the government of national reconciliation places the issue of the media at the centre of its priorities, in rather strange terms: "The government of national reconciliation: shall (once more) take any measure needed to ensure the independence of the judiciary and the independence of the media, both in terms of electoral disputes and electoral propaganda." Freedom in propaganda! That indeed is the limit! The various road maps of the international Task Force (GTI), a kind of international government for Côte d'Ivoire, regularly go back to the Ivorian media, insisting generally on "monitoring of the media," "the call to the media to avoid language which incites to hatred." In March 2006, this appeal could be read in the communiqué of one of the numerous meetings of the GTI: "The leaders (Author's Note: Ivorians) must also sensitise their sympathisers on the spirit of Yamoussoukro and ensure that everyone, including the media, stop inciting to hatred and violence and rather contribute positively to the peace and

reconciliation process." Under the third meeting held on January 15, 2006, the International Task force borrowed nearly the words of the Round-Table of Linas-Marcoussis. Its communiqué makes a break with formality, that is to say, cant, and assumed almost a threatening tone: "The Task Force also notes with serious concern the inflammatory tone which continues to be used by some political and media actors. Such negative attitude runs counter to the spirit of the peace and reconciliation process, and also represents a flagrant violation of the United Nations resolutions."

Regulation Empowers

The National Commission for the print Media (CNP) regularly comes back to the issue of the excesses and blunders, in its annual report. In that of 2003-2004, the regulatory body devotes a whole paragraph to one of the excesses most common to Ivorian journalists which also happens to be the expression of how the media are used as tools by politicians to serve their petty politicking: "Relationships among colleagues are the reflection of the relationships maintained by political parties engaged in the conquest, maintenance or reconquest of the supreme power.

"Anti-confraternity has been institutionalised. The clans get at each other's throat through their respective mediums.

"Since September 19, 2002, the Ivorian media landscape has gone by a classification which opposes on the one hand the so-called patriotic newspapers, and on the other hand the newspapers referred to as pro-rebel and rebel."

The terms of the Ivorian regulatory body are, rightly, strong: "Strongly marked by dependence and prejudice, the editorial policy (Author's note: of Ivorian newspapers) lacks any scrupulous adherence to the professional code of ethics. The editorial policy is that of the party or of the political leader it is one's mission to defend, in disregard of the rules of the profession.

"The profile of the media owner, the criteria for selecting journalists depend on the level of activism. Mastery of the French language, the language in which information is treated, and journalistic genres are only appreciated based on the high nuisance value of the write-ups.

"In sum, the Ivorian media are still in a sorry shape from having been reduced to a tool. The desire to see emerge an independent media, seems for now to be a pious wish."

Result: With their "atomic umbrella," to borrow an expression of Ivorian students, politicians, many journalists and majority of the media houses, be they of the public service or those said to be private, increase their offences. They, no doubt, carry on with the assurance that they will not face any real sanction. An assurance which, unfortunately, has been given the lie by the violence, physical and verbal assaults, which journalists and the media have suffered for many years.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ownership of Newspapers

ABSTRACT

For a long time the question regarding the ownership of Ivorian newspapers has gone unanswered. In several annual reports, the regulatory body, the National Council for the Print Media (CNP), has gone back over the issue sometimes in very strong terms. Today, official proprietors are known. However there is still another question: Does the much decried content of Ivorian newspapers not explain their ownership? In order to be financially and editorially healthy, the Ivorian media enterprise still owes a lot to its political ties.

A Vibrant Media Which Offers Many Insecure Jobs

Of the “springtime of the media” which held so much hope of which much has been said, the fruits have been just as poisonous as we had described the flowers. While media practitioners hailed freedom of speech with the birth of the media described as varied and pluralistic, serious problems quickly emerged: the excesses and blunders increased in the columns and on the air. Imprisonment of journalists also increased. But above all, journalism which in the early 1990s provided many jobs has become wholly insecure. There was no well-defined status for journalists for a long time, no job security, no salary for many of them, no health insurance even as they are not registered with the social security . . . Thus many Ivorian journalists are moonlighting even as the work in broad daylight. This insecurity has to a large extent led many journalists to sell their pen while politicians turn the media into their tools.

Nearly all the newspapers of the “springtime of the media” were established unofficially, which has caused some to regret gains such as the shift from the licensing regime for the establishment of newspapers to the regime of simple declaration. The law of 1991, the first Ivorian law defining the legal framework for the print media and broadcast communication, was judged by practitioners not only to be liberticidal, but also too restrictive for media businessmen. Thus, the media sector needed to be reorganised legally and economically. The law of 2004 brought some improvements at several levels particularly the abolition of custodial sentences for media offences and the requirement that newspapers be established from real media enterprises.

Who Own the Newspapers?

“The genuine difficulties, the clearly fragile nature of media enterprises must not blind us to the existence of a market for the media with so much vitality,

and which, given certain conditions holds the promise of a bright future. The overall turnover of the media on the market in Côte d'Ivoire attained 6.8 billion CFA Francs during the 94/95 financial year. From this total amount the Ivorian media are worth 4.8 billion CFA Francs, that is, more than 70%. The local daily newspapers all together generated over the same period 3.7 billion CFA Francs" (Ibrahim Sy Savané, *State of the Media in Côte d'Ivoire*, 1996). With such figures, even if there exist genuine difficulties, it could still be expected that businessmen would go into the establishment of media enterprises in large numbers. Under the one party system, from 1960 to 1990, the state, for obvious reasons, was the sole business operator in the media sector. However, though the re-establishment of the multi-party system from 1990 has brought about what is commonly known as "the springtime of the media" with a newspaper boom (178 papers from 1990 to 1996), few genuine entrepreneurs have invested their money in the establishment of media enterprises.

There is no doubt about it: the public service belongs to the State of Côte d'Ivoire. *Fraternité Matin's* capital of 175 million CFA Francs is wholly owned by the state. In the capital of the Ivorian Broadcasting Service (RTI: 2 television channels, *RTI 1* and *RTI 2* and 2 of the national radio as well as *Fréquence 2*) which has the status of a National Public Establishment (EPN) since the last time it changed it, the state of Côte d'Ivoire controls a massive 98% of the shares. The 800 or 900 employees of RTI would have only the remaining 2%. It is light years away that the minority could block a decision and enable the workers a have a say on this public service. The Ivorian News Agency (AIP) is also owned by the state of Côte d'Ivoire.

Table 5.1 Public Service Media

<i>Media Outlet/ Publishers</i>	<i>Date Established</i>	<i>Type of Business and Registered Capital</i>	<i>Majority Shareholder/ Number of Shares</i>	<i>Other Shareholders/ Number of Shares</i>
Ivorian Broadcasting Service	August 7 1963: 2 TV channels, 2 radio channels	National Public Establishment 1 (EPN)		
<i>Fraternité Matin SNPECI</i>	Dec. 9, 1964	State Enterprise with registered capital of 175 million CFA F	The State of Côte d'Ivoire 100% of Registered capital	
Ivorian News Agency				

Table 5.2 Ownership of Media Enterprises in Côte d'Ivoire

<i>Newspapers Publishers</i>	<i>Type of Company and Capital</i>	<i>Majority Shareholder/ Number of Shares</i>	<i>Other Shareholders/ Number of Shares</i>
<i>Le Nouveau réveil</i> Les Editions Le Réveil	Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,0000 (CFAF)	Denis Kah Zion 400 shares	Staff of Editions Le Réveil 100 shares
<i>Notre Voie</i> La Refondation	Limited Liability Company with Registered capital of 10,000,000	The Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) Represented by Affi N'Guessan 800 shares	Koffi Aka 60 shares Odette Sauyet 60 shares Allou Wanyou 40 shares Danoh Djédjé 40 shares
<i>Le Patriote</i> Mayama Editions et Production	Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Bakayoko Ahmed 475 shares	Staff of Mayama Publishers and Production 25 shares
<i>Le Temps</i> Cyclone S.A.R.L.	Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,000	Bamba Nadiani 350 shares	Gbagbo Koudou Al Rais David 150 shares
<i>La Mandat</i> Horizon Média	Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Kouadio Kouassi Jean-Marie 500 shares Sole Proprietor	
<i>L'Expression</i> Les Editions Yassine	Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Dembélé Fausséni 170 shares	Koné Abdoulaye 150 shares Traoré Moussa 45 shares Doumbia Mamadou 25 shares Yaya Savané 10 shares Bamba Assouma 125 shares Koné Yakouba 10 shares Diaby Moustapha 10 shares

Table 5.2 (Cont'd.)

<i>Newspapers Publishers</i>	<i>Type of Company and Capital</i>	<i>Majority Shareholder/ Number of Shares</i>	<i>Other Shareholders/ Number of Shares</i>
<i>L'Intelligent d'Abidjan</i> Socef NTIC	Limited Liability Company with a registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Hamilton Sir Kouassi 51 shares	Alafé Wakili 49 shares
<i>Le Quotidien d'Abidjan</i> Aymar Group	Sole Proprietorship with capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Aliali N'Goran 500 shares Sole Proprietor	
<i>Le jour Plus</i> Les Editions Le Néré	Limited Liability Company 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Coulibaly Biamari 500 shares Sole proprietor	
<i>Le Nouveau Courrier</i> Avenir Médias S.A.R.L.	Limited Liability Company with registered Capital 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Kouamouo Théophile 200 shares	Lago Lebato 150 shares Gueye Bonfils 150 shares
<i>Le Démocrate</i> Mediafcom	Limited Liability Company with registered Capital 5,000,000 (CFAF)	N'Dri Kouassi Bernard 500 shares Sole Proprietor	
<i>L'Inter Soir Info</i> <i>Star Magazine</i> Groupe Olympe	Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Feu Rayess Nady 51 shares	Chadi Rayess 49 shares
<i>Nord-Sud</i> Nord-Sud Communi- cation	Limited Liability Company with registered Capital 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Méité Sindou 275 shares Touré Moussa 40 shares	Koné Abdoulaye 75 shares Dembélé Fousséni 35 shares Bamba Assouma 25 shares Berté Ibrahima 25 shares Kébé Yacouba 25 shares

Table 5.2 (Cont'd.)

<i>Newspapers Publishers</i>	<i>Type of Company and Capital</i>	<i>Majority Shareholder/ Number of Shares</i>	<i>Other Shareholders/ Number of Shares</i>
<i>Aujourd'hui</i> Les Editions d'Aujourd'hui	Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Titi Gnahoua Joseph 500 shares Sole Proprietor	
<i>La Nouvelle</i> Les Editions Esprit Saint	Limited Liability Company with registered Capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Société Goyave.com Sole Proprietor	
<i>Réalités</i> Les Editions Appo	Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Assi Adon Amédée Sole Proprietor	
<i>L'Eléphant Déchaîné</i> SNEI	Limited Liability Company with of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Assalé Tiémoko 460 shares	Komenan Ehozi Sévérain 20 shares Ehounou Hanselm Jean-François 20 shares
<i>Le Devoir</i> Sublime Communi- cation	Limited Liability Company with registered Capital of 10,000,000 (CFAF)	Salamé Mohamed 500 shares Proprietor	
<i>Abidjan 24</i> Sentiers d'Afrique	Limited Liability Company with a registered share capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Adeh Mensah 150 shares	Seidou Siloué 115 shares Touré Faman 100 shares Djigbénou Maxime 85 shares Sako Mamadou 100 shares
<i>Trait d'Union</i> Les Editions Espoir	Private Sole proprietorship with registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Mrs. Séhi Lou 500 shares Sole Proprietor	

Table 5.2 (Cont'd.)

<i>Newspapers Publishers</i>	<i>Type of Company and Capital</i>	<i>Majority Shareholder/ Number of Shares</i>	<i>Other Shareholders/ Number of Shares</i>
<i>Parole d'Afrique</i> Adam News	Private Sole Proprietorship Limited Liability Company with registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Touma Michael 500 shares Sole Proprietor	
<i>Le Pardon</i> Africom Imprim	Private Sole Proprietorship with a capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Fanan Konaté 500 shares Sole Proprietor	
<i>Révélation</i> Aymar Group	Private Sole Proprietorship with capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Aliali N'Goran 500 shares Sole Proprietor	
<i>Paix et Développement</i> Les Editions Paix et Développement	Private Sole Proprietorship	Zogoué Fernand 500 shares/ Sole proprietor	
<i>Le Journal des Journaux</i> Max Image médiass	Limited Liability Company with a registered capital of 5,000,000 (CFAF)	Liport Max 200 shares Koné Dolougo Marguérite 200 shares	Ouattara Bintou 100 shares

Brief Analysis

Table 5.2 indicating ownership of newspapers was established by the National Council of the Print Media (CNP). It shows, officially, that private newspapers which are said to be independent, and which were established since 1990, are not owned by politicians or political parties. However, while *Notre Voie* clearly belongs to the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) of former President Laurent Gbagbo, the current Minister of the Interior, Ahmed Bakayoko, is the majority shareholder — 475 shares out of 500 — of the publishing company Mayama

Editions et Production, with the remaining 25 shares held by the staff. Denis Kah Zion, member of the PDCI-RDA holds 400 shares out of 500 shares of Editions Le Réveil, publishers of the daily newspaper, *Le Nouveau Réveil*, against 100 for the staff. The 500 shares of Cyclone SARL, publishers of pro-Laurent Gbagbo daily newspaper *Le Temps*, are divided between two shareholders: Bamba Nadiani, 350 shares and Gbagbo Koudou Al Rais David, 150 shares. Méité Sindou, current Chief Executive of the Directorate for Good Governance and former spokesman for Prime Minister Soro Kigbafori Guillaume holds 275 shares of Nord-Sud Communication; the other 225 shares are distributed among six minority shareholders. While Coulibaly Biamari, sole shareholder owns the 500 shares of Editions Néré, publishers of *Jour Plus*, said to support the current government, Kouamouo Théophile shares the 500 of Avenir Médias SARL of Nouveau Courrier with two shareholders each of whom owns 150 shares, and Titi Gnahoua Joseph sole owner holds all by himself the 500 of Editions d'Aujourd'hui. *Le Nouveau Courrier* of Kouamouo Théophile and *Aujourd'hui* of Titi Gnahoua Joseph are said to be on Laurent Gbagbo's side.

The Olympe group is a peculiar case. The two general information newspapers, *Soir Info* and *l'Inter*, published by this media enterprise, are held to be editorially independent by some media users, even though they have been accused of professional misconduct by OLPED. The 100 shares of the Groupe Olympe are held by the late Nady Rayess, 51 shares, and Chadi Rayess, 49.

The business community (which includes media enterprises) in Côte d'Ivoire has not fully escaped this other variety of fakes and imposters: the frontmen. One may ask if some shareholders of newspaper publishing companies in Côte d'Ivoire have not been in on this game. This would absolutely prove Ibrahim Sy Savané right when he talks of "benefitting from the generosity of some hidden sponsor." Most especially when he observes that "in order to survive, one had to, and in fact must always, either remain close — if not even more — to a political party with activists and maintain a certain following."

CHAPTER SIX

Preventive Measures Gone Unheeded

ABSTRACT

This last chapter will be devoted to all the measures adopted by the Ivorian media to ensure a professional and non-partisan coverage of the 2010 presidential election. This part of the study will take a critical stock of the written pledges made by Ivorian journalists and media houses in connection with the end of crisis elections.

The presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire, which was a major stage of a series of elections (National Assembly, communes, and departments), occasioned the passage of several laws. One of these guidelines on the professional code of ethics was adopted in Yamoussoukro on August 29, 1992 by representatives of the journalistic profession. This code states, among other things that:

The right to information, free expression and to criticise is one of the fundamental freedoms of every human being. From this right of the public to know derive all the duties and rights of journalists.

The journalist's responsibility towards the public takes precedence over all other responsibilities, particularly towards his employer and public authorities.

The mission of informing entails limits which journalists impose on themselves spontaneously.

In order that these rights be respected in the practice of the journalistic profession, it is necessary to establish concrete conditions for the independence and dignity of the profession and ensure they are respected.

On August 29, 1992, at Yamoussoukro, representatives of the national media adopted the professional code of ethics which was meant to govern the Ivorian media. The terms of the preamble seem clear and precise about the intentions of journalists just two years after the return to the multi-party system in Côte d'Ivoire and the beginning of what has come to be known as the springtime of the media.

The preamble of the professional code of ethics of the Ivorian media places the public at the heart of the journalistic profession, especially this public's "right to information, free expression and to criticise."

The designers of the code and the signatories also make it a founding document of duties and rights of journalists. While the journalists' duties constitute 14 articles, their rights make up only 7. This numerical disproportion is quite revealing: journalism imposes more duties, in other words, more responsibility than rights.

No clear reference is made in the professional code of ethics to the coverage of the elections. However three articles pertaining to the duties of journalists may be considered as markers which determine the rules of journalism in an election period. These are worth quoting in full:

Article 5: *never confound journalism with the profession of an advertising executive or a propagandist; never receive direct or indirect instruction from advertisers or administrative or political authorities.*

Article 6: *reject all pressure and receive editorial directives only from the heads of the editorial department. Assume full and total responsibility for one's write-ups.*

Article 9: *refrain from all breaches of social ethics: incitement to tribalism, xenophobia, revolt and crime and offences, breach of public decency, defence of war crimes and crimes against humanity.*

Sub-section 2 of Section 69 of Law 2004-643 of December 14, 2004 on the legal framework of the media, states the same thing when it prescribes that *"whoever shall incite to xenophobia, tribal hatred, religious hatred under all forms through the media shall be liable to the punishment provided for under articles 174 and 175 of the penal code."* In spite of these provisions, the Ivorian media stand guilty of numerous cases of incitement to xenophobia, tribal hatred racial hatred and religious hatred. On October 27, 1995, the newspaper *Notre Chance*, in an article entitled "Djény Kobinan, the Fanti of the apocalypse" commits the offence of incitement to tribalism and xenophobia. *Fraternité Matin* of October 28-29 of the same year commits the same offence in the article entitled "Gbagbo the National Assembly member." It shares this offence with two newspapers, *La Voie* No. 1232 of November 2, in its article entitled, "The Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) has never advocated an armed struggle" and *Nouvel Horizon* no. 268 of November 3. Incitement to tribalism, xenophobia and racism are offences akin to each other which "biologise social issues," according to the terms used by Jean-Paul Gouteux when speaking about "ethnicisation" of conflicts more particularly the Rwandan genocide through the media.

The Ivorian media through this threefold breach links everything done by a citizen to his or her ethnic (tribalism), even racial (racism) or foreign origin (xenophobia). In the table on the offences committed by the Ivorian media, a table established by the National Institute of Statistic (INS) for the Observatory for Press Freedom, Professional Code of Ethics (OLPED), from 1995 to 2005, the number of cases of incitement to tribalism, xenophobia and racism has really not dropped. Incitement is one of the offences most committed by Ivorian journalists. Could one then conclude that the provisions of Section 69 of Law 2004-643 of December 14, 2004 have not achieved any fundamental transformation of the behaviour of Ivorian journalists as far as the ethnic and

tribal questions are concerned? In a general sense, the Ivorian journalist sometimes treats this question in a professional manner in the case of inter-tribal clashes where land related conflicts pitch indigenous communities against foreigners. However, when it becomes an electoral issue the media seems to apply the partisan treatment to it as if the ethnic community to which a candidate in an election belongs was for him a weapon with which to conquer or conserve political power.

On February 13, 2008, a framework of collaboration between the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and media practitioners was signed. Present were the National Council for the Print Media (CNP) represented by its Chairman Eugène Dié Kacou, the National Council for Broadcast Communication (CNCA) by its Chairman Jérôme Diégou Bailly, the Observatory for Press Freedom and the Professional Code of Ethics (OLPED) by its Chairman, Zio Moussa and the Guild of Print Media Publishers of Côte d'Ivoire (GEPCI) by its President Denis Kah Zion, on the one hand, and on the other hand the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) represented by its Chairman, Robert Beugré Mambé.

While the preamble to this type of text may too often be general, that of the framework for collaboration between media practitioners and the Independent Electoral Commission for the 2010 elections reveals a lot about a certain state of mind: the media are feared for their excesses and blunders and they do not give any assurance for the professional coverage of the elections. All the same they must be made to share in the success of the election and be regarded as a partner to get Côte d'Ivoire out of the crisis. That is what the preamble says and which deserves to be quoted *in extenso*: "Since September 2002, Côte d'Ivoire has been in the throes of a politico-military crisis which is unprecedented both for the people and for the country, confronting political, social and economic upheaval, which has uprooted whole chunks of the population and caused the extensive degradation of moral and cultural values.

"Among the solutions decided on to exit from this crisis appears as a matter of priority the holding of democratic, transparent, honest and credible elections open to all, for which the exclusive responsibility falls to the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI).

"To take up the challenge, the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) wants to work in harmony and in a dispassionate manner, with all stakeholders of the national socio-political scene through a partnership freely acceded to.

"It is generally agreed that the presence of media practitioners and/or observers for the coverage of an electoral process, necessarily does well for its credibility and its transparency. However, such an eminently important role of media practitioners can, if care is not taken, hurt the entire process.

"The aim of this platform for collaboration with media practitioners is to establish a consensual framework of work, which would neither be a straitjacket

nor a corset for freedom of expression, but of which the sole aim is to preserve the social climate at a critical moment for Côte d'Ivoire: the elections.

"Being part of this platform commits the parties to the observance of all the provisions in an atmosphere of mutual trust. The return of peace is the only thing that is paramount. Beyond all the dogmas, we must be guided by this requirement." Furthermore, the partnership pact spells out the rights (7 articles) of journalists and their duties (14 articles) during this electoral period. Notable among the duties of journalists as prescribed by the Partnership pact between the CEI and media practitioners is this particular clause (Article 10):

- (h) *to refrain from announcing election results before they are proclaimed by the Independent Electoral Commission CEI;*
- (i) *rectify as expeditiously as possible, and in the manner and procedures required by law, all false information liable to disrupt or stall the normal course of the electoral process;*
- (j) *refrain from broadcasting and publishing statements and comments liable to sow confusion in the national public opinion and poison the social climate.*

The Ivorian media announced results long before the presidential elections, either by publishing results of opinion polls from foreign polling organisations or by advancing their own figures or those of politicians such as Kouakou Konan Bertin (KKB) of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire – African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA) and relayed in the columns of *Nouveau Réveil*, a pro-PDCI-RDA newspaper: "I tell you, the FPI (Ivorian Popular Front, Author's note) will be reduced to its original 18%. And after the disastrous management, after the thousands who died, after the blood which flowed, after this dangerous politics of the leading activists of the FPI, I doubt if they can (sic) maintain that 18%."

The media practitioners-CEI platform for collaboration is in no way restrictive. It does not provide for sanctions for non-observance of its clauses by any of the signatories. It does not even commit the regulatory and self-regulatory bodies which signed it to carry out for the period a special monitoring of the media of which, while the results may not receive negative sanctions, could at least be made public so that notional and international opinion could be witnesses to the manner in which media professionals have kept or not kept to the commitments they made freely.

The desire of the CEI, and also that of the contracting parties not to give themselves the image of organisations undermining press freedom through a series of restrictive clauses in this period which has, however, been judged (in the preamble) as "critical for Côte d'Ivoire", reduces the scope and effectiveness of this partnership pact. It is the same for most of the instruments aiming to guide the treatment of information in periods of crisis. They have generally

come up against the issue of the preservation and protection of press freedom.

The various peace agreements on the long drawn out crisis which Côte d'Ivoire has experienced have stigmatised the responsibility of the nation's media. Civil society has denounced it. The Forum for National Reconciliation served as its platform. The results of monitoring carried out on the media by regulatory and self-regulatory bodies are known and they have not always placed media practitioners in any favourable light. Yet all these factors did not seem to have induced those who drafted the document for collaboration to adopt slightly stronger terms in seeking to confer some authority on its application. The same approach could be considered for the professional code of ethics. The basic difference, however, is that the latter does not seek to regulate the treatment of information in an end-of-crisis electoral period. The professional code of ethics aims above all else to promote and defend press freedom; it establishes the rules for the practice of the profession in general, and, so to speak, forever. Or, at any rate, over a long period. In other words, an instrument adopted for a specific and limited period could have more latitude than one which legislates for a long term.

Conclusion

Some further studies will be necessary to give a more complete view of the Ivorian media. Ours has dwelt on a number of points which are very topical: exploitation of Ivorian journalists and media, the numerous offences they commit, the issue of ownership of newspapers, the responsibility of newspapers at the onset of the Ivorian crisis up to its transformation into a rebellion and finally a civil war.

The Ivorian media sector is vibrant and provides jobs. However, what is wrongly called its springtime has synchronised too well with another springtime: that of political parties. Does this explain the other? Whatever the case may be, for some twenty years, there seems to have been unanimous opinion against the Ivorian media which condemns it for its excesses and professional blunders.

Though the Ivorian media saw a significant economic growth during the first half of the decade of the 90s, it has become considerably poorer and journalism even more insecure. The sector has been hit by a high mortality rate which is not seeing any let up. Few, very very few newspapers circulate above 10,000 copies a day; above all, very few of them are economically viable.

One can only hope that this strange springtime of the 1990s will be followed by another one which will bring the media a more sustainable prosperity, particularly in its professionalism. The restructuring of the media through an overhaul of its economic condition and legal framework, and the new mechanisms such as the new professional code of ethics, the revitalisation of the regulatory and self-regulatory bodies all have a part to play.