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No. 4 in the Discussion Series: *Patterns of Conflict Resolution*

Institute for British—Irish Studies
University College Dublin

IBIS Discussion Paper
No. 4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

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On 19 September 2002 a group of Ivorian soldiers with predominantly northern origins attempted to overthrow the regime of president Laurent Gbagbo. While the coup d'état failed to remove the Gbagbo regime, by the end of September 2002, the insurgents firmly controlled the northern part of the country. While the adversaries signed a string of peace agreements since September 2002, it would take until October 2010 for new presidential elections—a key step in the process of restoring peace and stability—to be held. However, instead of bringing peace and stability, disagreement over the electoral results resulted in renewed large-scale fighting between forces loyal to the incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo and the rebel forces, which had pledged their loyalty to the newly elected president Alassane Ouattara. Ultimately, after 3 months of fighting, the Gbagbo regime was violently removed from power. While the Ivorian peace process may benefit from Gbagbo's violent removal in the long run, the question remains why restoring peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire has proved to be so difficult and ultimately "required" violence to achieve a political breakthrough. This will be the focus of the current paper.

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COTE D'IVOIRE'S VIOLENT PEACE PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

In the light of its economic and political achievements, international observers often referred to Côte d'Ivoire in the 1960s and 1970s as an "oasis of peace" and an "African miracle". However, at the beginning of the 1980s, the Ivorian success "model" slowly started to unravel; first economically and then politically. The sad low point of Côte d'Ivoire's political and economic demise was the emergence of a violent conflict with clear ethno-regional and religious undercurrents in September 2002. The conflict started on 19 September 2002 when a group of soldiers with predominantly northern origins attempted to overthrow the regime of President Laurent Gbagbo.

While due to the military intervention by France at the end of September the northern rebellion failed to overturn the Gbagbo regime, by then, the insurgents firmly controlled the northern part of the country and referred to themselves as the Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI). France's intervention led to a situation where there was no clear winner or loser. This forced the conflict parties to seek a negotiated solution to their differences, which, once agreed, proved extremely difficult to implement. When the conflict parties eventually agreed to hold presidential elections in October 2010 in order to push forward the peace process, these elections resulted in chaos and violence.

The main responsibility for the electoral debacle lies with Laurent Gbagbo, who refused to accept his defeat in the presidential elections, which international observers uniformly declared free and fair. In response to Gbagbo's refusal to hand over power to the newly elected President Alassane Ouattara, the northern insurgents took up arms again and started marching on Abidjan, the largest city of the country and the seat of government. The forces loyal to Ouattara quickly gained controlled of the whole country, except for Abidjan. In Abidjan, a fierce battle between the Ouattara forces and the forces that remained loyal to Gbagbo emerged and lasted for several weeks. The fighting eventually ended on 12 April when the Ouattara forces (with considerable help from French and UN peacekeeping forces) were able to enter the Presidential Residence and arrest Gbagbo and his closest associates.

While the Ivorian peace process may benefit from Gbagbo's violent removal in the long run, the question remains why restoring peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire has proved to be so difficult and ultimately "required" violence to achieve a political breakthrough. This will be the focus of the current paper. The paper will proceed as follows. To explore the dynamics and roots of the conflict, the next section will discuss the causes of the violent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, followed by an analysis of the main peace agreements and initiatives that have been undertaken since the outbreak of the Ivorian crisis in September 2002. In Section four, I will analyze the underlying dynamics, obstacles and complexities for why restoring peace and stability to Côte d'Ivoire proved so difficult. In the last section, I will draw some

conclusions regarding the Ivorian peace process and its future prospects in light of the violent removal of Gbagbo.

FROM IVORIAN MIRACLE TO VIOLENT CONFLICT[1]

When Côte d'Ivoire became independent in August 1960, a one-party system was adopted. The Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) was founded by the Baoulé tribal chief Houphouët-Boigny in 1946. This party uninterruptedly controlled the Ivorian political system between 1960 and 1999. Houphouët-Boigny was elected the first president of Côte d'Ivoire and remained in power until his death in December 1993. During the first 20 years of his presidency, Côte d'Ivoire achieved remarkable economic growth with real annual GDP growth rates of more than 7 per cent. In addition to its strong economic progress, Côte d'Ivoire benefited from a relatively stable political environment.

While the favourable economic environment contributed significantly to Côte d'Ivoire's relatively stable political environment, other factors also played a crucial role. Some scholars have stressed the importance of Houphouët-Boigny's approach to politics, characterized by a culture of dialogue, compromise, rewards, punishment, forgiveness and reintegration (see, for example, Akindes, 2004). Another crucial aspect of what Akindes (2004) has termed "Le modèle Houphouétiste" was his use of economic incentives to co-opt actual and prospective political challengers into the system (Zartman and Delgado, 1984). The robustness of the economy provided sufficient resources for Houphouët-Boigny's patronage system to defuse most sources of discontent (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999). The president was, however, uncompromising about the need to maintain order and stability to secure national economic development (ibid.). His willingness to use force for these objectives was demonstrated on several occasions, most notably during the secessionist revolt of the Sanwi king in December 1969, as well as during the Guébié crisis in November 1970. Another factor that contributed to maintaining political stability was Houphouët-Boigny's "system of ethnic quotas", which was aimed at establishing a certain balance between different regions and ethnic groups within the main state institutions (Bakery, 1984).

While Côte d'Ivoire's outward-oriented agricultural development strategy, with cocoa and coffee as its two main export commodities, produced impressive economic results in the 1960s, the "model" had an endogenous tendency to favour the southern areas over the northern areas because most plantations and other natural resources were located in the South (Langer, 2005). The resulting inequalities between the north and south increasingly threatened Côte d'Ivoire's ethno-regional harmony (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999).

With the global decline in commodity market prices in the 1980s, both the economic and political situation worsened dramatically. With declining revenues, the Houphouët-Boigny regime was no longer able to provide cosy state jobs to large

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[1] This section draws heavily from my earlier work (in particular Langer, 2005, 2008) on the causes of violent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

numbers of university students, which in turn led to serious student protests. Similarly, public investment in the northern regions had to be curtailed, which led to increasing discontent among northerners regarding their relatively deprived socioeconomic situation. Moreover, economic problems also exacerbated tensions between indigenous citizens and immigrants on the one hand, and between migrants from the North and locals in the relatively affluent south (Dembélé 2003). These tensions were increasingly perceived as a conflict between north and south (ibid.).

In April 1990, the economic crisis resulted in major demonstrations by the still officially illegal political parties. In an attempt to restore social and political stability, Houphouët-Boigny decided to abandon one-party rule and legalize a multi-party system in May 1990. The first competitive presidential elections took place in October 1990. Houphouët-Boigny won the elections with a considerable margin over the main opposition party candidate, Laurent Gbagbo. However, the most significant aspect of these elections was the introduction of ethno-nationalism and xenophobia into Côte d'Ivoire's electoral politics (Langer, 2005). In particular, during the 1990 elections, the main opposition party, Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI—Ivorian Popular Front), initiated a political campaign around the message that "the PDCI was a partial regime which had systematically favoured the interests of particular Ivorian ethnic groups – Baoulé and groups from the north—and of foreigners" (Crook, 1997: 222).

Following the elections, Alassane Ouattara—a Malinké, a subgroup of the Northern Mandé ethnic group, originating from the north of the country—was appointed to the newly created position of prime minister following the elections. As a former African director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ouattara was chosen mainly for his economic management skills and international reputation. However, by appointing Ouattara as prime minister, "the conflicts between the forest people from the south and the northerners in the land and economic sphere shifted to the political sphere" (Dembélé, 2003: 36, my translation). Although hardly surprising— given his old age (93 years)—the death of Houphouët-Boigny on 7 December 1993 was to radically transform Ivorian politics. Power struggles between the prospective political leaders contributed substantially to the disintegration of the Ivorian state a decade later. In accordance with the 1960 Constitution, the President of the National Assembly, Henri Konan Bédié, a Baoulé, succeeded Houphouët-Boigny for the remainder of his presidential term. The following presidential elections were scheduled for October 1995.

In the lead-up to these elections, ethno-political tensions and conflicts started to build up. Growing northern consciousness was an important change that contributed to the escalation of ethnic tensions at the beginning of the 1990s (Langer, 2005). The distribution of an anonymous document called "Le Charte du Grand Nord" in 1992 illustrated the changed attitudes of the north regarding the socio-political system in general, and the Baoulé in particular. The Charter

> called for fuller recognition of the Muslim religion […], more efforts to reduce regional inequalities, greater political recognition of the north's political loyalty during the

upheavals of the 1980s and […] an end to Baoulé nepotism in recruitment to public jobs (quoted in: Crook, 1997: 226).

Thus, northern grievances and dissatisfaction were expressed not only in economic and political terms, but also in ethnic and religious terms.

The emergence of a new opposition party, Rassemblement des républicains (RDR), in 1994, reflected a further split among Côte d'Ivoire's political elite. The RDR aimed to draw support from people with a northern and/or Muslim background, predominantly found among the Voltaic and Northern Mandé ethnic groups. Alassane Ouattara—previously working in Washington—would soon assume leadership of the RDR. The RDR posed a serious threat to the PDCI's electoral support in the north (Crook, 1997). In response, as Richard Crook notes, "Bédié's initial strategy was familiar to any student of electoral politics: he stole the opposition's clothes, and adopted a policy of Ivorian nationalism, under the slogan of the promotion of 'Ivoirité' (Ivorianness)" (Crook, 19978: 227). The concept of Ivoirité "rests on a controversial distinction between "indigenous Ivorians" and "Ivorians of immigrant ancestry" which weaves together anti-foreigner and anti-northerner sentiments" (Bah, 2010: 602).

Although Bédié claimed that the concept of Ivoirité was solely aimed at creating a sense of cultural unity among all the people living in Côte d'Ivoire, "the tacit goal of this divisive ethnic politics was to marginalize northerners, lumping them together with the immigrants from Burkina Faso, implying that they too are foreigners or at best Ivorians of immigrant ancestry" (Bah, 2010: 602). The main political victim of Ivoirité was Alassane Ouattara; the RDR leader with northern origins. Due to changes to the electoral code requiring both parents of a candidate to be Ivorian, he was not allowed to participate in the presidential elections of October 1995. However, the ideology of "Ivoirité" had an impact far beyond the political sphere because it led to a general erosion of northern Ivorians' social standing and cultural status, de facto making them secondary citizens in Côte d'Ivoire.

As a result of Ouattara's exclusion, the RDR boycotted the October 1995 presidential elections. The leader of the FPI, Laurent Gbagbo, also decided to boycott the elections, claiming that the electoral process had been manipulated. In the absence of his main rivals, Bédié won the October 1995 elections with a landslide. In sharp contrast to Houphouët-Boigny, Bédié almost completely stopped the efforts to balance the different ethno-regional interests and parties, and started favouring people from his own ethnic group, the Baoulé (Dozon, 2000). This came to be termed as the "baoulisation" of the state institutions (ibid.). The baoulisation of the political-administrative sector was extended to other sensitive sectors, including the military (Contamin and Losch, 2000). The ethnic tensions that stemmed from favouritism towards the Baoulé were compounded by general discontent in the armed forces because of a gradual decline in their status during the 1990s (Kieffer, 2000). The grievances within the armed forces triggered a coup d'état in December 1999, which resulted in the removal of Bédié.

In the wake of the successful coup d'état, the military forces established the Comité

national de salut public (CNSP), headed by General Robert Gueï. While Gueï initially promoted the ideals of national integration and reconciliation, after a couple of months, he also began to use the ideology of "Ivoirité" to gain political support and exclude political opponents, in particular Alassane Ouattara and his RDR party (Akindes, 2004). In October 2000, the CNSP organized presidential elections. Although the official results showed that Laurent Gbagbo had won the elections with 59.4 per cent of the votes (Le Pape, 2002), Gueï nonetheless claimed victory. This sparked massive street demonstrations by FPI supporters as well as members of the security forces, which forced Gueï to flee the country. Following the exclusion of their presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara for "nationalité douteuse" (nationality in doubt), the RDR refused to recognize the legality of the results and demanded new elections. To support their demands, RDR supporters organized large-scale street protests, which led to violent confrontations with both FPI supporters and security forces now under control by President Laurent Gbagbo.

On 29 October 2000, the "massacre of Yopougon" was uncovered. In this neighbourhood of Abidjan, state security forces slaughtered around sixty RDR-supporters with a northern background (Leymarie, 2001). The impact of the Yopougon massacre on the country's future political development and ethno-regional relations should not be underestimated. A well-known Ivorian novelist, Ahmadou Kourouma, a Malinké from the northern regions, noted with regard to this apparent act of genocide: "The Yopougon massacre has given the rebels the courage and motivation to attack the [Gbagbo] regime in 2002" (quoted in Rueff, 2004: 63, my translation).

Gbagbo originates from the western town of Gagnoa. He is a Bété, one of the ethnic groups of the Krou family. In line with his anti-Ouattara and anti-RDR and therefore anti-northern rhetoric, northerners were largely excluded from his government. Moreover, with the emergence of the Gbagbo regime, harassment and violent attacks against northerners and foreigners increased sharply. Because pro-Gbagbo vigilante groups and state security forces presumed that all northerners were RDR supporters, they engaged in a self-fulfilling prophecy. In assuming that all northerners were RDR supporters, they gave them almost no choice but to support the RDR (see Marshall-Fratani, 2006).

From 1998, the issue of national identification had become particularly divisive. As the International Crisis Group (ICG) notes:

> In Houphouët's time, many Ivorians had seen little need to become citizens formally, but with the enactment of a new rural land law in 1998 that made citizenship a condition of owning land, this changed. […] For northerners, establishing citizenship was extremely difficult, and was accompanied in many southern cities with suspicion from officials (International Crisis Group 2003: 7).

The FPI program of national identification was introduced in November 2001. It used someone's village of origin to determine whether he/she was Ivorian or not. The RDR worried that hundreds of thousands of its supporters (who by now were almost exclusively from the northern regions and/or northern ethnic groups) were in

danger of being denied a national identity card. The FPI program of national identification therefore dramatically exacerbated political and ethnic tensions.

On 19 September 2002, the northern frustrations with the Gbagbo regime accumulated in another attempt to overthrow him. While the northern rebellion failed to dislodge Gbagbo, by the end of September, the rebels firmly controlled the northern part of the country. Several attempts by the government forces to retake the rebel-controlled towns failed. On 1 October 2002, in the rebel-controlled town of Baouké, Sergeant Tuo Fozié announced the creation of the Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI). A couple of days later, Guillaume Soro emerged as the Secretary General of the MPCI. The main grievances put forward by the MPCI leadership related to the land ownership laws, eligibility criteria for the elections, the issue of identity cards and domination of the northerners by the southerners (Dembélé, 2003).

FROM THE LINAS-MARCOUSSIS AGREEMENT TO THE POST-ELECTION CRISIS

Only days after the violence erupted, French military forces intervened in the conflict in order to evacuate its nationals. However, this French intervention also effectively stopped the rebel advance towards Abidjan. In the western part of the country, however, large-scale violence between rebel and government forces continued unabated. On 17 October 2002 the security situation improved following the MPCI's decision to stop its offensive. The ECOWAS member states subsequently agreed to dispatch a peacekeeping force to oversee the ceasefire. With a ceasefire in place, ECOWAS brought the conflict parties together in Togo. The peace negotiations in the Togolese capital, Lomé, constituted the starting point of the political and diplomatic efforts to resolve the Ivorian conflict.

The Lomé peace talks started on 1 November and were expected to last for several weeks. But on 11 November 2002, the rebels suspended their participation following the killing of Dr. Benôit Dacourey-Tabley, the younger brother of the MPCI external relations coordinator, Louis Dacoury-Tabley, by forces close to the Gbagbo regime. This assassination was by no means an isolated case. In the months following the initiation of the rebellion, hundreds of people were murdered in Abidjan and other areas in the south-western part of the country, by deaths squads composed of members of the state security forces and pro-government vigilante groups (see, for example, Amnesty International 18 December 2002 & International Crisis Group, 2003). Most people that were killed belonged to the opposition parties or were presumed to support the insurgents.

Attempts by ECOWAS to rekindle the Lomé peace talks were unsuccessful. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), "divided by internal rivalries and petty quarrels and with no funds to support a peacekeeping force," the ECOWAS leaders "left France with little option but to take both the military and political roles more directly in hand" (International Crisis Group, 2003: 27). However, the French diplomatic intervention was complicated from the outset because both the Ivorian government and rebel movements accused France of favouring the other side. The

rebels blamed France for obstructing their advances towards Abidjan and San Pedro (a major port city), thereby preventing them from achieving an outright military victory, and the Ivorian government claimed that France favoured the rebels by not doing enough to help them defeat the insurgents.

France decided to bring the main political parties and rebel movements together for peace negotiations in Linas-Marcoussis, a small town south of Paris. These negotiations lasted from 15-24 January 2003, and resulted in the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The principal provision of the Agreement was the creation of a Government of National Reconciliation, headed by a consensus prime minister and comprised of ministers designated by the parties in attendance at the negotiations. Seydou Diarra, a northerner with no particular political affiliation, became the new prime minister. It was further agreed that while President Gbagbo would remain in office until the presidential elections of October 2005, he would have to delegate significant executive powers to the new prime minister, who would be in charge of the implementation of the Agreement. Other provisions of the Agreement included the revision of the existing procedures to identify Ivorian nationals and issue national identity documents, the reform of the Independent Electoral Commission, the revision of the rules of eligibility for the presidency, the revision of the Citizenship Code, the revision of the 1998 rural land ownership law, the demobilization of all forces recruited after 19 September 2002, and the establishment of an international follow-up/monitoring commission. According to the International Crisis Group, the "Marcoussis accords not only made the rebel forces participants on an equal footing with the political parties, but disavowed Gbagbo's political program since coming to power" (International Crisis Group, 2003: 31).

Arguably the three most important and politically sensitive legal reforms envisaged under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement dealt with the eligibility criteria for the presidency, the 1998 rural land ownership law and the citizenship code/naturalization bill. First, with regard to the rules of eligibility for the presidency, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement stated that Article 35 of the Constitution was to be amended in such a way that a person with an Ivorian father OR mother would be allowed to participate in the presidential and parliamentary elections. The proposed constitutional amendment was intended to reverse the changes made under Bédié and Gueï aimed at maintaining "pure" Ivoirité, and preventing Alassane Ouattara from participating in the presidential elections.

The second set of reforms focused on the 1998 rural landownership law, which had introduced citizenship as a precondition for owning land. The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement stipulated that this law had to be amended, so that foreign landowners who acquired their land before 1998 would be able to pass on their holding rights to their heirs.

The third area of reform focused on the citizenship code. The 1961 Law on Ivorian Citizenship determined that all people who resided in Côte d'Ivoire at the time of independence had the right to obtain Ivorian citizenship. However, in 1972, the 1961 citizenship code was amended and from then on people who were not born in Côte d'Ivoire and who had not requested Ivorian citizenship in the preceding twelve

years lost their citizenship rights. The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement stipulated that the Government of National Reconciliation was to introduce a naturalization bill, which would give people who had not exercised their right to obtain Ivorian citizenship before the amendment of the citizenship code in 1972, the right to claim Ivorian citizenship retrospectively.

The signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement was "welcomed" in Abidjan by four days of violent anti-French protests. The demonstrations were led by the militant pro-government youth organisations known as the Alliance des Jeunes Patriotes pour le Sursaut National or simply the Jeunes Patriots (Young Patriots). These "patriotic" youth movements emerged after the rebellion of 19 September 2002, and initially managed to rally tens of thousands of people at pro-government demonstrations in Abidjan. While these rallies were at first attended by a wide cross-section of the population, "the increasingly ultranationalist, xenophobic, and pro-FPI discourse very rapidly discouraged the participation of more moderate populations and militants from other parties" (Marshall-Fratani, 2006: 30). Ruth Marshall-Fratani further notes that after a couple of months, the Young Patriots developed into "urban militias forces working for the Gbagbo regime, charged with surveying the opposition. These youth became a very crucial source of information for the regime. With the backing of the regime they terrorized people in Abidjan, even assisting the infamous "death squads" responsible for numerous disappearances and summary executions" (ibid.).

While the FPI leadership portrayed the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement as an attack on Côte d'Ivoire's sovereignty, they also opposed the Agreement because they feared that the provision for naturalising immigrants born in the country before 1972, and by extension their children, could substantially increase the electoral support for the RDR and its leader, Alassane Ouattara (International Crisis Group 2003). The naturalisation of large numbers of foreign immigrants could also undercut FPI promises to its south-western constituency that land held by foreigners was going to be returned to its original owners (Marshall-Fratani 2006). The FPI leadership therefore decided to block the full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

On his return to Côte d'Ivoire on 27 January 2003, Gbagbo all but repudiated the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement by stating that the accords were only a set of proposals and he refused to delegate executive powers to the consensus prime minister (Africa Research Bulletin, 2003). In an attempt to resolve this impasse, the conflict parties met in Accra at the end of July 2004. At this meeting, they not only reaffirmed their commitment to the legal reforms envisaged under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, but also committed themselves to adopting these reforms before the end of August 2004. In addition, President Gbagbo committed himself to delegate significant executive powers to the consensus prime minister. The rebels agreed to demobilize from 15th October 2004. Yet, political progress soon stalled again because the FPI parliamentary caucus blocked nearly all the envisaged legal reforms. Furthermore, President Gbagbo announced on 12 October 2004 that he would only submit the amended Article 35 to the National Assembly once the rebels

had disarmed. In response, the rebel forces refused to meet the 15 October deadline to start disarming.

In November 2004, the Ivorian Air Force bombed the main rebel strongholds in the north, in the process killing nine French peacekeepers. In response France conducted a number of air strikes, which almost completely destroyed the Ivorian Air Force. This, in turn, provoked widespread anti-French protests in Abidjan and other major cities in the southern part of the country. The UN Security Council strongly condemned the actions of the Ivorian government and imposed an arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire.

Soon after the violent confrontation between the Ivorian government and French forces, a new mediation mission, headed by South African President Thabo Mbeki, began a series of meetings with the Ivorian conflict parties. With the encouragement of the South African-led mediation team, the FPI-controlled National Assembly adopted some of the legal reforms envisaged under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement in late December 2004, most notably the amendment of Article 35 concerning the eligibility criteria for the presidency. But a new controversy arose when President Gbagbo announced that the amended Article 35 had to be endorsed by a national referendum.

To resolve the political deadlock in time for the presidential elections of October 2005, President Mbeki convened a meeting in Pretoria, which resulted in the signing of the Pretoria Agreement on 6 April 2005. While the parties were unable to resolve their disagreements concerning the amendment of Article 35, they decided to accept President Mbeki's adjudication on this matter. On 26 April, in line with Mbeki's adjudication, President Gbagbo declared that he would use his special powers (conferred on him by article 48 of the Ivorian Constitution) to allow all candidates nominated by the political parties signatory to the Pretoria Agreement to participate in the forthcoming presidential elections (UN Secretary General 17 June 2005). In the weeks following the signing of the Pretoria Agreement, the Ivorian parties also agreed a new disarmament and demobilization timetable. Several disarmament deadlines slipped by, however, as the rebels refused to start disarming. They continued to accuse Gbagbo of failing to implement the legal reforms envisaged under the Linas-Marcoussis and Pretoria Agreements.

Realizing the danger of the power vacuum that would emerge once Gbagbo's mandate expired on 30 October 2005, the African Union (AU) proposed to extend the mandate of the sitting president for 12 months. On 21 October 2005, the UN Security Council endorsed this proposal. After weeks of negotiations between the key political players, Charles Konan Banny replaced Seydou Diarra as prime minister on 7 December 2005. At the initiative of Prime Minister Banny, the main political leaders met in Yamoussoukro on 28 February 2006. At this meeting, the Ivorian leaders not only agreed a set of new procedures to identify Ivorian nationals and issue national identity documents, but also decided that the identification of Ivorian nationals and disarmament processes were to be conducted simultaneously (Africa Research Bulletin 2006).

The identification programme was a key demand of the rebels who claimed that hundreds of thousands of first, second and third generation immigrants and northerners had been refused citizenship and had no voting/nationality papers, or had them confiscated by the state security forces (Africa Research Bulletin, 2006). As part of the identification programme, mobile courts (deployed throughout the country) were to receive citizenship applications and determine those eligible for citizenship. However, the identification programme came under fire from FPI supporters who claimed that the issuing of nationality certificates by mobile courts was unconstitutional. They also claimed that hundreds of thousands of foreigners were likely to obtain nationality documents fraudulently, which would enable them to vote for the opposition in the subsequent elections (Africa Research Bulletin, 2006).

Although the UN Security Council had become disillusioned with Gbagbo's lack of commitment to the peace process, it had no alternative except to work with him. Gbagbo's mandate was extended for another year while the UN Security Council also decided to give more powers to Prime Minister Banny. In response to the UN Security Council's decision to boost the power of the prime minister, President Gbagbo decided to come up with his own peace initiative. On 19 December 2006, he announced that he was prepared to hold direct talks with the rebel leadership. Representatives of Gbagbo and the rebel forces began negotiations on 5 February 2007 in the Burkinabé capital, Ouagadougou. One month later, on 4 March 2007, President Gbagbo and the Secretary-General of the MPCI, Guillaume Soro, signed a new peace agreement that became known as the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement.

The Ouagadougou peace process differed in important ways from earlier peace initiatives. Firstly, none of the political opposition parties were invited to the talks and, secondly, for the first time President Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro held direct talks without the presence of an international mediator. Another important difference was that the negotiations were conducted over a period of month, while "previous deals were rushed through and patched together in a matter of days under pressure from foreign countries" (The Economist, 10 March 2007: 44). While the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement does not represent a break with the previous peace agreements or resolutions of the UN Security Council, it did provide a set of new approaches to the key issues (International Crisis Group, 2007).

With regard to the identification of the population and the distribution of identity documents, they decided to simplify matters by combining the identification of Ivorian nationals and electors: "Those on the electoral register will have the right to an identity card; to get on the register, a birth certificate is all you need" (Africa Research Bulletin, 2007: 17011). In order to issue duplicate birth certificates to all those entitled but without identity documents, they agreed to re-launch the mobile courts. Further, while the conflict parties agreed to disarm the urban militias that had emerged after the eruption of the Ivorian crisis, they no longer foresaw the complete disarmament and demobilization of the rebel forces. Instead Gbagbo and Soro decided to integrate the rebel forces (or at least a substantial number of them) into a new national army. Another important difference with earlier peace

agreements was the appointment of Guillaume Soro as prime minister of the new transitional government. The responsibility of the implementation of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement was therefore put in the hands of the main protagonists themselves (International Crisis Group, 2007).

The implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement got off to a good start with the formation of the new transitional Government and the establishment of a joint military command. However, on 29 June 2007, the Ouagadougou peace process was rocked when Prime Minister Guillaume Soro's aircraft was attacked in the northern rebel stronghold of Bouaké. While Soro himself emerged unharmed, four of his travel companions were killed. It has never been established with certainty who was behind this attack.

From October 2007, the Ivorian peace process entered into more quiet waters and in particular in the first half of 2008, some progress was made towards the implementation of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement. Thus, for instance, at the beginning of July 2008, 627,923 duplicate birth certificates had been issued as part of the identification programme; the conflict parties had finalized the modus operandi for the issuing of national identity cards and the voter registration process; and they had made some progress in preparation for the national elections (UN Secretary General, 10 July 2008). The overall security situation had also improved considerably. However, in contrast, very little progress was made with respect to the disarmament and dismantling of the militia and rebel forces and the creation of a new unified army in 2008. The voter registration process was also seriously delayed by violent attacks at registration centres by pro-government youth movements. Therefore, elections had to be postponed once again.

It would take another year for the parties to the conflict to finally agree on the composition of the electoral roll. With the decision to postpone the disarmament of the rebels and the dismantling of the militia forces pending elections, the first round of the presidential elections could at last go ahead on 31 October 2010. Both during the electoral campaigns and elections no major disruptions occurred and generally the elections were considered free and fair. Laurent Gbagbo scored 38% of the vote, Alassane Ouattara 32% and Konan Bédié 25%. Since none of the contestants had reached the 50% of the vote, a run-off between Ouattara and Gbagbo was necessary to determine the next president of Côte d'Ivoire.

According to the Independent Electoral Commission, Ouattara won this run-off with 54% of the vote against 46% for Gbagbo. However, Gbagbo claimed that there had been electoral fraud in the north and rejected the results. The Constitutional Court, headed by a key ally of Gbagbo, decided to annul some of the results in the north, thereby giving Gbagbo a majority of the vote. The Constitutional Court subsequently inaugurated Gbagbo as the new president. Disgruntled, Ouattara swore himself in as president a couple of hours later. The international community declared the elections by-and-large free and fair, and supported Ouattara's claim to the presidency. In contrast, the Ivorian military supported Gbagbo's claim to the presidency.

Despite massive international pressure and even occasional military intervention of the French and UN peacekeeping forces on the side of the Ouattara forces, Gbagbo refused to give in and acknowledge his electoral defeat. As described in the introduction, the rebel forces, which had pledged their loyalty to the newly elected President Alassane Ouattara and appropriately renamed themselves the Ivorian Republican Army, therefore decided to dispose of Gbagbo by violent means. While they quickly regained control of most of the country, in Abidjan, they were confronted with fierce opposition by military forces and urban militias that continued to be loyal to Gbagbo. It took the Ouattara forces until 14 April to enter the Presidential Residence, the place where Gbagbo and his closest associates decided to make their last stand. With the arrest of Gbagbo and Ouattara's ascension to power, the Ivorian "peace" process has entered a new phase. Yet, before reflecting on the consequences for the peace process of Gbagbo's violent removal, it is important to explain why making peace in Côte d'Ivoire has proved to be so difficult and why a return to violence in the wake of the November 2010 presidential run-off should not have come as a surprise.

OBSTACLES TO PEACE IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

The main question I aim to answer in this section is why the Ivorian conflict parties have been unable to find a durable and peaceful resolution to their conflict. In order to answer this question, we need to see the Ivorian conflict for what it is: i.e. a violent escalation of a struggle for power which followed the death of President Felix Houphouët-Boigny in December 1993. The military insurgency of September 2002 was in many ways the result of the failure of the country's political elites to agree on a new set of formal and informal procedural and distributional rules aimed at containing the elite competition for political power (Langer, 2005). Moreover, recalling Von Clausewitz's famous dictum, the attempt by the northern insurgents to remove Gbagbo from power in September 2002 was essentially the continuation of politics by other means. However, once the monopoly of violence of the Ivorian state was broken, the resolution of the power struggle was compounded and complicated by the emergence of a security dilemma.

Caroline Hartzell is one the foremost authors who has hypothesized that security dilemmas can pose a serious problem for ending civil war:

> Ending a civil war calls for the reconstruction of central authority and the exercise of that authority by the state vis-à-vis society. The state, not rival groups, must now be vested with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, must reconstitute political power and enforce rules for the management of conflict, and must make decisions regarding the distribution of resources. Yet, it is precisely these dimensions of state power that raise the spectre of the security dilemma for groups in conflict. Accustomed to providing for their own security during the course of civil war, groups in a divided society must now be concerned about the impact that the state's use of force, control of power, and regulation of economic resources will have on their security. More specifically, parties to the conflict wonder what guarantee they have that the national army and police forces, particularly if controlled by an opposing group, will not be used against them once they surrender their arms and disband (Hartzell, 1999: 5).

Civil war opponents usually have three major security-related concerns when seeking to end a conflict through negotiations: that their opponent may gain control of the coercive apparatus of the new state; that their opponent may monopolize political power in the new state; and, that their opponent may gain an economic advantage in the new state (Hartzell, 1999).

To address these three major security-related concerns in negotiations, protagonists generally aim to construct institutions that balance power among the competing groups. However, there are a number of reasons why conflict parties may not be willing to embrace power-sharing arrangements. First, they may think that power-sharing interferes with their objective of achieving a comprehensive military victory or with the option of total power, which is sometimes offered by competitive elections (Sisk, 1996; Sisk and Reynolds, 1998; Spears, 2000). In addition, even if conflict parties have agreed a power-sharing arrangement, it often fails because of the general difficulties of individuals and groups cooperating on an ongoing basis after years of fighting and demonizing one and another (Sisk, 1996; Sisk and Reynolds, 1998; Spears, 2000; Walter, 2002).

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the security dilemma-logic is particularly useful for explaining the behaviour of the rebel forces who refused to demobilize as long as the legal and political reforms envisaged under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement had not been adopted and free and fair elections had been held. The northern insurgents feared that if they laid down their arms before the envisaged reforms had been implemented, the Gbagbo regime would continue to disenfranchise important sections of the northern population and to exclude the northern leader of the RDR, Alassane Ouattara, from participating in the next presidential elections. The opposition parties were similarly concerned that Gbagbo might manipulate the elections in order to stay in power.

The country's powerful executive presidential system complicated matters because it turns the presidential elections into a "winner-take-all" contest (Linz, 1990). As Juan Linz noted in his seminal article The Perils of Presidentialism: "The zero-sum game in presidential regimes raises the stakes of presidential elections and inevitably exacerbates their attendant tension and polarization" (Linz, 1990: 58). In multiethnic divided societies there is a pertinent need to "soften the harsh, winner-take-all implications of presidentialism" by introducing consociational elements in the constitution or in more informal ways. While it is too early to assess Ouattara's consociational credentials, his first government has a mixed composition in terms of ethnicity, religion and political parties.

Essentializing the Ivorian conflict to a violent escalation of a struggle for power between different ethno-regional groups also helps to explain the observed "spoiling" behaviour of different actors throughout the peace process. In his seminal article Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes, Stephen Stedman defined spoilers as "leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it" (Stedman, 1997: 5). On the basis of this definition, a diverse range of spoilers can be identified in Côte d'Ivoire. While numerous rebel commanders

displayed "spoiling" behaviour at different times, Gbagbo and his associates were undoubtedly the most powerful spoilers. Over the course of the peace process, Gbagbo successfully used a range of "spoiling" strategies to delay and obstruct the implementation of legal-political reforms that could threaten his hold on power, including refusing to delegate the necessary executive powers to the consensus prime minister for pseudo-legal reasons, using street mobs and vigilante group such as the Young Patriots to disrupt the peace process, and instructing FPI's Members of Parliament to vote against the envisaged legal reforms.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, as elsewhere, political power is not only valued for itself, but also because it provides access to the extremely lucrative state patronage networks. Because transparency and accountability of the disbursement of public funds worsened dramatically during the course of the Ivorian conflict, having control of the state became even more lucrative. Many influential political actors "found that war serves as an excellent means of enrichment, and they may be ill-served by the restoration of peace and security" (International Crisis Group, 2004: 4).

Another reason why Gbagbo and his associates as well as some high-ranked rebel commanders and military leaders were determined to hold on to power and obstruct the peace process had to do with the possibility that some of them might have to face the International Criminal Court (ICC) for their part in the widespread human rights abuses and war crimes which were committed in the course of the conflict. In January 2005, it emerged that the United Nations had compiled a secret blacklist of 95 people who were suspected of human rights abuses and who could eventually face trial before the ICC in The Hague, Netherlands. Radio France Internationale reported at the time that key personalities on the blacklist included Simone Gbagbo (the president's wife), Charles Blé Goudé (the leader of the Young Patriots) and Guillaume Soro (the leader of the New Forces) (IRIN, 31 January 2005).

An important reason why Gbagbo and his associates were so successful in delaying and disrupting the Ivorian peace process was the international community's mishandling of the Ivorian crisis. Despite his public repudiation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, his refusal to delegate significant executive powers to the consensus prime minister, and his efforts to rebuild and expand his armed forces, the international community failed to recognize early on that Gbagbo was strongly determined not to implement the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The international community mainly employed "inducement" and "socialization" strategies (Stedman, 1997: 12) in order to deal with his obstruction of the implementation process which had no impact, given the strength of his determination. For too long the international community perceived Gbagbo as a politically weakened president who had no choice but to make peace, rather than a politician who was prepared to use any means necessary, including violence, to stay in power. When they finally got fed up with his continued obstruction of the peace process and were willing to take a more coercive stand, Gbagbo had already planned his next move to stay in control of the "peace" process: initiating direct talks with the rebels to find a "home-grown" solution to the conflict.

The direct talks between the government and the rebels resulted in the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement. While this agreement appears to alleviate some of the obstacles that contributed to the failure of previous peace agreements, in practice, largely the same issues, obstacles and actors continue to obstruct the Ivorian peace process. Thus, for instance, the decision to integrate a substantial number of rebel forces into a new national army (instead of a complete demobilisation as agreed in previous agreements) arguably mitigated the security dilemma that the rebel forces faced. Yet, the inability of the conflict parties to agree on the number of rebel forces to be included in the new unified army showed the continued sensitivity and importance of this issue. From Gbagbo's perspective, the Ouagadougou peace process was very successful, because it kept him in power even though his mandate had ended in October 2005. In light of the increasing pressure from the international donor community, however, Gbagbo recognised that elections had to be held. But free and fair elections brought considerable risks with them.

As Horowitz (1985) has pointed out, in divided societies elections often basically amount to ethnic censuses: people vote for ethnic parties, and the largest ethnic group, or coalition of groups, wins. Gbagbo understood this logic. Given that his ethno-regional support base (i.e. mainly the Southwest) was too small to guarantee him an electoral victory, he did his best to delay the elections as long as possible. The results of the presidential elections confirmed Horowitz' logic of ethnic numbers, with Gbagbo predominantly winning the votes of the people from the Southwest, Ouattara predominantly gaining among the northern people and Konan Bédié winning in the southeast. In the presidential run-off, while Gbagbo continued to rely on the votes of the Southwest, due to the alliance between the RDR and the PDCI, Ouattara was able to expand his electoral support to the southeast, thereby giving him the edge in the electoral outcome. Given the stakes, losing power was not an option for Gbagbo and his associates and they therefore had to develop a post-elections strategy. The strategy they came up with -- claiming electoral fraud in the north and getting the Constitutional Court to proclaim Gbagbo as winner of the presidential elections- is a familiar one and worked relatively well for Gbagbo, at least until several weeks before his capture. Until this time, Gbagbo not only stayed in power but the international community was prepared to negotiate with him over the terms of his departure of office.

CONCLUSION: PEACE BY VIOLENT MEANS?

The Ivorian conflict can be traced back to the power struggle that was unleashed in 1993 following the death of Felix Houphouët-Boigny, who had ruled the country from independence. To gain political support, political leaders started to use a discourse of ethno-nationalism and xenophobia under the slogan of Ivoirité (Ivorian-ness), and all three presidents who came after Houphouët-Boigny—i.e. Konan Bédié, Robert Gueï and Laurent Gbagbo—adopted strategies of political monopolization by their own group, and ethnic favouritism in appointments and resource allocation (Langer, 2005). The northern population was the main victim of this ethno-nationalist turn. The struggle for power between the major ethno-regional groups eventually escalated into violence in September 2002.

The major challenge of the Ivorian peace process was therefore to resolve or at least "pacify" this struggle for power. Things were further complicated due to the presence of a security dilemma. By using the security dilemma and spoiler-concepts, the analysis has shown why finding and implementing a durable resolution to the conflict has proven so difficult. These concepts shed light on the observed behaviour of the Gbagbo regime and the rebel forces as well as the resulting political deadlock. While the rebel forces refused to demobilize as long as the legal and political reforms envisaged under the Linas-Marcoussis and other agreements had not been adopted, Gbagbo and his associates were reluctant to implement any political reforms that threatened their hold on power. Given Gbagbo's principal objective of staying in power, his decision to reject the election results of the presidential run-off of November 2010 (certified by the Independent Electoral Commission and the United Nations) should not have come as a surprise. Although Gbagbo's post-election strategy worked well for a while, he has clearly misjudged both the relative strength of the northern/Ouattara forces and the international community's eagerness to get rid of him once and for all.

Gbagbo's violent removal means that arguably the biggest obstacle to a return of peace and stability in the country has been eliminated. However, the price that the Ivorian people had to pay for his removal in terms of human suffering and physical destruction was very high. Having said this, the violent resolution of the post-election crisis and especially the arrest of Gbagbo offer some hope that the Ivorian peace process can now move forward more quickly. Indeed, as Edward Luttwak has aptly observed in this respect: "Although war is a great evil, it does have a great virtue: it can resolve political conflicts and lead to peace" (Luttwak, 1999: 36). Moreover, an important task for President Ouattara in the short term will be to reinsure and convince the substantial proportion of the population who voted for Gbagbo that he will be a President for all Ivorians, regardless of ethnicity, religion, region of origin or political affiliation. Clearly, this is a formidable task in a conflict-ravaged and ethnically polarized society like Côte d'Ivoire. In the long term, however, a durable peace in Côte d'Ivoire will ultimately depend on the political elites agreeing on a new set of "rules of the (political) game".

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