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

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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 autochtones and non-autochtones 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 struc-
turing 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 autochtones 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/Dioulou 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 criticising the Malinkés, Dioulas and Baoulés, who, according to their view, had engaged in a process of usurpation of land and were spoiling the autochtones. 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 Ivorians 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, Sénooufos 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 Baoulé. 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.
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 autochtones. It surely fuelled existing tensions between autochthonous, allochthonous and allogène 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. 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

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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.
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).

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-autochtones. 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’ (Banéga & Marshall-Fratani, 2007; Dembéle, 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). 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

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4 He was unable to run for Presidency on the grounds that both his parents were from Burkinabé origin.
launched the notion of ‘Ivoirité’ in the national politics (Ivoirian-ness), inspired and supported by a large number of Ivoirian intellectuals:

‘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)

‘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’ autochtones 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 coun-
try on 10 March 1893 – ‘when Côte d’Ivoire was born’ – could be designated as autochtones, while the others could not (Cur diphe, 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. 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-autochtones 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

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

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

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

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 leaders9 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 suc-

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.
ceeded in disbanding one of the paramilitary groups in the summer of 2000 (the PC-Crise). However, he was incapable of controlling all of 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 Ivorian 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 Côte 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 Ivorian 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 Ivorian 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 Ivorian 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 Ivorian 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

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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.
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.

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.\footnote{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.\footnote{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.

\footnote{11} ‘IB’ was arrested in Paris in August 2003 and was put on trial in France in the spring of 2008.
\footnote{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, 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’, 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

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.
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.

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

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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.
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’.

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 Ivorian 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 captured¹⁸ (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

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¹⁷ See the extracts of the Youth Assembly held 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.
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.

In the ten years of FPI rule, political opposition was quite fragile. A G7 coalition19 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

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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).


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.
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.  

• 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 inter-

mittent 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 depart-
ure 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 pro-
cess do not conferred Ivorian citizenship, they nonetheless mark a first step.

• 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 con-
tinued 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-autoch-
thones – 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 inter-
dictions 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 partic-
ular point in the following chapter but it suffices here to say that the autochth-
onous 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 put-
ting 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 Ivorian 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 Ivorian 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 Ivorian 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-
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 Ivorian 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 Ivorian 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 Ivorian 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 Ivorian peace-building 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 CNDDDR 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 Ivorian army (AFP, 2005; Reuters, 2005).

Following violent clashes in Duékoué in early June 2005, 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 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

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.
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.

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, 200829). 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

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29 Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/pp.aspx?c=glKWLLeMTIsG&b=2876173&printmode=1
process (the CNDDR was dissolved), with the military components falling under the responsibility of the Centre de Commandement Intégré (CCI), and the re-insertion 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 Tiëbissou 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.

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 CN DDR 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 home-towns 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 Ségou. 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.
The planned Ivoirian DDR process

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). 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 Ivorian 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. 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 Ivorian government would contribute 30%, international donors 20%, and the World Bank the remaining 50% by providing an USD 80-100 million grant. At the end of 2006, approved multilateral and bilateral contributions amounted to USD 16 million (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. 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).

Concluding remarks

Beyond the fact that this section presented an historical overview of Ivorian national political processes and that it linked these to broad processes of mobilization and demobilization, the genuine attempt of the chapter was to place

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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 Ivorian authorities make the transition from war to peace.
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 Ivorian 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, 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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36 See the works of Banégas (2008) and Chauveau & Bobo (2003).