Militarized youths in Western Côte d'Ivoire - Local processes of mobilization, demobilization, and related humanitarian interventions (2002-2007)

Magali Chelpi-den Hamer

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The recent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has led to the militarization of many young civilians on both belligerent sides, especially in the west of the country. What is of particular interest is that many of these youths have assumed a function of 'commuting' conscripts, alternating periods of semi-military work, where they had to report to some kind of warlike hierarchy, with periods at home where they were back to a quasi daily routine. This became particularly characteristic as the Ivoirian war evolved into a situation of 'no peace, no war' with sporadic violence still occurring, but only at certain periods and within specific settings. This book is an in-depth examination of the different processes that led to their militarization and demilitarization, in a context where borders between the military, civilian, and humanitarian arenas have never been strict, and have varied according to conflict phases, individuals' social networks and extent of locality of the recruitment.

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This book is dedicated to

Roelof, Anna & Tess

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Abbreviations

APO	Accord Politique de Ouagadougou
ANADER	Agence Nationale d’Appui au Développement Rural
AP-Wê	Alliance Patriotique Wê
CAR	Central African Republic
CCI	Centre de Commandement Intégré
CI	Côte d’Ivoire
CNDDR	National Commission for DDR
CTO	Centre de Transition and d’Orientation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ERNWACA	Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EM	Etat Major
FAFN	Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles
FANCI	National Armed Forces of the Côte d’Ivoire
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDS	Forces de Défenses et de Sécurité
FLGO	Forces de Libération du Grand Ouest
FPI	Front Populaire Ivoirien
FRGO	Forces de Résistance du Grand Ouest
FS-Lima	Forces Supplétives Lima
GTZ-IS	GTZ-International Service
HI	Handicap International
IAHCC	UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Coordination Meeting
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDA	International Development Association
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MARP	Méthode Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative
MDM	Médecins du Monde
MILOCI	Mouvement Ivoirien pour la Libération de l’Ouest de la Côte d’Ivoire
MINUCI	United Nations Mission in Côte d’Ivoire
MJP	Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix
MPCI	Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d’Ivoire
MPIGO	Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest
MSA	Mouvement Socialiste Africain
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ONUCI	Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d’Ivoire
PCO	Plan Conjoint des Operations
PDCI	Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire
PDR	Prevention, Demobilization and Reinsertion programme
PDR	Prevention, Demobilization and Reintegration programme
PIT	Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs
PNDDR	National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Plan
PNDDR-RC	Programme National de Désarmement, de Démobilisation, de Réinsertion et de Réhabilitation Communautaire
PNRRC	Programme National de Réinsertion et de Réhabilitation Communautaire
PSI	Parti Socialiste Ivoirien
RDR	Rassemblement des Républicains
RUF	Revolutionary Unitary Front
SAA	Syndicat Africole Africain
SC	Save the Children
UDPCI	Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d’Ivoire
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
UPRGO	Union des Patriotes pour la Résistance du Grand Ouest
WFP	World Food Programme

Foreword

I slept twice with my shoes on, a small bag packed at the foot of my bed, ready to literally run away as fast as I could if armed men were to enter my home. The first time was in Bétou, Republic of Congo (RoC), a small and very isolated town on the Ubangui River, hidden within the deep forest that borders the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). That was in March 2003, right after a Coup had ousted the Patassé regime from the neighbouring Central African Republic. Mercenaries from the other Congo (DRC) had lent a hand in supporting the counter-insurgency, but they had been defeated and were therefore on their way home, looting everything they could as they passed through. When they showed up on the outskirts of Bétou carrying fridges and radios on their heads (Bétou was their first Congolese stop after their rout in Central Africa), there was tangible tension in town. Shops had closed early and any movement outside was literally suspended. The *sous-Préfet* welcomed the armed men right before they entered the town and promised them support (he was later heavily criticized for this). Despite its unconventional character, his mediation worked quite well. The bulk of the *pirogues*[1] in Bétou were requisitioned that same night and the Congolese mercenaries immediately crossed the river to DRC; they were all gone by the next morning. Bétou was completely spared.

The second time I slept with my shoes on was a year later, in Abidjan, following the violent events of 25 March 2004, when so many people perceived as ‘political opponents’ were killed, injured, or went missing. The government had played a major role in these disturbing events. I was then staying in a rented house with no particular security safeguard besides an old Burkinabé and his wife (and myriad kids), who had been ‘guarding’ the house for several years and who actually were making their living by selling matches, Maggi cubes and batteries through a small hole dug in our cement fence. I was then particularly concerned by the anti-French discourse promoted by young mobs close to the Presidential party and massively relayed by the main media. It is curious how quickly terrible things run through your head. I think my main fear then was of being raped. Or being hurt ‘for fun’, ‘to set an example’, or for merely being white or French. Being ‘unfortunately’ killed was also a harrowing yet realistic threat that at the time seemed to me to lie within the range of possibilities. As I stayed inside for three days, keeping connected with a range of local contacts in the outside world by cell phone, I thought of the ICRC workers slaughtered in Eastern Congo in early 2001 (in Ituri), the abduction of a colleague of mine in the Ruzizi Plain the same year on 11 September (I was in the car behind), and I could not help wondering to myself what on earth I was doing there, far from my own home and exposed to events that were far beyond my control and that could affect my life in the worst ways.

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[1] *Pirogues* are local canoes made from a hollowed tree trunk.

Luckily, the person who would later become the father of my daughters was there both times; in terms of moral support and shared experience, this is definitely worth mentioning. And even more luckily, nothing happened. But the mere thought that it could have gone wrong is haunting. Maybe this is what triggered my interest in violent young African mobs. Or perhaps it was my father's furtive involvement in the OAS[2], when he was 18 and prone to being brainwashed, like many of his contemporaries. So when the opportunity arose to earn a living doing research and when a few doors opened in Côte d'Ivoire that made it possible to focus on armed groups, I jumped on the train and put my 'humanitarian' hat on hold. The journey lasted many years and took more than one turn.

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[2] OAS stands for *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* and was a short-lived French nationalist underground organization during the Algerian War (1954-62). The OAS used armed struggle in an attempt to prevent Algeria's independence.

Acknowledgements

This book would never have emerged without the critical insights of my two promotors. Isa Baud gave me the possibility to pursue this research at the university of Amsterdam and ample freedom to develop myself in the areas I wanted. For that, I am extremely grateful.[1] Jean-Pierre Chauveau pushed me to improve my analysis, to be more nuanced, more modest, to contextualize more; he made me grow as an analyst. His extensive knowledge of Côte d'Ivoire and his current interest in studying local processes of mobilization were very valuable assets, and I tapped into his expertise in full confidence. We did not meet often, but when we did, it was quite extensive: usually eight consecutive hours of analytical talks .... In February 2010, I went out of such talk with the feeling of having taken a cold shower. It took me four months to digest everything and to come up with a proper problematization. In February 2011, I went out of the same talk with the feeling of finally seeing the end of a long tunnel. I was close to a sense of completeness.

To Ate Poorthuis and the GIS team, many many thanks for your help in mapping the chronology of violent events for my fieldwork area. To my closest colleagues, Inti, Sanne, Mieke, Hulya, we embarked in this adventure together, we disembark one after the other. I am sure though that the developed friendships will last far beyond this new diploma. To the other colleagues from the department, I have been quite asocial lately, avoiding meetings, tea talks, guest lectures, even the department free drinks. For a few years, my time has been divided between work, studious weekends, a general feeling that my PhD is an impossible wall to break, and the basic logistics of a household of four. I am very happy that this is about to change.

A few people have read part of all of the manuscript and have provided valuable comments and encouragements. Many times, it opened a door to more reflection and forced me to nuance my writings even more. The revised versions have not been less catchy – at least in my opinion. To name these informed readers, special thanks to Yvan Guichaoua, Virginie Mamadouh, Marielle Debos, and David Raats, the latter for the sharp English editing. I would also like to thank the jury members of my PhD committee who took the time to read my work and to comment on it.

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[1] Part of the financing for my salary has been provided by the IS-Academie scheme.

During my time on the field, I am particularly grateful to the following persons: Césaire Brou, with whom I interviewed the bulk of the low-ranking recruits in this study, Franck Dakoury Gbaka, Diomandé Kongué and Diomandé Tiémoko, who all helped me to collecting data in the villages of Zou and Zeregbo during the period of preliminary fieldwork. For various logistical support and for the very nice after-work talks, many thanks to the GTZ-IS team, the IRC and ODAFEM, especially Jean Mapouala, Louis Falcy, Matias Meier, Denis Doua, Khalil, and Marie-Chantale. Collecting primary information is always challenging and this work could not have been written without the contribution of the militarized civilians I interviewed. Special thanks then to these men, women, boys and girls who unconditionally agreed to share with me their difficult personal stories. Their experiences are extraordinary. I tried my best to give them all the credit they deserve. If I distorted any meaning in the process, I sincerely apologize.

Last and far from being least, I am deeply indebted to my family. Roelof, you know me better than anyone. Thank you for everything. Anna and Tess, apologies for the days away writing (and the mood swings); but be sure I left you in very good hands.

1

Introducing the study

The recent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has led to the militarization of many young civilians on both belligerent sides. While some participated in combat and fought on the front line when violence was at its peak (Fall 2002 – Spring 2003), others assumed more backstage functions, from the maintaining of military positions, when places were won from the enemy, to basic logistical duties. There are many tasks within an armed group, and low-ranking recruits usually navigate between those depending on conflict phases and individual skills.[1] Where some youths were only militarized for a few months (at the onset of conflict), others have continued their involvement in armed movements over the years, after the main clashes were over, with some being particularly vocal about it. What is of particular interest is the fact that many of these youths have assumed a function of 'commuting' conscripts, alternating periods of semi-military work, where they had to report to some kind of warlike hierarchy, with periods at home where they were back to a quasi daily routine. This became particularly characteristic as the Ivoirian war evolved into a situation of 'no peace, no war' with sporadic violence still occurring, but only at certain periods and within specific settings.

---

[1] Multitasking is particularly characteristic of civilian recruits. Examples of activities included securing of particular places through the set-up of checkpoints, transmission of information between bases, registration of men and equipment going in and out military camps, collecting taxes from local economic operators, cleaning weapons, cooking, cleaning, sports (to stay in shape), and compulsory presence every morning at roll call, during the gathering of troops.

As the main theatre of violence, the west of the country has been particularly affected by the militarization of the civilian population. It has been chosen as terrain for this particular research. If the initial rationale behind arming the youths was most probably linked to self-defence in the case of counter-insurgent movements, and to the necessity to numerically strengthen the base of the rebellion in the case of the insurgents, those who belonged to these violent movements were generally quite negatively perceived by those who stayed outside these mobilization processes. In mainstream media and the dominant line of thinking in public opinion, there has been a strong inclination to amalgamate them with thugs and petty thieves and even if the picture has tended to be more nuanced at the local level, negative perceptions have tended to prevail: militarized youths in western Côte d'Ivoire have been socially and negatively marked, a paradox in many ways, since conscription has always been a necessary feature of civil wars, regardless of context. The way militarized civilians have been publicly framed in the country has fed the 'loose molecule' hypothesis popularized by Kaplan in the mid-1990s (Kaplan, 1994), where the stand is taken that the most likely profile of Ivoirian low-ranking recruits is that of jobless, uneducated, and dissocialized youths with few alternative prospects other than to resort to violence to make ends meet. Despite having received a great deal of criticism (Guichaoua, 2007; Peters, 2004; Richards, 1996), this view continues to remain quite anchored in popular sociology and is still popular in certain circles of academics, donors and practitioners.

But surely, not every youth drawn into an armed group has turned bandit in western Côte d'Ivoire and this book pays particular attention to avoid such oversimplification. If it is likely that some recruits saw an easy way to earn their living by turning criminal and extorting civilians (by making use of their position of power and their relatively easy access to weapons), many did not take part in such activities and limited themselves to doing what was asked of them by their hierarchy (which often only meant – once the period of open war was over – filling a shift at a checkpoint every fortnight or so). The scapegoating of these youths has probably been convenient for strategic purposes, and by offering a plausible explanation to violent events may even have participated in fuelling existing tensions by triggering a certain propensity for retaliation. But such a perspective had the detrimental effect of masking important differences of characteristics across settings and between the different movements. Who joins armed groups, and why, eventually remain empirical questions whose answers vary considerably across contexts; so do processes of demobilization, and – within those – the place of humanitarian action aimed at facilitating a return to civilian life for this militarized population. The objective of this study is to shed light on these topics in the specific context of western Côte d'Ivoire, taking as time span the combat operations of 2002-2003 to the partial demobilization of the pro-government militias in 2006-2007.

Research approach

This research explores – from the very particular perspectives of young civilians who were militarized for some time before receiving short-term reinsertion assistance – the different processes which led to their militarization and de-militarization. There has been no such study to date for western Côte d'Ivoire, despite the fact that the region has been home to most persisting non-State armed groups involved in the Ivoirian conflict and was the territory most affected by warfare. Yet notwithstanding this lack of empirical grounds, western armed groups have been *a priori* viewed in an extremely negative light with an overemphasis on their irrationality, violence and *lumpen* individuals. This book is a first-hand attempt to bring some nuance to the fore for this specific geographical area.

To examine the different processes that led to the militarization and demilitarization of such youths, I positioned myself at the intersection of what remained of a warlike apparatus in two settings located on either side of the former front line (two settings that could potentially be seen as sustaining a certain form of latent mobilization at the time the fieldwork was conducted), with what grounded the structures of interventions themselves (by placing externally-driven 'post-conflict'[2] interventions into perspective in those two contexts). The main puzzle I wanted to address was to understand the extent to which externally-driven interventions targeting militarized civilians should be conceived as special processes compared to other social processes at play in the local environment.[3] After all, and as it is exemplified several times in this study, for this particular type of recruit (militarized youth, non-professional and low-ranking), the borders are quite blurred between the different social arenas in which they find themselves evolving.

There is no doubt that the fact that I used to be part of the humanitarian scene before entering academia has shaped the way I approached the topic, both in terms of choice of methodology (by using humanitarian interventions as main outlook on how to empirically approach the topic of militarized civilians) and in terms of how I read and interpreted the existing theory (by drawing on personal experience when placing humanitarianism in a larger context of norms, of strategies of actors, and when ultimately bringing to the fore the relationship between militarized recruits and their social fabric). The Ivoirian context was not unknown to me before the start of this research (although the topic of militarized youths was), and having worn a 'practitioner hat' there for a year in 2003-2004 partly explains why I was so keen on attempting to formulate improvement strategies for existing interventions. But a practitioner background does not exclude reasoning, nor does it exclude a genuine willingness and ability to undertake in-depth analytical social exploration; several conceptual questions appeared relevant to examine as I dug deeper into the subject. What does it mean to be a 'reinserted' or a 'reintegrated' rebel or militia, and what does thinking in terms of dichotomy bring to the analysis when making the distinction between 'reinserted' and 'non-reinserted' recruits? Is it expected that there will be no regression into armed groups for the 'reinserted' ones? Under no circumstances?

---

[2] The term 'post-conflict' is only used here for descriptive purposes. Refer to footnote 4 for the concepttual view of 'war' and 'peace' used in this study.
The terms 'intervention' and 'humanitarianism' refers in this study to humanitarian interventions targeting militarized civilians, aiming at facilitating their return to civilian life.

[3] Going beyond this main questioning, it could also be worth reflecting on the extent to which an indigenous process of peace-building would be possible in western Côte d'Ivoire, given the existing knowledge of the local context.

If this is the expectation that motivates both the promotion of targeted interventions and the reasoning in terms of dichotomy (reinserted/non-reinserted), one has to seriously explore the specific context under investigation to assess the extent of influence of external interventions. With that in mind, I examined two particular geographical locations of western Côte d'Ivoire from both a micro-regional-level perspective and from the particular viewpoints of the recruits I interviewed. The fieldwork areas differed in terms of belligerent side (rebel-controlled vs. government-controlled) and in terms of main characteristics (size, rural/urban, ethnicity) and are further described in the immediate context section.

It could be argued regarding many aspects that, when post-war settings are mainly shaped by external interventions, there is a tendency to promote the forgetfulness of dreary events and to encourage the framing of the view that war was only an unfortunate interlude that disrupted a peaceful routine. Programmes that specifically address the reinsertion of militarized youths are generally keen on fostering non-military alternatives to soldiering and the option of integrating the regular army is rarely first brought to the fore, even when explicitly planned in a national security reform plan. In sum, when humanitarianism is at the core of a post-conflict setting, what tends to be artificially reproduced is the pre-war situation. There are however three major downsides to this situation: first, the impact of interventions on their direct environment tends to be overestimated; second, such a perspective tends to downplay the importance of war itself by reducing it to an anomaly and a brief episode upsetting some kind of (imaginary) untroubled order;[4] and third, if post-conflict interventions end up recreating the pre-war situation, it implicitly implies that humanitarianism can play a significant role in reproducing violent conflict, even if it does so unintentionally. After all, 'the seeds of war are to be seen shooting up in peace' (Richards, 2005a). By being de facto entangled in a given socio-politico-historical context, planned interventions inherit existing social networks and power relations which they have little control over. If they temporarily provide some kind of 'protected' humanitarian space, pre-war power relations are likely to continue to prevail, as well as social networks built during the war, which includes friendships and patronage relationships built within the military. It is also in this respect that humanitarianism targeting ex-combatants can potentially be seen as sustaining some form of latent mobilization: by keeping demilitarized people together, the setting they provide could possibly serve as platform to reactivate a military engagement in a later phase.

But another way to comprehend a post-conflict situation, much more appropriate for the Ivoirian context, is to place humanitarianism to the side of a given system (instead of at its core) and to basically consider that planned interventions implemented in post-conflict contexts are just additional social opportunities among a wide array of other social opportunities. That does not mean that they do not have effects, and that these effects do not influence the local systems in some ways. Humanitarianism after all remains embedded in local stakes, whatever place it has in the local environment. But there are three advantages when taking this perspective: first, it suspends preconceived judgment in terms of impact; second, it acknowledges the agency of people who operate and who participate in such interventions; and third, it rests on the basic assumption that humanitarianism emerges from social action and is therefore as much subject to social changes as other social processes. External interventions would therefore not be necessarily 'special' and do not necessarily require to be treated specifically, especially in the Ivoirian case, a country with a strong State apparatus, myriad civil society representatives and a civic culture accustomed to mediation and consultation.

What I propose to do in this study is to build on that second perspective (the one that posits humanitarianism to the side of a given system) by drawing on my own interpretation of the situation in western Côte d'Ivoire. Humanitarianism was never at the core of social change there and this point is proven on several occasions in this work; hence, it is a reasonably well-grounded hypothesis. During the period under study, the number of international humanitarian actors remained relatively marginal in comparison with other contexts. There were no more than 13 international NGOs in the area bounded by Duékoué, Toulepleu, Danané and Man, with a slight variation in numbers depending on the conflict phase, political developments, and availability of funding. The main question this study therefore attempts to address is determining the extent to which, in such situations, externally-driven interventions targeting militarized civilians should be conceived as special processes compared to other social processes at play in the local environment. The study will place 'post-conflict' humanitarianism into perspective in the contexts under examination, and will try to determine what eventually comes out of a humanitarian apparatus targeting ex-combatants when it does not play such a central role in their immediate contexts.[5]

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[4] This remark relates to a certain view of 'war' and 'peace' that chooses not to impose a sharp categorical distinction between the two concepts, but that prefers instead to speak of a continuum. It avoids 'quarantining war as a "disease" ', and places war within the range of social possibilities. This perspective brings to the fore that 'pre-war' peace is often overestimated. It also points out that the shifts towards intense armed conflict is a process with many twists, turns and pauses and that return to peace 'is a rocky path with many pitfalls' (Richards, 2005a).

There are two levels of reading. The first one – more descriptive – focuses on the different processes that led to the militarization and demilitarization of young civilians. I examine this point foremost by exploring the mobilization and demobilization contexts of western Côte d'Ivoire from the points of view of the 'reinserted' recruits interviewed. The second reading is more analytical, and reflects on the meanings of being a 'reinserted' rebel or militia, and on the relevance of thinking in terms of dichotomy when the different social arenas in which militarized civilians evolve overlap to such a degree. This naturally leads me to reflect on the extent to which complex socio-economic reinsertion processes can genuinely be driven by post-conflict interventions. I clarify below the conceptual framework I use for the scope of this work.

Defining militarized youths

The term 'militarized youths' encompasses a diversity of profiles in western Côte d'Ivoire, which are not exclusive but which have several conceptual implications. A first pattern consists of militarized youths locally recruited on both belligerent sides and affected in surroundings they know. On the counter-insurgent side, the proportion of the autochthonous[6] population who were drawn into an armed group was greater than the proportion of the non-autochthonous residents, but given that not everyone was living in the area when the war started, it is interesting to empirically check the extent of locality of the recruitment. The main peculiarity of the 'local' recruits is that they always remained involved in their pre-war social groups (close and extended family, friends, acquaintances); they simply forged additional social networks during the war, with some emerging from their participation in an armed group.

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[5] When it does, what tends to be reproduced is the pre-war situation.

[6] In Côte d'Ivoire, people define their 'autochthony' foremost in terms of geographical origin. The Ivoirian territory has in fact been divided along ethnic lines for a long time and the existing divisions are not called into question by the current conflict. In the western region, the Guéré (or Wê) are the autochthonous population in Duékoué, Guiglo, Blolequin and Toulepleu, while the Yacoubas (or Dan) are the autochthonous population in Man and Danané. At the local level, the term 'allochthone' designates an Ivorian from a different region (in Guéré territory for instance, allochtones would be Baoulé, Yacouba, Sénoufo, Lobi, etc.) and the term 'allogene' designates a foreigner from a foreign

A second pattern consists of militarized youths who were not based in the western region when the war started but who were drawn into the movement either out of solidarity (the ones native to the region or those whose ideas had found resonance with a particular armed group), or by the prospect of possible post-war rewards. An important rationale indeed, when continuing to maintain close relationships with the armed group over time, was the prospect of benefiting from some sort of reinsertion or reintegration support promoted by post-conflict interventions. Another reasonable assumption could also be to hypothesize that those non-natives of the West would be more likely to stick with their respective armed groups if only to benefit from free accommodation where they lacked a pre-war footing, and from expressions of paternalist support on the part of their leaders.

A third pattern consists of people who were temporarily sent outside their place of residence at the beginning of the war, to fight on the front line or to assume logistical functions for advanced bases during the period of open fighting, before returning home. This was notably the case for many pro-government militia elements who lent a hand to the national army from late 2002 to early 2003 in pushing back the rebels. A variant was to remain in a military setting for a year after the period of open war had passed – a setting that sustained a form of violent mobilization potentially ready to be reactivated, were hostilities between belligerents to be resumed. On the counter-insurgent side, militia leaders set up several such paramilitary encampments in the region they controlled near the former front line. These were functional until 2005, when the bulk of self-demobilization occurred for the pro-government militias.[7] On the insurgent side, since at the time the fieldwork was being conducted the rebel *État-Major* had no intention of starting to releasing recruits (talking about demobilization was then taboo in the rebel-controlled areas), a typical pattern was that most militarized civilians who had been drawn into the rebel forces continued to be based outside

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country (Burkinabé, Malien, Togolese, etc.). In practice, the terms are often used interchangeably and there is less and less distinction made between *allochtones* and *allogenes*, who are usually treated and considered the same by the autochthonous population.

[7] The base of UPRGO was in Zagné, the base of MILOCI was in Kahadé, the base of FLGO was in Guiglo.

their pre-war place of residence, with limited visibility on their geographical future. A standard trajectory was to have been active on the front line for a few months, at more or less advanced positions and in mobile bases as armed groups were advancing or retreating, and then to follow the group to a fixed base in one of the main localities of the West, where some military obligations persisted.

In contrast to this third pattern, a fourth one consists of youths who stayed in their place of residence for the entire war and who assumed the function of local vigilante.[8] This only happened on the counter-insurgent side: in many localities, young civilians joined a local checkpoint team to ensure the security of their village and neighbouring localities, until the dismantlement of the rural checkpoints in 2005.[9] If similar 'vigilante' phenomena occurred in other Ivoirian regions, what was specific to the west was to view the participants in this circumstantial phenomenon as functioning at the same level as those who participated in warfare, notably by sustaining an idea of 'post-war reward' and by including some of them in the list of recipients of potential intervention benefits.

This patchwork of engagement types was characteristic of the militarized youths encountered during the study and cannot be delinked from the understanding of a certain temporality of conflict. What was the norm in 2002-2003, during the period of open fighting, was different from what occurred in 2004, when pro-government militias were still encamped in a military setting. This also differed from the situation in 2007, when the bulk of the pro-government militias had self-demobilized and when the rebel forces were continuing to militarily and administratively control the northern half of the country. The borders between the different spheres (military, civilian, humanitarian) have never been strict, varying according to the phases of conflict, individuals' social networks and the extent of locality of the recruitment.

Structure of the book

The book is organized in nine chapters and a concluding essay. Chapter 1 introduces the study. It stresses the rationales of undertaking such research and pinpoints the questions the study eventually aims to address. Chapter 2 describes the research approach in very practical terms by explaining the methodological choices made and by reflecting on certain ethical considerations. Chapter 3 gives a brief overview of the theoretical debates relevant to this work by highlighting the paradox of external interventions and aspects of social movements theories that would be impossible to circumvent, given the scope of this study.

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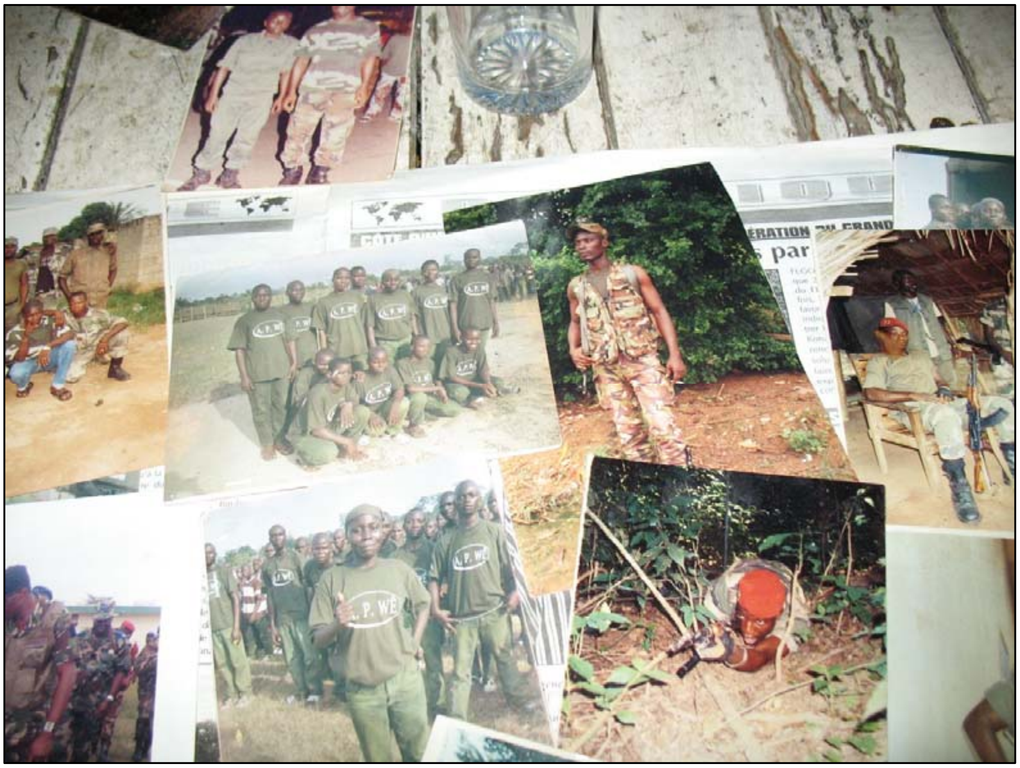
[8] This trend was also observed in other Ivoirian regions (Chauveau *et al.*, 2010).

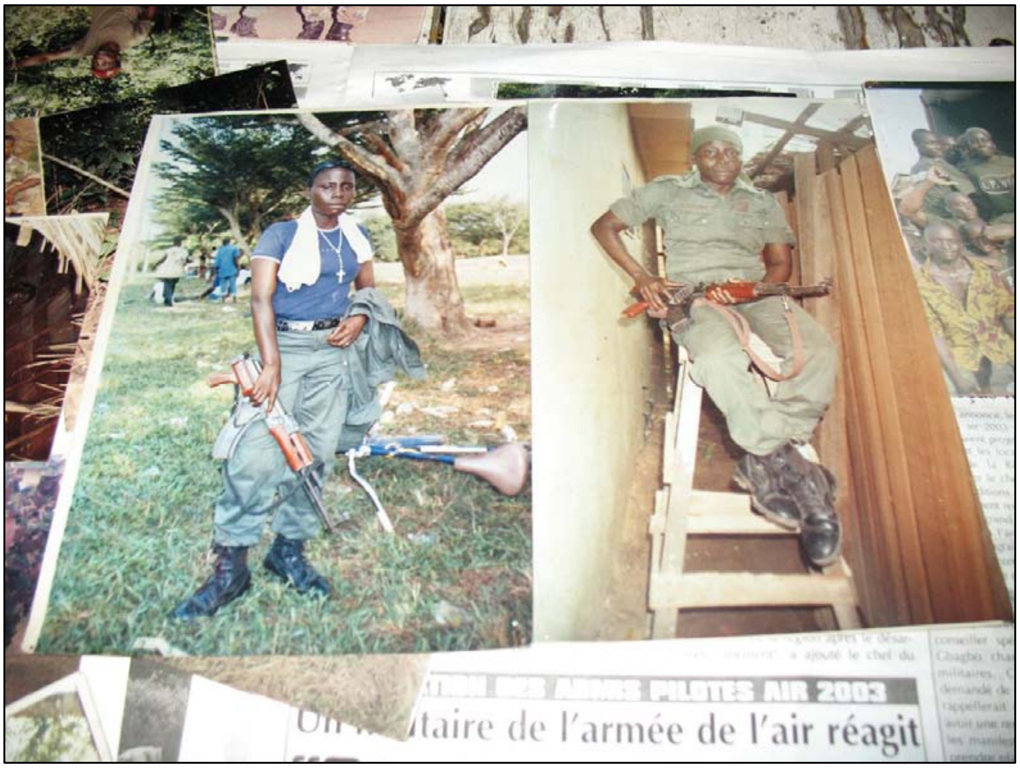
[9] They reappeared from time to time in the western region, but very rarely and very briefly. In other Ivoirian regions, checkpoints were dismantled in May 2003, after the last official ceasefire.

Chapters 4 and 5 contextualize youths' mobilization and demobilization. Chapter 4 places contentious movements into perspective by exploring the extent to which particular mobilizing and demobilizing contexts have been shaped by their historicity. Chapter 5 continues this contextualization exercise by exploring the extent to which, in the fieldwork locations, particular mobilizing and demobilizing contexts have been shaped by their immediate environments. It is a necessary step to assess the importance of historicity in such processes compared to more contingent and circumstantial factors. Based on a solid work of document reconstitution, Chapter 5 presents the main aspects of the conflict in the western region and the detailed ethnographic contexts of the geographical areas under study. In Chapter 6, the different armed factions that operated in the west during the period under study are described in detail, which brings to the fore the internal dynamics of these groups, their degree of ethnic mixity, which factions emerged earliest, which ones were absorbed by other groups, and the extent of 'locality' of recruitment.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 are the empirical core of this book. Chapter 7 explores the profiles and motives of several young militarized civilians on both belligerent side. Chapter 8 reflects on the complex relationships militarized youths have had, throughout the years, with their immediate environment. It notably stresses the fluidity of borders between the military, civilian and humanitarian spheres, as well as their evolution over time. Chapter 9 examines processes of demobilization and of return to civilian life, and the extent to which such complex (re)socialization processes are externally driven. If it is increasingly recognized that this transition is foremost driven by endogenous factors, post-conflict interventions have become unavoidable in the past decade, for better or for worse, and there is therefore the need to understand what they can reasonably achieve in order to place them better in their operational contexts. Chapter 10 concludes by outlining the theoretical contributions this study has made to the field and by formulating practical propositions.



Photograph 1: Patchwork of pro-governmental militia elements


Un militaire de l'armée de l'air réagit

Photograph 2: Female recruits, Guiglo

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Methodology

For a number of reasons – mainly linked to length of stay and instruments used for collecting the data – this work is not a classical ethnography. It was nonetheless largely inspired by anthropological work and by actor-oriented approaches.[1] With some exceptions, I did not observe respondents in situ (nor when engaged or when carrying out routine tasks); I focused instead on reconstructing their perceptions of past events by providing an artificial platform of exchange and by taking their life story as point of departure. This methodological choice was mainly guided by the object of study: after all, I was studying processes of mobilization *a posteriori* and the bulk of the youths I interviewed had been mobilized in 2002-2003, five years before the start of data collection. The primary data I gathered foremost stems from 237 semi-structured one-on-one interviews[2] I conveyed with male and female low-ranking recruits between 14 and 35 years old.[3] At the time of the first meeting, half of them had already left their respective armed groups (the pro-government militias) and nearly all of them were involved in an NGO-led reinsertion project. Systematic information was collected on their pre-war lives (educational and professional trajectories, relationships with close family, social networks), their motivations to join armed groups, their actions during the war (or perhaps better said, whatever they wanted to tell me about that period), and how they saw their future and options outside armed groups, including their own reflections on the reinsertion project in which they were participating. The relatively large number of cases from both belligerent sides had the merit of providing a great variety of patterns. The bulk of the data was collected in Man, Guiglo and Blolequin, the respective strongholds of rebel and pro-government armed groups in western Côte d'Ivoire. Perhaps I was too cautious, but I chose to conduct most interviews within the premises of three reinsertion centres ran by humanitarian agencies and used at the time of the data collection for project purposes. A few interviews were done in a village near Guiglo (Zouan) and in Abidjan, with former recruits who had not received any reinsertion assistance. The fieldwork periods were November-December 2006, April-May 2007, June 2007, and follow-up interviews were conducted in November-December 2007. I also continued to contact several respondents by phone until the summer of 2008, to get a sense of how they were getting on as the years passed.

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[1] Actor-oriented approaches stress the interplay of internal and external factors when exploring social change. At the same time, they take the stand that human action and consciousness play a central role in that interplay. The concept of agency is central in this perspective and social actors are assumed to have a genuine capacity to process social experience, to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme circumstances. A core feature pointed out by Giddens (1979) is that at any point in time, anyone has the capacity to act otherwise.

[2] The 237 respondents consisted of 200 men, 16 women and 21 adolescents enrolled in a reinsertion project. I also interviewed 5 former militia recruits who were not involved in any project and a dozen local entrepreneurs who had agreed to take on some of these youths as apprentices in the workshops they owned. The detailed interview guidelines are presented in appendix 2. The guidelines were usually used as a checklist and interviews took the form of a friendly conversation.

Prior and during the data collection phase, I had to make a certain number of choices, weighing what I wanted to do against what at the time seemed realistic to accomplish. How should I empirically define 'youth' in this study? Which characteristics should I use to choose my sample? Where do I do fieldwork? How should I deal with child respondents? In surroundings extremely 'humanitarianized', how can I – if not avoid – at least minimize being confused with development practitioners? Additional dilemmas emerged while undertaking the analysis, not the least related to how to deal with issues surrounding categorization. And as I was largely drawing on respondents' narratives, how to avoid falling into the trap of taking a too individualistic approach? I reflect on those points below.

Methodological choices

First dilemma: how best to contextualize individual narratives?

When drawing on personal narratives, the obvious risk is to fall into an extreme form of methodological individualism that partly distorts social phenomena because it fails to relate individual experiences with the wider structure. The analyst in fact has to be particularly careful not to exaggerate the instrumental rationality of individuals too strongly, or there is a real danger of remaining confined in a deterministic approach that bounds human choices and decisions by motives and previously existing causes, regardless of the structural aspects.[4] To avoid such trap, I engaged in a process of document reconstitution to get a good grasp of the local context (by 'local' I mean the immediate environment of the people under study). I was particularly interested in developing a coherent version of the recent history of the western region by generating a detailed timeline of violent events since 2002, in order to get a sense of the general atmosphere in which respondents had evolved.[5] After all, in many cases, among the driving rationales for explaining military engagement were the circumstances. I therefore extensively tapped into journalistic sources, particularly Ivoirian newspapers archives (Fraternité Matin, 24 Heures, Notre Voie, L'inter, Le Front, Soir Info) and those of national and international press agencies (Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, Agence France Presse, BBC, PANA Press, Reuters). Luckily, Côte d'Ivoire is home to a plethora of media and hosts at least a dozen daily newspapers with wide circulation throughout the country and easy internet access. Far from denying the partiality of certain sources and the politicized nature of some documents (Ivoirian newspapers are well-known for their political engagement and aggressive tone), my goal was to extract the most 'factual' information; hence, I treated the various articles as valuable primary documents that accounted for a particularly violent period. I completed this documentation with UN and INGO situation reports on western Côte d'Ivoire, impartial forces updates, and secondary sources (International Crisis Group analysis, IRINNews, and UNOCHA Bulletins). This reconstruction work had the merit of clarifying the different conflict phases and of introducing a certain temporality to the analysis of the conflict in the west of the country. It was a necessary step to understand, *a posteriori*, local processes of mobilization.

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[3] I was helped by a research assistant in that process. We split the interviews among each other.

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[4] Long (2001) in fact warns us that many 'micro' studies fall short because of a tendency to adopt a voluntaristic view of decision-making, by highlighting too much the transactional nature of actors' strategies while not examining enough how these individual choices were shaped by larger frames of meaning and action and by the distribution of power and resources. One acts in a certain way not only because of individual characteristics. The ability of people to build up room to manoeuvre only takes on full meaning when it is related to structural aspects and specific historical patterns. These actually partly explain how such room to manoeuvre is framed (Abbink, 2005; Carney, 1999; Giddens, 1979).

[5] A summary of this chronology is presented in Chapter 5, the detailed version in appendix 1.

Second dilemma: doing research in militarized settings

Man and Guiglo were both extremely 'militarized' and 'humanitarianized' in 2006 and 2007 – the period when I was doing fieldwork – which raised several dilemmas. How could I best approach such a messy field without unnecessarily putting myself and others at risk? How could I avoid being taken for a humanitarian practitioner while using the premises they used to conduct my first interviews? In Man, at the time of doing fieldwork, the local administration was completely managed by rebel officers. No recruits had yet been officially demobilized and none had received financial compensation. The mere prospect of releasing low-ranking recruits was not even debatable with the highest in command five years after the start of the conflict. In Guiglo, 981 militia elements had gone through a demobilization process and had received some kind of financial compensation. The local administration was also fully military and pro-government militias had an extremely bad reputation. They were particularly prone to hostile demonstrations against the UN and the French impartial forces, a characteristic I could fully observe in early 2006, when I was not yet doing fieldwork for this study but was nonetheless in the area for consulting activities.[6] It was in such settings that I started my research at the end of 2006. Needless to say, timing was quite crucial for the success of my data collection and I could probably not have approached the youths the way I did if I had conducted the interviews earlier (at least in Guiglo). If I was regularly monitoring the changes taking place in terms of local security, my fieldwork occurred during a relative period of calm and I was never caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. Because of the sensitivity of the topics I wanted to talk about and the risk that my actions could be misinterpreted by the military hierarchy if I went into too much detail, I adopted a rather low profile and opted, for this particular project, not to seek formal approval of the local authorities when carrying out the research. When I met the military *Préfet* in Guiglo and the *Com'Zone* in Man, I introduced myself as a researcher from the University of Amsterdam interested in studying the impact of war on local youth. I purposely kept the definition broad to avoid giving the impression that I was only focusing on militarized youth. As an extra precaution, I temporarily downplayed my French identity, overemphasizing my Dutch background instead. This discourse was generally well received and in Guiglo, the *Préfet* was particularly keen on sharing his thoughts on the subject. As I did not feel comfortable undertaking such research without the quasi certainty that an umbrella organization would help me reach a safer place elsewhere should the local situation abruptly deteriorate, I approached two international development agencies and asked them to include me in their evacuation plan. One of them was the German NGO GTZ-IS. I had heard they had just begun a pilot project in Man and Guiglo for reinserting young recruits and I used them as gatekeeper to get access to 216 respondents.

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[6] On 18 January 2006, following a peaceful demonstration in front of the UNOCI base to protest against a controversial communiqué (the International Working Group on Côte d'Ivoire had just announced that the mandate of the Ivoirian National Assembly due to expire on 16 December 16 2005 would not be extended), the event degenerated into a violent confrontation between the UN Bangladeshi peacekeepers and an angry mob. It resulted in the deaths of five protesters and the wounding of thirty-nine others (Human Rights Watch, 2006). In response to the shootings, a militia leader called everyone on the radio 'to come into town to avenge the death of those struck down by the assassins' bullets.' Shortly after, militia leaders once again used the radio to incite violence against all UN and humanitarian organizations. Several offices were burned, twenty cars tagged humanitarian were extensively damaged, office equipment was looted (computers, electric generators), as well as food and medical supplies stocks (the WFP warehouse was completely emptied).

Third dilemma: doing research tapping into humanitarian practice

There is an inherent tension in doing research while tapping into practice and in combining an approach that critically examines actions of development by using external interventions as means of accessing the bulk of respondents. There seems to be some kind of irreconcilable contradiction between the two and a real danger of bias for the analysis. I would argue that such a tension can yield productive results if the researcher pays sufficient attention to a range of things. To begin with, planned interventions offer a relatively easily accessible tank of potential respondents. While some would argue that it biases the selection of cases, not selecting respondents who are engaged in projects would probably also lead to bias as humanitarianism has become so much part of the local environment that it would be a mistake to systematically discard anyone who participates in an NGO-driven intervention. Now indeed, critics point more to the question of balance. The problem is not so much framed in terms of whether or not project participants should be excluded from a selection of cases, but to keep a fair proportion of those who are benefiting from some kind of assistance and those who are not, to overcome the risk of encountering the same type of profile among the respondents.[7] I would argue that such precaution is perhaps not necessary in certain contexts where external interventions have very limited impact on people's lives. Also, it tends to conceive 'project participants' or 'target populations' as a homogeneous group, with 'post-project' lives drastically different (and better) from the 'pre-project' ones. In reality, there is a great variety of patterns and different individual responses to similar structural and circumstantial conditions. In western Côte d'Ivoire, the reinsertion projects under study had very limited impact on project participants' lives. I nuance that point more in Chapter

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[7] It could be hypothesized that those who benefit from programme interventions have a better social capital than those who do not, so that the socially marginalized are left out.

9, but the general impression was that the project fulfilled more a function of networking (with project participants adding ‘fellow participants’ and ‘project staff’ to their social network and range of opportunities) than a function of support per se, although this indeed varied depending on individuals.

The fact that my initial encounters took place in centres run by NGOs for reinsertion purposes was nonetheless an issue I needed to mitigate. During my first visit to the centres, NGO staff – with approval of their hierarchy – organized an informal meeting with the youths present that day, where I was given the opportunity to introduce myself and to explain why I was there. For the sake of clarity, I explained that I was interested in hearing the life stories of young people who had spent some time in the militias/rebellion in order to compile such testimonies in a book. I emphasized that I was not interested in names, but in understanding from their points of view what drove them in and out armed groups and why they acted the way they did. I also emphasized that nobody had to meet with me if they did not want to. Interviews were not compulsory. I stated several times that I was not part of the project staff, that I could not materially help (so as not to raise undue expectations), and that any information shared with me would be kept confidential. While it is unlikely that everyone present at the meetings understood clearly what I intended to do, several youths volunteered to talk to me on my next visits. In terms of order, as I came to realize afterwards, the first persons I met in Guiglo were close to the militia leaders, some were even related to them. When I interviewed adolescent recruits in Man (they were hosted in a separate centre), the first person I met was the ‘President’ of the youths, followed by main members of his ‘bureau’. In order to help basic project management, the creation of a certain hierarchy amongst the children had been encouraged by the local NGO running the centre to facilitate collective interactions with project staff. A ‘President’, a ‘Treasurer’, a ‘Secretary’, a ‘Chief of Hygiene’ had therefore been named by their peers and were mediating collective demands. During my next visits, more and more adolescents registered their names to schedule an interview with me, probably reassured by what early interviewees had reported to them and by my frequent visits to the centre. If one message had been clearly passed on, it was that I was not a threat.

In Man, Guiglo and Blolequin, most interviews were done inside, in a quiet room, and it was usually not a problem to conduct them in French (communication was difficult with ten respondents in Man and interviews had to be cut short as I did not have enough knowledge of their respective local language to be able to carry on in-depth interviews without the help of a translator). Some interviews were filmed, some were taped and I took notes of the rest. With the youngest respondents, nearly all exchanges were filmed, unless they did not want this to be done.[8] I was more cautious with older recruits, as I feared – perhaps too much – that there was a greater risk my intentions would be misinterpreted. I, for instance, intentionally avoided asking from the start if I could tape interviews. It was only if I felt a conducive climate in the one-on-one exchange that I would ask the respondent if he or she would not mind if our exchanges were recorded. Although I had my camcorder with me nearly all the time, I was determined to only use it if I was completely sure that my intentions would not be misunderstood.

Fourth dilemma: how to empirically define youth for the scope of this study?

Since this work focuses on militarized youths, there is the need to define what is understood to be a 'youth' in this particular study. To be young is not a matter of biological age, and many scholars would agree with such a statement. Chauveau defines youth in terms of relational position. To him (and I share his view), being young is socially and culturally constructed, in relation to other generations, and in relation to access to relevant assets and resources that confer a certain social status (Chauveau, 2005a). If the notion of youth is a heuristic concept, there is also no universal definition of childhood, and the concept remains locally defined. Conceptualizing youth and childhood this way, in terms of local categories of perception, is in sharp contrast with the 'target group' categories built to meet the needs of external interventions. Those categories are in fact often constructed in ad hoc ways and according to age benchmarks defined by international standards, which are quite far from the lived realities of the people they attempt to define. In the normative approach promoted by planned interventions, a child is considered a child until the age of 18 (the age after which he/she is no longer eligible to receive child benefits), and a youth usually ceases to be young at 25 (the age limit is sometimes extended to 30). Defining childhood and youth along these lines inevitably suffers from a lack of solid grounds at the local level. Rosen has been among the fervent critics of such 'politics of age', a term he himself coined. When reflecting on the definition of childhood (Rosen, 2007), he argued that one effect of the 'straight-18' focus widely promoted in international law has been to shape the concept of childhood in a very strict way (bounded by numerical age) at the expense of more interesting reflections, discounting the more varied and complex local understandings of children and childhood and using age categories as instruments to advance specific agendas. Rosen especially pointed out that the mainstream discourse has tended to stifle the fact that older teenagers are likely to differ from younger children in many ways and that there is a tendency to infantilize 16 and 17-year-old recruits in contexts where adolescence and military life are not necessarily seen as antinomic. He has also stressed that by focusing too much on the older teenagers (the recruitment age debate focused on the ages 15 to 18),[9] the youngest ones have been forgotten, despite the fact that many child recruits are in their early teens when they are recruited (which this case study also illustrates).

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[8] It never happened. I forgot my camera twice during the period I did interviews, and each time, children expressed some disappointment.

But if youth and childhood are conceived as relational positions locally defined, does this thus mean that there are no limits to calling someone ‘young’ or a ‘child’? Abbink (2005) strongly argues in favour of such a benchmark, arguing that having no strict definition for youth does not mean that middle-aged people should be categorized as young. Even if some of the ‘middle-aged’ share common characteristics with younger persons (not yet having secured stable work, not yet having been in a position to raise a family, etc.), many of them miss the transition to adulthood because of poverty and deprivation (ibid) – I would add bad luck. As years pass by, their lives take a tragic turn and they eventually lose their youth. Their future no longer lies before them.

The line between ‘young’ and ‘child’ is a more blurred one and needs to be framed along cognitive development terms. Recent research has shown that children in different cultures are likely to engage in complex moral reasoning at a much younger age than expected (Boyden, 2007; Rosen, 2005; Rosen, 2007). In developing countries in particular, where most people are used to fending for themselves from an early age, context and experience have proved to play a major role in the development of human cognition and in influencing modes of action. Age and maturity are no longer conceived as necessarily going hand in hand, and adulthood is no longer overestimated by assuming grown-ups' immunity to being influenced.

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[9] In the late 1990s, there was considerable debate on which minimum age for recruitment to set in international law and a range of actors actively lobbied for abolishing the then marker of 15 as the minimum tolerated age for recruitment, and for raising this age limit to 18 in official documents (Harvey, 2000). INGOs were particularly active in pushing this view, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Swedish government and the Quaker UN Office in Geneva (Brett, 2005; Rosen, 2007). Those in favour of the change were mainly arguing that the 1989 UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) had failed to completely prohibit child recruitment and were particularly keen on underlining a contradiction in the Convention since on the one hand, a child was defined in the text as anyone under 18 in need of special protection, and on the other hand, recruitment of 16 and 17-year-olds was tolerated. Proponents were therefore keen to have such an ‘anomaly’ corrected in international law by raising the benchmark to 18. On the opposite side, people feared that too much focus on age would distract international attention from more fundamental issues such as forced recruitment. Ryle (1999) notably argued that what eventually mattered was the way conscription took place, not chronological age. Whether recruits are 16, 18 or 21 is of lesser importance, as long as these people willingly enter the force. After several stalls in the negotiation process, an optional protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on involvement of children in armed conflict was adopted in 2000 (United Nations, 2000). It called on states ‘to take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not yet attained the age of 18 years do not take a direct part in hostilities’ (Article 3). With respect to state armies, it forbade compulsory recruitment before the age of 18 while tolerating voluntary enlistment of 16 and 17-year olds, provided states maintain minimum safeguards to protect the minors in their ranks. With respect to non-state armed groups, it unconditionally forbade recruitment under the age of 18 and criminalized the practice (Article 4).

For the scope of this study, I gave up trying not to bracket 'youth' into two figures, as I kept meeting 14-year-old mothers who were already fending for themselves for several years and 42-year-old '*Présidents des Jeunes*' in the areas I toured (which appeared somewhat odd since they generally did not resemble adolescents or twenty-year-olds or people in their early thirties). If I tried in the beginning to look for some kind of remnants of an intricate age system in the societies I visited (a system in which generational issues are mitigated by the assigning of a social role to age groups, the maintenance of clear boundaries between them, and the existence of strict codes of behaviour), it became clear that such a system was long gone in western Côte d'Ivoire, and that the civil war had challenged it even more (despite the fact that some underlying ideas continued to persist in terms of reciprocity and mutual obligations). So when is one young in this book and who was included in the sample of militarized civilians? I pragmatically opted for men and women between 14 and 35 years old.

Ethical considerations

Beyond methodological challenges, studying militarized youths is an ethical minefield. The 'do no harm' imperative is trickier to reach in conflict zones due to exacerbated political polarization, the presence of armed groups, and the general unpredictability of events. I tend to agree with scholars who point out that research cannot be ethically conducted everywhere and should not even be attempted in certain settings. One difficulty is to find satisfactory ways to address consent. If tackling the issue is often used as an example of good practice leading to an 'ethically correct' research, how best to do so is a major point of debate in culturally diverse settings. Another difficulty is to mitigate the potential stress respondents might experience as they recall disturbing events. But doing research on armed groups in war-affected areas is also disturbing because the researcher is fully confronted with certain practices and ideas about violence, whatever his/her own views are on deontological ethics. To what extent can one suspend judgment? How to minimize emotional shakes? Can one keep a fresh mind after hearing about the same atrocities for the umpteenth time? Researchers are not immune to feelings, and some discourses can be hard to swallow, even for the most open-minded. Wood (2006) mentions these emotional dynamics because she is persuaded inadequate attention to them may lead field researchers to make errors in judgment.

The 'do no harm' imperative

How to define 'harmful'? Drawing on his experience as a member of a Canadian Research Ethics Board, Haggerty (2004) puts it this way: 'In the eventuality that a research project poses a greater risk than what a person might encounter in his/her daily life, these risks must be managed by the researcher or the research cannot be conducted.' Since they are related to a broader context than the research project alone, ethical concerns are put in some kind of perspective and the impact of social science research projects on people's lives is not overestimated. Haggerty in fact specifically warns about the current tendency to overrate the potential harm of research, mentioning a certain form of 'ethics creep' that invades social science research in the name of ethics.

Did I put research participants at a greater risk than otherwise in their daily lives? I doubt it. It would be largely overestimating the impact of this research. Notwithstanding a few exceptions, I genuinely believe the bulk of respondents were smart enough to decide for themselves whether they wanted to speak with me and what information they wanted to share. They also usually had a much more developed sense of risk than I did. I was indeed a bit nervous at checkpoints when I had on me transcripts that could prove the implication of a youth with an armed group 'from the other side'. But how likely was it that my bag would be searched? And if it was, how likely was it that respondents would be traced back or blacklisted on the basis of first names and villages of origin? Would a pile of paper raise a soldier's attention? There was surely a greater chance of my CFA francs being ripped off. If particular biographical details make my respondents recognizable – and I know an obstinate reader would be able to trace them back should he or she be patient enough to crosscheck all interview fragments in this book – it was highly unlikely in the field that a person would take time to do that with the aim of confronting someone.

But since a method I used was to ask young people to describe the distressing events they experienced during the war (thereby obliging them to recall disturbing memories as they were presenting themselves as either victim or perpetrator of violence), I had to minimize the psychological harm that might derive from such a recollection. It is always tricky to put yourself in the place of someone else and to evaluate the psychological damage certain questions can trigger. Different individuals have different reactions to the same experiences, and events that appear to me (and others) to be terrible do not necessarily affect the people who experienced them the same way. While doing fieldwork, I finally opted for inquiring about harrowing events without pushing my respondents if they did not want to elaborate much. If they wanted to talk and to describe what happened to them, I took the stand that they were willingly doing so and that they were conscious of the consequences; it was not unethical of me to listen. Some respondents mentioned having experienced nightmares for a while after having fought in the front line, others felt that they had to take some distance before returning to their former environment, to make a ‘fresh’ start. With regard to the ‘do no harm’ imperative, Haggerty (ibid) makes a nice parallel with social scientists and journalists, basically arguing that while both conduct interviews, videotape people and undertake some forms of participant observation, journalists are much less bounded by ethical protocols and it is expected that a story be told, unless the interviewee clearly mentioned that certain information has to be off record. The assumption is also that respondents get quoted, unless special reservations are made. In academia, the initial assumption is the opposite: research participants remain anonymous unless they provide explicit permission to be identified, and the content of information (the nature of what to write) is heavily weighed, especially when some information appears sensitive and subject to an interpretation that might endanger the respondent or distort an ongoing process. When I mentioned that I would not use real names in the book, many respondents told me that they would not have any objections if their real name was used. For the sake of precaution, I eventually adopted the scholarly attitude and opted for standard anonymity.

Consent

It would be overestimating my explanatory skills to assert that interviewees came to me in full understanding of the potential risks and benefits of participating in this research. I also cannot ignore the power imbalance between myself and the youths I interviewed, or the differences of perception and interpretation of some words and concepts across cultures. If, when presenting the topic of my research to potential participants, I was careful to say that individual interviews were not compulsory, I cannot discount the fact that the mere notion of what is mandatory and what is voluntary differs across contexts, and I could be easily challenged if I were only to base my argument for informed consent on the basis of this distinction.

Power imbalance is an inherent part of society. It is present at the local level (based on race, sex, wealth, age, gender and ethnicity) and it is also present in the Researcher-Subject relationship in research. In Man and Guiglo, I was by far better off than the youths I interviewed. I was staying in accommodations that exceeded local standards (in Man, I was hosted in the guest house of an INGO; in Guiglo, I was hosted in the guest house of a local timber company), I was sometimes eating in fancy *maquis*,[10] and – perhaps the most peculiar aspect – I was only passing through. Everyone I met knew I would be leaving after a while. On top of that, I was a young white woman in her early thirties – an outsider, clearly – and while this had its advantages in the sense that some people shared information with me that they probably would not have shared with someone else (a compatriot from their close social network, a younger or an older 'passer-by'), I know it also had drawbacks and it was sometimes difficult to grasp certain subtleties. Was I seen as 'being too outside' to be a good listener? I don't think so. I may have been the only person to have shown a genuine interest in listening to these youths' life stories, and I was probably the only one to whom they narrated their life, from their first memories of elementary school to their support network over time, and the range of paid activities they had engaged in since they started working. The way I was perceived was not necessarily linked to people's level of education. I had very good discussions with people who had dropped out of school at an early age and some exchanges were far less rich with people more educated. The quality of the discussions mostly depended on the one-on-one interaction between interviewee and interviewer, and on the interviewer's capacity to follow the thread of discussion, allowing interesting digressions and shifting back when needed.

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[10] A *maquis* is a local bar, where you can also eat. It is an Ivoirian term.

As research protocol, I opted for oral consent procedures as I did not want to formalize the exchanges too much; it also seemed to be the most culturally appropriate method. Respondents were briefed on their right to withdraw at any time and on their possibility not to answer certain questions. Although no-one cut an interview short, some remained evasive on certain points and a few refused to answer a particular question. When this was the case – usually while talking about war experiences – I stopped probing for more details and usually changed the subject. What strikingly comes forward though from this study, in line with other ethnographies of civil war (Weinstein, 2007; Wood, 2006), is that someone who has experienced war at first hand is usually genuinely willing to discuss his or her story with an outside researcher, foremost to ventilate personal feelings and to correct what has been told. There are so many negative stereotypes associated with combatants.

Am I being lied to?

If I compare my experience as a humanitarian practitioner with my experience as a researcher, the main difference in approach lies in one fundamental assumption. As service provider, my main conviction was that people around me were in general lying. Or to perhaps put it better: I was genuinely convinced that they were overstating their miseries in order to receive more assistance (mixing structural issues with the effects of war is the common trap of humanitarianism). As researcher, I took the opposite stand and the more incredible a story was, the more likely I was inclined to give it credit. When I reflect on this 180-degree turn, the best argument I can think of is that – in my new position – people had much less reason to lie to me or exaggerate stories. After all, what I was offering them was no more than a listening ear and a vague opportunity to anonymously appear in a book. The diversity of stories I heard comforted me in this idea. Some of my respondents clearly presented themselves as fighters, some stated during the interview that they only occupied backstage positions. And while some initially introduced themselves as combatants, the rest of their story nuanced their position to a great degree. Interestingly, I was sometimes tipped by some respondents about their peers: that one had stayed behind, that one had gone to combat, that one told lies (recall here that I mainly drew from stories of recruits who were enrolled in a reinsertion project so they all knew each other, at least by sight). This was indeed an additional layer of information to weigh. But if there might be some kind of stake associated with being known for having fought in battle (perhaps the feeling of being more entitled than others to receive some form of compensation), individual deeds during war were not particularly overrated during interviews.

But there is still a main caveat when tapping into someone's memories. When relying on testimony that describes events that happened several years ago, respondents run the risk of mixing individual experiences with constructed or imagined narratives. In most cases this is quite unintentional. Yet it occurs rather frequently and the challenge for the analyst is to try to disenmesh the two. Another tricky point is to address the complexity of assessing the credibility of a story properly. Several studies have looked at the relationship between memory, narrative and credibility, especially drawing on refugee testimonies (Cohen, 2001, Hegel 2002, Kalin, 1986 cited in Lammers (2006) mainly arguing that incoherence and inconsistencies in someone's testimony are not necessarily proof of forgery. What I experienced in the field and what at first resembled inconsistent storytelling was in fact a genuine difficulty respondents experienced when asked to follow some kind of chronological thread. They were constantly navigating between different periods and themes and had tangible difficulties in projecting themselves in a particular moment during the war. It was a real challenge to follow that up in the right manner and probing was constantly needed to get a story straight.

Emotional shakes

I was told many things. Someone regretted he had had to kill prisoners, another confessed he had enjoyed torturing them, a very young female respondent ended up as sex slave of a local commander, and one will be scarred for life by all the beating up he underwent. Some testimonies speak for themselves:

> ‘It is only when I remember the fightings, the death, when I think about what I did that I start to feel remorse. Killing someone is not an easy thing. We could not kill the prisoners of war, but sometimes, when we had caught 4 or 5 people, we had no other choice. We could not guard them and stay behind, we needed to move on and continue to fight. So sometimes, our chief commanded us to go with them, he used to say “accompany them”. That meant we had to kill them. So if you’re not in a strong state, you cannot do it. When you look a man in the eyes, you cannot shoot him. Never. When I think about it (…) But since I was given an order, I had to. Afterwards, it takes hours to raise your spirits, to be strong enough. You’ll smoke a lot, you’ll drink a lot, until you fall to sleep. It’s not easy.’

Apart from being a good illustration of a reality that lies miles away from any of mine, this story is disturbing because one cannot avoid experiencing empathy, even for the cruelest acts. Perhaps placed in the same circumstances, I would have done the same things. These reflections led me to read about the ethics of war and peace, and specifically on what responsibilities are at stake when obeying orders. Is there some kind of inalienable moral duty that always prevails, regardless of context? And if so, what is permissible in times of war and what is absolutely not? If there are several approaches to these dilemmas (from Hungtington’s moral obligation to obey to Cramer’s moral objection argument),[11] I tend to be more comfortable with approaches that take the stance that in extreme circumstances, the direct perpetrators of violence – the ones who follow orders to kill – somehow enter into a process of ‘dehumanizing’ their enemy. The effect is to undermine their authority as moral agents and their sense of judgment (Dower, 2009).

Self-censorship

I did not approach all respondents the same manner and my data suffers from a conscious gender/age bias. I did not use video with female respondents, for instance, I did not even ask if they would bother. I was afraid to get dramatic confessions of violent sex scenes and I did not want to get that on tape. It seemed to be indecent to do so. Looking back on this self-censorship, I realize the precautions I took may have been unnecessary. With me as interviewer, women had no less agency than men in deciding what they wanted to tell and what they preferred to keep to themselves. I had no intention to push them. With children, curiously, I had fewer reservations. They were between 14 and 18 when I first met them, and as they had already been old enough to carry a Kalashnikov rifle, I assumed they would also be old enough to know how to handle me. I therefore took the stand that they were able to engage in complex moral reasoning from an early age, in line with other critical scholars' views who argue that in places where people are used to fending for themselves from a very young age, context and experience play a major role in influencing modes of action (Boyden, 2007; Hart, 2009; Rosen, 2005).

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[11] Huntington’s position is that as long as an order is lawful, soldiers have a moral obligation to obey. In his view, soldiers carry no moral responsibility for war crimes committed in response to a superior’s orders and the principles of obedience isolates the culpability for war crimes with those commanders who initiate such orders. Huntington’s argument is mainly based on the assumption that without complete and unquestioning obedience, military units will be unable to perform their functions. Cramer instead points out the *moral objection argument*, which designates a situation when an order received dictates an action that is morally wrong. In Cramer’s view, the duty to follow orders is not unlimited and actions that would be illegal or immoral for individuals to engage in normal times (such as acts of torture, mutilation or intentional harming of innocent) are not permissible for a person based on a ‘blanket of immunity’ (Cramer, 2006).

I would have liked to personally interview mid-level and high-ranking officers to get their inside view on the mode of functioning of their group. It would have brought quite a comprehensive level of detail. But, given the circumstances, I did not feel comfortable approaching them with such a topic. If I did not seek a lot of contact with local commanders, I nonetheless had the opportunity to meet some of them. During my stay in Guiglo, I interviewed a former militia leader who had converted himself into a development broker through a local NGO aiming at reintegrating 'deviant young men' into society. Our conversation was more focused on his current work than on the armed group he formerly led, yet it yielded interesting contextual information and helped put things into perspective. I also attended a workshop on social cohesion organized by two consultants commissioned by the European Union. The workshop had the advantage of providing a setting where key local actors were gathered in one place at the same time: the military *Préfets* of all the western departments under government control, the village chiefs, the *chefs de cantons*, the representatives of the non-autochthonous communities, various local representatives of several committees (the committee of the *allogenes*, the committee of the returnees, the committee of the displaced, at both regional and micro-local level). The *sous-Préfet* of Péhé was particularly open to discussion and we exchanged emails. In Man, discussions with high-ranking officers were couched in much more wooden language. With the *Com'Zone*, exchanges were primarily protocolar and I was particularly concerned to use neutral language, fearing – again, maybe too much – that I could jeopardize my research if the highest in command would become suspicious about my presence in the area. Talks about reinsertion prospects were out of place as releasing recruits on the rebel side was not an option at the time, and I found it inappropriate to discuss other affairs. When I had the opportunity to informally speak with a rebel sergeant in a local *maquis* – he was actually partly detached to serve as day guard in one of the centres used for reinsertion purposes – our conversation remained focused on his life story and on his current extra-military activities. He was mainly making his living by managing the real estate he had in Abidjan (rental stores and houses) and he also told me that he was getting a weekly incentive for his participation in the rebellion. We did not talk much about his military involvement as I did not have the impression he wanted to elaborate on it.

3

Some theoretical considerations

This section gives a brief overview of the theoretical debates related to post-conflict humanitarianism and violent processes of mobilization that are relevant to the scope of this study. In this work, the general approach for building theory is inductive and inspired by the grounded theory methodology developed by Strauss, with special emphasis on the continuous need to compare between phenomena and contexts to make the theory strong (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The main intention of having this distinct theoretical chapter is to give conceptual keys of interpretation to the reader and eventually, by looking at existing theories in the light of the western Ivoirian context, to help conceptually refine some of the phenomena already presented in the introduction. Since the main research question in this study is to understand the extent to which externally driven interventions targeting militarized civilians should be conceived as special processes compared to other social processes at play in the local environment, it is worth reflecting on several dimensions of the humanitarian apparatus: the risk of capture of humanitarian resources by one of the belligerents, the extent of entanglement in the local dynamics, and the question of power seen from the point of view of the intervention itself but also from the points of views of local actors using the intervention for their own ends. If there is existing theory on these themes, its main flaw is to be based on static situations where humanitarianism plays a central role in the immediate context, with tangible effects on the local system. In situations where post-conflict interventions play a more marginal role, varying over time (like the situation in western

Côte d'Ivoire), there is a blatant lack of conceptualization. Yet it remains interesting to examine the effects of interventions in such settings, notably to examine the extent to which they reproduce a patronage and clientelistic mode of functioning.

Post-conflict interventions are paradoxical in nature: they do not initially belong to the context in which they operate, and yet, as soon as they start operating, they become entangled with local social networks, and not necessarily in the way they would like to be. Capturing the extent of such entanglement in the contexts under study is a fundamental key for any informed analysis, as well as empirically assessing the extent of 'humanitarian legitimacy', and the genuine effects humanitarianism has in complex environments (especially as Ivoirian microcontexts are known to be extremely disparate from one location to another). As I was leading these reflections for interventions that specifically targeted ex-combatants, I could not be unreceptive to debates that regarded the extent of 'milicianization' of a given society. After all, an interesting peculiarity of the Ivoirian case is that the militarization of civilians has been relatively contained in time, space, and degree of violence (in comparison with neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone) despite the fact that rebel forces have been occupying half of the country for nearly a decade.[1] The second conceptual pillar therefore examines existing analytical distinctions from a critical perspective (civil war *vs.* socio-political outburst, militia member/rebel *vs.* local vigilante) and eventually proposes a comprehensive categorization of theories related to processes of violent mobilization that help to better grasp the concept of militarized youth.

The paradox of post-conflict interventions

'Apolitical' political actors

There is a global approach to post-conflict interventions. Peace-building processes and conflict prevention are largely based on the idea that positive change can be induced by targeted interventions, and it is expected that the propensity for recruits to resume fighting can be diminished if sound interventions are implemented step by step, according to some kind of checklist. Donors and humanitarian practitioners talk in terms of programme objectives, outcome indicators, accomplishments, number of beneficiaries, and a twelve-month re-intergration programme for ex-combatants[2] is genuinely considered enough to prevent recruits from getting re-enrolled. Perhaps the most obvious reason why a global approach to post-conflict interventions is inappropriate is that it largely overestimates the impact of external interventions, namely by ignoring the fact that they are always reshaped by contextual dynamics. Interventions take place in a social arena, they interact with different stakeholders, and as a consequence, they rarely go as planned; they are constantly being reshaped contingent on the changing balance of power at the local level (Long, 2001). If initial objectives are rarely met, there is nothing wrong about it. I remember humanitarian staff working on reinsertion projects for ex-combatants being deeply annoyed by the fact that some 'beneficiaries' were not performing the way they were supposed to and were 'diverting' from the project objectives. Lack of assiduousness and disposal of project equipment in other ways than planned were in general judged severely and often interpreted as deviant behaviour. One can only regret that understanding the reasons for such changes of behaviour does not have a place on practitioners' agendas. Pouligny is rather provocative when she writes that 'most outsiders falsely believe that the date of their arrival is zero for the country, as if nothing had happened before them' (Pouligny, 2004a). Yet she points to the right paradox: there can be no attempt to rebuild a society without pairing the peace-building process with an in-depth examination of the existing resources. Local means are usually in place long before external interventions, and by being deeply rooted in the social and cultural context, they are usually naturally accessed by the local population when needed (Pouligny notably mentions the positive effects of some of the actions undertaken by traditional healers on former Mozambican and Sierra Leonean child soldiers after their return to their respective communities). In this particular study, this point is perhaps best exemplified by the extensive recourse to extra-humanitarian activities in the search to secure basic income. The fact that some of the reinserted recruits under study engaged in private activities in Guiglo and Man in parallel to their participation in a humanitarian project, and that some even preferred to skip participation because they were committed elsewhere, reveals the relatively low importance of interventions from the points of view of the youths themselves, compared to other opportunities arising from the contextual dynamic. Humanitarianism has only been a extra in western Côte d'Ivoire and there is no need to overestimate its effects: on the counter-insurgent side, humanitarian support for militarized civilians only materialized two or three years after the militia elements had left their respective armed groups – thus right after their effective demobilization, former recruits were mainly tapping into local resources. Such a phenomenon certainly opens up the debate whether an indigenous process of peacebuilding is conceivable in western Côte d'Ivoire, given the context we know. I come back to that point below, when reflecting on non-interventionism.

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[1] This observation continues to hold in the light of the recent events.

[2] Donors and practitioners generally use the term 'ex-combatant' in their writings. The term 'militarized civilian', with the implication we saw in terms of blurred borders between the military and the civilian spheres, has not yet entered their discourse.

The humanitarianism-legitimacy nexus

But there is another reason why a global approach to post-conflict interventions is inappropriate. It namely sets too ambitious goals, and notably a goal of state (re)building which is highly unlikely to be compelled by outsiders (Jozan & Ray, 2009). As Duyvesteyn (2009) points out, key to the process of state consolidation is the forging of a bargain between rulers and constituents. But when humanitarianism enters the scene, by the mere fact that external interventions inject additional resources and usually fulfil a role in basic service provision, there is the risk that an overdose of interventions undermines that very bargain between rulers and constituents, making internal agencies competitors of the State, or, in contexts outside state control, competitors of the armed group that plays the role of local sovereign. This argument of linking the injection of humanitarian resources to local legitimacy (which, pushed to the extreme, may lead international agencies to compete with the local rulers) finds most resonance in contexts where humanitarianism is at the core of social change. For other situations, and for the Ivoirian case in particular, it is worth reflecting on what happened, since the local environment was hardly disrupted by the process of intervention. I indirectly and empirically address this point in Chapters 8 and 9, when reflecting on the blurring of spaces between the humanitarian, military and civilian arenas and when examining the process of intervention itself.

Beyond this question of ‘humanitarian’ legitimacy, there is the need to clarify the concept itself in light of the contexts under study. After all, the northern half of Côte d’Ivoire was not controlled by the State between 2002 and 2007 (the research period), and this calls for a closer look at the links between legitimacy and local territorial sovereignty. If we adopt a classical view, state-building requires the construction of the monopoly of force in a particular territory and the establishment of legitimacy of that monopoly; the core challenge here is to find ways to legitimate the rule (Weber, 1997). The recipe that was developed in the 1990s for rebuilding failed states – a recipe vehemently criticized by Duyvesteyn and others – focused on creating strong institutions through democratic elections, the basic assumption being that this would be sufficient to generate a legitimate rule. However, legitimacy does not always follow from institutions like the liberal view suggests, it mostly follows from order, and as Duyvesteyn put it, it does not really matter who is responsible for it. Big men, warlords and rebel leaders can be particularly successful in creating some sort of social order in unstable contexts. They are therefore likely to be entrusted with some sort of legitimacy at the local level and even beyond. In this study, this trait was particularly relevant for the Guiglo site, a location where warlords literally emerged from and reconverted into local politicians. Post-conflict interventions found therefore themselves there in a quite awkward position: on the one hand, having to find some kind of working grounds with the local guarantors of social order (the former warlords); on the other hand, trying to promote a certain type of social contract, not necessarily in line with the local norms.

If one explores a specific post-conflict setting mainly shaped by external interventions, it could be argued on many aspects that it is an artificial construction and that what tends to be reproduced is the pre-war situation (I already alluded to that in the introduction). The problem with that perspective is that it tends to overestimate the regulating role of the pre-war structures. As Englebert and Tull wrote: 'Today's state-building practice favours the use of terminology of recreating the state as it existed before the conflict. But terms such as "rebuilding", "resuscitating", and "reestablishing" are misleading in so far as they imply the prior existence of effective public institutions waiting to reemerge' (Englebert and Tull cited in Duyvesteyn, 2009). Indeed, in many situations, well-functioning institutional pre-war structures simply never existed, or at least, they never functioned in the sense generally implied. Patrimonialism[3] is still the established political mode in most developing states (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa), and almost everyone is used to be involved in some kind of patron-client relationship (civil servants being no exception). 'Rebuilding' and 'reestablishing' pre-war structures therefore make little sense in such conditions. Why should one long for that if all it means in the end is recreating a system that favors patronage and clientelism under the guise of a democratic façade? Despite this criticism, the 'rebuilding' and 'reconstruction' paradigm continues to be widely used in practice, raising a certain number of concerns about the genuine driving force of these post-conflict interventions.

In situations when humanitarianism does not play a central role and when it is conceived at the local level as an 'extra' social opportunity coming on top of other social opportunities (of a more private or public nature), it remains interesting to examine the extent to which interventions in such settings reproduce a patronage and clientelistic mode of functioning. After all, whether interventions play a central role in a local context or a more modest one, the overall discourse remains the same: 'rebuilding' and 're-establishing' pre-war structures is still the aim. But because existing studies tend to overrate the place of post-conflict interventions in the local dynamics, there is a lack of conceptualization for interventions that acknowledgeably play a modest role in their immediate contexts. This work is a first-hand attempt to shed some light on that aspect.

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[3] Tellis-Nayak (1983) gives a particularly accurate definition of the patron-client bond as being 'an asymmetrical, voluntary, and instrumental friendship in which non-comparable goods and services are exchanged for mutual benefit'.

Main debates on humanitarianism

In politically unstable contexts, there is much ground to question the 'apolitical' nature of humanitarian deeds. Weinstein warns about 'the rebel bias', observing that external input in interventions makes rebel victories 'substantially less likely' because they favour 'negotiated settlements' over 'military victories' (Weinstein, 2005). There is indeed an international disposition to obstruct rebel victories, and although this is an obvious sign of partiality, it is rarely presented as cause for concern. Duyvesteyn goes one step further and argues that the current focus on democratization, negotiation, compromise and increased aid as conflict resolution mechanism has the adverse effect of jeopardizing viable state-building because it bypasses important indigenous state-building mechanisms and neglects the fact that states in turmoil have the ability to recover themselves (Duyvesteyn, 2009). Others have also acknowledged the benefits of such autonomous recovery, even if it means the continuation of war for some time: 'War-making is a process that can provide strong incentives for competing groups to secure the consent of the governed, overcome sectarian tendencies in favor of more national identities, and develop the administrative capacity required to deliver public good to their constituents' (Weinstein, 2005). The main argument here is based on the assumption that indigenous state-building mechanisms are the only form of state-building that combine domestic sources of legitimacy with realistic views on domestic capacities.[4]

If a certain line of thought is strongly in favour of a non-interventionist approach, there is the need to reflect on the nature of humanitarianism and on the debates humanitarianism generates. Not because non-interventionism is marginal. A few scholars in fact remind us that the principle of non-intervention actually applies in many situations (in Algeria, Colombia, Chechnya for instance) and that sometimes, interventionism can play a very marginal role (Bradol, 2003, 2004). But where planned interventions take place, there is the need to reflect on the real place they take in their local environments, since in war-affected contexts humanitarianism does not always act as a central driving force.

Interestingly, there is no single perspective on the driving principles of humanitarianism. If many restrict its mandate to emergency relief for victims of war and survivors of natural disasters, some go beyond that, 'just because lives are no longer at immediate risk does not mean that suffering has ended' (Barnett

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[4] A disturbing trend nowadays is only to tap into 'indigenous capacity' when having to legitimize an external intervention, and several authors recognize this (Weissman, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b). The role of local actors becomes limited to the role of sub-contractants, with some capacity at best, none at worst. If they manage to create the right legal and administrative structures, they might succeed in entering a system where international aid agencies delegate operational tasks to them under discourses of 'capacity-building', 'sustainability', 'recognition of indigenous knowledge'.

& Weiss, 2008). The main ideals behind the concept include neutrality (as defined by a rule of behaviour that demands that external interventions refrain from taking any side) and humanity (a precept that commands attention to everyone and that does not prioritize or sacrifice some to the detriment or benefit of others). But even that latter point is not exempt of fierce debate within the practitioner community, between those advocating interventions in certain zones, regardless of the consequences, and those preferring to stay out when it is too difficult to untangle the political, military and humanitarian aspects. Aid can be very selective and it is important to reflect on the grounds on which such selection is made. If there is no single perspective on its driving principles, there are also several approaches when placing it into context. One is to place humanitarianism at the core and to assume that post-war contexts are mainly shaped by ‘apolitical’ interventions that promote peace and reconciliation in war-torn societies. Another approach is to place humanitarianism at the side, and to consider it, from the points of view of actors, to be a social opportunity among other social opportunities. The second approach is the most relevant for our context.

- The risk of capture

In their analyses of humanitarian action, Barnett and Weiss highlight two contradictory trends that developed in the past two decades: a first one indicating the growing willingness and ability of outsiders to help those at risk using discourses diffusing ideas on ‘the responsibility to protect’, and a second one reflecting on the various issues that contemporary complex emergencies pose for humanitarianism (the assumed ‘neutrality’ and ‘apolitical’ nature of aid being increasingly called into question). There is indeed plenty of evidence of projects being manipulated, at least partially, to serve non-humanitarian agendas. In contexts where humanitarianism has become so intertwined with the local politics, there might be no other option than to have to choose sides, challenging thereby the neutrality/impartiality window of planned interventions and blurring the traditional analytical boundaries between the ‘humanitarian’, the ‘civilian’ and the ‘military’ spheres (Pouligny, 2003, 2004a; Weissman, 2003a, 2004a). There are many examples in recent history. In Angola, for instance, at the end of the 1990s, aid was clearly manipulated by Luanda. The UN refused to jeopardize their already shaky position and deliberately chose not to start any assistance programme in the UNITA-controlled areas (Messiant, 2003, 2004). In Sudan, belligerent parties developed a real savoir-faire in capturing and controlling humanitarian resources, to the point of making them play a significant role in the political economy of conflict (Lavergne & Weissman, 2003, 2004). When aid takes sides, it might be unintentionally at first but it usually quickly evolves into an informed act. In addition, external interventions are rarely seen as neutral by the local populations, and in many contexts humanitarianism finds itself subject and object of diplomatic games in which humanitarian parameters are far from being the most determinants. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, there is ground to argue that the way post-conflict aid was conditioned eventually served political ends, especially in 2007-2008 as more and more donors started linking the continuation of their financial support to political progress and Ivoirian presidential elections being held.[5]

- The extent of entanglement

But if Angola and Sudan were clear examples of situations where humanitarian resources were captured by a belligerent, other contexts remind us in fact that, instead of capture, what happens foremost at the microlevel is the enmeshment of postconflict interventions in the local dynamics (and many times, not necessarily in the way wanted or anticipated). External interventions inevitably end up liaising with local actors in order to be able to operate, and key local actors often assume many roles in the community. It is in fact rather common to have a situation where warlords are also respected traditional chiefs, with a foot in the local politics and a certain influence on their environment through their range of 'development' brokerage actions. Because the mere fact of delivering aid supposes some form of negotiation, recognition and legitimization, planned interventions have no other option than to become entangled with local social networks upon which they have little control, and these networks can include groups or individuals known to have a direct or indirect link with the belligerents. If the humanitarian context in western Côte d'Ivoire did not manage to escape this situation (I'll develop this more when reflecting on the question of power), one cannot really speak of a sophisticated system of capture, and humanitarianism is far from having played a central role in the political war economies of Man and Guiglo.

An important aspect that Pouligny brings to the fore with regard to entanglement is the ambiguity of most assistance programmes that claim to help rebuild a war-torn society but that 'drain' all of its political substance, reducing the process to mere technicalities. She writes:

> 'The "peace" that we pretend to rebuild might as well be an empty project. We may help rebuild economic and socio-political infrastructures and institutions but they are no more than "empty boxes", because we have given little consideration to the conceptual roots of social and political life (…). Reconstruction efforts have to see with changing identities and group boundaries, the difficulties of communicating across boundaries, justice and "reconciliation" the distribution of property, land and wealth, the writing of history, the rebuilding

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[5] France and Japan for instance suspended their support to education using such argument (personal interview with the ERNWACA representative).

> of trust and the capacity for new political systems. Yet behind these lies a host of cultural meanings which are usually unremarked and unanalyzed.' (Pouligny, 2004a)

It is indeed a fundamental mistake to downplay the embeddedness of external interventions in the local politics and the mere fact that the people with whom these interventions are dealing are not apolitical subjects should actually be self-explanatory. At the local level, it is partly people's behaviour that sets the stage for action or inaction. One should therefore carefully reflect on their perceptions of what happened during tense periods (who is to blame, what vengeance is due, to which side do they feel the closest, is there any point in rebuilding at all, …) and a good understanding of these views should be the basis of any intervention. Pouligny yet regrets that this dimension is given too little attention in comparison with the exaggerated current focus on technicalities (I tend to share her line of thought) and is not the only one to warn about the inappropriateness of promoting a too technical approach. Agier & Bouchet-Saulnier (2003), for instance, pinpointed a worrying shift that has occurred in recent years. On the one hand, they describe the 1990s as a decade in which unprecedented efforts were made to provide material assistance to people in need (mainly focusing on refugee contexts), but on the other hand, they also depict the same period as an era of 'apparent effervescence' and as a decade mostly known for having clearly marked the deterioration of individual legal rights.[6] They write:

> 'Behind the apparent effervescence, the question of legal protection has truly regressed. From the closing of borders to forced repatriation, endangered populations found themselves trapped in conflicts, transformed in human shields, in baits for international aid, in mere objects deprived of rights and subject to all kinds of violence and arbitrariness. The disappearance of all sort of legal protection for these people has increased their physical vulnerability (…).' (Agier & Bouchet-Saulnier, 2003)

What is central in this argument for the scope of this study is the recognition that under cover of generosity, pragmatism, emergency, and proximity with the people in need, an overdose of interventions may run the risk of drying up important social mechanisms that already exist at the local level (namely, social interactions that regulate responsibilities, rights and reciprocal obligations and that generally arrange social life on a much more stable basis than imported solutions). Agier and Bouchet-Saulnier strongly advocate resisting the current trend that conceives humanitarian spaces as 'spaces of exception', where generosity and pragmatism override people's responsibilities and rights (Agier & Bouchet-Saulnier, 2003). The risk, they warn, is that generous aims can be distorted to the point of depriving war-affected populations of the little agency they have left. What is to be encouraged instead is a constructive confrontation, which does not annihilate people in need as thinking subjects. If their warnings make perfect sense in situations when humanitarianism plays a central role in its immediate environment, it is interesting to examine the same stand from the perspective of contexts and societies where interventions play a more marginal role, especially in this Ivoirian case, where the militarized youths who have been locally recruited and locally demobilized have actually always stayed in contact with their pre-war social groups.

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[6] Agier & Bouchet-Saulnier notably argue that the deterioration of their legal protection is partly linked to the confusion between the notion of 'protection' (which has legal implications) and the notion of 'physical security' (which is not legislated in international law). This confusion is sustained by the ambiguity of UN peace missions, and particularly those under Chapter Seven of the United Nations Charter, which foresees military interventions to provide physical security to the local populations, provided a range of conditions (Agier & Bouchet-Saulnier, 2003).

- The question of power

The question of power has to be seen from the point of view of the intervention itself but also from the points of view of the local actors who use the intervention for their own ends. If humanitarianism is frequently presented as being devoid of power, power is nonetheless an inherent feature of it. Humanitarian organizations mainly rests on two types of authority (Barnett & Weiss, 2008): an 'expert authority', that gives them credibility because of their assumed specialized training, knowledge or experience, and a 'moral authority', that gives them trustworthiness based on the assumption that they speak and act on behalf of the most destitute populations. Since humanitarian actors frequently operate from a position of dominance vis-à-vis the populations they are interacting with (to the point of seeking partial control of individual behaviour), there is ground to dispute the base of their authority (which can be understood in this context as the ability of one actor to use institutional and discursive resources to induce deference from others). Do 'beneficiaries' actually confer humanitarian intervenetions an authority or is it an authority that is externally bestowed?

Much of the existing literature emphasizes the external endowment aspect. Firstly, because of their social position and symbolic standing, humanitarian agencies are among the few that have the social capacity to designate a situation as an emergency and to determine therefore which countries, groups and individuals receive attention and which do not. Secondly, by pointing out the current trend that seeks justification for limitless interventions, there is a tendency to suggest that humanitarian agencies cannot be circumvented: 'No longer content with treating symptoms, aid organizations are now tackling the "root causes" of disease, conflict, and poverty. Toward that end, they have attempted to intervene in a nearly limitless set of social problems that demand to be catalogued, controlled, and solved' (Barnett & Weiss, 2008).

In comparison, there is little scholarly production that focuses on the authority conferred from below and when such a perspective is discussed, it is usually to highlight the ways in which humanitarianism is manipulated by the local elites and by current or former warlords (Hammond, 2008; Lavergne & Weissman, 2003, 2004; Rubenstein, 2008). If it is to some extent true in our case that humanitarian interventions targeting ex-combatants have de facto inherited existing patron-client relationships over which they had little control (militia and rebel leaders had after all much more say in selecting the recruits to include in the reinsertion projects than humanitarian staff), it would be worth examining the extent of manipulation of the clients themselves, regardless of the patron-client relationship. This study will examine this gap, as well as those mentioned above, by reflecting on the nature and effects of a humanitarianism which took a rather side role in two distinct war-affected environments. By placing much emphasis on the viewpoints and actions of 'reinserted' recruits, it will ultimately examine the extent to which 'reinserted' recruits (understood as recruits who have benefited from some kind of reintegration assistance) are different from 'non-reinserted' ones in contexts where interventionism is marginal. What role have external interventions really played in such complex processes and how did they become entangled with their respective contexts? To what extent should externally driven interventions targeting militarized civilians be conceived as special processes compared to other social processes at play in the local environment, and what are the conditions that make humanitarianism a good (or poorer) opportunity in comparison with other types of social action? These are the core questions I attempt to answer in this work. Recourse to internationally driven projects is far from being the ideal way to alleviate suffering. Yet it is a widely promoted solution and it is usually tolerated by parties in conflict. If one should not long for it, in many instances there is no way to avoid it. The challenge therefore is to find satisfactory ways to put external interventions into perspective, especially these days, when general enthusiasm for humanitarian values is turning into general scepticism.

Some theoretical reflections on war and mobilization processes

This particular section examines a neglected point in war theories, which unfortunately is too seldom brought to the fore, despite its empirical adequateness with the concept of militarized civilians. It namely reflects on the boundaries of civil war and socio-political outbursts, and on the relevance of continuing to make an analytical distinction between non-State armed groups and local vigilantes in situations where the borders have become blurred between the two. This last point is particularly relevant to make in our case for the government-controlled area, since during the period under study, most low-ranking militia elements in fact navigated between different positions according to the conflict phase and their individual skills: from local vigilante in the very beginning, to fighter or logistician in advanced bases in the stage that followed, to more backstage positions later on, and eventually back to rural vigilantism. This observation is developed further in Chapter 8, where I give several examples of such multitasking. Reflecting on the boundaries of civil war and socio-political outbursts is also particularly relevant for the scope of this study given the extent of diffusion of violence in western Côte d'Ivoire: in certain areas, violence has come to permeate every layer of society and this strikingly comes out of the chronology of violent events for the western context (Chapter 5). One could therefore wonder if, in these types of 'no war, no peace' situations, it is possible to clearly continue distinguishing between acts of war and mere socio-political outbursts. Perhaps is it only a question of terminology? I reflect in any case on these questions below, ending the section by proposing a comprehensive categorization of theories related to violent mobilization processes. This framework will be used in the following chapters when reflecting on the respondents' pre-war profiles and motives.

As already noted, there is something peculiar about the Ivoirian case if we compare it to other African conflicts. Despite the split of the country in 2002 and the persistence of a rebel-controlled area in the northern half of the country, the professionalization of violence has been relatively contained in Côte d'Ivoire in terms of time, space, and degree of violence. However, a worrying development nonetheless took place within the Ivoirian society and at the local level, the war has become the occasion to legitimate extensive use of minimal forms of violence, which have become extremely difficult to put to a halt. In the government-controlled areas, traditional forms of urban/rural vigilance have evolved into more sophisticated structures (better armed and usually linked to one of the main belligerent parties), and the visible proliferation of self-defence groups has reconfigured many spaces, to the point of entirely changing local balances of power in certain areas. The situation in the *Zone de Confiance*[7] was particularly illustrative of such power shifts, and I'll come back to this point more specifically when presenting the immediate context. But why were the Ivoirian militarized youths not as keen as elsewhere on pursuing opportunistic careers in parastate armed groups? Or to probably put it better: why were local warlords not interested in continuing to push these youths into an armed movement? If some analysts describe Côte d'Ivoire as having engaged in a process of '"milicianization" of society, privatization of violence and militarization of the youth by the government in place' (Banégas, 2008), there is a need to confront these claims with empirical evidence and to be particularly careful when drawing conclusions. If to some extent, one could argue that such claims held true for a certain fringe of the youth (namely, for the Young Patriots,[8] a political movement particularly active in Abidjan and in the main urban hubs, composed of a diversity of individuals ranging from simple demonstrators to violent thugs), there is ground to question the relevance of such statements for the suppletive recruits hired close to the combat zones.

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[7] A *Zone de Confiance* (Zone of Confidence) was created in May 2003 to separate rebel-held from government-held territory and designated a neutral area, free of belligerence, where no weapons were allowed and which was monitored by impartial forces (French forces and ECOWA troops at first, then ONUCI contingents). It was disbanded in April 2007. In the four years of its existence, the *Zone de Confiance* proved to be a complete misnomer, as it designated an area of widespread banditism and unpunished crimes.

Civil war or socio-political outburst?

In countries experiencing a situation of 'no war, no peace', there is a time when non-State armed groups usually start giving up their purely military tasks (attack/defence) to fulfil a function of local guardian with the aim of ensuring some kind of social order in the places under their control. Translated into practice, this means that once the period of combat has passed, many of these groups do not do more in fact than what local vigilantes do, i.e. protect the direct environment of a village, a town or a neighbourhood, at least from a military perspective.[9] The existence and persistence of such phenomena raises a number of issues. Firstly, and returning to the previous question, it points to the diversity of players in matters of local security, even if it is likely that some groups emerged during the war and that others were empowered by the internal conflict. In western Côte d'Ivoire, armed mobilization took several forms and borrowed elements from both 'traditional' and 'modern' institutions. On the insurgent side, it revived the long-standing semi-secret hunters' association known as 'dozo' (Hagberg & Ouattara, 2010); on the counter-insurgent side, it was mainly grounded on community ways of policing and on the paramilitary structure derived from these (eventually becoming enmeshed with the national army).[10] These 'self-defence' groups – this term is the most common one used to describe such movements – certainly resembled the most paramilitary structures at the peak of the counter-insurgency, and when the period of combat operations passed, they gradually gave up their purely military tasks. But it remains interesting to explore what remains of this local security apparatus in more peaceful times, by examining the extent to which these armed groups are (or not) partially reactivated to fulfil a function of local guardian more in line with traditional forms of urban/rural vigilantism.

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[8] It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the phenomenon of the Young Patriots in depth. For more information, I refer to the works of Banégas, Arnaut and Koné.

[9] A socio-anthropological focus would have brought more to the fore the embeddedness of local vigilantes with their political environments. See for instance the work of *Chauveau et al.* (2011) based on other Ivoirian contexts.

[10] Detailed contextual information is given in Chapter 5, when describing the immediate context.

A second issue that such phenomena raise is that it has become very complex at the local level to distinguish between component features of civil wars and mere manifestations of social and political violence. To paraphrase Cramer (2006: 50): ‘When and on what grounds is an event defined as a war? How clear is the difference between a civil war and a political or a social outburst? And when is war not a war?’ If categorization is a necessary feature of the social sciences (without it, the social processes that scholars try to describe would simply be too diverse and complex to be understandable), one should not forget that analytical frames are socially constructed and can therefore be changed. After all the first function of classifying and defining boundaries is to help identify patterns in the data, the boundaries can be refined. Any analytical attempt to define civil wars (by looking at the number of battle deaths, by recognizing an active armed opposition to the State, if the State is one of the main belligerents)[11] could therefore easily be challenged since the chosen criteria generally mask important diversities of features. In fact, a main characteristic of many modern wars is that they do not have clear-cut beginnings and ends and that the modes and causes of contemporary warfare often resemble communal violence and socio-political outbursts. Reflecting on that, Cramer argues that the important point is not to advocate a rigid distinction between civil wars; firstly, because there is a great diversity within the category of civil wars itself, and secondly, because there are forms of political outburst that sometimes share more characteristics with certain civil wars than other social phenomena classified in the ‘civil war’ category (Cramer, 2006:74). In line with other scholars (Debos, 2010; Duyvesteyn, 2005; Guichaoua, 2010; Richards, 2005a, 2005b), Cramer conceptualizes reality as a spectrum of violence with overlapping brutal events. He views the concepts of ‘war’ and ‘peace’ as a continuum rather than as two distinct phases, and to him, the question is not so much to identify when, how and why a civil war turns into a socio-political outburst (the question actually loses its relevance when one stops reasoning in phases), but rather when, how and why certain forms of violence emerge, increase, decrease, persist and disappear at certain periods of time and in specific settings. I tend to agree with his line of thought, which eventually renders the term 'civil war' obsolete.

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[11] Sambanis (2004), for instance, came up with nine criteria: 1) the war must take place within the territory of an internationally recognized state with a population of more than 500,000; 2) the parties to the conflict must be politically and militarily organized with identifiable leadership and publicly stated objectives; 3) the government must be a principal combatant; 4) the main rebel groups must be locally represented and composed of local recruits (though there may be international involvement in the war); 5) the war is deemed to begin in the first year that the conflict causes 500-1,000 deaths and the war is only classed as a war if cumulative deaths over the next two years exceed 1,000; 6) the civil war must involve sustained violence, with no single year having fewer than twenty-five deaths and no three-year period having less than 500 conflict-related deaths; 7) the weaker party must be able at all times to inflict at least 100 deaths on the stronger party; 8) the war ends if it is interrupted by a peace treaty, cease-fire or decisive military outcome producing two years or more of peace; and 9) if new parties enter the war, fighting over new issues, a new war is then begun.

Mobilization processes

Violent movements take multiple forms and vary widely across contexts in terms of size, composition, ways of functioning, strategy and their degree of connection to the State. They include insurgent and counter-insurgent groups, but also angry mobs, groups of thieves, and 'self-defence' movements. In terms of size, they range from tiny groups that encompass a dozen militants to mass organizations comprising thousands of recruits drawn into the war by compulsory conscription, coercion, or on a voluntary base. In Côte d'Ivoire, youth engagement took many forms across the country and there was a great disparity by regions, departments, and even neighbouring villages or towns. Some recruits wore many hats at the same time, and some navigated much more easily than others between their different affiliations. The simplest questions were not easy to answer during fieldwork: Who is a rebel/militia element? Who is a simple '*barragiste*' (the local term for 'vigilante')? The confusion also reached its peak when some of the interviewed youths claimed affiliation to one category while they were generally classified in another. For instance, someone known to have done (only) vigilante work in the surroundings of his village could be referred to as a pro-government militia, and two people who fulfilled the same exact function during the war could be 'rewarded' very differently (I for instance met two siblings in that situation in the village of Zouan, near Guiglo. The sister was officially 'listed' as paramilitary recruit and had received substantial payment, while her brother did not get anything.).

The literature is particularly prolific when it comes to conceptualizing mobilization processes, and much has been written on the propensity of youth to join violent movements. Theories can be roughly divided into four stands, none of which being mutually exclusive, with some theories being given much more credit than others. There are indeed several ways to classify the existing theories but the categorization below is based on my own reflection. A first trend is based on an assumption of causality that implies that adverse structural conditions largely explain engagement with contentious politics.[12] A second trend stresses the importance of 'cultural-based' elements. A (timid) third trend focuses on political geography, and a fourth trend tries to bring to the fore the influence of individual emotions in explaining protest behaviour. I develop their main features below. Many of these approaches overlap, but they place different emphasis on what should be central in the research approach. I come back to this categorization in my conclusions, where I discuss it from a more epistemological perspective, but here I present the main features of each theory trend.

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[12] Beyond youth studies, this is in line with a broader trend that attempt to assert one – more or less – exclusive causal factor that explains contemporary wars.

- Theories that emphasize a relation of causality

In a certain stream of literature, youths have been portrayed as a serious threat to the existing social order and those living in developing countries have been particularly pointed out since they represent the largest segment of the population.[13] Those living in Sub-Saharan Africa have been stigmatized even further since the whole continent has gained a reputation of backwardness and state collapse, with scholars pointing out 'spectacular experiences of social orders disintegrating' (Kaarsholm, 2006: 1). The leading argument in these theories is based on the assumption that youths are increasingly being pushed to the margins of society. Regardless of the definition one adopts, 'youths' are believed to display very different characteristics than 'non-youths' and some ideas are firmly anchored in the popular sociology: youths would be more prone to engage in social unrest because they are expected to take up any opportunity thought to be likely to relieve them of their perceived condition of outcast (even if only for a short while). This conceptualization of youth as outcast is worth a closer look, as it points to an important shift in youth studies. From a problematic centred on the renewal of generations, Chauveau (Chauveau, 2005a, 2005b) rightly noted that the problematic has switched in recent decades to one centred on presenting the youth as an apart category. One explanation for this conceptual change is rooted in history and in the in-depth structural adjustments that occurred in African countries in the 1980s under international pressure. It is well documented that young people were particularly vulnerable to these changes by being among the first to be affected in terms of access to employment and access to studies. Linking joblessness to the propensity to join groups of contestation is therefore a step that many analysts took. But not before long, 'idleness' replaced 'joblessness' in the causal equation, conveying a notion of inherent laziness. Youths have been dichotomized in the literature, alternatively presented as 'vanguards' or 'vandals', as 'makers' or 'breakers', as if there could be no overlap between the two concepts and as if the definition of these terms was not arbitrary. One view has emphasized their potential to be agents of positive change; the other has conceptualized them as a social problem for society. Several scholars have nevertheless warned against such oversimplification, and have seriously questioned the relevance of suggesting a causal link between the fact of being young and the fact of being more prone to violence (Abbink, 2005; Abbink & Van Kessel, 2005; Honwana & De Boeck, 2005a, 2005b).

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[13] One reason why youths have been set as an apart category is numeric. About half of the population is under 25 in Sub-Saharan Africa, which has led some analysts to argue that the demographic pressure is real and that one of the major stakes is to find a satisfactory way to use the bulk of this active force in a positive way.

Another influential argument in explaining youth's engagement in violent processes is the argument of 'blocked social mobility' (Abbink, 2005: 16). It is linked to the preceding argument in the sense that it also assumes a causal link between the fact of being young and a certain propensity to join violent groups, but the reason explaining the link is different. It is not so much because they are 'idle' that youths are likely to end up in groups of contestation. They rather join in when they become aware that their room to manoeuvre has been consciously limited by the older generation AND when they judge the context opportune for certain adjustments to take place. 'Through looting and violence, the rebellious young generation consciously "takes back" what they consider was monopolized by the older generation' (ibid). Teinting the rationale for engaging in social action with identity concerns is in line with the current trend in social movement theories that emphasize political struggles over material ones.[14] This line of reasoning is particularly significant in Africa, as African economies have a very low capacity to absorb their educated youth – there is a structural overproduction of graduates and inherent frustration over the lack of social and economic opportunities. Several scholars have based their argument along the same line, postulating that, in the past, youths had quite limited room for manoeuvre, very restricted powers of decision and were confined in making their claims heard. In contrast, today, youths are believed to have more means at their disposal to express their claims – increasing their participation in the local politics or resorting to violence being some of their options (Abbink, 2005; Abdullah, 1999, 2005; Bierschenk & Olivier De Sardan, 1998; Chauveau & Bobo, 2003; Peters & Richards, 1998; Richards, 1996). But if there are some examples that show that resorting to violence is one response to a situation of stagnation and a lack of future prospects (Abbink notably mentions the leftist urban revolt of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party in the 1970s), it should not be taken as the norm. After all, the precise dynamics of processes of mobilization remain empirically grounded, vary widely across contexts, and there are many cases where structural lacks of opportunities do not necessarily translate into political insurgencies.

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[14] Ellis & Van Kessel (2009: 3) rightly point out though that concerns over material issues remain as relevant to these struggles as they were to earlier social movements.

The 'blocked social mobility' argument finds much resonance in theories that rest on explaining forms of mobilization through grievance motives (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1996, 1999). While it has been scientifically proven on several occasions that rebellions are unlikely to be solely grievance based (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000),[15] it is important to understand the central concepts behind grievance-based theories of conflict to be able to fully capture the complexity of violent processes of mobilization. The notions of 'relative deprivation' and 'horizontal inequalities' between groups with different characteristics stand at the core of such a line of thought, with 'relative deprivation' defined as the discrepancy between what people think they deserve and what they actually believe they can get (in other words, the gap between people's aspirations and achievements) and 'horizontal inequalities' defined as 'inequalities between culturally defined groups'[16] (Stewart, 2008: 7). The most commonly used example of relative deprivation is the case of educated young men who cannot find decent employment and who eventually join violent mobs in frustration (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Gurr, 1970; Murshed & Tadjoeddin, 2007). Grievance-based theories of conflict therefore stress socio-economic inequalities hence poverty as a prelude to war. As Cramer pragmatically put it: 'Where the poor have little alternative, there is little to be lost in fighting' (Cramer, 2006: 75).[17] Relative deprivation and horizontal inequalities are in fact thought to be important vectors of conflict in contemporary wars.

- Theories that emphasize the 'culture of violence' aspect

Another influential argument in explaining youth's engagement in violent processes is the argument of the 'cultures of violence', which can potentially explain why the militarization of civilians in certain countries is more contained in time, space, and degree of violence than in others. For instance, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana,

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[15] Collier & Hoeffler (2000) compare them to social movements that emerge in response to socio-political resentment. They are fuelled by 'inter-ethnic/inter-religious hatred', 'political exclusion', and/or 'revenge', but cannot subsist without predation, or they would lack the solid financial base to be able to sustain themselves. A lot has been written on greed versus grievance-based theories of conflict. Collier's provocative findings that neither social fractionalization by ethnicity/religion nor inequality of income/assets increased the probability of civil war came under much criticism, especially in non-economist spheres. However his focus on 'how to financially sustain a rebellion' had the merit to emphasize money as the very heart of war. In later works, Collier refines his analysis and argues against a solely greed-based interpretation of rebellion (Collier *et al.*, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004): 'Loot is not usually the root motivation for conflict but may become critical to its perpetuation, giving rise to the conflict trap' (Collier *et al.,* 2003: 71). Predation remains central in his perspective though, and is object of fierce debate between scholars who view it as the outcome of warfare, and others who view it as the cause.

[16] In such perspective, group boundaries have to be clearly defined (for instance young *vs*. old, or autochthones *vs*. foreign).

[17] Yet, Cramer is a fervent critic of theories solely based on grievance rationales.

Tanzania, and Botswana have experienced a conflict of much lesser intensity than Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and even within a country itself, if we could argue the example of Côte d'Ivoire, we could argue that the southeast region was much less affected by the war than the western districts. As Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans (2009: 38-39) put it:

> 'Africa is the continent in which to observe contextualized contestation (…). Countries vary in terms of the circumstances they create for contentious politics. The political opportunity structures, the openness of the political system for challengers, the access points available for people to defend their interests and express their opinions and the temporal political configuration, have all been identified as determinants of the incidence and type of protest.'

The advantage of adopting this perspective is that it clearly shows that the mere combination of lack of opportunities, demographic generational imbalance and socio-political tensions is not enough to explain extreme forms of violence in Sub-Saharan Africa. Abbink (2005: 17) pinpoints important political and sociological factors that are likely to play a role in mitigating the escalation of violent practices. He stresses the importance of a strong central state tradition and the existence of a pattern of values within society that encourages cooperation and discursive conflict mediation. He also stresses that a society used to a plurality of beliefs and multiple ethnic identities should be less likely to transmit values that promote intolerance between groups. This perspective clearly places a strong emphasis on the role of leaders and elites in promoting certain values within society (or within the social movement they represent). The central question becomes then to what extent these leaders and elites are fulfilling a role of promoting positive values that promote broad-mindedness, understanding and acceptance of other cultures, since they are also known for occasionally promoting negative ones and for regulating part of the local violence when it serves their needs. So how to analyze the ways in which values are transmitted? For Kaarsholm: 'This involves an appreciation of the fora and discourses through which political understandings and endeavours are constituted; how these fora and discourses relate to the state and to each other in different ways, and how they change and evolve overtime' (Kaarsholm, 2006: 13). What is suggested, in other words, is a mapping of specific public spheres to get an in-depth understanding of their mode of functioning, to investigate how the 'local' is constituted, changed historically and how it is used to interact with other levels of society.

Kaarsholm's remark links up to an interesting aspect of social movement theories, the issue of framing. How are specific facts disseminated to the general public? What is the context in which a demand for action is presented? And how are such demands interpreted? Several scholars have reflected on these questioning (Ellis & Van Kessel, 2009; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Because engaging in collective social processes requires some shared understandings of who should act, why and how, social movements seek to affect the interpretations of the general public and of their members by the information they disseminate, a process known as ‘framing’; the maximum is therefore done to communicate how a social, political or economic change should be interpreted and what should be done about it (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009: 31). If a relatively simple and localized fact can potentially be presented by skilled leaders as something much larger, one should not forget that there is a multiplicity of players capable of framing local discourses in a given arena (political parties, armed groups, local elites, the local, national and international press, etc,). It should therefore not systematically be taken for granted that a single view predominates in a given context and different framing processes might compete against each other. This question of framing is particularly relevant for the Ivoirian case since propaganda and hate speech diffused by the local media has been a political tool widely used during the period under study, a phenomenon I come back to in the Contexts sections.

As they were tainted by a number of fallacies, theories stressing the importance of political culture have been somewhat neglected in the past, and when they were brought to the fore, cultural traits were at first very broadly conceived (for instance as Dutch or French, African or Asian, Catholic or Muslim) and there was little room for nuance within such wide categories. Culture itself tended to be defined as people’s predominant beliefs and attitudes, without recognizing the multiplicity of patterns. Political culture theories also focused on elites, as they considered them the only agents capable of paving the way to the development of a political culture; they largely ignored the masses. Finally, a certain level of growth was believed to be a precondition for the development of a political culture to take place (Kaarsholm, 2006: 11). Recent theoretical efforts have brought a more critical and dialectical understanding of political culture. Firstly, there is now recognition that there might be different political cultures in a given context, and that these cultures may potentially struggle for hegemony. Secondly, ‘masses’ have been rehabilitated and are now seen as at least as important as the local elites in shaping political culture frameworks. Thirdly, it has eventually become acknowledged that poor people are not exempt from political aspirations (ibid: 11-13). The first point is particularly important since it links political cultures with theories of framing, emphasizing the multiplicity of patterns.

- Theories emphasizing the importance of immediate contexts and political geography

Arjona and Kalyvas are among the few to recognize the importance of political geography[18] in explaining mobilization processes. Drawing on a study of counter-insurgent groups in Colombia, they found that the ability of armed organizations to rule specific areas has an important effect on the willingness of individuals to join in. In other words, local territorial sovereignty would be an important dimension of recruitment in civil wars and would continue to matter as the conflict evolves overtime:

> 'A country in the midst of civil war is best conceptualized as a fragmented territory and the ensuing "micro-orders" are characterized by varying standards of governance established by the ruling armed groups. (…) A person is most likely to make the decision to join an armed group if she lives in a micro-order where that group has consolidated its power and the majority of the community has embraced its rules. This is most likely to occur in localities where the group has engaged in a comprehensive type of rule – i.e. if combatants are able to establish a monopoly of the use of violence and rule over other aspects of human interaction.' (Arjona & Kalyvas, 2009)

It might sound self-evident, yet it is striking to note how theories stressing the importance of local territorial sovereignty are downplayed in the literature, in comparison with theories that rest on assumptions of causality. If one could argue that armed groups might conquer areas that are already receptive to them for a host of structural reasons, others could oppose that it is only a matter of geographic and military factors, and that it is an empirical question after all. But in both cases, whoever controls a given place is likely to have some influence on people's behaviour. Such way of theorizing rehabilitates the importance of local processes of mobilization in explaining the rise and fall of social movements (these have lagged far behind explanations that emphasized the grievance and structural aspects). It is linked to political cultures theories in the sense that they also emphasize processes of framing and people's perceptions, but it seems to be less rooted historically and more subject to drastic reversals (in a contested territory, the ruling armed group can be rather quickly replaced by another). These theories find particular resonance in our case and will mostly be exemplified in Chapter 7, when reflecting on motives to join armed groups.

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[18] Political geography is the field of human geography that is concerned with the study of both the spatially uneven outcomes of political processes and the ways in which political processes are themselves affected by spatial structures (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_geography).

- Theories bringing to the fore the influence of emotions for explaining protest behaviour

Collective action is a group phenomenon rather than an individual one and conflict can probably not solely be explained from individualist perspectives (Cramer, 2006: 108). But because in the end individuals themselves decide whether or not to join an armed group (when they are not being coerced) or whether or not they would like to enter a project, it is necessary to examine what connects the individual to the collective and the influence of individual emotions on protest behaviour. Identification seems to be one answer:

> 'People participate not so much because of the outcome associated with participation but because they identify with the other participant. Group identification changes the focus from what "I" want to what "we" want. Collective action participation is seen as a way to show who "we" are and what "we" stand for, and people experience commitment and solidarity with other members of the group. In addition, group members have the idea that "we" have much in common (by way of shared grievances, aims, values or goals). Group identification seems to be a powerful reason for participating in protest.' (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009: 32-33)

People have many social identities. What therefore makes some repertoires central to mobilization and others not? Probably the most powerful factor that comes to mind when bringing individuals together in some kind of membership is conflict or rivalry between groups, the so-called ethnic, religious or political wars. Western Côte d'Ivoire is particularly propitious to such development as there are many stakes associated to the control of land and a historical background of contested autochthonous and non-autochthonous rights. But this cannot explain why violence occurs only at particular times and places, and why, even at such times and in such places, only some people participate in it and others do not. There is therefore the need to look beyond the influence of social identities and to try to provide clues on differential responses to the same structural conditions.

Why do people act so differently despite sharing similar characteristics and originating from the same contexts? Why are some aggrieved and not others? Why do some feel afraid and ashamed where some feel empowered and proud? Social constructivists attempt to draw on explanations founded in emotions to seek to uncover interpretation and meaning. The main argument here is that structural explanations are limited, because individuals who are in the same structural position do not necessarily display identical behaviour (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009: 30). When they do, their motivational background and accompanying emotions can be very different. Little is known about the influence of emotions on protest behaviour, and there has been little research on the complex emotional processes that channel fear and anger into moral indignation, political activity and violence (probably because these are very complex phenomena which are very complicated to research). Yet it is acknowledged that emotions permeate all phases in participation in social movements: they inform behaviour at the recruitment stage, during the stay within the group, and when a participant drops out (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009: 32-33). Because emotions propel behaviour, if one wants to understand engagement in collective action, one must understand how emotions work. Obviously, emotions can be manipulated. Goodwin, Jasper & Polleta (cited in Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009) argue that emotions are socially constructed, but that ‘some emotions are more constructed than others’. Other persuasive scholars have also stressed that participation in social action is rooted in a notion of belonging (identification with a group), in experienced grievances (influenced by processes of framing), and in emotions that initiate action. In western Côte d’Ivoire, the fact that being exposed to the same trouble did not automatically translate into participation in violent action is worth careful consideration.

Concluding remarks

The contexts under study and the data collected during fieldwork have brought to the fore a series of phenomena that are so far under-theorized for situations where post-conflict intervention plays a side role in the local system. This chapter has called into question several analytical categories (the distinction between militia and local vigilante and the dichotomy between civil war and political outburst). It has also uncovered some conceptual gaps that this study will attempt to fill (the genuine effects humanitarianism has in environments where post-conflict interventions do not play such a central role in the immediate environment, the extent of manipulation of the intervention by the clients themselves going beyond the simple patron-client relation, the extent of a possible indigenous recovery with regards to the demilitarization of civilians), and it intuitively hopes to strengthen timid theory trends that conceptualize the propensity of the youth to join violent movements (namely those theories emphasizing the importance of immediate contexts in explaining engagement, and those focusing on the influence of emotions).

But if we want to understand local processes of mobilization/demobilization well, it is important to place contentious movements into perspective by exploring the extent to which particular mobilizing contexts have been shaped by their historicity and local context. Several scholars have in fact argued that answers to questions such as who protests, why people protest and the forms that contention takes, lie in the interaction of supranational processes, national political processes and local immediate contexts (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009: 37). Different spatial and temporal locations would therefore give birth to different forms of action. In the following section, I particularly explore the second factor – the interaction of national political processes with the dynamics of non-State armed groups – since national political processes have, in the opinion of many, played a major role in leading Côte d'Ivoire into war, and in fostering a situation of 'no war, no peace' for several years. I also put humanitarianism in Côte d'Ivoire into perspective by emphasizing its relative recentness and by reflecting on the place it took as post-conflict interventions gradually started becoming enmeshed in the national politics.

4

A conducive historical and political terrain to the militarization of civilians

The current conflict is deeply rooted in history. It partly results from the exhaustion of the old Ivoirian regime, which is no longer able to provide enough resources to everyone in a context of economic recession; it partly results from political struggles for power, which are exacerbated to some extent by a spirit of revenge, as certain groups were privileged over others at certain periods of time; and it partly results from the instrumentalization of the population to political ends, which has aggravated the fragmentation of society by heightening long-standing, contentious issues, and which has led several analysts to describe the current conflict as a 'citizenship crisis'. The mere fact that national level politics did not have the same effects in all Ivoirian regions is a good illustration of the importance of the immediate context in influencing local modes of action and the particular receptivity of certain locations to certain repertoires. The 'citizenship crisis', for instance, could develop in a very propitious climate in the west of the country, where tensions between *autochthones* and non-*autochthones* were already a structural issue before the war.

But if the war that broke out in September 2002 expresses the exacerbation of deep lines of fracture (along ethnic, social and economic divides), it is also very circumstantial, and as Banégas & Marshall-Fratani (2007) point out, the way violence imposed itself in a relatively short period as the central element structuring the political field raises the question of what place historicity really has in this process, as opposed to some kind of reactive contingency activated by extremely explosive circumstances. I reflect on that below.

From cosmopolitan politics to a politics of ethnic polarization

About a third of the population residing in Côte d'Ivoire today is of foreign origin, with a total population estimated at 20 million. During the colonial period, immigrants from neighbouring countries and Ivoirians from the northern and central part of Côte d'Ivoire migrated to the south in large numbers and played a major role in the development of the plantation economy, outnumbering the *autochthones* in certain areas who thus became minority groups in their own homeland. At the end of French colonial rule, in the 1960s and 1970s, President Houphouët-Boigny continued to promote the same trend by applying an open-minded politics that granted political rights to foreigners, and access to land and civil service jobs. He wished to make Côte d'Ivoire the pole of attraction of the West African region and viewed the Ivoirian population as a melting pot. In his view, there was no need to distinguish between Ivoirians and non-Ivoirians and he went as far as proposing dual nationality for all West African migrants (in 1966). But such a cosmopolitan vision did not find resonance everywhere, especially among the southern *autochthones* who were increasingly viewing themselves as spoiled of resources. I give below a few keys of interpretation to understand why such open politics were contested at the time, and continue to be.

Colonial times: Valorization of migrants, downplay of certain 'autochthones'

When the first colonists settled in Côte d'Ivoire, they established themselves along the east coast, mainly in Agni homeland. It was relatively easy to do so as the local populations were relatively receptive, and trade was facilitated by the open access to the sea. Although settlement mainly took place on the coast, there was also a strong willingness to develop trade with the interior, especially with the forested areas, which appeared rather rich in gold, ivory, palm oil, rubber, and which offered quite a propitious terrain for the extensive cultivation of cocoa, coffee and timber. Dozon pointed out very well the colonists' dilemma of those times: on the one hand, the woodlands were favourable to exploitation; on the other hand, in the eyes of the colonial administration, the people who inhabited these zones (notably the Bétés and Guérés) were seen as primitive and backwards. The western woodlands were especially pointed to, since 'savage' practices such as cannibalism, sacrifices and fetishism prevailed and did not seem to be compensated by the type of 'ordered anarchy' that existed in the east. The western inhabitants were also known for being aggressive and for being fierce opponents of colonization (Dozon, 1997). When, after bitter fighting (1908-1913), the colonists finally conquered the west, they partially solved their dilemma by promoting massive immigration in these zones, notably by tapping into the Ivoirian populations of northern origin. The colonial administration came up with a sort of professional categorization along ethnic lines, and promoted it over the years. According to this logic, the Malinkés/Dioulas[1] were seen as 'politically superior' and as 'apt' to become agents of trade. The Sénoufos were perceived as good agricultural labour, and it was genuinely believed that the Malinkés, Dioulas and Sénoufos would all benefit from a change of region, since it had been assessed that the savannahs they inhabited were not really favourable to a quick development. As Dozon and Chauveau (1987) put it, the plantation economy provided the context in which the colonial state was to 'produce' an ethnic identity that gave rise to a territorialized and ethnicized definition of citizenship and national identity. It was precisely through this process that positive or negative opportunities were determined. In other words, 'right' ethnicities were more likely to lead to social mobility and assimilation while coercion and exclusion were more likely to be the lot of the 'wrong' ones. Now 'right' and 'wrong' did indeed vary over time, depending on the political rhetoric, and were subject to multiple interpretations.

Extensive exploitation of the Ivoirian land first occurred where the colonists dwelled early on, in south-east and along the eastern coast, in the Agni region. This was initially driven by European entrepreneurs who started timber, coffee and cocoa plantations, but the new cultures were quickly adopted by the local populations, especially the cocoa culture. An indigenous plantation economy developed in the 1920s, attracting both autochthonous and non-autochthonous producers. The Malinkés/Dioulas, in particular, became involved in peasant labour, moving beyond the trader function assigned to them by the colonists, towards a function of agricultural producers, having to negotiate their access to land with the autochthonous population (Agnis). The Baoulés, originally native to the central region, were also keen to migrate south-east to work as paid labourers on the existing plantations. By doing so, they were fleeing the forced labour duties they had to perform in their region of origin. They became involved in negotiations with the *autochthones* to get access to land and they eventually started to exploit their own allotted land, provided they complied with certain local arrangements. These migratory movements of peoples and this 'overstepping' of labour boundaries (particularly in the Malinké/Dioula case) largely happened in the margins of the colonial administration.

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[1] Dioula is a generic term to refer to Muslims from northern Côte d'Ivoire or the Sahel.

It is within such a context that a first movement of contestation rooted in an autochthony discourse emerged in the 1930s. The ADIACI (*Association de Défense des Intérêts des Autochtones de Côte d'Ivoire*), an association of natives led by educated Agnis, started protesting against various matters. They started criticizing the Malinkés, Dioulas and Baoulés, who, according to their view, had engaged in a process of usurpation of land and were spoiling the *autochthones*. Of course, the ADIACI never mentioned the existence of informal arrangements that regulated land use at the local level. But framing the discourse in such terms found a certain social resonance and paved the way to follow-up contentious politics based on *autochthone* and migrant antagonism. The ADIACI was also particularly vocal against the attribution of civil servants jobs to migrants of Dahomese and Senegalese origin. The French had promoted their immigration in order to have support in the administration of native affairs, but the ADIACI judged the phenomenon excessive, foremost because educated Ivoirians could fulfil those positions in the colonial administration (Ceuppens & Geschiere, 2005; Dozon, 1997).

By 1950, indigenous cocoa and coffee plantations had spread in western Côte d'Ivoire, and the colonial administration had openly encouraged the migration of Malinkés, Sénoufos and Baoulés to the area, building on the 1920s experience. Given that the French administration had promoted such migration, the displacement of populations from the northern and central regions to the western woodlands were much more massive than in the previous period, and native populations were outnumbered in many areas. In the region of Gagnoa, the autochthonous people (Bétés), who had the disadvantage of having *a priori* been severely judged by the colonists, were excluded from all types of negotiation.

When indigenous political movements were allowed by the colonial administration in 1944, the first union to be created was the *Syndicat Agricole Africain* (SAA), led by Félix Houphouët, which was embraced by many northerners and Baoulé peasants. Its primary function was to lobby for the abolition of forced labour. This was eventually achieved in 1946, when Houphouët, then elected deputy and appointed member of the *Commission des Territoires d'Outre-Mer*, presented an abolition act that passed at the French National Assembly. In 1946, the political party *Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI) replaced the SAA but kept its electorate base of northerners and Baoulés. Educated Agnis created an opposition union at about the same time, and a political party that clearly defended Agni rights. The Agni élite was then using the term 'autochthone' very restrictively, only to designate the Agni population. By opposing the PDCI, the Agni opposition movement was clearly trying to safeguard some kind of political position. In addition to the PDCI and this Agni opposition party, another political movement emerged in the west of the country, the *Mouvement Socialiste Africain*

(MSA), which clashed on a number of occasions with the *Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire*.

The Houphouët era

Multipartism did not last long in Côte d'Ivoire and after the country became independent in 1960, Houphouët set up a single-party system with PDCI as the leading party based on the argument that a single-party system was needed to build the country's social cohesion. While keeping a democratic façade (multipartism was never formally abolished from the Constitution), the new head of State was keen on silencing any form of opposition.

Under Houphouët's 33-year presidency, the agricultural sector grew rapidly. Partnerships with foreign companies, particularly with French ones, brought an influx of capital to the agricultural sector as well as privileged access to European markets and advantageous agreements on coffee and cocoa which guaranteed planters high prices for their exports (International Crisis Group, 2003; Losch, 2000). Noteworthily, the former *colons* were not asked to leave, contrary to what was happening in the neighbouring ex-colonies, and instead, new French citizens were encouraged to come and bring their expertise. Houphouët's policy of promoting mass immigration from neighbouring countries provided planters with a steady labour supply. His famous statement, 'the land belongs to those who cultivate it', explicitly conceived that the non-autochthonous population (Ivoirians and non-Ivoirians alike) had the same rights with regards to land than the autochthonous population, if they put the land to use. This was a clear political stand, which did not go uncontested at the local level, especially since it was so much in rupture with the customary practice that promoted inalienability of land for the *autochthones*. It surely fuelled existing tensions between autochthonous, allochthonous and *allogene* populations, in situations when previous arrangements related to land tenure were already being contested.

During the 1970s, the Ivoirian economy exploded. It was then mainly based on cocoa and coffee exports and cocoa prices multiplied sevenfold during the decade and fourfold for coffee. Houphouët, who was then the largest plantation owner of the country, drastically increased his personal fortune. PDCI political figures, who had been given land and forests over the years, likewise became considerably richer (Wodié, 2003). That was the period of the 'Ivoirian miracle'. By 1979, Côte d'Ivoire had become the world's leading cocoa producer and continues to be the world's top producer at the time of writing, despite the nine-year war and the very stringent socio-economic conditions it had to face for the past three decades.[2] Côte d'Ivoire also has a long-standing position as coffee producer and has been ranked third for several years among coffee producing nations (after Brazil and Colombia). Since the start of the war though, coffee has suffered a major setback in production. The country is also a major exporter of bananas, palm oil and pineapples. The 1970s were the years of opulence, making Côte d'Ivoire the economic engine of West Africa. A lot was done to modernize the country, and a great deal of public infrastructure (roads, highways, schools, hospitals) was constructed during that period. There was a real effort to develop all Ivoirian regions: public schools were entirely free, so were hospitals, and the government provided enough jobs so that unemployment was not an issue at the time (Wodié, 2003).

Yet such a 'miracle' did not go without encumbers. For many, Houphouët ruled with an iron hand. The press was not free and violent repression occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, targeting anyone who was seen as a potential threat for the established order. Between 1961 and 1965, Houphouët organized targeted purges that were based on false allegations of plots. From the young elite, Houphouët picked the ones who would be susceptible to opposing him one day and incarcerated them in military camps. The people he arrested were presumably guilty of either wanting to remove him from power or guilty of participation in subversive activities. Hundreds were put in jail, including Houphouët's own nephew, Jean Konan Banny, and Seydou Diarra who would later become Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire between 2003 and 2005 (Wodié, 2003). In addition to these purges aimed at individuals, Houphouët violently repressed two secessionist movements: the Sanwi crisis at the end of the 1960s, and the Kragbé Gnagbé movement in the early 1970s. The Sanwi crisis was an attempt by the Agni kingdom of Sanwi to retain a separate identity by breaking away from the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, right after independence. Government troops swiftly suppressed this movement. In the same vein, but in another region and a few years later, another opposition movement was repressed in the Bété region. A local political leader of Bété origin, Kragbé Gnagbé, was expressing a lot of grievances against the Baoulés who, from his point of view, were taking over Bétés's land. He created an opposition political party, the PANA (on paper, multipartism was still a constitutional right according to Article 7 of the Ivoirian Constitution). But the party was never legalized by the Ministry of Interior. Gnagbé therefore vehemently denounced the lack of freedom of expression and decided to start a secessionist movement. He created the Republic of Eburnie within the Ivoirian territory, in the Bété homeland, and he and his partisans led an attack on the city of Gagnoa. His attempt at secession ended in a bloodbath. The national army crushed the rebels and killed many civilians who were suspected of having provided assistance (Wodié, 2003).

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[2] The list of world's top cocoa bean countries is based on the latest production estimates for the 2006/2007 season from the International Cocoa Organization. In 2006/2007, the Ivoirian cocoa production still accounted for about 40 per cent of the world output.

The Houphouët regime was rotted by corruption and it unfortunately became a way of life for many people, with those working in the public office being no exception. Nepotism became quite common among the Ivoirian elite and every time new ministers were appointed they would be keen to promote their kin and their kin only. Since, to some extent, the head of State was doing the same, it was not really seen as an issue. Houphouët principally hired people of the same ethnic origin (Baoulé). Under his thirty-three years of reign, the defence ministry was always occupied by a Baoulé, the Presidential Guard was entirely composed of Baoulés, and Houphouët's own nephew was Minister of Defence for several years before being replaced (Wodié, 2003). This indeed fuelled some sort of tribalism, in sharp contrast with a regime line that promoted cosmopolitan values. At the same time, Houphouët gained the favour of the non-Baoulés by distributing favours and gifts to 'worthy militants' regardless of their ethnic affiliation and on basis of patronage relationships. Akindès (2009) points out well the 'ethnic balancing' of such a redistribution process, which namely profited a young elite recruited on the grounds of the diversity of their regional and ethnic backgrounds, who ended up in very lucrative positions. In such ways, 'ethnic balancing' was used as a political tool to foster some sort of social cohesion. Potential disputes were anticipated and mitigated by supplying jobs to known or suspected opponents in the public and private administration, in the army, in the agricultural domain, and by providing educational advantages for their children. In other words, Houphouët promoted a regime that allowed people who fulfilled high public functions to live well above the normal standard of living. In exchange, they were expected to show continuous support to the head of State. Their positions were at stake. This compromise depended above all on an institutionalized form of clientelism that some scholars described as being 'oiled' by export revenues (Banégas & Marshall-Fratani, 2007).

The economic recession in the early 1980s and the liberalization of global markets led to a dramatic drop in primary product prices and by the calling into question of many of the Houphouëtan pillars. By the end of the 1980s, cocoa prices were at the same level in real terms as in 1945 (International Crisis Group, 2003). Côte d'Ivoire was plunged into a financial crisis that was further worsened by government corruption and mismanagement. The State was facing many complex issues simultaneously: while it was no longer able to absorb the increasing numbers of educated youth, demands for social services were on the rise from the middle class, and civil servants were calling for substantial salary rises (so was the army, and so was the educational sector). The government was eventually forced to break its longstanding fixed-price contracts with cocoa and coffee planters, and in 1989-1990 prices were cut in half, which immediately resulted in mass protest (International Crisis Group, 2003). Since the entire economy of Côte d'Ivoire was based on cocoa/coffee exports, it was an economic disaster. The country became more and more dependent on foreign funding to function, and part of the unemployed educated urban youths started returning to the rural areas where they had come from. There, many found that the land that they had hoped to claim was held by non-*autochthones*. With no work and no parcel of land to cultivate, xenophobia grew even further. It was at this time that the political rhetoric started playing with nationalist feelings, finding a great deal of resonance in certain fringes of the Ivoirian population. The notion that immigrants were taking 'the bread out of Ivoirians' mouths' (International Crisis Group, 2004) has in fact grown over the years, in proportion to the depth of the national economic crisis, and has contributed to reinforcing the view that the current conflict is foremost a crisis of and about citizenship (such overemphasis on rights and citizenship had not been free from criticism and I'll briefly come back to the controversy when discussing the politicization of the ethnicity rhetoric).

The economic crisis has definitely marked the end of Côte d'Ivoire's idealized image of an 'open' country, by unveiling the extent of social fragmentation. Rather than a melting pot, 'what we find is a form of cohabitation and division of labour amongst communities where each group occupies a specific economic niche' (Banégas & Marshall-Fratani, 2007; Dembélé, 2002).

Feeling that things were gradually slipping from his grasp, and faced with internal political dissension, Houphouët eventually (re)introduced multiparty politics in 1990, starting by the presidential elections – some would interpret this political act as a carrot. The first multiparty elections of 28 October 1990 were in fact far from being 'democratic': candidates had to be vetted by the Ministry of Interior, and only PDCI militants and people handpicked by Houphouët himself were allowed to run for presidency (Wodié, 2003).[3] One year later, following a politics of austerity imposed by the World Bank, which forced the State to reduce its public expenditures, most notably by cutting off civil servants' salaries and by shifting most of the social costs to the population (schools and hospitals were no longer free), violent protests erupted in Abidjan. One of the worst moments was the government's violent repression of a peaceful opposition march in February

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[3] In 1990, there were three political parties in the opposition: the *Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs* (PIT) led by Francis Wodié, the *Parti Socialiste Ivoirien* (PSI) led by Bamba Moriféré, and the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) led by Laurent Gbagbo (Akindes, 2009).

1992, which eventually degenerated into an uncontrolled riot (Akindes, 2009). Opposition leaders Laurent Gbagbo (FPI), who would later become President of Côte d'Ivoire between 2000 and 2010, and Francis Wodié (PIT) spent some time in prison following this event. At the death of Houphouët in 1993, the country had not yet recovered from the economic crisis and the entire Côte d'Ivoire model was still being called into question.

Politicization of the ethnicity rhetoric

The decade of the 1990s was characterized by intense political struggles and by a political crystallization of the autochthony discourse. Henri Konan Bédié, then President of the National Assembly, succeeded Houphouët as the head of State, first as the interim President (in accordance with Article 10 of the Ivoirian Constitution), and then as elected politician representing the PDCI party, after the presidential elections were held in 1995. His main political opponent, Alassane Ouattara, who was the last Prime Minister under Houphouët, was barred from running in these elections because of a last-minute opportunistic revision of the electoral code which raised doubts about his true nationality.[4] Ouattara's party, the *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR), had emerged out of dissatisfaction with PDCI politics and was mainly composed (in the beginning) of discontented PDCI militants. It positioned based itself from the start on a northern electorate by capitalizing on pre-existing demands from the northern elites who had set on paper a '*Charte du Grand Nord*' in 1992, which called for more participation in Ivoirian politics of those of northern origin (Akindes, 2004). When Ouattara was excluded from running for presidency in 1995, the two other main parties opposing the PDCI (the RDR and the FPI) decided to boycott the elections.

Autochthonous ideologies – which were already popular within a certain fringe of the population – became even stronger in the 1990s when they were institutionalized in mainstream politics. They were largely adopted by the FPI and became part of its main political discourse. Even Bédié (PDCI), who was then the Ivoirian President and the direct political successor of Houphouët, openly questioned the past cosmopolitan politics by casting doubt on the soundness of keeping an open immigration policy in a context of unemployment and economic recession (Dozon, 2001). Was he trying to draw a clear line between himself and his predecessor's policies? Perhaps it was only an opportunistic political move, to put an end to the FPI's monopoly of the theme. Regardless, Bédié placed the issue of immigration control very high on the PDCI agenda. The defence of autochthony grew to be couched in ideological terms and Bédié launched the notion of 'Ivoirité' in the national politics (Ivoirian-ness), inspired and supported by a large number of Ivoirian intellectuals:

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[4] He was unable to run for Presidency on the grounds that both his parents were from Burkinabé origin.

> 'Ivoirité is the set of socio-historical, geographical and linguistic data which enables us to say that an individual is a citizen of Côte d'Ivoire or an Ivoirian. The person who asserts his Ivoirité is supposed to have Côte d'Ivoire as his country, be born of Ivoirian parents belonging to one of the ethnic groups native to Côte d'Ivoire.' (Niangoran Bouah, ethno-sociologist)
>
> 'Foreigners occupy a dominant, sometimes hegemonic, situation in the Ivoirian economy. This massive foreign presence is therefore a threat to the socio-economic balance of the country.' (Jean-Noël Loucou, historian)
>
> 'Houphouët gives preference to the individual rather than to the citizen. An openness to the other of this magnitude transformed the country into a sort of African microcosm, a melting pot, in which even today, it is difficult to distinguish precisely the original components.' (Professor Leonard Kodjo cited in Akindès 2003)
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> 'The discourse over Ivoirité is part of the general discussion about all the questions which underlie the very existence and progress of our developing nation. The fact that it was launched during the 1995 elections should in no way reduce it to a dispute dictated by political and electoral considerations. It is a fundamental question, which deals with what makes a people, its identity and collective soul.' (ibid)
>
> 'To build "Us", we should be able to distinguish from "Them" (…) It is necessary to establish such "Us/Them" distinction, in a compatible way with the pluralism of nationalities.' (Niamkey Koffi, philosopher, cited in Curdiphe, 2000)

The concept of *Ivoirité* basically distinguished between the *Ivoiriens de souche*, which designated the 'pure' Ivoirians from the other ones of a more doubtful origin (the latecomers, people whose parents were not necessarily Ivoirians, etc.). Needless to say that it opened the door to many abuses. The concept of *Ivoirité* formed the base of a new social contract based on ethnic polarization. The idea had been developed very sophisticatedly and was tapping into a populist repertoire that implicitly conveyed the belief that the country would return to prosperity if it focused its strength on core traditions and values (implying the need to return to autochthonous traditions, which were presented as particularly rich and alive in southern Cote d'Ivoire). The CURDIPHE (*Cellule universitaire de recherche et de diffusion des idées et actions du Président Bédié*) was particularly active in promoting these ideas and came up with an elaborate categorization. Professor Niangoran-Bouah (anthropologist and high-ranking employee at the Ministry of Culture) defined several criteria: people who wanted to claim their *Ivoirité* had to belong to Côte d'Ivoire and be born from Ivoirian parents who themselves belonged to one of the autochthonous groups of Côte d'Ivoire; 'genuine' *autochthones* had to be related to one of the founding fathers of the different provinces; they had to share the language of one of the five main groups (Twi for the Akan, Madé-Tan for the Malinkés/Bambaras, Mandéfou for the Dan, Siénéfo for the Gour and Magwé for the Krou), and had to have similar cultural practices. Autochthony was also dated: those who were already in country on 10 March 1893 – 'when Côte d'Ivoire was born' – could be designated as *autochthones*, while the others could not (Curdiphe, 2000). If someone fulfilled all these criteria, he/she could be recognized as an *Ivoirien de souche*.

The date benchmark obviously excluded the populations who arrived later, and in particular all those who were attracted by the development of the plantation economy and all those who had been 'imported' by the colonial administration to develop basic infrastructure. Many scholars expert on Côte d'Ivoire therefore agreed that the concept of *Ivoirité* framed in the mid-1990s was a sort of claim that fostered the idea of a southern autochthony (Ceuppens & Geschiere, 2005; Jean-Pierre Dozon, 2000; J.-P. Dozon, 2000). Dozon also warned about the double exclusion the ideology implied: on the one hand, excluding the northern immigrants (the Burkinabé, the Senoufo, the Lobi), and on the other hand, excluding certain southerners too (and especially the Bété), on the grounds that certain 'ethnic groups' would supposedly be less capable of leading the nation than others who have a more propitious cultural heritage.[5] As the concept of *Ivoirité* was becoming more and more politically instrumentalized by the PDCI, it diffused the view that the Baoulés were some sort of *super-autochthones* with full legitimacy to rule the country (after all, Baoulé presidents had run the country for 35 years).

Other scholars have reflected on the negative characterization of some ethnic groups (particularly the Dioulas and the Bétés), contrasting those with the presupposed positive qualities of others (the Agnis and Baoulés). As Memel Foté (1999) puts it:

> 'The Dioula and Bété are discriminated against using dubious psychological arguments. They are not "genuine" in the words of the ideologists, their reactions are unpredictable and they are not really to be trusted (…). Significant immorality traits are associated with this psychology. According to one person, the Dioula are "lawless unbelievers" and the Bété are "violent women-chasers"; another says the Dioula are as malevolent as slaves; a third person states the "class education" which is characteristic of "the civilized Akan" is not apparent among the other two ethnic groups and their like. (…) These negative anthropological factors define in reverse the positive qualities considered desirable in the ideal political class of the Ivoirian nation, the assumption being that these are to be found in the Akan alone, particularly among the most militant Baoulé and Agni who were the spokespersons.'

This construction of a positive representation of the self in opposition to others has contributed to the accumulation of a whole set of imaginary stories and psycho-sociological markers for social groups. These are conveyed in the popular culture and ultimately structure the way in which the members of a given territorial space perceive one another (Akindes, 2004; Konaté, 2004). Yet we need to be careful when suggesting causal associations. If some analysts have attributed the situation that led to the partition of the country in 2002 to the outcome of a longstanding crisis of citizenship (understood as a struggle for redefining the content of citizenship, rights and the conditions of sovereignty from two completely opposite conceptions of citizenship)[6] (Banégas & Marshall-Fratani, 2007; Marshall-Fratani, 2006), there is the need to go beyond this single explanation, especially since the war did more than expressing deep lines of social fracture. The Ivoirian conflict that started in 2002 was also very much led by circumstances and we need to reflect on what place historicity really had in this process, including the historicity of the ethnicity rhetoric in the national politics.

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[5] I discuss the western Ivoirian ethnic groups in the following chapter.

From the Coup to the war

The military Coup of 24 December 1999 ended the rule of Bédié and forced him into exile one year before the planned presidential elections of 2000. A group of young noncommissioned officers took power in a bloodless insurgency, protesting against Bédié's refusal to pay them overdue wages, the severely degraded material conditions in the army, and the corruption and authoritarianism of the Bédié government. The months that preceded the Coup were characterized by a particularly tense atmosphere dominated by a political discourse framed by *Ivoirité*: an international arrest warrant had been issued for Ouattara who had been accused for the umpteenth time of having forged his Ivoirian identity (how opportune in those pre-electoral days); several RDR militants had been arrested and imprisoned; and while the electoral lists were being updated, several people of northern origin had fallen victim to physical and verbal aggression on the part of the police and gendarme officers. In such an agitated context, the Coup was in fact very much welcomed by the people and was eventually perceived as a necessary step towards lowering tensions (Akindès, 2009; N'guessan, 2002). The Coup also clearly marked the fact that the identity dimension could no longer be treated unidirectionally in politics, i.e. solely limited to the PDCI agenda: it had moved beyond a one-party rule.

The Coup marked the entry of a fresh political figure, General Gueï, not so new to the Ivoirian political scene, but not so used to being in the spotlight. Gueï was the Army Chief of Staff between 1990 and 1995, until Bédié put an end to his appointment after he refused to send the army to curb RDR and FPI opposition demonstrations. Of Yacouba origin, Gueï was born in the west, in a village north of Man. He always denied being at the root of the Coup, yet he was chosen to lead the junta and he assumed a leadership role from the start by becoming the head of the *Comité National de Salut Public* (CNSP). In early 2000, he formed a government with the main opposition parties, from which the PDCI was excluded. This strongly marked the end of a forty-year hegemony. The post-Coup government was presented as transitional and presidential elections were announced for October 2000. At first, General Gueï fostered an 'anti-'Ivoirité' politics and made clear that framing national politics along ethnic lines was a threat to national unity. He was particularly keen on reassuring foreigners and nationals of non-Akan origin about their respective 'historical' places in relation to the construction of the Ivoirian nation (Akindès, 2004: 21). In his first months in power, Gueï presented an image of 'pacifier' and used several means to such ends: he restored Ouattara's rights on his return from exile, he quashed the legal proceedings against him, and he extensively drew on Houphouët's cosmopolitan discourses to promote a peaceful climate (notably by broadcasting past interviews of the former President that promoted social cohesion on national television). Until March 2000, the Gueï military regime gave the impression that the transmission of power to elected politicians would occur smoothly in October. But once engaged in politics, Gueï's tone gradually changed and his position hardened. Quite unexpectedly, he announced that he would also run for President and as the months passed, he showed less and less willingness to leave his position as head of State. The rhetoric of *Ivoirité* re-emerged, somewhat disguised,[7] and several people were arrested on the grounds of their political affiliation. Another military Coup was attempted on May 2000 by militant soldiers who were disillusioned by such changes in discourse and attitude; Gueï after all was gradually adopting the very ideology against which they had risen a year before. The mutiny ended in bloodshed. Some soldiers were tortured and killed, and others vanished (Akindès, 2009).

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[6] One conception of citizenship is rather open, while the other is based on the political ideology of autochthony.

Between the Coup and the 2000 presidential elections, the army gradually disintegrated into multiple factions and semi-autonomous paramilitary groups (PC-Crise, Camora, Kamajor, Cosa Nostra, Red Brigade). These factions eventually started obeying informal networks and personal clans more than their official hierarchy.[8] By July 2000, Cote d'Ivoire was described by many observers as having descended into a state of near anarchy. The population was racketeered by several armed groups, and some military leaders[9] in the divided army had become unavoidable political actors (Banégas & Marshall-Fratani, 2007; Le Pape & Vidal, 2002). Gueï attempted to mitigate the excesses of his troops and succeeded in disbanding one of the paramilitary groups in the summer of 2000 (the PC-Crise). However, he was incapable of controlling all of them.

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[7] The term was no longer used but the discourses were the same.

[8] This process was already underway under Bédié, who – mainly led by fear of a coup – sowed the seeds of division in the army by discriminating against the officers he thought to be close to his political rivals (Banégas & Marshall-Fratani, 2007).

[9] The leader of the 2002 insurgency, Staff Sergeant Ibrahim Coulibaly, was among them.

The 2000 and 2001 elections

It is within such a climate that presidential elections were held in October 2000. Ouattara's nationality had been once again called into question and he had once again been excluded from the presidential contest. Gueï and Gbagbo were therefore the main contestants. The electoral contest took place in a highly tense climate. Gueï attempted to rig the elections by declaring himself winner at the end of the first round, which led both FPI and RDR partisans to take to the streets to demand the departure of Gueï. But while the RDR was demanding new elections, the FPI was claiming its legitimate victory. Gbagbo proclaimed himself head of State on the grounds that partial electoral results showed that he had beaten Gueï, and the protests degenerated into violent clashes between FPI and RDR supporters, and with the army (Akindès, 2009). Many people were killed and injured during these events and a mass grave was even discovered in the northern Abidjan suburb of Yopougon. Gueï fled the country on 26 October and Laurent Gbagbo remained, as President of the second Ivoirian Republic.

A failed coup attempt in January 2001 was blamed on foreigners and resulted in large numbers of immigrant workers from Burkina Faso leaving Côte d'Ivoire. Municipal elections were nonetheless held in March 2001 and marked an important turning point in the country's electoral history: for the first time, all political parties were given permission to compete, including Ouattara's RDR, which won an important number of *communes* (Mission Des Nations Unies En Cote D'ivoire, 2004). President Gbagbo consequently engaged into national reconciliation politics and organized a national forum in October 2001 to debate the issues that had polarized Ivoirians for many years: the conditions of service of the security forces, the fiercely debated questions of nationality and land ownership, the criteria of eligibility to run for presidency and the extent of legitimacy of the Gbagbo government. The forum proved to be a sort of catharsis. Gbagbo, Bédié, Gueï and Ouattara eventually issued a communiqué in early 2002 in which they agreed to oppose undemocratic avenues to power, to improve the conditions of service of the Ivoirian security forces, to create a broad-based national electoral commission, to create a national body that would address the question of land ownership, and to form a new government of national unity that would better reflect the diversity of the electorate. The new Gbagbo government was eventually formed on 5 August 2002 and included representatives of the main opposition political parties: 20 portfolios were allocated to the FPI, 7 to the PDCI, 4 to the RDR, 2 to the PIT (*Parti Ivoirien du Travail*, led by Francis Wodié) and 1 to the UDPCI (*Union pour la Démocratie* *et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire*, led by General Gueï). The long-standing controversy concerning Mr Ouattara's nationality, which had been a major source of political tension and instability, was finally resolved when an Ivoirian court delivered him a nationality certificate on 26 July 2002.

The 2002 uprising

This short period of appeasement came to an end with the military uprising of 19 September 2002. At the origin of the putsch were discontented soldiers who had initially been close to General Gueï before being thrown out of the army (either by Gueï himself or by his successor). Some were facing demobilization in 2003 under an army reform programme decided upon by the Gbagbo government, and many of these soldiers had actually found refuge in Burkina Faso in successive waves between September 2000 and September 2002. Those who were facing forced demobilization had written several times to the head of State, pleading to be retained in military service, or at least to be given a decent demobilization package. But their actions bore no fruit, and in addition, they were accused by the Gbagbo government of offences under the previous regimes. Some of those who were already in exile were tracked down and threatened by Ivoirian agents. It is believed that, from 2001 onwards, Burkina Faso played a substantial role in training these uncommissioned officers in exile in logistics, communication, and clandestine operations (International Crisis Group, 2003). These soldiers in fact had little to lose and on 19 September 2002, a number of them led simultaneous attacks on strategic military positions in three major Ivoirian towns – Abidjan, Bouaké and Korhogo. Under their command were an estimated 800 men.

When they failed to take Abidjan (the combat operations there only lasted a couple of days), they retreated to Bouaké and the attempted coup degenerated into a civil war between soldiers that had remained loyal to the State and break-away army troops quickly supplemented by militarized civilians. While loyalist security forces quickly regained control of the situation in Abidjan, the rebels retained control of Bouaké and Korhogo and started seizing other towns in the northern and western regions as other disgruntled soldiers and civilians swelled their ranks.[10] General Gueï, together with several members of his family, and Minister of the Interior, Emile Boga Doudou, were killed in Abidjan the first day of the insurgency. The Ivoirian national army (FANCI) launched several military operations to dislodge the rebel soldiers from the seized towns, but did so without success. By the end of September, the insurgents were firmly in control of the northern and central parts of the country. Bouaké was the main rebellion stronghold, and rebels were referring to themselves as the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI). The country was split in two, leading to – as Arnaut (2004: 240) nicely puts it: 'the kind of geographical framework within which the discourse of autochthony flourishes so well' – and a significant portion of the civilian population had been drawn into armed movements, on both belligerent sides.

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[10] If the majority of rebel recruits were of northern origin, rebel forces have always denied having a specific regional or ethnic affiliation (Langer, 2003). One of their announced objectives was 'to put an end to the domination by the Southerners' but it would be a mistake to equate rebel recruits with northerners, especially in the west of the country; we will elaborate on that in Chapters 6 and 7, when reflecting on the geographic origin of recruits and on the rationales to enlist. If many northerners were attracted to the movement, it might simply have been because the recruitment discourse had found resonance with them.

Many MPCI commanders who led the initial revolt were originally members of the paramilitary factions that had emerged in 2000, under the Gueï junta (the Cosa Nostra, the Camorra). Some were also former members of the Presidential Guard. The majority of the rebel leadership was in exile in Ouagadougou in 2001-2002 and had left the country after Gbagbo had evicted Gueï from power. Staff Sergeant Ibrahim 'IB' Coulibaly, former member of the Presidential Guard, is credited with having led the 19 September coup from Ouagadougou.[11] A large part of the armament used for the uprising came from the State arsenal in Bouaké, as the government had had it recently replenished in anticipation of a counter-coup in Abidjan (International Crisis Group, 2003; Langer, 2003). Staff Adjutant Tuo Fozié commanded the military operations in Bouaké and was one of the first spokespersons of the rebel forces. He notably signed the first ceasefire agreement in Bouaké on 17 October on behalf of the '*Coordination des mutins*' (African Union, 2002) and he was the one representing the MPCI during the peace discussions of Lomé.[12] Chérif Ousmane was Fozié's right hand, and became head of the Guépard company during the war, then assistant commander of operations for the Bouaké area, and ultimately *Com'Zone* of the rebel stronghold. Other like soldiers, who had also been in exile in Burkina Faso, included Issiaka Ouattara (alias Wattao), field commander of the Anaconda Company in Bouaké, and Massamba Koné, the *Com'Zone* of Korhogo, who would later be appointed Minister of Development and Planning under the government of national reconciliation.

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[11] 'IB' was arrested in Paris in August 2003 and was put on trial in France in the spring of 2008.

[12] Under the government of national reconciliation, he became Minister of Youth and Civic Service. He left this function in 2005 when a new Prime Minister was appointed, but has since remained director of the *Forces Nouvelles* police and *Maréchaussée*.

When the first peace talks were held in Lomé at the end of October 2002,[13] the MPCI made a series of military and political demands. On the military side, it demanded an amnesty for the soldiers in exile in Burkina Faso and the suspension of the demobilization process planned under the government's army reform programme. These demands were rapidly addressed and on 1 November 2002, the government submitted a draft amnesty law to parliament that included the liberation of jailed soldiers, an end to the open proceedings against the ones accused of jeopardizing state security, the return of the soldiers in exile and their reintegration into the army. On the political side, MPCI demands were taken less seriously. The MPCI had demanded a review of the constitution, the resignation of President Laurent Gbagbo, new elections, and 'an end to the domination by the southerners',[14] but these demands were largely dismissed as the host to the talks, Togolese President Eyadéma, ostensibly took the position that an armed rebellion could make military claims but not political ones. The MPCI eventually withdrew its demand for Gbagbo's resignation and requested instead that a transitional government be installed to prepare for anticipated presidential elections.

Overall, MPCI forces were estimated to number 10,000 recruits. Two additional rebel movements emerged at the end of November 2002 before merging into the umbrella group, the *Forces Nouvelles.* I describe these evolutions in the next section, when having a closer look at insurgent and counter-insurgent groups.

2000-2010: a decade of FPI rule

Contrary to contexts where the mobilization of the repertoires of autochthony and territorialized belonging can be analyzed as a supranational phenomenon that bypasses a 'weak' state in a context of globalization, the Ivoirian case shows instead the continued vitality of a nation-state, which – with renewed ardour since the Bédié Presidency – has been the principal space to construct and make sense of the autochthony discourses, as well as the principal space that has used techniques to put them into play (Marshall-Fratani, 2006). The mobilization of the discourses of autochthony and nationalism has therefore been a conscious political strategy for defining, redefining, and controlling certain spaces and categories, and this has found a particular resonance in Côte d'Ivoire, since the relationship between foreigner and national is essentially considered – as Dembélé (2002) reminds us – in terms of territorialized ethnic spaces.

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[13] The two sides 'acknowledged the need to preserve territorial integrity, respect of institutions, and constitutional legality'. They also agreed to respect the ceasefire and to refrain from 'the recruitment and use of mercenaries, enrolment of children, and violations of the accord on cessation of hostilities' and pledged to urge 'their authorities to refrain from any bellicose acts such as abuses, violence and extra-judicial killings'. (International Crisis Group, 2003)

[14] United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), Conflict Background (cited in Langer, 2003). These demands were mediated by Guillaume Soro and Louis Dacoury-Tabley, who were both leading the rebellion political branch.

The FPI has particularly excelled in using an ultranationalist discourse that framed the idea that there can be 'no identity without territoriality'.[15] Such a motto has echoed and fuelled, concomitantly, local conceptions of autochthony, which implicitly call for excluding 'strangers' from certain belonging, while constantly redefining who is a stranger and who is not (Bayart & Geschiere, 2001; Bayart *et al.*, 2001; Ceuppens & Geschiere, 2005; Dembélé, 2003). In Côte d'Ivoire, a person would define his or her 'autochthony' foremost in terms of geographical origin and would eventually end up reducing to himself and his group the attributes of Ivoirian citizenship. This conception automatically excludes all others from citizenship – and by others, I mean people from a foreign country (*allogenes*), but also Ivoirians who reside and work in a different region than their region of origin (*allochthones*). It is therefore no surprise that less and less distinction is made at the local level between *allogenes and allochthones*; they are usually labeled the same by a population that claims that it 'was here before', and new conceptions of rights and citizenship are derived from it. At the local level, there has been a resurgence of the idea of autochthony in recent years with the increasing competition for resources. In certain areas, foreign communities are being ever more excluded from certain forms of citizenship by customary institutions, and this process takes several forms depending on contexts, from restricted access to resources or rights, to excessive taxation or over-regulation of certain social, legal and religious matters. The concept of autochthony has taken a more radical turn in recent years by stressing the importance of belonging to one of the 'right' ethnicities, which excludes northerners. The FPI has only recycled existing ideas, adapting the concept of *Ivoirité* to its own ends by rehabilitating the Bétés over other groups, and by continually toying with the idea of who is a 'real' Ivoirian and who is not.

The question of immigration control has been central in FPI politics since the party's emergence. Accusing Houphouët of using northern immigrants as 'electoral cattle', Gbagbo fiercely campaigned against foreigners' voting rights during the 1990 presidential elections; he also warned about the too preponderant place they had in the national economy. In the early 1990s, it was the FPI press that began publishing rumours about Ouattara, suggesting that he was Burkinabé and not Ivoirian (Marshall-Fratani, 2006).[16] While it was Bédié who eventually coined the term *Ivoirité*, Gbagbo had earlier displayed a genuine interest in finding scientific ways to legitimize the autochthony of the Bété ethnic group. As a historian, he attempted to show in his writings that the Bétés were among the very first peoples present on Ivoirian territory (Gbagbo, 2002: 39-42). In 1998, he claimed that the violent land conflicts between *autochthones* and non-*autochthones* in the west had nothing to do with ethnic problems but were mere 'technical issues', and that one way to solve this, in his perspective, was to relegate the northern *autochthones* to their zones, eventually with the aid of a state development policy (Marshall-Fratani, 2006). His vision of territorialized ethnic spaces was clearly stated there, when what he proposed to do was to close internal borders and to confine ethnic groups within their assumed territorial 'boundaries'.

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[15] The idea was first advanced by Mbembe cited in Marshall-Fratani, 2006).

[16] The press has been an instrument extensively used by politicians to disseminate such libelous ideas.

During the first two years of the Gbagbo regime, the cleft between FPI and RDR sympathizers grew to a worrying extent. The latent nationalism of the FPI became state policy and was echoed with increasingly xenophobic and radical accents by pro-FPI press and pro-FPI youths just about everywhere. The confusion between Ivoirian northerners and foreign immigrants intensified and led to very extreme declarations on the part of *autochthones* in certain areas.[17] Those in the army who were thought to be sympathetic to the RDR were demoted, and some were even forced into exile.

The programme of national identification FPI launched in the summer of 2002 marked a turning point in internal politics. Not surprisingly, this was one of the first things rebel forces wanted to put an end to, and national identity records and state registries were often destroyed in rebel-held territories, after a town or village had been captured[18] (several accounts report that rebels were outraged when people presented these 'new' identity documents at checkpoints). National identity cards and the question of 'usurpation' of citizenship have been a national obsession since the early 1990s, when the structurally deteriorating conditions led Ouattara to introduce the *carte de séjour* for foreign residents. In its programme of national identification, the FPI yet differed from the previous attempts to create a reliable system of national identity records in both its methodology and conception. The FPI was basically seeking to institutionalize a system in which, alongside the place of birth, the 'village of origin' would appear on the new identity cards and would be consider a key marker to determine whether someone was Ivoirian or not. What the FPI was seeking to consecrate in sum was the principle of territorial autochthony as the main ground for claiming national identity and full citizenship (Marshall-Fratani, 2006). What is of particular interest is that while claiming to be fighting against this very ideology, rebel forces paradoxically came to capitalize on it, as their ranks gradually absorbed people of northern origin and others who were feeling excluded from FPI's extremely restricted conception of citizenship.

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[17] See the extracts of the Youth Assembly hold in Bonoua, Ivory Coast, on 22 January 2001. *24 heures* on 8 January 2004 – article entitled 'The Bonoua xenophobic laws'.

[18] The Minister of the Interior who had engineered the programme was also murdered in Abidjan in September 2002.

In the ten years of FPI rule, political opposition was quite fragile. A G7 coalition[19] was formed in 2003, which attempted to project an image of a common 'republican' front to counter the FPI, but the Gbagbo regime regularly refused any form of political compromise, increasingly isolating itself in the political scene, a trait that probably reinforced its radical character.

The longstanding controversies on nationality and land

The question of Ivoirian citizenship has been fiercely debated for decades. It peaked with the FPI national identification programme and was recently reset high on the agenda during the 2010 elections. The first Ivoirian *Code de la Nationalité* (1961) stipulated that any child born on Ivoirian soil was eligible to Ivoirian citizenship on the grounds of *ius soli*.[20] Article 105 provided that those whose 'habitual residence' was in Côte d'Ivoire prior to independence were entitled to Ivoirian nationality if they applied for citizenship within a period of one year after the law had been passed.[21] Many people missed the deadline, mostly out of ignorance of the procedures, or due to being unaware of the time limit, or having little interest in 'formalizing' their legal status. Few people actually saw the need at the time to claim formal citizenship; it was not an economic necessity then, everyone had access to land.

In 1972, the Code was modified and included a combination of *ius soli* and *ius sanguini*; that meant that any child born on Ivoirian soil was eligible for Ivoirian citizenship if he or she had at least one Ivoirian parent.[22] This change in law unfortunately formalized statelessness for generations of individuals born since independence to parents who had not claimed citizenship at a time when they could. If the Code provided for the automatic acquisition of Ivoirian nationality for an abandoned infant found in Côte d'Ivoire (until and unless the infant is proven to have another nationality), it made no provision for children born on its territory from stateless parents. These ambiguities have been explicitly recognized by the 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Peace Accords (23 January, 2003), which explicitly called for amending Articles 6 and 7 of the Nationality Code. The Code was eventually amended in 2004, but only superficially, and amendments mainly addressed questions of naturalization and procedures of inter-marriages between Ivoirian and foreign residents.[23]

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[19] The G7 is composed of seven of the ten signatories of the Linas Marcoussis peace agreement of January 2003. Apart from the three rebel movements – MPCI, MPIGO, MJP, now grouped together under the term '*Forces Nouvelles*' – the G7 comprises the PDCI, RDR, UNDPCI, and a small party, the *Mouvement des Forces de l'Avenir* (MFA).

[20] Law 61-415, 14 December 1961.

[21] Because Côte d'Ivoire came into existence in 1960, the meaning of 'Ivoirian' in Article 6 of the 1961 Code is itself problematic: no one was legally 'Ivoirian' prior to this date; all Ivoirian residents were then French subjects.

[22] Law 72-852, 21 December 1972.

- From the FPI national programme of identification to the 'audiences foraines'

The programme of national identification FPI launched in the summer of 2002 was quickly put to an end by the war, yet it continued to weigh on political imaginaries and administrative practices. To some extent, some of the FPI operational procedures were reactivated during the pre-electoral exercise of the *audiences foraines* in 2007. In 2002, the process was as followed: under the assumption that every Ivoirian had a village of origin, the procedure for acquiring an ID card was for everyone to return to his or her village of origin to request it. Protests about this extremely onerous procedure led to the adoption of another procedure that enabled the individual to request the card in the place he or she resided, with the obligation to cite local witnesses from his or her village of origin. The idea was also to have local commissions in place, composed of village chiefs, land chiefs, members of leading families and political parties, to verify the claim of autochthony. In 2007, following the Ouagadougou agreement, the authorities launched a country-wide initiative to provide birth certificates to the Ivoirian residents who lacked such documentation, a first step in establishing a reliable identification system in order to prepare updated electoral rolls for the upcoming elections. Under the agreement, mobile courts presided over by a judge (the courts were known as the *audiences foraines*) started touring the country to issue substitute birth certificates (*jugements supplétifs*) to everyone older than thirteen born in Côte d'Ivoire who had never been registered before. The nationality of the applicant's parents was apparent on the *jugement supplétif*. Individuals were asked to claim their *jugement supplétif* at the mobile court closest to their place of birth. They had to be accompanied by witnesses to testify as to the truth of the place of birth they claimed. While the registration process was free of charge from the applicant request to the transcription in the national registers, the applicant was requested to pay a 'stamp fee' if he wanted a copy of the birth certificate transcript. By March 2008, the mobile courts had issued 372,810 *jugements supplétifs* (Bah, 2010). The hearings, which have been intermittent since their launch in 2007, restarted in August 2008 and by the end of 2008, 2.8 million people had registered at approximately 3,000 registration sites (ibid). Such massive enthusiasm for the *audience foraines* shows a clear departure from past practices and may be an indication that more and more people want to secure some kind of documentation, as local and national regulations become increasingly exclusionary. While the certificates issued through this process do not conferred Ivoirian citizenship, they nonetheless mark a first step.

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[23] Law 2004-663, 17 December 2004.

- The issue of land

Another burning issue – very salient in a country which still derives one fourth of its income from agricultural exports – relates to the security of land tenure and the changes it underwent over time. One of Houphouët's central state policies in relation to land fundamentally linked ethnicity and autochthony to national politics: if his 1962 land decree was never implemented, Houphouët's 1963 motto – 'the land belongs to those who made it productive' – had value of law. Until the passing of the 1998 rural land law, non-immatriculated rural land officially belonged to the private dominion of the State. Customary law continued to hold though, but at the local level, in practice, non-immatriculated rural land continued to be perceived by *autochthones* – and even by some non-*autochthones* – as the unalienable property of autochthonous communities. Chauveau (2007) shows well the evolution over time of the state strategies related to this question: from a land regime that sought to foster 'positive discrimination' in favor of the non-*autochthones* (1900-1950), we observe a shift to a land regime that tried to rehabilitate autochthonous rights (1955-1956), and then another shift back to a land regime favouring foreigners, that institutionalized several interdictions for levying excessive land taxes on strangers (ministerial decrees of 1957 and 1961). Then there was a legal vacuum of about 30 years, a period during which the State formally disengaged from any form of land regulation while informally shaping the customary system of land tenure known as the institution of *tutorat*. The *tutorat* system was putting the accent on the cultural obligations to give access to land to strangers, a sign of African fraternity, but at the same time it also favoured *autochthones* in the sense that complex moral obligations were deriving from the obtention of such right. I expand this particular point in the following chapter but it suffices here to say that the autochthonous claims on land were at least as much driven by the desire to continue benefiting from the non-autochthonous financial and in-kind rents as by the willingness to physically retake a portion of land. The 1998 law marked another shift, this time to a land regime that favoured the *autochthones* by basically putting on paper that foreigners had lost their right to own land. They could lease it, but if they did, they were expected to respect certain local arrangements (Chauveau, 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Chauveau & Richards, 2008a, 2008b).

Chauveau (2007) interprets these policy shifts not so much as a response to a demand for more security in land tenure or for the recognition of certain customary land rights, but rather as a response, from national political elites, to changing socioeconomic contexts that affect the production, taxation and redistribution of export crops. Such stakes he writes, are at the heart of land policies, and this is what leads political elites to favour certain groups in the population over others, at certain periods of time. Clearly, the 1998 law makes autochthony the main source of legitimate entitlement to land ownership, but this is mostly due to the socioeconomic context, it is not driven by ideology. Yet depending on how autochthony is conceptualized – and at the local level, it may be subject to worrying interpretations – the 1998 law opened up the possibility to exclude non-autochthonous Ivoirians from land ownership. But the passing of the law was largely perceived as necessary, in a context where local arrangements were increasingly contested, and where the existing system of land conflict mitigation was showing its limits. It is in fact during a conciliatory visit in the west of the country in 1997, following particularly violent skirmishes between autochthonous Guéré and allochthonous Baoulé, that President Bédié announced the project of reforming the rural land law. The law was unanimously adopted in 1998. All political parties had reached a consensus despite its anticipated short-term negative effects on a certain fringe of the population. The law set out drastic rules, one of them being that in the case of a previous land transaction between an *autochthone* and a foreigner, land titles had to be given back to the Ivoirian seller at the death of the foreign buyer; there was no possibility of transmission. But the law was never implemented in practice. Its implementation was stalled in the very beginning by the Gueï military Coup, and in rural areas, informal arrangements continue to prevail between native sellers and foreign buyers, these *petits papiers* being constantly re-negotiated over time, with tacit acceptance of the local authorities (Koné *et al.*, 1999).

The place of humanitarianism in Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire is not the first nation that pops into mind when thinking of countries that receive international humanitarian assistance. Its image of 'Ivoirian miracle' has remained quite anchored in the general public opinion, and despite having undergone general impoverishment for nearly three decades, the country still appears in rather good shape in comparison with its western and northern neighbours. Even at the peak of the crisis, Côte d'Ivoire has been the object of limited humanitarian attention. If international agencies started appearing in the country in the 1990s to provide assistance in dealing with the massive arrival of

Liberian refugees, by the end of 2003 there were only 13 international NGOs intervening as a result of the Ivoirian conflict: Médecins Sans Frontières (the French, Dutch and Belgian sections), Médecins du Monde, OXFAM, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children (the English and Swedish sections), Solidarités, Handicap International, CARE US and AFRICARE. If some other INGOs arrived later (notably the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the German NGO GTZ-International Service (GTZ-IS)[24]), the number remained close to fifteen. In comparison with the 108 international NGOs operating in Afghanistan, that was indeed not many.[25] The other usual international agencies active in the field were the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as well as the main UN humanitarian agencies: World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA).

If the UN humanitarian system differed in its mode of functioning from international NGOs (UN humanitarian agencies are led by a UN Humanitarian Coordinator, INGOs are independent), there were nonetheless mechanisms of coordination in place: INGOs' heads of mission were meeting every two weeks, the UN coordinated various sectoral groups on health, education, social cohesion, in which INGOs took part to share information and coordinate action, and there was a weekly UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Coordination Meeting (IAHCC), in which INGOs could take part once a month. In early 2004, on the initiative of the UNOCHA, humanitarian agencies institutionalized a regular meeting with donors' representatives present in the country. Humanitarian agencies were left relatively free from control and could usually circulate everywhere in Ivoirian territory without having to report their movements to any official institution. In late 2003, early 2004, most INGOs had to sign an official agreement with the Ivoirian State (*un accord d'établissement*) which provided them with several advantages, such as exemption from VAT on purchases, exemption from custom taxes when importing goods, exemption from tax on funds sent from abroad, and favoured treatment by the immigration services when entering and/or exiting the country.

On top of that humanitarian apparatus, international peacekeeping missions came along. Beyond their military aim of monitoring the ceasefire and move-

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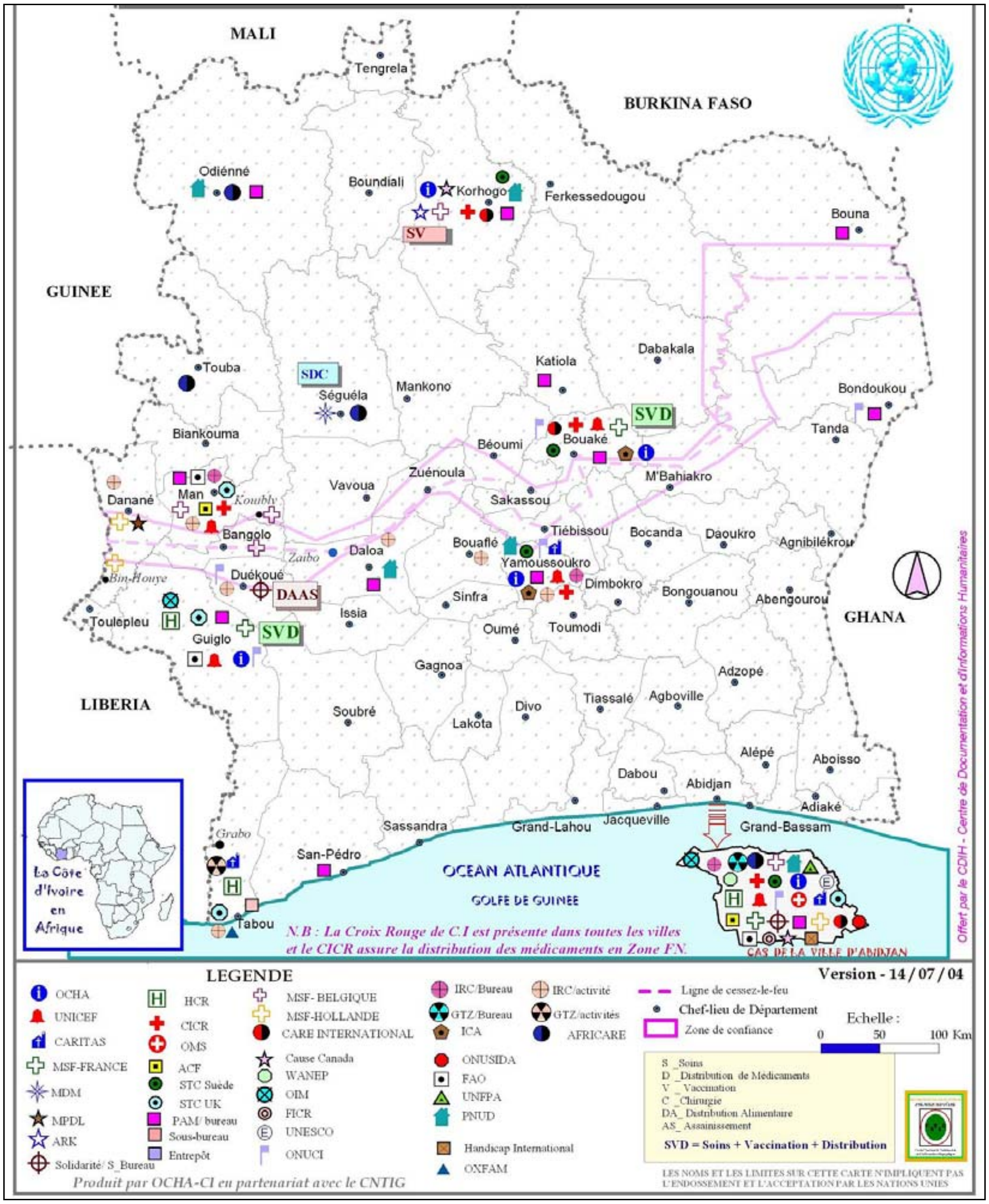
[24] GTZ-IS is distinct from the bilaterally funded GTZ, which stands for German Cooperation.

[25] http://afghanistan-analyst.org/ngo.aspx

Map 4.1 Areas of intervention of humanitarian agencies


MALI
BURKINA FASO
GUINEE
LIBERIA
GHANA
Tengrela
Odienné
Boundiali
Korhogo
Ferkessedougou
Bouna
SV
Touba
SDC
Séguéla
Mankono
Katiola
Dabakala
Bondoukou
Tanda
SVD
Biankouma
Béoumi
Bouaké
M'Bahiakro
Danané
Man
Koubly
Vavoua
Zuénoula
Sakassou
Bangolo
Zaïbo
Daloa
Bouaflé
Tiébissou
Yamoussoukro
Bocanda
Daoukro
Agnibilékrou
Bin-Houye
Duékoué
DAAS
Sinfra
Dimbokro
Bongouanou
Abengourou
Toulepleu
Guiglo
Issia
Oumé
Toumodi
Gagnoa
Adzopé
Soubré
Divo
Tiassalé
Agboville
Lakota
Alépé
Aboisso
Dabou
Abidjan
Adiaké
Grabo
Sassandra
Grand-Lahou
Jacqueville
Grand-Bassam
San-Pédro
Tabou
La Côte d'Ivoire en Afrique
OCEAN ATLANTIQUE
GOLFE DE GUINEE
N.B : La Croix Rouge de C.I est présente dans toutes les villes et le CICR assure la distribution des médicaments en Zone FN.
CAS DE LA VILLE D'ABIDJAN
Offert par le CDIH - Centre de Documentation et d'informations Humanitaires
LEGENDE
Version - 14/07/04
OCHA
UNICEF
CARITAS
MSF-FRANCE
MDM
MPDL
ARK
Solidarité/ S_Bureau
HCR
CICR
OMS
ACF
STC Suède
STC UK
PAM/ bureau
Sous-bureau
Entrepôt
MSF- BELGIQUE
MSF-HOLLANDE
CARE INTERNATIONAL
Cause Canada
WANEP
OIM
FICR
UNESCO
ONUCI
IRC/Bureau
GTZ/Bureau
ICA
ONUSIDA
FAO
UNFPA
PNUD
Handicap International
OXFAM
IRC/activité
GTZ/activités
AFRICARE
Ligne de cessez-le-feu
Chef-lieu de Département
Zone de confiance
Echelle :
0
50
100 Km
S _Soins
D _Distribution de Médicaments
V _Vaccination
C _Chirurgie
DA_ Distribution Alimentaire
AS_ Assainissement
SVD = Soins + Vaccination + Distribution
LES NOMS ET LES LIMITES SUR CETTE CARTE N'IMPLIQUENT PAS L'ENDOSSEMENT ET L'ACCEPTATION PAR LES NATIONS UNIES
Produit par OCHA-CI en partenariat avec le CNTIG

Source: UNOCHA, July 2004.

ments of armed groups, they also had a role to play in supporting humanitarian assistance by establishing the necessary security conditions in the areas of intervention. The first to step in were the French, from the very beginning of the Ivoirian crisis. In September 2002, France already had a military battalion stationed in Abidjan to honour the defence agreements signed in between France and Côte d'Ivoire on 24 August 1961. Following the start of the crisis, it gradually reinforced its presence on the ground to 4,000 men in early 2003. The French peacekeeping operation in Côte d'Ivoire was baptized *Opération Licorne* and clashed on a number of occasions with rebel forces when they breached ceasefires (1 December 2002 in Man, 21 December 2002 and 6 January 2003 in Duékoué, 4 April 2003 in Dibobli), and with government troops (6 November 2004 in Abidjan). Following the first ceasefire of the Ivoirian war (on 17 October 2002), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed at the end of October to send a military force of 2,000 men to monitor it, taking over this task from the French. The ECOWAS peacekeeping mission was composed of troops from Senegal (the leader country of the operation), Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Niger.

The first United Nation Security Council Resolution on Côte d'Ivoire welcomed the deployment of ECOWAS forces and French troops (a posteriori) and authorized them to take the necessary steps to guarantee the security of their personnel and the protection of civilians immediately threatened with physical violence within their zones of operation (Resolution 1464, 4 February 2003). The second UN Resolution on Côte d'Ivoire (Resolution 1479, 13 May 2003) established the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) for an initial period of six months. The MINUCI mandate was to facilitate the implementation by the Ivoirian parties of the Linas-Marcoussis agreement and also included a military component, as complement to the French and ECOWAS operations. After several extensions of the MINUCI, ECOWAS and French mandates, the UN Security Council eventually decided to establish a UN peacekeeping operation in Côte d'Ivoire (the ONUCI), which took over the missions previously carried out by the MINUCI and ECOWAS (Resolution 1528, 27 February 2004). The ONUCI consisted of military and civilian staff and its military strength was set to a maximum of 6,240 United Nations personnel.[26] Its initial mandate was for 12 months starting on 4 April 2004, and was extended several times as the peace process regularly stalled. ONUCI staff was gradually deployed, building on existing MINUCI and ECOWAS resources, with Bangladesh, Pakistan and Morocco being major contributors of military personnel. French forces remained deployed, under an independent chain of command, and continued to be mandated by the UN Security Council to provide support to the UN Operations in Côte d'Ivoire.

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[26] Since then, the authorized (man)strength of the ONUCI has been reviewed and changed by the Security Council on a number of occasions, depending on the situation in the country and the needs of the mission.

It is beyond the scope of this study to explore in depth all humanitarian interventions that have been implemented since the start of the Ivoirian crisis. But since one aim of this research is to explore local processes of demobilization, I must take a closer look at the general driver behind interventions aimed at reinserting ex-combatants.

DDR in Côte d'Ivoire

Reinsertion programmes for ex-combatants have become standard interventions in the aftermath of war and are usually part of a planned process that includes a Disarmament phase, a Demobilization phase and a Reinsertion component to facilitate the transition from soldiering to civilian life. The entire process is referred to as DDR and is widely fostered in international diplomacy. The Linas-Marcoussis agreement (23 January 2003) was the first document that addressed the question of DDR in Côte d'Ivoire. UN Resolution 1528 (27 February 2004), which set the ONUCI mandate, later included a disposition that empowered the ONUCI to assist the Government of National Reconciliation in this process. With regard to DDR, the ONUCI mandate was to help undertake the regrouping of all the Ivoirian forces in cantonment sites, then to guard weapons, ammunition and other military materiel handed over by the former combatants, and finally to provide support to implement the national DDR programme. According to ONUCI estimates (September 2006), the Ivoirian DDR process was expected to target 37,914 rebels (FAFN), 4,000 soldiers of the regular army who were recruited after 19 September 2002 (FANCI/FDS), 2,000 militia members from the western region (FLGO, AP-Wê, MILOCI, UPERGO, FS-Lima), 4,000 children associated with the above armed forces and groups, and 3,000 people considered 'at risk'. At the time of writing, DDR had not yet started for the main belligerents (the FANCI and the *Forces Nouvelles*), and militias had only been partially dismantled in the summer of 2006 (981 individuals).

While Chapter 9 empirically explores the humanitarian aspect of DDR by examining two instruments of reinsertion widely used in post-conflict politics to help resocialize young people temporarily drawn into armed groups (the supply of transitory financial safety nets and the provision of short-term vocational training), I focus here on the link such a type of 'humanitarian programming' has with the national political processes (and progress).

If we look at the chronology of DDR-related events, the general impression is that of a political yoyo. Negotiations between parties to the conflict progress, inter-belligerent communication resumes, a new peace agreement emerges (to usually confirm the road map of the previous ones), and eventually implementation fails because of some stalling somewhere (which leads to a hardening of positions, increased tensions and rupture of dialogue until the next mediator fosters another round of negotiations). In sum, the start and implementation of DDR seems to depend much more on political and military matters than on humanitarian principles.

- A political yoyo

Both Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III international agreements (respectively signed on 23 January 2003 and 29-30 July 2004) specifically addressed the issue of DDR and included a first plan of action. Prime Minister Diarra announced an initial starting date of 8 March 2004 which in the end appeared quite an unrealistic deadline since rebel forces were unlikely to agree to disarm before the deployment of the UN peacekeeping force on Ivoirian territory (this was expected to start in April). The Accra III Agreement set a second starting date on 15 October 2004:

> 'The [DDR] process will be conducted on the basis of a specific timetable, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the decisions adopted in this regard in Grand Bassam and Yamoussoukro. The DDR process shall include all paramilitary and militia groups. It is also agreed that the restructuring of the defence and security forces should be undertaken in accordance with the road map delineated at Grand Bassam.' (Accra III Agreement, 30 July 2004).

The initial idea was to split the disarmament phase in three stages (with phase 1 starting in central Côte d'Ivoire, followed by phase 2 targeting the west and the east, and then phase 3 ending with the disarmament of armed forces in the north and south). The National DDR Commission (CNDDR) suggested later that the process should start in the east and west of the country simultaneously. The initial road map was therefore updated and encompassed six areas: preliminary operations, awareness raising, regrouping of forces, disarmament, demobilization and a reinsertion/reintegration component. The DDR process did not start in October as planned, because the rebel forces announced that they were not prepared to disarm in the absence of political progress (namely, the other dispositions of the Accra III Agreement: the delegation of powers to the Prime Minister, the resumption of the work of the Government of National Reconciliation, and the criteria for eligibility to run for the presidency). The rebellion therefore stopped its collaboration with the CNDDR for a while. November 2004 was the period of violent clashes between the FANCI and the French forces and in early 2005, the CNDDR was restructured to ensure a more balanced representation. Rebel forces and the Ivoirian Army eventually resumed their cooperation with the Commission after more than one year of stalling. Unfortunately, the seminar to finalize the National DDR Plan was cancelled at the last minute because the FANCI and the French forces again entered into violent clashes in Bouaké (Boshoff, 2005, 2007).

The peace talks of Pretoria marked another benchmark in the Ivoirian peacebuilding process as they formally ‘ended’ the country's state of war (Pretoria Agreement, 6 April 2005). It was decided that FANCI and FAFN Chiefs of Staff would resume contact (they had had no official communication for a few months) and their first meeting was scheduled on 14 April to specifically discuss the implementation of the National DDR Plan. It was also recommended that specific suggestions be formulated with respect to the restructuring of the defence and security forces into a new army; the commitment to disarm and dismantle pro-government militias was also reiterated. At a follow-up meeting, the CNDDR proposed a third date for the start of the DDR process, 14 May 2005. The start of the process was conditioned to financial and technical aspects but also to the extent of progress made in the non-DDR aspects of the Pretoria agreement (Boshoff, 2005). The date was eventually postponed one month, following talks in Yamoussoukro that clarified certain practical DDR modalities. The start of disarmament of the regular troops (which designated all FAFN rebel recruits and all FANCI soldiers recruited after 19 September 2002 in the government army) was eventually scheduled to start on 27 June 2005 and to end on 10 August. It targeted 42,564 rebels and 5,500 FANCI forces, and included individuals who might eventually be susceptible to being integrated into the restructured Ivoirian army (AFP, 2005; Reuters, 2005).

Following violent clashes in Duékoué in early June 2005,[27] the start of the DDR process was once again delayed. The international community condemned the Duékoué massacre and pledged action to prevent a repetition of similar events (Declaration of Pretoria, 29 June 2005). The Declaration of Pretoria laid out another framework for DDR and for the first time set on paper that it would not be possible to hold the presidential elections in October 2005 without first demobilizing and disarming the armed parties involved in the conflict. DDR and political reform had to go hand in hand and the adoption of key laws[28] constituted a prerequisite for the start of the process. The disarming of the regular troops was rescheduled for the end of July 2005 under the assumption that the laws would be amended by then. On 9 July 2005, political talks were held in Yamoussoukro pledging all FAFN recruits and all FANCI soldiers recruited after September 2002 to start assembling at the agreed pre-cantonment sites (these talks became known as the Yamoussoukro Declaration). A timetable was also set for reforms to be passed. An additional aim of the Yamoussoukro talks was to foster the disarming and dismantling of the western pro-government militias and to have it completed by 20 August 2005. But if the adoption of reforms respected the chronogram set in Yamoussoukro, various laws were passed by presidential decree and remained contentious, which led to another political deadlock and to another refusal by the rebel forces to start the process of pre-cantonment. Arguing that some reforms were inadequate, the political wing of the rebellion withdrew from the peace process on 25 August 2005 (Unowa, 2005). With DDR failing to happen, the October 2005 presidential and legislative elections also did not happen as planned and the African Union had to extend by twelve months the mandate of the Ivoirian President and his Prime Minister. In October 2006, their mandate was extended by a year for a second time due to a continuing political deadlock, and a new election date was set for October 2007.

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[27] Forty-one people were killed in the villages of Guitrozon and Petit Duékoué, and 61 wounded by men armed with machetes and guns. Chapter 5 gives more contextual information on this particular event.

[28] The Pretoria Declaration had set a deadline, 15 July 2005, to amend seven key laws: related to the reform of the Independent Electoral Commission, the financing of political parties, the Ivorian nationality, the issue of national identity documents, the establishment of a human rights commission and the regulation of newspapers, radio and television.

Between August 2005 and April 2006, the FAFN and the FANCI Chiefs of Staff had cut all lines of communication. In early April 2006, disarmament talks resumed among them under the mediation of the African Union Chairman, Congolese President Sassou Nguesso. It was then decided that both the processes of disarmament and identification would be conducted concomitantly instead of one before the other (ICG, 2006; UN, 2008[29]). The FAFN agreed to start disarming after the dismantling of the pro-government militias and the dismantling of the western militias eventually started at the end of July 2006, but was cut short due to the low weapons yield (Chapter 9 provides more information on the dismantlement of pro-government militia elements, while this section focuses on the disbanding of the regular troops, the post-19-September FANCI and the FAFN). Followed another political stalemate, another extension of the presidential mandate (the third one) and the controversial passing of UN Resolution 1721 which transferred important presidential prerogatives to the Prime Minister. Specifically, it enabled the Prime Minister to legislate independently of the President and the Parliament, and to exert ‘necessary authority’ over armed forces (UN Resolution 1721, 2006). In reaction to this diplomatic confiscation of power, President Gbagbo proposed to engage in a direct dialogue with the *Forces Nouvelles*, as much as possible stripped of international influences. This new position led to the Ouagadougou talks on 5 February 2007, and to a new political agreement, the *Accord Politique de Ouagadougou* (APO, 4 March 2007). With respect to DDR, the APO reiterated its attachment to the Yamoussoukro Declaration, to the last version of the DDR timetable, and to the *Plan Conjoint des Opérations*. Two new national institutions were created to implement the DDR process (the CNDDR was dissolved), with the military components falling under the responsibility of the Centre de Commandement Intégré (CCI), and the reinsertion elements becoming part of the PNRRC *(Programme National de Réinsertion et de Réhabilitation Communautaire).* On 30 July 2007, President Gbagbo visited the rebellion stronghold of Bouaké (the first time he stepped into rebel territory since the start of the war) and attended a weapon-burning ceremony that symbolically announced the start of the disarmament process. A few weeks later, a first programme for the voluntary demobilization of FAFN recruits started in Bouaké, and on 22 December 2007, joint parades of rebel and government troops in Tiébissou and Djébonoua marked the official start of the DDR process for the regular troops. Government troops and the FAFN were expected to move away from their front-line positions and to start handing over weapons. On 24 January 2008, the FANCI Chief of Staff General Mangou announced the withdrawal of 12,000 FANCI soldiers from the front line and the completion of their cantonment in barracks. Shortly after, the rebel army Chief of Staff General Bakayoko announced the start of the FAFN cantonment process. By mid-March, 118 rebels had officially surrendered their weapons. The implementation delay in rebel-controlled territory was attributed to a lack of structures to house the combatants. In the south, barracks were already functional, so it was relatively easy to gather the elements.

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[29] Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/pp.aspx?c=glKWLeMTIsG&b=2876173&printmode=1

These positive moves of late 2007, early 2008, could not hide the fact that DDR was again faltering. In June 2008, FAFN elements rioted in Bouaké over delayed disarmament payouts, mixed FAFN/army brigades blocked the road between Yamoussoukro and Bouaké in protest of the non-payment, and in August the same year, 300 rebels demonstrated for the same reason. At the end of 2008, the DDR process had again come to a halt and the election date of 30 November 2008 was once again postponed. The main contribution of this DDR-related chronology has perhaps been to strikingly bring to the fore the intertwinement of political progress and humanitarian objectives.

- The process on paper

Two main documents define DDR practice in Côte d'Ivoire: the *Plan Conjoint des Operations* (PCO) signed in Yamoussoukro on 9 January 2004 by both FANCI and FAFN Chiefs of Staff, by the impartial forces (the then ECOWAS and Licornes), and by the Head of the CNDDR (the PCO was last revised in May 2005); and the National DDR Programme, which includes a timetable adopted on 9 July 2005 by both FANCI and FAFN army Chiefs of Staff (the Yamoussoukro *chronogram*). The PCO clearly states that all combatants have to surrender their weapon(s), including FANCI and FAFN recruits, but also any individual in possession of arms. Disarmament and demobilization operations are supposed to be carried out based on a list of recruits and a list of equipment has to be provided by both belligerents. The National Commission for DDR has the overall responsibility to carry on the process (PCO, 2004). The process includes four steps: 1) Cantonment; 2) Disarmament; 3) Demobilization; 4) Reinsertion. 'Cantonment' is the process by which armed forces regroup in a secure compound to demobilize and disarm, 'Disarmament' consists of the collection, control and disposal of weapons, 'Demobilization' is the process by which armed forces downsize or completely disband, and 'Reinsertion' refers to the process by which militarized individuals make the transition from military to civilian life. The terms are defined more extensively in Chapter 9.

Seventeen possible cantonment posts were identified by FAFN and FDS Chiefs of Staff (they were called the 'DDR zones'). Should the official DDR start for the regular troops (if ever), disarmament and demobilization operations were expected to take place in eleven of these zones.[30] Each zone would in theory consist of four sites: one site for registering, disarming combatants and relieving them of equipment; another site for demobilization; quarter areas for the ones re-entering the army (also called *casernement* site); and a specific site for under-age combatants. In the first site, combatants would be welcome, disarmed, registered, photographed, and examined by a doctor. They would then be either oriented to a demobilization site or to *casernement* barracks. There, demobilized combatants would fill in a questionnaire where they would express their wishes and clarify their main skills, based on which the CNDDR would determine what measure(s) of reinsertion would fit them best. From the day of registration to their final orientation, it was expected that each recruit would stay no longer than five days in a DDR zone (PCO, 2004).

The National DDR Plan entitled demobilized combatants to a safety net package of 499,500 CFA francs (EUR 760) for six months, disbursed in three installments: 25% paid upon demobilization, 25% paid 45 days later, and 50% paid 90 days after demobilization. The package was planned to be distributed at a regional office, upon presentation of a demobilization ID card. Ex-combatants were then expected to be oriented depending on their choice of activity and depending on whether they would want to be transferred back to their hometowns or villages of origin, or whether they would prefer to settle elsewhere. The

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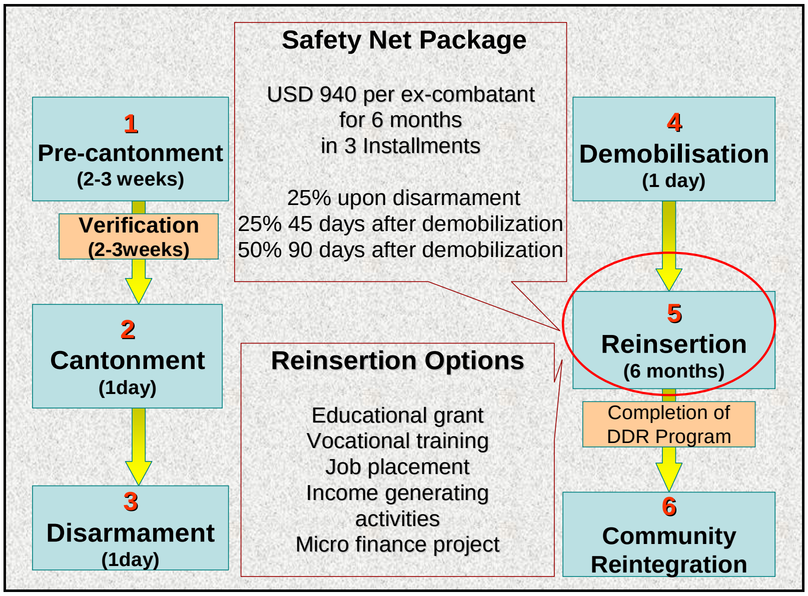
[30] In the northern part of the country (controlled by the *Force Nouvelles*) there were 5 DDR zones: Bouaké, Bouna, Korhogo, Man and Séguéla. In the southern part of the country (controlled by the FANCI/FDS) there were six: Abidjan, Guiglo, Daloa, Yamoussoukro, Bondoukou and San Pedro (UN, 2008). Most of these zones had undergone extensive rehabilitation works at the time I was doing fieldwork, and ONUCI had already allocated some containers at these DDR sites to store and secure the ammunitions and arms that would be collected during the disarmament process.

Figure 4.1 The planned Ivoirian DDR process


Safety Net Package
USD 940 per ex-combatant
for 6 months
in 3 Installments
25% upon disarmament
25% 45 days after demobilization
50% 90 days after demobilization
1
Pre-cantonment
(2-3 weeks)
Verification
(2-3weeks)
2
Cantonment
(1day)
3
Disarmament
(1day)
4
Demobilisation
(1 day)
5
Reinsertion
(6 months)
Completion of
DDR Program
6
Community
Reintegration
Reinsertion Options
Educational grant
Vocational training
Job placement
Income generating
activities
Micro finance project

Source: ONUCI, September 2006

plan also foresaw individual advice on available reinsertion/reintegration opportunities. It was expected that demobilized recruits would receive enough information on possible educational grants, short vocational training, job placement, income generating activities and possibilities for micro-credit. More substantial financial assistance was also proposed for the ones wishing to resume their studies (up to 200,000 CFA francs), those who would prefer to engage in technical training (supplying of tools kits), and those who would opt to set up their own business (an individual loan up to 180,000 plus 150,000 CFA francs for the purchase of equipment).[31] It is a real pity these generous measures were never applied in practice.

- The linking of funding to political progress

Curiously, the issue of DDR funding has hardly been front-page news and it is only recently that (partial) funding has been secured. What dominated the Ivoirian media and the political discourse since early 2003 has been the political yoyo: Should DDR precede the identification process? Should it run concomitantly with it? Is DDR completion a condition for holding elections? But while simple calculations would show that to be able to provide 40,000 combatants with the agreed safety net, this would imply the quick disbursement of USD 37.6 million in cash, finance-related issues were rather downplayed.[32] The cost of DDR was estimated at USD 150 million for the period 2005-2008, and funding was far from being secured before the second half of 2007, boosted by the apparent success of the APO and the World Bank announcement in April that Côte d'Ivoire had become eligible for a loan. The agreed scheme was that the Ivoirian government would contribute 30%, international donors 20%, and the World Bank the remaining 50% by providing an USD 80-100 million grant.[33] At the end of 2006, approved multilateral and bilateral contributions amounted to USD 16 million[34] (plus another USD 6 million funding DDR related projects). The World Bank had not yet disbursed its contribution due to unpaid arrears in debt payment. This is in fact a disturbing example of political manipulation of aid: it is indeed quite strange to make the payment of debt arrears conditional to financial support for a peace-building process. It is then only in July 2007 that the World Bank reiterated its commitment to partially fund the DDR process. It publicly announced the approval of a USD 120 million IDA grant in support of the government's crisis recovery programme.[35] A third of the grant was directed to DDR programming and specifically to the financing of the economic reintegration component of ex-combatants, youths associated with armed groups, and youths at risk (USD 40 million). Most of the operating costs of the PNRRC were supposed to be covered by it. Another important source of funding for DDR was secured in July 2008 when Arab donors agreed to loan USD 463 million for infrastructure development and reinsertion of ex-combatants (ICG, 2008; World Bank, 2007).

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[31] http://www.unddr.org/countryprogrammes.php?c=51#approach: accessed Jan. 23 2009.

Concluding remarks

Beyond the fact that this section presented an historical overview of Ivoirian national political processes and that it linked these to broad processes of mobilization and demobilization, the genuine attempt of the chapter was to place contentious movements into perspective by exploring the extent to which particular mobilizing and demobilizing contexts had been shaped by their historicity, in order to avoid overestimating its effects. I was therefore particularly careful when suggesting causal relations, especially when reflecting on the ethnic roots of conflict and/or on the ‘citizenship crisis’ argument. Meso and micro political processes being inherently complementary, the next chapter continues this contextualization exercise but this time by exploring the extent to which particular mobilizing and demobilizing contexts had been shaped by their immediate environments. This necessary complement eventually strengthens the analytical grounds to reflect on the real place historicity took in these processes, compared to other factors perhaps more contingent and circumstantial. As already mentioned, the mere fact that national level politics did not have the same effects in all Ivoirian regions illustrates well the importance of local contexts in influencing local modes of action. Some areas were far more explosive than others, and if self-defence groups did not only emerge in the western region and also developed elsewhere,[36] the violent and enduring forms they took in certain locations show that some areas were more receptive than others to some forms of populist rhetoric. The western context, with its history of immigration, contested land rights and structural intercommunity violence, was particularly receptive to the instrumentalization of the autochthonous discourse towards hostile ends. Chapter 5 presents the main aspects the conflict took in the western region and the micro-ethnographic contexts of the geographical areas under study.

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[32] The amount of the safety net package in Côte d'Ivoire (USD 940 or EUR 760) has been subject to controversy when compared to the amount used in Liberia and Sierra Leone (USD 300).

[33] On April 2007, the World Bank agreed to lend USD 100 million to Côte d'Ivoire for disarming recruits in exchange for the repayment of past debt interest. But it was not until 17 July 2007 that the World Bank announced the approval of this USD 20 million IDA grant. The grant was meant as general support for the government's crisis recovery programme (ICG, 2007).

[34] The multilateral and bilateral donors who committed to contribute to DDR financing are UNDP, UNICEF, France, the EU, Japan, Denmark and Sweden.

[35] The World Bank's programme had been suspended in Côte d'Ivoire due to the start of the crisis in 2002 and the government failing to pay arrears in 2004. The grant approved in 2007 is known under the name 'Post-Conflict Assistance Project' (PCAP).The PCAP represents part of the World Bank's increasing re-engagement in the country since the signing of the APO. The World Bank is working closely with its partners, including the United Nations system, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund in aiding the Ivoirian authorities make the transition from war to peace.

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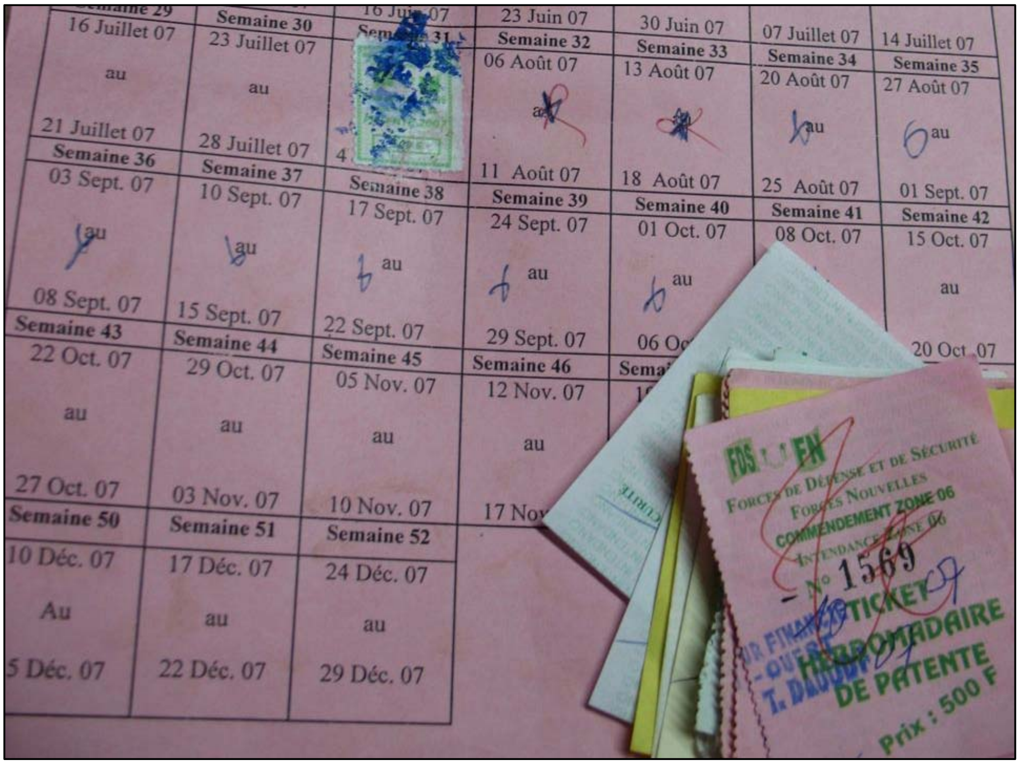
[36] See the works of Banégas (2008) and Chauveau & Bobo (2003).

Photograph 3: Market scene, Man



		16 Juin 07	23 Juin 07	30 Juin 07	07 Juillet 07	14 Juillet 07
Semaine 29 16 Juillet 07 au 21 Juillet 07	Semaine 30 23 Juillet 07 au 28 Juillet 07	Semaine 31 [illegible] 4	Semaine 32 06 Août 07 au 11 Août 07	Semaine 33 13 Août 07 au 18 Août 07	Semaine 34 20 Août 07 au 25 Août 07	Semaine 35 27 Août 07 au 01 Sept. 07
Semaine 36 03 Sept. 07 au 08 Sept. 07	Semaine 37 10 Sept. 07 au 15 Sept. 07	Semaine 38 17 Sept. 07 au 22 Sept. 07	Semaine 39 24 Sept. 07 au 29 Sept. 07	Semaine 40 01 Oct. 07 au 06 Oc	Semaine 41 08 Oct. 07	Semaine 42 15 Oct. 07 au 20 Oct .07
Semaine 43 22 Oct. 07 au 27 Oct. 07	Semaine 44 29 Oct. 07 au 03 Nov. 07	Semaine 45 05 Nov. 07 au 10 Nov. 07	Semaine 46 12 Nov. 07 au 17 Nov	Semai 1		
Semaine 50 10 Déc. 07 Au 5 Déc. 07	Semaine 51 17 Déc. 07 au 22 Déc. 07	Semaine 52 24 Déc. 07 au 29 Déc. 07				

FDS FN
FORCES DE DÉFENSE ET DE SÉCURITÉ
FORCES NOUVELLES
COMMENDEMENT ZONE 06
INTENDANCE ZONE 06
N° 1569
TICKET HEBDOMADAIRE DE PATENTE
Prix : 500 F

Photograph 4: Rebel taxation on small businesses, Man

5

The immediate context

The way western Côte d'Ivoire has been presented since 2002 in the local press and in international reports has been somewhat misleading. The region tends to be depicted as a homogeneous area, differences are downplayed, and what is suggested is a certain form of uniqueness: in comparison with what the other regions of Côte d'Ivoire have experienced in the past decade, the situation in the west is supposedly more extreme, more violent, more militarized, and these observations led many analysts to assume that the west was likely to undergo a process of unique societal changes. The 'Ivoirian Wild West', which stretches between Danané, Man, Duékoué, and Toulepleu (see Maps 5.1 to 5.4), has become a name commonly used to label the area (BBC News, 2005), and countless reports perpetuate the myth of a region doomed to violence, cultural divide and inter-ethnic tensions (Agence France Presse, 2005; BBC News, 2004a, 2004b). It has in fact become quite a challenge to reverse these perceptions.

But there are many wests within the same boundaries. Not only in terms of territorial sovereignty – between 2002 and 2010, the towns of Danané, Mahapleu, Man, Logoualé were controlled by rebel forces; Duékoué, Guiglo, Blolequin, Toulepleu, Zouan-Hounien were in government-controlled area; and Bangolo, Zou and Diéouzon used to be part of the buffer zone in between[1] – but also because the sub-areas display quite different characteristics in terms of ethnic composition, migration dynamics, economic activities and political affinities. The Yacoubas are the autochthonous population in Man and Danané, the Guéré area comprises Guiglo, Blolequin and Toulepleu, and the Wobés live on the outskirts of a rebel stronghold, when they have more traditional affinities with the counter-insurgent movement. It is worth noting that if these autochthonous groups had been mapped in 2007, they would not have shared the same borders as their local administrator. Many people of Wé origin found themselves split by the ex-front line in fact, and I heard many anecdotal examples of individual allegiances that defied conventional keys of interpretation (Yacoubas fighting on the same side as Guérés for instance). This chapter presents the main aspects the conflict took in the western region and the main features of the ethnographic context. The Man and Guiglo areas are particularly detailed at the end of the chapter, since they were chosen as terrain for doing fieldwork.

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[1] The buffer zone here refers to the *Zone de Confiance*, already described in a previous footnote.

The general atmosphere:
Chronology of violent events in the west (September 2002-2007)

Starting with a chronology of violent events is key to helping the reader grasp the general ambiance that prevailed in the west through the different phases of conflict. Western residents have been particularly affected by acts of extreme cruelty during the six months of warfare that lasted from November 2002 to May 2003, when belligerent parties were scrambling for territory with the help of particularly brutal allies. Unluckily for them, they have not been spared in the years that followed, when the stage of open warfare was replaced by widespread banditism and by a vicious circle of intercommunity violence, which connected many times to enduring war factions. If bloodshed caused by acts of war only lasted a few months, killings, petty crime, fear and general mistrust have continued over the years, fueled by the regular occurrence of violent events in the western region, which often took the form of inter-ethnic clashes.

Far from being exhaustive, the chronology presented below (Table 5.1) puts to paper a certain number of benchmarks and is used as a way to reflect on the turmoil that reigned in the region since the start of the war in September 2002 (a longer version is presented in Appendix 1 with the detailed sources documenting the events). The chronology is particularly illustrative of the shift from a classical form of warfare composed of attack/defence operations to large-scale inter-ethnic violence; it was already a structural issue before the war, which the 2002-2003 events exacerbated. In Guéré government-controlled territory, violence especially targeted the non-autochthonous populations, Ivoirians and foreign nationals alike (Burkinakés, Baoulés, Dioulas, etc.). In the *Zone de Confiance*, where no clear authority prevailed during the period under study, the local prerogatives of the non-*autochthones* were instead strengthened, and they started playing a leading role in local security matters (see for instance in the chronology the particularly violent clashes between Guérés and Burkinabés in Toa Zéo in 2006 and the involvement of the *dozo* brotherhood[2] in the process). The chronology shows well that in the rural societies under study, any type of petty crime began to be interpreted as an act of war and was systematically framed along ethnic lines, calling for a 'group' response and entering thereby a vicious cycle of retaliation. I come back to these remarks later in the chapter, when reflecting on the diffusion of violence in those rural societies. To clarify the outline below, I use the terms *autochthone, allochthone* and *allogene* when needed, using the definitions clarified in an earlier footnote (Chapter 1, footnote 6).

Table 5.1 Chronology indicative of the atmosphere of violence peculiar to western Côte d'Ivoire (2002-2007)

Map 5.1	7 October 2002	As the military front moves West, autochthonous Guéré youths are mobilized by local authorities to protect their villages. Escalating violence against *allogene* Burkinabés living in the area (especially on the Duékoué-Kouibli axis, villages of Blodi, Iruzon, Diahouin, Toa Zeo, and Kouibli). Burkinabés flee en masse.
	3-4 November	Rebel forces attack the local firm Sucrivoire in Borotou-Koro, 150 km north of Man, taking 42 tons of sugar, cash and various equipment.
	28 Nov.-1 Dec.	Rebel forces take the towns of Man, Danané and Zouan-Hounien on 28 November. Man is recaptured 2 days later by loyalist forces and cleansing operations follow (arbitrary arrests, summary executions, etc.).
	2 December	Moving south along the Liberian border, rebel forces take Toulepleu.
	6-7 December	Rebel forces then move east and take the town of Blolequin. Five days later (12 December), loyalist forces retake the town aided by autochthonous militias.
	19 December	Man is recaptured by rebel forces. Cleansing operations.
	20 December	Rebel forces take Bangolo and the villages nearby (Blodi, Iruzon, Toazeo, Sibabli and Kouibli). It is now the turn of

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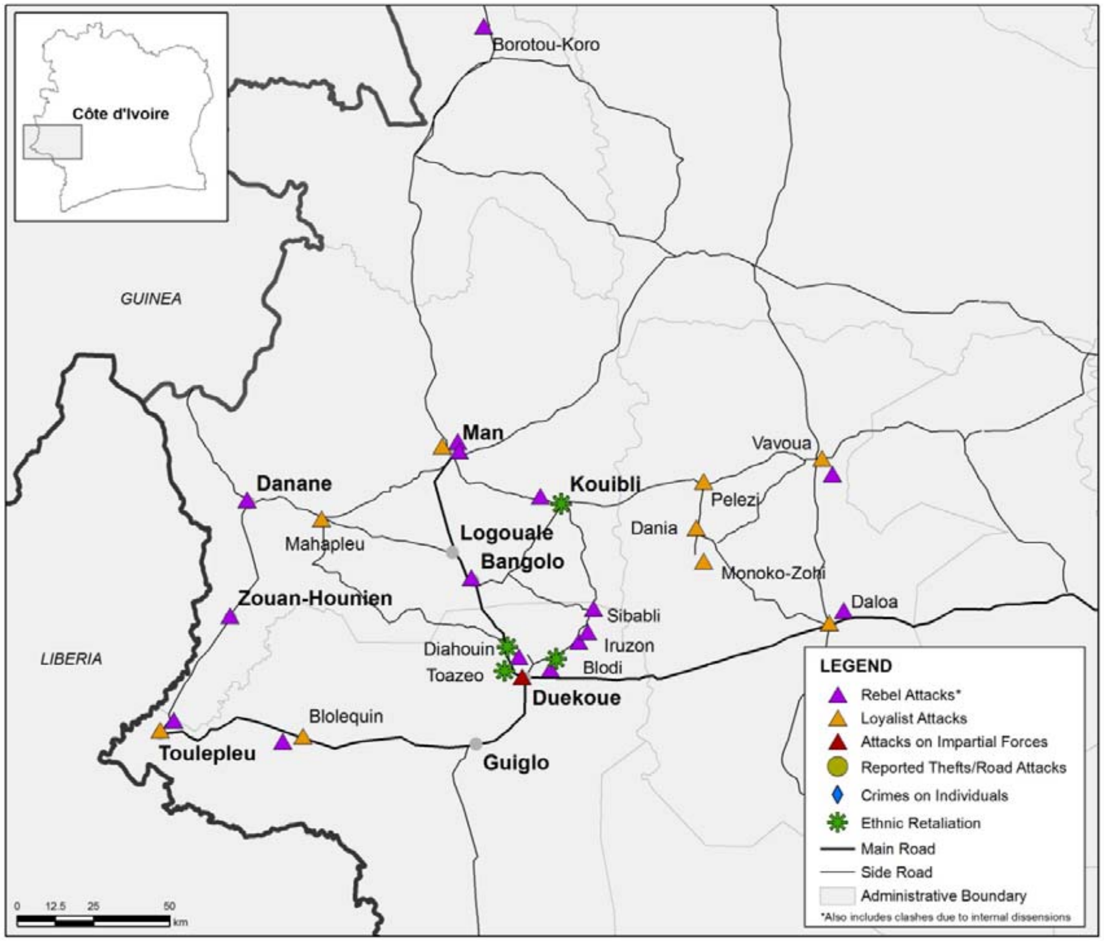
[2] The *dozo* designates a group of traditional hunters from north of Côte d'Ivoire, armed with hunting rifles and believed to have mystical powers. Since the early 1990s, they were commonly employed as local security providers thoughout the country, in both rural and urban areas. Armed with shotguns, mystic amulets, and wearing traditional clothing, they were widely praised for significantly reducing crime rates and were notably used by political parties to secure their respective rallies. Fearing that the dozo would get out of control, Bédié physically confined their activity in 1998 by prohibiting them by law to exercise their activity in another region than their region of origin (Bassett, 2004). Within the framework of the current war, the dozo phenomenon has been revived and dozos have been increasingly contracted by local authorities to provide local security – especially in the *Zone de Confiance* and in the rebel-controlled areas. The agreement is generally formalized through a contract signed between the dozo and the local authorities (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

		the Guéré *autochthones* to flee the area en masse.
Map 5.2	10-12 Jan. 2003	Loyalist forces retake Toulepleu. Surroundings are looted and set ablaze.
	14 January	Ethnic tensions explode in Guéré territory (Bagohouo, Nidrou, Yrouzon, Blodi, Bahé Sébon). Circumstantial alliances occur between *allogene* Burkinabés and rebel forces to fight autochthonous youths.
	25 February	Attacks on Baoulé farmers (allochthonous) in the area of Guiglo.
	7 March	At least 60 civilians are killed in Bangolo by Liberian mercenaries. The Dioula quarter (allochthonous) is targeted in particular.
	22-23 March	The village of Dah, 9 km southwest of Bangolo, is attacked at night. It is locally interpreted as an act of retaliation for the Bangolo event.
	6-14 April	Loyalist forces launch a major offensive along the Liberian border between Toulepleu and Danané and recapture Zouan-Hounien (6 April). One week later, rebel forces retake Zouan-Hounien.
	6 May	Despite the ceasefire (3 May), loyalist forces attack rebel positions and retake the town of Zouan-Hounien for the second time.
	23 May	Impartial forces are deployed in the west to monitor the ceasefire. A buffer zone is instituted, the *Zone de Confiance* (ZdC), which separates government and rebel territory by a neutral area.
Map 5.3	20 November	Heavy fighting between autochthonous Guérés and *allogene* Burkinabés in the village of Zou, in the ZdC.
	8 January 2004	Guéré youths raid Kahin (in the ZdC), a village populated in majority by Baoulés (allochthonous) and Burkinabés *(allogene)*. Eight people are killed in the attack.
	18 February	Three Burkinabé farmers *(allogene)* are killed in Duékoué.
	20-27 April	Fighting between autochthonous Guérés and *allogene dozos* in the villages of Diéouzon and Kouibli.
	18-19 May	A Togolese *(allogene)* is found dead in Guiglo.
	2 June	A Dioula taxi driver (allochthonous) is found dead in Guiglo.
	1 June 2005	The villages of Petit-Duékoué and Guitrozon are attacked by armed men, leaving 41 dead and 60 wounded, all of autochthonous Guéré origin.
	6 June	Reprisals immediately follow. Three Dioulas and 1 Burkinabé are killed by autochthonous militias in Duékoué. Later, 4 Guérés are attacked.
Map 5.4	5-6 Febr. 2006	Unidentified armed men attack the encampment of Peehapa (part of the village of Mona), 17km from Guiglo. Twelve *autochthones* are killed.
	13 February	In retaliation for the Peehapa killings, Guéré youths from the villages of Mona and Zouan plot to launch an attack targeting the Burkinabé camp in Guiglo. Local authorities intervene and contain the youths.
	10 April	First day of disappearance of a Baoulé farmer (allochthonous), last seen near Petit Guiglo.

	1 May	Guérés accuse Baoulés (allochthonous) and Burkinabés *(allogene)* of having set fire to several autochthonous plantations in the village of Gohouo Zagna, east of Bangolo.
	3 May	A Burkinabé is reported missing in Gohouo Zagna.
	4 May	Three autochthonous Guérés are found dumped in a hole, hands tied behind their backs, stabbed to death. Four other Guérés fall into an ambush in the same area but succeed to escape and alert the impartial forces.
	20 May	Armed individuals attack a passenger truck in Saada, 20 km of Guiglo.
	29 May	Armed men attack two buses between Bangolo and Guehiebly.
	24 June	2 Burkinabé children aged 3 and 6 *(allogene)* found dead in Douekpé.
	27-28 June	French forces discover the corpse of 7 *autochthones* in two villages near Douekpé. Fifteen are wounded. It is interpreted as an act of retaliation for the murder of the two *allogene* children.
	Early November	Toa Zéo *allogene* Burkinabé leader calls on the dozo brotherhood to protect his community. The decision is contested and leads to internal clashes (1 dead).
	19-20 Nov.	Tensions escalated when the *dozos* move from Toa Zéo to Blodi. Autochthonous militias become involved, leading to 6 deaths, the burning down of an *allogene* encampment, and the emptying of nearby villages.
	4 December	In Téapleu, an accident between a bus and a motorbike degenerates into ethnic conflict between Yacoubas and Dioulas. Some houses are set alight.
	8 January	Several coffee/cocoa plantations located between Duékoué and Blodi are burnt down, allegedly by *autochthones*.
not mapped	14 January	Six young autochthonous Guéré of the village of Baoubly are declared missing after having gone fishing near a Baoulé encampment.
	23-24 January	Two persons of Baoulé origin *(allochthone)* are lynched in the village of Baoubli, between Bangolo and Logoualé. A Burkinabé *(allogene)* is stabbed to death near Baoubli.
	25 January	A 90-year-old Guéré *autochthone* is found dead on his plantation, feet bound and beheaded.
	23 May 2007	Allochthonous and *allogene dozos* kill four thieves in the Zou area.

Source: See Appendix 1 for the detailed sources.

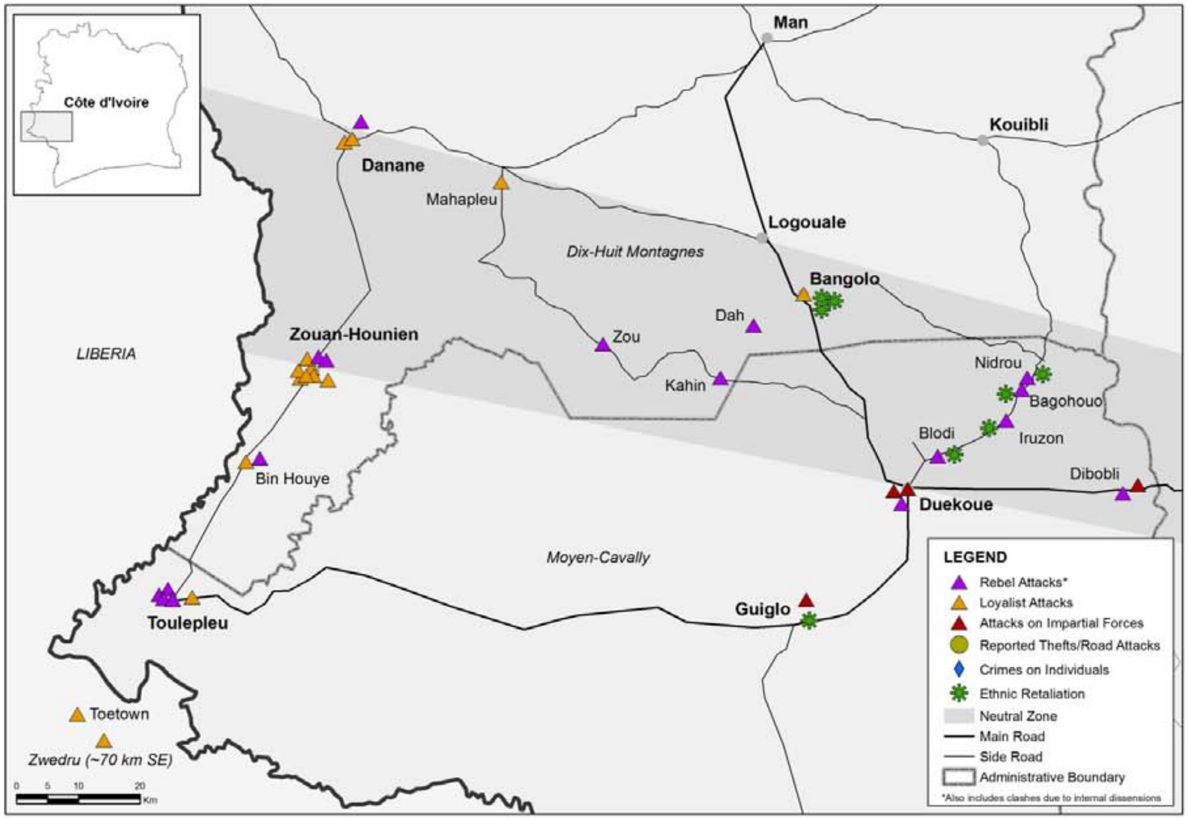
Map 5.1 Types of violent events in western Côte d'Ivoire from 19 September to 31 December 2002


Côte d'Ivoire
GUINEA
LIBERIA
Borotou-Koro
Man
Danane
Kouibli
Vavoua
Pelezi
Dania
Monoko-Zohi
Mahapleu
Logouale
Bangolo
Zouan-Hounien
Sibabli
Iruzon
Blodi
Diahouin
Toazeo
Duekoue
Daloa
Blolequin
Toulepleu
Guiglo
LEGEND
▲ Rebel Attacks*
△ Loyalist Attacks
🔺 Attacks on Impartial Forces
● Reported Thefts/Road Attacks
◆ Crimes on Individuals
✳ Ethnic Retaliation
Main Road
Side Road
Administrative Boundary
*Also includes clashes due to internal dissensions
0 12.5 25 50
km

Place	Date	Event
Bangolo	20 Dec 02	▲
Blodi	7 Oct 02	✳
Blodi	20 Dec 02	▲
Blolequin	6 Dec 02	▲
	12 Dec 02	△
Borotou Koro	3 Nov 02	▲
Daloa	11 Oct 02	▲
	14 Oct 02	△
Danane	28 Nov 02	▲
Dania	27 Nov 02	△
Diahouin	7 Oct 02	✳
Duekoue	21 Dec 02	🔺
Iruzon	20 Dec 02	✳
	7 Oct 02	▲
Kouibli	7 Oct 02	✳
	20 Dec 02	▲
Mahapleu	18 Dec 02	△
Man	28 Nov 02	▲
	30 Nov 02	△
	29 Dec 02	▲
Monoko-Zohi	27 Nov 02	△
	27 Nov 02	△
Pelezi	27 Nov 02	△
Sibabli	20 Dec 02	▲
Toazeo	7 Oct 02	✳
	20 Dec 02	▲
Toulepleu	2 Dec 02	▲
	4 Dec 02	△
Vavoua	27 Oct 02	▲
	27 Nov 02	△
Zouan-Hounien	28 Nov 02	▲

Source: Compiled by the author based on a chronology of violent events using GIS, 2010

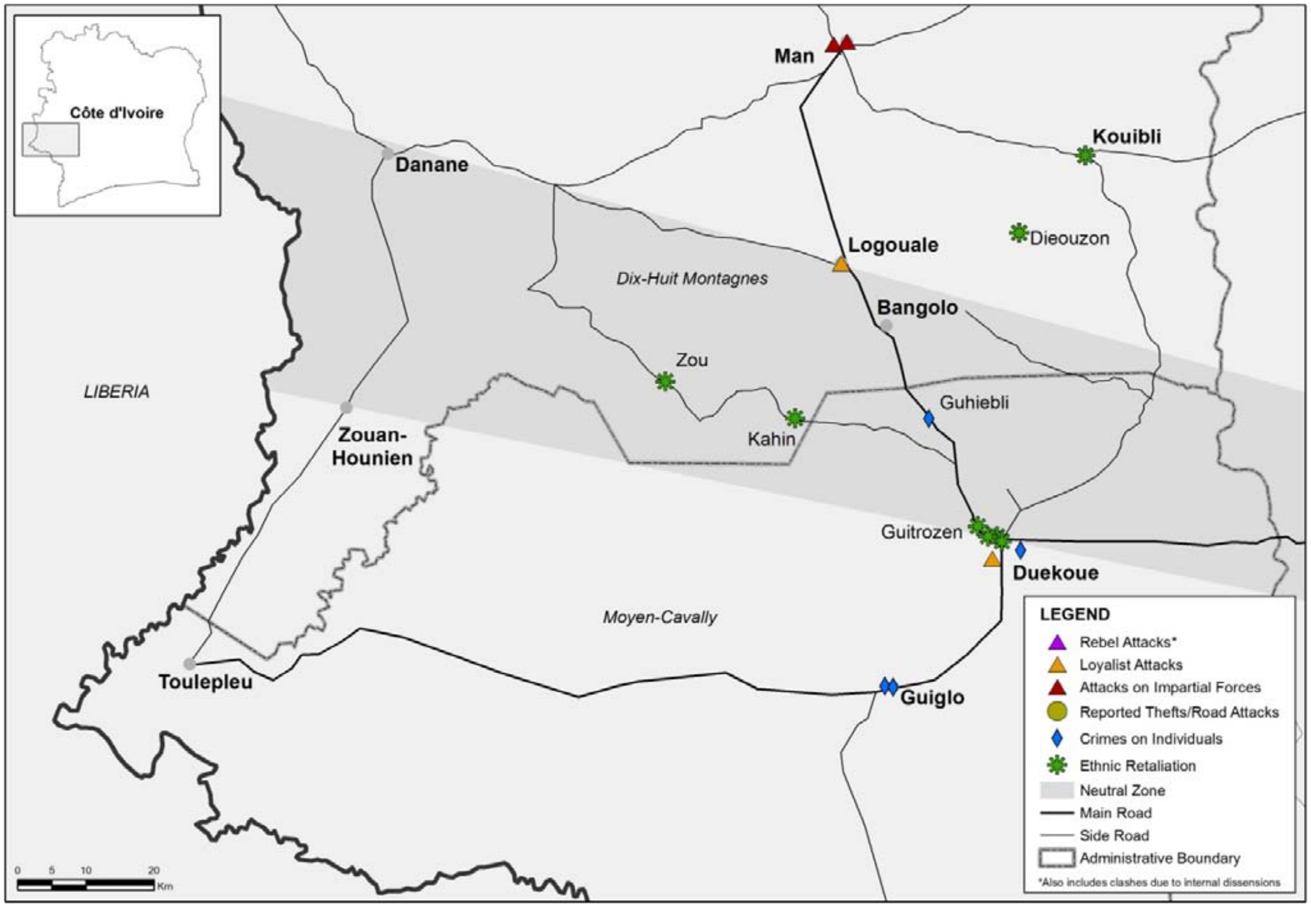
Map 5.2 Types of violent events in western Côte d'Ivoire – 1 January 2003 until the *Zone de Confiance* being set up (23 May 2003


Côte d'Ivoire
Man
Kouibli
Danane
Mahapleu
Logouale
Dix-Huit Montagnes
Bangolo
Dah
Zou
Kahin
Zouan-Hounien
LIBERIA
Nidrou
Bagohouo
Blodi
Iruzon
Dibobli
Bin Houye
Duekoue
Moyen-Cavally
Guiglo
Toulepleu
Toetown
Zwedru (~70 km SE)
0 5 10 20 Km
LEGEND
🟣 Rebel Attacks*
🟠 Loyalist Attacks
🔴 Attacks on Impartial Forces
🟢 Reported Thefts/Road Attacks
🔷 Crimes on Individuals
✳ Ethnic Retaliation
▨ Neutral Zone
Main Road
Side Road
Administrative Boundary
*Also includes clashes due to internal dissensions

Place	Date	Event
Bagohouo	14 Jan 03	🟣
	14 Jan 03	✳
Bangolo	1 Feb 03	✳
	7 Mar 03	🟠
	7 Mar 03	✳
	4-8 May 03	✳
Bin Houye	13-14 Apr 03	🟣
	22-23 Apr 03	🟠
Blodi	14 Jan 03	🟣
	14 Jan 03	✳
Dah	22-23 Mar 03	🟣
Danane	6 Apr 03	🟣
	6 Apr 03	🟠
	15 Apr 03	🟠
Dibobli	4 Apr 03	🔴
	4 Apr 03	🟣
Duekoue	6 Jan 03	🔴
	6 Jan 03	🟣
	1-2 Apr 03	🔴
Guiglo	25 Feb 03	✳
	8 May 03	🔴
Iruzon	14 Jan 03	🟣
	14 Jan 03	✳
Kahin	6 Jan 03	🟣
Mahapleu	15 Apr 03	🟠
Nidrou	14 Jan 03	🟣
	14 Jan 03	✳
Toetown	3 Mar 03	🟠
Toulepleu	10-12 Jan 03	🟠
	10 Feb 03	🟠
	6 Apr 03	🟠
	18 Apr 03	🟣
Vavoua	3 Apr 03	🟣
	15 Apr 03	🟠
Zou	1 Jan 03	🟣
Zouan-Hounien	6 Apr 03	🟣
	6 Apr 03	🟠
	6 Apr 03	🟠
	13-14 Apr 03	🟣
	14 Apr 03	🟠
	22-23 Apr 03	🟠
	6 May 03	🟠
Zwedru	28 Mar 03	🟠

Source: Compiled by the author based on a chronology of violent events using GIS, 2010

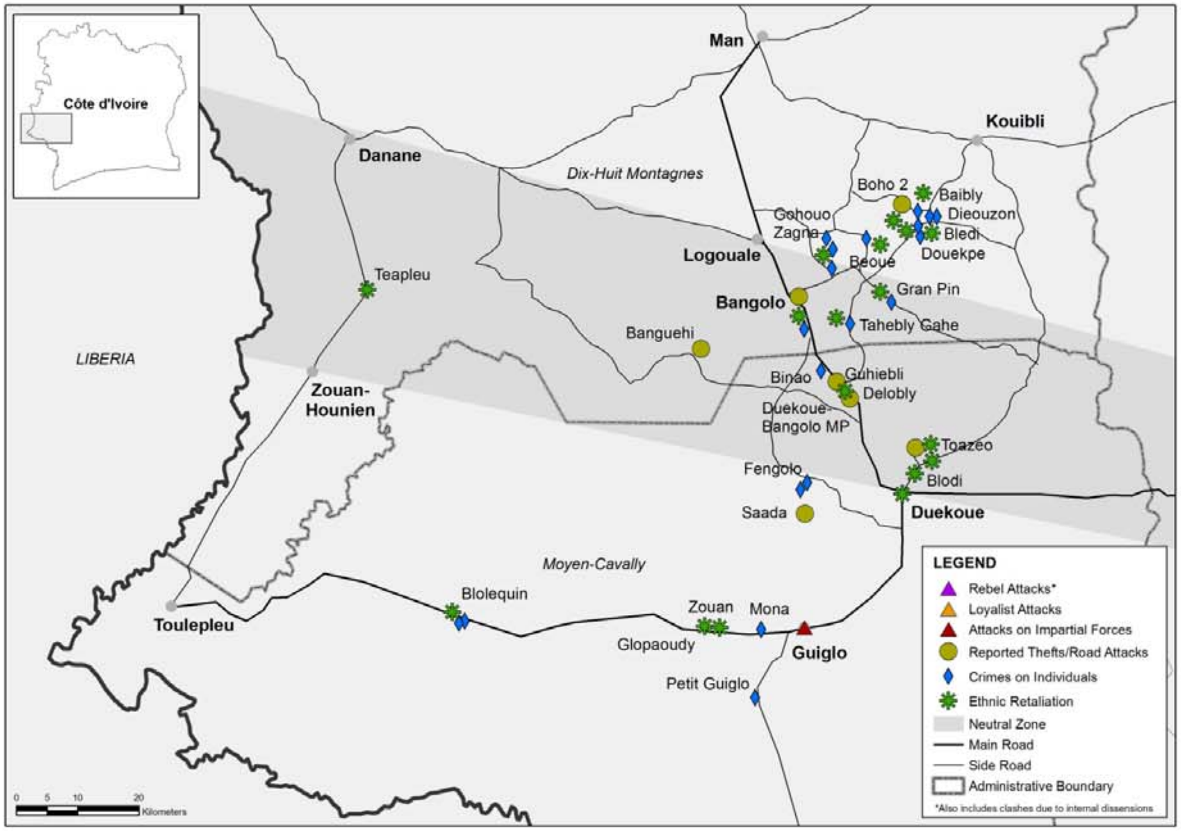
Map 5.3 Types of violent events in western CI – from the *Zone de Confiance* being set up (23 May 2003) until December 2005


Côte d'Ivoire
Man
Kouibli
Danane
Logouale
Dieouzon
Dix-Huit Montagnes
Bangolo
Zou
LIBERIA
Guhiebli
Kahin
Zouan-Hounien
Guitrozen
Duekoue
Moyen-Cavally
Toulepleu
Guiglo
LEGEND
Rebel Attacks*
Loyalist Attacks
Attacks on Impartial Forces
Reported Thefts/Road Attacks
Crimes on Individuals
Ethnic Retaliation
Neutral Zone
Main Road
Side Road
Administrative Boundary
*Also includes clashes due to internal dissensions
0 5 10 20
Km

Place	Date	Event
Dieouzon	20-27 Apr 04	✳
Duekoue	18 Feb 04	♦
	6 Jun 05	✳
	6 Jun 05	▲
Guhiebli	13 May 05	♦
Guiglo	18-19 May 04	♦
	2 Jun 04	♦
Kahin	8 Jan 04	✳
Kouibli	20-27 Apr 04	✳
Logouale	28 Feb 05	▲
Man	20 Sep 04	▲
	6 Nov 04	▲
Zou	20 Nov 03	✳

Source: Compiled by the author based on a chronology of violent events using GIS, 2010

Map 5.4 Types of violent events in western Côte d'Ivoire during the year 2006



Côte d'Ivoire
Man
Kouibli
Danane
Dix-Huit Montagnes
Boho 2
Baibly
Dieouzon
Gohouo Zagna
Bledi
Douekpe
Logouale
Beoue
Gran Pin
Teapleu
Bangolo
Tahebly Gahe
Banguehi
LIBERIA
Binao
Guhiebli
Delobly
Zouan-Hounien
Duekoue-Bangolo MP
Toazeo
Fengolo
Blodi
Saada
Duekoue
Moyen-Cavally
Blolequin
Zouan
Mona
Toulepleu
Glopaoudy
Guiglo
Petit Guiglo
0 5 10 20 Kilometers
LEGEND
Rebel Attacks*
Loyalist Attacks
Attacks on Impartial Forces
Reported Thefts/Road Attacks
Crimes on Individuals
Ethnic Retaliation
Neutral Zone
Main Road
Side Road
Administrative Boundary
*Also includes clashes due to internal dissensions

Place	Date	Event
Baibly	1 Jun 06	◆
Bangolo	20 Apr 06	◆
	29 May 06	●
Banguehi	10 Oct 06	●
Beoue	20 Apr 06	◆
	20 Apr 06	✱
Binao	23 Aug 06	◆
Bledi	27-28 Jun 06	✱
Blodi	19-20 Nov 06	✱
	20 Nov 06	✱
Blolequin	20 Aug 06	◆
	24 Aug 06	✱
	12 Sep 06	◆
Boho 2	27-28 Jun 06	●
Delobly	27-28 Sep 06	✱
Dieouzon	20 Apr 06	◆
Douekpe	20 Apr 06	◆
	20 Apr 06	✱
	24 Jun 06	◆
	24-26 Dec 06	✱
Duekoue-Bangolo	26 Aug 06	●
Fengolo	25 Jun 06	◆
	9 Dec 06	◆
Glopaoudy	12 Sep 06	✱
Gohouo Zagna	20 Apr 06	◆
	20 Apr 06	✱
	1 May 06	✱
	3 May 06	◆
Gran Pin	20 Apr 06	◆
	20 Apr 06	✱
Guhiebli	29 May 06	●
Guiglo	17 Jan 06	▲
Mona	5-6 Feb 06	◆
Petit Guiglo	10 Apr 06	◆
Tahebly Gahe	20 Apr 06	◆
	20 Apr 06	✱
Teapleu	4 Dec 06	✱
Toazeo	5 Nov 06	●
	24-26 Dec 06	✱
Zouan	12 Sep 06	✱

Source: Compiled by the author based on a chronology of violent events using GIS, 2010

Temporality of conflict, changing mobilizing contexts

If we surpass the first impression of 'spiral of violence' that comes from the reading of such lines, what comes out of the chronology is a useful contextual information that enables to draw different conflict phases and that enables to introduce a certain temporality to the analysis of conflict in the west of the country. The Ivoirian war has neither been linear nor continuous, even in the west, even in the worst months of conflict. There have been ups and downs, periods of extremely brutal confrontation, periods of relative pauses, and immediate contexts have been largely shaped by the occurrence of these specific events. Armed factions' mobilizing discourse and recruitment strategies have changed overtime, especially when the belligerents needed to reinforce their troops with fresh recruits prior to a major attack or counteroffensive, and the witnessing and hearing of certain events have certainly influenced individual interpretations of immediate contexts.

The detailed chronology has been mapped using a geographical information system (GIS) and is visualized by Maps 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. The maps clearly show the shift from a period of warfare mainly characterized by combat operations and that lasted roughly until May 2003 (capture and recapture of towns, moving front line, displacement of populations) to a period of more diffuse violence characterized by violent settling of accounts, systematic retaliation based on ethnic grounds, and acts of pure banditry (that period more or less lasted until the recent events of 2010-2011).

Between September 2002 and May 2003 (Maps 5.1 and 5.2), several phases shaped the period of warfare in the west: when rebel forces recaptured the town of Man in late December 2002, when loyalist forces recaptured the Toulepleu-Blolequin axis in early 2003,[1] the period of sharp fighting for control of the road between Danané and Toulepleu in April 2003, the hunting down of Liberians when the Ivoirian rebels decided to split from their inconvenient friend (January-May 2003), and the setting-up of the *Zone de Confiance* in May 2003, which completely changed the local balance of power in certain places and provided the geographical space to allow widespread unpunishable banditism.

If there was a temporality of conflict, there was also a temporality in the processes of mobilization, and reports of military attacks, counter-attacks, purges in ranks, killings of individuals, acts of retaliation, robberies, allegations, rumours, have all played their part in radicalizing positions and in shaping immediate contexts on either side of the front line.

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[1] With the help of Liberian recruits (mostly recruited from anti-Taylor movements), the government launched a major offensive and regained control of Toulepleu in January 2003. By the end of February, the northern loop of the road between Blolequin and Toulepleu was under the control of Liberian fighters allied to the government and to Guéré militias. The presence of the Ivoirian national army was minimal in this area and ended at Blolequin.

- On the counter-insurgent side

Close to the front line, in the government-controlled areas, militarized civilians largely consisted of young *autochthones* of Wê origin (Guérés, Wobés). Prior to the rebel attacks, mobilization first resembled an advanced form of urban/rural vigilantism, more structured and better armed than usual, which aimed at preventing rebel incursions in villages and towns not yet taken by the rebel forces. The capture of Vavoua by the rebellion was an important trigger to set up these self-defence groups on a massive scale, since Vavoua was considered the north-eastern gateway to the western region. People realized that the threat was real and that, in no time, the military front would move westwards and would directly threaten them. At various levels, civilians were therefore encouraged to mobilize into self-defence groups and to set up checkpoints (*'corridor'* in Ivoirian French or *'barrage'*) in order to protect key entry and exit points at specific locations. The Ivoirian army spokesperson, Jules Yao Yao, made a public statement on television in that regard, on 18 October 2002, encouraging youths to take appropriate measures in self-defence. At a more local level, the city, district or provincial authorities gave the Guéré youths permission to organize, and in many cases, were actually the ones promoting this armed mobilization. This period was pretext to many abuses of power. I come back later to this point when reflecting on the ethnicization of conflict in the west, but there is here the need to mention that the function of added security these *barrages* were supposed to fill quickly derived into a means of extortion and a way to violently assert some sort of autochthonous legitimacy, and control checkpoints started to be used as racketeering locations for systematically nicking money and goods from the non-autochthonous population (*allochthones* and *allogenes* alike), even from those well known to the *barragistes.*[2] This particular phenomenon marked the beginning of a worrying trivialization of violence at the village level: verbal harassment and physical assault had started to become a norm in these societies.

After this checkpoint period came the time to fight. Particularly widespread mobilization occurred in Guiglo in early December, after the rebel forces captured the towns of Toulepleu and Blolequin in Guéré territory. Many autochthonous Guéré youths reported having been extremely shocked by the distress of the displaced people they saw – their 'parents' – who were passing through town as they were fleeing combat. With the rebels only a few kilometres away, a recurrent concern was that Guiglo would soon be attacked, and if the insurgents encountered no resistance, Guiglo residents – and especially the autochthonous Guéré – could experience the same distress. At the local level, municipal authorities and community leaders toured the immediate surroundings and called for volunteers to participate in the war effort. Each village was asked to send between 30 and 50 youths and there was no retaliation if fewer volunteered. Counter-insurgent movements were quick to emerge in the west, fostered by local 'comités de crise', who had been set up at the start of the war by municipal and district authorities. If one of the genuine mandates of these committees was to alleviate suffering of the local population (a declaration by the *comité de crise* of Bangolo went as far as to publicly contradict pro-government propaganda in order to obtain basic assistance),[3] they also played a major role in motivating the autochthonous youth to lend a hand to an Ivoirian army that was often described as being struck by high desertion rates (Pana Press, 2003o). Counter-insurgent groups rapidly evolved into organized armed militias and eventually played a major role in pushing the rebels back from Taï, Toulepleu, Blolequin and Bangolo in late 2002. I describe these armed factions in detail in the next chapter.

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[2] See Chauveau & Bobo (2003) and Chauveau *et al.* (2010).

At the national level, large-scale mobilization was boosted by Minister of Defence Bertin Kadet's call on national television on 8 December 2002. This came amidst reports that rebel factions were advancing eastwards from the Liberian border. 'We are calling for mobilization because, with the increase in the number of fronts, we need to increase the size of our defence forces' (BBC News, 2002).[4] Thousands of young Ivoirians thronged the headquarters of the national armed forces in Abidjan in response to the appeal of the minister. If some were driven by pure patriotism and included Guérés who had moved outside their region of origin, many were also driven by the prospect of getting a permanent job in the army. Three thousand civilians between 20 and 26 years old were incorporated into the national army – they were later labeled the 'post 19 September' recruits. Some of them were already in the armed branch of the Young Patriots movement and would later be nicknamed '*les soldats Blé Goudé*'. Not surprisingly, the youth wing of the opposition urged its partisans to use all republican means to oppose the mobilization call made by the Minister of Defence (Pana Press, 2002d, 2002f).

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[3] 'Contrary to a certain press and to what FANCI's press releases suggest, the department of Bangolo has been continuously controlled by the rebels since 20 December 2002.' Such a declaration was all the more surprising since its author – the President of the *comité de crise* of Bangolo – was known for being a member of the FPI, the President's political party (Notre Voie, 2003a).

[4] 'Ivoirians are showing the desire to go to the front and they should be satisfied', he said. 'The people of Ivory Coast will apply all the resources at their disposal to struggle on the side of President Laurent Gbagbo and his government to put an end to these aggressors and liberate our country.' The declaration came after the discovery of a mass grave in the western village of Monoko-Zohi, following intense fighting between government and rebel troops. The government denied any responsibility, stating that government forces 'are not in the habit of burying their dead in common graves' (BBC News, 2002).

Of the many youths who had volunteered but had not been selected, some were eventually sent to the front line to strengthen the base of the western militias. During this period of open warfare – which lasted roughly until May 2003 – checks intensified on both sides to discover suspected 'enemies'. Suspicion could fall on anyone and fake denunciations were commonplace. The mere fact of displaying an amulet could be interpreted as a need for special protection, hence as a feature of a combatant. Amulet holders could be 'dozos', one of these traditional hunters present and active in the security arena for decades in Côte d'Ivoire, and recruited by the insurgents at the very start of the war.

After the period of open fighting, a time of urban/rural vigilantism recurred, followed by a time of more 'hidden' military operations (*opérations de ratissage* in the bush, infiltration, spying). This period lasted roughly until 2005 in the west and a bit longer in the *Zone de Confiance*, a period after which several indicators point to a relative return of normalcy, at least in matters related to warfare. Checkpoints were still in place during this time, with the misconduct we know and following a logic of 'protection/extortion' (Banégas, 2010); on both belligerent sides, *autochthones* and non-*autochthones* were using war as pretext to expand their respective assets. This is perhaps the most worrying development that took place in Ivoirian rural societies: violence had become so diffuse in some places that it has been quite difficult to disentangle structural forms of ethnic violence from war crimes – and it was probably an impossible task between 2002 and 2006. Agier warns about the emergence of such a culture of violence and against the tendency to transform every social problem into a new front of violence, regardless of the cause. Reflecting on the period known as '*La Violencia*' in Colombia and its sixteen years of cycles of killing and retaliation, he argues that when a society is marked by an extremely violent history, the collective memory of violence eventually overshadows the causes of major and minor conflicts, especially when all actions are committed in total impunity (Agier, 2004: 236). A possible effect is that violence can come to be regarded as ineluctable in certain contexts, 'as a plague that can strike at anytime', 'as a historical phenomenon beyond individual control' (ibid). Western Côte d'Ivoire is particularly at risk of internalizing such a culture of violence. Somehow legitimized by the climate of extreme violence that prevailed during the period of open fighting, long-standing inter-community tensions and pre-war clashes have found a new breeding ground and more extreme forms of expression to manifest themselves, especially since checkpoints and their corollary of abuses have become extremely difficult to put to a halt in certain locations (Maps 5.3 and 5.4). To paraphrase Vlassenroot (2006: 65), a bitter effect of those self-defence groups and counter-insurgent militias is that it reinforces the view that violence is a legitimate strategy of defence while at the same time suggesting that it is a legitimate strategy for creating change. In western Côte d'Ivoire, from certain *autochthones'* perspective, resorting to violence can be seen as a legitimate way to rehabilitate too long spoiled autochthonous rights, when dispossessing *allogenes* and allochthonous farmers is perceived as a way to take back what belongs to Guérés. But such a focus on local conceptions of rights should not negate the fact that, in certain instances, these acts of dispossession have little to do with ethnic identities. Sometimes, they are only disguised ways for an individual to grab someone else's resources in an attempt to achieve some kind of upward social mobility. Rather conveniently, western Côte d'Ivoire has provided the contextual background needed to legitimize this. Confiscation of successful agricultural plantations has actually been a real issue in the western region during the period under study (especially in Guéré territory); I come back to this point below when describing how militia leaders eventually had to become involved in these types of land conflict mitigations. The issue of confiscation of the Baoulé's plantations has in fact been particularly salient in the Guiglo area, exacerbated by the war and the displacements of populations.

- On the insurgent side

Mobilizing contexts also evolved over time in the rebel-controlled areas. During the first weeks of insurgency, the rebellion leadership paid particular attention to minimizing abuse of civilians. In the towns they captured, in the villages they took, rebels made a point of behaving quite cordially towards the population. In Man, right after having taken the town, the rebels hold information meetings with civilians and even distributed food. 'They broke into a storehouse where loyalist forces had stored their food – they had just been supplied – and they took the tins of sardines and gave them to the people' (Human Rights Watch, 2003b). Such 'altruistic' features in the early stage of a rebellion are not unique to the Ivoirian case, and may even mirror, to some extent, the beginning of the insurgency in neighbouring Sierra Leone.[5] Although rebel forces never claimed to have a specific regional or ethnic affiliation, many early joiners were of northern origin and had experienced some form of discrimination based on their ethnic background. In that sense, they were sharing some common grievances with the population in the north which was particularly receptive to their seizing of power.

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[5] Early rebellion in Sierra Leone could be considered 'altruistic' in the sense that young people mobilized to fight for their dreams of responsible government and a strong state. In the later stages, Richards suggests that it turned into a 'fatalistic' civil war, where desperation turned into extreme destructiveness (Kaarsholm, 2006).

In many areas, therefore, at the start of insurgency, the rebellion was perceived as some kind of liberation movement. Rebels were praised by the local crowd, and the rebellion leadership was quite keen on fostering such an image.

But the early days of insurgency should not be romanticized. If rebel forces reportedly drafted consenting civilians (including prisoners detained in police stations), forced conscription was also rather common in the areas they controlled, a trivial reason being that the base of the movement had to be manned well enough to be able to pose a serious threat to the loyalist forces. Sometimes, the village chief was asked to give the rebels young men for recruitment. Recruitment strategies resembled then what was happening on the other side, yet with the major difference that it was impossible to refuse – some form of retaliation usually occurring if too few men joined the rebel ranks.[6] But as the war intensified in the west and with the increasing involvement of the Liberian suppletive forces, recruitment methods hardened and rebel forces eventually started to systematically take people by force, without even bothering taking contact with the local chief. An account of a Yacouba villager is particularly telling: ‘The rebels arrived in a jeep and a four-by-four. Some of them were soldiers and others were youths who did not seem to be there by choice. They asked where the customs office and the gendarmerie were. They were after the *corps habillés*. After ransacking the town hall, they organized a meeting with the population. They told us not to panic, they were there to help, they were not after the people, only after the administration and the *corps habillés*.’ (Human Rights Watch, 2003b). In Zouan-Hounien, several testimonies collected by Human Rights Watch reported that rebel forces left people in peace in the beginning, but that things worsened when the Liberians entered the town: ‘The rebels came at the end of November. At the beginning they left people alone, then, the Liberians came, and things really worsened for the population. First, they looted the houses of those who had fled, the houses of the government officials; then they started attacking Guérés, then the foreigners. Now, they even attack the Yacoubas. For them, it does not matter if you are a Christian, a Muslim or a cow, they kill you anyway.’ The following description of a Dioula family, attacked in Toulepleu by Liberian elements of the MPIGO fighters, is particularly telling: ‘The rebels said they would not hurt civilians, so we were surprised when they broke our door down and asked for money. My grandmother was coming out of the shower. She was shot dead. My older sister went to get the money, but she was trembling so much that she was slow. They said the money was not enough and they shot her in the chest.' Those stages are the most worrying, when all popular enthusiasm fades away, when perceived 'liberators' turn against the very ones that they are supposed to set free, when control is lost, and when the initial fervour is replaced by the abrupt realization that the paths of war are foremost destructive.

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[6] Although this point has to be nuanced, Liberian backed forces were known to exploit civilians: ‘From Blolequin to Péhé, it is all mercenary checkpoints and bodies, all along the way, new bodies and old bodies, maybe three to four weeks old. They force you to work, to bury the bodies.’ (Human Rights Watch, 2003b)

On either side, Liberian suppletive forces committed massive looting and exactions. I do not want to develop much the reasons for the use of such troops in this book – it would be beyond the scope of this study – but in order to give the reader some keys to interpret the western context, I briefly describe what happened then. Liberian mercenaries were known to use extreme forms of physical violence and to show no mercy; much of their loot was sent to Liberia. The promise of Ivoirian richness was perhaps the main driving force for many of those Liberian fighters, after all they were all coming from a devastated country. If they first started stealing from the property of those who had fled the area, they quickly targeted the remaining people, threatening everyone suspected of having assets remaining. The loot included money, food, vehicles and other personal property (Liberians sent hundreds of tons of such items across the border), but also primary resources. The cocoa and coffee harvest for instance (which takes place between October and January) was also ripe for taking. Diamonds and gold were also taken, especially around the Zouan Hounien area, where there were reports of forced labour working in the Ity mines (Human Rights Watch, 2003b). Close to the Liberian border, the towns of Danané and Zouan-Hounien were used as logistic platforms to organize this particular trade.

The slip into large-scale inter-ethnic violence

In the first months that followed the start of the war, several journalists and political figures made allegations that Burkina Faso was backing the insurgents. The displaying of rebel captives of northern origin in the local media (Burkinabés are easily recognizable by the scarification they have on their faces) heightened popular hostility against these groups and had immediate repercussions in the agrarian societies of the interior where most Burkinabés live.[7] Burkinabés became the ideal scapegoats and were systematically attacked after each rebel advance.[8] In the rural areas north of Duékoué, in the fall of 2002, groups of young Guérés stormed Burkinabé quarters and encampments, armed with machetes, hunting rifles and miscellaneous other weapons. Attacks were particularly brutal in the villages of Blodi, Iruzon, Toa Zéo, Sibabli and Kouibli, in the Bangolo area:

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[7] About a third of the population residing in Côte d'Ivoire today is of foreign origin, out of a total population estimated to be 20 million. Burkinabés are the most important foreign community in Côte d'Ivoire and represent more than 55% of the foreign nationals who live in the country (about 2.5 million people). The majority lives in rural areas and usually started to work first as paid labour in plantations owned by Ivoirians. After some time, they settle down and start running their own plantations. Burkinabés have been living in Côte d'Ivoire since the colonial period and many families have been here for more than one generation (Zongo, 2003).

> 'When the rebels took Vavoua, people started saying that the Burkinabés were with the rebels. The young Guérés started to attack them. At first, the mayor came and asked the youths to set up checkpoints to defend the village. But not before long, youths started to harass the Burkinabés and to steal from them. This continued until they were organized with weapons. On October 8, they attacked an encampment and killed three young Burkinabés. They burnt everything. We had to leave.' (Human Rights Watch, 2003b)

The reaction from the Guéré communities to the activism of these youths varied widely per village. In some places, Guéré chiefs did little to quell their militancy, in others, local authorities intervened, including village chiefs and sometimes even the gendarmes, to try preventing an escalation of violence; it was, however, usually to little effect (Human Rights Watch, 2003b). In late October 2002, when the cocoa and coffee crops were ready for harvesting, most of the Burkinabés had been chased out of the area and were sheltering in Duékoué or had returned to their homeland.[9]. When the area fell into rebel hands at the end of December, the balance of power switched and the Guérés became the ones on the move (this trait is particularly apparent in the chronology presented earlier).

But arbitrary violence did not remain confined to Burkinabés in government-controlled areas. Any individual who belonged to an ethnic group that potentially could be perceived as allied to the rebels was a potential target. In April 2003, Human Rights Watch report the lynching of a Yacouba who had gone to the mayor's office in Duékoué to obtain a laissez-passer to be able to travel in the area. When someone accused him in the street of being an assailant, a crowd threw themselves on him and beat him with bricks and stones. He was taken to the local hospital, but some individuals dragged him outside and killed him. His body was set alight and left into the hospital courtyard. In such a tense and suspicious climate, being accused of being an assailant could be a death sentence, and anyone, even Guérés, could be beaten to death.[10]

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[8] International Crisis Group went so far as to report that violence against Burkinabés and Malians in the Duékoué-Guiglo area had become so systematic, widespread and excessive throughout April 2003 that it resembled deliberate policy. Local militias and village self-defence committees were involved, as well as the gendarmes and the police. Even village elders were used to draw Burkinabés back to their plantations, where they were killed by local youths. The flight of Burkinabés by bus to Burkina Faso reached a dramatically high level in March and April 2003 (International Crisis Group, 2003).

[9] Returning to Burkina Faso was already an existing trend and can be traced back to the mid-1990s (Zongo, 2003). The main cause of this reverse migratory flow relates to a growing uncertainty with regard to land transfers due to the increasing contestation of existing arrangements. It is however noteworthy that only a minority of Burkinabés left Côte d'Ivoire, even at the peak of conflict; many stayed in fact relatively nearby, in the western region, probably waiting for a decrease in tension.

In the *Zone de Confiance*, in Wé territory, the war eventually weakened the position of the Guéré and Wobé, while strengthening the local prerogatives of the non-*autochthones*. Wê youths were particularly affected by this changing balance of power, and in the villages of Zou and Zeregbo for instance, at the time I was doing fieldwork, they had stopped regulating the local taxation on transport, market stalls and local trade. They were also only playing a marginal role in matters related to local security. Non-*autochthones*, particularly of Lobi origin and those involved in the *dozo* brotherhood, had gradually taken over most of these privileges and were playing an increasing role in settling local affairs, adding a new layer to the local mechanisms of conflict resolution. Situations varied a lot, depending on villages and village chiefs. At the time of doing fieldwork, the climate between *autochthones* and non-*autochthones* was much more tense in Zeregbo than in Zou for instance: in Zou, the local chief was a contested but respected elder, who was genuinely seeking some kind of social cohesion among the communities he administered by trying to mitigate the interethnic tensions that had been revived by the war; in Zeregbo, communities were openly afraid of each other at the end of 2006, and the chief, who was known to be involved in petty trafficking, was doing little to change these perceptions.

Box 5.1 is particularly telling because it illustrates quite well the confusion between acts of war and petty crime, and how, at the village level, any type of anecdotal incident has come to be systematically framed along ethnic lines, calling for a ‘group’ response and beginning a spiral of retaliation. To an outside observer, there is little in common between the third war of Zou and the first two. To an insider – since immediate consequences are similar (houses are burnt, people are slaughtered, specific quarters are targeted, many people flee) – distinguishing between acts of war and other forms of violence has become meaningless. This is the worrying development we were talking about earlier: violence has become so diffuse in certain locations in the western region that the the rationale of violence does not matter anymore and everything becomes pretext for group confrontation.

The *Zone de Confiance*, where no clear authority prevailed between May 2003 and April 2007, has been the theatre of so many incidents that degenerated into intercommunity conflict that it raises serious doubt whether such a dynamics of revenge can ever be broken in certain areas. The events of Diézouon/Kouibly in

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[10] Human Rights Watch reports that in early March 2003, a Guéré was beaten to death in Duékoué, 25 metres from a gendarmerie post, after another Guéré had accused him of being an assailant.

Box 5.1: The three Zou wars

The first war
Liberian MPIGO forces entered the village on 1 January 2003. The first week was relatively peaceful, but the situation drastically changed in the second week. There were shootings, broken down doors, looting. The Liberians were stealing anything, bikes, motorbikes, coffee/cocoa mills, food, poultry, etc. When they were passing through the village from Bangolo or Logoulalé with their loot, they were obliging youths to carry it to Mahapleu or Danané. The youths were beaten up, they were threatened at gunpoint, so they had to go with them. They were shooting in the feet of those who were resisting too much. Much of the population fled during that period, to escape these sufferings. They left the village and went to the bush, in the encampments. Some fled to the nearby towns. MPIGO was chased out by the MPCI a few weeks later. The MPCI stayed about two weeks in the village, without making any trouble, which restored the confidence of the population. That is when the population came back. The cohabitation with the rebels was so peaceful then that certain *cadres* from the village, who were living in town, accused the Guéré village chief of having entered into an alliance with the rebels. The chief was publicly accused in a local newspaper.

The second war
MJP troops relayed the MPCI in Zou and started disarming the population. Four Guérés from the nearby village of Phing-Béoua, including the President of Youth, visited the rebels to reclaim their weapons. During the discussions, the Guérés wounded two rebels. Retaliation was immediate and the four Guérés were shot dead. The death of the President of Youth was quite badly received by the Guérés of Phing-Béoua who decided to retaliate the same day. Forty Guérés therefore attacked the 12 rebels who were staying in Zou. The rebels retreated, due to their small number, and called for reinforcements. Reinforcements arrived the evening of the same day from Man and Danané and surrounded the village. The fighting lasted for four hours. More than 23 Guérés were killed, a lot of houses were burnt down in the Guéré quarter, and many people who were trying to escape fell into ambushes. During and after this violent episode, a lot of Guérés left the village. Some returned after the *Zone de Confiance* was set up in May 2003, reassured by the presence of impartial forces who had established a base in the village to monitor the local security.

The third war
On 20 november 2003, a Young Burkinabé accidentally hit a Guéré girl with his bike. He was stabbed in the neck by a young Guéré of Phing-Béoua and died. Apparently, the two people already knew each other and were involved in some kind of affair with the same girl. Tensions escalated quickly between the Burkinabé and Guéré communities, despite attempts at mediation by the village chief. The Guérés refused to hand over the offender to the Burkinabés and even helped him to escape. Calling for revenge, the Burkinabés started the war. Consequences were quite heavy for the village. There were several dead, dozens of diasppearances, people were slaughtered, their throats cut, houses were burnt down. The village emptied of most *autochthones* after that. Even some *allochthones* left for more secure places.

Source: IRC, MARP Zou, 2007

April 2004, the killings of Duékoué in June 2005, and the incidents of Toa Zéo in 2006 are all visible benchmarks for each of these events led to massive displacement of people (all events are recorded in the chronology above). Less obvious, yet taking the same worrying ethnic turn, is the series of attacks on individuals that took place in the *Zone de Confiance* between 2004 and 2007, sparing no one, from 3 year olds to 90 year olds, fishermen, businessmen, farmers (ibid). One even gets the impression that the mere fact of being young has become suspicious in such contexts and worthy of punishment. In Guéré territory, in 2005-2007, any type of petty crime came to be interpreted as an act of war and was systematically framed along ethnic lines, calling for a 'group' response and beginning a vicious cycle of retaliation. Any source of tension had become a potential trigger to ethnic violence, regardless of what the initial cause of friction was (a dispute over land or a mere conflict between neighbours).

An example of inter-ethnic rivalry that has been instrumentalized by the war is the long-standing Yacouba/Guéré resentment. In February 2003, the MJP leadership publicly claimed that if the State was going to use Guéré militias to kill Yacoubas and Dioulas, it would organize attacks on Guéré and Bété villages in reprisal (International Crisis Group, 2003). Mid-July 2003, after the end of war had been declared, Guéré militias were still involved in raids against Yacouba villages in the areas of Zouan-Hounien and Bin-Houyé, and it was suggested that the Guéré/Yacouba conflict was mirroring the Khran/Gio feud that had been revived on Ivoirian soil by the use of Liberian mercenaries on both sides (ibid). I tend to think that the Khran/Gio strife had little to do with the recrudescence of tensions between Guérés and Yacoubas. From an emic perspective, the mere fact of associating Yacoubas with rebels and Guérés with pro-government militias was probably enough to legitimize a cycle of violence difficult to break. Again, the rationales of violence hardly matter when everything becomes pretext for group confrontation.

An interesting feature of this period of systematic intercommunity violence is that it is relatively loose from the Ivoirian conflict. If we exclude the recent events of early 2011, rebels and loyalist forces had stopped fighting each other for many years, the last direct attack probably being the assault on Logoualé, in February 2005, when progovernment militias shot at rebel positions. The bulk of intercommunity violence was largely happening within agrarian societies where people knew each other very well. It usually involved individuals and groups of individuals from the same village, or from a neighbouring one. If enduring war factions lent a hand to certain groups on a number of occasions, war – as background context – has acted more as a catalyst, providing the space with no clear territorial sovereignty which was needed (the *Zone de Confiance*) to make it possible for such a spiral of violence to ensue.

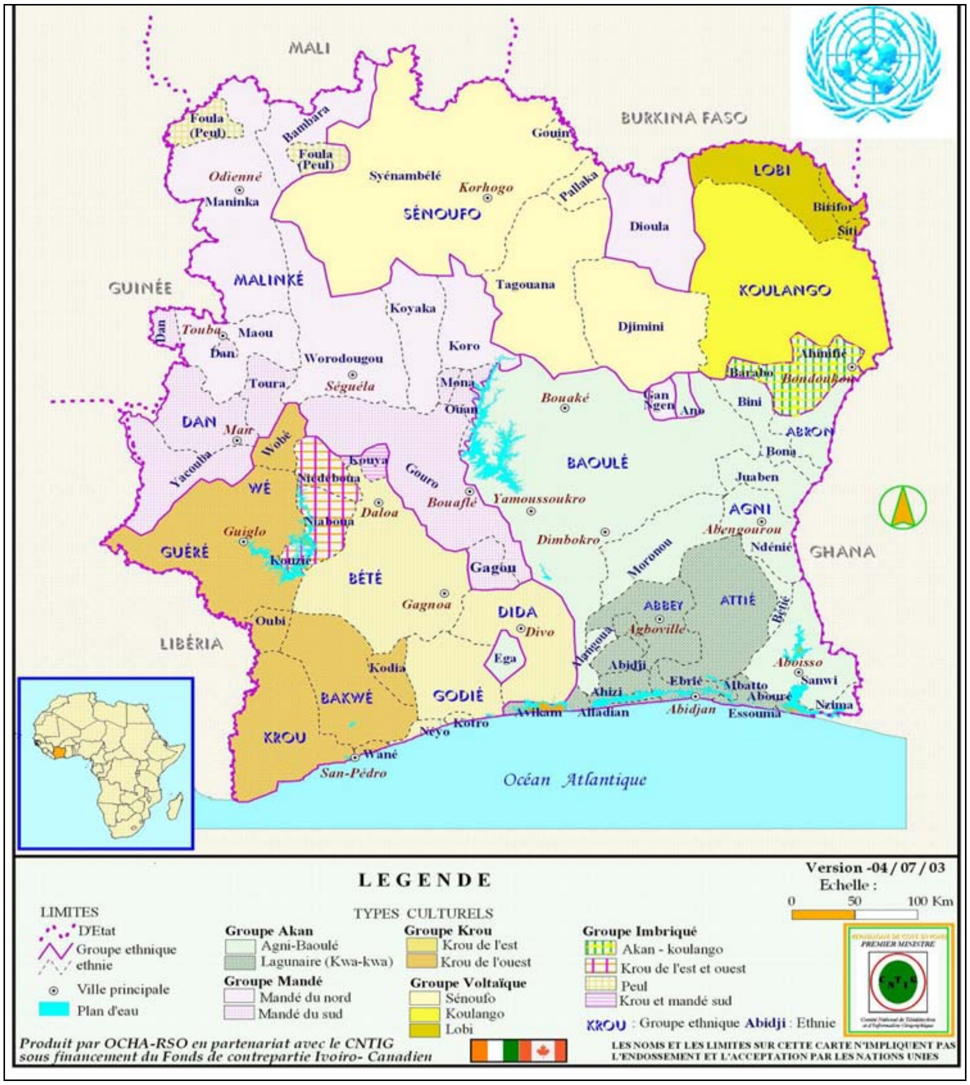
Another interesting feature of that period of intercommunity violence is that violence has been used as a means to reorganize the local socio-economic spaces and to control mobility within and between those spaces. After all, ethnic groups do not compete for territory in Côte d'Ivoire and spaces are already divided along ethnic lines; the existing divisions are not called into question. But ethnicity has provided an easy grip for weakening the positions of *autochthones* in certain places, and strengthening them in others. As Vlassenroot wrote: 'Ethnicity continues to be the main instrument to organize disorder: no other theme or issue has remotely similar mobilizing power and reducing the explanation of a current crisis to an ethnic issue is generally sufficient to convince youngsters to join or form an [ethnic] militia' (Vlassenroot, 2006: 59).

Multi-ethnic agrarian societies

Mono-ethnic villages do not exist in Côte d'Ivoire, and the west is no exception. Villages are mixed, composed of *autochthones* who are considered autochthonous on basis of some kind of historical primacy ('the ones who were here before'), and also composed of foreigners, which eventually designate nationals of a foreign country (allogenes) and Ivoirians from a different region *(allochthones).* There is a whole history and ideology behind the concept of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire, which I described in detail in the previous chapter. Suffice here to say that the concept of autochthony implicitly calls for excluding strangers from belonging, while at the same time constantly redefining who is a stranger and who is not. At the local level, less and less distinction is made between *allogenes* and *allochthones* in the rural areas, and they are usually labeled and treated the same from an emic perspective.

Côte d'Ivoire counts a large diversity of ethnic groups that are commonly classified into four, based on linguistic criteria: the Akan, which includes the Baoulé and Agni and finds its geographic origin in eastern, southeastern and central Côte d'Ivoire; the Krou, which originates from the southwest of the country and which counts among others the Krumen, the Bété, the Guéré and the Wobé; the Mandé, also called the Mandingué, from the northwest, which consists of the Malinké, the Bambara, the Dioula, and the Yacouba; and the Gour, also called the Voltaïc, which originates from the northeast and includes the Sénoufo and Lobi communities. Some kind of territorial ethnic mapping can be drawn out of such divisions, which highlights the geographical origin of Côte d'Ivoire's main ethnic groups and shows, for each area, who is considered autochthonous and who is not (Map 5.5).

Map 5.5 Geographical origin of the main ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire


MALI
BURKINA FASO
GUINÉE
LIBÉRIA
GHANA
Océan Atlantique
Foula (Peul)
Bambara
Odienné
Maninka
MALINKÉ
Syénambélé
Korhogo
SÉNOUFO
Gouin
Pallaka
Dioula
LOBI
Birifor
Siti
KOULANGO
Tagouana
Djimini
Koyaka
Koro
Touba
Maou
Dan
Worodougou
Séguéla
Toura
Mona
Ouan
Barabo
Abinifie
Bondoukou
Bini
ABRON
Bona
DAN
Man
Wobé
Yacouba
Kouya
Niédéboua
Gouro
Bouaké
BAOULÉ
Juaben
WÉ
Nidboua
Daloa
Bouaflé
Yamoussoukro
AGNI
Abengourou
Guiglo
GUÉRÉ
Kouzié
Dimbokro
Moronou
Ndénié
BÉTÉ
Gagou
ATTIÉ
Gagnoa
DIDA
Divo
ABBEY
Agboville
Bétié
Oubi
Ega
Mangoua
Kodia
Abidji
Aboisso
Sanwi
BAKWÉ
GODIÉ
Ebrié
Mbatto
Abouré
Ahizi
Avikam
Alladian
Abidjan
Essouma
Nzima
KROU
Kotrô
Neyo
Wané
San-Pédro
LEGENDE
Version -04 / 07 / 03
Echelle :
0
50
100 Km
LIMITES
D'Etat
Groupe ethnique
ethnie
Ville principale
Plan d'eau
TYPES CULTURELS
Groupe Akan
Agni-Baoulé
Lagunaire (Kwa-kwa)
Groupe Mandé
Mandé du nord
Mandé du sud
Groupe Krou
Krou de l'est
Krou de l'ouest
Groupe Voltaïque
Sénoufo
Koulango
Lobi
Groupe Imbriqué
Akan - koulango
Krou de l'est et ouest
Peul
Krou et mandé sud
KROU : Groupe ethnique Abidji : Ethnie
PREMIER MINISTRE
CNTIG
Produit par OCHA-RSO en partenariat avec le CNTIG sous financement du Fonds de contrepartie Ivoiro- Canadien
LES NOMS ET LES LIMITES SUR CETTE CARTE N'IMPLIQUENT PAS L'ENDOSSEMENT ET L'ACCEPTATION PAR LES NATIONS UNIES

Source: UNOCHA, 2003.

The terrain chosen for this particular research and roughly bounded by the towns of Danané, Man, Duékoué, and Toulepleu is home to various autochthonous groups. The Guéré homeland extends from Toulepleu east to the Sassandra river, north towards Bangolo, and south to Taï. The area occupied by the Wobé people extends further north, east of the Guéré area, on the Duékoué-Kouibli axis, in the *sous-préfectures* adjoining the Niédéboua territory. The Guéré, Wobé and Niédéboua are part of the larger ethnic group Wê, and share historical and cultural ties with the ethnic group of the current President (of Bété origin). They are consequently more inclined to adhere to pro-government propaganda.

Administratively, the Wê are located in the Moyen-Cavally region and in the southeastern part of the 18 Montagnes region.[11] The *sous-préfectures* of Zou, Diéouzon, Zéo, and the departments of Toulepleu, Blolequin, Guiglo, Duékoué, Bangolo (all located in Guéré territory), were particularly affected by the war and have been home to the bulk of the pro-government militias. It is estimated that the Guéré and Wobé respectively represent 3.4% and 1.7% of the Ivoirian population (2001 national census). The Yacouba territory extends from Man to Danané, then south along the Liberian border, until north of Toulepleu. It was for the most part occupied by the rebel forces, with the exception of some villages and encampments in the *Zone de Confiance*. The towns of Zouan-Hounien (pronounced Zonn-Houyé in the local language) and Bin-Houyé are in Yacouba territory. The Yacouba people are estimated to represent 5.9% of the Ivoirian population (approx. 250,000 people). They are also called Dan and share cultural affinities with the Liberian Gio. The Toura live in the north of Man, in the region of Biankouma and represent about 1% of the Ivoirian population.

Western Côte d'Ivoire has been particularly affected by internal and cross-border migration.[12] If the Ivoirian land was at first massively exploited by European entrepreneurs in the south-east and eastern part of the country (colonists started wood, coffee and cocoa plantations), the indigenous plantation economy developed quite quickly in the 1920s and spread to other regions. It involved both autochthonous and non-autochthonous producers. By the early 1950s, indigenous cocoa and coffee plantations had spread so much in western Côte d'Ivoire that the triangle west of Zouan Hounien across the Cavally river and south of Zou had become one of the most productive areas of the country. The colonial administration openly encouraged the migration of Malinké, Sénoufo and Baoulé to the western woodlands. The autochthonous Bété, in particular, were severely judged by the colonists and excluded from any form of negotiation. Many people from northern and central Côte d'Ivoire therefore moved west, soon outnumbering the Bété and Guéré *autochthones* in many locations. At Independence, the first Ivoirian President continued to promote the same trend by applying a very open immigration policy to the citizens of the neighbouring countries, particularly the Burkinabé. After all, part of Burkina Faso had been administratively linked to Côte d'Ivoire during colonial rule, between 1932 and 1947 (Zongo, 2003). Houphouët-Boigny's well-known statement *'la terre appartient à ceux qui la cultivent'* (the land belongs to those who put it to use) had value of law and explicitly implied that foreigners and *autochthones* had similar land rights, provided they were growing crops on Ivoirian soil. This was a clear political stand which did not go uncontested at the local level. It was so much at odds with customary practice that promoted inalienability of land rights for the *autochthones* that it fueled a great deal of tension in agrarian societies, while providing the ideal background for a possible slip into inter-ethnic violence.

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[11] The *18 Montagnes* region counts 6 departments and 41 *sous-préfectures*, also called *communes*, which designate rural hubs: the department of Bangolo, with the *sous-préfectures* of Bléniméouin, Diéouzon, Gohouo-Zagna, Guinglo-Tahouaké, Zéo, and Zou; the department of Biankouma, with the *sous-préfectures* of Blapleu, Brima, Gbablasso, Gbangbégouiné, Gouané, Gouiné, Gourané, Mangouin, Santa, and Yorodougou; the department of Danane, with the *sous-préfectures* of Daleu, Gbon-Houyé, Gouotro, Kouan-Houlé, Mahapleu, and Séileu; the department of Kouibly, with the *sous-préfectures* of Nidrou, Poumbly, Sémien, Tién-Siably, and Totrodrou; the department of Man, with the *sous-préfectures* of Douélé, Gbatongouin, Gbofesso-Sama, Gotongouiné 1, Kiélé, Podiagouiné, Yapleu, and Zagoué; the department of Zouan-Hounien, with the *sous-préfectures* of Banneu, Glangleu, Goulaleu, Guiamapleu, Téapleu, and Yelleu.

The *Moyen-Cavally* region counts 4 departments and 25 *communes*: the department of Blolequin, with the sous-préfectures of Diboké, Doké, Tinhou, and Zéaglo; the department of Duekoue, with the *sous-préfectures* of Bagohouo, Diahouin, Dibobly, Diourouzon, Gbapleu, Guéhiébly, and Guézon; the department of Guiglo, with the *sous-préfectures* of Bédi-Goazon, Kaadé, Kéibly, Nizahon, Petit-Guiglo, Sakré, Zagné, and Zro; the department of Toulepleu, with the *sous-préfectures* of Bakoubly, Bohobli, Méo, Nézobly, Péhé, and Tiobly.

[12] I developed this migration dynamics in the previous section and I only repeat a few points here to explain the immediate context.

If western Côte d'Ivoire consists of a mosaic of ethnic groups, the belief that autochthonous rights prevail over the rights of the non-*autochthones* is firmly anchored at the local level. Not so much because *autochthones* cleared the land first, thereby earning specific rights – the majority of the land was actually put in use by imported labour, so such a justification would not really hold in such a context – but because being autochthonous in Côte d'Ivoire is foremost conceived in terms of belonging to the ethnic group of the first settlers in a well-defined territory (*sous-préfectures* tend to mirror such 'autochthonous' ethnic divisions). It does not matter if 'native *autochthones*' do not exist in Côte d'Ivoire. After all, 'the whole country has been populated by successive waves of migrants, with no exception for the western parts' (Schwartz, 1968). But the firm belief still exists that being first entitles someone to more rights than being second or third, and this conception is enough to legitimize clear and explicit autochthonous rights that are eventually used as a basis to regulate social relationships in multi-ethnic agrarian societies. Non-autochthonous rights and obligations are derived from this. It is not rare for non-*autochthones* to be restricted in their actions or to be forbidden to carry out certain tasks and economic activities without authorization. In Zéregbo, for instance − a Guéré village in the *sous-préfecture* of Zou where I did exploratory fieldwork − there were many rules framed along ethnic lines in order to regulate access to some of the local resources. Fishing, for instance, was strongly regulated. The nearby Cavally river was divided among all Guéré family heads. They could use intensive fishing techniques to catch fish (traps, floating baits, small dams), but non-*autochthones* could only go fishing with a line and a hook, and only in certain waters located far from the village. If they wanted to fish nearer by, they had to ask an *autochthone* permission, which was generally granted against some kind of payment.

Related to land use, the institution of 'tutorat' is particularly present in the western region, both in Wê and Yacouba territory, and is deeply embedded in social relations. Chauveau & Colin (2005) define it as an agrarian institutional device, which regulates first-comers/late-comers relationships and which fits into a moral economy in which one cannot refuse land access to an outsider who needs land as a mean of subsistence for himself and his family. The institution of *tutorat* regulates therefore, on the one hand, the transfer of land rights between *autochthones* and non-*autochthones,*[13] and on the other hand, the incorporation of the non-*autochthones* in the local community. Merely because of the notion of *tutorat,* it is in fact not rare for a foreigner to live in an autochthonous neighbourhood, close to his '*tuteur*';[14] however, the reverse is not common, and in the Wé homeland, a Guéré would not normally live in a Mossi[15] quarter. A main feature of the institution of *tutorat* is that migrants are expected to owe their *tuteurs* perennial gratitude. A bundle of explicit and implicit obligations is fully part of the land transfer agreement, and it is usually expected that migrants share part of the harvest, that they give some kind of financial contribution to mark personal events in their *tuteur's* life (funerals, sickness, etc.), or that they simply respond when the *tuteur* asks for help. The tendency to increase and monetize social obligations in return for access to land has encouraged the idea among migrant settlers that they had engaged in a purchase-sale transaction. But from the autochthonous perspective (and generally also from the viewpoint of many settlers), an economic transaction in no way cancels the moral obligation of gratitude owed to the *tuteur*. Sometimes, *tuteur* demands grow out of proportion, at other times migrants do not honour the agreed commitment. What eventually matters, however, is that a multiplicity of arrangements exists at the local level, and that the terms are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated over time by all parties involved. Noteworthily, purchasing an agricultural plot and paying a substantial amount of money for it does not mean that the migrant can waive his obligations. From the autochthonous perspective, the buyer still owes the *tuteur*, and this belief is shared by many foreigners. In fact, as Kabeer (2005) put it for another context, *allogenes* and *allochthones* often have their own views on when it is fair for them to be treated the same as *autochthones,* and when is it fair for them to be treated differently.

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[13] See the works of Koné *et al.* (1999) and Koné & Chauveau (1998).

[14] *Tuteur* is an emic term referring to autochthones who have entered a client-patron relationship with a migrant.

[15] Mossi is a widely used local term to designate Burkinabé.

If land issues in western Côte d'Ivoire are not directly related to war per se, the current conflict has exacerbated pre-war frictions and has added new sources of tension. Pre-war frictions over land, related to the sale and resale of agricultural plots, incomplete payments, contested boundaries of forests, arrangements not honoured within the framework of *tutorat*, etc. They could take extremely violent forms, including murder that often went unpunished. The war – and the displacement of population that followed from it – added new sources of tension. In some places, the conflict was used as pretext to settle old disputes and expand individual territories: several non-*autochthones,* previously involved in a *tutorat* relationship, took advantage of the confusion and of the flight of the autochthonous population to expand their share of cultivated land. Non-autochthonous newcomers also added to that messy field by settling in places where they were not authorized to do so. In the *Zone de Confiance*, with the balance of power shifting from *autochthones* to non-*autochthones* and the abrupt end to formal judicial authority, the general feeling at the time I was doing fieldwork was that many pre-war issues had been put on hold, in the wait for a reversal of power at the village level, or the restoration of civil courts for the cases that demanded a more formal settlement. I interviewed a Guéré from Zéregbo who had experienced a very brutal altercation with three Yacoubas from the neighbouring village in 2001. During the dispute, his wife was wounded and his newborn killed, accidentally stabbed while on his mother's back. He went so far as to hire a lawyer to represent him in court, at the tribunal of Man. His case has been on hold since the start of the war, as all judicial administrators have fled the area. In the same *Zone de Confiance*, in Guéré territory, there has been a revival of 'illegal' plantations, 'illegal' designating the unauthorized exploitation by 'strangers' of plantations owned by *autochthones* who fled the village during the war and who have not yet returned. Although some form of moral economy still prevails – according to the village chief of Zou, if the *tuteur* has not yet returned, '*son étranger*' can use part of his land to plant subsistence crops (rice, maize, cassava) – there are limits to how far such complaisance extends, and non autochthones are strictly prohibited to grow perennial crops, such as coffee or cocoa. *'S'il le fait, c'est à ses risques et périls'* (interview with the village chief). To give a sense of scale to this phenomenon, it is useful to note that when this interview took place in December 2006, the village of Zou was nearly emptied from its autochthonous population. In addition to the village chief, a respected elder, only eight young men of Guéré origin had returned since the violent events of spring 2003. Everybody else had fled, either in neighboring towns in government-controlled territory, or in Abidjan.

The year 2005 was marked by two important events. The first one related to the creation of a military administration in the west. In an attempt to 'secure' the region following the tragic events of Petit-Duékoué and Guitrozon where 41 *autochthones* were killed in one night (including children, women and the elderly), the President decided to set up a 'gouvernorat militaire' in the Moyen-Cavally region, a disposition that persisted until recently. The second event concerned the upgrade of certain villages, *communes* and *sous-préfectures*, which respectively became *communes*, *sous-préfectures* and departments. These new administrative territories were established by presidential decree on 2 July 2005 (two years after the end of combat operations) and notably concerned several localities in the west (several *sous-préfectures* were created in the departments of Kouibly, Zouan Hounien and Blolequin: Zéaglo, Zagné, Nizahon, etc.). If one reading could be to associate the creation of these departments, *sous-préfectures* and *communes* to a hidden agenda linked to electoral purposes (assuming for instance that more *sous-préfectures* and *communes* were created in government-controlled territory), it does not seem to be a driving rationale. A better interpretation is perhaps to only note the resumption of the ordinary administrative and political life in the areas close to the former front line from 2005 onwards. In 2005, it was possible to make such administrative changes, a few years before it was unthinkable. This does not exclude that some villages may have been promoted to *communes* for the strategic role they played during the war (like the villages of Kahadé and Zagné, for instance, the respective bases of the MILOCI and UPRGO, or the village of Doké, home to the mother of a high-ranking FANCI commander). But because other administrative districts were also created in the rebel-controlled zones at the same time, this tempers the argument that it was a 'reward' or an electoral deed. After all, in October 2005, 520 communes were created in Côte d'Ivoire (on top of the 198 existing ones), and only 25 were located in the Moyen-Cavally region.

The fieldwork locations and the western humanitarian context

The two settings I focused on are not only different in terms of local territorial sovereignty (Guiglo is located in the government-controlled area, Man is controlled by the rebel forces), but also in terms of size, ethnic composition, economic activities and political affinities. The two locations have been differently marked by the war and by some of the situations that derived from it: mobilizing contexts have been very specific to each setting and the forms that humanitarian interventions took, within specific geographical contexts and when targeting militarized civilians, also differed depending on the location.

Guiglo

Guiglo was never attacked. It is a rural town of about 66,000 people,[16] capital of the Moyen-Cavally region, located on the Nzo river, at approximately 600 kilometres from Abidjan. The department of Guiglo borders four others, the department of Blolequin in the west, the department of Bangolo in the north, the department of Duékoué in the east, and the department of Tabou in the south; it counts 8 *sous-préfectures* (Bédi-Goazon, Kahadé, Kéibly, Nizahon, Petit-Guiglo, Sakré, Zagné, and Zro). The autochthonous population is of Guéré origin. The refugee camp of Nicla borders the town and hosts about 6,000 Liberian refugees who have been living in Côte d'Ivoire since the mid 1990s. At the last municipal and legislative elections in 2001, both the elected mayor, Gaha Barnabé, and the elected *department député*, Hubert Oulaye (later to become minister in the government of reconciliation) were FPI sympathizers.[17]

Economically, Guiglo is a dynamic market centre where autochthonous and non-autochthonous communities trade rice, livestock and cassava. The town is also a collection depot for cocoa, coffee and timber, before it is taken to the coastal ports for export. It hosts an industrial sawmill, the French owned Thanry company, which employs many people in town. The local informal economy is an important source of income for many people and includes the artisanal production of charcoal, made from the timber industry scrapwood. There is more export industry nearby, the Compagnie Hévéicole du Cavally (CHC), a rubber company located near Zagné, a few kilometres south of Guiglo. The CHC is also a major player in the local economy and employs more than a thousand permanent staff as well as sustaining privileged links with thousands of individual rubber producers.[18]

• Mobilization contexts

During the war, Guiglo was the centre from where the form of counter-insurgency movements that emerged in reaction to the rebel attacks resembled the most organized forms of paramilitary militias. Although the town was never attacked, Guiglo was on maximum alert in early December, when local residents heard that the towns of Toulepleu and Blolequin had fallen into rebel hands. Mobilization initially resembled the self-defence movement phenomenon described earlier, derived from an existing type of urban vigilantism, but with the front line only a few kilometres away, these self-defence movements rapidly became more structured and developed closer links with the Ivoirian army (FANCI). The following testimony is particularly telling:[19]

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[16] http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villes_de_Cote_d%27Ivoire

[17] FPI was the Presidential party when Gbagbo was in power.

[18] CHC provides local farmers with planting material, training and finance to establish their own rubber plantations. Then, 'cuplump' (raw rubber) is bought at market prices for processing at the company's factory. Chapter 9 gives more details on that.

> 'I joined a self-defence group. In the very beginning, we were not yet with the FANCI. We were posted at the various entries of the town, to secure the place and to prevent the rebels getting in. If we noticed someone suspicious, we would call the FANCI to investigate further. The soldiers were not particularly keen on us. They were saying we were different and that we had a different way of seeing things. At the checkpoints, we were on our own. We had wooden clubs and 12 calibres for those who had a gun. We were given ammo.
>
> At first, the self-defence group had no name. It is when it was decided that we had to lend a hand to the FANCI that we were given a name. We were called AP-Wê, that meant Patriotic Alliance of Wê. We could not really tell people that we were reinforcement militia members. We were wearing green tee-shirts, with the AP-Wê name on it. Because there were many of us and because many of us were from neighbouring villages, we got transferred to Blolequin. Other people came to Guiglo, including some from Abidjan. They created their own alliance, the Front for the Liberation of the Great West. They had grey tee-shirts with the FLGO name on them. They stayed in Guiglo; we left for Blolequin.
>
> Later, Général Maho united the two movements. Because he had not fled [Guiglo], he was trusted and all information was passing through him, even encouragement messages. It was him who motivated the youth to protect the town. So he became our chief and our group merged and became the FLGO. There was also another group in Zagné, and another group in Duékoué. They had come to Guiglo to receive military training and later they went back to their positions. In Blolequin, we had our own military camp. We started fighting with our own guns [hunting guns at first], and then we got access to Kalashs that we were taking from [dead] rebels. Sometimes, we found more sophisticated weapons. Some of the FANCI soldiers also trusted us and gave us arms. They knew we were there to help. It is in Blolequin that we learned how to manipulate weapons: how to assemble and disassemble machine guns, how to unjam guns in the heat of combat (…).'

Militias' links with the Ivoirian army were reported several times in the local press despite repeated government denials. In early December 2002, an article from the Agence Ivoirienne de Presse reported that the Blolequin municipal authorities had officially announced their support for the Ivoirian army and the mobilization of Wê youths 'for pushing the rebels out of the Wê homeland'. According to the article, the youth directly received military equipment from one of the mayor's assistants and local *chefs de terre* had been mobilized (Agence Ivoirienne De Presse, 2002). The article also stated that in order to prevent further rebel advances and to keep the populations safe, the villages of Doké, Goya, Yoya and Ifa were already guarded by these Wê warriors (Agence Ivoirienne De Presse, 2002).[20]

As already mentioned, local 'comités de crise' emerged relatively quickly in the western region and played an important part in motivating the local youths to lend a hand to an Ivoirian army struck by high desertion rates (Pana Press, 2003o). Several accounts have in fact pointed out that in the very first days of violence, many gendarmes[21] – who at the time were the local representatives of the Ivoirian army before reinforcements were sent in – fled the area (individual interviews, December 2006).

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[19] The text has been slightly adapted for better reader comprehension.

[20] The article also reported that traditional female shamans (*féticheuses*) had also joined the Wê youths to prepare them mystically before they attacked rebels' positions(Agence Ivoirienne De Presse, 2002).

A particularly large mobilization occurred in Guiglo. Many youths enlisted in the emerging militias, responding to several calls for volunteers from the municipal authorities and from the Ivoirian army. From the testimonies heard, the registration process simply consisted in giving one's name at the local city hall, or at the FANCI military camp, or at one of the militias' bases, which was usually the leader's compound – on several occasions this happened to be a local appointed official. Even if some of these youths had previous experience in rural or urban vigilantism before the war (with some having already been involved in village or neighbourhood watches), they were usually new to warfare and several testimonies show that they underwent some kind of accelerated military training led by experienced soldiers. All travel between Guiglo and Toulepleu was temporarily prohibited by the Ivoirian army and by municipal authorities to avoid information on FANCI positions leaking out (Agence Ivoirienne De Presse, 2002).

- Demobilization contexts

If municipal and district authorities[22] were very much involved in the mobilization of the youths in the early stages of the counter-insurgency, they were no less involved in 'demobilization' matters. Indeed, militia leaders had a vested interest in having these militias persist as long as possible and they particularly exceled in framing a discourse that overemphasized the military power of the pro-government militias by conveying the idea that uncontrolled 'elements' of the base were regularly 'threatening' to resume violence if they were not properly compensated for their war effort (Nord-Sud, 2009). To a certain extent, pro-government militias have evolved in recent years from an armed group involved in warfare to what is simply an instrument for consolidating the power of local elites. On the part of militia leaders, it is 'a skillful manipulation of disorder' (Vlassenroot, 2006: 56). In 2007, these groups seemed more to have stopped seeking socio-political change and to be aiming at defending their autonomy as a group (the same idea was advanced by Amadiume cited in Ellis & Van Kessel, 2009). But if we except recent pre-electoral and post-electoral events, one could argue that militia leaders were exercising little control over their elements in 2006 and 2007.[23] The likelihood that angry militiamen formed a serious threat to national security was low then: firstly, because the bulk of the heavy weapons had been in storage in arsenals for a few years, and secondly, because – even if tensions were increasingly visible between leaders and the most vocal elements on the base – the bulk of militiamen had returned to civilian activities and had resigned themselves to getting little, if not nothing, out of their participation into warfare. They only had vague hopes of compensation.

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[21] The gendarmerie is part of the national armed forces of Cote d'Ivoire and is roughly equivalent in size to the army. It fulfils the function of a national police force and is particularly responsible for territorial security in rural areas. In times of national crisis, the gendarmerie can be used to reinforce the army.

[22] Municipal and district authorities consist of the *Mairie* and the *Conseil Général*. *Conseil Généraux* were created only a few months before the start of the war so they were relatively new actors in the local arena.

When it became clear that a political settlement would prevail over a military one, militia leaders were avid to (re-)take on[24] a role in local politics. This included a function of broker – especially since they were keen on reinserting the militarized civilians under their command – and they notably started extensively liaising with the burgeoning hevea export industry nearby (this point will be further developed in Chapter 8 when reflecting on the humanitarian-military nexus). The same militia leaders have also become increasingly involved in reconciliation matters recently, showing many signs of their willingness to cooperate for restoring a peaceful climate in the west. They have, for instance, become involved in land conflicts mitigations, particularly regarding the issue of confiscated plantations (Maho promised to find a solution for restituting the plantations confiscated by *autochthones* to Baoulé farmers) (Fraternite Matin, 2009); they have promoted the return of civilians to certain locations (Notre Voie, 2008); they have tried to appease discontented militia recruits (Notre Voie, 2009); and in local security matters, they have tried to address the security concerns of the western residents under their jurisdiction, particularly those of the local traders and transporters, by notably escorting vehicles for a while on sections of roads known to be prone to banditry.

Man

Man is an urban hub and a heterogeneous town about three times the size of Guiglo. Its population was estimated to be 160,000 in 2010. It is the capital of the 18 Montagnes region and lies between mountains that include Mount Toura and

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[23] This led to several amusing anecdotes. Diomandé Vassé for instance, a Minister's advisor known to have supplied the militias in the beginning of the conflict, was taken hostage by FLGO militiamen when they were denied their financial demands (L'inter, 2008b, 2008c).

[24] Before the war, FLGO leader Maho Glofehi was the third assistant of the Mayor of Guiglo, member of the FPI, and a traditional Wê chief. UPRGO leader Octave Yahi was Vice President of the *Conseil General* in Guiglo.

Mount Tonkoui, the two highest peaks in Côte d'Ivoire. The department of Man borders the department of Danané in the west, the department of Bangolo in the south, the department of Vavoua in the east, and the department of Biankouma in the north. The autochthonous population is of Yacouba origin. At the last municipal and legislative elections in 2001, both the elected mayor, Albert Flindé, and the elected *department député*, Siki Blon Blaise, were UDPCI sympathizers, the political party of former head of State General Gueï.

Economically, the region of Man is the largest producer of coffee in Côte d'Ivoire and the town hosts the national factory Coffee Manufacturer of Côte d'Ivoire (UNICAFÉ). Man is also home to other export industries and there are several industrial timber companies nearby. There is a dynamic market centre in town, which attracts many people of different origins. Everything is traded, from agricultural products such as rice, cassava, plantain, to a wide range of fabrics, spare parts, and miscellaneous other items. The town is also a collection depot for cocoa and coffee and a logistic centre for their trade.

• The effects of war

The town fell into rebel hands for the first time at the end of November 2002. Two days later, loyalist forces recaptured the town for a few weeks, and on 19 December, Man was once again retaken by the rebellion. For the past eight years, it has remained in rebel-controlled territory. State institutions immediately ceased functioning: the armed forces, the police, the gendarmerie, customs, water and forest services, the judicial system, the administrative prefects, as well as the *Conseil Général* and the *Mairie*. The municipality (Mairie) was not closed for long though and resumed work in three domains: the registration of births, issuing certificates, and liaising between the population and rebel forces (they were then referred to as the *Forces Nouvelles*).

Man was located in Zone 6 in rebel territory.[25] During the period under study, it was headed by zone commander Losseni Fofana *(Com'Zone)*, in place since July 2003 and known locally as 'Loss' or 'Papa Cobra'.[26] He used to be a corporal in the Ivoirian army, where most high-ranking elements of the *Forces Nouvelles* came from (Heitz, 2009a). Since the rebellion had to find ways to reach financial and economic autonomy in the territory they occupied, an economic forum was held in Bouaké on 9 November 2003, where tax collectioning systems were discussed in depth (Pana Press, 2003c, 2003k). A few days earlier, rebel forces had made a public statement against the redeployment of the State administration in the territories they controlled and had started recruiting staff to fulfil administrative positions (Pana Press, 2003h, 2003l). Shortly after the Bouaké forum, they started to systematically levy trade taxes on local businesses, from petty traders to the large export industries of cocoa, coffee and timber. In Man, the new tax system for the big companies began being implemented at the end of April 2004; a colonel from Korhogo had been specially mandated to that end (personal communication with Colonel Moussa, May 2004). In addition to the routine bribes demanded at checkpoints from individuals and transporters, extortion from businesses occurred openly and followed a clear chain of command.

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[25] The rebel-held part of Côte d'Ivoire is divided into ten zones.

[26] There was much internal rivalry in the beginning when competing for positions and resources. It claimed many deaths among the rebels. Loss gradually eliminated his opponents or forced them into exile.

I come back to some of the points mentioned here in Chapter 8, when empirically reflecting on the functioning of these armed groups. But suffice here to say that the *Forces Nouvelles'* most lucrative sources of money were the cocoa and timber industries, ransacked at every single level of the chain. On a different scale, elements of the *Forces Nouvelles* could be observed collecting fees at the local market and at various shops in town, carrying receipt books.[27] Small business owners usually handed over the money on a weekly basis:

> 'The rebels come every Tuesday. One group comes to collect the 500 CFA francs (USD 1) a week and then there is a second group that comes to check your documents on another day. If you don't pay, or if your documents are not in order, they can confiscate your equipment and take it to their military camp. There, you have to pay 5,000 CFA francs to get it back.' (Human Rights Watch, 2010)

Despite partial redeployment of the State administration (the Prefecture of Man was handed over to the civilian authorities in June 2007), the *Com'Zone* continued to exercise almost complete control over economic, security, and judicial affairs within his zone until the recent events.

In 2005, the Ivoirian State and the *Forces Nouvelles* reach an agreement authorizing the *Forces Nouvelles* to fulfil the function of police and gendarmerie in the territory they controlled. On 21 April 2006, the *Préfet de Police* of Man announced a large-scale recruitment campaign for police officers, and anyone under 30 years old was invited to apply, provided he or she had a minimum educational level (CM2/6th grade). Low-ranking rebels were particularly responsive to this call, and it is a topic that came up on several occasions during individual interviews. On 15 December 2006, 600 *Forces Nouvelles* police and gendarme officers were officially released from training to be deployed in rebel-held territory (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2006e). This auxiliary police force was trained in collaboration with

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[27] Noteworthily, the municipality successfully negotiated a share of the market taxation (Heitz, 2009b).

UNPOL, the UN Police, and received the blessing of the highest authorities (from Prime Minister Banny to the Ministry of Justice). In rebel-controlled territory, prisons, gendarmeries and police stations re-opened for the handling of civilian disputes.

The western humanitarian context

With the exception of Médecins sans Frontières (the Belgian, Dutch and French sections started their operations in the west in early 2003 while there were still combat operations in the area),[28] most humanitarian agencies started operating in the west in the latter half of 2003, when the period of open combat had ceased.[29] The first initiatives fostered focused on health care, water, basic sanitation and food security. Protection and programmes of reinsertion for ex-combatants came much later on the humanitarian agenda, with the latter appearing to be more boosted by political progress than by a genuine desire to understand the complex issue of temporarily militarized civilians. Reinsertion programming has mainly been framed in terms of technicalities, with indicators focusing on the number of project beneficiaries per activity and per site, the price details of the equipment provided, attendance lists, etc. Such an operating framework was intrinsically flawed by the lack of recognition of the project dynamics, an aspect I particularly explore in Chapter 9, when analyzing two standard instruments of post-conflict interventions targeting ex-combatants.

Simply because post-conflict interventions operate geographically near to the heart of conflict, they are quite likely to become entangled in social networks that play some part in structuring the conflict itself. Western Côte d'Ivoire has not been an exception. It is therefore worth to explore the extent to which humanitarianism has interacted with the war apparatus and whether it has been manipulated (or not) by the local warlords. I examine these two questions by reflecting on certain remarks made during the interviews I conducted and by recalling my own practitioner experience in Côte d'Ivoire in 2003-2004.

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[28] MSF-Belgique was running the hospital in Man, MSF-Netherlands the hospital in Danané, and MSF-France the hospital in Guiglo. All sections started running mobile clinics when the security situation allowed movement outside the towns.

[29] They included Médecins Sans Frontières (the French, Dutch and Belgian sections), Médecins du Monde, OXFAM, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children (the English and Swedish sections), Solidarités, Handicap International, CARE US and AFRICARE. A few INGOs came later, notably the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the German NGO GTZ-International Service (GTZ-IS), the latter provided support to militarized civilians.

- The humanitarian/military nexus from the insurgent perspective …

As I dug into my professional files, I came across several anecdotes that depicted the relative lenience of the rebel forces towards humanitarian workers. This report of an INGO field coordinator in Man is particularly telling:

> 'Last week, we could see movements of troops with heavy weapons in town going north, on the Guinean border. The French forces Licornes advised us not to travel there at the moment. The area is not secured. (…) Two *Forces Nouvelles* officers visited our office: the *Chargé de Communication* and the *Responsable des Affaires Sociales*. It was the first time they came along. The objective of their visit was to tell me that everything was under control but that the *Forces Nouvelles* had decided to tighten the current checkpoints. They were thus apologizing in advance for the potential car and truck hassles. Indeed, our cars are now checked and searched almost all times and ID cards are asked from all the passengers.' (extracts from an INGO situational report, Man, 9-27 May 2004)

On the insurgent side (at least in the Man area), international humanitarian agencies have remained relatively free from control and despite punctual interdiction from times to times, could circulate nearly everywhere in rebel territory if they were in possession of a valid laissez-passer and '*ordre de mission*'. The laissez-passer was a document issued by the *Forces Nouvelles* covering a particular zone (Man was for instance in Zone 6); it was usually necessary to obtain a laissez-passer from the rebel *État-Major* of Bouaké first to show that the agency had received approval from the highest in command. The *ordre de mission* was an internal document of the agency that was usually signed by the project manager. Humanitarian staff were also usually provided with an agency ID card, so they could present it at checkpoints, in case of identity checks.

Not everything ran smoothly of course, and in the absence of local commanders checkpoint staff could become quite heavy-handed. Sometimes, they would not be willing to let vehicles pass for fear of fighting in the area, on other occasions they would insist on getting a lift or receiving some petty cash, but these problems were usually solved quite easily after lengthy talks with them, without having to resort to giving in to their demands. Then, after a while, when the humanitarian agency was better known in the area, these kinds of problems tended to diminish.

Can we thus speak of a capture of humanitarian resources by the insurgent side? If routine bribes were probably sometimes paid by transporters on humanitarian freight at particularly heavy checkpoints, this was far from being the norm and the tax-free character of aid was usually recognized in rebel territory. In Côte d'Ivoire, we were far from the sophisticated system of capture described by Lavergne & Weissman (2003) in Sudan. There, the insurgents had developed a real savoir-faire in this respect, a humanitarian wing had been created within the SPLA to control the distribution of aid (the SRRA) and a significant part of resources were diverted to the rebel army and to the local elites through several means (from the looting of WFP warehouses to an indirect system of taxation of humanitarian agencies). If humanitarianism in southern Sudan played a key role in the political economy of conflict, its role was much more modest in western Côte d'Ivoire. The *Forces Nouvelles* created a sort of humanitarian wing within the movement (it took several names: from the *Bureau des Affaires Sociales* in the beginning, to *division Chargée des Affaires humanitaires* in more recent years), but such structures had little say in what international agencies did on the ground. When agencies were asked for their daily route (under the pretext of 'needing to know for providing protection'), there was no sanction when the information was not supplied and in the same vein, when the *Forces Nouvelles* suggested a potential local development partner to INGOs (known to be pro-rebel), there were no coercive measures when the suggestion was not followed. If any, financial and in-kind flows were minimal in Man between humanitarian agencies and the *Forces Nouvelles*, at least nothing comparable with what the companies exporting timber, coffee and cocoa were subject to (personal communication, April 2004).

- … from the counter-insurgent perspective

Hassling humanitarian workers was much more common on the counter-insurgent side and examples of humiliation and excessive harassment were frequently reported by INGOs working around Ben Houyé and Zouan Hounien:

> 'J. was obliged to do push-ups at a particularly heavy checkpoint last week, the one set at the exit of Zouan Hounien on the road to Ity. The same problem happened with WFP drivers. It was at the same place.' (extracts from an INGO situational report, Man, 14 February 2004)
>
> 'Our car with our local staff was stopped for more than one hour at a FANCI checkpoint at the entry of Bin Houyé (coming from Zouan Hounien). Two reasons were given: one was that the local staff didn't present the proper authorization (but I know they presented the same documentation we have been presenting for the past three months) and the second reason was that one of our staff is called Dely Desiré and one well-known rebel commander in Man is called Dely Gaspard. So FANCI accused our staff of being part of a rebel family.' (extracts from an INGO situational report, Man, 8-19 November 2003)
>
> 'Last Friday, our staff was again stopped by the FANCI at the exit of Bin Houyé. One soldier aggressively asked why IRC staff were all Yacouba. And then he started to check their identity cards. One didn't have his ID card so the car had to go back to his place to pick it up. Fortunately, his house was not too far away. The soldier let them go afterwards.' (extracts from an INGO situational report, Man, 5 March 2004)

But despite heavy harassment at checkpoints (under the pretext of checking travel documents, car insurance or ID), international humanitarian agencies were also rather free on the government side and could circulate everywhere without having to report to any official body. In late 2003, early 2004, most INGOs signed an official agreement with the Ivoirian State *(un accord d'établissement)* which included several advantageous agreements for the INGOs such as the exemption from VAT on purchases, the exemption from custom taxes on imports, the exemption from taxes on funds sent from abroad, and favourable treatment by the immigration services when entering and/or exiting the country. These dispositions were in general implemented and were not issues. Some INGOs also signed agreements with specific ministries, in relation to their activities.

Has some sort of capture of humanitarian resources thus occurred on the government side? The tax-free character of international aid was usually also recognized in the government-controlled territory and trucks labeled 'humanitarian' and transporting humanitarian freight could usually avoid paying the routine fines. Although the World Food Programme warehouse was looted in Guiglo in January 2006, along with other INGOs stocks and equipment, this was more due to a crowd effect and the unexpected local mass reaction after the Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers opened fire on particularly strident demonstrators (shooting and killing several of them). Even though this tragic event was politically exploited by the local authorities, the loot probably went to the angry crowd, and what actually came out strikingly of the contexts under study, is that if some sort of capture was happening on either belligerent side, it was not at the level of physical humanitarian resources.

In contrast, local aid mechanisms were probably more prone to physical capture. As already mentioned, in the early stages of the counter-insurgency, Guéré cadres were raising financial contributions in their respective towns in support of the war effort and of the displaced populations. But it is quite possible that part of the help targeting the displaced was diverted to sustain the counter-insurgent groups, especially during the encampment period, where pro-government militias were confined in a military setting and were given free food.

> 'On 4 May 2004, a FANCI truck arrived in Bangolo with rice and other food for the IDPs of the area. This food apparently was a gift from the Guéré community of Abidjan. Some Guéré politicians accompanied the truck. These politicians first met representatives of the IDPs, and this was followed by a very disorganized and messy food distribution.' (extracts from an INGO situational report, Man, 9 May 2004)

- The 'Zone de Confiance': military, political or humanitarian product?

On top of that humanitarian apparatus, international diplomacy was keen on monitoring the ceasefire and movements of armed groups in the west of the country, and impartial forces were also mandated to play a role in supporting humanitarian operations there by establishing the necessary security conditions in the areas of intervention.

Perhaps the most tangible example of a military, political and humanitarian embroilment in western Côte d'Ivoire was the set-up of the *Zone de Confiance*, an artificial area created completely from scratch by the impartial forces, which was used for both military and humanitarian ends. The *Zone de Confiance* designated a geographical area that separated rebel-held from government-held territory between May 2003 and April 2007. It was supposed to be neutral and belligerent and weapon free (the ceasefire was monitored in it by the impartial forces; French forces and ECOWAs at first, and then the ONUCI contingents), in sum, it was supposed to be one of these 'spaces of exception', an expression coined by Agier and Bouchet-Saulnier which I already alluded to in the theoretical considerations. In the four years of its existence, the *Zone de Confiance* in fact was a huge misnomer to designate a space of widespread banditism and where crimes went unpunished. No clear authority prevailed there and the visible proliferation of armed groups had the effect of reconfiguring many spaces, to the point of entirely changing the local balance of power in certain areas.

There is some ground to argue that the set up of such a Zone was necessary to reestablish basic living conditions in certain areas and to create favourable conditions for humanitarian interventions. After all, in many locations checkpoints were ended after the impartial forces asked the local youths to stop. And when the French forces and the ECOWAS started setting temporary bases in remote rural settings in the summer of 2003, people slowly started to leave the bush where they had been hiding, and started to repopulate the villages. But it is noteworthy that because of this new setting, with such unclear local laws, impartial forces were drawn more and more into local processes of conflict resolution, which therefore became quite controversial. Several examples in the chronology recounted below point to that trend.

If counting the dead is part of standard ceasefire monitoring, becoming involved in structural tensions is more questionable, even if the genuine aim is to mitigate violent conflicts. By playing an increasing role in settling local affairs, especially with regards to local security matters, impartial forces have involuntarily added a new layer to the local mechanisms of conflict resolution and one might wonder whether it is for better or worse. Such questions fully echo what we stressed earlier, when reflecting on interventionism: the fact that an overdose of interventions runs the risk of drying up important social mechanisms that already exist at the local level (i.e. the social interactions that regulate responsibilities, rights and reciprocal obligations and that generally arrange social life on a much more stable basis than imported solutions). In the western context, if both Licornes and ONUCI have endorsed the hat of the best legal facilitators in the *Zone de Confiance*, there is the need to reflect on who will replace them when they leave, once their mandate expires.

Table 5.2 Series of events showing the increased implication of the impartial forces in local mechanisms of conflict resolution

17 and 19 April 2006	ONUCI facilitates reconciliation meetings between Guéré and Baoulé communities.
4 May 2006	Four Guérés fall into an ambush in Gohoua-Zagna but succeed in escaping and alert the impartial forces.
27-28 June 2006	French forces discover 7 dead and 15 wounded in the villages of Blédi and Goho2, next to Douekpé. The attack is locally perceived as a reaction to the murder of the two Burkinabé children.
September 2006	French forces publicly state that, since February 2006, inter-ethnic conflicts have cost the lives of 25 people and wounded 46 in the area east of Bangolo (axis Baibly/Gohouo). Acts of banditism have cost the lives of 16 and wounded 11 on the Bangolo/Duékoué axis and the Daloa/Vavoua road.
28 December 2006	Impartial forces arrest the *dozos* of Toa Zéo.
14 January 2007	Six young Guérés of the village of Baoubly (between Duékoué and Bangolo) are declared missing after having gone fishing near the Baoulé encampment of Koffikro. Impartial forces conduct the investigations.
25-26 September 2007	A farmer of Pinhou (*sous-préfecture* of Zou) is accused by his peers of being a thief and having stolen poultry. He is severely beaten and dies. Impartial forces arrest four suspected criminals.

Source: see Appendix 1 for detailed sources.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has placed contentious movements into perspective by exploring the extent to which the mobilizing and demobilizing contexts of Guiglo and Man were shaped by their immediate environments. It presented the main aspects of the conflict in the western region, the micro-ethnographic contexts of the two localities under study, and it has reflected on the question of *dosage* when examining the western humanitarian context. As a necessary complement to the preceding chapter, this section eventually strengthens the grounds to avoid over-estimating the importance of historicity in processes of mobilization compared to more contingent and circumstantial factors. It has particularly stressed the importance of the local territorial sovereignty dimension on matters related to recruitment, a thread I pick up in Chapter 7, when reflecting on the motives that drew young civilians into armed factions.

Photograph 5: Pork farm sponsored by the GTZ-IS project, Guiglo

Photograph 6: Apprentices fixing a motorbike, Man (one of them is a former child recruit)

6

Armed factions operating in the west

On both belligerent sides and at various levels, a significant portion of the civilian population became involved in armed movements and started engaging in a wide range of (para)military tasks, from combat operations to basic logistical duties (multitasking was the norm within armed groups). While some analysts went as far as describing Côte d'Ivoire as having engaged in a process of 'milicianization' of society, it is worth exploring the extent of this phenomenon since the links between joining armed groups and political loyalty are more complex than it seems. Processes of mobilization took different forms across the country, depending on individuals' affiliations, beliefs and social networks, and I explore these individual characteristics in the next chapter. But processes of mobilization were also contingent to more contextual factors such as proximity to the front line, the temporality of the conflict, the dynamics of local politics, the characteristics of the mobilizing context, and the recruitment strategy of the armed faction in question. I focus here on the dynamics of the armed factions that were active in western Côte d'Ivoire between 2002 and 2007. By stressing their temporality, their evolution in time, their degree of ethnic mixity (which factions emerged earliest, which ones were absorbed by other groups, the extent of 'locality' of recruitment), I try to go beyond the prevailing views of these movements. The general discourse has in fact rarely been satisfactory and there is a blatant lack of empirical studies of the western region. Existing literature has tended to put all militias in one basket, masking the differences, and by doing so it has failed in capturing the dynamics of these groups and in clarifying inter-groups relations. The diversity of rebel and militia members these armed factions encompassed has also rarely been acknowledged and discussions tend to quickly fall short because of the lack of detailed knowledge of these armed groups' base. This section and the following chapter partially attempt to fill that gap and are based on information derived from the local press and from certain individual interviews.

Counter-insurgent movements

As has been already mentioned, it is mainly in western Côte d'Ivoire, in the Moyen-Cavally region, that counter-insurgency movements took the form of armed groups that resembled the most structured forms of paramilitary militias. With the proximity of the front line, and in reaction to unprecedented levels of violence in the area, the existing form of rural/urban vigilantism (which also existed elsewhere, in other regions) quickly evolved into more sophisticated structures with the support of local leaders, in order to secure areas and places not yet taken by the rebel forces. While it is suggested in some writings that the Ivoirian government initiated these groups (or at least helped in fostering them by calling for civilian help in the media), an alternative perspective is to postulate that the State has in fact built on these existing small-scale counter-insurgent initiatives, and that it has helped them to develop by improving their structure and equipment in order to serve the incumbent regime's military and political aims.

These groups – which I call 'pro-government militias' in this book or 'counter-insurgent movements' – rapidly connected with each other, merged, and developed links with other military and paramilitary movements; it included the Ivoirian army (FANCI) and the Liberian mercenaries hired by the State to counter the rebel attacks. Noteworthily, a number of high-ranking FANCI commanders were of Wê origin, which might partly explain the craze for defending Wê territory (General Mathias Doué, the FANCI Chief of Staff in 2002-2003, was of Wobé origin; Lieutenant Jean Oulaï Delafosse[1] was of Guéré origin. His name was often cited during the individual interviews I conveyed as having been closely associated with the Liberian-backed LIMA forces.).

There were several pro-government militias: the *Alliance Patriotique Wê* (AP-Wê), the *Forces de Libération du Grand Ouest* (FLGO), the *Mouvement Ivoirien pour la Libération de l'Ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MILOCI), the *Union des*

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[1] At the start of the war, his mother was still living in Doké, a small village located on the Blolequin-Toulepleu road. In 2005, when after the Petit-Duékoué incidents it was decided that the western *sous-préfectures* would be administrated by military personnel, Delafosse was appointed *sous-préfet* of Toulepleu.

Patriotes pour la Résistance du Grand Ouest (UPRGO), and the Liberian-backed LIMA forces. They eventually played a major role in pushing back the rebels from Taï, Toulepleu, Blolequin and Bangolo in late 2002 and early 2003. If in times of war, all pro-government armed factions collaborated with each other, it would be a mistake to ignore their differences and the diversity of militia recruits they encompassed. In the west, militia members ranged from poorly armed and ill-trained villagers to individuals who clearly received extensive military training in order to provide substantial support to the national army. Some groups were more 'local' than others, some were more important in scale (Table 6.1), some emerged before others, and some were completely absorbed by other armed factions.

Table 6.1 Claimed affiliation of pro-government militias listed by the PNDDR[2]

Armed factions	**N**	**%**
APEWE	950	16.8
FLGO	3,260	57.8
UPRGO	580	10.3
MILOCI	14	0.2
FAT/FATCI/FSAT	145	2.6
FDS	1	0
LIMA	1	0
MPIGO/FAFN	2	0
Not claimed	688	12.2

Source: Data taken from PNDDR. Table compiled by the author (2007).

Several testimonies of the 'early joiners' I interviewed suggest that the *Alliance Patriotique Wê* (AP-Wê) was the first pro-government militia to be formed in Guiglo in December 2002 before spreading to nearby towns. This is corroborated by Fofana (2009) who describes the AP-Wê as the first 'self-defence' movement in western Côte d'Ivoire and as being the result of an initiative driven by the local *comité de crise*.[3] The official discourse had a strong ethnic connotation: the objective was to mobilize Wê youths to defend the Wê territory. One form of the mobilizing discourse was also very contentious and openly hostile to the Yacouba ethnic group who, for a variety of reasons, had been associated with the assailants: it was presented as necessary to ‘defend the Wê against the Dan, those who make war against the Wê to avenge the death of General Gueï’. (Fofana, 2009) There seem to be several branches of the movement. In Guiglo, the bulk of AP-Wê recruits was absorbed by the FLGO movement and received FLGO militia cards (personal communication with militiamen). In Duékoué, Julien Gnan Monpého, alias ‘Colombo’, claimed leadership and made several public statements in the press presenting himself as the AP-Wê leader.[4] In Toulepleu, there is some evidence that a branch of the AP-Wê movement was active during a certain period of conflict – this is documented by local press releases – however, the precise leadership and connections with the other branches remain unclear.

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[2] There was indeed a certain opaqueness of numbers and several estimates have been put forward by different spokespersons at different periods. In contrast to these figures, a declaration by FANCI officer Colonel Jules Yao Yao in a local newspaper mentions 1,200 AP-Wê, 7,000 FLGO and 1,800 UPRGO recruits, quite a different estimate than the numbers advanced by the PNDDR ('Désarmement des milices à Guiglo', Soir Info, 1 June 2005).

[3] Crisis committees were set up at the outset of the crisis by representatives of the *Mairie* and *Conseil Général* and emerged in reaction to the levels of violence in the area.

The *Forces de Libération du Grand Ouest* (FLGO) was also founded in the very early stages of the counter-insurgency and absorbed most of the AP-Wê recruits in Guiglo. Many recruits I interviewed who first enrolled in the AP-Wê movement in fact say that they received a FLGO card later, after the first fighting was over and some kind of ‘formal’ process of registration was taking place. Both the AP-Wê and the FLGO movements were initiated by Maho Glofiéi Dennis, who proclaimed himself General of these movements. Maho was then third assistant to the mayor of Guiglo, a political activist (as an active member of the FPI Central Committee, he had solid ties with the Presidential party), and a respected community leader in his function of President of the Association of Wê Chiefs. Like the AP-Wê movement, FLGO was by majority composed of young people of Wê origin. In the first years of the movement, the official discourse was more keen on presenting FLGO as an ‘army of resistance’ instead of as a ‘militia’ (BBC News, 2005), and FLGO and AP-Wê played a major role in 2002-2003 in pushing back the rebels from several key locations in the Moyen-Cavally region. Then the initial discourse gradually evolved and the militia term lost its pejorative connotation as it became more visibly associated with eligibility to DDR benefits. At certain periods though, the FLGO discourse revived a certain war discourse, but this time directed at the international peacekeeping forces and often openly hostile towards the French forces. After the attack on Logoualé (February 2005), a declaration by the FLGO leader urged the United Nations and the international community to proceed with the immediate and unconditional retreat of the rebels and of the French army from the western territory (Agence France Presse, 2005). In January 2006, following the unfortunate killing of two demonstrators by the Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers based in Guiglo, local authorities instrumentalized the crowd and all UN and INGOs offices and equipment were looted or burnt.

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[4] Colombo was alledgely involved in banditry and he was known in the Duékoué-Bangolo area as fostering tensions between autochthonous and non autochthonous populations.

Explanations concerning the military supplies have always remained vague, with both FLGO leaders and recruits consistently and frequently claiming – at least in the beginning – that FLGO had no guns others than those stolen from the dead rebels. Several sources have however reported that FLGO received financial and in-kind military support from different channels, which included people close to the Presidency (BBC News, 2005; International Crisis Group, 2004). In fact, the movement had developed links with several key political figures in Abidjan and had also built on existing connections. It has been documented that at the peak of conflict Maho had daily phone contact with the then Minister of Defense Kadet Bertin[5] and Minister of Civil Service and Employment Hubert Oulaï (Oulaï was also of Guéré origin, from a village near Guiglo). By the end of 2002, Maho had therefore become an unofficial politico-military relay in a parallel chain of command that ran from the Presidency to the various pro-government western militias (International Crisis Group, 2004). If Maho was the political face of the movement, the FLGO military branch was led by Ivoirian soldiers (the name of Sergeant Jean-Marie Toualy notably appeared in some literature (Dioh, 2003)).

Like the AP-Wê movement, there were several branches of the FLGO and the ways of settling demands or disputes did not go unchallenged. If Maho was its uncontested leader, other FLGO chiefs played an important role at grassroot level, particularly in holding the militias together. In Toulepleu in 2007, FLGO leader Paul Houeya intervened when Kadet Bertin (former Minister of Defence in 2002-2003 who was then acting as personal advisor to the President on security matters) met militia elements in town to ask them to hand over their weapons to the Prefect of Toulepleu. Unsatisfied with the incentives proposed, Houeya held a separate meeting with his forces to discuss what other options they had (Onuci, 2007). This example is a rather good illustration of how loose the chain of command had become in 2007. In those days – and probably up to until recently – it was unlikely that Maho could claim full control of his troops, and non-State armed groups were probably much better coordinated in 2002-2003 − at the peak of the conflict − than in 2007. The militias' chain of command appeared rather loose then, especially as the financial stakes linked to former combatants' reinsertion were becoming more and more important. In several towns, a number of young civilians who, at a certain time, had been involved in

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[5] Kadet Bertin was Minister of Defence in 2002-2003. After that, he became personal security adviser to Laurent Gbagbo. He is the nephew of the incumbent president and is also viewed by many as the unofficial head of the Ivoirian army.

FLGO, started manifesting their discontent, openly contesting their leaders' actions (L'inter, 2008a, 2008b). FLGO local commanders could therefore play an important role in holding the militias together (or not), and in fueling or mitigating tensions.

The third main militia faction, the *Union des Patriotes pour la Résistance du Grand Ouest* (UPRGO), was created at the end of spring 2003, when acts of war had calmed down. An article in the Ivoirian newspaper Soir Info, dated 3 June 2003, reported that a public meeting was held end of May in Guiglo, at which local elected officials announced the creation of a new counter-insurgent movement: the *Union des Patriotes pour la Résistance du Grand Ouest* (cited in International Crisis Group, 2003). Why such a movement emerged at such a period and in the same town as the FLGO is not clear from the information we have, but it is well documented that UPRGO and FLGO maintained close links and that the two leaders were well-known local political figures (Octave Yahi, UPRGO leader, was Vice President of the *Conseil Général* of Guiglo). UPRGO is thought to have been military led by General Banao on the ground (Banégas, 2008; L'inter, 2007a). Blolequin was one of their bases in the beginning; then when the degree of violence decreased the following year, the base of the movement was eventually relocated to Zagné, a few kilometres south of Guiglo. In size, UPRGO was much smaller than the FLGO movement (Table 6.1) estimates it to be approximately seven times smaller).

The *Mouvement Ivoirien pour la Libération de l'Ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MILOCI) appeared on the militia scene much later, in early 2005, when its leader, Pastor Gammi, claimed responsibility for the attack of Logoualé on rebel positions in February 2005 (Irin, 2005; Yao Ferdinand Pour Le Rassemblement Des Republicains, 2005). Even if the attack was unsuccessful and Logoualé remained in rebel hands, Gammi's discourse was that this event marked the start of a series of aggressive acts meant to 'liberate' the zones under rebel control, since the impartial forces 'were doing nothing' or worse, 'were blocking militias' advances'. Verbal criticism of French forces was very harsh and French soldiers were even threatened that they could be the next targets (Irin, 2005). It is estimated that between 200 and 300 armed men were involved in the attack on Logoualé, of whom 87 were taken prisoner by the rebels and then by the impartial forces. Prisoners included people of Wê origin but also young Yacoubas, who had joined the pro-government militias, rendering the composition of the group rather counter-intuitive.[6] Contrary to the bulk of AP-Wê and FLGO recruits, the MILOCI was not an ‘ethnic’ movement and the recruitment was not as local as theirs was. It was largely composed of Abidjanese activists, members of the Jeunes Patriotes social movement, who had fought in FLGO ranks at the height of the war (notably to recapture the towns of Toulepleu and Blolequin) and to whom it had been promised integration into the army (Le Patriote, 2005). When it became clear that most of them would never be incorporated in the army, some of these youths gathered in Duékoué and decided to form the basis of a new movement. The movement was based in Kahadé, a Guéré village 25 km from Guiglo, and had close links to the FLGO and the Ivoirian army. In an extensive interview in Le Patriote, a young militia member describes the connections with Abidjan and the regular army (Box 6.1).

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[6] Pastor Gammi himself was said to be of Yacouba origin, and was father of Diomandé Vassé, who was advisor of Minister Douaty in 2002-2003. Both politicians were known to have played an important role in supplying the starting counter-insurgency with military materiel.

Box 6.1: Testimony of a MILOCI recruit

‘The MILOCI is composed of “young patriots” who were active in the *communes* of Yopougon, Adjamé, Abobo and Koumassi in Abidjan. Some of them gathered in Duékoué and formed the basis of the movement. […] At the beginning of the war, patriotic movements started. In Yopougon, we were with someone called Julien. Every *commune* in Abidjan had its group of young patriots who were part of street *agoras* and parliaments. It was coordinated by M.Batoa and Pastor Gammi. […] Pastor Gammi is of Yacouba origin, from the region of Danané. His real name is Diomandé and he is related to Vassé Diomandé, advisor of minister Douaty and member of the Social and Economic Council. He is not a pastor. He was the right hand of Blé Goudé at the head of the COJEP and […] to make himself more popular, he joined the armed branch of the patriotic movement. […] I never met him. He was not on the ground.

The MILOCI used to be part of the FLGO movement. When we fought in Toulepleu and Blolequin, the MILOCI did not yet exist. Later, we were all brought back to Abidjan, to the 1st Battalion of parachutist commandos, where we told that we would be integrated in the Ivorian army. But we were left on our own. […] They only integrated one section in the army, the “Unité Tonnerre”, currently based in Ity, in the 1st Battalion of parachutist commandos […]. The MILOCI is not an “ethnic” movement. It is composed of “young patriots” from Abidjan who wanted to become soldiers, and to whom it was promised integration into the army after the battles in the west. We were 350 people in the beginning. Between then and today, many were discouraged.

In the west, we were based in Kahadé, a Guéré village, 25 km from Guiglo. We used to sleep at the youth centre. Minister Douaty used to provide us with food supplies, via his advisor Diomandé Vassé. We also had a stock of weapons in Guiglo. The minister visited our arsenal twice while I was on the watch. Commandant Batoa was the MILOCI Chief of Staff on the ground. He was a civilian. Our war leader was an officer, from the FANCI. It was Lieutenant Teha from the First Battalion of the infantry detachment in Blolequin. Our armament, military training and uniforms were provided by the FANCI. We were not staying in the same camps, but we had access to their base. […] In the village where we were based, the chief also helped us to get weapons; he was buying them in Liberia. […] Colonel Yedess, head of the Ivoirian army’s operations in the west, was our spiritual chief.’

Source: Le Patriote (2005)[7]

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[7] For better reader comprehension, the translation was slightly adapted by the author.

If the links with Abidjan and with the regular army were obvious, connections with the FLGO were no less evident. Shortly after the attack of Logoualé, General Maho issued a communiqué: 'We offer our complete support to the actions by MILOCI, and our youth, and all his strength, are at its disposal for any need at any point'(Agence France Presse, 2005). The connection with the Ivoirian army was also later confirmed by Colonel Eric Burgaud, Chief of Staff of the French forces in the West: 'We have proof that the [MILOCI] militiamen were supervised by the Ivorian army and that they had been armed by the Ivorian army' (Reuters cited in Human Rights Watch, 2005). This was also confirmed by the testimony of Liberian fighters who had participated in the Logoualé attack who told Human Rights Watch staff that they had received arms, ammunition and uniforms from military personnel in preparation for the attack.

In July 2005, the FLGO, MILOCI, UPRGO and AP-Wê started to appear in the press, regrouped under the umbrella organization *Forces de résistance du Grand Ouest* (FRGO) and led by Maho (Human Rights Watch, 2005). This incentive to merge probably arose from the likelihood of receiving financial compensation for having participated in the war effort and perhaps it was then thought that presenting one group instead of four would facilitate the disbursement of the DDR cash instalments.

On 13 December 2005, the FRGO held a press briefing in which it announced its full support for the new Prime Minister in his mission to restore peace. Maho took advantage of this communiqué to put the disarming of the 10,700 FRGO combatants on the agenda, expressing his disappointment at not having been involved in the discussions on DDR held by the UN, the African Union and the South-African mediation, while the rebel factions had had a say (Nord-Sud, 2005). This was quite an opportune statement to make, at a time when the modus operandi for disarming the pro-government militias was still being designed. In practice though, and in comparison with the individual armed factions, the FRGO did not weight much in the political scene. Financial compensation for participating in the war effort was largely negotiated directly with the leaders of the four militias, and sometimes on a case-by-case basis with a number of local war lords. Several 'presidential envelopes' were also opaquely distributed in the west, notably in 2005, when Minister of Defense Kadet Bertin visited Toulepleu, and in 2007 when President Gbagbo came to Guiglo.[8]

Another counter-insurgent armed group that emerged in the west were the Liberian-backed LIMA forces, who were particularly active in the very beginning, at the height of conflict. If their precise chain of command largely remains unclear, we know that they were led on the ground by several Liberian commanders and Ivoirian FANCI Lieutenant Jean Oulaï Delafosse is reported to have been closely involved with them (United Nations, 2006). It has, however, been reported that on a number of occasions, the Ivoirian army lacked direct command over their Liberian elements. Human Rights Watch even wrote that Guéré officials from the Toulepleu area complained to government officials in Abidjan about the way their Liberian allies were treating civilians. They were told in answer 'to be very careful' and 'not to say that it was the mercenaries who did these things'. 'Say instead that it was the rebels' (Human Rights Watch, 2003a).

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[8] I come back to this question of payment in Chapter 9, when reflecting on the function of such incentives.

Nearly half of the pro-government militias I interviewed mentioned having started their militia days with the LIMA forces (Table 6.2). The name 'LIMA' was actually given by the French peacekeepers early on and represented the international radio code word for the letter L, as in Liberia (International Crisis Group, 2003). Various statements and press releases from the UN, the French government and international news agencies (and notably the 2003 Report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1458, S/2003/498) have designated these factions as '*supplétifs Libériens*' or as 'LIMA' forces. Not surprisingly, neither the State nor the FPI press has ever acknowledged the use of Liberian elements as reinforcements. LIMA forces have yet always been linked to the Ivoirian State and a LIMA section has even persisted in Toulepleu up to quite a recent date. Some accounts even reported tensions between FLGO and the remnants of these LIMA factions. During the disarmament process in Guiglo in late July 2006, when the Toulepleu-based LIMA forces wanted to join the process, they were called 'Liberian' by the other groups and were therefore excluded. UNOCI staff observed militia leader Maho telling LIMA recruits who had arrived from Toulepleu that they could not disarm as they were 'Liberians and not Ivoirians'. Maho was also observed criticizing

Table 6.2 First faction integrated by respondents

MAN		**GUIGLO**	
MPCI	34	AP-WE	22
MPIGO	32	LIMA	45
MJP	33	FLGO	16
Other	1	UPRGO	10
		Jeunes Patriotes	1
		FANCI	2
		Rural vigilantism	3
		Other	1

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

the fact that the Toulepleu counter-insurgency group was retaining Liberian fighters in violation of international agreements (United Nations, 2006).

Finally, there is ground to think that the MODEL – the Liberian armed movement that eventually ousted Taylor from power – was in fact an offshoot of the LIMA. Entering into details here would be beyond the scope of this study but it is worth noting that after LIMA forces fought alongside FLGO and MILOCI elements in Côte d'Ivoire, some sections composed of Liberians and of Ivoirian militarized civilians crossed the border to eventually fight in Liberia[9] (notably in Zwedru and Toe Town, two battles mentioned in the chronology of violent events in Appendix 1 and visualized by Map 5.2 in the previous chapter).

In the two fieldwork locations on the government side, Guiglo and Blolequin, the recruitment of low-ranking pro-government militia members appeared strikingly local. The large majority of the recruits I interviewed were of Guéré origin (the local *autochthones*), and this suspected 'locality' of recruitment was later confirmed when examining a larger dataset from the National Programme of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (PNDDR). The dataset I had access to provided the nominal listing of 5,641 pro-government militia members with specifications on the faction they had joined, their sex, age, civil status, place of birth, origin, place of current residency, pre-war activity, education level, and the 'wishes' they expressed to the PNDDR staff in terms of place of residence and activity should the official DDR programming ever start on a large scale. Regardless of obvious questions concerning the way such data were compiled, 90% of the 5,074 recruits who were then listed by the PNDDR were from Guéré localities (Table 6.3).[10]

Insurgent movements

If the majority of rebel recruits were of northern origin, rebel forces have always denied having a specific regional or ethnic affiliation (Langer, 2003). True, their political demands had some kind of ethnic connotation in the beginning; one of their announced objectives was 'to put an end to the domination by the southerners',[11] in addition to demanding the resignation of the current President, the holding of inclusive national elections and an in-depth revision of the Ivoirian Constitution. Many observers hence concluded that the current conflict had only crystallized a long-standing North-South divide, and the term 'northerner' often

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[9] It was reported that Gbagbo had then gained tacit U.S. approval to pressure Taylor (International Crisis Group, 2003).

[10] The table includes people who had left their area of origin before the war and who returned to fight.

[11] United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), Conflict Background (cited in Langer, 2003).

Table 6.3 Cities of origin of pro-government militias listed by the PNDDR

	N	**%**
WEST	**5,074**	**90**
Bangolo	317	6
Blolequin	1552	28
Duékoué	588	10
Guiglo	988	18
Péhé	394	7
Tai	260	5
Toulepleu	707	13
Other locations in the West (<100 recruits)	268[12]	5
CENTRE	**62**	**1**
Bouaké	31	0.5
Other locations in the Centre (<30 recruits)	31	0.5
NORTH EAST	**47**	**1**
Tehini	46	1
Other locations in North East (<30 recruits)	1	0
CENTRE WEST	**44**	**1**
SOUTH WEST	23	0
EAST	15	0
SOUTH EAST	15	0
NORTH / NORTH EAST	15	0
ABIDJAN & suburbs	**133**	**2**
Abidjan	111	2
Other locations in Abidjan (<100 recruits)	22	0
NON-SPECIFIED	213	4
Total Militia Recruits	**5,641**	**100**

Source: Data taken from PNDDR. Table compiled by the author, 2007.

became synonymous with 'rebel' in the general public opinion. Also true, many northerners, living in both government and rebel-controlled areas, were drawn into the movement because the recruitment rhetoric had somehow struck a note – as one recruit put it: 'When people come and say: "We're fighting for you, because we know that day and night, you get hassled. You are called foreigner (…)." Such a discourse generates energies' (Fofana, 2009). But rebel recruits were not confined to people of northern origin: the ones who stirred up the coup were foremost discontented soldiers protesting against their increased marginalization and the ethnic composition of the group of people I interviewed in Man nuances such claims. The quasi-immediate politicization of 'northern people's generally felt ethnic grievances' by the opposition, however, was opportune in quickly giving the insurgents some sense of legitimacy.

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[12] '268' means that 268 recruits have come from localities that supplied less than 100 recruits to the armed group.

If we look at the ethnic composition of the group of people I interviewed, the picture is rather diverse. In Man, western and northern ethnic groups were roughly even in proportion. Many youths drawn in the armed factions were in fact of Yacouba origin, the local *autochthones* (also the ethnic affiliation of the controversial former head of State General Gueï), and many respondents were also of other 'western' ethnic affiliations (Toura, Mahou, and even rather counterintuitively, Wobé). About half of respondents were of northern origin and consisted of Dioulas, Sénoufos, Mossis, Malinkés, Lobis, and Odiennekas (Table 6.4). Although, to complement my sample, I could not collect detailed information on the overall composition of the rebel forces in my fieldwork locations, the multiplicity of ethnic backgrounds among my respondents was striking in Man compared to the quasi mono-ethnic situation encountered in Guiglo and Blolequin, where by large, the majority of respondents were of Guéré origin.

Table 6.4 Respondents' ethnic group

MAN Rebel forces		**GUIGLO Pro-government militias**	
Yacouba/Dan	46	Agni	2
Dioula	11	Wobé	2
Sénoufo	15	Guéré	93
Toura	4	Bété	2
Mossi	6	Krumen	1
Mahou	3	Yacouba	1
Djimini	1		
Koyaka	2		
Malinké	7		
Agni	1		
Lobi	1		
Wobé	1		
Samogo	1		
Odienneka	1		

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

The group that led the initial revolt in September 2002 was the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI). Although the MPCI signed a first ceasefire on 17 October, the conflict was further complicated by the emergence of two additional rebel movements in the west of the country: the *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) and the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP). Both came into existence at the end of November, as they claimed the capture of strategic towns in the west. Since MPIGO and MJP were not signatories of the 17 October ceasefire agreement, they could violate the truce with total impunity.

The MPIGO was mainly composed of Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters,[13] and was assisted by Yacoubas (the local *autochthones* of the Man/Danané area). It gained a reputation of perpetrating extremely violent acts on civilians. From an emic perspective, MPIGO became synonymous with Liberian mercenaries, uncontrolled troops, fear, and extreme cruelty. The movement came into existence with the capture of the town of Danané on 28 November 2002 and primarily claimed to have emerged in response to the assassination of General Gueï, killed in Abidjan in the first hours of the revolt. One of the recurring discourses was to avenge this deed. The armed group was estimated to number 6,000 recruits.

MJP was the western extension of the MPCI and was the smallest of the rebel movements. Initially, it only counted 250 men and was composed of *dozos* (the traditional hunters mentioned before), Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters, and local and non-local Ivoirian recruits. The attack on Man was led by Liberian commanders. Little is known about the Ivoirian MJP leader, Déli Gaspard, other than the fact that he was one of the signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis agreement. In Man, the connection between MJP and MPCI was evident from the very beginning, as vehicles and equipment stamped with the MPCI logo were seen in town shortly after MJP commanders claimed responsibility for the attack on the city. MPCI leaders were also frequently seen in town and MPCI laissez-passer was recognized in MJP-controlled areas (and vice versa). This was not necessarily the case between MPIGO and MPCI.

Following violent clashes in Duékoué on 21 December 2002 between the French peacekeeping force and a rebel armed faction (it was the first time the French had opened fire to halt a rebel advance), MPCI, MPIGO and MJP issued their first joint statement in Bouaké. France was warned that any other attack on a rebel position would be considered to be an ‘act of war’, and the French forces were threatened with being attacked on all fronts if they would do so again. In February 2003, the leaders of the three factions met again in Man to discuss a possible merger, and shortly after, MPCI, MPIGO and MJP officially joined together and the name *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) started to appear in the press to designate the coalition (Pana Press, 2003f, 2003g, 2003q). Since then, all military and political negotiations on behalf of the rebel forces have been conducted by the *Forces Nouvelles*, with Colonel Soumaïla Bakayoko as Chief of Staff on the military side and Guillaume Soro as the political leader.

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[13] Liberian fighters were composed of a mix of pro-Taylor militia members and local recruits of Gio origin.

Yet, despite this union, the *Forces Nouvelles* have not been exempt from internal dissension (International Crisis Group, 2003; Langer, 2003; Reuters, 2003). Shortly after the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis agreement in January 2003 which stipulated a series of actions to take (setting up a government of reconciliation, creating an independent electoral commission, preparing presidential and legislative elections in October 2005, the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of combatants, and a series of reforms of both nationality and land laws), violent conflicts broke out between rebel commanders because some were refusing to make too many concessions. Pro-IB[14] military elements were particularly prone to view any progress in the political resolution of conflicts as capitulation, and there were therefore many clashes in the course of 2003 between pro-IB elements and more progressive troops, who continued to show loyalty to the military commanders who had been involved in political negotiations (Tuo Fozié and Chérif Ousmane). Much internal cleansing therefore took place during that period in the rebellion strongholds of Bouaké, Man, Korhogo, Séguéla and Vavoua.

The coexistence of Ivoirian and Liberian elements in the rebel forces did not go without encumbers. The schism between Ivoirian rebel forces and their Liberian allies dates almost from the beginning, when Ivoirian rebel leaders realized how badly their temporary associates were treating the civilian population. In December 2002, a tacit deal restricted the Liberian-backed MPIGO zone of influence to Danané and to the immediate border with Liberia, and, until April 2003, MPIGO zones were distinct from MPCI-MJP zones. In late January 2003, MPCI Chief of Staff Tuo Fozié ordered the expulsion from Man of the worst of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters, at least those known for their extreme violence against civilians, who had been regularly witnessed roaming between Danané, Bangolo and the Liberian border, pillaging, raping, burning villages and killing civilians. Following a meeting in Korhogo on 6 February, Ivoirian rebel leader Ousmane Coulibaly was placed in charge of a 'clean-up' and reinforcements were sent from Bouaké. The plan was to contain the Liberians to the border area. But as MPIGO and MPCI Ivoirian leaders openly clashed on a number of occasions and as it became increasingly difficult to control the Liberian elements of MPIGO in Danané, the strategic alliance did not survive the loyalist offensive of April 2003 and an extensive clean-up took place in the rebel ranks. The MPIGO Ivoirian leader, Felix Doh, was murdered at the end of April, in obscure circumstances.[15] As peace discussions were progressing (notably with the Linas-Marcoussis agreement, which led the rebel political branch to agree to joining a power-sharing government), the Ivoirian rebel military leadership was more and more keen on putting an end to the increasingly inconvenient alliance of convenience with the Liberians (January-May 2003). The hunting down of Liberians then followed in the period February-May 2003. After having chased the Liberians from Danané, MPCI military leader Chérif Ousmane assumed leadership of the region (Human Rights Watch, 2003b).

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[14] 'IB' stands for Staff Sergeant Ibrahim 'IB' Coulibaly, former member of the Presidential Guard, who was credited with having led the 19 September insurgency.

Concluding remarks

This chapter was necessary to clarify the dynamics of the armed factions that operated in the west between 2002 and 2007 in order to avoid putting them all in one basket. It brought to the fore the internal dynamics of these groups, their degree of ethnic mixity, which factions emerged earliest, which ones were absorbed by other groups, and the extent of 'locality' of recruitment. On that last aspect – which is key for making an informed analysis on violent mobilization processes – it showed that recruitment appeared strikingly local in both towns, despite the fact that the two mobilizing contexts varied tremendously from one place to another. Next chapter looks at the individual motives for enlistment, and at the pre-war profiles of the militarized civilians in the west.

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[15] Ivorian rebels blamed Doh's death on Sam Bockarie, a well-known RUF commander with close links to Taylor. It is however not out of the question that Doh was killed by his own brothers in arms, given the suspicions surrounding his true loyalty to the cause. Bockarie was also eventually killed in unexplained circumstances a few days later, another sign of the deterioration of the Taylor/rebel military partnership (International Crisis Group, 2003; Langer, 2003; Reuters, 2003).

Photograph 7: On the way to Dompleu, 5 km of Man

SUMMER
F-M
BALL

Photograph 8: Market scene, Guiglo

7

Militarized civilians: Diversity of trajectories, diversity of motives for enlistment

Who joins armed groups and why, are empirical questions whose answers vary considerably across contexts. Why do civilians follow certain leaders into war? Are there certain profiles more likely to enrol? When are people more likely to engage in violent action? And certainly equally important to reflect upon when trying to understand local mobilization processes: why do some people 'not join' when faced with similar circumstances? Answers to these questions largely depend on individual and collective interpretations of given contexts. Surely, immediate circumstances play an important role in triggering people's engagement, but because the mere fact of being exposed to the same trouble does not automatically translate into participation in violent action, it is also necessary to reflect on the diversity of exit strategies people devise when subject to harassment by non-State armed groups. In western Côte d'Ivoire after all, not everybody felt obliged to take up arms in self-defence. Not everyone was coerced. This section therefore attempts to find keys of interpretation to understand why some men and women ended up taking up arms at some point in the western region. To do so, it explores the pre-war profiles of 237 militarized civilians who were drawn into armed factions on both belligerent sides, and their motivations for engagement from their particular points of views.[1] Interviews took place in Man, Guiglo and Blolequin, three locations extensively described in Chapter 5.

Gurr's famous question, 'Why Men Rebel' (Gurr, 1970), has fascinated scholars for a long time. If much has been written on social protest movements (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009: 22-26), the literature on violent social protest movements is much scarcer; this chapter partially attempts to fill this gap. Classical approaches tend to describe contentious politics as an irrational phenomenon: 'the politics of the impatient'. From this perspective, it is assumed that people protest because they are frustrated, marginalized, affected by economic crises and/or deprived of certain social rights, and explanations are framed foremost in terms of grievances. It is also often assumed that when protest occurs, it is most likely to occur in a chaotic way. Dissatisfaction with these theories grew in the late 1960s with the growth of social movements activities on both sides of the Atlantic, as social protest lost its irrational character and started to be perceived as a positive and possible way to improve politics. The new paradigms that emerged, simultaneously, were structural approaches on the one hand, which began to emphasize the political element of protest, and socio-constructivist ones on the other hand, which focused on the collective and individual interpretations of socio-political contexts. In both these theory trends, grievance has been assigned a subordinate position and the analytical repertoires tapped into have mostly been organized around the three concepts of framing, identity and emotions (and particularly the influence of emotions on action). In conflict studies, a direct consequence has been to switch the focus away from the felt need to make an inventory of grievances to search for the cause(s) of conflict, to a growing interest in understanding the diversity and complexity of local mobilization processes. Perhaps the root causes of civil war no longer matter, as Woodward (2007) writes. After all, people's motivations usually overlap one another and it makes little sense to search for a mono-cause or for a rationale that would be more significant than others. I empirically reflect on such questions below.

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[1] As already mentioned earlier, the bulk of respondents were identified using supporting NGOs as point of entry and were involved in a 'reinsertion programme' at the time of the interviews. Given the limited timeline of humanitarian interventions targeting ex-combatants, the terms 'reinsertion' and 'reintegration' are here used interchangeably. All respondents occupied low-ranking positions in the armed movements and had either joined pro-government militias and rebel groups at the start of the Ivoirian conflict. A few recruits who had demobilized themselves were selected through other networks, mainly through young people I interviewed who referred me to other youths who were not part of any programme. The bulk of respondents were young men and women, between 15 and 35 years old; a large majority were men.

Who ‘took up arms’ in the west?

The question of who joins armed groups depends a lot on individual and collective interpretations of a given context. When he studied ethnic militias in Nigeria, Guichaoua (Guichaoua, 2007) used three indicators to characterize the profile of recruits: ‘levels of education’, ‘occupation’ and ‘social connectedness’. His results show that militia members were educated above average, that a large majority had a side job outside the militia, and that most were not dissocialized at all. Many recruits were married, had children, were well-settled in a place they rented, and known as militia members in their neighbourhood. In contrast, Humphreys & Weinstein (2004) pointed out a different trend and found that across factions, the majority of the Sierra Leonean ex-combatants they interviewed were uneducated and poor, with a pre-war background as student or farmer. Perhaps there is some kind of profile for those more likely to join a violent movement. Perhaps there is none and it is more a matter of circumstances. In western Côte d’Ivoire, as I dug into the pre-war educational, professional and social trajectories of the recruits I interviewed, I came across a diversity of patterns.

Education trajectories: no need for war to disrupt them

Education is not to be taken for granted in Côte d’Ivoire, and for the ones who go to school, each additional year of education is the product of a fierce struggle against poverty and familial priorities. Militia members interviewed in Guiglo/-Blolequin were much better educated than the rebels interviewed in Man. In Man, about half of the respondents had never been enrolled in an education system recognized by the state, while in contrast nearly all had gone through some kind of formal education in Guiglo/Blolequin, with half succeeding in starting secondary school and three entering a post-secondary phase (Table 7.1). These results are not surprising per se and only reflect the structural regional disparity that existed before the war in terms of enrolment rates, use of infrastructure, and completion of schooling (Chelpi-Den Hamer, 2007; Hugon & Bommier, 2002; Le Pape & Vidal, 1987; Proteau, 2002). In Côte d’Ivoire, formal education is the least popular in rural areas, in the north, and among the populations of northern origin, partly because they compete with Quranic schools.[2]

Lack of means, including lack of means after a parent’s sudden death, was the main reason put forward in both locations to explain why respondents had

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[2] In 2001, five years was the average duration of schooling in rural areas compared to fifteen years for the country as a whole. Literacy rates were 60% in Abidjan, 10% in the north, 30% in rural areas and 70% in urban zones. Primary enrolment rates were 40% in Korhogo and 80% in Man (Hugon & Bommier, 2002).

Table 7.1 Last year of schooling before dropping out

		MAN	GUIGLO	TOTAL
Primary education	CP	9	5	14
	CE	6	8	14
	CM1	3	7	10
	CM2	12	24	36
	Total	**30**	**44**	**74**
Secondary education	6ème	6	7	13
	5ème	5	8	13
	4ème	8	14	22
	3ème	6	16	22
	2nde	1	1	2
	1ère	0	3	3
	Total	**26**	**49**	**75**
Technical education (formal)			1	1
Post-secondary education			3	3
	TOTAL	**56**	**97**	**153**

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

dropped out of school – this strikingly came up when examining respondents' individual trajectories (Box 7.1). Another reason to drop out of school was the loss of interest in general education, the willingness to work and/or the necessity to help parents by either entering the family business or by working for a third party to generate an extra source of income. At adolescent age, many adult respondents reported that they had not yet completed their primary education. Some reported feeling too old to continue going to school and a minority stopped because of educational failure. They usually repeated a class first, but then failed a second time, which was eventually the trigger that convinced them to drop out: continuing was no longer worth their time and financial sacrifices. Many respondents had already stopped attending school one or more years before the start of the war. The few who reported dropping out because of the conflict mentioned their school's closing as the main reason.

Professional trajectories:
The tribulations of 'hyper-mobile' youths in the informal sector

Most recruits I interviewed earned money before the war. Some were doing contractual work and their income varied according to contract opportunities; some were working as day labourers, and some had a regular income. The majority was employed in the informal economy, a few had very decent jobs. Variable income was the norm, and only a minority were earning the same amount every month (about 10% of respondents). In Man, roughly a quarter were

Box 7.1: A selection of educational accounts

1. B. was a brilliant young man who had received all his education in Abidjan. His father had died when he was very young and his mother was financially taking care of him. When she fell sick in 1996 and decided to go back to her village to get treatment, B. had just started secondary school. He was put into the care of an uncle. Unfortunately, the uncle was transferred not long after to the north of the country, leaving him alone in Abidjan. B. tried to cope as best as he could, but he could not last more than a few months on his own. Schooling was free, but he could not afford transport to go to school and his uncle did not support him regularly. He could no longer rely on his mother as she had passed away. Three months after the start of the 1998-1999 school year, he finally received some financial help from his uncle (the equivalent of EUR 10). He realized it would never be enough to enable him to continue his education and therefore decided to drop out of school. He used the money to pay for transport, and went to the village his mother was from, in western Côte d'Ivoire. He had never been there before but he thought life would be easier than in Abidjan. He moved to the west four years before the start of the war.

2. G. dropped out of school in 11th grade (1ère), one year before completing his secondary education. He was 22 years old. He said he stopped because he lacked the financial means to continue. His scholarship was not enough to cover his expenses. He was entitled to 12,000 CFA francs per trimester, but given that he was an intern in Yamoussoukro, the money was directly channeled to the boarding school and he did not get any cash. He had a side job and used to work as a hairdresser during weekends and vacations, but he was not earning enough. He therefore decided to stop and to return to his hometown, Guiglo, where he started working full time as a hairdresser.

3. M.'s father was a primary school teacher and used to get transferred from one village to another for his work. His wife and kids always followed him. When M. was enrolled in 3rd grade in a village near Duékoué, his parents got into an argument and split up. He ended up living with his mother, who could not afford to have him stay in school. He dropped out of school at 9 and started working as an apprentice in an auto workshop.

4. A. had to enrol in a private school after finishing primary education, spending 90,000 CFA francs a year for tuition fees. He had successfully passed the secondary school entrance exam but his grades did not allow him to continue in the public system. Like many sub-Saharan African countries, Côte d'Ivoire has such a structural lack of infrastructure at the secondary level that only the pupils who score above a certain grade get access to free secondary education. A. was also taking courses in parallel in a vocational school to learn auto mechanics. His father was running a garage. He was 23 when he stopped studying and started helping his father full-time with the family business.

Source: Fieldwork, 2007

self-employed before the war, another quarter were employed by some kind of boss, and another quarter were enrolled into some kind of informal apprenticeship. The rest did contract and day work; only a minority were studying. In Guiglo, two-thirds of the respondents were self-employed or involved in the family business, 15% were apprentices, 10% were employees, and only a few were still at school.

At the one extreme, I met quite entrepreneurial young men. One respondent, for instance, whom I met in Man, was combining two jobs before the war. He was an employee of the sugar firm Sucrivoire in Borotou, where he was paid 75,000 CFA francs a month to stack sugar bags (the equivalent of EUR 115). After his day shift, he ran his own electronic workshop and a local radio station. He had several apprentices to help him, and his daily sales varied between 5,000 and 40,000 CFA francs. Another respondent (met in Guiglo) was running his own business as a building painter and was registered with the local Chamber of Commerce. He had won several bids before the war and once economic activities resumed after the main clashes were over, he became involved in contracts for renovating public infrastructure. At the other end of the spectrum, I met young men who led quite dependent lives. They would not work and blamed their family for that, 'for failing to place me somewhere'. There were not many of them but their discourses were in sharp contrast with the rest. Out of the 10% of respondents who had never worked for a wage before the war, a minority fell into that category. The rest were simply very young in 2002, under 19, and usually still under parental care. They were either at school, in their first years of apprenticeship, doing rural/urban petty jobs or simply doing nothing.

The flexibility and geographical mobility of the youths I interviewed was rather striking. In western Côte d'Ivoire, and in the country in general, it is a real struggle to work, and earning a living requires more than goodwill and individual skills. In respondents' own terms, *'on part pour se chercher'*. That literally means that they leave home behind in search of better prospects elsewhere. They may be helped by relatives in the process, or rely on acquaintances to find their way, but this stage recurs repeatedly in their professional trajectories and helps them make the transition to adulthood and financial independence (Box 7.2).

Apart from giving the reader a good insight into (unsafe) local work practices, this case is illustrative in many respects. First, it shows that at a certain point in their lives, it is implicitly expected that young people, and especially young men, stop being a burden on their relatives. Second, from the day they start working, youth are successively pushed and pulled into activities, moving from one region to another, following opportunities or fulfilling certain commitments. They usually work in several locations before reaching financial independence, and many eventually build their professional trajectories by alternating work in urban and rural settings. Finally, this case shows that it is not uncommon to return to the village or town of origin after a few years of independence, and not necessarily for lack of options. An implicit set of obligations exists among family members, and sometimes one simply goes back to respond to familial obligations, even if it takes precedence over personal preferences. One respondent was an accomplished tailor in town, running his own business for several years, when his brother asked him to return to their village to take care of their mother. Their

Box 7.2: A typical 'hyper-mobile' youth

C. was 22 years old before the war and had already worked in six different locations. He never went to school and started working when he was 11. He would go and fetch water, he would scare the birds in the fields, he would sell bags of rice in the market. His mother gave him petty cash when needed. He was 16 when he left home and began doing contract work. He started clearing the field of a Baoulé in a village near Issia. The man told him that he would pay him 150,000 CFA francs after the harvest (the equivalent of EUR 230), but C. only received the third of it. Cocoa and coffee yields had not been good that year, and the man could not pay what he had promised. C. left him and started working on the cocoa and coffee plantation of a Sénoufo near Guiglo. He said he would have liked to stay longer there, but a few months after he started the job, a group of men – former employees – broke into his boss's house, where he was staying, with a 12-calibre gun. C. was frightened. He thought that if the men came back when the boss was absent, he would be beaten up. He therefore left for a more secure place.

At first, he stayed at his aunt's in town, in Biankouma, helping her in her cassava/-yam/maize fields for a few months. Then he worked for a Baoulé, to whom he had been introduced before (the person was the friend of an acquaintance). His new boss was working for the Ivoirian electricity company. Despite his lack of specific skills, C. was hired to work on high-voltage power lines in the rural areas near Touba. He was based in town but usually spent a couple of weeks in nearby villages to do the work. He used to work in a group of 7 or 8 men, and each of them would earn 50,000 CFA francs per job (the equivalent of EUR 75). The work was hard but C. said his boss took good care of them. He paid for their food, and he also provided accommodation, power and water. A few months later, C. moved on elsewhere. He went to a mining place with a friend and started digging holes to find diamonds. But as he did not earn anything there and as he did not trust his co-workers, he stopped and went back home, to his mother's place. He was then 19 years old. There, he started commuting every day between his village and the nearby town (Man), earning his living by carrying luggage and pushing wheelbarrows. On good days, he could make up to 5,000 CFA francs (the equivalent of EUR 8), on bad days nothing. He would take 200 FCFA francs per day to pay for the rental of his wheelbarrow, and he would save some cash to pay the city fee, which allowed him to carry out such activities (13,000 CFA francs per year). Sometimes, he did contract work for the Ivoirian electricity company. C. gave most of what he earned to his mother and was the primary provider for his family.

Source: Fieldwork, 2007

three sisters had married and had left home, leaving the old woman on her own with several grandchildren in her custody. The person I interviewed was 26 years old when he moved back to his village. There, he started a small tailoring workshop with three sewing machines (two were paid for by his brother) and four apprentices. He was taking care of twelve people: his mother, his own family, and all the nephews and nieces his mother had in her custody.

Social connectedness: alternating practices of 'tapping' and 'giving'

About a third of respondents in Guiglo were head of their household before the war and another third were still under their parents' direct care. In Man, familial ties were looser: if a third of the respondents were still living at their father/-mother's place, another third lived with extended family and about one fourth were fending for themselves with no family to rely on, living with acquaintances, in the home of their boss, or living on their own. This is not to say that they were disconnected socially (I only remember one or two cases that I would qualify as being socially 'lost' before the war), but many respondents in Man were using weak ties and extra-familial networks to get along on a daily basis. This is in fact hardly a surprising situation: Man is an important magnet for the western region (it is much bigger than Guiglo in terms of size) and it has become the host city to many youths who had left home in search of better prospects.

One way to assess how much the recruits I interviewed were socially connected before the war is to look at their degree of financial dependence. Were the youths I interviewed supported by someone before the war? Or were they supporting someone themselves? If a majority of respondents claim to have received some kind of financial assistance, many also claim to have provided for close relatives before getting involved in an armed group. It was not rare for a 'supporter' to become someone 'supported' later on, and vice versa. The scope and frequency of support generally varied depending on timing, available resources and upcoming expenses, but a common pattern was that even in a difficult position, they were doing their best to send something to close parents and spouses. This did not impede them from tapping into their social network when they were in difficulties (father/mother, relatives in better economic conditions, creditors); several youths mentioned having been helped by relatives to set up their own business, some were regularly receiving Western Union transfers from siblings overseas, and it was also not uncommon to see a younger sibling supported by an older brother in a better socio-economic position, even if it was not really necessary (the younger sibling being completely independent financially and primary caregiver for his own family). Help could be given with no expectation of payback or could be linked to some sort of investment, in which case the 'supporter' retained some rights to expected returns. But in general, respondents' testimonies show that family members were simply helping one another in a context marked by a severe socio-economic crisis and by structural poverty features unfortunately unlikely to disappear any time soon.

The specificities of the youngest recruits

The participation of children and adolescents in violent conflicts is the gloomy reality of many wars, and Côte d'Ivoire is no exception. Both rebel and pro-government militias made public that they had some under-eighteens among their troops in the beginning of conflict. At the same time, they always denied having consciously recruited them.

There is little hope of getting a good approximation of the number of child recruits in the Ivoirian conflict, let alone of the number of those who did not enter formal demobilization and reinsertion. Numbers used in institutional reports are based on FAFN and militia lists and are only reported cases of demobilization. They are therefore rule-of-thumb figures, which say little about the scope of the phenomenon, even if intuitively one could argue that child recruitment in Côte d'Ivoire was not as massive in scale as it was during the Liberian and Sierra Leone wars. The conflict did not last long, and the main period of violence only lasted a few months in the west, from the end of 2002 to mid-spring 2003, with a short peak in November 2004. This is of course not to suggest that extreme violence was absent in the Ivoirian war, but only to make the point that cannon fodder was only needed for a short period, given the timeline of combat operations.

Much of the literature on children's involvement in military action emphasizes their limited agency when they enlist in violent groups and often implies that youngest recruits follow different patterns of mobilization than their older peers. There has in fact been a proliferation of articles and reports in recent years that have been widely relayed in the international media, documenting stories of youths coerced into violent movements. The main effect of such writings has been to shape the dominant discourse on child soldiering, with the main pitfall being to oversimplify children's motives for engagement by reducing the issue to forced conscription and manipulable minds. Conversely, ethnographic studies have highlighted the complexity of children and adolescents' mobilization processes, the multiplicity of patterns, and the similarities and differences with the older recruits. After all, who joins armed groups, how and why remain empirical questions, regardless of the age marker. As noted earlier, the main pitfall of adopting a 'politic of age' is to distract public attention from the real problems. By drawing on solid empirical data, the reflections that follow hope to join this stream of writing.

The youngest recruits I interviewed were between 14 and 18 years old at the time of the first interview and they were then hosted in a reinsertion centre in Man. The first interview happened approximately three or four years after their enlistment into an armed group, which means that they were between 10 and 14 years old when they were recruited. This is well below the acceptable age in Côte d'Ivoire, even if we take the pragmatic view of tolerating recruitment into armed groups for the oldest teenagers. A striking outcome of the interviews was the degree of resilience and maturity these children displayed when confronted with difficult situations. They shared several characteristics with the older recruits: they were far from having few or no ties to society (even if most were using loose networks to get along on a daily basis), they usually had a certain level of education (dropout was mainly due to a lack of financial means), some had job skills (mainly learnt through informal training), and they were not necessarily more prone to violence than their contemporaries.[3]

Perhaps the main difference with adults is that child respondents experienced a substantial loss in terms of human capital, a point Blatmann (2006) made for another context. In our case, the ones at school when the conflict started and the ones involved in informal apprenticeships clearly wasted precious years. As they say in their own words, they 'put themselves late'. If the same motto generally also applies for the older recruits, the genuine effects are usually felt to a much lesser extent. The main difference is that when this loss of human capital happens at an early age (which is the case for children and adolescents), there is usually much less time to acquire a skill before joining an armed group and there is also less time to develop an extensive social network, which might result in fewer options after the war for employment or self-employment. In sum, the involvement in warfare of the very young hampers their individual social advancement on a much more pronounced scale than it does for adults.

There are two other differences with adult respondents that young age also exacerbates: one relates to the extent of financial independence, the second concerns the extent of geographical mobility. If adult recruits often reported having left home in their late teens or early twenties in search of better prospects elsewhere, this trend was much less pronounced with child respondents. In addition, even if many were contributing to the family income by earning petty cash, most were still dependent on caregivers, whether direct family (mother and/or father) or extended relatives. This second point, however, also applied in our case to many young adults.

What drove young civilians to military life?

Protection from real and perceived threats

'I joined the militia because transport was too expensive.' I would never have thought of such an argument if I had not come to Guiglo to hear it, and hear it repeatedly. If the causal relationship does not strike the reader at first sight, it quickly makes sense when you put the line into context. At the start of the war, the west was at the heart of the violence and there was fierce fighting between government troops, the rebelling forces, and their respective allies. Civilians were not spared and people had to act quickly in towns and villages close to the front line to save their families and their main assets. Those wealthy enough to own cars, minivans, buses or trucks had an important advantage compared to the others and could flee faster than those on foot to safer places. But since vehicles were valuable assets for belligerents and quite prone to be quickly requisitioned for warfare, there was no time to lose. Several people I interviewed pointed out that transport prices to southern locations skyrocketed during that period, making it very difficult to transport everyone in the family.[4] In addition, not much room on board was available and the families of the vehicle owners had priority over clients and acquaintances.

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[3] For additional interview fragments and detailed empirical information, see (Chelpi-Den Hamer, 2010).

Many respondents considered their involvement in armed groups as the most logical move in response to a potential threat (Chelpi-Den Hamer, 2011). By taking up arms, they were protecting themselves from an extremely violent context (or at least they were trying to). Many felt that they would be better off in than out. As Utas (2006: 165) noted for another context, they were 'escaping the disadvantage of being a civilian'. One individual, for instance, joined to be allowed to continue farming. As he put it: 'It was very common then to arrest someone for no reason. But if I am within the movement, I am one of them. They can no longer accuse me of being against. I can therefore go and work without being arrested.' Other respondents felt they had to become soldiers to protect their family from abuse while trying to save the little they owned: 'Soldiers were annoying the population, so we joined to protect our parents. No-one bothers them anymore since we are in.'[5] Many said 'took up arms' because everybody in town was in uniform and could break into their homes and steal from them with total impunity. When Man was attacked, most of the population fled to neighbouring villages, and after a few days young men began to return to their homes to keep an eye on family assets. The town had however become so militarized in the meantime that many respondents genuinely believed that they would be better in the rebel forces than out. It was also not uncommon for families to split up in the panic surrounding the flight, especially if all household members were not physically present at the same location when they had to leave in a hurry. The youngest were particularly vulnerable if they were left on their own, and in such cases joining an armed group – or being taken into the custody of a rebel chief – was therefore perceived as a real relief (Chelpi-den Hamer, 2010).

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[4] The trip from Guiglo to Abidjan could cost up to 20,000 CFA francs per person. One respondent mentioned that since he could not afford to pay for the 10 relatives he supported, he decided to stay and fight.

[5] Original text in French: 'Les corps habillés fatiguaient la population. Nous, on s'est mis dedans pour protéger les parents. Personne ne vient plus menacer nos parents puisqu'on est dedans.'

The question of ethnic polarization: the feeling of being 'on the wrong side'

If it would be over-simplistic to describe the Ivoirian war as 'ethnic' in nature, ethnic polarization did occur and the Ivoirian war crystallized long-standing tensions in the west between autochthonous and non-autochthonous populations. As already outlined in the contextual sections, the concept of ethnicity provided an easy political and military hold over the years, in a historical and structural context propitious to this.

On the counter-insurgent side, mobilization clearly took place along ethnic lines, with an unprecedented massive mobilization of the Guéré youths. There, the populations of northern origin were perceived as 'the others' and associated with the enemy, foreign nationals and some Ivoirians alike (Burkinabés, Dioulas, Lobis); they were then naturally drawn into the rebel forces, either by circumstances or out of genuine interest, in which case mobilization was often spurred by pre-existing social networks. Noteworthily, even if the Baoulés were also targeted by some of the most extreme autochthonous youths (the chronology presented earlier revealed several cases of expropriation of plantations), they did not seem to be particularly prone to join the rebel forces in the west (in our sample for instance, we did not interview any Baoulés in Man). If one could argue that the individual feeling of being on the wrong side was particularly present at the start of the war (especially with the Burkinabés and Dioulas), it also survived over the years in government-controlled territory, especially in the Guiglo/Duékoué area. At some point, one could even wonder why the targeted non-*autochthones* continued to live in the area despite so many recurrent attacks and such a latent threat. Perhaps the main reason was to maximize potential benefits (at great risk), since volatile environments are also known for the opportunities the circumstances provide. A more practical reason could also be that having already invested quite a lot in their plots, in time, daily labour and money, non-autochthonous peasants were genuinely hoping to avoid losing everything and to be obliged to start from scratch elsewhere.

Ethnic polarization was also an important dimension of recruitment in the rebel forces. One respondent described how government soldiers would come into town to conduct identity checks on foreigners and on Ivoirians of northern origin. Being the latter, he thought he would be better off if he enlisted in the rebel forces: 'Gbagbo people[6] were killing the Malinké. Because of the rebellion, we were killed. Because we did not have papers, we were killed. Because we were dressed with dirty clothes, we were killed. They were even killing insane men. We were scared.' (interview fragment, April 2007). In November-December 2002, Man changed hands three times in a couple of weeks, shifting first from the national army to the rebel forces, then from the rebel forces to the national army, and finally from the army to the rebel forces. Each time, violent retaliation followed, targeting suspected opponents. But the feeling of being on the wrong side was not only framed along ethnic lines in rebel-controlled territory, it was also conceived in terms of political and social markers. In December 2002, being a gendarme and a FPI sympathizer was a double offence, and there was usually no mercy. These markers were much more pronounced in the beginning than in the later stages of conflict. Conversely, on the counter-insurgent side, ethnic polarization seemed to reinforce itself over the years with the diffusion of violence in the rural societies.

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[6] 'Gbagbo people' refers to government soldiers.

Another example of inter-ethnic rivalry instrumentalized by the war in the western region is the long-standing resentment between Yacoubas and Guérés, triggered by the assassination of former head of State General Gueï (he was of Yacouba origin). This event had a significant impact on the young Yacoubas and was cited many times as a reason to enlist. But simple facts clearly stress the need to go beyond an interpretation of the Ivoirian conflict based solely on ethnic grounds, notably because there has been anecdotal evidence that, in some cases, Yacoubas fought on the same side as Guérés (this was the case for one female respondent, for instance, who only joined a pro-government militia to save her family assets). Pastor Gammi, the leader of the MILOCI pro-government militia has also been said to be of Yacouba origin.

Unwilling and coerced

If most respondents could exercise some kind of agency in their decision to enlist (with the little room to manoeuvre they had), many were also taken by force, especially those who joined armed factions led by Liberian mercenaries: 'They would have killed me if I had refused to carry their ammunition in the bush.' Others were taken because their skills were useful to the group, blacksmiths for instance, or technicians. The first knew how to repair guns, the second could maintain communication equipment.

> 'We heard on the radio that Côte d'Ivoire was under attack, but our boss decided to continue working. Some workers fled, others stayed, and I continued at the factory. One night, I heard gunshots at the plant. We were then busy loading sugar bags in trucks. It sounded like shooting in the air. Rebels came in and requisitioned a truck. They asked us to load sugar bags in it. We were at gunpoint, so we had to obey. They came back shortly after. They were looking for a technician to change the frequency of their walkie-talkie. The staff was scared and pointed at me. They asked me to do it because they wanted to communicate with their chiefs. I did not want to but they had guns, so I could not refuse. When they were finished

> speaking to their commanders by radio, they told me I was an important asset for them, as a technician; they could therefore not let me go. I did not want to go with them. I told them I was no military, I had no war experience, I did not know how weapons worked. But they told me they would protect me. The more we were discussing, the more angry they became. "Why was I annoying them?", they said. One rebel took his Kalash and hit me with the butt. He told me that if I wanted to die now, he would kill me. I was therefore obliged to follow them. We left for Séguéla to receive military training. I did not want to be part of it, but the ones who refused were killed in front of me. I had to stay calm.'

Interestingly, some people reported having first been coerced into an armed group and then having stayed for lack of better alternatives elsewhere. Some were initially taken by force into a rebel Liberian-led armed group, and then fled, only to re-enter another armed group, willingly (this was mentioned several times by recruits who had first been drawn into MPIGO and who had been left 'unattended' when the Ivoirian rebel forces rid themselves of the Liberians in the spring of 2003). Noteworthily, being coerced was not necessarily presented as a traumatic event. It was sometimes very pragmatically presented as an inevitable event, as some kind of necessary plague:

> 'In the beginning, there were not enough men in the rebellion, so they were taking people by force. At the military camp, we were told that it is now war and that we have to fight. We were given two days to visit our parents to receive their blessing and anti-bullet medicine. After that, we all boarded a military truck and we were sent as reinforcements to fight the battle of Man.'[7]

Opportunistic young men?

Contrary to the widespread idea that the core of armed groups consists of opportunistic young men, relatively few respondents reported having joined for work. If some people mentioned having been attracted in a group by the prospect of receiving subsequent incentives, they also said they were quickly disabused: 'They told me that if I go and fight, they will give me 100,000 or 200,000 CFA francs. I got money once, after the first fighting. Afterwards, I got nothing.' Some were told that there might be an opportunity to enter the regular army afterwards (a rather interesting prospect as it implied stable work, and decent and regular pay with retirement benefits); others were promised implicit rewards if their group was victorious. But many simply reported to have enlisted because there was nothing else to do. At the peak of the conflict, in areas close to the front line, economic activities had either stopped or had slowed down considerably and many people were unable to resume their pre-war activity; some therefore pragmatically decided to join an armed group; at least then they would be certain to eat during the period of their engagement. Being given the opportunity to start a career in the military was surely an attractive prospect for many youths, but to equate all civilian recruits with young men driven foremost by opportunistic motives would simply be oversimplistic in its disregard for the complexity of the process.

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[7] 'On nous a raflé. En ce moment, y avait pas beaucoup d'hommes. Donc eux prenaient les gens par force. Tu sais, ça a commencé chez nous. Le même jour, y a eu la prise de Bouaké et de Korhogo. Quand on est arrivé au camp, on nous a dit que, actuellement, c'est la guerre et que chacun va faire ça. On nous a donné deux jours pour aller voir nos parents pour qu'ils nous donnent un peu de "babwadi" (médicaments anti-balles). Après les parents ils ont dit, on n'a qu'à aller. On est monté dans camion. On nous a envoyé en renfort à Man.'

Switching between groups existed, especially in the beginning, as FLGO absorbed most LIMA and AP-Wê recruits on the militia side, and when Liberian fighters were expelled from the rebel factions (several MPIGO recruits I interviewed reported having re-entered other rebel factions afterwards), yet these movements between factions appear to have been relatively marginal. If there was some kind of flow between the different armed groups, it was not so much in terms of shifting allegiance (free movement between the rebel and the pro-government zones was particularly difficult at the peak of conflict and even in the later stages) and individuals more often ended up in another group as a consequence of the recomposition of armed forces. This situation is very different from the one Vlassenroot describes in Eastern DRC in early 2000. There, the speed with which militarized civilians changed ideologies and allies was a clear sign that what they were ultimately looking for by joining an armed group was some alternative to a situation of acute deprivation and social marginalization (Vlassenroot, 2006: 59). In western Côte d'Ivoire, such opportunist behaviour did sporadically occur, but was far from being a norm.

The question of informed choice for the youngest combatants

There are a number of well-anchored ideas about children that are not easy to challenge. Across contexts, they are usually presented as innocent, vulnerable and financially dependent, regardless of actual circumstances, to the point that it has become unimaginable that they would rationally choose a path that could possibly lead them to perform evil. For the youngest combatants, the question of informed choice is fiercely debated (Peters *et al.*, 2003). Boyden (2007) has rightly pointed out that any child engaged in violence disturbs adults, foremost because by going against the odds, he or she challenges the very foundation of the existing social order. In the same vein, Honwana (2005) recognizes that children who behave violently clearly fall outside mainstream formulations of childhood and upset social norms and codes. The view that children are innocent is largely based on a certain conception of children's cognitive development that assumes that their moral understanding, their political thoughts and their actions differ widely from those of adults because they mature in stages, following an ordered sequence of cognitive steps (Kohlbert, 1976; Piaget, 1972). In this perspective, the following holds: children's abilities to think and act reasonably are largely conceptualized as being immune from environmental influence; a lower age limit is even suggested for linking moral reasoning with action; it is strongly implied that adolescents and pre-pubescent youth are more malleable than adults; and the phenomenon of child soldiering is mainly explained by coercion, abuse of authority, unscrupulous commanders or drug addiction.

Far from denying the fact that, in many cases, children's recruitment was the result of coercion in western Côte d'Ivoire, reducing their agency to nil during the enlistment process and during their involvement in warfare would also be misleading. If the children I interviewed clearly expressed having felt more fear in the recruitment stage (even if they could exercise some kind of agency in the process), the processes of mobilization had also been very complex: there was no single pattern and the types of rationales that emerged generally challenged popular theories on social movement that assume causal relationships between pre-war backgrounds and motives for enlistment. Various reasons were mentioned for joining the rebellion ranging from self-defence to the protection of parents. They also included genuine desire for revenge, joining for lack of alternatives, and merely seizing an opportunity to secure food for a limited period of time. Some enlisted late and only joined the military after a brother or sister had done so, several months prior. Some were recruited because they were alone, with no resources, in a place full of soldiers. For them, joining the army was a logical move, and becoming a soldier was perceived as a necessary and positive choice. Motives were rarely clear-cut, and respondents usually brought forward more than one reason in their narrative, pointing to different degrees of agency. As an analyst, I started wondering if some motives weighed more heavily than others in their decision-making and if I should rank them in my interpretation. I quickly discarded that option. What led children to join a group, and what kept them there, was the result of a complex process, rather than something that could be attributed to isolated factors. What mattered in the end was how respondents made sense of their war experience, and how they interpreted their entry into the groups and their stay there. With some children, it was clear from their accounts that they never wanted to be where they were. Certain youths, especially among the ones that had been coerced by Liberian mercenaries, were forced to do things that they would have despised in normal times (torturing prisoners, extortion, stealing). Some reported feeling under constant threat. With other children, it was more complex. Even if some had initially been abducted into the movement, they did not experience their belonging to the group as something entirely negative.

The accounts that follow describe the complex reasons and processes that led very young people to engage in violence. They clearly show that the phenomenon of child soldiering cannot be reduced to coerced recruits, and that even the youngest can exercise some degree of reflection and agency when enlisting in the military. Two primary aims of respondents were staying alive and protecting their closest caregiver, which in practice meant finding the right strategies when their path and the military's crossed. The testimonies are expressive enough to give a fair idea of the diversity of enlistment patterns while bringing to the fore the extraordinary individual stories. Some of the accounts have been slightly adapted for better reader comprehension.

> 'Everybody had fled the village. I had stayed with my grandfather. When the rebels came, they said my grandfather was hiding a soldier at his place. They started to beat him up. I pitied him. I even cried. They shot a bullet at his feet. But they were telling lies. My grandfather was hiding no-one. The rebels searched everywhere in the house. They told my grandfather that they would kill him if he would not tell them the truth. That is why I joined the rebellion. It hurt me too much to watch my grandfather being molested. Two or three days after this incident, I and my brother gave our names, and we joined the rebels.'
>
> 'The war came in the weekend. I was in town, working in my uncle's workshop. Everybody fled. I fled with my cousin. We went to the bush, then to the village. My uncle was there. He told us that he feared his place in town would get robbed. He did not have the time to lock his home. The attack had arrived so quickly that even the food was still the stove. So with my cousin, we went back to town to guard the houses. We stayed in one home, and we were watching the others. One day, a rebel came. He told us not to worry and he started staying with us. We were eating together. After a while another rebel came, and then another. Eventually, there were a lot of them in the house. My cousin said we'd better join them. We were stuck anyway. We could not go back to the village because they had installed checkpoints and we could not leave the town.'
>
> 'I was recruited by someone I knew from my neighbourhood. He knew my difficulties. My grandmother had died, and she was the one who used to take care of me. My boss had also died, and I had to stop my work at the workshop. When the rebels took the town, my neighbour joined them, right from the beginning. When he saw that he was earning a bit of money, he came back to our neighbourhood to recruit people. He knew my situation. He told me to go with him; he told me I would earn something out of it. He promised me money.'
>
> 'When the rebels came, they took people by force and loaded them into trucks. They caught me and my brother. We did not want to go, but we had to. They were threatening people at gunpoint.'

Reflection on violent mobilization processes

Finding clear boundaries between motives is a difficult task as respondents' narratives are rarely clear-cut in distinct categories. Motivations usually overlap one another and people enlist for a range of reasons; it therefore makes little sense to search for a single cause. If we look at what people spontaneously mentioned (Table 7.2), there seems to be relatively little support for grievance-based motives for enrolment and only a minority enlisted to express their frustration with a past event or to seek revenge. It is rather striking that land-related grievances were absent from the reasons brought forward, and have not been mentioned once by the people I interviewed, especially since the Ivoirian history of land tenure is closely intertwined with that of inter-ethnic violence. Surely the picture would have been different if I had focused on more rural forms of counter-insurgency (the rural vigilantism we mentioned earlier, that was re-activated during the crisis in a more sophisticated way). From the chronology of violent events presented earlier, it is clear that land stakes have fueled violence in several rural locations in the west, and at several periods, before and since the start of the war. To mention a few: the Guéré-Baoulé clash at Fengolo in 1997, which was used as pretext to introduce a new land regulation; the events of October 2002 on the Duékoué-Kouibli axis (the villages of Blodi, Iruzon, Diahouin, Toazéo, and Kouibli), when Guéré youths were abusing the Burkinabés residing in the area; January 2003, when ethnic tensions exploded again in the same area but targeting the *autochthones* instead since a circumstantial alliance between Burkinabés and rebel forces had actually occurred to fight the Guéré youths; April 2004, in the Diéouzon area; April/May 2006, east of Bangolo, when Guérés accused Baoulés and Burkinabés of having set fire to several autochthonous plantations near the village of Gohouon Zagna, etc. As already mentioned, such diffuse forms of violence have surely been the most worrying development that has taken place in the Ivoirian rural societies.

Table 7.2 First reason given by respondent for joining an armed movement

	MAN	GUIGLO	TOTAL
To protect themselves	14	4	18
To protect parents and community	22	42	64
To defend 'their' region	-	19	19
Taken by force	24	-	24
Encouraged by friends	5	5	10
Harassed too often for being of northern origin	10	-	10
To avenge the death of General Gueï	1	-	1
To work	10	5	15
In response to a call for volunteers	4	5	9
Encouraged by soldiers	2	3	5
In response to the death of someone close	7	15	22
Other	1	2	3

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

As the mere fact of enlisting in a movement that seeks to overthrow the state probably draw on other rationales than enlisting in a movement that seeks to defend it, there is the need to make an analytical distinction between insurgent and counter-insurgent movements and each must be explored in depth. This might sound trivial, yet it is striking how uninvestigated counter-insurgent mobilization processes are in comparison to the extensive research on rebel recruitment. This observation is shared by other scholars (Arjona & Kalyvas, 2009; Meagher, 2008), who urge that more attention be given to how the State accommodates (or not) the counter-insurgents. In western Côte d'Ivoire, belligerent side and local territorial sovereignty clearly mattered in fostering local mobilization. In Guiglo for instance, it was striking that the large majority of respondents reported having enlisted to protect their region and community. If the role of immediate contexts has to be acknowledged (and foremost the role of local leaders in promoting mass mobilization), individual perceptions should not be underestimated, especially the feeling of 'being attacked'. A lot of the youths I interviewed reported having been extremely 'shocked' when they witnessed the distress of the displaced people who were passing through Guiglo as they were fleeing combat in Toulepleu or Blolequin, and a recurrent concern I heard was the fear of what would happen to their family if some of them would be unable to flee on foot, if no-one posed any resistance. Armed mobilization took several forms on the counter-insurgent side, but was eventually grounded foremost on community ways of policing and on the paramilitary structure that derived from these. These 'self-defence' groups resembled paramilitary structures at the peak of the counter-insurgency, before gradually giving up their purely military tasks after the period of combat operations had passed. But while one would have expected that they would have gradually changed function to become local guardians by securing their immediate surroundings (resuming thereby a more traditional form of urban/rural vigilantism), western militias have in fact done little to counter the criminality in their zone in the later stages of conflict. Conversely, on the insurgent side, low-ranking elements in the rebel forces increasingly fulfilled the role of public security officials.

Processes of mobilization took on different forms in the western region, depending on individuals' affiliations, beliefs and social networks, but also depending on more contingent and geographical factors such as which side of the front line it was, the dynamics of local politics, the characteristics of the mobilizing context, and the recruitment strategy of the armed factions. Although this diversity of factors is usually recognized in explaining processes of mobilization, there is somehow a tendency to bring to the fore grievance-based motives, adverse structural conditions, and individuals' characteristics, especially when the base of an armed group shows a certain ethnic homogeneity. The contribution of this section has been to rehabilitate the importance of immediate contexts and political geography.

Concluding remarks

The Ivoirian case is a good illustration of the plurality of profiles and of the diversity of forms of engagement. It also clearly stresses the importance of immediate contexts in explaining processes of violent mobilization. This chapter has pointed out that in 2002-2003, enlistment in armed groups in western Côte d'Ivoire stemmed from highly circumstantial factors, showing that, in some cases, who mobilized and who did not was simply a matter of geographic and military factors. As Arjona & Kalyvas (2009) put it, 'by assuming the role usually ascribed to the state, armed groups become recognized as the authority, which ultimately leads to recruitment'. In other words, whatever armed group is in control of a given place at a given moment is potentially the most decisive factor in influencing people's behaviour. This perspective clearly places a strong emphasis on the role of leaders and the elite in promoting certain values within society and emphasizes the importance of 'framing' and the role and charisma of individual leaders in explaining recruits' engagement (Leach & Scoones, 2007): in which circumstances did civilians take up arms? What information was disseminated at the time to the population? Who framed such local discourses, and how was it interpreted locally? If these dimensions are usually less put forward in conflict analysis in comparison with explanations based on adverse structural conditions, they are certainly worth looking at, and what happened in western Côte d'Ivoire highlights very well the importance of each of the points above. On the pro-government side, the role of a local political leader in Guiglo was key in triggering massive local mobilization; on the rebel side, the assassination of the former head of State General Gueï and the way this information was exploited by the media and local politics had a significant impact among the young Yacoubas, and was cited many times as a rationale to enlist. Recruitment appeared strikingly local in Guiglo and Man, and if mobilizing contexts have varied tremendously from one place to another, local territorial sovereignty was clearly one important dimension of recruitment there, combined with individual interpretations of specific situations.

In terms of profile, the Ivoirian case shows that there was no single pattern. Recruits displayed very different pre-war trajectories, and in line with other studies on social movements (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009: 22), this case tends to depict a picture that shows that it is people who are rather embedded into society who are politically active, and not the alienated ones. Empirically, this study firmly dismisses the loose molecule hypothesis, which basically argues that the most likely profile of low-ranking recruits consists of jobless, uneducated, and dissocialized youths with few alternative prospects other than to resort to violence to make ends meet. If the young militia members I interviewed appeared better educated, with more stable social networks, this does not mean that the young people who joined the rebellion were disconnected socially. They were just using other ties and extra-familial networks to get by on a daily basis. Perhaps one noteworthy characteristic of recruits was the fact that prior to their engagement in armed groups, they were all extremely mobile, both in terms of geographic location and sector of activity. Although this observation can be made for most African youths, whether or not they have been drawn in an armed movement, it exemplifies once more the already well-documented 'hyper-mobility' phenomenon, and at the same time recalls the fact that the characteristics of militarized recruits only resemble the ones of the population at large.

In terms of mobilization processes, one has in fact to be careful not to downplay individual perceptions at the expense of geopolitical factors, even if the characteristics of immediate contexts are recognized to have played a major role in the processes of enlistment. This work has also empirically underlined that individual perceptions matter quite a lot in understanding local processes of engagement and that several considerations are at play for individuals: how they experience direct danger; how they perceive their degree of vulnerability; to what extent the choices they have is constrained by a limited room to manoeuvre; and the social proximity to militia and/or rebel insiders. Such results are in line with certain scholars who argue that these factors are more decisive in explaining processes of mobilization in certain contexts than poverty per se or perceived socio-economic exclusion (Guichaoua, 2007).

Photograph 9: Ex-combatant taking part in an informal production of charcoal, Guiglo

Photograph 10: Soccer team, Man, including one ex-combatant

8

Blurred spaces: Militarized youths and their relationships with their immediate environment

It is often assumed that youngsters who have been involved in armed groups must be resocialized after their military experience, as if their bond with society was cut during their engagement (Geenen, 2007). The vast majority of reinsertion programmes are based on this postulate. There is, however, growing evidence that militarized civilians often retain contact with civilian life during their period of engagement in an armed group, especially the ones locally recruited who remain in their immediate surroundings (their main peculiarity in fact is to never stop being involved with family, friends and pre-war acquaintances). In western Côte d'Ivoire, many recruits I interviewed involved themselves in extra-military activities when heavy fighting diminished and there were always the basic logistics to ensure that implied continuous interaction with non-military people.

If not yet mainstream, this conception of armed violence as a prosaic and intermittent occupation has been noted by other scholars (Debos, 2010; Guichaoua, 2010), and calls for a nuanced approach when analyzing processes of violent mobilization, an approach that rests foremost on the assumption that borders between the military, the civilian and the humanitarian spheres are fluid and blurred, especially once open fighting is over. In the same writing style of

Christiansen *et al.* (2006: 12),[1] we could assert for the regions under study that 'within the same day, a person can be positioned (or position him/herself) as combatant, ex-combatant, civilian, "beneficiary" of humanitarian assistance, employed youth or unemployed, depending on the situation and the stakes involved in the relationship with the other party.' Respondents have certainly made use of these different framings, presenting themselves differently to various outside entities depending on the image they wanted to convey at a particular time, consciously positioning themselves in certain groups but not in others, navigating between categories in pursuit of their best interest; this intentional identity *bricolage* is after all normal in situations where the people benefiting from an intervention are also the usual residents of the environment hosting that intervention. The aim of this chapter is therefore to rehabilitate these multiple identities by reflecting on the complex relationships militarized youths have entertained over time with the different arenas in which they were routinely embedded.

Part-time recruits

What does it mean to be considered – or to consider oneself – 'militarized' when most of the week is devoted to agricultural activities or non-military petty tasks? The Ivoirian case illustrates this paradox quite well, as most non-professional recruits have actually been part-timers in the Ivoirian conflict once the period of combat had passed. The extracts below exemplify well this peculiarity on both belligerent sides:

> B. is still active in the rebellion. He is responsible for selling the compulsory 'verification' tickets to transporters at the Zélé checkpoint. The ticket proves that the transporter has paid his daily tax to the rebel forces. When he is not commissioned (4 or 5 days per week), he is engaged in another activity: 'I do not have a lot of [financial] means. So I am currently working on a project with a friend – the person who just called me. He works the iron. We try to come up with a project for producing coffee/cocoa mills, to see if it can become something. If this project does not work, we'll see.' Eight months later, I meet B. again. He is still selling tickets to the transporters for the rebel forces, but he now invests his free time in a gardening project. We visited his field of cucumbers. He said that it was quite a lucrative business. The plan was to sell at the market.

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[1] Reflecting on how complex it is to properly define youth, Christiansen, Utas and Vigh have argued that youth is better conceptualized as a social position (rather than a social or cultural entity in itself or a rigid developmental life-stage), internally and externally shaped and part of a larger societal and generational process. How youth position themselves, how they are positioned within generational and societal categories, how young people construct 'counter-positions' are central questions for them. The dynamics of this social position, its 'navigating' component, is perhaps best captured in this quote, taken from their introduction, and which I paraphrase here for the Ivoirian context: 'Within the same day a person can be positioned as a child, youth and adult, depending on the situation and the stakes involved in the relationship' (2006: 12).

> A. is also part of the rebellion, working for the *eaux et forêts division*. During his spare time, he manages a *cabine* (a cellphone stall): 'I am settled in Man but sometimes I have to move around. You know, the ones who live out of town actually pay transport to be able to place a call. In the bush, there are many areas where there is no cellular network.'
>
> On the other side of the ex-front line, J. tells me that he used to work as private vigilante in parallel with his activities in the militia: 'When I was based in Guiglo [he was based there three months in the beginning of the war], I guarded private shops when I did not have to work at the checkpoint. We were three from my group to do this. We were paid 15,000 francs each, every month. Our chiefs had no problems with that, they let us do it. When we left for Zagné, we continued to stand guard in rotation at the checkpoints. When I was off duty, I was selling plastic shoes. I used to do that before the war.'
>
> In the same area, H. explains: 'After the attack of Logoualé, we retreated to Zéo. I stayed there 4 or 5 months. Then we moved to Guiglo. The war had calmed down and it was no longer necessary for us to stay in Zéo. In Guiglo, I started working with someone, I was managing his *cabine*. He was paying me 5,000 by pre-paid card of 100,000. In a month, I could empty four such cards. I was placing the calls for the people and they were paying me.'

Extra-military activities indeed did not start when belligerents were still competing for territory; regardless of individual duties, there was no time at that juncture for doing something else and combat operations were the priority. People instead started to diversify their activities when the situation grew calmer, after the period of fighting. For those who did so, the main goal was often quite modest: just to earn enough to pay the rent and routine expenses. The start of intermittent work is perhaps easier to trace on the counter-insurgency side, where those who started working usually began their activity in the second half of 2003, or in 2004. The situation at the time allowed a clear division of labour between 'checkpoint shifts' every fortnight or so, and 'private work', and in addition, militia leaders were showing a certain leniency in this respect by not hampering their elements to work when they were not on duty. About two thirds of the interviewed militia members were involved in extra-military paid occupations in parallel to their activities in the militia. Activities ranged from hairdressing to painting, from masonry, farming, cellphone services, to running local bars. On the government side, I even came across a few cases where the respondents, who were living in Abidjan before the war, were still managing their Abidjan activities from a distance, receiving money on a regular basis from the relative or skilled apprentice they had put in charge.

With the progressive closing of checkpoints in 2004 and 2005 (notably boosted by the deployment of the impartial forces in the western region), those years also marked the end of active involvement for most militia members, even if a few continued to maintain relationships with militia leaders and occasionally executed sporadic missions. Perhaps the label 'intermittent' is then misplaced for the bulk of the pro-government militias after 2005 and we'd better speak of the 'end of armed mobilization'. Interviewed militia members in this respect were much freer than their rebel counterparts, who literally could not demobilize themselves from the rebel forces in the same period without facing trouble. There was a much greater stake to keep the elements together on the rebel side since the rebel forces had to maintain the impression of potential military threat. On the insurgent side at the time, the military hierarchy sustained an ambiguous attitude towards its low-ranked elements. Until 2006-2007, being involved in extra-military economic activities was usually interpreted as a sign of lack of interest in military duties, and carried the risk of leading to serious intimidation. From 2007 onwards, being a part-time recruit was usually tolerated in the rebel ranks, as long as the recruit continued to give visible signs from time to time of his or her belonging to the movement (I illustrate this point later in the chapter).

Social relationships within the armed groups

Hierarchical relationships within the different armed groups vary widely from one individual to another, ranging from the display of paternalist behaviour (e.g. commanders giving petty cash to individuals from time to time), to certain forms of authoritarianism (to fight against defection), and tolerated practices of *laissez-faire*. I examine below some examples of interactions between low-ranking recruits and their direct hierarchy. In addition to providing a series of individual accounts, rich in detail, the interview fragments presented here also shed light on the basic functioning of insurgent and counter-insurgent armed groups.

The question of payment

> ‘There is nothing of nothing in the rebellion. Now we see it clearly. It only delays a man. You earn nothing, you do not eat well, you are dressed in dirty clothes, it is zero. When it is over, I am going to run a small business, or buy a truck, build a house. I want to run a small shop, one of those selling soap, biscuits, Omo, milk, *huile du nord*.’ (S., Man)
>
> ‘I was given 15,000 CFA francs a day [during combat operations]. But you do not know if there is a tomorrow, so you spend it all. You waste it buying drinks, or you go and buy cigarettes, even if you did not smoke before the war.’ (C., Guiglo. She fought with the Lima forces in the beginning of the counter-insurgency).
>
> ‘In the beginning, we were given 10,000 CFA francs per month every two months and then it stopped. Afterwards, we were coping as well as we could. At the checkpoint, you could get 5,000 a day. It was our parents who were actually taking care of us. We were getting food from the village, my wife was actually sending me manioc. And when we set a town free, we received a bonus, a *prime d’État*.’ (T., Guiglo).
>
> ‘In Toulepleu, we were given 25,000 CFA francs per month, for three months. We were paid by a Liberian chief. In Liberia, we were given 20,000 Liberian dollars every two weeks.’ (S., Blolequin).
>
> ‘When we were based in Blolequin [during combat operations], we were not paid but we were given encouragement incentives to pay for our cigarettes, our soap. Some days, for instance, our section chief could give us 10,000 each, it depended. We were called the

> *Forces Spéciales*, the 'ready-to-die' *(les prêts-à-mourir)*. We could be called at anytime to fight. Other sections did not earn anything, for instance, those who would come to replace us, or those who were doing the security in the villages. Not everyone was earning something. But us, if we were told, "the rebels are positioned there", once you get the information, even if you're asleep, they wake you up, you have to go fight. This was the task of the first five sections. Each of us had a weapon and we were sent to cleanse a place [of rebels]. When the place was secure, the other sections could come to guard the location and to make sure that the rebels would not come back. With these sections, there were perhaps ten people for two weapons. With our section, everybody was armed.' (G., Guiglo)

Far from suggesting that rebels were not paid and that pro-government militias were financially much better off, I use these introductory accounts to illustrate the extreme diversity of stories. Some respondents were never paid, some were paid generously in the beginning but only for a short period, some consistently received a regular incentive, some were fully dependent on their spouse's income, and some only could lay hands on an annual 'carrot'. Such an extreme variation within the same 'class' of recruits (namely: non-professional and low-ranked) can be explained by several factors: the function they fulfilled in the armed group, the social proximity to the local commander and to the mid-ranking officers, the period of conflict, the belligerent side. Not surprisingly, those who fought in the first line were usually properly rewarded during combat operations, however, this never lasted. It also was at a time when the future seemed so uncertain that all the money earned was usually spent the same day. As C. put it, at that time, you literally did not know if there would be a tomorrow.

- Checkpoints

On the rebel side, the *État-Major* developed the practice of paying his troops by sending them to the *'corridor'*, which meant posting them temporarily to a local checkpoint, usually for two or three days. Given the number of recruits, low-ranking militiamen were usually sent on duty once every fortnight, unless they fulfilled specific duties that required their presence more often. They were paid 2,000 CFA francs for this by the *État-Major* (what they called '*la ration'* or the act of *'être rationné'*), and on top of that came extra petty cash collected at the checkpoint, which mainly came from bribing civilians (the compulsory taxation of economic operators was entirely given over to the *État-Major*).

> 'I do not have extra-military activities. When I go to the *corridor*, I go about every week, I can earn 2,500-3,000 CFA francs, with the ration on top.'
>
> 'When I was with the MPIGO or the MJP, I did not receive any money. There was no such thing when there was fighting. They gave us 5,000 recently. Twice. When posted to the *corridor*, you can more or less get by. You do not earn a fixed amount, it varies. Sometimes, you can go and earn 2,000, sometimes you earn more. I go more often than the others because I sell the tickets for the *État-Major*, for the transporters. I can go two or three times a week. The transporters pay 1,000 CFA francs for a 24-hour permission. What the others do is different. Them, they are "rationed". Us [they are several per shift], we sell tickets. In the

> evening, we count the money, we deduct our rations, and the rest we send to the *État-Major* so that it can pay for the food and medical care of the other militia members in town.'

Twice in December (in 2005 and 2006), around the period of Christmas, the rebel *État-Major* distributed 5,000 CFA francs to all the low-ranked elements as end-of-the year incentives. As one respondent cynically put it: '5,000 is not a payment, it is a favour. It is perhaps only to check the number of people in the rebellion'. Probably so, but giving petty cash in December to dependents is also a widespread cultural practice that was confirmed by many individual recollections of pre-war life. The rebel *État-Major* was just reviving the tradition, which was opportunistically coloured by a military agenda.

On the counter-insurgent side, militia members also rotated at the checkpoints, usually filling a position for a whole week before being relieved by another group. Beside the petty cash collected there (the non-autochthonous passers-by were particularly targeted), payment was extremely variable, from nothing to periodic incentives, or more regular wages. The driver of Maho for instance received 50,000 francs every month. Those who had fought or held positions close to the front line during the period of combat were often paid in the beginning (every two weeks), but for a very short time and it did not last long ('We received pay six times'). Others never got anything. The counter-insurgents who were eventually seeing to the security of their own villages and nearby surroundings occasionally received bags of rice, but were mostly paid by what they extracted from passers-by. The interview fragments below shed some light on how payment trickled down to the individual:

> 'We were not paid. We were given nothing. Apart from the food. I was paying my rent with the small contracts I was doing on the side.'
>
> 'The chief of section was receiving money from time to time, 300,000. That paid for food and soap.'
>
> 'When there was a ceasefire, the chiefs gave us 10,000 francs to go back to our families.'
>
> 'We received contributions from the *cadres* of Doké *[cotisations]*. They once sent 150,000 francs, rice and medicines. Otherwise, the FANCI usually provided us with coffee, rice and tinned beef. It was sent from their camp. When we were setting a town free, the villagers were happy and were preparing food for us.'
>
> 'I went to the checkpoint everyday during six months. We were not paid. Our salary was the money we took from people. We did checkpoints in the villages of Doké, Kouably, Pohouin. When the checkpoint was in Doké, I slept at home, but when it was in the other villages, I was sleeping on the road. We could make 1,500 francs a day, so about 10,000 a week. When we were doing checkpoints in the other villages, there were always villagers with us, so we always knew who was from here and who was not. Those who were not from the village were obliged to pay 100 francs to pass.'

- The practice of stealing

Despite the internal rule of 'no stealing', several respondents on both belligerent sides confessed to having sold equipment found in empty houses. Their loot ranged from fans, tools, machines, cocoa bags, with respondents' families often receiving a share of the loot. The practice of stealing dead enemies was also quite widespread.

> 'If you enter an empty house and if there is food, you take to eat. The equipment, you don't take. The chiefs take it all anyway. But I could keep some stuff. In Zouan Hounien, I sold a TV for 30,000 francs. I also sold a pulverizator for 10,000. I sold the equipment to soldiers. We were paying ourselves using the towns we set free.' (D., Blolequin)

> 'My chief told me to break into the houses people had abandoned to steal things. Our commander did not like that, but I was obliged to do it because it was an order from my chief. We used to search everywhere in the houses. I had to give everything to my chief. I was not allowed to sell the stuff myself. If the chief was in a good mood, he would give me some money. If not, I got nothing. Sometimes, I kept small things for myself. I kept a Walkman and a tape player.' (D., Man)

> 'I earned five mattresses in Toulepleu. I sent one to Bedy Gouazon, to my wife. I also gave one to my parents. I still have two. The Liberians were often traveling to Guiglo so I could find transport to send the equipment. I also gained six bags of cement. I sent four to Bedy Gouazon and I sold two in Toulepleu. Also three fans. I gave two to my older brother. He lives in Port Bouët. I also got *pagnes*, "*les complets wax*", I gave those to my mother, and I also got two radios. One I gave to my sister, one I kept. I also could sell four fridges in Toulepleu, 7,500 each. And in Liberia, I got a motorbike, but because I could not have it cross over, I sold it for 50,000 Liberian dollars.' (S., Guiglo).

> 'When we kill rebels, we search them. If they have money, we take it. Sometimes we can get 100,000 francs from a rebel, sometimes 5,000, it is a matter of luck. When we earn something, when there is a truck leaving for the village, we send money to the family.' (M., Blolequin)

Ambiguity of the rebel hierarchy: Between paternalism, authoritarianism and laissez-faire

From the points of view of the interviewed recruits, the rebel military hierarchy cultivated an ambiguous attitude towards its low-ranked elements. If there was some kind of standard pattern in terms of general modus operandi (the *État-Major* was ensuring a regular turnover of militiamen at checkpoints, free food was provided and in order to maintain some kind of social cohesion, daily and weekly military assemblies were held, *'rassemblement'*[2]), unequal treatment was the norm when it came to individual requests, and this strikingly came out of the individual interviews. With some recruits, the rebel *État-Major* was quite generous when asked for help, with others it showed much less empathy, as these two accounts illustrate:

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[2] The daily assemblies only concerned the elements of a military camp, and there was one daily assembly per camp. The weekly assemblies were a gathering of all members of all camps in town, once a week.

> 'The chiefs here, they do not give anything. If you do not have a shoe [she takes off her shoe], if you go and plead your case, the chief is not going to give you anything. It is because we are so many. If he gives to you today, others go to see him afterwards to ask, and later the chief is upset and asks me, "Why did you tell the others that I helped you?"' (F., female recruit, Man)
>
> 'To get by, I go to the *corridor*. When I have problems, I go and see the chiefs. They usually help. They give money, bags of rice.' (B., female recruit, Man)

Without being too greatly mistaken, one could attribute these differences to the quality of the social network in question. Unsurprisingly, those closer to a high-ranking element were likely to benefit more than those lacking such privileged contacts, and the volume and quality of personal networks varied widely according to someone's geographical position and appointed places of duty. One female respondent, for instance, mentioned that she was very well treated in Korhogo by the chief she had been following since the beginning, but when she moved to Man after the death of her commander, things changed drastically as she had no 'protector' to rely on. Rebel paternalist behaviour found several modes of expression on various occasions: commanders distributing petty cash or in-kind contributions to some of their troops; commanders paying for medical expenses; when the rebel *État-Major* promoted all low-ranking recruits to the rank of corporal (2005). When support was granted (elements had to plead their cases individually), it was usually punctual, limited in time and scope, and geared at solving a very specific problem (for instance paying for funerals, medical expenses, transport costs, etc.):

> 'If I have a problem, I go to see the *Com'Zone*, or his deputy. When I lost my uncle, the brother of my father – he was living in Man, he was like a father to me – they helped me with the funeral, they did that. So for me, *Forces Nouvelles* are like my parents. If I have a problem, they solve it well. When my mother got sick, I went to see the commander, and every time I have pressing problems, he takes care of it.' (A., female recruit, Man)
>
> 'The chief, if I have a problem, he can help but he is not obliged. When I have family issues, I go and plead my case.'(G., male recruit, Man)

If someone could ask for petty assistance, he or she could not ask for more. Requesting help for beginning a small business, for instance, even when many recruits were ostensibly performing an extra military task when not on duty, could simply not be done. The first reason was indeed that it would open the door to widespread defection (something the *État-Major* could not back). The second (less intuitive) reason was that it would have closed an important channel of day-to-day support for many low-ranking recruits, namely a source of petty cash and free food that was also benefiting their close family. The interviewed low-ranking recruits were in fact continuously playing on that ambiguity: trapped into a movement that could not release them, they nonetheless regularly used their position to extract funds from mid-ranking and high-ranking commanders for their routine expenses. If they were no longer enlisted, one of their channels of support would inevitably dry up.

> 'It is because I work with them that they help me. I am their element. The commander cannot help you anymore if you tell him that you are leaving the army to do something else. He is not going to want that. So I did not tell him that I was working.' (A. worked part-time as a hair-dresser for a short period while she was still active in the rebellion.)

> 'If I have a problem regarding *pommade* (skin cream), I go to see a chief. I ask him, even little, 200 francs. I don't always go to see the same person. It depends. When I have 2,000 francs, I go to the market and buy my things.' (G., female respondent, Man)

But reducing the rebel military hierarchy to a means of providing welfare would be a mistake since the rebel *État-Major* regularly took coercive measures against his elements when it was considered that they were overstepping the rules. Those who were caught stealing or who were harassing civilians too much were usually arrested (in the early stages of the insurgency, they were executed). Leniency was far from being a given and the rebel hierarchy knew how to rule with an iron fist. One respondent reported having experienced serious intimidation when he resumed his pre-war activity shortly after arriving in Man:

> 'One morning I wake up, all my equipment is on the floor. I'm told: "Did you come here to do war or work?" I was obliged to let it go. When my workshop was destroyed, I went and filed a complaint at several police stations. But I was always told the same thing: "We have come here to do the war, we did not come to work. We do not have a solution for you."' (E. is a technician who was forced to enter the rebellion in Borotou to provide rebel forces with technical support. When he was deployed in Man, he set up a small repair workshop in town, in parallel with his military activity. E. usually made a point of not wearing a uniform ('*treillis*'). He also avoided eating at the camp.)

Timing and form were certainly two important factors when deciding to show signs of detachment from the military. It is for instance noteworthy that after some time, E. did not have a problem working for someone everybody knew in town:

> 'There was a Senegalese here, at the market. He hired me to check his devices. The machines came, I checked them. If one was broken, I repaired it, I did the maintenance. They [the rebels] knew that. The Senegalese was a well-known man; the rebels even took their equipment there for repair, so they could not do anything to me. The Senegalese was paying me per day. One VCD at 1,500 CFA francs, the big TV screens at 2,000. He was paying me all at once, after I did five or ten repairs. Sometimes we had to wait one week before the next stock arrived. When I was finished with all checks and repairs, I was selling the equipment with him. He would have told me before: "This, you have to sell it at 17,500 CFA", so if I sold it at 18,000, then 500 were for me. I also did a lot of cell-phone repairs. I could make 50,000 per month sometimes.'

Six months later, the same respondent was self-employed, earning much less than when he was employed by the Senegalese. His boss had actually moved elsewhere (without helping him to start his own workshop as promised) and after some time on his own at the market, where he was paying 5,000 CFA francs rent plus 500 CFA francs a week to the *Forces Nouvelles* for his authorization to sell, he moved to another workshop in another neighbourhood, mainly because he could not cope on his own with all the expenses:

> 'I've known the workshop's owner for two and a half years. He is a friend. He is a civilian. I work well with him. I repair outside the workshop, either directly at the client's home, or in the village. They call me and I repair there. It is better than being at the market. There, there were always problems with the electricity, the rent, the licence *(patente)*. It was a lot of expenses. Sometimes, my friend goes outside to work and I take care of the workshop in his absence. When there is not a lot of work – sometimes, we can go three or four days with nothing – we go to villages on market days. We travel regularly. It is difficult these days. The big workshops in town are doing well, but there I would be an apprentice and I don't want that. In the big workshops, all the repairs you do are for the boss. You only get *prix du savon*, perhaps 150 francs a day. And when you come back to your house, what can your wife do with that??? So to get by, I prefer staying with my friend in the small workshop.
>
> I have not joined assembly at the camp for a long time. Foremost because I lack the means to go there and Grand Gbagpleu where I work is quite far from the military camp, and because I have to travel a lot for work. But they told us recently that they were distributing 5,000 CFA francs for the holiday season. So I'll go there. But I know that because they have not seen me a lot, they will divide. They'll probably give me 2,500 instead of 5,000. But because it is a gift, I cannot complain.'

In 2006 and 2007, such practices of laissez-faire were relatively common in rebel-held territories (after March 2007, it was probably boosted by the *Accord Politique de Ouagadougou*, which while fostering inter-Ivoirian dialogue, had also reiterated its attachment to the disarmament and demobilization of militarized civilians). At the time of doing fieldwork, not attending the daily and/or weekly military assemblies was tolerated, as well as the practice of not going to the checkpoint when appearing on the roster. On that last point, several respondents openly expressed their shame to be put in a position where it was expected that they would extort from civilians. Noteworthily, there was no sanction when they stopped going.

Modus operandi on the counter-insurgent side,

In many respects, the modus operandi of the counter-insurgents resembled that of the rebel forces: the question of payment, punctual 'gifts' supplied by militia leaders, the supply of militia cards to ensure free transport,[3] the supply of free food during the encampment period (although in advanced bases, this was far from as systematic as within the rebellion).[4] Paternalist behaviour expressed itself in a number of ways but appears much more centralized than with the rebel forces, respondents usually mentioning 'the General' as their direct source of support[5] :

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[3] 'There had been a call on the radio asking everyone who had gone to war to go and fetch the card. It is after the war that I came to the Mayor's compound. He gave me the FLGO card.'

> 'The General would take care of the family if someone died during combat.'
>
> 'The General gave me two loads of wood so I could start making charcoal again.'
>
> 'Maho paid for everything. Our food, our sleep. Before, we used to be 1,100 at his camp. Now we are 600. Before the demobilization, I was earning 20,000 every month. The wage depended on your rank but also whether or not you had to pay rent. I rented a house for 10,000, so I was given 20,000 every month. The others could perhaps get 5,000.' (R. moved to Guiglo from Abidjan to defend his region. After the period of combat, he stayed at Maho's camp for a while. Later, he moved out to stay in a rental place with his spouse. In the summer of 2006, he received a demobilization incentive of USD 900.)
>
> 'The chiefs were sometimes giving rice when the family was not good.'

A typical trajectory that came out of the interview was to alternate a period of serving in the bush with a period of encampment (in more or less advanced bases), and when the situation calmed down, to retreat to a militia leader's compound or to go back home. Encampment did not necessarily mean that all militia members were sleeping at the camp, and many houses abandoned due to the war were converted into militia quarters. Until 2005, encamped recruits had to request permission if they wanted to go on leave. It was not a given, and non-expendable recruits (the ones particularly skilled in combat operations) could experience difficulties as the following account illustrates:

> 'I had to lie to go and visit my family. I had to say I was sick. The problem is, when you are skilled, it is difficult to let you go.' (A.)

A peculiar trait of the pro-government militias has been their close connection with the national army and police up until 2004-2005. Several testimonies in fact pointed out that in the first two years of the counter-insurgency, the national armed forces were regularly coming to fetch militia elements when going on patrol (which was every night). Another characteristic of the low-ranking militia elements has been that they have developed privileged partnerships with private businesses, and that in part this was to their own benefit. We mentioned earlier in this chapter the securing of small businesses as an extra-military paid occupation (third interview fragment: J. used to work as private vigilante for a small Guiglo business in parallel to his activities in the militia. He could earn 15,000 francs every month from that activity). But on a larger scale, a whole network of surveillance developed around the timber export industries, and low-ranking militias were sent to escort timber or to guard equipment:

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[4] I remember a MILOCI recruit complaining about 'eating bad'. If we place his remark into context, it is perhaps not surprising. The MILOCI was created in 2005, thus this was years after the first counter-insurgent groups had emerged; civilian support in terms of food and cash had probably run dry then.

[5] They refer here to Maho, the FLGO leader described earlier.

> 'Mr. M. used to sign contracts with us. We were sent ten or fifteen elements to guard a portion of road, to block the trucks that come to steal the wood for sending to San Pedro. We could get 10,000-15,000 each per mission.'
>
> 'Quite often, we went to the bush to guard the machines of the timber industry [he names the company]. When you go on a mission, you can get up to 60,000. Also, when there was a soccer game in town, we can be called to do the security and to prevent disputes.'

The military-civilian nexus

The relationships between militarized recruits and local populations in western Côte d'Ivoire have generally been based on a combination of solidarity and coercion, and were all the more complex when they involved family ties. They varied over time as the conflict evolved and as the immediate stakes of capture or defence were replaced by the necessity for each group to find ways to control their zones; they also varied by location, as the insurgents had more stakes than the counter-insurgents groups in securing economic self-sufficiency in the zones they controlled by extracting resources from economic operators. In the literature, the military-civilian nexus has foremost been explored from a macro perspective and has mainly been framed in terms of the extent of civilian control over the military – the main argument being to place ultimate responsibility for military matters in the hands of a civilian political leadership rather than in the hands of military officers (Houngnikpo, 2010). But there has been a striking lack of studies that have taken an approach viewing matters from below. This chapter partially attempts to fill that gap by exploring in situ – from the testimonies collected – the social relationships between civilians and low-ranked recruits.

Mutual support between recruits and civilians: Genuine solidarity or social obligation?

At the time belligerents still had moving bases (as they were advancing or retreating), solidarity expressed itself in a number of ways. On the counter-insurgent side, much of the financial aid was sent through private channels, at several levels, at group or individual initiative. In the rural areas close to the front line, female villagers were preparing food for the fighters alongside women who had been enlisted in a militia and who had ended up in this particular village as they had followed their group. Guéré cadres were raising money in their respective towns to send to the front. Collecting money also developed overseas within the Wê diaspora. This was sometimes directly stated in the interviews, '*les cadres se sont cotisés*', or as here:

> ‘During the war, parents were raising funds per *canton* (sub-district) within the Guéré community. The guys were then sending this to us. They paid four times. The first time, they sent 100,000 CFA francs and bags of rice. Each village had to raise a contribution and send, one after the other. We were sharing among all of us. For instance, if the village of Nounoubaye paid, we shared with everyone, even with the ones who were not from Nounoubaye. Some villages did not send anything. The village of Goya for instance.’

These expressions of support certainly played an important role in ensuring basic logistics and a (relatively) steady source of cash and food in the beginning of the counter-insurgency. Yet a question remains: Were these contributions genuinely meant (by the contributors) as a contribution to the war effort or were they foremost directed at providing some kind of support to the war-affected populations residing close to the front line? Even if we lack information to be able to make a completely informed analysis, we must question this assumed civilian volition on the counter-insurgency side. Although an article dated 7 January 2003 from Le Grand Soir (Le Grand Soir, 2003) testifies to a real interest by the Wê diaspora in providing financial and in-kind support to the affected Wê populations (they were planning to raise funds, to collect food and basic supplies from French supermarkets, to liaise with the *comité de crise du Grand Ouest* in Abidjan), humanitarian and military goals were probably condemned to end up overlapping given the circumstances, thereby providing a very nice example of a forced military/humanitarian alliance confined – for a change – to very local stakeholders.[6]

On the rebel side, contribution to the war effort was more coercive, in the form of compulsory taxation, but an interesting trait that came out of the interviews was the dilemma rebel recruits experienced when posted in a familiar place (after the period of fightings), as they literally appeared trapped between their military duties and their social obligations. One respondent expressed it quite well when describing the line of acquaintances who regularly came to see him to request help in getting family or friends out of prison. It became such a burden for him (he even began to be poorly perceived by his superiors) that he asked for a transfer elsewhere. Other testimonies point out the dilemma of having to arrest a parent:

> ‘Because Biankouma is my home and many times people were leaving their village just to see me, to tell me: “Ah! We have this brother who has been arrested, you have to go and fetch him.” My chiefs were not very keen on me. They were saying: “But you here, you are

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[6] It is noteworthy that at the time of doing fieldwork (2006-2007), there was a tendency to remain quiet about such past civilian support. In the local press and through the eyes of the dominant public opinion, militiamen were equated with criminals and *lumpen* youth, and the Ivoirian conflict became conceptualized as the work of others. The fact that most militarized youths had in fact been recruited locally to protect their region and that their own parents did play a significant role in sustaining the movement were no longer brought to the fore.

> always the one who comes and intervenes." That is why I decided to leave there. I came to Man at the end of 2003.'

> 'When you are in the army, it is not good that you stay home. The thing is, when you are in the police, if you are sent on a mission and if you have to catch your parents, you are obliged to do it, it is an order. But if you catch your parents, they are not going to understand that you do that because it is an order from your chief. They will misinterpret.'

Persistence of family ties has been a striking feature on both belligerent sides. If social links were disrupted by the war, close familial bonds somehow succeeded in enduring and the flows of food, cash and services were going on both sides between the militarized recruit and those who remained civilian. Recruits were dispatching whatever they could, whenever they could, depending on the occasions of transport. It could be bags of rice, petty cash, pans, plates and cooking gear (especially from those working in a military kitchen). Those with family nearby continued to be involved in family affairs, notably when there were funerals or medical expenses. On the rebel side, rebel commanders also used the family unit as some kind of leverage to discipline their troops. Following a reported case of robbery in Logoualé, the *Com'Zone* of Man issued this awkward statement on the local radio:[7]

> 'Mothers should warn and look after their rebel kids. If their children want to remain rebels, they have to stay on the right track and accept the internal rules.'[8] (extracts from an INGO situational report, Man, 8-19 November 2003)

Expressions of support and mutual help did not remain confined to the family unit and several accounts pointed out the strategies some militarized civilians used to protect a simple passer-by:

> 'The way I did my work, God will help me. I can even give the name of someone I saved. It was a Baoulé. He was accused of being a suspect at my checkpoint, the boys wanted to kill him. I asked them to keep him alive, time for me to check his story. The Baoulé was saying that he was coming from Séguéla. I went to see the Mossis who were working at the truck station. They eventually confirmed that the Baoulé was not a suspect and that he had a chicken farm in Séguéla. There were sometimes buying eggs from him.'

On the counter-insurgent side, since the bulk of the militia youths had been locally recruited and were still close to their place of residence, most continued to keep close contacts with their family during their time in the militia. During the encampment period (which lasted until the end of 2004), several respondents reported that they were commuting regularly from their military camp to their home village when they were not in service, up to several times a month (transport was free upon presentation of their militia card). Several respondents also mentioned that they dispatched everything they could to their relatives in their village whenever they had the chance (cash, mattresses, cement, radios, air fans, *pagnes*). If we look at the data collected, about half of the interviewed militia members were supporting their family while still active in the group. Conversely, some respondents mentioned being completely financially dependent on their spouse's work of during their time in the militia. The youths who mentioned having no contact at all with their family before returning home were usually the ones who had only served for a short period at the height of the conflict and who had then returned home directly. Sometimes the family had even been informed that he or she had been killed during combat operations.

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[7] Rebel commanders have often made use of the local radio to disseminate information to the general public, notably for appeasing tensions or for communicating new developments (they used the local radio in 2004 to announce the deployment of the blue helmets, to provide information on DDR, and to inform on the demobilization of children).

[8] The rebellion had formalized strict rules in terms of how their elements should interact with civilians and newcomers entering willingly were usually notified about them upon their registration. Stealing from civilians and hassling people was for instance strictly forbidden. In Man, a rule was also set among the soldiers that rapists were to be killed immediately. If recruits wanted to go and visit family or friends (even for attending funerals), they had to request official permission. There was, however, an unavoidable gap between theory and practice, and many free-riding elements and commanders.

What degree of civilian leverage in coercive relationships?

If the relationship between armed forces and local populations also followed a logic of coercion, there was a certain degree of civilian leverage. On the insurgent side, perhaps coercive measures were more prominent in the beginning; after all, more recruits seem to have been forcedly drafted and freedom of movement was severely hampered by routine bribes and compulsory 'exit' taxes.[9] They lasted longer in any case, for the mere fact that in the absence of national tax income, the rebellion had to find ways to sustain itself.

As already mentioned in the contextual chapters, rebel forces started levying compulsory taxes at the end of 2003. It included the 'verification tickets' mentioned earlier, proving that transporters were paying their daily contribution to the movement, and it also included organized forms of extracting money from local businesses. In Man, shops and market stalls were taxed 500 CFA francs a week and they were regularly checked. Heitz's work (2009b) sheds some light on these local mechanisms of taxation.[10] The large export industries of cocoa, coffee and timber were ransomed at every single level of the chain and a system even developed to control the supply of fuel. In addition to this formalized taxation, bribing was still commonplace. If part of the tax could be considered to be redistributed to some extent to the local population in the form of services (after all, for nearly a decade, rebel forces served locally as police, gendarmerie, customs officials, *eaux et forêts*, and judiciary in the zones they controlled), excessive taxation weighed heavily on individual households and did little to alleviate already strained socio-economic circumstances.

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[9] In Zouan-Hounien and Danané, Human Rights Watch reports similar stories to those from the Péhé and Toulepleu areas: 'Liberian mercenaries were forcing civilians to pay 25,000 CFA or more to leave the towns' (Human Rights Watch, 2003b).

[10] She notably brings to the fore that the municipality of Man had succeeded in negotiating a share of the market taxation with the rebel *État-Major*.

If there is a tendency to assume that local populations residing in war-affected areas are either victim, passive or neutral, what happened in Man shows in fact that they are capable of surprising resilience. Even confronted with dire circumstances, the local populations of Man have continued to organize themselves and to negotiate with the rebel forces with whatever room to manoeuvre they had. When a local butcher was killed by a group of rebels in late 2003, all butchers in Man went on strike for a full week (extracts from an INGO situational report, Man, 8-19 November 2003). The extent of leverage civilians had on the rebellion is probably best exemplified when examining individual accounts on accommodation. When I was doing fieldwork, an issue that regularly popped up during interviews was the reappearance of landlords (who had fled their homes when the war erupted) and the necessity for the militarized recruits who were occupying their premises to start paying rent. The rebel *État-Major* was even in favour of this, asking his troops to regularize their housing situation with their respective landlords. In 2007, many respondents were still ‘squatting’ for free in houses they had requisitioned (many houses having been left empty after the first attacks), and were finding themselves in the awkward position of having to negotiate their stay with a private person:

> ‘I live in a house with other soldiers. But we have to leave. We have to pay rent. The house was entrusted to us by a neighbour with the owner’s approval. The neighbour lives in the same *cour* and the owner left years ago for Abidjan. But now the owner says he is about to come back, so the neighbour asked us to find another place. We said, “No problem. We’ll search for another house.”’ (T.)

On the counter-insurgent side, the ambivalence of the militia/civilian relationship reached its peak in the very beginning, when Liberian mercenaries were still active. A report released by Human Rights Watch in 2003 in fact pointed out that in locations close to the Liberian border, the civilian population was being robbed and held hostage. In Péhé, the town closest to Toulepleu, home to many displaced people who had fled the Toulepleu area after rebel attacks on their villages, it was reported that the population was forced to pay the Liberians at checkpoints to get wood or be allowed to go to their fields. They also had to pay to leave towns:[11] ‘Those trying to leave Toulepleu in late January 2003 were forced to pay the government-backed Liberian forces between 95 and 200,000 francs CFA' (Human Rights Watch, 2003b). People were not free to leave: 'They [the Liberians] said people can't leave because they don't want the region to be empty' (ibid: 38). Similar stories came up during the interviews I conducted. One respondent, for instance, openly said that he joined the Liberian forces because he was fed up with being enslaved by them. Because he could not leave, he had no other choice than to comply with the occupants' demands. His enlisting was therefore seen by him to be a pragmatic alternative: at least he could set himself free by enslaving others. Later, as the conflict started to last long and as the composition of armed forces evolved (with the visible retreat of the Liberian allies), coercive measures were more diffuse and only applied to a certain fringe of the population: during the checkpoint period, Burkinabés, Dioulas, Lobis, were particularly prone to extreme extortion. After the checkpoints' dismantlement in 2005, coercive measures continued underground, on a more individual and hidden scale.

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[11] Preventing civilians from fleeing is in line with a war strategy that uses local populations as forced labour to bury corpses, find food or carry equipment. The use of civilians as leverage to secure basic supplies for the functioning of armed groups does not seem to have been a prominent practice in western Côte d’Ivoire.

Blurred spaces

An important feature to bring to the fore is that it is in fact quite difficult to draw a clear line between the military and civilians: examined from individual perspectives, both arenas regularly overlap. Soldiering has become so much a part of the residents' immediate environment, especially in towns where military camps are based, that militarized recruits and civilians have been compelled to interact. This feature was particularly visible in Man, in rebel-controlled territory. If we look at accommodation habits, respondents were usually living in a military setting at first (either in a military camp or in a private place requisitioned for hosting the rebel elements)[12] before transferring to private places with family or *cour*-mates.[13] In some cases, respondents were living with their spouse and children, in others with relatives or civilian acquaintances, sometimes with other soldiers. Interestingly, when finally having left their military home, some made a point in not speaking about their belonging to an armed group:

> 'In my neighbourhood, many do not know. It is not something to advertise. You can be emotional about it. I do not find it important now because it is something from the past. When I talk to my friends, we talk about other things.'

Eating practices clearly show the entanglement of the military with the private sphere. Some respondents always ate at the camp (some even had a spouse or mother working as cook at one of the military bases), some took home food from the camp to share with their close family,[14] and others were keen on saying that they always ate outside camp, showing that they could fend for themselves, outside the military structure. Some were claiming to be full-time recruits, doing nothing on the side, while others were visibly working outside their military duties, earning a living. Most respondents were easily mistaken for civilians when they were not on duty and when they were not in uniform. These examples challenge the popular idea that conceptualizes the military and the civilian spheres as two completely different spaces with few links between them. But in Man and elsewhere, armed men had just become part of the town, and navigated between their civilian and military lived realities, depending on needs and obligations.[15]

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[12] This was to be expected from people who were not residents of the Man area before the war, but it was initially also the case for the recruits posted in their own town.

[13] One reason to leave the military camp as accommodation place was the robberies taking place there.

The humanitarian-military nexus

If we already started the reflection in Chapter 5 when examining the extent of capture of humanitarian resources by the armed groups operating in the western region, it is worth exploring the humanitarian-military nexus from two additional angles. A first interesting approach is to examine, at the individual level, the perceptions militarized recruits have of humanitarianism, especially the ones who are – or were – involved in a project (after all, any direct intervention has the potential to impact them directly). The second perspective worth looking at is linked to the shift in activities of certain militia warlords in post-conflict settings, as some of them converted into development brokers.

From the individual's perspective

Several young rebels I interviewed who were participating in a reinsertion project run by a German agency pointed out their mixed feelings about the intervention. On the one hand, they usually acknowledged that the intervention was providing them with a small extra: another place where they could receive free food, an opportunity for following short-term training, in sum, some in-kind support. But on the other hand, their participation in the project was sometimes interpreted as a burden. Some even expressed their fear of being excluded by their rebel superiors from services they could normally apply for if they had not been participating (that concerned food rations and the financial prospect of the DDR safety net). The following accounts are particularly telling:

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[14] In a context of general impoverishment, the provision of free food proved in fact to be an important factor in holding the rebel elements together.

[15] At the meso-level, the blurring of the military/civilian divide is perhaps best exemplified when armed groups started to take public prerogatives in the absence of the State. In Man, this was not limited to the security sector (police/gendarmerie), and rebel agents were also acting as customs, *eaux et forêts*, and judicial officials in the zones they controlled. Some respondents were penitentiary guards, some had passed a test to enter the local police force, some were appointed in the local forests for forestry control. What is particularly striking in the Ivoirian case is that all pre-war administrative structures continued to persist in the rebel zones. They have not merged, new names were not created, rebel agents have just continued the pre-war routine checks, while exacerbating its bribing part.

> 'It is not sure we'll get the safety net if it comes. At the camp, they say, "No! We are with GTZ, we received the kit, we are already demobilized." But we did not receive anything! You cannot do the war for five years and then get a kit of 75,000 francs and then say that you are demobilized!'

If there is a clear gap between what 'small men' say in the army and what the rebel *État-Major* does and promotes, such remarks were nonetheless fostering an ambiguous climate, in line with what we mentioned earlier: if someone shows too visibly clear signs of detachment from the rebel apparatus, he or she runs the risk of ending up excluded from potential benefits.

If the *État-Major* had no intention to start releasing recruits (talking about demobilization was taboo in the rebel-controlled areas at the time the fieldwork was being conducted), individuals interpreted their room for manoeuvre very differently. For some, participating in a project was clearly subordinate to their participation in the rebellion:

> 'Presently, I run the pig farm, here in Man. I am not from here but the chiefs say the war is not yet over. So we cannot go home yet. But when DDR comes, we will be able to go wherever we want.'

For others, the connection was more fluid and they had clearly started to cut back the frequency of their military tasks:

> 'Thanks to GTZ, I now run a small home business. I no longer go to the *corridor*. The last time was perhaps two or three months ago.'

On the counter-insurgency side, perceptions of humanitarianism also varied depending on the individual, and despite the fact that all respondents had received financial compensation in 2006 (unlike their rebel counterparts). I develop the use of such incentives in the following chapter; here I just mention a few examples of respondents' satisfaction or disillusionment:

> 'Some say GTZ did not do well. But this is not true. GTZ did what it could with the means it had. I will be given my kit tomorrow. I'll take it home then, and perhaps if I'm lucky I'll even get a diploma. At the garage where I'm enrolled, they'll probably give me a certificate. It would be a great asset for me.'

> 'They told us that when we will be disarmed, they will give us plenty of things. They told us that we would be comfortable, that we would forget all this. We've been waiting. True, we are disarmed, but for the rest, we're still waiting.'

Extent of entanglement of humanitarianism with the remnants of warfare

A second interesting approach for exploring the humanitarian-military nexus is to examine the extent to which humanitarianism has interacted with the remnants of the apparatus of warfare, especially in Guiglo where local warlords converted into development brokers. Bierschienk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan were the first to come up with the concept *'courtiers locaux du développement'* to refer to social actors implanted in a given local arena who play the role of intermediaries in order to attract external resources with the aim of 'developing' the arena in question (by 'developing', it is meant fostering any kind of activity that could improve the local living conditions). This of course includes liaising with international INGOs active in the area but not just with these. Public or private parties with a genuine interest in developing a certain domain can also be seen as potential sources to tap into.

In Guiglo, when it became clear that a political settlement would prevail over a military one, militia leaders were keen on (re)endorsing a local politician hat. For at least two major leaders, this meant resuming pre-war local political functions[16], and since they had militarized civilians to 'reinsert' (those who were previously under their command), their political persona had to also function as a development broker. What happened there is in fact a good illustration of local leaders' multiple registers of action, with some assuming many roles within the community they belong to, from armed faction representative to respected traditional chief, via local politician to President of a local NGO. Because individuals could pass from one register to another and introduce themselves under different guises to outsiders, the action repertoires were inherently blurred and a former militia leader had no difficulty taking on a humanitarian persona. In Guiglo, the UPRGO militia leader, Octave Yahi, founded the local NGO *Nouvelle Famille,* to be able to tap into the burgeoning hevea export industry nearby, by positioning himself as a potential partner. Cultivating hevea was particularly in vogue there when fieldwork was being conducted, a popularity amplified by a campaign run by the *Compagnie Hévéïcole du Cavally* (CHC) to incite small farmers to produce this crop. Information on hevea benefits was disseminated through public meetings and partnerships with local stakeholders. Hevea was presented as a very lucrative prospect with yields estimated at 100,000 CFA francs per hectare and per month when the plants reach maturity (six years after planting). This was indeed an attractive revenue for many people, especially since rubber trees produce nearly all year long and can last up to fifty years. The local NGO *Nouvelle*

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[16] Before (and during) the war, FLGO leader Maho Gloféhi was the third assistant of the Mayor of Guiglo, member of the FPI, and a traditional Wé chief. UPRGO leader Octave Yahi had just been named Vice President of the *Conseil Général* in Guiglo.

Famille was further claiming its aim was to reintegrate ‘deviant young men’ into society by fostering the promotion of hevea cultivation. It therefore combined a humanitarian goal with the promise of boosting the CHC production capacity. During his time in Zagné (the former location of the UPRGO base), Yahi had developed privileged contacts with the CHC. He knew that only one third of the company’s production capacity was being exploited for lack of raw material, and that the company was looking for independent farmers it could sub-contract to increase its production. A certain number of incentives were therefore proposed to peasants to produce or increase their production of rubber:[17] this included the free supply of hevea plants (young seedlings) and extensive training for setting up seedbeds in the region.[18] *Nouvelle Famille* succeeded in positioning itself as a more or less unavoidable partner to the CHC, which gave it free access to young plants and a hand in the hevea business on the supply side. On paper, the *Nouvelle Famille* project was targeting 1,200 youths, of whom many were known to be former militia members. To be eligible for entry, participants had to fill in a registration form and purchase a *Nouvelle Famille* membership card (2,000 CFA francs), and also had to show a certificate of land property, which had to be signed by the village chief where the youth wanted to settle. The plots were supposed to be given ‘in recognition of the services rendered during the war’ (personal communication with Yahi, June 2007).

Concluding remarks

This chapter has challenged the traditional boundaries used in the analysis to explore the humanitarian, civilian and militarized spheres. Rather than conveying the idea of a clear distinction between the three arenas, it has stressed their overlaps, their dynamics, and has clearly dismissed strict conceptual boundaries. It has in addition stressed several opportunist manoeuvres of the militarized youths, which has reinforced the blurring effect. On both belligerent sides, full-time involvement in an armed group gradually evolved into a ‘part-time’ one, after the peak of the conflict had passed. Extra-military activities took longer to develop on the insurgent side since there was a genuine willingness to fight against widespread defection, however, they nevertheless ended up emerging – if we can date the start of the phenomenon to 2004 for the pro-government militias, 2006 is a more appropriate guess for the start of extra-military activities on the rebel side. On both belligerent sides, relationships between militarized recruits and local populations have been based on a combination of solidarity and coercion varying over time, depending on strength of ties and the immediate stakes involved. Concerning the group of recruits locally recruited, the persistence of family bonds was a striking feature in Guiglo and Man and the flows of food, cash and services were going in both directions between the militarized ones and their respective families. But relationships with civilians went beyond the close family structure and an important feature that this chapter brought to the fore is that it is in fact quite difficult to draw a clear line between military life and civilian life: eating habits, accommodation practices, continued participation in family affairs, obliged militarized and non-militarized civilians to continuously interact, with the effect to have less and less distinct roles.

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[17] The CHC was planning an extension of small farmers’ plantations of approximately 1,000 hectares per annum and an increase in its production targets of 2.17 t/ha for the company plantations and 1.70t/ha for individual plantations (company website, accessed 28 November 2008).

[18] The use of seedbeds was estimated to decrease the price of seedlings from 180,000 to 35,000 CFA francs per hectare.

9

Return to civilian life for militarized populations: Two standard humanitarian instruments under the lens

Since borders between military, civilian and humanitarian spheres have become increasingly blurred, especially as situations of ‘no war, no peace’ tend to linger, the conceptualization of reintegration processes would undoubtedly gain if it were no longer presented as a drastic change, ‘post’ military. Reintegration has much to do with the way local communities construct memories of violence (Pouligny, 2004b: 11) and this process takes a particular turn when recruits stay close to their place of residence, as has partly been the case in western Côte d’Ivoire. Because it is through a social group that reintegration processes take place, militarized civilians who leave the military cannot therefore be conceived as isolated from the society they are (re)entering: social networks and immediate surroundings play a key role in these social processes.

If reintegration is driven foremost by internal processes, post-conflict interventions nonetheless also attempt to facilitate the return to civilian life of militarized populations, and have engaged in such programming for about a decade. If there are proponents and opponents of such types of intervention, reintegration programming has become so much part of any environment affected by warfare that it has become an unavoidable actor in any given system, regardless of one's opinion of the relevance of the intervention. This section therefore explores the extent to which (re)socialization processes have been externally driven in western Côte d'Ivoire from the particular points of view of recruits who have received external help in the process. What have been the various stakes in favour of participation? To what extent have processes driven by planned interventions responded to recruits' individual expectations? Respondents' accounts when describing the resumption of their daily routine and the reactivation of their past social relationships are particularly telling when exploring these questions.

In this chapter, I first clarify the main debates related to reinsertion and reintergration before pointing out the specificities of the Ivoirian case. I then focus on two standard reinsertion instruments widely used in post-conflict politics to help 'resocialize' young people temporarily drawn into armed groups: the supply of financial safety nets, and the provision of short-term vocational training. For the latter, I draw on observations made when studying a pilot project executed by a German agency (GTZ-IS), which targeted low-ranking demobilized militia members and rebels still active in the rebellion. The project offered them a short education in a specific craft (tailoring, welding, mechanics, agriculture/husbandry, or small business management) and provided them with basic starting equipment. Regarding the financial safety nets, given that the recruits I interviewed put the cash allowance they received to several uses, it is worth exploring the extent to which such a form of financial compensation has helped them to secure social acceptance, especially in light of the fact that they received it several months (and sometimes even years) after their practical demobilization.

The global approach to reinsertion and reintegration

A conflict resolution pack

Conflict prevention and peace-building processes are largely based on the idea that positive change can be induced by targeted interventions, and it is expected that the propensity for recruits to resume fighting can be diminished if sound interventions are implemented step by step, according to some kind of checklist. Donors and humanitarian practitioners talk in terms of programme objectives, outcome indicators, accomplishments, number of beneficiaries, and a twelve-month reintegration programme for ex-combatants is genuinely considered enough to prevent recruits from re-enrolling. This conception largely overestimates the impact of planned interventions by ignoring the fact that interventions are always reshaped by contextual dynamics and that they rarely go as planned. By taking place in a social arena, they interact with different stakeholders and are constantly being reshaped according to the changing balance of power at the local level (Long, 2001).

DDR programmes are no exception. Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration are all planned processes which look very good on paper, but which rarely go as planned. They have nonetheless become standard interventions to secure peace in the aftermath of war and they usually pave the way for international initiatives in the domains of development and reconstruction. If DDR processes are in general widely accepted by donors, multilateral agencies, and parties involved in a conflict – Muggah refers to them as ‘a part of the emergent post-conflict orthodoxy’ (Muggah, 2005) – they are not free of shortcomings, and several scholars have in fact called to critically reflect on these processes, if only to help them to realize their full potential. I clarify the acronyms below, and then I present the main debates related to reinsertion and reintegration processes.

Clarifying the terms

Demobilization is the planned process by which armed forces downsize or completely disband. It implies the reduction in size of the official army, paramilitary forces, and rebel groups.[1] In practice, it involves the gathering, disarmament, administration, counseling, skills assessment and discharge of former combatants, with a compensation package usually including financial ‘safety nets’ and reintegration support (DPKO, 2000; ISS, 2008). Disarmament is the central objective of demobilization and consists of the collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, and light and heavy weapons from anyone involved in armed groups. It formally marks the change of status from combatants to ex-combatants (DPKO, 2000; Swarbrick, 2007). Perhaps even more importantly, it fulfils a strategic symbolic function by signaling the commitment of all parties to the peace process. It is often used as a ‘confidence-building’ tool and it is genuinely believed that it has the potential to increase stability in very tense and uncertain environments (Willibald, 2006).

In DDR programming, Reintegration is conceptualized as the complex economic, political, social and psychological process by which former militarized people make the transition from military to civilian life (ISS, 2008; Knight & Ozerdem, 2004). It is conceived as a long-term process since it is assumed that it takes several years for former recruits and for their families to adapt to their new situation. It encompasses several dimensions, usually defined as followed: economic reintegration is understood as the process through which demobilized soldiers achieve financial independence by securing a stable livelihood for themselves and their dependents; political reintegration is the process through which they engage in community-based structures and in local processes of consultation and decision-making; social reintegration is the process through which they (re)-consider themselves to be part of the community with whom they relate to; and psychological reintegration is the process by which they adjust from a military lifestyle (generally characterized by a strict hierarchical system of command and a high exposure to violence) to civilian life (usually less dangerous and much more flexible). Reintegration support can take the form of cash payments, food donation, access to credit schemes, counseling, job placement, vocational training and small equipment. Reinsertion differs from reintegration in the sense that it refers to the immediate post-demobilization period. It is generally also accompanied by a small package which aims at providing interim support before the longer term process of reintegration commences (Willibald, 2006). In practice, the two terms are often used interchangeably, which adds to the confusion by sending mixed messages to target groups with respect to what assistance to expect.

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[1] Depending on the context-specific security sector reform, part of the paramilitary forces and the rebel recruits are (or not) integrated into the regular army once it is restructured (Bryden *et al.*, 2005).

A few scholars have argued that donors are not really serious about funding the developmental component of DDR and tend to forget long-term reintegration processes very quickly (Pouligny, 2004b). When (some) funding is secured for the R component of DDR, it is usually for reinsertion, not reintegration. The general focus mainly remains quantitative and focused on the DD phases (generally perceived as the most urgent to address). Targets are measurable in terms of number of guns returned, number of recruits demobilized and number of recruits relocated.[2] Less tangible pointers, such as the degree of social acceptance and the degree of general wellbeing, lag far behind, regardless of their social importance.

It is worth noting that DDR programmes do not necessarily have to start with the DD components. Even if the acronym suggests that the procedural order is first Disarmament, then Demobilization and then Reinsertion (and eventually Reintegration if funding allows), the sequence of the different phases of DDR processes does not need to be in line with the acronym (Pouligny, 2004b: 5; Specker, 2008a). Disarmament can also take place during or after demobilization, and can even be separate from the demobilization process; for instance, when armed civilians turn in their weapons. Combatants may also only want to disarm and dismantle their groups once they have gradually resumed civilian life. A variety of 'D' and 'R' combinations has therefore been used in practice, according to funding availability and the preferences of individual agencies. While

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[2] Spreading the recruits tends to give the impression that it disperses their military chain of command, hence that it prevents them from getting re-enrolled.

Pouligny recognizes the inherent advantage of this system – which allows for maximum flexibility in operational planning – she also underlines its major inconvenience: it creates confusion, and by adopting competing and often contradictory definitions of what DDR means, it creates discrepancies between the different stakeholders' expectations and possibilities. Sharing the same viewpoint, Specker (2008a: 14) also underlines the fact that activities within the R phase itself are not always well sequenced, which results in operational delays. There is, for instance, often no clear vision as to how the various activities should follow one another: after the short-term vocational training comes to an end, for instance, there are frequently no jobs or not sufficient equipment available to ex-combatants.

Reinsertion and reintegration in debate

There are several practical debates associated with external processes of reinsertion and reintegration. Should cash be given to militarized populations to help them make the transition from soldiering to civilian life? Should specific programmes be created for them, regardless of potential risks of stigmatization? Who should be in them, who should be left out? And given the unpredictability of securing stable funding in the long run, to what extent is the reinsertion/reintegration distinction still relevant to make in operational programming (Specker, 2008b)? There are many practical difficulties in following up demilitarized recruits in the long run: African youths, including those who had joined an armed group, frequently move between towns, villages and regions, and their hypermobility makes them difficult to trace. Another difficulty is due to the length of most reinsertion/reintegration programmes: with any project lasting more than six months considered long-term, there is a clear lack of perspective and a serious need for longitudinal studies that explore the changing lifestyle of former recruits over a long period of time.

- The use of cash in safety nets

Most DDR processes include cash transfers to militarized civilians in at least one of their phases. What lies behind this practice is the assumption that giving money to ex-combatants directly can have a positive effect on their lives. While this runs against the conventional view of aid that favours in-kind assistance over financial help, the relevance of using cash is being reconsidered in development circles and has received growing support. A certain line of thinking argues that it is in fact quite efficient to give money directly to the ones in need (Hanlon, 2004; Willibald, 2006). Still, the use of cash in development response remains confined to a few niches, and donors and practitioners are still reluctant to use it on a large scale. Interestingly, it has become increasingly widespread in DDR processes, despite the many acknowledged shortcomings. Cash incentives are used in the disarmament stage to 'buy back' weapons and reduce the number of guns and ammunition in circulation. It is also sometimes used in the reinsertion/reintegration stage to facilitate ex-combatants' return to civilian life (Knight & Ozerdem, 2004; Muggah, 2005). I focus below on cash incentives used in the reinsertion/reintegration stage.

There are several pros and cons to using cash at this stage in the DDR process. At one extreme, it is believed that financial support can have a positive effect on former recruits by facilitating their transition between war and post-war life, namely by providing them with the necessary means to meet the immediate challenges they face. At the other extreme, another interpretation is that rewarding the fighters with financial incentives might have the possible effect of fostering re-enrolment, should the situation deteriorate once again in the same area. By drawing on a variety of case studies, Willibald (2006) has identified various benefits and risks for using cash in development response. In terms of benefits, he mentions: the advantage of adapting very well to the specific needs of the individual; the benefit of preserving individual's dignity and freedom of choice; cost efficiency (understood as lower transaction and logistical costs associated with programme implementation); beneficial knock-on effects on local markets and trade; and a way to sidestep the problem of commodity aid being sold. Specifically regarding DDR, he stresses that the provision of cash incentives encourages former combatants to return their weapons and to return to their communities relatively quickly, thereby diffusing political unrest as former recruits disperse. He also points out that it curbs dependencies on informal support structures by alleviating the burden on communities and households (those would otherwise be adversely affected by the return of ex-combatants). In terms of shortcomings, he mentions the higher risk that the money be used 'unwisely' (on alcohol, drugs, weapons), especially when the recipient has limited financial management skills. He also acknowledges that it creates more exposure to robberies and targeted assaults (of both beneficiaries and programme staff), and he points out the difficulty of selecting recipients, since extra cash is usually needed by most of the war-affected population. With specific regard to DDR, he and other scholars (Junne & Verkoren, 2005: 312) recognizes that cash incentives could potentially fuel an illegal arms market by expanding cross-border movements, could potentially incite recruits to take up arms again if expectations are not met, and could eventually disconnect ex-combatants from the communities they relate to, should they be given disproportionate financial compensation. I will come back to these pros and cons when discussing empirical findings.

- Specific programming and entry criteria

Donors' representatives in the field and practitioners are increasingly skeptical about creating specific programmes for ex-combatants in protracted situations (personal communication, June 2007). This observation is shared by several scholars who instead advocate broadening the current programmatic frameworks (Saferworld, 2008). When situations of 'no war, no peace' prevail in areas struck by structural poverty, it is in fact quite difficult to target the right individuals and to ensure a fair allocation of assistance: everyone seems to be in need. One of the main rationales brought forward in support of this argument is that communities might become resentful of ex-combatants if they receive (perceived) disproportionate support from their participation in assistance programmes (i.e. if the programme privileges them too much in comparison with the local standards). The Liberian and Sierra Leonean experiences have both confirmed that non-militarized civilians grow frustrated when they do not receive any compensation for their suffering, and that such a situation can create tensions. In Sierra Leone, ex-combatants who received humanitarian support eventually were perceived as a privileged group by their immediate environment, and instead of decreasing tensions, these escalated between demobilized recruits and the population in several locations. Cash payments and in-kind donations are often locally perceived to be rewards, some sort of financial compensation for the war effort, which at the local level conveys the ambiguous message that crime pays; in such a perspective, (re)enrolling, should hostilities resume, could be a possible threat, driven by lucrative prospects. Several studies have nonetheless indicated that community resentment is likely to fade away with time, when the community realizes that it indirectly benefits from the return of these youths. The testimony of this demobilized recruit is particularly telling: 'Community members did not like the fact that we got money but did not mind taking our cash' (Tesfamichael *et al.*, 2004 cited in (Willibald, 2006). In an impoverished area, any infusion of extra cash eventually ends up stimulating the local economy, generating collateral profits for others.

Another rationale brought forward with regard to avoiding creating specific reintegration programmes for ex-combatants is that it could open the door to many abuses. Such interventions de facto inherit from existing patron-client relationships upon which they have little control, and there is the risk that beneficiaries themselves attempt to bluff the system using influential social networks to get on the list of beneficiaries, regardless of their participation in warfare. In western Côte d'Ivoire, after all, militia and rebel leaders had much more say than humanitarian staff in selecting the recruits to include in the reinsertion projects.

If scepticism increases in development circles over the relevance of creating specific programmes for ex-combatants, the alternative approach, which consists of targeting the war-affected community at large, is not often applied in practice.[3] Specific programmes remain the norm, despite their inherent stigma and acknowledged shortcomings. Who is included? Who is left out? What are the entry criteria? Girls and women are curiously invisible in most DDR processes, and children and adolescents recruits are usually entitled to special treatment.[4] Very few donors are also prepared to pay for reinserting war chiefs, since they usually receive quite bad press according to international standards. The question arises then whether a military unit can be effectively dismantled without dealing at all with its hierarchy. As Pouligny pointed out, what in that case guarantees the break in the chain of command (Pouligny, 2004b)? An additional difficulty emerges when attempting to sort out militarized recruits from civilians. The distinction is rarely clear-cut. Some recruits consider themselves mobilized for a limited period of time only, in contrast to others who continue to assert their belonging to an armed group several years after the end of combat. Some expressly fall into the category 'combatant' while others never fought and always held a position in the rear. The way the National DDR Plan is drafted has a direct influence on individuals' eligibility for support: it determines who is entitled to benefit and who is not. But even then, determining status is not easy: the Ivoirian DDR plan used such a wide definition for ex-combatant that it eventually included far too many people to reasonably cope with.

DDR in Côte d'Ivoire

Dismantlement of militias: a series of false starts

If the disarmament of the main belligerent parties never started on a massive scale and resembled a political yoyo (see Chapter 4 for more details on the planned process), the dismantlement of pro-government militias partially occurred, although not without difficulties. There were a series of false starts. The beginning of the process was announced several times and actually started three times in Guiglo: on 25 May 2005, on 26 July 2006, and on 19 May 2007. The first year, there was no eagerness to disarm. FANCI Chief of Staff General Mangou organized a ceremony in Guiglo in the presence of the four main militia leaders (FLGO, AP-We, UPRGO and MILOCI) to mark the start of the dismantlement of militias; local authorities, dignitaries and UN representatives were also represented (OCHA, 2005). During the event, militia leaders expressed their commitment to restoring peace. They reiterated their willingness to be included in the DDR process, and, as a symbol of their commitment, they handed over a symbolic weapon. At the ceremony, the PNDDR representative announced that western militias would be taken into account in DDR programming, but he did not specify what they would be entitled to in terms of a reinsertion package. Six days after the 25 May 2005 ceremony, the dismantlement of militias was no longer an option. Forty-one people had been killed in the villages of Guitrozon and Petit Duékoué, sixty-one had been wounded, all of Guéré origin, and both belligerent sides were accusing the other of having plotted the massacres.

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[3] When applied (at the time of doing fieldwork), it was usually an extension of a specific programme. For instance, while the first reinsertion project of GTZ-IS targeted demobilized militiamen and young rebels still active in the rebellion, the follow-up projects enlarged the target and included groups labeled 'at risk', which included participants who had not necessarily been involved in armed groups.

[4] For more information on the youngest recruits in the Ivoirian conflict, see Chelpi-Den Hamer (2010).

On 27 July 2006, in line with the Pretoria Agreement and following the resumption of the DDR talks between the regular troops, 150 pro-government militia members surrendered their weapons in Guiglo in presence of Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny and PNDDR and UN representatives (OCHA, 2006). They were the first to do so, out of an ever-changing estimated target of 2,000 militia members. They received the financial safety net agreed in the national plan, which was disbursed as follows. A first instalment was given upon disarmament (125,000 CFA francs[5]) and represented a fourth of their total entitlement.[6] The rest was supposed to be paid later, in two instalments, respectively one and two months after their official demobilization.[7] The second payment was made relatively on time, but the third payment was eventually delayed a month for a variety of reasons. Between 27 July and 3 August 2006, 981 militia members eventually underwent the same demobilization process, and 108 weapons and 6,975 pieces of ammunition were handed over to the impartial forces, including some automatic weapons and a cannon (ONUCI, September 2006). But most of the arms were defective, and the ratio of combatant per surrendered weapon/ammo was so ridiculous that the DDR division of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) recommended suspending the operation. The dismantlement of militias therefore ground to a halt on 4 August 2006 (OCHA, 2006; UN chronology, 2008).

The third false start in the militia dismantlement was on 19 May 2007, when the Ivoirian Presidency initiated a media-conscious operation in Guiglo, during which 1,026 weapons were handed over (government estimate) against conesquent payment to the main militia leaders (estimated at 280 million CFA francs[8]). The ONUCI revised the number of weapons down (to 500) and pointed out that a third were dysfunctional (personal communication, November 2007). Interestingly, this initiative was launched outside the National DDR Plan, and neither the National Commission for DDR (CNDDR) or the ONUCI were associated with the event. After that day, one of the President's advisors unilaterally declared the end of the militia dismantlement (ICG, 2007). Although a presidential envelope was supposed to be dispatched to militia members, the process was so opaque that militia leaders were accused of keeping the money for themselves and of favoring their relatives, which generated some tension. When I was on fieldwork in June 2007, a lot of militia members recruited in Blolequin had in fact left town to travel to Abidjan in order to claim a share.

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[5] 125,000 CFA francs are equivalent to EUR 190.

[6] The total amount of the package amounted to 499,500 CFA francs (USD 940 or EUR 760).

[7] Transport expenses were promised to be paid separately (personal communications with demobilized recruits, April 2007).

[8] 280 million CFA francs are equivalent to EUR 427,000.

Particularities of the Ivoirian case

In addition to the general debates associated with disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration (Should cash be given to combatants? Should specific programmes be created for them? How to determine entry criteria?), there are a number of particularities to take into account in the Ivoirian case, necessary to better comprehend the situation there. Firstly, the Ivoirian PCO uses a broad definition of militarized people and does not limit it to those solely in possession of a weapon. It clearly states that anyone who has joined an armed group and who has acted in support of military operations is considered a 'combatant', and thus is eligible for entry into the official DDR programme: *'Leur qualité de combattant procède de leur appartenance à un groupe armé'* (PCO, 2004). A second particularity is the unreliability of the figures (Unowa, 2005). For obvious strategic reasons, the number of recruits and equipment has remained unclear on both belligerent sides, and to date, PNDDR and ONUCI representatives have not yet received the lists of combatants and weapons, which raises several issues in terms of planning. Thirdly, there is the need to acknowledge the brevity of the conflict, in sharp contrast with what happened in the neighbouring countries. The Ivoirian conflict did not last long, nor the violence related to the war, yet as mentioned in the contextual chapters, it left quite a cultural mark, especially in areas close to the front line.

An interesting peculiarity of the Ivoirian case is that on both sides, most recruits had de facto disarmed without undergoing the official DDR process. In 2007 on the rebel side, most respondents stated that they had not carried arms for several years. The bulk of the weapons had been collected by their leaders when the military situation stabilized and had been gathered in arsenals, ready for a potential redistribution if the situation evolved in such a direction. On the counter-insurgent side, right before the dismantlement wave of the 981 militia members in the summer of 2006, weapons were collected in advance from combatants in towns and villages by militia leaders, and then were surrendered in batch to the ONUCI, under CNDDR supervision. Such a modus operandi actually raised a certain number of issues, as not all recruits who had given back arms appeared on the list for inclusion in the official demobilization programme. Militia leaders were therefore accused of favouring relatives. Outside Guiglo in particular, militarized civilians expressed their frustration more than once with respect to their lack of reward.

The fact that most rebel and militia recruits were in fact disarmed several years ago revisits a common assumption in literature on DDR, one that states that combatants only agree to surrender the physical and economic security their weapons provide if they see alternative livelihood prospects in what reinsertion programmes offer (Knight & Ozerdem, 2004; Willibald, 2006). If most low-ranked recruits surrender their weapons to their commanders way before the start of the official disarmament, this claim is no longer valid, and some contexts similar to our case might confirm the fact that recruits in non-State armed groups do not necessarily use the threat of a gun for private economic gain.

An interesting feature probably not confined to the Ivoirian case is the multiplicity of reinsertion initiatives that have run in parallel to the National DDR Plan. We mentioned one before, in May 2007, when the Ivoirian Presidency initiated militia dismantlement in Guiglo and gave cash payments to militia leaders to dispatch to their troops. The initiative was launched outside the National DDR Plan and did not involve the key DDR actors CNDDR and ONUCI. Another parallel initiative focusing on the reinsertion of ex-combatants is the pilot project undertaken by the German agency GTZ-IS that is described in detail below. It initially targeted 500 of the 981 militia members demobilized in 2006 who were allocated financial compensation, and 500 FAFN elements still active in the rebellion who had not yet received any reinsertion support. Another initiative that can be documented is the ONUCI USD 4 million reintegration programme for ex-combatants and youths at risk, launched in August 2008 with wide media coverage, and planning to foster the creation of 1,000 micro-projects (the programme was initially designed to last six months and the amount of individual support ranged between 300 and 420,000 CFA francs) (ONUCI, 2008). In November 2008, the UNDP publicly announced its support for the reinsertion of 700 ex-combatants in Katiola and Bouaké. Other initiatives included UNDP and UNICEF, which secured specific funding to support the reintegration of children[9] and women associated with armed forces. The international NGOs Save the Children and International Rescue Committee were also developing specific programmes with respect to children associated with armed forces, and the Norwegian Refugee Council succeeded in securing funding for offering training and economic opportunities to youths at risk in the militia stronghold of Duékoué. Although, theoretically, most of these initiatives occurred in partnership with the National Programme of Reinsertion and Community Rehabilitation (PNRRC),[10] it has been difficult for this institution to coordinate all this in practice. This raised additional issues and added to the confusion by sending mixed messages. When the official DDR process starts (if ever), what will be the approach to recruits who have already benefited from an alternative type of support? Would they be included in the official programme? And given the fact that each alternative programme delivers a different package and keeps its own records, to what extent is it possible to assess the impact of such 'extras' on participants' lives? Can recruits easily navigate between the different schemes?

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[9] Children associated with armed group or forces were handled separately. They usually went through an orientation and transit center (CTO) under the direct supervision of NGOs and the overall management of UNICEF. They were not entitled to the safety net package.

The next two sections focus on how young people temporarily drawn into armed groups made use of two standard reinsertion instruments widely used in post-conflict politics as 'resocialization' tools: financial safety nets, and short-term vocational training. I first look at how respondents made use of their financial safety net and the extent to which it helped them to secure social acceptance, especially since the cash instalments were given several months after their effective demobilization. I then specifically focus on a pilot project undertaken by the German agency GTZ-IS, by examining the pros and cons of taking part in such an intervention from the particular points of view of youths who participated in the project. What were the economic and social stakes in favour of participation? How have they made use of the reinsertion prospects the programme offered? And how have they integrated it (or not) with other opportunities that arose at the same time?

Reinsertion under the lens: how were cash allowances spent?

Genuine belief that recruits had earned the right to compensation was a recurring litany throughout interviews. 'We lost five years of our time.' 'We've been delayed.' There was something intrinsic to these statements, namely, the expression of a certain conception of fairness and the implicit claim that financial compensation was due, regardless of the outcome of conflict. The majority of recruits, rebels and militia members alike, emphasized the fact that despite having been called to fight for their country, they had gained little from it, and they had mainly lost their time in the movement instead of being able to work elsewhere. They therefore were entitled to a proper reward for their services rendered. If some threatened to return to violence if not satisfied, the particular fact that most recruits had already been disarmed in 2006-2007 make foremost these claims rhetorical, without being mistaken too much.

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[10] The PNRCC was founded by the APO in March 2007 and replaced the former structure of PNDDR/RC.

While most low-ranked recruits saw financial compensation as a back-payment for their services, military leaders, and especially the high-ranking ones, had a different perspective; once the right to compensation was institutionalized in the National DDR Plan, they used it as a carrot to retain their troops. The prospect of no financial reward would probably have led many recruits to abandon the ranks after a certain time, especially among the western militias who were in this respect much freer than their rebel counterparts. But the prospect of being on the official demobilization list and of potentially receiving DDR money had the reverse effect of building recruits' loyalty. This was especially expressed on the rebel side, as no recruit had yet received any form of financial compensation.

This section examines how the financial incentive distributed in the summer of 2006 to the 981 militia members was spent. It was dispatched in three instalments: the first one was supplied on July 2006 (125,000 CFA francs), the second on 13 September 2006 (125,000 CFA francs), and the third one at the end of November of the same year (249,500 CFA francs).[11] The analysis is based on a careful examination of 100 testimonies.

Box 9.1: Three examples of the use of financial incentives

'The first instalment I shared with my family and my in-laws. I kept a little, but not much. Most of the money was used to pay miscellaneous expenses. The second instalment, I gave 50,000 to my wife for her small business. I also set up a *cabine* for my little brother but he screwed everything up. I used the last instalment to invest in my own business, a *maquis* and to improve my home.'

'I gave money to my family and I paid for my uncle's medical expenses. I also gave petty cash to acquaintances I have in the militia group who are not yet demobilized. I bought a plot of land in Guiglo, near the timber industry for 50,000 CFA francs. I am currently building a house. I also purchased wood from the timber company, to make charcoal. I opened a CCP account at the local post1.'

'I improved my home. I set up a water tap for 58,000 CFA francs and I purchased an electricity counter at 72,000 CFA francs. I helped my brother to start his own hevea field and I gave him 125,000 CFA francs. I also gave petty cash to my family.'

Source: Fieldwork (interview fragments from discussions with A., M. and G., spring 2007)

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[11] Initially planned on 29 October 2006, it was delayed a month.

Juggling between social obligations and personal benefit

Drawing on interview fragments and informal discussions with demobilized militia elements, findings show that respondents used their safety net very differently, constantly juggling between social obligations and personal benefit (Chelpi-Den Hamer, 2009). I come up below with a rough categorization of expenses.

- Reimbursing creditors

Reimbursing creditors was not an uncommon answer and many respondents said that upon reception of the cash, they paid the debts they accumulated during the war period. One respondent had accumulated as much as 325,000 CFA francs in debt since the beginning of the war. He had not paid his house rent for several months, which put him 25,000 CFA francs in debt every month, not to mention the unpaid utilities bills (electricity/water). For him it was important to pay his creditors first, otherwise he feared they would have gone to the police to file a formal complaint when they found out that he had received some cash. Another respondent explained that even if he had slept most of the war in military camps, he had to keep renting a home in town for his wife. Several militiamen also mentioned that they had bought food on credit during the war. They could usually eat at the camp but their dependents were not entitled to free food. One respondent had contracted a loan to bury his mother. She had remained in the mortuary for a month (billed 5,000 CFA francs a day) and he had to borrow for the cost of the coffin (50,000 CFA francs) and to pay for the stay of relatives who had come to attend the funeral. He used his cash allowance to clear this debt.

- Responding to familial demands

The relationships respondents have with their family after receiving their cash entitlement are quite complex and range from strategies of avoidance to strategies of resignation. How to best manage the burden, seems to be the standard strategy. Several respondents' remarks illustrate the difficulties in avoiding relatives: 'People know when you get your cash. The following morning, you see all your relatives in a row in front of your door and you have to give them something. You give 5,000 to your aunt, 5,000 to your cousin, 5,000 to your other cousin, etc.' One respondent bypassed the issue by putting all his cash in the local bank and returning empty-handed to his village. Even when cornered, he was practically incapable of giving cash to anyone.

A few respondents mentioned having loaned money to a sibling (up to 100,000 CFA francs). While most loans were not yet repaid at the time of the interviews, some had already been bitterly abused. One respondent mentioned he had given his complete first instalment to his family, 'to be left in peace'. He used to be employed as a *katakata* driver before the war, and he wanted to save the rest to buy a *katakata*. *Katakatas* are a sort of bush tractors that transport all kinds of merchandise. Given the second-hand cost of such vehicle (about 1.5 million CFA francs), one of his brothers convinced him to entrust him with his second and third instalments. The plan was to travel to Abidjan to ask their eldest brother to participate in the purchase by paying the remaining million. The entrusted brother eventually usurped all the money, claiming that he had been robbed on the way.

Regardless of these cases of abuse, a recurring argument in favour of family support is gratefulness. Close to the front line, villages often played an important role in supplying food to combatants and complex mechanisms of money collection occurred between armed groups, villagers, and the educated elite in Abidjan native to these war-affected areas. One interview fragment summarizes it well: ‘You have to be grateful and reward those who fed you during the war.’ Several respondents therefore felt obliged to reward their benefactors, and these included close relatives who participated in the war effort and who supported them during difficult times. Rewards to the spouse and to direct parents (father/-mother) were rather standard patterns, and I heard several stories of respondents setting up a farm for their father, or helping their wife develop her own business.

- Investing

Several respondents mentioned that it was not until the last instalment that they could do something productive with their money. Some invested in wood and bought loads from the nearby Thanry timber industry to make into charcoal. Others entered the growing sector of hevea cultivation or expanded the plantation they already had (this sector was especially in vogue at the time I was doing fieldwork). Respondents who were already engaged in cultivating hevea before the war usually bought new plants from the CHC *(Compagnie Hévéïcole du Cavally)*, an international rubber company located in the area (to give a rough cost estimate, there are about 600 plants on one hectare, and one plant costs about 250 CFA francs). Those new to the activity purchased land, cleared their field and/or joined the myriad of private and humanitarian projects that were then offering incentives to cultivate hevea in the Moyen-Cavally region.

One respondent used his last instalment to purchase one hectare of hevea for the rubber industry for 180,000 CFA francs.[12] He had used the previous two transfers to give petty cash to his relatives (wife, brothers and sister), pay for his son’s school boarding expenses (35,000 CFA francs), buy food (three bags of rice at 36,000 CFA francs) and to purchase agricultural equipment (a pulverizer at 48,500 CFA francs). Another respondent used his third transfer to enter a local project, the *Nouvelles Plantations Hévéïcoles de l'ouest Montagneux de la Côte d'Ivoire*, to benefit from free seedlings. When we met, he had just started contracting workers to clear two hectares of forest to start a hevea plantation.

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[12] Access to land must not be considered a given for the *autochthones*. Some indeed mentioned that they could rely on their father’s forest to start their own plantation, but others said they had to buy a piece of land.

Respondents did not solely invest in agricultural activities. One used his safety net to purchase a sewing machine, a *Singer-à-tête-noire* (75,000 CFA francs). He was planning to return to tailoring, an activity he was doing before the war, and to run his own workshop. Another waited for the third instalment to restock his shop with 200,000 CFA francs worth of new merchandise. Another invested in a chicken farm. He bought poultry, food, vaccines, and resumed his pre-war activity. Another used most of his safety net to start a *maquis*. He spent 300,000 CFA francs to purchase a freezer, several chairs, a few tables, the first stock of drinks, and to cover the various costs related to the installation (restoration, rent and a security deposit). Other types of investments included partial payment to an auto school (in the prospect of getting a driving licence to be able to work as a taxi/truck/minivan driver), paying city fees (for setting up a market stall or a small business), paying intermediaries to find a job, paying registration fees for being authorized to take national civil service exams, and the payment of bribes and fees to be allowed to take the 9th and 12th grade exams (in the hope that this would open more doors).

- Using unwisely?

Although I am not at ease with the term, there are a range of uses that could be labeled 'unwise' or 'unproductive' from a Western perspective: improving one's home, buying a plot of land (when not for agricultural purposes), purchasing basic furniture, clothes, marrying, rewarding old men who provided mystic protection during the war *(gris-gris),* etc. If buying a bed and a mattress perhaps raises few eyebrows, purchasing a TV/VCR, building a house or spending important sums on marriage could be more contentious; yet locally, they send quite important signals. Noteworthily, a certain number of respondents took advantage of their financial safety net to leave the family home and to settle independently: 'Before the war, I used to sleep at my parents. With the net, I detached myself. I built a *2-chambres-salon*.'[13] One respondent used his second instalment to have his identity papers drawn up. In a country where the lack of documentation often impedes free circulation, this is far from being unproductive. Many respondents also mentioned having spent substantial sums on medical expenses right after receipt of their cash entitlement, either for themselves or for close relatives. Usually, such use was a major expense and there was nothing left. But it is difficult to label such types of expenses unproductive. Respondents preferred the term 'bad timing' when a serious disease hit them (or their family).

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[13] This means a small house with two bedrooms and a living-room.

Perhaps the best statement to illustrate how most respondents felt upon receipt of their safety net is the following interview extract: 'When you are not paid for years, you live one day after the other. This cash we got, we could do nothing good with it.'[14] That partly explains why a lot of respondents spent their money quickly and to relatively insignificant personal benefit. Many respondents were also not happy with the fact that the safety net came in three instalments. They would have preferred to receive everything in one go, as smaller cash amounts are easily wasted, in particular by responding to familial demands;[15] however, such a flexible view runs against the preferred international approach that favours payment by instalment (Knight & Ozerdem, 2004).

- Allocating money to war chiefs: racket or reward?

Allocating part of the financial safety net to war chiefs is a common feature, which raises the question of the extent to which it should be interpreted as racket or reward. If we look at interview fragments, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence suggesting that extortion was real. One account is particularly enlightening: 'It was serious in Duékoué.[16] You were obliged to give. If you did not give, you could not get out. The first time, my leader took 30,000 out of my instalment as recognition payment. The next two times, he did not get anything. As I was walking out of the compound with the cash in my pockets, he asked me, but I lied to him. I told him that I was still expecting my money and that I just wanted to get out for a drink.' Retaliation rarely follows such avoidance strategies, and once the immediate threat had passed, there was usually no follow-up action on the part of war chiefs. Other respondents were less entrepreneurial and could not avoid being shaken down after having received each instalment.[17]

While certain leaders were more magnanimous than others, UPRGO war lords seem to have been particularly prone to extorting from recruits. Who really benefited from this money remains vague though, based on the information we have.

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[14] 'Quand vous êtes resté quelque part sans salaire pendant des années, tu vis au jour le jour. Cet argent, on ne pouvait rien faire avec.'

[15] This is in line with the previous finding: most respondents could not do anything productive with their money until the third instalment.

[16] Duékoué is the site where militia recruits were gathered and officially demobilized under PNDDR and ONUCI supervision. The money was given in a protected compound, however, as soon as people got out, they were prone to abuse.

[17] One respondent could not avoid giving half of his safety net. He was relieved of 70,000 CFA francs from his first instalment, 80,000 from the second and 100,000 from the third.

The distinction between war leaders and war leaders' envoys was often blurred on the ground and in the respondents' discourse, and it was not easy to distinguish between organized racketeering orchestrated by militia leaders and simple robbery by higher-ranked recruits, who were taking advantage of their position to abuse their peers. Most accounts showed that rather than giving cash directly to their chiefs, recruits were more likely to pay an intermediary, especially if the person was known to have a close relationship with their leader. Some even signed receipts! In addition, there was a certain group dynamic: as the first demobilized recruits had given money to their chiefs, the later cohorts were likely to imitate them.

If rewarding war chiefs resembled a racket in some cases, that was not the only pattern and the informal back payment to warlords varied considerably from one individual to another. Several respondents pointed out that they were not forced to give money. I also heard accounts of militia leaders gathering recruits before the first instalment was made and telling them that they were not obliged to make any financial contributions.[18] Some recruits did not perceive it as coercion. One respondent rewarded his chief by paying for several rounds of drinks. Another said that although his chief had mentioned that he did not want anything, he was happy to give him 20,000 out of his last instalment. Allocating money to war chiefs is strongly connected to social obligation, and the majority of recruits were grateful to have been put on the official demobilization list by their militia leaders, making them eligible for financial compensation.

Another feature to take into account is to whom recruits want to give. Militias have also their hierarchy, and while some may feel more inclined to give to the general leader, others might prefer rewarding a chief who was closer to them during the war and to whom they related more. A few respondents who fought in advanced positions were keen on rewarding the chiefs of their section. In their view, he had succeeded the most important: he had preserved their lives during combat. I remember one female recruit praising her local commander: 'I really say thank you to Colonel T. because he took good care of us. We did not lose anyone in our group. He watched our back. When he knew the day was not good, he would tell us not to move. That's the way we worked.' The social value of reward associated with mystic beliefs must therefore not be downplayed when examining the relationship between war chiefs and recruits.

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[18] Some added to that that those willing to give were nonetheless very welcome.

Has the spending of cash allowances facilitated social acceptance?

Given the well-known controversies associated with using cash transfers in the reinsertion phase of ex-combatants, it is worth questioning the extent to which the financial safety net has been helpful in securing acceptance by the community with whom ex-combatants associated, and whether it played a role in facilitating their transition to civilian life. Examining these questions is particularly relevant since most low-ranking militias had returned home 1½ to 2 years before being officially demobilized and eventually faced reinsertion issues then.[19] Accounts widely varied per respondent. The ones who chose to remain in Guiglo, in the militia leaders' compounds or nearby, were clearly waiting for the official disarmament to start and for the several-times-announced financial safety net. Some experienced no problems at all and were warmly welcomed by their families: 'My folks were told I was dead. They were quite happy to see me back.' Others had never severed contacts with their parents during their time in the armed group. As the previous chapter clearly illustrated, many recruits in fact did not need to be 'resocialized' after their military experience; their actual bonds with society had never been cut.

But how smooth was their return to civilian life? Accounts were rather mixed and there was no single pattern. While reinsertion problems directly experienced after having demobilized oneself were not often spontaneously mentioned (and unfortunately not systematically probed in depth during interviews), several things came up during the discussions. Shortly after their return, a certain number of militia recruits were feared by the people with whom they usually associated, especially those known to have fought with Liberian mercenaries. The account of this female recruit is particularly highlighting:

> 'In the beginning, I was scaring everyone. Even my cousins were afraid. Even my mother. When I was angry, I often noticed that people acted different. They were all scared of me. But I said no. What I did [during the war], it is past. But even my friends were scared, and they were saying, "She went to war, she's going to kill you at night". It did not feel good. So I moved on elsewhere for some time. I spent two months in Abidjan. When I came back to Guiglo, I started to sell *alloco* in front of the Becanti.[20] People were coming to see me out of curiosity, also soldiers. Some were surprised, "Eh, you are here now!" Some did not even want to eat *alloco*, they just came to see me. It took some time, but people eventually saw me differently. I had not changed, but their perception did. They saw that I behaved well, and that I did not look for arguments[21] with anybody. Now everything is okay.'

Like her, several respondents mentioned having felt the need to work on their image shortly after returning to their pre-war lives; they had to emphasize their non-violent attitude. If some respondents could resume their pre-war activities relatively quick, others encountered difficulties. Again, there was a multiplicity of patterns, which mostly depended on respondents' individual attitudes, characteristics and social networks. One respondent could not go back to his previous work because he had a bad reputation. As he put it: 'Many things happened during the war. I did not know the face of all rebels, so when the chief suspected someone and said, "This person is a rebel, he has to be killed", we obeyed. But this man might have family in Guiglo; and now if I approach someone for work, these people can tell him that I'm not a good person and that it is better to avoid me.' In contrast, well-known fighters had no problems resuming their pre-war jobs. One respondent who had fought in the front line with the Liberians resumed upon return his work as building painter, and even if he mentioned getting fewer contracts than before, the main cause was the general decrease in local economic activity due to the displacement of most of the local middle class, not the fear of dealing with him.

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[19] Most of them had returned to their home in 2004-2005 after the end of the encampment period in a military setting (in Blolequin, Toulepleu, Zéo, or Zagné, depending on the faction integrated).

[20] The *Bécanti* is a local *maquis*. *Alloco* is a local dish, based on bananas.

[21] 'Je ne faisais pas palabres avec quelqu'un'.

Has financial compensation facilitated social acceptance? For most demobilized militia recruits, the safety net was distributed well after their return to their community. Some had even ended their participation in the militia group two or three years earlier. This raises a first doubt as to the extent to which cash allowances played a role in facilitating social acceptance. In addition, not every combatant benefited from them. As already mentioned, the demobilization programme of the summer of 2006 was only partial and targeted 981 low-ranked militia recruits. Not everyone appeared on the list for inclusion and in a single village – even in a single family – some received the package and others did not. Selection appeared quite arbitrary in some cases. Perhaps the most interesting feature is that those who did not receive financial compensation were mocked by their peers. A posteriori, going to war and getting nothing out of it was perceived locally as ridiculous and as a waste of time. I observed this several times when I went to villages to interview demobilized recruits. There was, however, a certain tolerance with respect to this unfairness, and if the few militia recruits I interviewed who did not receive compensation indeed expressed their frustration, they seemed to accept their situation.

Respondents used their safety net very differently, constantly juggling between social obligations and personal benefit. Out of the five broad categories of expenses I identified – 1) reimbursing creditors, 2) responding to familial demands, 3) investing in an own business, 4) allocating money to war chiefs, and 5) dealing with social events (such as medical expenses, funerals, home improvements) – three would not have existed if no cash had been given to combatants. Creditors would not have rushed to ask for full payback and would have continued to display the same attitude as towards their other debtors. Relatives would not have lined up in front of respondents' doors, and war chiefs and undemobilized friends would not have had a share.

For the two other categories (investing and dealing with social events), the financial compensation was useful but rather limited in time and scope. When discussing investments, a recurring point that came up from the interviews was that the safety net should have been given in one go instead of in three instalments. Relevant investments usually involve substantial sums of money and small amounts are easily wasted on day-to-day expenses. With respect to social events, one important contribution that this extra cash has made is in allowing young men to emancipate, by being able to leave the family home and/or by becoming a short-term provider for their close family.

If I go back to the previous list of benefits and risks in using cash in the reinsertion stage and apply it to this case, several things are worth highlighting. I found no evidence in support of the argument that cash incentives encourage former combatants to return their weapons and return quickly to their community. Most militia recruits in the west were already disarmed and no longer living in military camps at the time of their official demobilization in the summer of 2006. The majority had in fact returned to their homes in 2004-2005 and resumed some sort of activity. The financial safety net therefore had a limited impact on the immediate post-return phase, which is when social acceptance was the most challenging. I also found little evidence that individuals used the money 'unwisely'. After receiving their safety net, they faced a certain number of demands (from creditors, family, and acquaintances made during the war) to which they had to respond, and the range of responses greatly varied from one individual to another. The demobilized recruits I interviewed were not particularly privileged in comparison with the communities they related to. Extra cash has helped them face a number of events (medical expenses, school feels, costs associated with marriage and newborn children) and in several cases, has enabled them to partially invest in a small business, even if they were more likely to be abused by their direct entourage. The use of cash transfers in the reinsertion phase has indeed meant a breath of fresh air for ex-combatants, but should not be overrated, as their room to manoeuvre was eventually limited by the way they individually balanced social obligations with personal benefit.

The next part examines how respondents made use of a second reinsertion instrument widely used in post-conflict politics to help resocialize young people who had temporarily joined armed groups: the provision of short-term vocational training. I specifically draw on observations made when studying a pilot project executed by a German agency (GTZ-IS). I attempt to discover the extent to which participating in such an externally driven humanitarian project can help militarized youths to secure a decent post-war livelihood.

Assessment of a pilot initiative fostering economic reinsertion

In August 2006, following militia dismantlement in Guiglo, the German agency GTZ-IS started an EU-funded project in partnership with the National DDR Programme for reinserting combatants on both sides of the front line. The first intervention targeted 500 of the 981 militias demobilized in 2006 (those who had received the financial safety net), and 500 FAFN recruits still active in the rebellion who had not yet been demobilized and had not received any financial compensation. They were offered a short education in a specific craft (tailoring, welding, carpentry, agriculture/husbandry or in small business management). Basic equipment was provided at the end to help the youths begin their activity.

I explore here the pros and cons of taking part in such intervention from the very particular perspectives of young civilians who were militarized for some time before receiving short-term reinsertion assistance. What were the entry criteria? Were there major differences between rebel and pro-government militias? From the points of view of these youths, what were the economic and social stakes in favour of participation? How did they make use of the reinsertion prospects the programme offered, and how did they integrate them with the other opportunities they encountered at the same time? The bulk of the data is based on 200 semi-structured interviews with low-ranked youths who joined government militias and rebel groups in Guiglo and Man at the start of the conflict and who benefited from assistance at some stage. Additional interviews were done with minors and with female recruits, and also with a few people who did not benefit from any support.

Project description

The initial project developed by GTZ-IS was designed to support the official DDR process once it would begin. It was supposed to intervene in the official disarmament and demobilization stage by providing operational support on site (rough renovation of infrastructure, canteen management for demobilized combatants, basic logistics for all involved agencies). In the reinsertion stage, it was supposed to provide short-term support to 1,000 pro-government militia recruits, within the framework of a pilot initiative. On paper, this reinsertion initiative was conceived as a short-term project (3 months) and was geared at preparing recruits for longer-term social and economic reintegration. It included basic literacy, sensitization to civic education, human rights, and peace education (1 month), and also a first provisional orientation towards specific reinsertion streams such as ones for job training or small businesses (2 months). Importantly, it was presented as inseparable from long-term reintegration perspectives and its main attempted contribution was to bridge the opportunities the GTZ-IS project offered with the reintegration support mentioned in the Ivoirian DDR Plan[22] (Ball & Van De Goor, 2006; GTZ, 2007a, 2007b).

The project was supposed to start on 15 June 2005 and last six months. Due to repeated delays in the disarmament and demobilization stages, a first amendment extended its duration by eighteen months. The persistent lack of progress led to a second amendment which suspended the project in March 2006. In August 2006, in light of the partial militia dismantlement in Guiglo, the EU agreed to waive the suspension and the GTZ-IS launched the reinsertion component of the project. The first intervention targeted 500 of the 981 militias demobilized in 2006 who had received the financial safety net, and 500 FAFN recruits still active in the rebellion who had not yet been demobilized and had not received any financial compensation.[23] Given that the Ivoirian DDR Plan had taken a broad definition of combatant and did not limit it solely to those in the possession of arms, (former) members who had joined an armed group and who had operated behind the front line in support of military operations were also eligible for entry.

The first step of the project consisted of a 4-week process, which included individual profiling for each participant, basic literacy[24] and numeracy (or refresher sessions for the ones already literate), and a first professional orientation. The second step consisted of an 8-week process orientated towards job placement and technical training, with a strong practical component of which the content depended on which reinsertion stream had been chosen by the participant. Basic concepts of management and group business were also explained during that period. In the initial project, there was no support planned for helping participants to start up their business or for supplemental training if needed. The assumption was indeed that the short-term opportunities the project offered would be a bridge to the long-term reintegration support the Ivoirian DDR Plan would provide. But with the official DDR process not taking place, it became quite unlikely that this support would ever materialize. GTZ-IS therefore included a budget line for purchasing basic starter equipment, made possible by slightly amending the EU budget and also by drawing on a complementary source of funding. Most participants in the GTZ-IS reinsertion project therefore received basic assistance when they began their economic activity.

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[22] As mentioned in Chapter 4, the National DDR Plan foresaw subsequent financial benefits to reinsert demobilized combatants. It included a financial safety net for six months, possible education grants, vocational training, a subsequent starter kit, and privileged access to micro-credit. It is a real pity that it was never applied in practice.

[23] Follow-up interventions took a broader perspective and enlarged the target to non-combatants.

[24] It included several modules to raise awareness of civic education, human rights and peace promotion.

Both reinsertion centres – in Guiglo and in Man – started in October 2006.[25] In Guiglo, the PNDDR provided a list of 207 demobilized militia members to include in the project, 146 were regular participants. In Man, the central rebellion administration in Bouaké had first provided a list of FAFN recruits to include in the project. When most recruits did not show up when the project started, the project staff assumed that much of the list was obsolete and entry criteria were therefore locally reviewed in collaboration with the local rebel administration. Low-ranking elements of the *Forces Nouvelles* were informed of the possibility of taking part in the GTZ-IS project on a voluntary basis. As talking about demobilization was still taboo at the time, in the rebel-controlled areas of 2007, the framing of the project goal was stripped of any DDR connotation and the label ‘pilot’ was extensively used with the military hierarchy, as a way to legitimize an experimental intervention that should not have drastic consequences for the zone. It worked. The mere prospect of having to release recruits in the near future was not debatable with the *Com’Zone* five years after the start of the conflict, but under the label ‘pilot’ the GTZ-IS project was authorized to be implemented in Man. Tables 9.1 and 9.2 present the distribution of recruits by reinsertion streams for the two towns of Guiglo and Man.

Small-scale agriculture/husbandry was the most popular track in both locations, while job training was a much more popular stream in Man. Practical workshops were set up inside the centres for technical training. In Man, there were four of them: tailoring, joinery, welding and auto mechanics; in Guiglo, there were two: tailoring and auto mechanics. Recruits who had chosen other tracks received practical training outside the centre (those who chose to specialize in ‘cold’ for instance, the repair of AC units and freezers, or in electricity): they were either working as apprentice in a local workshop or they enrolled in private technical courses, with the project agreeing to pay their tuition for a few months. For farm-related projects, GTZ-IS partnered with local farm cooperatives and the national agency ANADER *(Agence Nationale d’Appui au Développement Rural),* which provided technical training on site.[26] In what follows, I examine the economic and social stakes in favour of participation. I focus in particular on how the project participants made use of the reinsertion prospects

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[25] The project also included three other towns in the west: Duékoué, Blolequin and Toulepleu. These were, however, smaller-scale satellite units, mainly aimed at reaching demobilized militia recruits who had returned to relatively remote communities (Toulepleu is at the Liberian border, about 120 km from Guiglo, and half of the road is in very bad condition).

[26] The training was quite flexible, and really depended on the participants’ former experience. For some, the training could be extended. Others, more experienced in the skill, could get down to work directly, sometimes even without practical training (especially if they were resuming their pre-war activity).

Table 9.1 Distribution of project participants by reinsertion streams in Guiglo

	MEN		**WOMEN**		**TOTAL**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE/HUSBANDRY	**82**	**60**	**-**	**-**	**82**	**60**
Pig farm	61	45	-	-	61	42
Poultry farm	12	9	1	10	13	9
Agriculture	9	7	-	-	9	6
JOB TRAINING	**21**	**14**	**6**	**60**	**27**	**18**
Tailoring	6	4	6	60	12	8
Mechanics	10	7	-	-	10	7
Electricity	2	1	-	-	2	1
Computer	2	1	-	-	2	1
Joinery	1	1	-	-	1	1
SMALL BUSINESSES	**33**	**24**	**3**	**30**	**36**	**25**
TOTAL	**136**	**100**	**10**	**100**	**146**	**100**

Source: GTZ (2007).

Table 9.2 Distribution of project participants by reinsertion streams in Man

	MEN		**WOMEN**		**TOTAL**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE/HUSBANDRY	**196**	**39**	**-**	**-**	**196**	**39**
Pig farm	123	26	-	-	123	25
Poultry farm	59	12	-	-	59	12
Agriculture	9	2	-	-	9	2
Ox farm	5	1	-	-	5	1
JOB TRAINING	**157**	**33**	**13**	**73**	**170**	**34**
Tailoring	39	8	3	17	42	8
Hair dressing	-	-	10	56	10	2
Welding	48	10	-	-	48	10
Mechanics (auto)	46	10	-	-	46	9
Mechanics (motorbike)	1	-	-	-	1	-
Electricity	6	1	-	-	6	1
Tapestry	4	1	-	-	4	1
Joinery	13	3	-	-	13	3
SMALL BUSINESSES	**129**	**27**	**5**	**28**	**134**	**27**
TOTAL	**482**	**100**	**18**		**500**	**100**

Source: GTZ (2007).

GTZ-IS offered, and how they combined it with the other opportunities that arose at the same time.

Reinsertion streams

If we look at the charts, what is striking is that the majority of respondents engaged in an activity that they had never done before the war. Only 45% of the respondents used the opportunity the project provided to continue with their previous work. Job training was the most popular track (chosen by 40%), followed by small businesses (36%) and small-scale agriculture/husbandry (23%). More than a third of the respondents said openly that they would not continue the activity after the end of the programme.

If I refine the analysis by town, the picture is different. In Man, the majority of interviewed recruits engaged in vocational training (65%), then in small businesses (21%), followed by agriculture/husbandry (14%). Only a third engaged in an activity they were familiar with before the war; the rest restarted from scratch. Three fourths of respondents said they wished to continue the activity after the end of the program, either by managing it in person or by placing someone they knew at the head of the business. In Guiglo, job training was the less attractive path[27] (15%), and half of respondents engaged in small businesses and in activities they were familiar with. Agriculture/husbandry was also popular, with a third of respondents choosing this stream. 40% of respondents said openly that they would eventually have someone manage their activity for them when the programme ended. Figures 9.1 and 9.2 present the data.

There are several elements to take into account when interpreting these figures. To what extent have respondents chosen their reinsertion streams and were certain tracks imposed on them? What were the main shortcomings of the profiling process? How have respondents made use of the reinsertion prospects the project offered and how have they combined it with other activities eventually engaged in at the same time? I describe the research findings below.

- Misinformation and group bias:
  What degree of agency exists in the choice of reinsertion streams?

Information disseminated to (ex)combatants has been far from optimal, especially in the start of the program, when these youths had to pick a reinsertion activity.[28] Many respondents were attracted to certain streams by the prospect of

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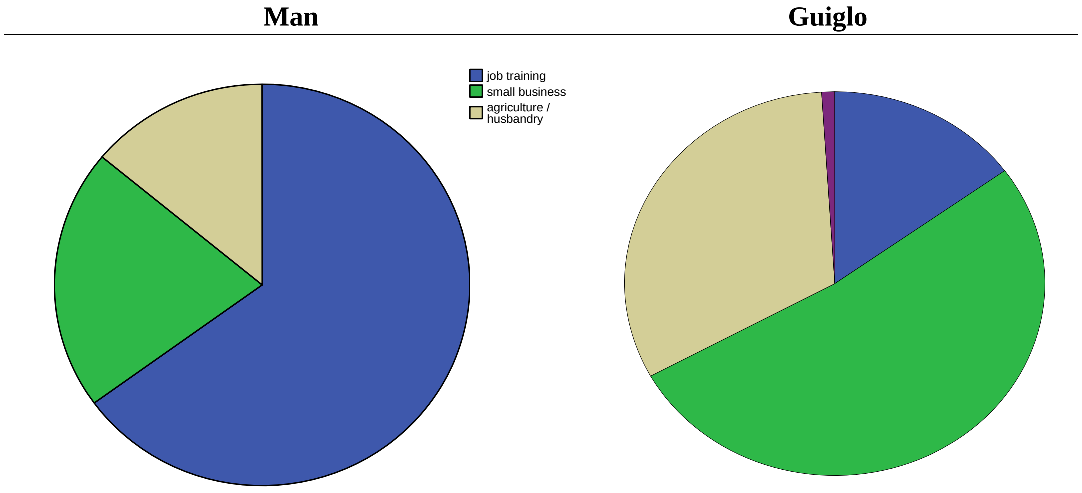
[27] This loss of interest in job training is consistent with the general distribution of recruits by reinsertion streams in Guiglo (Table 9.1).

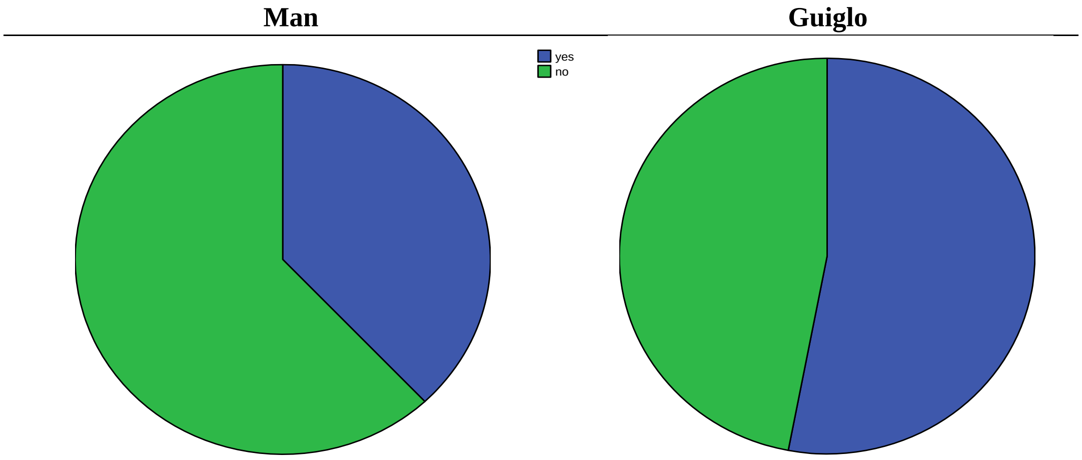
[28] This is in line with other studies (Jennings, 2007).

Figure 9.1 Which reinsertion activities have respondents engaged in?



Source: Fieldwork (2007)

Figure 9.2 Were respondents familiar with this activity before the war?



Source: Fieldwork (2007)

receiving subsequent inputs (in particular in small businesses) and were quickly disabused by the little they got. Individual kits amounted to 75,000 CFA francs (EUR 115), which was considered too little by the majority to attain economic sustainability. Several youths also pointed out that when they added up the price of the items they had been given, they discovered that the value of the package was below the announced 75,000. This raised serious concerns among them and some obvious questions with regard to the transparency of the supply chain.

If we compare the content of the project reinsertion package with the long-term reintegration support the Ivoirian DDR Plan was supposed to provide ex-combatants, we can only regret the difference in scale. As detailed earlier (Chapter 4), the DDR Plan was supposed to provide demobilized combatants with several benefits, including a financial safety net for six months, possible education grants up to 200,000 CFA francs, long-term vocational training, and privileged access to micro-credit (up to 180,000 CFA francs for an individual loan, 150,000 for the purchase of equipment, and 100,000 for agricultural projects). The GTZ-IS project offered much less and only in-kind contributions. With the official DDR process failing to happen, the pilot project failed in providing the necessary support for the post-reinsertion phase. The assistance it provided remained too limited in volume and scope, and if it indeed did offer some extra to participants, it was incapable of fulfilling its primary objective of securing a sustainable livelihood for the majority of recruits.[29] The project may also have added to the general confusion surrounding DDR and reinsertion/reintegration packages through its faulty dissemination and the mixed messages it sent. Several interviewees in fact pointed out that recruits were confused because they thought the GTZ-IS project would provide them with the package proposed in the Ivoirian DDR Plan. That partly explains why they had expected more. Failing to meet these expectations has only contributed to fueling and sustaining frustration.

Table 9.3 Nature and cost (in CFA) of individual kits in the small business track

Cellphone *(cabine)* :	- cellphone (20,000) - recharge cards (50,000) - SIM card (5,000)
Retailer (boutique):	- Prime necessities products (75,000) (soap, cigarettes, batteries, tea/coffee, biscuits, matches, rice, condiments, Maggi cubes…)
Specialized retailer:	- depending on products (75,000) (second-hand clothes *(friperie), (pagnes),* plastic shoes, cosmetics, rice/beans, alcohol, etc.)

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

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[29] This is in line with other studies (Bouta, 2005; Dzinesa, 2007; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2004, 2007; Peters, 2006, 2007; Thakur, 2008).

Another feature that can explain why certain tracks were more popular than others is that some activities were initially presented as individual activities, but then at a later stage became compulsory group activities, as the initial investment costs were too high to settle the youths individually. This was in particular the case for respondents engaged in husbandry (in pig and poultry farms) and for those engaged in welding and joinery. In Man, for instance, 34 husbandry groups of five people were set up (poultry, pigs or oxen). The cost of setting up the farms varied between 956,500 and 1,133,500 CFA francs[30] and included the construction of the stables, and the purchases of vaccines, food, livestock, and basic equipment. Seven groups of four/five people were also formed in welding: they collectively received a tool kit worth 758,736 CFA francs and the project disbursed an additional 475,000 CFA francs to cover the cost for building a basic workshop.[31] All things combined, group support for welding approached EUR 1,900 while individual welding kits were much more basic (the individual equipment was only worth EUR 130). Sixteen recruits nevertheless chose to settle individually.

Given the striking imbalance between individual and collective kits, recruits who had entered these streams therefore had little choice: they could either join up with vague acquaintances, go into business together, with all the vagaries one can easily imagine, and receive a decent kit; or they could settle individually, in the same track, but with the disadvantage of receiving little equipment; or they could change tracks. Most respondents who eventually decided to switch tracks eventually did so at the end of the project period and thus could not benefit from the full training associated with their new choice. Several youths who were initially enrolled in husbandry or welding/joinery preferred switching to the small business track and to settle individually. Clearly, they did not want to be forced to go into business in a group, with people they barely knew (the trust issue was cited several times by the respondents), and they had not found the individual kit attractive enough to remain in their initial track. This push towards group activities might have been the cause for the widescale drop-out of militia members: in January 2007, project participants had already decreased by one third in Guiglo, dropping from 207 to 146.[32] Rebel participants were much more assiduous.

Although some groups broke up shortly after setting up business, some have continued for quite a while, and I can testify to a few working projects. However, very quickly, operational issues arose. With the farms, it was often difficult to secure the necessary land to raise feed for the livestock (maize and cassava). This was partially managed in the beginning by donating feed, but when the bags were empty, finding enough resources to feed the animals became a serious problem. The youths who were not from the area had to negotiate plots with the local landowners, which was not always possible. Two respondents I met six months after establishing their farm told me that they were about to divide the remaining pigs between them, and to continue farming individually. They had had so many difficulties in finding a field to plant maize to feed the pigs, that in their view, splitting the group and continuing on their own was the only solution. It had the advantage of being flexible: 'If we go back to our own villages, we can ask for a plot. People help each other. But here, we are strangers. We have too many difficulties in cultivating land.'

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[30] This ranges between EUR 1,460 and 1,730 by group.

[31] This is equivalent to EUR 1,160 and EUR 725.

[32] This is in line with other studies. When Pouligny (2004) compared the survival rate of micro-enterprises supported within the framework of a reinsertion initiative, Congolese individual projects scored 65% versus 30% for Mozambican group initiatives.

With the welding/joinery workshops, trust was a main issue among group members and vis-à-vis potential clients. A welding group felt the need to relocate to Danané, two hours west of Man, because they genuinely believed that given their rebel past in Man, they would get fewer customers if they stayed there. In contrast, other groups had no problem settling in the town they were in during their military engagement. Another issue was more practical. If, after a while, individual group members wanted to go elsewhere (to respond to familial obligations for instance), it was difficult to split up the expensive machines and it was quite unlikely that when it did happen, the workshop would be able to generate enough profit to be able to compensate them properly.[33] One option was to sell the equipment, but this would jeopardize the whole enterprise; another option would be to barely give anything to the ones leaving and to let the other group members continue. If reinsertion tracks were never imposed on project participants, several incentives acted as push factors in informing their choice, such as changing information, the imbalance between individual and collective kits, the confusion arising from the multiplicity of initiatives parallel to the official DDR Plan, etc. Yet these factors do not fully explain every choice made and there is the need for a deeper understanding of recruits' individual trajectories to be able to understand this.

The profiling process

There were several shortcomings in the profiling process used by the humanitarian agency. What struck me most was the lack of perspective regarding combatants' pre-war profiles, in particular with respect to their professional trajectories. The general assumption was that most participants had limited skills, almost no professional background, and that the project would offer them a unique opportunity to develop their individual capacities. This is in line with the 'loose molecule' hypothesis well anchored in development circles, which states that the base of an armed group consists of jobless, uneducated and dissocialized youths who are expected to start their lives over from scratch when they disengage from military activities. If we look at section 3 of the profiling sheet which refers to professional background (Figure 9.3), it is rather thin. It consists of one question – 'Did you have a job or an activity before the war?' – and eight closed answers: '1. No activity; 2. Civil servant; 3. Employed in the private sector; 4. Self-employed; 5. Small business; 6. Farmer; 7. Pupil; 8. Student'. There is no mention of any time period, no room for providing details. Yet, we are talking about people who are likely to have worked in a range of activities before the war, from an early age, in several locations. Chapter 7 illustrated that clearly, and when examining the pre-war profiles of militarized youths, it became evident that most of them were regularly earning money before the war. Some were doing contractual work and their income varied according to contract opportunities, some were working as daily labour, and some had a regular income. The majority was employed in the informal economy, and a few had very decent jobs. Another interesting finding was that from the day they started working, respondents were successively pushed and pulled into activities from one region to another, following opportunities, responding to familial demands, fulfilling certain commitments; they usually had to work in many locations before attaining self-sufficiency. With such backgrounds in mind, oversimplifying recruits' past in a general profiling sheet does not appear to be the ideal approach, and should not be used as a base for orientating militarized youths towards specific tracks.[34] To gain a thorough understanding of recruits' individual trajectories and to advise them well, there is the need to dive into their life stories, in order to give sufficient credit to their personal and professional evolution.

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[33] Group members were not necessarily from the same area.

Local notions of ownership, lucrativeness, and seizing other opportunities

It is an unfortunate fact, but humanitarian practitioners, from field officers to headquarters staff, are in general deeply annoyed by the fact that their target group does not perform according to plan and divert from project objectives. This

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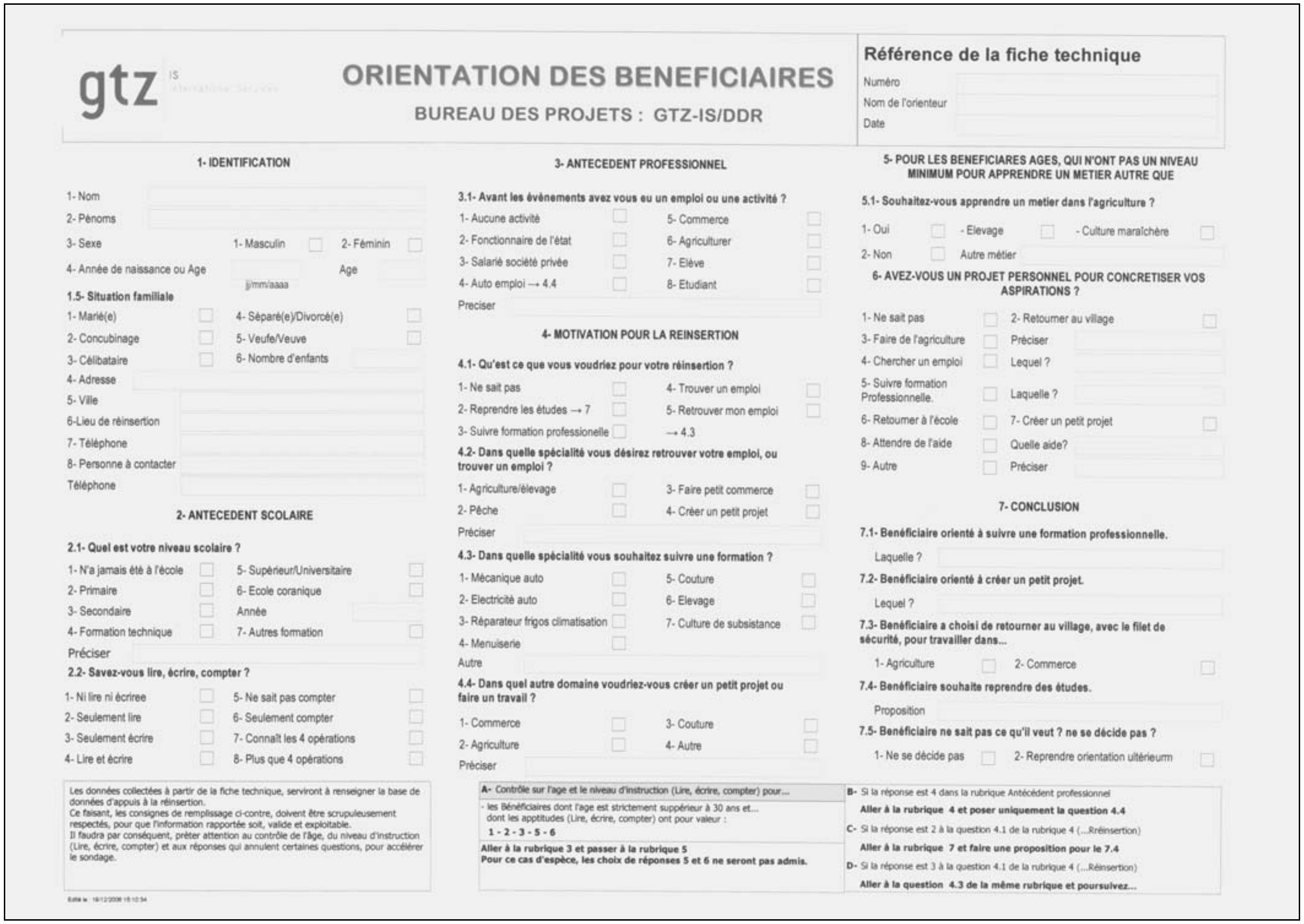
[34] This tendency towards oversimplification has been noted by several scholars in many contexts. In a case study on Darfur, Tubiana (2009) points out that despite years of presence in the field, some practitioners continue to misinterpret the context, as they oversimplify too much extremely complex social processes.

Figure 9.3 Profiling sheet



gtz IS

ORIENTATION DES BENEFICIAIRES

BUREAU DES PROJETS : GTZ-IS/DDR

Référence de la fiche technique

Numéro

Nom de l'orienteur

Date

1- IDENTIFICATION

1- Nom

2- Pènoms

3- Sexe 1- Masculin ☐ 2- Féminin ☐

4- Année de naissance ou Age jj/mm/aaaa Age

1.5- Situation familiale

1- Marié(e) ☐ 4- Séparé(e)/Divorcé(e) ☐

2- Concubinage ☐ 5- Veufe/Veuve ☐

3- Célibataire ☐ 6- Nombre d'enfants

4- Adresse

5- Ville

6-Lieu de réinsertion

7- Téléphone

8- Personne à contacter

Téléphone

2- ANTECEDENT SCOLAIRE

2.1- Quel est votre niveau scolaire ?

1- N'a jamais été à l'école ☐ 5- Supérieur/Universitaire ☐

2- Primaire ☐ 6- Ecole coranique ☐

3- Secondaire ☐ Année

4- Formation technique ☐ 7- Autres formation ☐

Préciser

2.2- Savez-vous lire, écrire, compter ?

1- Ni lire ni écriree ☐ 5- Ne sait pas compter ☐

2- Seulement lire ☐ 6- Seulement compter ☐

3- Seulement écrire ☐ 7- Connaît les 4 opérations ☐

4- Lire et écrire ☐ 8- Plus que 4 opérations ☐

Les données collectées à partir de la fiche technique, serviront à renseigner la base de données d'appuis à la réinsertion.
Ce faisant, les consignes de remplissage ci-contre, doivent être scrupuleusement respectés, pour que l'information rapportée soit, valide et exploitable.
Il faudra par conséquent, prêter attention au contrôle de l'âge, du niveau d'instruction (Lire, écrire, compter) et aux réponses qui annulent certaines questions, pour accélérer le sondage.

3- ANTECEDENT PROFESSIONNEL

3.1- Avant les évènements avez vous eu un emploi ou une activité ?

1- Aucune activité ☐ 5- Commerce ☐

2- Fonctionnaire de l'état ☐ 6- Agriculturer ☐

3- Salarié société privée ☐ 7- Elève ☐

4- Auto emploi → 4.4 ☐ 8- Etudiant ☐

Preciser

4- MOTIVATION POUR LA REINSERTION

4.1- Qu'est ce que vous voudriez pour votre réinsertion ?

1- Ne sait pas ☐ 4- Trouver un emploi ☐

2- Reprendre les études → 7 ☐ 5- Retrouver mon emploi ☐

3- Suivre formation professionelle ☐ → 4.3

4.2- Dans quelle spécialité vous désirez retrouver votre emploi, ou trouver un emploi ?

1- Agriculture/élevage ☐ 3- Faire petit commerce ☐

2- Pêche ☐ 4- Créer un petit projet ☐

Préciser

4.3- Dans quelle spécialité vous souhaitez suivre une formation ?

1- Mécanique auto ☐ 5- Couture ☐

2- Electricité auto ☐ 6- Elevage ☐

3- Réparateur frigos climatisation ☐ 7- Culture de subsistance ☐

4- Menuiserie ☐

Autre

4.4- Dans quel autre domaine voudriez-vous créer un petit projet ou faire un travail ?

1- Commerce ☐ 3- Couture ☐

2- Agriculture ☐ 4- Autre ☐

Préciser

A- Contrôle sur l'age et le niveau d'instruction (Lire, écrire, compter) pour...

- les Bénéficiaires dont l'age est strictement suppérieur à 30 ans et... dont les apptitudes (Lire, écrire, compter) ont pour valeur :

1 - 2 - 3 - 5 - 6

Aller à la rubrique 3 et passer à la rubrique 5
Pour ce cas d'espèce, les choix de réponses 5 et 6 ne seront pas admis.

5- POUR LES BENEFICIARES AGES, QUI N'ONT PAS UN NIVEAU MINIMUM POUR APPRENDRE UN METIER AUTRE QUE

5.1- Souhaitez-vous apprendre un metier dans l'agriculture ?

1- Oui ☐ - Elevage ☐ - Culture maraîchère ☐

2- Non ☐ Autre métier

6- AVEZ-VOUS UN PROJET PERSONNEL POUR CONCRETISER VOS ASPIRATIONS ?

1- Ne sait pas ☐ 2- Retourner au village ☐

3- Faire de l'agriculture ☐ Préciser

4- Chercher un emploi ☐ Lequel ?

5- Suivre formation Professionnelle. ☐ Laquelle ?

6- Retourner à l'école ☐ 7- Créer un petit projet ☐

8- Attendre de l'aide ☐ Quelle aide?

9- Autre ☐ Préciser

7- CONCLUSION

7.1- Benéficiaire orienté à suivre une formation professionnelle.

Laquelle ?

7.2- Benéficiaire orienté à créer un petit projet.

Lequel ?

7.3- Benéficiaire a choisi de retourner au village, avec le filet de sécurité, pour travailler dans...

1- Agriculture ☐ 2- Commerce ☐

7.4- Benéficiaire souhaite reprendre des études.

Proposition

7.5- Benéficiaire ne sait pas ce qu'il veut ? ne se décide pas ?

1- Ne se décide pas ☐ 2- Reprendre orientation ultérieurm ☐

B- Si la réponse est 4 dans la rubrique Antécédent professionnel
Aller à la rubrique 4 et poser uniquement la question 4.4

C- Si la réponse est 2 à la question 4.1 de la rubrique 4 (...Rréinsertion)
Aller à la rubrique 7 et faire une proposition pour le 7.4

D- Si la réponse est 3 à la question 4.1 de la rubrique 4 (...Réinsertion)
Aller à la question 4.3 de la même rubrique et poursuivez...

Source: Fieldwork (2007)

is usually interpreted as deviant behaviour, it is fought against in practice, and because of operational imperatives, there is rarely the time or interest to seek to understand what motivate participants to make such a different use of opportunities provided. This case study is no exception. When a certain number of respondents ended their activity or 'disappeared' out of sight of the project staff, this was considered a failure. The mere conception that these youths had changed their mind and had chosen to invest their time in a different activity than the one initially picked was perceived quite negatively. This is indeed linked to different notions of ownership. Even though the term conveys the common-sense wisdom that in order to be successful, an intervention has to be embraced by those who have to live with it (Donais, 2007), most interventions remain externally driven, and local notions of ownership are rarely taken into account.

In examining how the youths I interviewed made use of the reinsertion prospects the project offered, a main finding was that many of them took the opportunity to place someone they trusted in charge of the project activity, while they were investing their time in more lucrative matters. Such an arrangement had the advantage of providing income-generating activities to close relatives and, in some cases, could even provide the youth with an extra income. Another finding was that many respondents who were supposed to run *cabines* (*cabines* are cellphone stalls, where people pay to make phone calls) had actually put someone in charge to manage it for them. The main reason for such behaviour relates to local notions of lucrativeness, namely the lucrativeness of the GTZ-IS project compared to the lucrativeness of any alternative opportunities. Understandably, if more interesting opportunities emerged elsewhere, project participants were likely to be attracted by these. The account of this female respondent who opted not to participate in the first wave of the project is particularly informative:

> 'Before the war, I was selling things. I used to go to Ghana to purchase goods, and later I was selling them in Côte d'Ivoire: *pagnes*, shoes, small stuff. I was also *tâcheron*, that means that I was taking contracts with the local timber industry, hiring workers to execute them. I used to take afforestation contracts. It is like being head of your own company; you agree on a price, you manage your workers, the timber company pays. They pay very well in fact. For this year, I already completed the afforestation contracts. We worked in protected areas, in the *forêts classées*. You can be paid about 70-80,000 francs per hectare, and then you pay the workers, and then you can perhaps earn 30,000 francs per hectare. With the money, I was paying for my other trade, selling things. I also gave to my family. I can say I ran a small business. I paid taxes, I have papers which prove it, and when I go to the timber industry to negotiate the contract, they can see that I comply with the norms […].'

> 'After the war, I restarted the afforestation contracts in March last year [2006]. I responded to a call and they took me, they gave me a contract. And then a project came, for reintegrating ex-combatants. My name was even on their list. But I went to see the project staff and I said: "No. I am currently busy now. I have already committed to work and I cannot do

> two activities at the same time. So if there is a second wave in the project, put me in it then, but not now. "'

The GTZ-IS project has failed to embed itself in lucrative opportunities offered locally. Given the local violent history of land tenure, it did not want to engage in cultivation of perennial crops that would have implied a long-term use of land, and it did not really take note of the fact that several project participants had chosen to follow this path outside the project framework (and many times at the expense of it). Heveaculture was particularly in vogue in Guiglo when the fieldwork was being conducted, a popularity amplified by a campaign run by a local export rubber industry to incite small farmers to raise this crop, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, certain warlords had even converted themselves into development brokers to liaise with this burgeoning hevea industry. One can only regret that the German project did not take part in such dynamics. By failing to link with the main export-oriented industries,[1] the project stayed confined to limited opportunities and failed to connect with sustainable employment options. In the follow-up interventions led by GTZ-IS, the focus on labour-intensive work[2] (road repairs for instance) does not appear strategic, as it continued to only provide the youths with short-term gain. Besides, one can seriously question the necessity of liaising with an expensive internationally driven project to promote contract work in an area where functioning local chambers of commerce exist and where the announcement of upcoming labour-intensive work is usually followed by overwhelming applications.[3]

The specificities of the youngest recruits

In early writings, Brett and McCallin wrote something profoundly disturbing about the youngest combatants: 'These children have no skills for life in peacetime and are accustomed to getting their way through violence' (Brett & McCallin, 1996). Child soldiers were portrayed as having no connections in society, without skills, incompetent and prone to violence, and it was strongly implied that they were trapped in a vicious cycle, and that they would always experience difficulties in returning to a non-violent routine because they had been actors in and witnesses of too many atrocities during the war. Such a quote is disturbing because it assumes a causal relationship between actions executed in warfare and processes of demobilization, and it draws the hasty conclusion that former child recruits are cursed, and that they are unlikely to reinsert well in society by themselves. Research on children's and adolescents' processes of demobilization has in fact largely remained confined to the examination of external interventions with the inherent bias of overestimating the impact of projects in children's re-insertion phase and of largely ignoring the role of endogenous features. Here, I try to rehabilitate some of these endogenous dynamics in the immediate demobilization phase, before reflecting on an intervention that targeted children associated with the rebel forces in Man, from the points of view of the ones who benefited from this intervention.[4]

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[1] *Thanry* in Guiglo (wood/coal); the *CHC* in Zagné (rubber); several timber companies in Man.

[2] Employment intensive work is locally named HIMO. The acronym refers to works '*à Haute Intensité de Main d'Œuvre*'.

[3] This observation has also been made by other scholars (KLEM & DOUMA, 2008).

Demobilization accounts varied a lot depending on individuals, and included stories of escape, self-demobilization, and cases of commanders directly handing over recruits to humanitarian staff (see Chelpi-den Hamer, 2010 for detailed demobilization stories). The use of children as soldiers has come to be perceived so negatively in recent years that parties to conflicts are in general quite co-operative about stopping the practice, once the peak of the conflict has passed. In many accounts, children's length of stay in the armed group was linked to the length of stay of the group in the area. When there was a move to establish the base in another location, rebels often took some children with them while letting others go. Triggers to demobilization usually included discussions with caregivers, the visit of a parent to the camp, a change in command, the death of the direct chief, seizing an opportunity to escape (absence of chief, not returning from leave), and, sometimes, the emergence of the child's critical consciousness (as one put it: 'It is not worth staying, I can be killed tomorrow'). In some cases, release was negotiated by a family member. When bargaining was not possible or when the child had no one to bargain for him, a risky escape and the ability to profit from external interventions were the only way out:

> 'I wanted to quit the rebel forces, but I could not. Because once, one man told them he wanted to quit, and they killed him in front of me. I was scared. There were other children in the camp, but for them, there was no problem in leaving because they often had brothers in the rebel forces who could negotiate their departure with the chief. I had no brother in the rebel forces, so I was obliged to stay. They never gave me permission when I asked for it to visit my parents. If UNICEF had not come with the project, I would still be in the camp.'

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[4] The project targeting child soldiers was then run by the Ivoirian NGO ODAFEM and was funded by UNICEF. The first step of the project entailed a three-month process, which included listening, counseling, individual profiling, medical care, sports, an initial career orientation session, basic numeracy and literacy courses (refresher sessions for the already literate). During that period, demobilized children had to stay day and night in the transition centre, where they were offered proper care, shared accommodation, shower facilities, a functioning canteen, and basic entertainment (games, video). There were strict rules inside the centre premises and children had to ask for permission if they wanted to leave the centre to go somewhere else, even during daytime. The second step of the project consisted of a short-term vocational education programme. Youths were placed on a temporary basis at local entrepreneurs' workshops for a six-month period, at the end of which it was assumed that they would have acquired the basic skills to continue the work with a starter kit of basic tools/material.

Once the child was demobilized, accounts were rather mixed in terms of community acceptance. Some respondents reported having experienced extreme rejection by their direct environment, they were either isolated upon return, feared or mocked. In contrast, others mentioned having been warmly welcomed from the start and could easily blend in. The role of parents, caregivers and, in some cases, village chiefs, has been important factors in putting an end to verbal abuse and isolation as they were mediating the social reintegration of the child in the community. A few respondents mentioned having gone through some kind of cleansing ritual shortly after their return home, to purify them of their wrongdoing. The accounts below are quite illustrative of this diversity of stories:

> ‘When my sister and I returned to our village, my mother told me that I was no longer her child. She had told me not to join the rebels, and I had not listened to her. She was not happy. But then my grandfather forgave me, and she accepted. My grandfather called my mother and told her: “What the child did, it is not his fault. It is his sister’s fault because she asked him to follow her.” They did not forgive my sister. She left the day after our return. She slept, then she left, without telling anyone.’
>
> ‘When we went back to our parents, they were very happy. Nobody bothered us. They thought that we were dead, that we had already been killed. I moved back in with my father and mother. I started helping my mother in the fields. My father was sick and had stopped working.’
>
> ‘They were all scared of me. They would not come close to me because they thought I was violent, I could kill someone. They were scared. I was mostly alone. I was sad. I had no friends. When she saw that, my *tutrice* gathered the people in the neighborhood to ask them forgiveness. She told them that I would not harm them and that they could play with me. Now I’m fine. I have no problem anymore.’
>
> ‘In my village, everyone knows I was a rebel. Here in town, some people know, some people don’t. It is not a problem because I was never stationed in Man when I was in the rebel forces. I was close to the Liberian border. Here I have no contacts anymore with soldiers. I play football, everyday at 5 p.m., after I’m done with work.’

A project ran by a local NGO (under UNICEF funding) had quite a mixed impact on the lives of the children interviewed. One very important effect is that it boosted the number of demobilizations: some children self-demobilized when they heard that they had the option to register for a project, others were directly referred to humanitarian staff by military commanders, and others were traced back to their village when NGOs toured war-affected areas to provide support to children associated with armed forces. Another positive impact is that it provided short-term relief to children who had entered the reinsertion project. They were supplied with free food on a daily basis, they had access to medical care for a few months, and some benefited from school supplies for the ones who resumed schooling. But in its core aspects, the impact was rather mitigated because it often occurred several years after children had demobilized themselves; the intervention only played a marginal role in facilitating his or her social reinsertion, and while one would have expected that, because of their limited social capital, children would have embraced the opportunities humanitarian interventions offered (by working hard during their training, by showing that they were motivated, by being assiduous), longitudinal follow-up of some of the children provides a different picture – actually showing quite high dropout rates. Clearly, reinsertion assistance has to be redefined in order to bear any fruit. Projects targeting children have tended to miss the dynamics of these young people's lives by negatively perceiving those who deviate from the initial activity; and like with their older peers, there is to date a limited interest in seeking to understand what motivates them to do so.

Concluding remarks

Recourse to humanitarianism is far from being the ideal way to alleviate suffering, yet it is a widely promoted solution and is usually tolerated by parties in conflict. If one should not long for it, there is no way to avoid it. The challenge, therefore, is to find a satisfactory way to put external interventions into perspective, especially as general enthusiasm for humanitarian values is turning into general scepticism. Pouligny (2004) genuinely hopes for a change in mentality, a 'revolution', which would redefine the function of humanitarian experts and would conceive them as facilitators of local negotiation processes, not practitioners. For this revolution to occur, a serious questioning of the current praxis is needed, with a new approach that must show more flexibility, patience and modesty in terms of aims. It is highly unlikely that a short-term intervention constrained by limited means changes the life of an individual. But if it relates well to its immediate context, it may diminish someone's burden and potentially help them to develop. This is the real operational challenge to take up: no longer regarding projects in isolation.

The examples of externally driven interventions given in this chapter are striking illustrations of the fact that humanitarianism is far from being at the core of the post-war context of western Côte d'Ivoire. In contrast to other social dynamics, humanitarianism has not been the central driving force in the local environment, and people have not hesitated to opt out when better opportunities emerged elsewhere. Perhaps the fact that Côte d'Ivoire has not been as ravaged as Liberia or Sierra Leone can be advanced as explanatory factor: the country is still rich and when the odds are good, it is still full of lucrative opportunities to take up. We are far from a situation where a myriad of humanitarian projects would run the risk of drying up important social mechanisms. What we saw instead is that humanitarianism has been locally used as something extra: to participants, it provided a social opportunity among a wide range of other social opportunities; to local dignitaries, it provided a way to expand their brokerage portfolio and to bolster their local political influence. It is however worth reflecting on what were the driving determinants of such effects: was it because of a question of *dosage*? (i.e. one could argue for instance that since interventions were marginal in western Côte d'Ivoire, such effects were all the more exacerbated since people could not rely too much on them). Or was it more due to local opportunity structures, which inevitably differ from one context to another? It is difficult to clearly answer this questioning because I did not study in depth all the factors that were at play, yet it is worth keeping such an interrogation in mind, to avoid drawing tautological conclusions.

10

Conclusions

The main puzzle I wanted to address in this study was to understand the extent to which, in western Côte d'Ivoire, externally driven interventions targeting militarized civilians and aiming at facilitating their demilitarization and return to civilian life should be conceived as special processes compared to other social processes at play in the local environment. This work clearly shows, for this particular context, that such types of post-conflict humanitarianism cannot be analyzed in isolation from endogenous factors: on the one hand, it has brought to the fore the extreme porosity of borders between the social arenas in which low-ranking and non-professional militarized youths are evolving in, while still involved in an armed group (notably by stressing the navigating strategies of the youths between these different spaces); on the other hand, based on that assessment, it calls for a re-conceptualization of reintegration processes – stripped of their 'post'-military 'specialness' in contexts where the military and civilian spheres are intimately related. If the militarization of civilians cannot be disconnected from the wider context, neither can their demilitarization, especially for those locally recruited, who have never really severed their ties with their families and other pre-war social groups. The effects of external interventions targeting ex-combatants cannot therefore be considered unique in environments where borders are blurred between the military, the civilian and the humanitarian spheres.

As already mentioned in the theory chapter, the contexts under study and the data collected during fieldwork have brought to the fore several phenomena that have so far been undertheorized for situations where post-conflict intervention plays a side role in the local system. I develop below five main findings that fill certain conceptual gaps or that rehabilitate certain theory trends: the circumstantial and emotional forms of engagement; the nature of entanglement of the militarized youths with their immediate environment; the effects of humanitarianism targeting ex-combatants in such environments (with special focus on the extent to which the clients themselves are able to manipulate the intervention); a critical reflection on several existing analytical dichotomies that might be easily challenged in contexts similar to western Côte d'Ivoire (notably the distinction between militia and local vigilante); and the nature of possible remnants of mobilization when the peak of the conflict has passed (by assessing the extent to which certain armed groups are reactivated to fulfil a function of local guardian more in line with traditional forms of urban/rural vigilantism).

The main empirical and conceptual findings

Circumstantial and emotional enlistment

Enlisting in an armed group in western Côte d'Ivoire was more often than not the result of highly circumstantial factors and one of the main contributions of this study has been to rehabilitate the importance of immediate contexts in explaining processes of violent mobilization. In Guiglo and Man, who mobilized and who did not was largely due to a combination of geographic, military and emotional factors. If theories resting on such elements are usually downplayed in the literature as compared to theories that rest on assumptions of causality and that emphasize the loose molecule hypothesis (those that state that adverse structural conditions largely explain engagement in armed groups), this work has stressed quite well the place of such a circumstantial form of engagement, emphasizing the role of leaders and the elite in promoting certain values within society and the importance of 'framing'.

What in addition strikingly came out of the various testimonies is that individual perceptions mattered quite a lot in such processes of local mobilization. Several considerations were at play for individuals: how they experienced direct danger; how they perceived their degree of vulnerability and that of their close family; how their choices were constrained by the room to manoeuvre they had; how close they were to militia and/or rebel insiders, etc. These results are in line with a certain line of thought, which argues that circumstantial and emotional factors are perhaps more decisive in explaining processes of mobilization in certain contexts than poverty per se, or perceived socio-economic exclusion (Guichaoua, 2007). Recruits in fact displayed very different pre-war trajectories and the study tends to depict a picture that shows that it was people who were quite embedded in society who joined an armed group, rather than the alienated ones. Empirically, this finding conclusively dismisses the loose molecule hypothesis, where the stand is taken that the most likely profile of low-ranking recruits is that of jobless, uneducated, and dissocialized youths with few alternative prospects other than to resort to violence to make ends meet; such a conclusion is in line with other scholarly work (Guichaoua, 2007; Peters, 2004; Richards, 1996).

The entanglement of militarized youths with their immediate environment

It is often assumed that youngsters who have been involved in armed groups must be resocialized after their military experience, as if their bonds with society were cut during their engagement; the vast majority of humanitarian programmes targeting ex-combatants are based on this postulate. But there is growing evidence that militarized civilians often keep in contact with civilian life during their period of engagement in an armed group, especially the ones locally recruited who remain posted in their immediate surroundings (their main characteristic, in fact, is to never have stopped being involved with family, friends and pre-war acquaintances). In western Côte d'Ivoire, many recruits I interviewed undertook extra-military activities when violent fighting diminished, and there were always basic logistics to take care of, which implied continuous interaction with non militarised people. If not yet mainstream, this conception of armed violence as a prosaic and intermittent occupation calls for a nuanced approach when analyzing processes of violent mobilization, one that foremost rests on the assumption that borders between the military, the civilian and the humanitarian spheres are fluid and blurred, especially once the period(s) of open fighting has passed. Rather than conveying the idea of a clear distinction between those three arenas, this study has stressed their overlaps, their dynamics, and has clearly dismissed strict conceptual boundaries. It also stressed the opportunist manoeuvres of the militarized youths, which reinforces such a blurring effect all the more.

On both belligerent sides, full-time involvement in an armed group gradually evolved into a 'part-time' one after the period of open fighting was over. Relationships between militarized recruits and local populations have been based on a combination of solidarity and coercion and have varied over time depending on strength of ties and immediate stakes involved. Within the group of recruits locally recruited, persistence of family ties was a striking feature in both Guiglo and Man and the flows of food, cash and services were going both ways between the militarized and their respective families. But relationships with civilians were not confined to the close family structure. An important feature that the study brought to the fore is that it is quite difficult to draw a clear line between militarized life and the civilian one, since eating habits, accommodation practices, and continued participation in the family affairs (in sum, the daily routine) oblige the militarized and the non militarized to continuously interact, with the effect that they have less and less distinct characteristics.

Since borders between military, civilian and humanitarian spheres were so much blurred in western Côte d'Ivoire, the conceptualization of reintegration processes would undoubtedly gain if it were no longer presented as a drastic change, 'post'-military. Immediate reintegration was mainly driven by internal processes there, since reintegration assistance did not occur during the immediate post-return phase recruits went through, when social acceptance was at its most challenging (social networks and immediate surroundings therefore played a key role in local demobilization processes). But even if they were late, post-conflict interventions also attempted to facilitate the return to civilian life for militarized populations, and engaged in such a programming in 2006 and 2007. Regardless of one's opinion of them, they were part of the environment in western Côte d'Ivoire and, as such, unavoidable stakeholders in the local systems. The examples of externally driven interventions given in this study clearly showed that humanitarianism was not at the core of social change there, with people not hesitating to opt out when better opportunities emerged elsewhere. Humanitarianism has instead been locally used as something extra and, to project participants, it provided a social opportunity among a wide range of other social opportunities.

What comes out of a humanitarian apparatus targeting ex-combatants when it does not play such a central role in their immediate contexts?

Considering that planned interventions implemented in post-conflict contexts are simply additional social opportunities among a wide array of other social opportunities does not mean that they do not have effects and that these effects do not influence the local systems in some ways. This case study has highlighted at least three: 1) the seizing of an opportunity, 2) the placing of close relatives in the income-generating activities fostered by the intervention (a variant being to hire someone to operate the activity on a regular basis), and 3) the boosting of demobilization and disarmament processes, an effect particularly pronounced with the youngest recruits on the insurgent side (certainly linked to the negative international press surrounding the child soldiering phenomenon), but also noticeable for some older ones, especially on the counterinsurgent side, as exemplified by some testimonies heard:

> 'When we came back from Toulepleu after the military encampment period, I kept my weapon in the village. Later, Maho disarmed us in Guiglo. From there, we were put in a truck and we were brought to Duékoué for the DDR.'

What is of particular interest regarding the last two effects is that although they both result from unintended consequences of the interventions themselves, they are probably their most tangible outcomes: the second one by bringing to the fore the ineluctable involvement of the close family structure in the potential benefits derived from the intervention, and the third one by giving a sense of closure to those who were once involved in an armed group (and to the war-affected population). If rarely highlighted by the operators of post-conflict interventions, these effects clearly show that the navigating strategies of the militarized youths between different arenas are not confined to their time within their respective armed groups. From the perspective of the youths benefiting from reintegration programmes, placing someone else in a project seems to be a logical move when more interesting opportunities emerge elsewhere; such behaviour in fact only reproduces a well-embedded cultural pattern of patron/client relationships, coloured with a degree of moral obligation when the close family is involved. It is in no way unusual. In that respect, it resembles the strategies of the population at large, which can be quite keen on navigating between informal paid work opportunities; this social behaviour is not confined to those who have participated in an armed movement.

This last remark enables us to reflect on the extent to which the clients themselves are able to manipulate the intervention and to go beyond the usual patron-client relationship that depicts warlords as the only skilled manipulators of external assistance. There are many stakes in DDR-related interventions, even when the benefits seem at first hand minimal, and those who profit from them also play with them if it has the potential to serve their ends. This is why there is an urgent need to reconceptualize externally driven demobilization and reintegration processes, away from a segmented approach[1] that overemphasizes the importance of the local elites in shaping the effects of the interventions, and towards a perspective that recognizes the room to manoeuvre of the low-ranking recruits and their continued links with their immediate environment. In situations where humanitarianism does not play such a central role in the local context, interventions do not run the risk of drying up the already existing social mechanisms that regulate social life – quite the contrary. One interesting finding of this study has actually been to stress – with caution – that a possible effect of DDR-related interventions is to reinforce existing moral obligations, not to weaken them. This point is probably best exemplified by the behaviour of 'reinserted' recruits, who we literally see juggling social obligations and personal benefit after having received their financial safety nets, and who sometimes place a close relative in the activity fostered by the intervention.

Another contribution of this study has been to bring nuance to the general perception of the patronage links inherited from relationships built during warfare. If the humanitarian interventions that were under the lens eventually drew on existing patron-client relationships over which they had little control (since militia leaders and the rebel *État-Major* were the ones selecting the recruits to include in the reinsertion projects[2]), the study has revealed that the extent of patronage relations in reintegration processes has in the end not been as systematic, negative and unfair as intuitively anticipated. If there is no way to avoid militia leaders' relatives appearing on the reinsertion lists, who else is included and who is left out appears to be chosen quite arbitrarily in many cases, especially in areas far from the leaders' compounds, where these decisions are taken without taking into account the usual social networks based on geographic proximity (from the same family, one can be in the project, another not). It is noteworthy to recall here that whether or not someone makes the list does not depend so much on the function fulfilled in the armed group: the Ivoirian DDR plan – like many others – had taken such a wide definition of who was entitled to post-war benefits that many people could eventually qualify, provided they had been associated with an armed group for a certain period of time. To put it bluntly: a combatant has as much chance of making the list as a cook or a cleaner, even if it is often locally perceived that the one who fought has more 'rights' to post-war benefits. But since the function eventually does not matter, there is no need to manipulate one's identity to 'fit' into a combatant category to receive post-conflict assistance. Reinserted recruits get the same package, regardless of their former wartime occupation. In western Côte d'Ivoire, some militarized youths became eligible for reintegration assistance, while others did not, for no particular reason, and despite having assumed similar duties during the war. For the lucky ones, the fact that they made the lists has opened a door for them, and it has since been up to them to make the most of it. This observation is in line with other scholars' calls for moving away from the general rejection of war-time patronage networks and to consider the potential benefits of this phenomenon pragmatically, notably by recognizing its ability to foster a stable economic basis for recently demilitarized local youths (Lemasle, 2010: 334).

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[1] 'D' and 'R' can simply not be seen as distinct processes, they constantly overlap.

Calling existing analytical dichotomies into question

What does it mean to be a 'reinserted' or a 'reintegrated' rebel or militia, and what does thinking in terms of dichotomy bring to the analysis when making the distinction between 'reinserted' and 'non-reinserted' recruits? Is it to be expected that there will be no regression into armed groups for the 'reinserted' ones? Under no circumstances? The recent events in western Côte d'Ivoire seem to prove this wrong by rehabilitating once more the argument that enlistment into armed groups stems from highly circumstantial factors. When I talked to M. in early May 2011 (M. was a demobilized child soldier I interviewed in Man in 2007 and with whom I continued to have sporadic contact in 2008), once past the relief of learning that he was still alive after the wave of particularly violent events that rocked the west in the spring of 2011, it became clear that he had been lucky to escape reengagement. As he told me, he had to hide. He was particularly in danger of being redrafted because the rebel *État-Major* needed recruits skilled with weapons for the southern offensive taking place, and he had once been one of them. Sadly, his partner did not make it and was killed by a stray bullet during the events. He was about to bury her, hence the reason for his call. But beyond this tragic anecdote, M.'s story shows well that having been 'reinserted' once does not mean that someone can claim to no longer have anything to do with warfare.

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[2] With the variant in Man that the initial list supplied by the the central rebellion administration in Bouaké was eventually adapted locally, in collaboration with the local rebel administration.

This study also challenges the notion that 'reinserted' recruits are different from 'non-reinserted' ones by highlighting the fact that interventions targeting ex-combatants in the end play a very modest role in improving their lives, to the point that several people do not hesitate to opt out when better opportunities emerge elsewhere. If most demobilized recruits interviewed saw financial compensation as a back-payment for their services, the safety net was distributed well after their return to their community, sometimes two or three years after they had ended their engagement in the armed group. It therefore had a limited impact on their immediate post-return phase, which is when social acceptance was the most challenging. Recruits used their safety net very differently. Out of the five broad categories of expenses identified – 1) reimbursing creditors, 2) responding to familial demands, 3) investing in own business, 4) allocating money to war chiefs, and 5) facing social events (such as medical expenses, funerals, home improvements) – three would not have emerged if no cash had been given to combatants (reimbursing creditors, responding to familial demands, and allocating money to war chiefs). For investment, the financial compensation was indeed useful but should not be overestimated, especially since it was given in three instalments in a context where small amounts are easily wasted on day-to-day expenses. In terms of facing social events, extra cash has helped recruits to respond to immediate expenses (medical expenses, school feels, costs associated with marriage and newborn), however, they were more likely to be abused by their immediate entourage. In sum, the use of cash transfers in the reinsertion phase has indeed meant a breath a fresh air to ex-combatants, but should not be overrated, as their room of manoeuvre was eventually limited by the way they balanced their social obligations with personal benefit.

Another dichotomy that could easily be challenged in contexts similar to western Côte d'Ivoire is the distinction between a militia member and a local vigilante. More than being a terminological challenge, it is a real puzzle in some contexts to draw a clear line between who is/was a militia member and who is/was a civilian; as Pouligny (2004) rightly noted, the distinction between the two can be all the more blurred by the fact that the construction of the militarized/civilian dichotomy might differ from the viewpoints of individuals and groups within the local societies, and from the viewpoints of outsiders. If the confusion and overlapping of terms exists to such an extent – Who is a combatant? Who is a militia member? Who is a local vigilante? – it actually makes little sense to distinguish between the three labels in certain contexts, especially on counterinsurgent sides and in areas close to the former front line, where armed mobilization is likely to have been initially based on community forms of policing.[3] The literature on vigilantism sheds some light on this dilemma by pointing out the multiplicity of forms vigilante groups take over time and space and by stressing several paradoxes that surround the concept when traditional forms of rural/urban vigilantism are related to a form of mobilization that resembles warfare (Baker, 2007; Kirsch & Gratz, 2010; Kyed, 2007; Menkhaus, 2007; Pratten & Sen, 2007; Reno, 2007). If vigilantes are often genuinely driven by a set of moral values and a desire to promote social order in the societies in which they operate, their 'guarding' function can be paralleled by acts of extreme violence against whomever is perceived as the enemy (Abrahams, 1987). Also (and contrary to a widespread perception), vigilantes are no substitute to the State and often engage in an evolving relationship with it, alternating periods of confrontation with periods of entanglement and mutual support (Buur, 2010; Kirsch & Gratz, 2010). It is this last point that applies so well in the Ivoirian case, given the extent of entanglement of the counterinsurgent movements with the national army in the beginning of the conflict and their severing of links at a later stage; as Meagher (2010) convincingly writes, there is a strong urge to look at how the State accommodates (or not) counterinsurgent armed groups over time. The mass uprising in Guiglo was largely a response to violence 'from below', which got quickly captured, absorbed and instrumentalized by the Ivoirian State, as the national army was failing to provide protection to the western residents at the onset of conflict. But while one would have expected that this counterinsurgency would gradually slip into a function of local guardian by securing their immediate surroundings (resuming thereby a more traditional form of urban/rural vigilantism once the period of combat had passed), western militias in fact did little to counter the criminality in their zone. Worse, there have been several allegations that some militia members contributed to it. Thieves and *coupeurs de route* have remained a structural issue in Guéré territory (with seasonal peaks in December and during the cocoa/coffee harvest time, when money circulates most widely), and autochthonous and allochthonous communities have continued to clash regularly, without appropriate mediation.

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[3] Which was notably the case in Guiglo.

When fighting is over, what remains of the warfare apparatus?

The (quasi) absence of intervention on the counterinsurgency side in local security matters once the peak of conflict had passed is another odd trait of the Ivoirian case. Although there has been anecdotal evidence that some militia recruits have genuinely been contributing to the maintenance of the local social order (some being employed as local security guards by private companies or as escorts), militia leaders have never publicly advertised this role, which, to some extent, has maintained a certain vagueness with regards to the participation of militarized civilians in local security matters. Another layer had yet been added to the existing system, even if the main driver had switched from some sort of moral obligation in the very beginning (which boosted massive recruitment for self-defence) to more lucrative notions at later stages (the prospect of deriving an income from securing local goods); in addition, this phenomenon did not concern everyone and the ones who got access to these paid opportunities were usually the ones who continued to maintain visible links with prominent militia leaders. But if new regimes of local governance have certainly been negotiated at the local level with regards to local security matters – informed by immediate circumstances, but also derived from the local historical trajectory of popular justice and social mobilization (Buur, 2010; Kirsch & Gratz, 2010: 18; Mbembe, 2001: 76-93) – the situation in Guiglo has been quite a far cry from situations elsewhere, where local vigilantes were quick to redress the grievances of the poor by taking local justice into their own hands (Meagher, 2008; Sen, 2007). On the insurgent side, conversely, an interesting development that took place after 2006 is that low-ranking elements in the rebel forces increasingly started to fulfil the role of public security officials (in agreement with the Ivoirian government) to make up for the absence of State officials in the rebel-controlled areas[4] (this notably concerned the functions of police, forestry control and penitentiary guards). But instead of interpreting such a phenomenon as an example of militarized youths keen on pursuing an opportunistic career in the rebellion, one has to see it as a social claim, with a main rationale less linked to the willingness of pursuing war in the long run than to individuals' desire for (and ability to achieve) upward mobility.

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[4] A quite ironic development when compared to the situation in 2002, when the first to die in the rebel-controlled areas were precisely those State security officials.

When assessing the extent to which certain armed groups might be reactivated to fulfil a function of local guardian more in line with traditional forms of urban/rural vigilantism, what is striking on both belligerent sides is that we are quite far from a 'group' response and that the phenomenon has remained relatively small-scale and limited to a few individuals. The question is therefore not so much framed in terms of why some armed groups continue to protect local communities over time while others do not (a collective bias several authors endorse), but how individuals are able to make sense of their limited options and how they are able to devise ways of coping with the different opportunities faced, even those deriving from warfare. The concept of agency is central to this approach. Social actors circulate between several sets of logic and choose between various standards: eventually, several rationalities come to meet.

Conceptual implications

In light of those conceptual and empirical findings, there are several elements to include in any analytical framework developed for conceptualizing the demobilization and reinsertion processes of young people temporarily drawn into armed groups. The variety of individual backgrounds must be carefully looked at, in terms of personal skills and situations but also in terms of motivations for engagement, in order to better guide the intervention. The second element concerns the extent of entanglement of the militarized sphere with the civilian and humanitarian domains. A comprehensive framework must address the complexity of the links militarized civilians continue (or not) to maintain with their close family and pre-war social networks during and after their time in an armed faction. Finally, for each given context, there is the need to get an idea of the *dosage* of interventions. Not so much to suggest a causal relationship (after all, whether interventions are at the core of side of a given environment, they are part of the local opportunity structures and have certain effects), but because in situations where humanitarianism does not play such a central role in the local context, interventions hardly run the risk to dry up existing social mechanisms, and this situation enables the analyst to study quasi-usual endogenous processes in socio-political-economic spaces recently affected by conflict. The specific character of an intervention is an empirical question, which cannot be determined in advance and which has to be contextualized at several levels; one of them is to assess the extent to which other factors have potentially played a role in an effect presumedly boosted by the intervention.

The step forward

Humanitarianism has only been an extra in western Côte d'Ivoire and there is no need to overestimate its effects. Because it came late for most of the militarized civilians in this study (two or three years after their effective demobilization), and because it was never implemented on a large scale, it certainly opens up the debate whether an indigenous process of peace building is conceivable in western Côte d'Ivoire, given the context we know. There is certainly ample room for research in this respect, but we can perhaps guide the early stages of reflection by returning to one of the effects mentioned above. It has been empirically shown, humanitarian interventions targeting ex-combatants have the collateral effect of boosting demobilization and disarmament processes. Ironically, this is not considered to be their objective (and their goal remains framed and measured in terms of socio-economic reinsertion), yet de facto this unintended consequence is probably the most valuable contribution these interventions make in terms of conflict mitigation. As hinted earlier, it gives a sense of closure to those who were once involved in an armed group and to the local population they live amongst. It fosters self-demobilization and it creates political and media events that invite militarized individuals to return their weapons without being further chased. The possibility of indigenous recovery must therefore be analyzed in this light: are there alternatives in contexts where the global approach to post-conflict interventions has permeated so much the local contexts?

Photograph 11: Apprentices, including former militarized recruits, in a tailoring workshop, Guiglo

CENTRE
BUREAU du Directeur
LES APPRENANTS
CMP

Photograph 12: Informal training in electricity, Man
(GTZ-IS was paying their tuition for three elements of the *Forces Nouvelles*)

Appendix 1
Chronology of violent events in the west (2002-07)

The aim of this chronology of violent events is to help the reader grasp the general ambiance that prevailed in western Côte d'Ivoire throughout the different phases of the conflict. It has been compiled drawing on several sources:[1] local newspapers (*Fraternité Matin*, *24 Heures, Notre Voie, L'inter, Le Front, Soir Info*), national and international press agencies (Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, Agence France Presse, BBC, PANA Press, Reuters), institutional reports (International Crisis Group, IRINNews, OCHA Bulletins, INGO reports), impartial forces intelligence (as documented in the UN and UNOCHA security bulletins) and some reflections taken from individual weblogs. Far from denying the partiality of certain sources and the politicized nature of some documents (Ivoirian newspapers are well-known for their political engagement), the goal here was to extract the most 'factual' information. The documents are therefore treated as valuable primary sources that account for a particularly violent period. A few general events are recalled which are not specific to the west and have been included for a better comprehension of the chain of events. Their dates are underlined in the chronology.

2002

19 September	Strategic positions are attacked in three major Ivoirian towns. At least 400 people are killed in Abidjan, including Minister of Interior Boga Doudou and former head of State General Gueï. Having failed to take Abidjan, rebelling soldiers retreat to Bouaké and announce the creation of an insurgent group, the MPCI. BBC and RFI programmes cease within a week on FM frequencies, eliminating access to independent media coverage of the conflict for most rural residents.
24 September	Rebel forces capture the town of Tiebissou, 50 km north of Yamoussoukro.
26 September	Ivoirian authorities declare Bouaké and Korhogo war zones. Rebel forces take the town of Korhogo, almost without

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[1] Sources include: (Agence France Presse, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Agence Ivoirienne De Presse, 2002; Associated Press, 2002; Bbc News, 2002, 2003; Fraternite Matin, 2002a, 2002b; Human Rights Watch, 2002, 2003b; International Crisis Group, 2003; Irinnews, 2005; L'inter, 2007b; Le Front, 2005; Le Monde, 2002, 2005; Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2003; Notre Voie, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2006; Operation Des Nations Unies En Cote D'ivoire, 2007a, 2007b, 2008; Pana Press, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, 2002e, 2002f, 2003a, 2003b, 2003d, 2003e, 2003f, 2003g, 2003i, 2003j, 2003m, 2003n, 2003p, 2004a, 2004c, 2004d); (Pana Press, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d, 2005e, 2005f, 2008; Rassemblement Des Republicains, 2005; Reuters, 2002, 2003; Soir Info, 2002; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2006e, 2006f, 2006g, 2006h, 2006i, 2006j, 2006k, 2006l, 2006m, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008)

	resistance. Loyalist forces reinforce their troops in Vavoua.
7 October	The French channel TV5 is taken off the air. The military front moves west with the rebel forces capturing the town of Vavoua, 100 km east of Man. The following days, in rural areas nearby, and especially on the Duékoué-Kouibli axis (the villages of Blodi, Iruzon, Diahouin, Toazeo, and Kouibli), Guéré youths are mobilized by mayors and local chiefs to protect their villages. Checkpoints are set up in each locality to control entry. Escalating violence against the Burkinabés residing in the area, beginning with extortion and verbal harassment and ending in physical assaults, including murder. By the end of October 2002, most Burkinabés have fled the area.
11-12 October	Moving south from Vavoua, rebel forces attack Daloa, a major urban hub in *the Bété* area. Daloa borders the *Guéré* area, and is a key transit point for the cocoa and coffee trade.
14-15 October	Loyalist forces recapture Daloa with Angolan help. 'Cleansing' operation follow (*operation de ratissage*): arbitrary arrests and summary executions of suspected rebels, which include many civilians of northern origin and RDR sympathizers. A blacklist circulates among loyalist troops, with names of people suspected of having links with the rebel forces.
15 October	Regarding the Daloa attack, an article in *Notre Voie* suggests strong ethnic and political polarization. On rebel forces: 'The assailants found refuge in the Dioula neighbourhood, the Dioula showed them support. Abandoned guns were collected by young RDR members, who have encouraged these terrorists' actions since the beginning of the attack in Daloa; rebels are praised as they pass by their neighborhood.'
17 October	A ceasefire is brokered by the Senegalese Minister of Foreign Affairs and accepted by both belligerent sides (MPCI and Ivorian Presidency). The agreement provides that both insurgent and government troops remain in the areas they are controlling. The ceasefire line runs east to west and divides the country in half. The towns of Odienné, Korhogo, Séguéla, Vavoua and Bouaké are controlled by rebel forces, and French forces are asked to supervise the ceasefire until ECOWAS troops take the lead.
23 October	In reaction to the very negatively perceived repressive operations in Daloa, Jules Yao Yao, spokesperson of the loyalist forces, makes a public statement in the local press, *24 Heures*. He acknowledges that such operations are taking place, but that they only target individuals who hosted or helped the assailants. Arbitrary arrests and summary executions end immediately afterwards.

31 October	Lomé peace talks. Both belligerents agree to respect the ceasefire and to refrain from having mercenaries and children in their ranks.
3-4 November	Rebel forces attack the local firm Sucrivoire in Borotou-Koro, 150 km north of Man. They take 42 tons of sugar, cash and various equipment.
27 November	Loyalist forces launch an attack on Vavoua, 100 km east of Man, and use helicopters to bomb rebel military bases. Due to their proximity to downtown Man, there are many civilian casualties. The same day, government helicopters fly over the nearby villages of Pélézi, Dania and Monoko-Zohi, in the rebel-controlled area. They drop several bombs and shoot at people. Non-autochthonous neighbourhoods seem to be affected the most.
27-28 November	Armed groups attack the village of Monoko-Zohi, 70 km southwest of Vavoua. They deliberately target civilians.
28 November	Two new rebel groups appear in the west of the country, below the ceasefire line set on 17 October (MPIGO and MJP). The new forces come at quite an opportune time as the MPCI has signed a ceasefire with the government, impeding pursuing further military advances. The opening of a new western front by MJP and MPIGO forces has the advantage of not violating any treaty. A mix of MJP and MPCI forces takes the town of Man, and MPIGO claims the attack of Danané. The town of Danané is bombed by a government helicopter. The same day, rebel forces capture the town of Zouan-Hounien, south of Danané, located next to an important gold mining area.
30 Nov. - 1 Dec.	Loyalist forces recapture Man. 'Cleansing' operations follow the next days, similar to what occurred in Daloa (disappearances, arbitrary arrests, summary executions of suspected rebels, many of whom of northern origin and Yacouba background, RDR and UDPCI sympathizers[2]). A blacklist from Abidjan circulates among loyalist troops, a list of names is also compiled by local authorities and 'denunciations' are commonplace.
2 December	MPIGO, quickly moving south along the Liberian border from Danané and Zouan-Hounien, takes Toulepleu.
4 December	Loyalists launch a counter-attack on Toulepleu. The town is bombed by helicopters but remains a rebel-controlled area.

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[2] UDPCI used to be led by General Gueï (head of State between December 1999 and October 2000). The General was of Yacouba origin.

5 December	French soldiers find a mass grave in Monoko-Zohi. The information is relayed in both local and international press. There is a great deal of controversy who is to blame, but loyalist forces seem to have been the perpetrators, according to testimonies of people who survived the attack.
6-7 December	Rebel forces move west from the Toulepleu area and take the town of Blolequin (MPIGO).
12 December	Loyalist forces take Blolequin back with the help of Liberian forces and Guéré militia members.
18 December	Mahapleu, 50 km east of Man and in rebel-controlled area, is bombed by a helicopter on market day. The attack is led by loyalist forces. Market stalls and the mosque are among the targets.
19 December	The town of Man is recaptured by rebel forces. Violent retaliation targets civilians who helped loyalist forces during the two-week period they had control of the town (for instance, by fingering suspected rebels). Those involved in neighbourhood vigilantism are particularly at risk of being arrested or killed. The BCEAO bank in town is ripe for the taking.
20 December	Rebel forces take Bangolo and the villages nearby, including those on the Duékoué-Kouibli axis (Blodi, Iruzon, Toazeo, Sibabli and Kouibli). Massive displacement of the Guéré population to the government-controlled area.
21 December	French forces clash with MPIGO rebels in Duékoué.
23-27 December	Mass arrival of civilians in Duékoué (estimated at 24,000). They are mostly of Guéré origin and come from villages located on the Duékoué-Kouibli axis.
end of December	The Ivoirian government commits to grounding combat helicopters.

2003

1 January	Rebel forces take the village of Zou.
6 January	Rebel forces attack French forces in Duékoué. They launch the attack from Fengolo, their most advanced base south, but do not succeed in taking the town. Rebel forces eventually move to CIB the following days, in the *sous-préfecture* of Blolequin, and pass through the villages of Kahin, Tomepleu and Guezahi.
10-12 January	Loyalist forces retake Toulépleu (and Blolequin?), with the help of Liberian forces and Guéré militia members. Rebel forces, and especially Liberian fighters, ravage several

	villages as they retreat north, looting and killing arbitrarily.
13 January	Ceasefire signed between the government and the two rebel groups MPIGO and MJP. It remains a deal on paper.
15-24 January	Linas-Marcoussis peace talks in France: an agreement is reached to establish a government of national reconciliation with wide executive powers, composed of ministers from the main political parties and rebel groups. While the talks are being held, fighting continues in the west.
14 January	Ethnic tensions explode in the area of Bagohouo, Nidrou, Yorozon, Blodi, Bahé Sebon, in Guéré territory. Alliances of convenience occur between Burkinabés and rebel forces to fight the autochthonous youths (the first targets are self-defence committee members) and a great deal of violence is used against Guérés. Some accounts describe the rebel forces as having been incited by the Burkinabés. Massive flight of Guérés to Duékoué.
late January	MPCI leader Tuo Fozié orders the expulsion from Man of the worst of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters.
February	Reports of alleged attacks on Yacoubas in the area of Bangolo.
10 February	Fighting between Ivoirian government and rebel forces takes place in Toulepleu.
25 February	Reports of attacks on Baoulé farmers in the area of Guiglo.
3 March	In Liberia, Liberian government troops retake the town of Toe Town, on the south-eastern border, from Liberian insurgents. They are allegedly backed by the Ivoirian state.
7 March	Al least 60 civilians are killed in Bangolo by Liberian fighters. There is controversy on which side perpetrated the violence, but these Liberians seem to have been backed by the government. The Dioula quarter in particular was targeted.
8 March	Rebel forces have decided to close their 'border' in order to prevent infiltration of government forces.
22-23 March	The village of Dah, 9 km southwest of Bangolo, is attacked at night. It is locally interpreted as an act of retaliation after the Bangolo killings. There do not seem to be any particular targets. Both autochthonous and non-autochthonous residents flee the area. The Ivoirian armed forces accuse the rebel forces of having killed 42 civilians. Three days later, AFP states that there was no independent confirmation of the claim, since French forces based in Duékoué report having heard the rumour, but not being able to confirm the attack.

	A few weeks later, Human Rights Watch gathers several testimonies documenting the event.
28 March	Loyalist forces and Guéré militia members help their Liberian ally to attack the town of Zwedru in Liberia.
1-2 April	French positions in Duékoué are attacked.
3 April	Rebel forces attack ECOWA troops, south of Vavoua.
4 April	Rebel forces attack the French near Dibobli, 40 km east of Duékoué.
6 April	Loyalist forces launch a major offensive along the Liberian border and intense fighting starts for the control of the road between Toulepleu and Danané. Despite government committing to grounding combat helicopters in late December, the town of Zouan-Hounien is bombed by an MI-24 on 6 April. Most residents flee the town after the aerial attack. Loyalist forces recapture the town of Zouan-Hounien, with the help of Liberian and Guéré militias, and hold it for a week. Some accounts say that the remaining Guérés were evacuated to safer places during that period. The towns of Zouan-Hounien, Danané and surrounding villages are bombed several times in the following days. Surrounding villages are set ablaze by Liberian fighters.
13-14 April	For the second time, rebel forces capture the town of Zouan-Hounien and Bin Houyé. For fear of aerial reprisals, the remaining population takes refuge at the Catholic Mission.
14 April	Intense aerial raid on Zouan-Hounien by the loyalist forces. Non-military premises are clearly targeted, including the Catholic Mission and the health centre it hosts.
15 April	The towns of Danané, Mahapleu and Vavoua are bombed by helicopters but remain rebel-controlled areas. The aerial attacks are denied by the government.
17 April	Press release by *Médecins sans Frontières*: 'On Tuesday, April 15, in the afternoon, MSF had to treat about fifty wounded civilians in the hospital of Man. The wounded - among whom 9 children, 13 women, and some elderly persons - reported that they were victims of helicopter attacks in Danané and Mahapleu.' On the same day, while war is still raging in the west, the reconciliation government composed of pro-government and pro-rebel ministers holds its first full cabinet session in Abidjan. The event is hailed by President Gbagbo as 'a major step in restoring peace'.

18 April	Rebel forces launch an offensive on the town of Toulepleu. The town remains government-controlled area.
22-23 April	Loyalist forces attack rebel positions in the towns of Zouan-Hounien and Bin Houyé.
25 April	The MPIGO Ivoirian leader Felix Doh is killed after Ivoirian rebels clash with their Liberian and Sierra Leonean allies.
3 May	A ceasefire is signed by the belligerent sides, immediately preceded by a violent scramble on both sides to gain as much territory as possible before it goes into effect. Part of the agreement is that each side will expel its Liberian fighters.
5 May	Both loyalist and rebel forces reject the idea of setting up a buffer zone to separate their respective territories.
6 May	Despite the ceasefire, loyalist forces attack rebel positions in the town of Zouan-Hounien and retake the town.
4-8 May	Reports of 'Burkinabé rebels' allegedly killing 223 people of Guéré origin (including children) as they were trying to leave the Bangolo area for Duékoué.
8 May	French soldiers are attacked by an unidentified armed group near Guiglo. Two people in the group are killed. Sierra Leonese commander Sam Bockarie, who used to be involved in MPIGO leadership, is reported dead.
10 May	The national curfew in place since 19 September is lifted. The government of reconciliation announces the end of the war.
14 May	Loyalist forces re-establish curfew in two western cities.
15 May	The government denounces the violence against civilians in western Côte d'Ivoire and promises to take measures.
22 May	The *Préfet* of Korhogo is set free by the rebel forces after 8 months of detention. He is handed over to loyalist forces.
23 May	Impartial forces are deployed in the west to monitor ceasefire. The west continues to see extreme violence, despite the ceasefire being signed. A buffer zone is instituted in the west, the *Zone de Confiance* (60 km by 40 km), which separates government and rebel territory with a neutral area, monitored by impartial forces. Only later is the *Zone de Confiance* extended to the breadth of the country.
27 May	Ivoirian Prime Minister and other political figures, including rebellion supporters, visit the western region in order to send a strong political signal. French forces and ECOWA troops provide direct support in this security operation.

4 June	The President is accused by the rebel forces of fueling the Liberian war by supporting the Liberian insurgent movements LURD and MODEL and using some of these Liberians to retake the towns of Man and Danané.
5 June	Rebel forces officially announce that the West has been ‘cleansed’ of mercenaries. They no longer have such fighters in their ranks.
22 June	Dismantlement of hundreds of checkpoints in Bouaké.
25 June	Impartial forces make a public statement in which they report relative stability in the *Zone de Confiance* and the western region.
4 July	Government and rebel Chiefs of Staff officially announce that the war is over. In a ceremony held at the presidential palace, former rebels present President Gbagbo with a rifle, to signal their intent to disarm.
11 July	The Ivoirian government promises emergency food aid in the west.
21 July	Rebel forces hold a meeting with the population in Man and ask them to endorse the new peace plan. They also ask for forgiveness for the acts of war committed.
25 September	The BCEAO bank in Bouaké is robbed. Heavy shooting between rival rebel factions. Checkpoints are reinstalled in town. Five days later, rebel Chief of Staff Colonel Bakayoko and his right hand Commander Cherif Ousmane, are ambushed. This leads to drastic measures in town, and rebels are eventually prohibited by their leadership to bear arms in Bouaké.
15 October	Mass displacement of populations of Dioula, Burkinabé and Malian origin from the western region to the town of Gagnoa. People arrive in successive waves, fleeing the violence in rural areas.
11 November	Non-autochthones continue to be hunted down around Gagnoa.
20 November	Heavy fighting between Guéré and Burkinabé in the village of Zou, in the *Zone de Confiance.*
23 November	PANA reports the distress of 7,000 Burkinabés, chased from their plantations by young Guérés and living in temporary UN encampments nearby Guiglo.
8 December	The displaced Dioula, Burkinabé and Malian people that had sought refuge in Gagnoa in October return to their plantations.

2004

8 January	Young Guérés raid the village of Kahin, in the *Zone de Confiance*, mainly populated by Baoulés and Burkinabés. Eight people are killed (one of Guéré origin).
18 February	Three Burkinabé farmers are killed in Duékoué, allegedly by Guérés.
4 March	Fifteen people are killed, including children, in the village of Broudoumé, in the region of Gagnoa, by unidentified armed men.
20-27 April	Fighting between *autochthones* and *dozos* in the villages of Diéouzon and Kouibli. Mass displacement of population to Bangolo. \
18-19 May	A Togolese is found dead in Guiglo, allegedly killed by militia members.
2 June	A Dioula taxi driver is found dead in Guiglo, his throat slit.
7 June	French forces attacked by unidentified group in Gotihafla.
20 September	While it was believed that the BCEAO bank in Man had been completely emptied in December 2002, remnants of cash are robbed by some of the French soldiers posted in the bank to secure the town.
4 November	Loyalist forces launch an aerial raid on Bouaké.
6 November	Loyalist forces attack the French peacekeeping mission. The French destroy all Ivoirian aircraft. Anti-French riots erupt in both government and rebel-controlled areas. In Man, several thousand people demonstrate at the French base, asking the French peacekeepers to leave.

2005

28 February	Pro-government militias attack Logoualé, in rebel territory. The UN mission intervenes to re-establish order and monitor the ceasefire.
8 May	The UN representative for Côte d'Ivoire Humanitarian Affairs makes a public statement regretting the violence that happened in Duékoué in late April, leading to many deaths and displaced people.

13 May	Firmin Mahé, sometimes presented as militia chief, sometimes simply as a bandit (‘*coupeur de route*’[3]) is killed in Guchiébli by French forces in doubtful circumstances near Bangolo, in *ZdC*.
25 May	Start of the dismantlement of the pro-government militias in Guiglo.
31 May - 1 June	The Guéré villages of Petit-Duékoué and Guitrozon are attacked by unidentified men armed with machetes and hunting guns, leaving 41 dead and more than 60 wounded, all of Guéré origin. Mass displacement of population follows.
6 June	Reprisals immediately follow. Three Dioulas and one Burkinabé are killed by AP-Wê militia members in Duékoué. The same day, four Guéré are attacked by Dioulas.
15-17 June	On a visit to Wê territory, the Ivoirian President encourages the youths to remain mobilized.
18 June	Following rising insecurity near Duékoué, the President decides to set up a military administration in western Côte d’Ivoire.

2006

January	In reaction to the contested terms of UN Resolution 1643, a wave of violent protest against the UN is led by the Young Patriots in Abidjan and by pro-government militias in Duékoué and Guiglo.
17 January	Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers open fire on the crowd in Guiglo, killing 5 demonstrators. Violent reaction of the mob. All UN and INGO offices are looted in Guiglo with the exception of the MSF premises. UN peacekeepers and INGOs retreat from Guiglo for a few months.
5-6 February	Unidentified armed men attack the encampment of Peehapa, part of the village of Mona, 17 km from Guiglo. 12 people are killed, of Guéré and Gnaboua origin. Several Guéré families move to Guiglo.
13 February	When Guéré youths from the villages of Mona and Zouan plot to attack the camp of the displaced Burkinabé in Guiglo, in retaliation for the Peehapa killings, local authorities intervene and contain the youths.
10 April	First day of disappearance of a Baoulé farmer, last seen in an encampment near Petit Guiglo.

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[3] The *coupeurs de route* is a French term used to describe groups of armed individuals who attack vehicles and then rob the passengers of money and goods. It typifies lawlessness in western Côte d’Ivoire.

14-15 April	A Baoulé farmer is shot dead in Basinkro, near the village of Guézon Tahouaké. It is the third time armed men visit the encampment.
16 April	The UN Police reports that some people have lef the village of Petit Guiglo after hearing rumours of retaliation by the Baoulé community.
17 and 19 April	The UN facilitates reconciliation meetings between the Guéré and Baoulé communities.
April	Security incidents in the villages of Gohouo Zagna, Béoué, Tahebly Gahé, Bahébly, Diéouzon, Gran Pin, and Douekpé. The MSF assists some of the wounded. Displacement of population. Alleged perpetrators are *dozos* and *'coupeurs de route'* (bandits). The same month, a Burkinabé is attacked near Bangolo by a bandit and Burkinabés attack young Guérés in reprisal. Rebel forces and *dozos* fight people of Lobi origin in the village of Zoupleu. UN Police notes several similar cases of violence in the southern villages of the *Zone de Confiance*.
1 May	Guéré accuse Baoulé and Burkinabé of having set fire to several autochthonous plantations in the village of Gohouo Zagna, east of Bangolo.
3 May	A Burkinabé is reported missing by the Burkinabe community leader of Gohouo Zagna. He is found dead two days later.
4 May	Three Guérés are found dumped in a hole, hands tied behind their backs and stabbed to death. Four other Guérés fall into an ambush in the same area but manage to escape and alert the impartial forces.
20 May	Armed individuals attack a passenger truck in Saada, 20 km of Guiglo, north of Zouan, in the *Zone de Confiance*.
29 May	Armed individuals attack two buses and rob passengers between Bangolo and Guehiebly.
1 June	A Guéré is found dead between Goenle-Tahouaké and Baibly, east of Bangolo.
24 June	Two Burkinabé children aged 3 and 6 are found dead in Douekpé, east of Bangolo.
25 June	Four women, one child and one man are reported missing in Georgeskro (an encampment of Fengolo).
27-28 June	Armed men attack the village of Boho 2, in the *sous-préfecture* of Zéo, east of Bangolo. French forces discover 7 dead and 15 wounded in the villages of Blédi and Goho 2, next to Douekpé. The attack is locally

	perceived as a reaction to the murder of the two Burkinabé children.
27 July	Western pro-government militias start to disarm. The modus operandi is centralized in Duékoué.
4 August	Because too few weapons are surrendered, the disarmament of the western pro-government militias is suspended.
20 August	Two local businessmen, of Guinean and Nigerian origin, are reported missing, last seen on their way back from the market of Blolequin. It triggers an inter-ethnic conflict four days later, between Guéré and non-*autochthone*s from the village of CIB (in the Zou *sous-préfecture*).
23 August	A Burkinabé is killed in the village of Binao, on the Duékoué-Bangolo road. In response, Burkinabé attack Guéré women in their fields. Many Guéré flee towards Bangolo.
26 August	Two minivans are attacked on the Duékoué-Bangolo road, killing a driver and a little girl.
September	French forces report that since February 2006, inter-ethnic conflicts have cost the lives of 25 people and wounded 46 in the area east of Bangolo (Baibly/Gohouo axis). Acts of banditry have cost the lives of 16 and wounded 11 on the Bangolo/Duékoué axis and the Daloa-Vavoua road. Near Kouibly, populations living in the rebel-controlled area bordering the *Zone de Confiance* complain about frequent attacks.
12 September	Two Guérés are found dead near Blolequin; *autochthones* accuse Burkinabés. In response, armed youths create checkpoints between Glopaoudy and Zouan.
27-28 September	Two young Guérés are found dead in Délobly, between Duékoué and Bangolo. Several Burkinabés accuse the *autochthones* of protecting the criminals and as the incident degenerates, *autochthones* flee the village to move to villages nearby (e.g. Guéhiebly, 7 km from Délobly).
28 September	Pro-government militia members demonstrate in Duékoué, asking for the DDR operations to resume.
10 October	Shooting is heard in the village of Banguéhi (Zou), with *dozos*, in charge of the security of the village, fighting armed thieves, particularly active when coffee and cocoa is being traded. There are allegations that the thieves are of Burkinabé origin.
early November	The Burkinabé community leader of Toa Zéo calls on the *dozo* brotherhood to protect his community. This decision is contested

	and leads to an internal clash ending with one dead and several wounded in the Burkinabé community.
19-20 November	Tensions rise when the armed *dozos* move from Toa Zéo to Blody. AP-Wê militia members become involved, and fighting leads to 6 dead, an *allogene* encampment being burnt down, and the emptying of the nearby villages of Toa Zéo, Blody and Irozon. *Autochtones* seek refuge in Duékoué.
4 December	In Téapleu, between Zouan Hounien and Danané, a traffic accident between a bus and a motorcycle dissolves into ethnic conflict between Yacoubas and Dioulas. Several houses are burnt and many people flee the area.
9 December	Unidentified armed men attack the village of Fengolo, killing one person and wounding four. Displacement of population to Duekoue.
24-26 December	The village of Toa Zéo is attacked, and shooting is heard in certain neighbourhoods of the town of Duékoué, where displaced residents of Toa Zéo have temporarily sought shelter. Impartial forces indicate that young Guérés have started the shooting in an attempt to oust the *dozos* from Toa Zéo.

2007

2 January	A minivan is shot at, at the village of Petit Logoualé, near Bangolo. Two passengers are killed.
8 January	Several coffee/cocoa plantations located between Duékoué and Blodi are burnt down (UN Pakistani peacekeepers had just left the village of Blodi). The loss is estimated at 64 hectares. In the encampment of Dobobly in the same area, 21 persons claim that their fields were set ablaze. One of the perpetrators, of Guéré origin, is shot dead during the violent outburst that followed, on the Toa Zéo-Irouzon axis.
14 January	Six young Guérés of the village of Baoubly (between Duékoué and Bangolo) are declared missing after having gone fishing near the Baoulé encampment of Koffikro. Impartial forces conduct the investigations.
18 January	Armed individuals set an empty truck on fire on the Duékoué-Bangolo axis.
19 January	On the same road, armed individuals attack a van and rob passengers.
20 January	Discovery of a corpse, the skull is crushed, on the road between Mona and Demobly, 12 km from Guiglo. The victim is apparently not from the direct area but is alleged to be a ‘displaced’ person from Zou. A minivan is attacked on the road Yabli-Guinglo. One dead, one wounded.

22 January	A group of Burkinabé forbids a vehicle carrying Guérés from entering the village of Blodi. Five armed individuals attack a bus in Diahouin (between Duékoué and Bangolo) and rob passengers, killing one.
23-24 January	Two persons of Baoulé origin are lynched in the village of Baoubli, between Bangolo and Logoualé. A Burkinabé is stabbed to death near Baoubli.
25 January	An old man of Guéré origin, about 90 years old, is found dead on his plantation located next to the Baoulé encampment of Jeunessekro. His feet were bound, and he had been beheaded and disembowelled.
5 February	The UN police is impeded by the population in the arrest of the persons suspected to be involved in the disappearance of the Guéré fishermen three weeks earlier.
6 February	Journalists from IRIN/Radio were taken hostage by their interviewee, militia chief Colombo, of the AP-Wê group.
25 February	Armed individuals attack someone of Guéré origin in Glopaoudy, 15 km north of Guiglo. The incident turns into ethnic conflict between autochthonous and allochthonous communities.
28-30 March	Armed confrontation between two rival groups in Bangolo and surrounding villages.
11 April	Signature of a quadripartite agreement to eliminate the buffer zone known as *Zone de Confiance* by 16 April.
16 April	The *Zone de Confiance* is officially dismantled. Medecins sans Frontières continues to report almost daily attacks against civilians in the western part of the *Zone de Confiance.*
19 May	Western pro-government militias begin again to disarm.
23 May	*Dozos* kill four thieves in the Zou area, who allegedly had attacked their village next to Danané.
26 June	UN Police reports cases of rapes on the Duékoué-Toa Zéo road. Several women are attacked, allegedly by 8 men, resident of the Toguéhi neighbourhood in Duékoué. 4 Nigerians are robbed by young men, who had convinced them to take a side road on their way out from Duékoué in order to avoid checkpoint harassment.
6-7 July	A 50-year-old Malian from Guiglo is killed at home during a robbery.

	23 September	Following militia riots in Duékoué and Guiglo, a curfew is set in Duékoué.
	25-26 September	A farmer from Pinhou (*sous-préfecture* of Zou) is accused by his peers of being a thief and having stolen poultry. He is severely beaten and dies. Impartial forces arrest four suspected criminals.
	19 October	The Prime Minister announces the future introduction of the *'Service Civique'*, an institutional device which will target the Ivoirian youth by minimizing the risk that ex-recruits re-enrol.
	29 October	The President officially announces his willingness to ban the *'carte de sejour'*, imposed on foreign nationals living in Cote d'Ivoire since the early 1990s.
2008		
	January	UN reports several attacks on cocoa/coffee buyers on the Zou/Pinhou axis.
	18-19 January	Violent altercation between UN peacekeepers and youths in Béoué, between Guiglo and Blolequin.
	28 June	The towns of Séguéla and Vavoua are the theatre of heavy fighting between rival rebel factions.
	24 November	Armed men try to take control of the rebel arsenal of Séguéla.

VENTE
DE PORC
AU FOUR

Photograph 13: Small business sponsored by the GTZ-IS project, Guiglo

ICI VENTE DES POULETS
DE CHAIRS
CRIKOUMAN
OUMAR CEL: 04-56-15-67

Photograph 14: Poultry farm sponsored by the GTZ-IS project, Man

Appendix 2
Checklists of individual interview guidelines[1]

Main socio-demographic characteristic
age, sex, ethnic group, place of birth, social group membership, involved in a relationship or not, ethnic group of spouse, with/without children under custody, age of children, educational status of children, raised by whom and at what period, parents/guardians occupations (current or former), parents alive/deceased, parents living together/apart during childhood, general information on siblings, strength of ties with the near family, involved/not involved in a past family conflict

Mobility
list of all localities where the respondents have lived since childhood detailing the periods, the occupation, the reason of having moved there and the extent of financial (in)-dependence, last place of residence at the moment of recruitment and composition of household, place of residence affected/not affected by open fighting at the peak of conflict, displaced/not displaced due to war

Educational trajectories
list of all schools (public and private) where the respondents have studied since childhood detailing the localities, the periods, the people taking care of food/accommodation/school and clothing expenses, reasons for dropping out, for those who had dropped at an early age or who had never gone to school, extent of functional literacy and numeracy

Professional trajectories
age of respondent when he/she started working (including unpaid help to parents), list of all paid/unpaid economic activities since childhood by locality and period, frequency and amount of the money earned (including time in informal apprenticeship), details of possible dependents, goals of possible savings

Recruitment
place and date of recruitment into the first armed group, age when recruited, name of first group integrated, detailed circumstances of recruitment, rationales for joining, any proof of enlistment, relatives/friends/acquaintances already into the armed group prior enlistment, violent death of someone close due to war

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[1] The checklist for interviewing the youngest recruits was adapted from the adult guidelines.

Militarized life

list of all fronts and military settings where the respondents went by period and locality since recruitment day, accommodation and eating habits and locations, general information on earnings during that period including sporadic incentives given by war chiefs and products of the loot, description of the various tasks executed while in the armed group, extent of involvement in extra-military paid activity, extent of social connection with close family during the time in the armed group

Return to civil life

demobilized or still active[2] current place of residence and composition of the household, current activity, eating habits, personal and professional project once demobilized, description of training followed within the reinsertion project, familiar/not familiar with the activity, willingness to continue the activity or to do something else, nature of financial and in-kind support received, ideal location to run the project, in group/in family/alone, general knowledge of DDR benefits

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[2] Note that nearly all respondents were involved in a reinsertion project at the time of doing fieldwork but only about half were demobilized (the pro-government militias). There had not yet been any demobilization of rebel forces.

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English summary

This research explores, from the very particular perspectives of young civilians who were militarized for some time before receiving short-term reinsertion assistance, the different processes which led to their militarization and demilitarization. There has been no such study to date for western Côte d'Ivoire, despite the fact that the region has been home to most persisting non-State armed groups involved in the Ivoirian conflict and was the territory most affected by warfare. Yet notwithstanding this lack of empirical grounds, western armed groups have faced much negative a priori with an overemphasis on irrationality, violence and lumpen individuals. This study is a first-hand attempt to bring some nuance to the fore for this specific geographical area, taking a time span from the combat operations of 2002-2003 to the partial demobilization of the pro-governmental militias in 2006-2007.

Background information

The recent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has led to the militarization of many young civilians on both belligerent sides. While some were directly involved in combat operations when violence was at its peak (Fall 2002 – Spring 2003), others assumed more backstage functions, from the maintaining of military positions when some places were taken from the enemy to basic logistical duties; the main pattern eventually was to navigate between different functions depending on conflict phases and individual skills. If some of the youths were only militarized a few months (at the onset of conflict), others have continued their involvement into an armed movement over the years, after the main clashes were over, with some being particularly vocal about it. As the main theatre of violence, the west of the country has been particularly affected by the militarization of the civilian population and was chosen as terrain for this particular research. What has been of particular interest there is the fact that many of such youths have assumed a function of 'commuting' conscripts, alternating periods of semi-military work where they had to report to some kind of warlike hierarchy with periods at home where they were back to a quasi routine. This became particularly characteristic as the Ivorian war evolved into a situation of 'no peace no war' with sporadic violence still happening, but only at certain periods and within specific settings.

The term 'militarized youths' encompasses a patchwork of engagement type in western Côte d'Ivoire and cannot be delinked from the understanding of a certain temporality of conflict. What was the norm in 2002-2003 during the period of open fighting was different of what was happening in 2004 when pro-governmental militias were still encamped in a military setting and also differed from the situation in 2007 when the bulk of the pro-governmental militias had self-demobilized and when the rebel forces were continuing to militarily and administratively control the northern half of the country. This diversity of profiles can roughly be categorized into four patterns: a first one composed of militarized youths locally recruited on both belligerent sides who stayed affected in surroundings they know for the whole period; a second one consisting of militarized youths who were not based in the western region when the war started but who were drawn into the movement either by solidarity or by the prospect of possible post-war rewards; a third one consisting of people who were sent outside their place of residence in the beginning of the war and who returned home once the peak of conflict had passed; and a fourth one consisting of youths who stayed in their place of residence for the whole duration of the war and who assumed a function of local vigilante.

The main puzzle

The main puzzle I attempted to address in this study has been to understand the extent to which, in western Côte d'Ivoire, externally-driven interventions targeting militarized civilians and aiming at facilitating their demilitarization and return to civil life should be conceived as special processes compared to other social processes at play in the local environment, in contexts were borders between the different spheres (military, civilian, humanitarian) have never been strict, and varied according to conflict phases, individuals' social networks and extent of locality of the recruitment. Côte d'Ivoire is not the first land that pops into mind when thinking of countries that receive international humanitarian assistance. Its image of 'Ivoirian miracle' has stayed quite anchored in the general public opinion, and despite having undergone general impoverishment for nearly three decades, the country still appears in rather good shape in comparison with its western and northern neighbours. Even at the peak of the crisis, Côte d'Ivoire has been object of limited humanitarian attention. The study therefore attempted to place 'post-conflict' humanitarianism into perspective in the contexts under examination, and eventually tried to determine what eventually comes out of a humanitarian apparatus targeting ex-combatants when humanitarianism does not play such a central role in their immediate contexts.

Structure of the book

The book is organized in eight chapters and a concluding essay. Chapter 1 introduces the study. It stresses the rationales of undertaking such research and pinpoints the questions the study eventually aims to address. Chapter 2 describes the research approach on very practicable terms by explaining the methodological choices made and by reflecting on certain ethical considerations. Chapter 3 gives a brief overview of the theoretical debates relevant for this work by namely highlighting the paradox of external interventions and aspects of social movements theories that would be impossible to circumvent given the scope of this study.

Chapters 4 and 5 contextualize the study. Chapter 4 places contentious movements into perspective by exploring the extent to which particular mobilizing and demobilizing contexts had been shaped by their historicity. Chapter 5 continues this contextualization exercise by exploring the extent to which, in the fieldwork locations, particular mobilizing and demobilizing contexts have been shaped by their immediate environments. It is a necessary step to assess the importance of historicity in such processes compared to more contingent and circumstantial factors. Based on a solid work of document reconstitution, Chapter 5 presents the main aspects the conflict took in the western region and the detailed ethnographic contexts of the geographical areas under study. In Chapter 6, the different armed factions that operated in the west during the period under study are described in detail, which brings to the fore the internal dynamics of these groups, their degree of ethnic mixity, which factions emerged earliest, which ones were absorbed by other groups, and the extent of ‘locality’ of recruitment.

Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine are the empirical core of this book. Chapter 7 explores the profiles and motives of several young militarized civilians on both belligerent sides. Chapter 8 reflects on the complex relationships militarized youths have entertained over time with their immediate environment and notably stresses the fluidity of borders between the military, the civilian and the humanitarian spheres and their evolution in time. Chapter 9 examines processes of demobilization and return to civil life, and the extent to which such complex (re)socialization processes are being externally driven. If it is increasingly recognized that this transition is foremost driven by endogenous factors, post-conflict interventions have become unavoidable actors in the past decade, for better or null, and there is therefore the need to understand what they can reasonably achieve to place them better in their operating contexts. Chapter 10 eventually concludes by stressing the theoretical contributions this study has made to the field and by formulating practical propositions.

The main conceptual and empirical findings

Who joined armed groups and why?

The Ivoirian case is a good illustration of the plurality of profiles and of the diversity of the forms of engagement. It also stresses quite well the importance of immediate contexts in explaining processes of violent mobilization. Enlistment into armed groups in western Côte d'Ivoire has stemmed from highly circumstantial factors and has showed that in many cases, who mobilizes and who does not has simply been a matter of geographic and military factors. It might sound self-evident, yet it is striking to note how theories stressing the importance of local territorial sovereignty and circumstantial factors are downplayed in the literature in comparison with theories that rest on assumptions of causality and that emphasize the loose molecule hypothesis (those that set that adverse structural conditions largely explain engagement into contentious politics). Whatever armed group is in control of a given place at a given moment is potentially the most decisive factor in influencing people's behaviour. This perspective places a strong emphasis on the role of leaders and elite in promoting certain values within society. In which circumstances have civilians taken up arms? What information was then disseminated to the population? Who framed such local discourses, and how has it been locally interpreted? If these dimensions are usually less put forward in conflict analysis in comparison with explanations based on adverse structural conditions, what happened in western Côte d'Ivoire highlights very well the importance of answering each of the points above when attempting to grasp local social processes of mobilization.

In terms of profile, the Ivoirian case showed that there was no single pattern. Recruits displayed very different pre-war trajectories and the study tends to depict a picture that shows that it is people who are rather embedded into society who are politically active, and not the alienated ones. Empirically, this finding firmly dismisses the loose molecule hypothesis, which basically argues that the most likely profile of low-ranking recruits consists of jobless, uneducated, and dissocialized youths with few alternative prospects other than the one to resort to violence to make ends meet.

Blurred spaces: Militarized youths and their relationships with their immediate environment

It is often assumed that youngsters who have been involved in armed groups must be resocialized after their military experience, as if their bond with society was cut during their engagement and the vast majority of humanitarian programs targeting ex-combatants are based on this postulate. There is yet growing evidence that militarized civilians often keep contacts with civil life during their period of engagement into an armed group, especially the ones locally recruited who stay affected in their immediate surroundings (their main peculiarity in fact is to never stop being involved with family, friends and pre-war acquaintances). In western Côte d'Ivoire, many recruits I interviewed involved themselves in extra-military activities when violent fighting diminished and there was always basic logistics to ensure that implied continuous interaction with non-military people. If not yet mainstreamed, this conception of armed violence as a prosaic and intermittent occupation calls for a nuanced approach when analyzing processes of violent mobilization, a one that foremost rests on the assumption that borders between the military, the civilian and the humanitarian spheres are fluid and blurred, especially once the period(s) of open fighting is passed. Rather than conveying the idea of a clear distinction between those three arenas, this study has stressed their overlaps, their dynamics, and has clearly dismissed strict conceptual boundaries. It has also stressed the opportunist manoeuvres of the militarized youths, which has all the more reinforced such blurring effect.

On both belligerent sides, full time involvement into an armed group gradually evolved into a 'part-time' one after the period of open fighting was over. Relationships between militarized recruits and local populations have been based on a combination of solidarity and coercion and have varied overtime depending on strength of ties and immediate stakes involved. Within the group of recruits locally recruited, persistence of family ties was a striking feature in both Guiglo and Man and the flows of food, cash and services were going both sides between the militarized ones and their respective families. But relationships with civilians were not confined to the close family structure and an important feature that the study has brought to the fore has in fact been that it is difficult to draw a clear line between the militarized life and the civil one since eating habits, accommodation practices, continued participation in the family affairs, oblige the militarized and the non militarized to continuously interact with the possible effect to have less and less distinct characteristics.

Return to civil life for militarized populations: Humanitarianism under lens

Since borders between military, civilian and humanitarian spheres have become increasingly blurred, especially as situations of 'no war no peace' tend to linger, the conceptualization of reintegration processes would undoubtedly gain if stopped being presented as a drastic change, 'post'-military. If reintegration is foremost driven by internal processes (social networks and immediate surroundings playing a key role in these), post-conflict interventions are nonetheless also attempting to facilitate the return to civil life for militarized populations and have engaged in such programming for about a decade. If there are proponents and opponents of such type of intervention, reintegration programming has become so much part of any environment affected by warfare that it has become an unavoidable actor of any given system, regardless of one's judgment when reflecting on the relevance of the intervention.

The examples of externally-driven interventions exposed in this study are striking illustrations that humanitarianism is far from being at the core in the post-war context of western Côte d'Ivoire. In contrast to other dynamics, humanitarianism has not been the central driving force in the local environment, and people have not hesitated to opt out when better opportunities emerged elsewhere. Perhaps the fact that Côte d'Ivoire has not been as depleted as Liberia or Sierra Leone can be advanced as explanatory factor: the country is still rich and when the odds are good, it is still full of lucrative opportunities to take up. We are far from a situation where a myriad of humanitarian projects would run the risk to dry up important social mechanisms. What we saw instead is that humanitarianism has been locally used as something extra: to participants, it provided a social opportunity among a wide range of other social opportunities; to local dignitaries, it provided a way to add to their brokerage portfolio and to strengthen their local political influence.

Considering that planned interventions implemented in post-conflict contexts are just additional social opportunities among a wide array of other social opportunities does not mean that they do not have effects and that these effects do not influence the local systems in some ways. This case study has highlighted at least three: 1) the seizing of an opportunity, 2) the placing of close relatives in the income-generating activities fostered by the intervention (a variant being to hire someone to operate the activity on a regular basis), and 3) the boosting of demobilization and disarmament processes, an effect particularly pronounced with the youngest recruits but also noticeable for some older ones. What is of particular interest for the last two effects is that if they both result from unintended consequences of the interventions themselves, they are probably their most tangible outcomes: the second effect by bringing to the fore the ineluctable involvement of the close family structure in the potential benefits derived from the intervention, and the third one by giving a sense of closure to those who were once involved in an armed group. If rarely highlighted by the operators of postconflict interventions, these effects show well that the navigating strategies of the militarized youths between different spaces are not confined to their time within their respective armed groups. From the own perspectives of the youths benefiting from reintegration programming, placing someone else in a project looks like a logical move when more interesting streams emerge elsewhere and such behavior eventually only reproduces a well-embedded cultural pattern of patron/client relationship, teinted with some moral obligation when the close family is involved.

This last remark enables us to reflect on the extent of manipulation of the intervention by the clients themselves and to go beyond the usual patron-client relationship that depicts warlords as the only skilled manipulators of external assistance. There are many stakes in DDR-related interventions, even when the benefits seem at first hand minimal, and those who profit from them also play with them if it has the potential to serve their ends. This is why there is an urgent need to reconceptualize externally-driven demobilization and reintegration processes, away from a segmented approach that overemphasizes the importance of the local elites in shaping the effects of the interventions, and towards a perspective that rehabilitates the room to manoeuvre of the low-ranking recruits and their continued links with their immediate environment. In situations where humanitarianism does not play such a central role in the local context, interventions do not run the risk to dry up the already existing social mechanisms that regulate social life, on the contrary, and one interesting finding of this study has actually been to stress that one possible effect of DDR-related interventions is to reinforce existing moral obligations, not to weaken them.