DRAFT

Local governance and national crisis in Côte d'Ivoire

Opportunities and challenges for community-based development and peace-building

April 2008
The World Bank
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**ACRONYMS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**INTRODUCTION**

**CHAPTER 1. THE ROOTS OF THE IVORIAN CRISIS**

**CHAPTER 2. NOT PEACE, NOT WAR – GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN CRISIS**

**CHAPTER 3. LOCAL CONFLICT DYNAMICS**

**CHAPTER 4. THE DYNAMICS OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS........................................................................................................................................ IV

ACRONYMS .......................................................................................................................................................... V

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ........................................................................................................................................ VII

INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................................................................................... 1

BACKGROUND..................................................................................................................................................... 1

OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT............................................................................................... 1

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS..................................................................................................................... 2

CHAPTER 1. THE ROOTS OF THE IVORIAN CRISIS................................................................................................. 4

SOCIAL DIVERSITY AND DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE ..................................................... 4

HOUPHOÛËT-BOIGNY’S DEVELOPMENT MODEL ................................................................................................. 6

THE CRACKS IN THE IVORIAN MIRACLE: FROM ECONOMIC CRISIS TO POLITICAL UPHEAVAL ....................... 7

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION......................................................................................................... 8

Ivoirité and the politics of social exclusion ........................................................................................................ 9

Politization of daily life ................................................................................................................................... 10

Social conflict and institutional crisis in the countryside .............................................................................. 11

FROM COUP D’ÉTAT TO POLITICAL MOVEMENT .......................................................................................... 12

Politization of the army ................................................................................................................................... 12

Birth of a political movement ........................................................................................................................ 12

CHAPTER 2. NOT PEACE, NOT WAR – GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN CRISIS ...................... 14

BETWEEN PEACE AND WAR .................................................................................................................................. 14

THE OUAGADOUGOU PEACE PROCESS AND REMAINING CONFLICT RISKS ................................................... 15

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants .................................................................... 15

GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT .................................................................................................. 17

Culture of violence ........................................................................................................................................... 17

Culture of impunity and corruption ................................................................................................................... 18

The security forces ........................................................................................................................................... 19

Media and freedom of expression .................................................................................................................... 20

Civil society ...................................................................................................................................................... 21

Governance in the CNW .................................................................................................................................. 22

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND RISKS ......................................................................................................... 23

Economic impacts ........................................................................................................................................... 23

Social impacts ............................................................................................................................................... 24

CHAPTER 3. LOCAL CONFLICT DYNAMICS ......................................................................................................... 26

THE CRISIS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND INTER-GENERATIONAL TENSIONS: AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CONFLICT .......................................................................................................................... 26

A TYPOLOGY OF CONFLICTS IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE ......................................................................................... 26

Leadership conflicts ....................................................................................................................................... 27

Conflicts over land ......................................................................................................................................... 27

Conflicts over fishery resources ...................................................................................................................... 28

Conflicts between farmers and cattle herders ................................................................................................. 32

Inter-communal tensions and conflict ........................................................................................................... 33

Religion-based conflicts .................................................................................................................................. 34

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: POORLY DEFINED AND COMPETING INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS ..................... 37

The traditional path ........................................................................................................................................... 37

State and military authorities .......................................................................................................................... 38

The role of NGOs, local civil society and religious leaders ......................................................................... 39

The role of local radio ..................................................................................................................................... 39

CHAPTER 4. THE DYNAMICS OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ......................... 41

THE DECENTRALIZED AND DECONCENTRATED INSTITUTIONS ...................................................................... 41

Préfecture and sous-préfecture ......................................................................................................................... 42
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Political elite by ethnic group, 1959–1980................................................................. 7
Table 2: Selection of fieldwork areas................................................................. 64
Table 3: Deconcentrated (appointed by central government) ............................................. 67

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1: Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (1998-2001) ................. 19
Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by a World Bank team led by Maurizia Tovo. Rainer Quitzow was responsible for the research design and implementation and is the principal author of this report. The World Bank team also included Bernard Harborne, Karène Melloul and Andrea Ries Padmanabhan who provided feedback throughout the process. The team was supported by Tina Aboah-Ndow, Marie-Chantal Attobra, Kathryn Bach, Nicole Hamon, Latifa Kamara, Kouakou Kouassi, and Zainab Mambo-Cissé. Peer reviewers were Andrew Norton and Sarah Michael.

The design of the fieldwork and final report were largely based on a background paper prepared by Professor Francis Akindès (Professor of Sociology, University of Bouaké). The field research was led by Dr. Constant Soko and Dr. Sévérin Kouamé. They were assisted by Moussa Fofana, N’Guessan Komenan, Koffi Parfait N’Goran, and Rachel Tchema.

Additionally, the World Bank team would like to thank Colette Alla (former head of community rehabilitation of the National program for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and community rehabilitation (Programme national de désarmement, demobilization, reinsertion, et rehabilitation communautaire, PNDDDR/RC) and her staff as well as Raphaë Agnero and Benjamin Walker from the Rural Land Management and Community Infrastructure Development Project (Projet National de Gestion des Terroirs et d’Equipement Rural,PNGTER) for their support throughout the process. The team would also like to thank the other members of the advisory group for their support and feedback. In particular, the team would like to mention the support of Maurizio Crivellaro (International Rescue Committee), Louis Faley (International Rescue Committee), Gervais Koffi (Care International), Spes Manirakiza (Search for Common Ground) and Gianmarco Scuppa (European Commission).

Finally, the team would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the FN and the Ministry of the Interior as well as numerous individuals throughout the country during the implementation of the field research.
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANADER</td>
<td>Agence Nationale d’Appui au Développement Rural (Agency for the Support of Rural Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDD</td>
<td>Community-Driven Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFA</td>
<td>Currency used in Côte d’Ivoire and other member countries of the Communauté financière de l’Afrique (African Financial Community)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNCA</td>
<td>Conseil national de communication audio-visuelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNE</td>
<td>Commission nationale électorale (National Electoral Commission)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNW</td>
<td>Center-North-West (area under FN control)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Country Social Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODAK</td>
<td>Conseil pour le développement d’Akressi (Development Council of Akressi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COGES</td>
<td>Comité de gestion (Management Committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDRR</td>
<td>Demobilization, Disarmament, Reintegration and Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAFN</td>
<td>Forces armées des forces nouvelles (Armed Forces of the New Forces, former rebel forces in Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FANCI</td>
<td>Forces armées nationales de Côte d’Ivoire (National Armed Forces of Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FESCI</td>
<td>Fédération estudiante et scolaire de Côte d’Ivoire (Student Federation of Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Forces nouvelles (New Forces, ex-rebels movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPI</td>
<td>Front populaire ivoirien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally displaced person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIDH</td>
<td>Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l’homme (Ivorian Human Rights League)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDH</td>
<td>Mouvement ivoirien des droits de l’homme (Ivorian Human Rights Movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJP</td>
<td>Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (Movement for Peace and Justice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODEL</td>
<td>Movement for Democracy in Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPCI</td>
<td>Mouvement patriotique de Côte d’Ivoire (Democratic Movement of Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPIGO</td>
<td>Mouvement populaire ivoirien de Grand Ouest (Large West Ivorian Popular Movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLPED</td>
<td>Observatoire de la liberté de la presse, de l’éthique et de la déontologie (Observatory of Press Freedom, Ethics and Deontology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONUCI</td>
<td>Opérations des Nations Unies en Côte d’Ivoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACOM</td>
<td>Projet d’Appui à la Conduite d’Opérations Municipales (Municipal Support Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCI</td>
<td>Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire (Democratic Party of Côte</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PNGTER  Rural Land Management and Community Infrastructure Project (Projet National de Gestion des Terroirs et d’Équipement Rural)

PNDDR/RC  Programme national de désarmement, démobilisation, réinsertion et réhabilitation communautaire (National program for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Community Rehabilitation)

PNRRC  Programme national de réinsertion et réhabilitation communautaire (National Program for Reintegration and Community Rehabilitation)

PSDAT  Programme de soutien à la décentralisation et à l’aménagement du territoire (Program for the Support of Decentralization)

RDR  Rassemblement de Républicains (Republican Congress)

RFI  Radio France Internationale (Radio France International)

RGPH  Récensement Général de la Population et de l’Habitation (General Population and Living Measurement Survey)

RSA  Rapid Social Assessment

RTI  Radio-Télévision ivoirienne (Ivorian Radio-Television)

SYNAGCI  Syndicat National des Agriculteurs de Côte d’Ivoire (National Farmers’ Union of Côte d’Ivoire)

UDPCI  Union de la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d’Ivoire (Union of Democracy and Peace in Côte d’Ivoire)

UN  United Nations

UNESCO  United Nations Education and Social Council

UNICEF  United Nations Children’s Fund

UNPOL  United Nations Police
Executive Summary

Since the signing of the Ouagadougou peace agreement in March 2007, the government of Côte d’Ivoire and the Forces Nouvelles (FN) have taken important steps toward reunifying the country after almost five years of separation. Security has improved and overall living conditions have seen a degree of normalization. Furthermore, the State administration is returning to the Center-North-West (CNW, as the FN-controlled area is now called) and essential services are progressively being restored. Despite these advances, however, Côte d’Ivoire’s efforts to secure a sustainable peace continue to face a number of important challenges. A series of important political questions, such as the process of national identification and the organization of presidential elections, are not yet resolved. And although the security situation has remained stable, without a comprehensive program for the disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants the situation remains potentially explosive.

Throughout the crisis, the international community has focused its efforts on building and maintaining peace (fragile though it may be). The UN peace keeping mission (ONUCI) supported by the French military (Licorne) has largely succeeded in preventing renewed outbreaks of violence between the two belligerent parties, while UN agencies and international NGOs have provided emergency aid to the areas most affected by the conflict. But a shift to longer-term development and reconstruction efforts will be necessary for the establishment of the foundations of a sustainable peace. With the government clearing its payment arrears, the World Bank has been able to resume its lending program to support this crucial transition period.

Objectives of the Report

In this context, this report will provide an analytical basis to inform the planning and implementation of forthcoming projects, especially those including community-based rehabilitation. A special challenge for these projects will be to employ mechanisms adapted to the limited administrative capacity in the CNW, while also strengthening local governance and peace building efforts. For this purpose, this report analyzes local governance and conflicts and explores their linkages to questions of governance and social development at the national-level.

The report is divided into three parts. The first (chapters 1 and 2), based on existing literature, discusses the national level. While it contains little original research (with the exception of the sections on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process (DDR) and governance in the CNW, both in chapter 2), it provides the reader with a summary of the underlying socio-economic and political factors that contributed to the eruption of the military crisis in 2002 (chapter 1) as well as a broad picture of the current state of governance and social development (chapter 2). Chapter 2 also includes a brief description of the main socio-economic impacts caused by the crisis.

The second part (Chapter 3 and 4), which is based on fieldwork carried out in seven zones (including two cross-border areas with Liberia), examines the most important impacts of the crisis on local conflicts and governance, with a particular focus on the CNW. It is this part that constitutes the heart of the report, and the information and analysis presented is original. Chapter 3 examines local-level conflicts and existing mechanisms used to manage them, identifying key challenges and opportunities for supporting local-level reconciliation and strengthening conflict management. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of local governance and existing community development activities, focusing primarily on the CNW.
The last part builds on the analysis in parts 1 and 2 to identify a number of priorities for supporting sustainable conflict recovery on the national and local level. In particular, it focuses on providing practical advice for improving conflict management and for implementing community-driven rehabilitation in the CNW.

**The Roots of the Ivorian Crisis**

Despite the country’s socio-cultural diversity, throughout the 1960s and 1970s the development model of Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d’Ivoire’s founding father, secured a remarkably affluent and stable Ivorian society. Liberal immigration and investment policies attracted foreign capital and an influx of foreign laborers, both of which sustained the country’s prosperous plantation economy. With the rent he collected, President Houphouët-Boigny created a range of para-statal entities that provided him with a powerful patronage network, which he used to co-opt potential challengers. Both in the State and the military, he combined this system with a practice of “ethnic balancing,” ensuring that each group had a seat at the table.

However, by the early 1980s, the economic foundations of the system began to falter. As cocoa and coffee prices began to fall, economic growth slowed almost to a standstill and living conditions began to erode. In the early 1990s, the socio-economic crisis finally led to a series of student protests as well as demonstrations by the illegal opposition parties, including Laurent Gbagbo’s FPI. This culminated in the first multi-party presidential elections in October 1990. Though Houphouët-Boigny won a landslide victory, a deepening economic crisis and the resulting reductions in State expenditures plunged the country into further social and political turmoil.

It was in this context that Houphouët-Boigny died in 1993, giving rise to a prolonged power struggle among the country’s political elites. Unable to mobilize significant support beyond their core constituencies, the emerging political leaders resorted to electoral strategies dominated by ethnic and regional interests. Houphouët-Boigny’s successor, President Bédié, introduced the divisive political discourse of *Ivoirité*, asserting the rights of the Ivorian citizen vis-à-vis the country’s immigrant population, which further polarized the country. Tensions began to trickle down to the general population, as Northerners and foreigners became victims of routine harassment by the police.

In the countryside, the process of structural adjustment had forced the Ivorian state to scale back the support it had provided to the plantation economy, profoundly affecting the institutional arrangements that had underpinned the country’s stability during the preceding decades. Many of the para-statal organizations, which had provided investments and extension services while serving as vehicles for securing the planters’ political support, were dismantled. In their place, a variety of independent rural associations, driven by the same regional interests as the main political parties, emerged. Simultaneously, driven by XXX, rising numbers of unemployed youth were returning to the countryside to reclaim a piece of land in their hometown. However, by the late 1980s agricultural land had become scarce, and family estates were often occupied by other family members or foreign migrants. As a result, in the 1990s increasingly violent confrontations over land erupted, pitting indigenous groups against migrants.

Meanwhile, national politics remained divisive. In 1999, General Guéï took over the government after a bloodless coup d’état, promising to put an end to the divisive politics of the Bédié regime. To the consternation of many of the young officers who supported him,
Gueï, who had presidential ambitions of his own, soon introduced his own somewhat more expansive definition of Ivoirité. As the 2000 Presidential elections approached, tensions were further exacerbated by attempts to disqualify the opposition Republican Grouping’s (Rassemblement des Républicains, RDR’s) presidential candidate, due to alleged doubts related to his Ivorian citizenship. As a result, the winner of elections, Laurent Gbagbo, assumed power in conditions he himself referred to as “calamitous”. Unable to rally the country behind his leadership, Gbagbo would continue the exclusionary policies of his predecessors. Perhaps the most significant of these was his reform of the armed forces, facilitating the promotion of FPI supporters, while demoting or removing supporters of Gbagbo’s rivals.

On September 19, 2002, a former staff sergeant and a group of non-commissioned officers who had either lost their influence or been removed from the armed forces staged a coup d’état. After taking over Bouaké and Korhogo, however, the insurgents were stopped outside Abidjan by gendarmes loyal to the regime. What had started as a coup then turned into a rebellion, with the former insurgent group, calling itself the Patriotic Movement of Côte d’Ivoire (Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d’Ivoire, MPCI), securing Bouaké and Korhogo and then moving west to further expand its control.

Initially the operation was purely military, but once it became clear that the rebels would not win an easy victory Guillaume Soro seized the opportunity by providing the movement with a political platform under his leadership. Later joined by two new insurgent groups, the Popular Movement of the Grand West (Mouvement Populaire de Grand Ouest, MPIOG) and the Movement for Justice and Peace (Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix, MJP), the political organization led by Soro, known as the New Forces (Forces Nouvelles, FN) has since controlled the northern half of the country (referred to as the CNW).

**SHORT-TERM CONFLICT RISKS**

With the signing of the Ouagadougou peace agreement in March 2007, it appears for the first time that the government and the FN are determined to find a lasting solution to the military crisis that has plagued the country since 2002. The situation in the country has begun to normalize, with government officials and civil servants beginning to return to their posts in the CNW. Nevertheless, a number of significant conflict risks remain.

For a number of reasons, the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of combatants remains a central challenge for the advancement of the peace process. First, divisions between different factions of the FN make a successful DDR process essential. Failure to adequately address the needs of FN combatants could further exacerbate tensions between those supporting the current political process and those who remain skeptical. Furthermore, these needs include not only a well-designed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program, but also progress in addressing the perceived ethnic imbalance in the army --one of the underlying causes of the uprising in 2002. Integrating certain FAFN elements in the national army will be a first step, but it will have to be accompanied by the establishment of transparent mechanisms for the recruitment and promotion of soldiers. Finally, the DDR process will also have to ensure that all relevant groups are included in the process, from Liberian mercenaries and militia members to the regular combatants of the FAFN. This implies finding a specific arrangement for the reintegration of Liberian fighters. Though possibly the biggest challenge, these fighters also pose the greatest danger to civilian populations in the case of a renewed outbreak of violence.
Not only ex-combatants but also other unemployed youth pose an important short-term conflict risk. As in many other conflicts, high rates of youth unemployment have been an important contributing factor to the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire. While in the medium-term economic growth will have to provide the basis for tackling this problem, in the short-term employment creation programs targeted at youth can make an important contribution towards peace-building, particularly in the West of the country.

Furthermore, the return of IDPs involves a number of conflict risks that the current approach to the issue does not address. An effective program requires an integrated approach, which addresses both the needs of the IDPs and of those currently occupying their residences. Additionally, addressing the tensions caused by the occupation of land by IDPs in the CNW will require immediate attention. The installation of displaced Burkinabéés in forestry areas around Danané indicate that this may constitute a serious risk of conflict. With the return of the State in the North, State authorities in cooperation with the FN should make the identification and resolution of these types of conflicts a top priority in an effort to prevent new outbreaks of violence.

Finally, the mitigation of social risks caused by the prolonged crisis should remain a short-term priority. In various parts of the country, continued efforts to ensure food security are necessary. Additionally, restoring safe access to drinking water, education and basic health care services to pre-crisis levels remains an important challenge. These efforts should go hand in hand with the redeployment of the State in the CNW, where challenges still exist for the normal functioning of State institutions.

**Governance and Social Development in Crisis**

As described above, the roots of the Ivorian crisis lie in the disruption of an imperfect yet for many years stable model of economic and political regulation. In the absence of a political leadership able to appeal to a broader and more heterogeneous electorate, the divisions that caused the current crisis will remain in place. This in turn is likely to perpetuate grievances related to unequal representation in the different spheres of the State, including the military. Though at present the process of national identification and the organization of fair elections are attracting the most attention, they represent only a first step towards re-establishing a socio-political equilibrium in Côte d’Ivoire. Equally important will be the establishment of institutional arrangements that are adequately able to reflect the social diversity of the country and provide forums for negotiating equitable access to economic and political resources.

Another key concern has to be the strengthening of the overall justice system. With the onset of socio-economic and political instability in the 1990s, Côte d’Ivoire has become increasingly engulfed in a culture of violence, which has been further exacerbated by the fact that these acts of violence are largely carried out with impunity. To build a sustainable peace, the government will have to implement measures to guarantee impartial application of the law and ensure its ability to bring criminals to justice. It also requires broadening access to the justice system among the population as a whole. In the CNW, immediate action to reassert the authority of the judicial system will be necessary.

In the presence of large scale human rights violations and a polarized political climate, freedom of expression has also been significantly constrained. Strengthening the independence of both media and civil society from manipulation by political actors is, therefore, another medium-term priority. Supporting the financial independence of media enterprises would be a first step. In the newspaper business this might involve limiting the amount of external funds that may be provided to the enterprises from an individual source of
funding. Additionally, existing efforts to advocate for fairness and independence in reporting should be supported. In the area of civil society, it is not possible to systematically exclude political interference. However, supporting capacity-building for the establishment of more professional management structures and greater transparency among civil society would be an important first step towards making Côte d’Ivoire’s civil society organizations more effective mediators between the population and relevant government institutions.

LOCAL CONFLICT DYNAMICS

Weakening traditional authorities and conflict management

The collapse of Houphouët-Boigny’s system of political regulation has also had profound implications for the country-side, far away from the power center in Abidjan. The simultaneous retrenchment of the State and liberalization of the political landscape provided a breeding ground for emerging conflicts over the control of dwindling economic resources. Tensions were further compounded by the return of unemployed youth to the country-side. The interests of these returning youth not only pitted them against the large number of foreign and domestic migrants who frequently occupied the land resources they expected to claim; oftentimes, it also placed them at loggerheads with village elders, who typically benefited from the agreements they had made with the foreigners regarding land use.

The resulting inter-generational tensions have had repercussions that go beyond the management of land resources, but which extend to the management of local conflicts more generally. During the fieldwork conducted for this report, it was apparent that youth in Côte d’Ivoire are increasingly challenging the traditional governance systems where authority is primarily based on seniority. Since the beginning of the military crisis, the disappearance of formal authority has further emboldened many youth to ignore the authority of their elders, causing a further destabilization of the traditional governance system.

As a result, conflicts over positions of leadership in the traditional system of governance have become increasingly common. Typical causes are the perception by youth that certain traditions are not fair or that older village chiefs do not have the skills to effectively organize village life and negotiate with the modern administration. During the crisis, the displacement of village chiefs and difficulties in guaranteeing village security have further exacerbated this crisis of legitimacy. Based on these and similar grounds, a group of local youths may conspire to depose the existing leader and install a different, usually younger and more educated chief. However, rather than resolving the problem, this process is typically contested by other groups in the village, resulting in a power struggle over the village leadership.

This weakening in the traditional governance system has created an important institutional vacuum in the realm of conflict management. Even before the crisis, the majority of the population was largely excluded from the formal justice system, and recourse to traditional systems of conflict resolution remain the preferred way to resolve disputes. However, as the traditional leadership continues to lose its legitimacy, its ability to contain the various types of conflicts has become severely constrained. In many cases, rulings that are perceived unfavorable by one or both of the conflict parties are not respected. In search of a better outcome, stakeholders may decide to seek out other authorities, such as the sous-préfecture, the police, the gendarmes or special conflict management committees, or resort to violence. At present, however, this process of conflict management lacks a clearly defined institutional path, and conflict parties are not obliged to follow any pre-defined procedure. As a result, outcomes are highly dependent on individual perceptions and on the choices by the different actors, including both the authorities and the conflicting parties themselves.
Conflicts over land and natural resources

The most explosive conflicts in Côte d’Ivoire still appear to be over land, particularly when involving local autochtones (original settlers) and foreign or domestic migrants. The resolution of land conflicts is often complicated by the fact that there is a lack of written documentation to verify transactions. While these written documents are not necessary in the context of a strong traditional authority, the weakening role of the traditional system makes these documents increasingly important to the processes of establishing agreement between conflicting parties. Encouraging the use of written documents would be an important measure for the prevention of conflicts related to land or other natural resources.

Furthermore, the debate surrounding the national land law has been an important source of conflict and uncertainty among local populations. While the law itself provides modalities for Ivorians and foreigners to access land, it is not clear how the initial application of the law would affect different stakeholders. Consequently, local interpretations have given rise to the fear that the law provides the legal basis for the expropriation of foreigners. Any initiatives to apply the law in question, therefore, should have clearly defined procedures for managing the transition and be supported by a strong communication campaign to inform local populations. Moreover, capacity-building among local officials will be required. In other words, progress in applying the law throughout the country will be slow and resource-intensive. In the medium-term, a program to prepare communities for the full application of the law may be considered.

Conflicts over natural resources extend beyond land, as the local conflicts over fishery resources in Aboisso demonstrate. Like the conflicts in the West, this conflict has pitted the local autochtones against foreign immigrants. In the Northern part of the country, disputes between sedentary farmers, typically Senoufous, but also Baoulés in areas further south, and nomadic cattle herders, usually foreigners belonging to the Fula ethnic group, constitute the most prominent source of tension. Like the land conflicts in the West and South-West, an explicit State policy promoting the immigration of the Fula cattle herders laid the foundation for the resulting tensions between these two groups.

Inter-communal conflicts

While disputes over natural resources, most notably land, are frequently the cause of conflicts between different ethnic groups, they do not constitute the only source of inter-communal violence. Other common sources of conflict include political power struggles, disputes over religious sites, and different types of individual altercations that broaden to include entire communities. With the onset of the military crisis, perceived allegiances with either side of the political divide have become another important conflict trigger. Particularly in the West and North of the country, insecurity, impunity and distrust have caused latent tensions between different ethnic communities to spill over into violence with increasing frequency. In the areas most directly affected by the war, particularly in the former UN-controlled buffer zone, vicious circles of violence have developed between different ethnic communities, as each side attempts to avenge the violence previously inflicted on their kin.

A number of conflicts are also based on religious beliefs and practices. Typically, these conflicts arise between Christians or Muslims and animists. No confrontations between Muslims and Christians on religious grounds alone were identified during the fieldwork.

1 The Fula are also known as Peul (in French).
Rather, conflicts are typically triggered when members of the Muslim or Christian community fail to respect traditional religious practices or norms. This may involve interference in a religious ceremony, the violation of a sacred place, or contravention of other prevailing prohibitions. Since these prohibitions and norms are highly localized, these conflicts usually occur within the same village community and may oppose members of the same ethnic group.

**Conflict prevention and management**

Research carried out both in the South-West (Diarrassouba, N. et al 2005) and the North (Kohlhagen 2003) suggests that low levels of integration of migrants in local village communities raise the likelihood of violent conflict. Promoting migrant participation in inter-communal efforts, therefore, remains an important tool for promoting social cohesion. This might also include instruments like local radio. Establishing inter-communal committees for managing such an initiative would ensure that the radio remains a tool for the promotion of reconciliation when tensions increase. Moreover, in some of the areas most severely affected by inter-communal violence, local grassroots initiatives have developed to promote reconciliation among the different communities. These initiatives should receive recognition and support from local authorities and international organization operating in these areas.

To establish an effective system of conflict management, it will first be necessary to strengthen the traditional governance structures. This begins with the establishment of a traditional governance structure that enjoys legitimacy among all relevant stakeholders and where the question of succession is governed by clear and accepted rules. This process may involve facilitating the formalization of traditional governance structures (e.g. written and codified). However, the expected benefits of codification must always be balanced against the potential risks. As certain traditional leaders continue to rely on mysticism, symbolism, and charisma, codification and ensuing bureaucratization may diminish their relevance and undercut their authority. The process should, therefore, be adapted to the various local conditions.

Secondly, it will be necessary to better define a clear hierarchy of steps for addressing conflicts - first by the traditional system and then by the State. This might include not only the formalization of the traditional system of conflict resolution but also its position vis-à-vis the State authorities. Finally, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity to mediate conflicts at the sous-préfecture level, which is increasingly being called on to intervene in the process of conflict management.

**Local governance**

Beyond the national reconciliation process, a central challenge for restoring a sustainable peace in Côte d’Ivoire will be the establishment of an inclusive system of local governance. This involves not only successful systems for conflict management, as discussed above, but, more generally, the effective participation of different social groups in local decision-making processes. In Côte d’Ivoire, this raises not only the question of how to engage citizens and traditional authorities, but also of what roles should be attributed to the various deconcentrated and decentralized institutions.

The deepening of decentralization could promote social cohesion, if it contributes to the local-level empowerment of groups that are only weakly represented at the central level. However, elected bodies, in particular the General Councils (*Conseil généraux*), are highly politicized and their implication in local governance carries important conflict risks. Especially in the North, the General Councils suffer from low levels of capacity, lack of legitimacy and a high
degree of politicization. Any further transfer of power to these institutions would, therefore, have to be preceded by a capacity-building program as well as new departmental elections.

Where they exist, municipal governments appear to be more firmly institutionalized and seem to be more inclusive in their decision-making processes. Greater proximity to the local population seems to facilitate participation by local communities in decision-making. Programs to support decentralization should, therefore, begin at the municipal level. The basis for the continuation of the decentralization process throughout the country would have to be the creation of municipal governments where they do not exist.

Additionally, to make local government more effective, a clarification of roles and responsibilities of the different deconcentrated and decentralized institutions is necessary. Currently, tensions between the préfecture and elected officials as well as between the General Council and the municipal government are common, due to disputes over the mandates of the respective institutions. A combination of capacity building and, if necessary, clarifications of the legal framework, should be considered to reduce these types of problems.

LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT

Community-based rehabilitation and development projects offer one of the first entry points for addressing questions of local governance and reconciliation in a (post) conflict setting. To be effective, however, they have to build on local initiatives and take into account context-specific opportunities and risks.

In the CNW, the crisis has caused a proliferation of local NGOs. Though largely driven by the availability of resources for humanitarian assistance interventions, these local NGOs constitute an important resource utilized by numerous international organizations. Moreover, in many areas these NGOs are organized in networks, which represent an important entry-point for capacity building.

School management committees in the CNW, involving parents, teachers and untrained instructors, represent another important community-level asset, which may be weakened with the return of the State. To leverage this important resource, school-rehabilitation and other education interventions should emphasize the continued involvement of these. Home-town associations, while another potential asset for community development, also tend to represent the political interests of a particular local elite. An active effort should be made, therefore, to include the home-town association in community-development activities, while ensuring that they are not able to dominate the process.

During the crisis, the lack of coordination among international organizations conducting community rehabilitation has had a negative impact on the quality of the projects. In many cases, villages are confronted with successive poorly managed projects, implemented by different partners. Better coordination could eliminate such a duplication of efforts in the same village. This would allow implementing agencies to lengthen the cycles of individual projects without a reduction in coverage. To enable coordination to occur, the appointment of a lead agency responsible for coordinating community-based interventions in each department should be considered.

Village committees represent the nexus between village-level governance and project management. Well-functioning village committees, however, are relatively rare. One reason for this are disputes over the traditional leadership in the village. In other words, the presence of an accepted village leadership is also a prerequisite for establishing an effective village
committee. Secondly, fieldwork has shown that the process for the selection of village committees requires more time and resources than are typically invested. Moreover, to guarantee representation of all relevant social groups, clear rules for the make-up of committees and the appointment of committee members are required. This cannot imply a one-size fits all approach, since even the composition of neighboring villages varies considerably. However, the representation of women, youth and the largest migrant community, not only in the committee itself but within its board, should be a minimum requirement. A way of ensuring better overall representation of relevant social groups would be an appointment process, which allows sub-groups (women, youth, traditional leaders, migrant communities, etc.) to nominate representatives subject to confirmation by a community assembly and the village leadership in the presence of an NGO representative. Additionally, women as well as migrants should be represented in the committee leadership (typically president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer).

In urban areas, different types of neighborhoods require different approaches for the implication of local populations in community-based interventions. For the older, village-type neighborhoods, where traditional governance structures remain relevant, approaches similar to those utilized in the rural areas would appear most appropriate. In more heterogeneous neighborhoods, this may not be possible, due to the difficulty of ensuring the inclusion of all relevant groups. While a neighborhood committee might have a facilitating role, community-based NGOs or the municipality itself might have to play a more prominent role in performing outreach and in the facilitation of consultations among the different social groups.

Community contributions to infrastructure projects in cash and in kind were common practice in the villages visited during the fieldwork. Though most such projects have ceased since the onset of the military crisis, the collection of community contributions for important community expenditures remained commonplace. In other words, as elsewhere, it should be feasible to incorporate community contributions into community-based interventions. On the other hand, as the management of rehabilitated water pumps in the CNW revealed, the collection of dues from villagers also bears a conflict potential. Furthermore, a secure form for safeguarding the contributions from looting, as happened during the crisis, will be important to instill renewed confidence in a system for the collection of contributions.

Where municipal government does not exist, the implication of elected officials in community-rehabilitation activities remains a significant challenge. Without established structures for participation at the village level, it is unlikely that newly created village-level structures can effectively participate in decision-making at the departmental level. As already mentioned above, low-levels of capacity, lack of legitimacy (particularly in the North) and high levels of politicization of the General Councils may not make them an ideal partner in the implementation of large-scale community rehabilitation activities.

In areas where municipal governments do exist, their involvement in community rehabilitation activities appears to be more promising, as these structures are more firmly institutionalized and seem to be more inclusive in their decision-making processes. The actual capacity to act as implementing agency for project activities will vary from case to case, depending on whether the municipal government representatives have returned to their posts. The sous-préfecture might retain a role in approving investment decisions in accordance with national standards and laws. Moreover, if committees for conflict resolution are created as a part of a project, the sous-préfecture should be implicated in the establishment of clear institutional rules and mandates for these committees.
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

1. Since the signing of the Ouagadougou peace agreement in March 2007, the government of Côte d’Ivoire and the Forces Nouvelles (FN) have taken important steps towards reunifying the country after almost five years. Security has improved and overall living conditions have seen a degree of normalization. Furthermore, the State administration is returning to the Center-North-West (CNW, as the FN-controlled area is now called) and vital services are progressively being restored. Circulation between the CNW and the South has become less cumbersome, providing a first step towards the full resumption of economic exchanges between the two zones.

2. Despite this progress, however, Côte d’Ivoire continues to face a number of important challenges for securing a sustainable peace. On the national-level, a series of important political questions, such as the process of national identification and the organization of presidential elections, are not yet resolved. And although the security situation has remained stable, without a comprehensive program for the disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants the situation remains potentially explosive. Moreover, persisting inter-communal tensions bear further potential for renewed unrest.

3. Throughout the crisis, the international community has focused its efforts on building and maintaining a fragile peace. The UN peace keeping mission (ONUCI) supported by the French military (Licorne) has largely succeeded in preventing renewed outbreaks of violence between the two belligerent parties, while UN agencies and international NGOs have provided emergency aid to the areas most affected by the conflict. But a shift to longer-term development and reconstruction efforts will be necessary for building the foundations of a sustainable peace. With the government clearing its payment arrears, the World Bank has been able to resume its lending program to support this crucial transition period. During an initial reengagement phase, financing will focus on meeting the immediate needs for maintaining a stable security environment, securing economic fundamentals and supporting the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure. In addition to a pre-arrears clearance Post Conflict Assistance Project (PCAP), the initial program includes an Economic Governance and Recovery Grant, an HIV/AIDS project, and an urban infrastructure project. Also, four operations that had been suspended will be reactivated, covering community-driven development, transport and education.

OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

4. The objective of this report is to provide an analytical basis to inform the planning and implementation of forthcoming projects and in particular those including community-based rehabilitation. A special challenge for these projects will be to provide mechanisms adapted to the limited administrative capacity in the CNW, while strengthening local governance and local-peace building efforts. For this purpose, the report analyzes local governance and conflicts and explores their linkages to questions of governance and social development at the national-level.

5. The report is divided into three parts. The first (chapters 1 and 2) focuses on the national level and it is primarily based on existing literature. This part does not present significant new information (with the exception of the sections on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process (DDR) and governance in the CNW, both in chapter
2). It was, however, considered necessary to provide the reader with a summary of the underlying socio-economic and political factors that contributed to the eruption of the military crisis in 2002 (chapter 1) as well as with a broad picture of the current state of governance and social development (chapter 2). Chapter 2 also includes a brief description of the main socio-economic impacts caused by the crisis.

6. The second part (Chapter 3 and 4), which is based on field work carried out in seven zones (including two cross-border areas with Liberia), examines the most important impacts of the crisis on local conflicts and governance with a particular focus on the CNW. It is this part that constitutes the heart of the report, as the information contained is new and unique. Chapter 3 examines local-level conflicts and existing mechanisms to manage them, identifying key challenges and opportunities for supporting local-level reconciliation and strengthening conflict management. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of local governance and existing community development activities, focusing primarily on the CNW.

7. The last part builds on the analysis in parts 1 and 2 to identify a number of priorities for supporting sustainable conflict recovery on the national and local level. In particular, it focuses on providing practical advice for improving conflict management and for implementing community-driven rehabilitation in the CNW.

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS**

8. The team chose to focus fieldwork on the FN-controlled areas as well as the former “buffer zone” (zone de confiance, an area between the two belligerent parties in principle patrolled by peacekeeping forces), since less information was available on questions of governance and local conflicts in those areas. Also, due to the limited resources, it was only possible to cover a total of five fieldwork areas in Côte d’Ivoire. Fieldwork results should, therefore, be considered indicative of the types of challenges in the country rather than an exhaustive analysis. In particular, no fieldwork was conducted in Abidjan since the community rehabilitation program financed by the World Bank will not be active there and, as the only metropolitan area, Abidjan represents a particularly complex case that would have required an independent research process.

9. This study combines the World Bank’s Country Social Analysis (CSA) approach with the Social Assessments (RSA) used to prepare community-driven development (CDD) projects. CSA focuses on the macro-level analysis of social, political and institutional factors to identify significant opportunities, constraints and risks to development. It may address a range of issues, such as risks to the country’s political stability, institutional barriers to social inclusion and important governance challenges. It should also provide an overview of key social groups and their livelihood strategies as well as their access to assets and services and their ability to participate in decision-making. RSAs identify local-level stakeholders for CDD activities and examine participation and consultation mechanisms as well as questions of social capital, socio-cultural diversity and institutional development. In conflict-affected countries, RSAs identify opportunities and constraints for this type of intervention, and more in general for sustainable conflict recovery. This study combines these two approaches by emphasizing the linkages between country-level social and political developments and local-level conflicts and governance. While identifying priorities for supporting peace-building and sustainable conflict recovery at the national-level, it focuses particular attention on the local environment for community-based development and peace-building.
10. The study was developed and implemented over a period of approximately one year, involving successive phases of consultation with the government and other partners in Côte d’Ivoire as well as primary and secondary research. The process included the following steps:

- **Consultations with the government and partners in Abidjan and Bouaké (February/March 2007):** To initiate the study, consultations were held with the representatives from the National Program for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and community rehabilitation (*Programme national de désarmement, démobilisation, réinsertion et rehabilitation communautaire*, PNDDR/RC) both in Abidjan and Bouaké, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Planning. Additionally, a range of development partners engaged in community-based interventions throughout the country were consulted. Based on these consultations, an advisory group was formed, including representatives of the government, donors, and local and international NGOs. During its first meeting, the advisory group discussed and validated the preliminary research proposal.

- **Literature review (May to August 2007):** On the basis of the initial research proposal, Professor Francis Akindès (Professor of Sociology, University of Bouaké) conducted a literature review to summarize the existing research on the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire with a special focus on local conflicts and governance. He identified key knowledge gaps and proposed priority areas and a methodological framework for the collection of primary data in five fieldwork areas in Côte d’Ivoire.

- **Discussion of the literature review and fieldwork design with the advisory group (August 2007):** The literature review and fieldwork proposal were presented to the advisory group for their validation and feedback. Following the discussion, fieldwork sites were selected and the focus of the primary data collection was further refined.

- **Primary data collection in Côte d’Ivoire (September 2007 to February 2008):** Based on the final design of the fieldwork methodology, primary data collection was carried out in Aboisso, Bangolo, Bouaké, Danané and Korhogo.

- **Primary data collection in the border area between Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia (June 2007 and January 2008):** Primary data were also collected in the trans-border area between eastern Liberia and western Côte d’Ivoire by the team who had already conducted similar research in Liberia. The objective was to identify key trans-border dimensions of the conflict to complement both the study on Côte d’Ivoire and an existing Rapid Social Assessment on Liberia (Richards et al 2005).^2^

For a detailed description of the fieldwork approach and methodology, please see annex X.

---

^2^ When the Liberian study took place, it was not possible to work in the eastern part of the country, because of security problems; thus, this additional data collection filled an important gap.
CHAPTER 1. THE ROOTS OF THE IVORIAN CRISIS

11. This chapter analyzes the social, political and economic developments that led to the collapse of a previously successful economic and political model created and maintained for over thirty years by Côte d’Ivoire’s founding father, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny. It begins with a short description of social diversity in Côte d’Ivoire and then presents the main social, political and economic foundations of Houphouët-Boigny’s model for managing this diverse society. It then identifies the factors that led to the unraveling of this model.

SOCIAL DIVERSITY AND DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE

12. Côte d’Ivoire is composed of four major ethno-linguistic groups considered to be indigenous to the region. It also has a large immigrant population, totaling approximately 26 percent of its total population (Zanou 2001).

- **The Akans (42.1% of the population)**³, Côte d’Ivoire’s largest ethno-linguistic group, is indigenous to the South, Center and East of the country as well as neighboring Ghana. Their largest sub-group in Côte d’Ivoire are the Baoulés with a strong presence in the Center of the country. Since independence, the Baoulés have held a dominant role both in government and in the cocoa sector. Due to their importance in the country’s plantation economy, the Baoulés have remained predominantly rural with only 28.7 percent⁴ living in urban centers. The other Akan groups, including the Ebriés, Adjoukrous, Abbés and Attiés in the south-eastern coastal areas as well as the Agnis, Abrons and Nzimas in the east are more urbanized (over 40 percent).

- **The Mandés (26.5 % of the population)** are typically sub-divided into the northern and southern Mandés. The largest group among the northern Mandés (16.5 percent) are the Malinkés with a strong presence in the North-West as well as in neighboring Mali and Guinée. Malinké is also the language spoken by Muslim merchants in the West African sub-region, the so-called Diouals, a word that means “merchant” in Malinké (see Box X). Due their important commercial role, the northern Mandés are the most urbanized of Côte d’Ivoire’s indigenous groups with over 50 percent living in cities. The southern Mandés (10 percent of the population) consider themselves quite distinct from the Malinkés and are composed of several smaller groups, most notably the Gouros, Dans, and the Yacoubas who live in the western part of Côte d’Ivoire. Traditionally, the Dans and Yacoubas are farmers, and they remain a predominantly rural society with more than 70 percent living in rural areas. They have close ethnic ties with the Gios of Liberia.

---

The population commonly referred to as Dioula is a Muslim socio-professional group with an important commercial role in Côte d’Ivoire and the West African sub-region. Though composed of multiple ethnic and national backgrounds (including Guinée, Mali, Burkina Faso and Northern Côte d’Ivoire), the Dioulas are viewed as a homogenous socio-cultural group, due to their common religion, their use of Malinké (also referred to as Dioula) and their shared professional culture. Though many Dioulas are also involved in agricultural production, they are known for their commercial role in the Ivorian economy, often acting as buyers and sellers of cash crops, like coffee or cocoa, or working as shopkeepers and transporters. Supported by their trans-border cultural community, the Dioulas have become important economic actors in many local economies.

- **The Krous (12.7 % of the population)** are from the central and south-western part of the country and have ethnic ties with Liberia’s Krahs. The largest sub-groups among the Krous ethno-linguistic family are the Bétés, Wès (or Guérés), Didas and Kroumens. Inhabiting Côte d’Ivoire’s most important forest area, the Krous have traditionally practiced itinerant agriculture, and in certain sub-groups, hunting, fishing and the art of navigation have played an important role. Though today many Krous are engaged in Côte d’Ivoire’s plantation economy, they are less invested in this economic model, choosing instead to invest their monetary returns in education. As a result, the Krous are more urbanized than the Ivorian average and have the highest rate of school enrollment among all the major ethnic groups.

- **Voltaïques or Gurs (17.5 % of the population)** primarily live in the North and North-East of the country. The Sénoufous, present also in Burkina Faso, are the largest sub-group among the voltaïque ethno-linguistic group and place great importance on their farming tradition. They are the least urbanized among the Ivorian ethnic groups with less than 25 percent living in cities.

13. **Immigration in the 20th century has largely followed the expansion of the plantation economy.** Beginning with the transfer of forced labor from Upper Volta (today Burkina Faso) during colonial times, migrants first arrived in Côte d’Ivoire’s eastern regions. After independence, Houphouët-Boigny continued to promote immigration to ensure a steady supply of labor for the growing plantation economy, which began to expand to the center of the country. By the late ‘60s the agricultural frontier had moved to the western parts of the country and finally to the south-western forestry areas, where some of the most rapid population growth took place. Between 1975 and 1988 the south-western population more than doubled, due to the influx of foreign immigrants as well as Baoulé migrants from the center of the country.

14. **A high level of immigration coupled with a high natural population growth made the population of Côte d’Ivoire one of the fastest growing in the world throughout the 20th century.** With only 1.5 million inhabitants in 1920, the Ivorian population grew to almost 7 million by 1975, 10 million by 1988 and more than 15 million today. The immigrant population grew from under 1.5 million in 1975 to over 4 million today, or more than 25 percent of the total population. The majority of these international migrants have come from Burkina Faso, making up more than 50 percent of the immigrant population, followed by Mali and Guinea. While the Burkinabés live predominantly in rural areas (69.3 %), the Malians and Guineans are the most urbanized group in Côte d’Ivoire with 57.3 and 65.9 percent living in cities, respectively. As a result, Abidjan, the economic capital, also has an important...
immigrant population with more than half a million foreigners equal to more than 15 percent of its population.

15. **The Muslims are the largest religious group comprising almost 40 percent of the total population.** Islam is the predominant religion among the Voltaic and Northern Mandé groups in the North as well as the immigrant population. Catholicism, the second largest religion, comprises almost 20 percent of the population and is the dominant religion in the South. It has had the character of a State religion, due to the founding father’s Catholic faith. More recently, a number of protestant groups have increased their numbers, especially among the south-western Krou population. About 6.6 percent of the population is protestant and around 12 percent consider themselves animist, while 17 percent declare no particular religion.

**HOUPHOUËT-BOIGNY’S DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

16. Houphouët-Boigny managed Côte d’Ivoire and its remarkable socio-cultural diversity from 1960 until his death in 1993. His socio-economic and political model made Côte d’Ivoire one of the most stable and affluent countries in the sub-region. From 1960 to 1980, a favorable economic environment and political stability created a virtuous circle of economic growth. High commodity prices allowed the country’s economy to grow at an average rate of 7 percent per year. Houphouët-Boigny continued the colonial development model based on an agricultural export economy, a liberal investment code and close economic ties with the former colonial master, France. This attracted not only foreign capital but also the necessary labor supply. Encouraged by Houphouët-Boigny who famously stated, “the land belongs to those who cultivate it”, Côte d’Ivoire became a magnet for sub-regional immigration.

17. **High levels of economic growth, in turn, enabled Houphouët-Boigny to maintain political stability within the highly centralized one-party system he had built around the Parti Démocratique de la Côte d’Ivoire (Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire - PDCI).** He used an effective combination of the ‘carrot and the stick’ to maintain his grip on the State. Using the rents from the corporatist plantation sector, he created a range of para-statal entities that provided him with a powerful source of patronage to co-opt potential challengers. He thus sustained a class of affluent administrators and entrepreneurs, all members of the omnipresent PDCI (Akindès 2004). When he was seriously challenged, however, he also didn’t hesitate to use force. In several instances, such as the Guébié (a Bété sub-group) crisis in 1970, where an estimated 4000-6000 people died, or the Yopougon crisis in 1991, Houphouët-Boigny used the military to brutally suppress political dissent.

18. **Another element of the Houphouët-Boigny regime was his reliance on the French for military protection, while incorporating high-ranking officers in his system of political patronage by awarding them important administrative positions.** This protected him not only from foreign military threats, but also from a potential insurgency or coup d’état. It also enabled him to keep military expenditures at a minimum, thus allowing him to invest in the development of the country’s infrastructure and human capital. These investments in turn created a new generation of educated Ivorians who left the rural areas in large numbers to find jobs in the growing State bureaucracy. These mid-level managers (cadres) were recruited according to their regional or ethnic background, guaranteeing each group their share of the country’s material wealth.
19. High-level political appointments followed a similar logic of “ethnic balancing,” ensuring each group a seat at the table. Nonetheless, Houphouët-Boigny reserved a privileged position for his own Akan ethnic group, in particular the Baoulés. Based on a myth that the Akans were the most suitable for occupying the State, he sought to legitimize the dominance of the Baoulés among the political elite. As the following table indicates, the Akans with more than 50 percent of the posts were overrepresented in relation to their overall share of the population (approximately 42 percent). Finally, Houphouët-Boigny could rely on the support of the large immigrant population whom he accorded extraordinary rights. Not only were foreigners encouraged to acquire land, based largely on informal or traditional systems of managing land resources, but they were also able to vote in local elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Total political elite</th>
<th>Minister</th>
<th>Deputy</th>
<th>Economic and social councilors</th>
<th>PDCI politburo</th>
<th>Total population in 1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akan</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krou</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malinké</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Mandé</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voltaic</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Bakary (1984, p. 36) in Langer (2005)

20. By the early-1980s, the economic foundation of the system began to falter. As cocoa and coffee prices began to fall, economic growth slowed almost to a standstill. Growth rates from 1980 to 1990 averaged a miserable 0.5 percent, while the external debt grew from 59 percent to 205 percent of GDP (Ridler 1993). A series of structural adjustment programs severely constrained the government’s ability to sustain its system of political patronage and absorb the burgeoning numbers of educated youth into the system of public and para-statal entities. Simultaneously, the State was forced to gradually retreat from its activist role in the plantation economy, where it had provided subsidized inputs, investments in rural infrastructure and price guarantees. This process finally culminated in the reduction of the guaranteed cocoa price from CFA 400 to CFA 250 per kilo in 1990, marking a breaking point in the State’s control over the countryside.

21. At the same time, living conditions throughout the country began to erode. GNP per capita between 1979 and 1995 decreased by over 40 percent, while poverty levels increased from 11.1 percent in 1985 to 36.3 percent in 1995. Unemployment, previously an insignificant phenomenon, rose to 5.5 percent nationwide and to 15.7 percent in Abidjan (World Bank 1997).

22. In early 1990, the socio-economic crisis finally led to a series of student protests and demonstrations by the illegal opposition parties, including Laurent Gbagbo’s Ivorian Popular Front (Front populaire ivoirien or FPI). Though violently suppressed by the military, these demonstrations culminated in the announcement of the country’s first ever multi-party presidential elections, which were held in October 1990. Houphouët-Boigny won a landslide victory against his opponent Gbagbo and appointed Alassane Ouattara to the
newly created position of Prime Minister. In the context of a deepening economic crisis, Ouattara was tasked with the implementation of further austerity measures supported by a World Bank/IMF structural adjustment program. In response to the budget cuts, the student movement under the leadership of the newly founded Student Federation of Côte d’Ivoire (Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d’Ivoire or FESCI) continued its protests. In an effort to restore the State’s authority, the military led by General Gueï began taking increasingly brutal measures, which in turn led to increased militancy among the students. However, the army’s rank and file had also been affected by the reductions in expenditure and at several occasions took to the streets themselves.\(^5\)

**SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION**

23. **It is in this context of political turmoil that Houphouët-Boigny dies on December 7, 1993, leaving behind a country plagued by economic and social upheaval.** While Houphouët-Boigny’s role as founding father of the Ivorian nation enabled him to maintain his authority over the State, subsequent leaders have failed to build a sustainable and inclusive system of political and economic governance. Without Houphouët-Boigny’s powerful patronage system\(^6\) to co-opt political rivals, power struggles between the country’s various political leaders became a dominant feature of the Ivorian political landscape.

24. **These leadership struggles began with the battle between the president of the National Assembly, Henri Konan Bédié, and Prime Minister Ouattara for the succession of President Houphouët-Boigny.** After finally ceding the presidency to Bédié, Ouattara split from the PDCI and created the Republican Grouping (Rassemblement des Républicains or RDR), which became the second significant opposition party next to the FPI. None of these three political groupings has had the ability to mobilize significant support beyond its core constituency, and their leaders have, therefore, pursued electoral strategies dominated by ethnic and regional interests (see box X for a brief description of the main political parties in Côte d’Ivoire).

**Box 2 : Political strategies create party affiliations along ethnic and regional lines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The three main political parties in Côte d’Ivoire can be characterized as follows:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Laurent Gbagbo’s Ivorian Popular Front (Front Populaire Ivoirien, FPI) is dominated by the Krou ethnic group from areas of the West and South-West though, as the oldest opposition party, it also has a significant following among other ethnic groups from the South of the country;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Republican Grouping (Rassemblement des Républicains, RDR) led by Alassane Ouattara is primarily supported by Northerners, whether still living in the North, in Abidjan or other parts of the country;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The (Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire (Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire, PDCI), still led by Konan Bédié, is supported primarily by members of the Akan ethnic group (particularly the Baoulés) from the Center and East of the country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these three major parties, the Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d’Ivoire (Union for Democracy and Peace - UDPCI) is the only other party with a significant yet highly regionalized electoral following. Founded by General Gueï after the 2000 presidential election, it is primarily supported by followers from the general’s Yacouba ethnic group as well as other groupings of the Southern Mandés.

---

\(^5\) In 1990 and 1992, mutinous soldiers had protested in the streets and even pillaged the president’s wine cellar (Bouquet 2005).

\(^6\) By the end of the 1990s, successive structural adjustment programs had reduced government expenditures from one third to one fifth of GDP (EIU (2001) cited in Basset (2003)).
Ivoirité and the politics of social exclusion

25. Once in power, successive governments have resorted to a divisive political discourse known as Ivoirité, which asserts the particular rights of the Ivorian citizen vis-à-vis the country’s immigrant population. First introduced by President Bédié after a questionable electoral victory in 1995, it was initially aimed at mobilizing the support of his own Baoulé ethnic group by giving political expression to xenophobic tendencies that had been building since the economic downturn in the 1980s. In 1992, this trend had already resulted in the introduction of identity cards for foreigners. In 1994, this was followed by changes to the electoral code, including the removal of the right of foreigners to vote and more restrictive citizenship requirements for those competing for public office (Bouquet 2005). The concept of Ivoirité gave these anti-immigrant sentiments an explicitly ethnic connotation and laid the ideological foundation for an emerging political culture dominated by ethnic and regional loyalties. Bédié emphasized not only the need to belong to an ethnic group native to the country, but he attempted to reassert the special role of the Akans in governing the country. The true origins of the predominantly Muslim ethnic groups from the North, on the other hand, were openly called into question, as they were equated to the immigrant population with whom they shared a common religious and cultural background (Akindès 2004). Though not at the center of debate, their Muslim religion was painted as an additional threat to the Ivorian national identity (see Box X).

Box 3: The role of religion

While the dominance of the Christian faith in the South and the importance of Islam among the northern ethnic groups appear to mirror the current divisions of the country, the role of religion in the current crisis remains clearly secondary. Although the main political rivals, Ouattara and Gbagbo, are of Muslim and Christian faith, the secretary general of the FN, Guillaume Soro, is not Muslim. Moreover, both the president of the national Islamic council and the archbishop of Abidjan have appealed for a clear separation of religious beliefs from the current political divisions (Basset 2003). Nevertheless, different manifestations of Ivoirité have evoked a threat of Islam to an alleged social equilibrium in Côte d’Ivoire. In other words, the Islamic religion of the Northern population has at times been exploited as an additional marker of difference between those considered Ivorian and those to be excluded from the country’s ethno-nationalist constructions (Akindès 2004).

26. Bédié’s Akan-centric version of Ivoirité was subsequently adapted by President Gueï and President Gbagbo to mobilize their own regional constituencies. Though General Gueï had seized power claiming to put an end to Bédié divisive politics, with his eyes on the next presidential elections he soon resorted to his own somewhat more expansive definition of Ivoirité. While still seeking to minimize the role of the predominantly Muslim population from the North, he incorporated populations from the West and South-West, including his own Yacouba ethnic group. With this Gueï hoped to dispel fears that he was captive to the interests of the RDR and the Muslim population of the North.

27. Ivoirité was not only a strategy of political mobilization, but was also employed as a tool for eliminating the RDR’s political leader, Alassane Ouattara, from the 2000 presidential contest. Initially, it had been Bédié who in the run up to the elections, began

---

7 In the run up to the presidential election in 1995, the opposition parties had demanded increased transparency and an independent electoral body. As these demands had not been met, both the FPI and the RDR boycotted the election and Bédié, despite low levels of popular support, won the election virtually uncontested.

8 After being deposed as army chief of staff in 1995, General Gueï had seized power in a bloodless coup d’État in 1999.
to call into question the citizenship - and thus the ability to stand for election - of his old rival. After taking power in 1999, General Gueï continued these efforts to disqualify the RDR’s Alassane Ouattara. Though Gueï was ultimately unable to win the presidency, the disqualification of Ouattara not only deepened the country’s political divisions but it also severely undermined the legitimacy of President Gbagbo who, after a tumultuous electoral process, was finally declared the winner on October 26th, 2000 (see box X for an historical account of the events leading up to the 2000 elections).

**Box 4: The events leading up to the 2000 presidential elections**

The electoral process of 2000 was preceded by a controversial referendum on a constitutional proposal, which, promoted by General Gueï, introduced a set of citizenship requirements aimed to disqualify Ouattara from the elections. Sparking a contentious debate on the eligibility of certain Northerners to vote in the upcoming elections, the referendum contributed to an already volatile political climate. Divisions among the population spilled onto the streets and into the university. Similarly, the military showed increasing signs of fragmentation. While Gueï escaped several counter-coup attempts, he could no longer control the harassment of the population being practiced by the armed forces in the streets (Bouquet 2005).

Eventually, the constitutional proposal was approved, thus laying the foundation for Ouattara’s ultimate disqualification from the election. Additionally, Bédié, still the candidate of the PDCI but in Parisian exile at the time, was surprisingly (yet in compliance with the law) disqualified on the grounds that he had not produced the mandatory statement of his physical health verified by an Ivorian doctor. As a result, the only serious contenders for the presidency would be the FPI’s Laurent Gbagbo and General Gueï.

On October 22, 2000, the elections finally took place in relative calm. However, on October 24 as the first results were being announced, Gueï attempted to cut the national electoral commission’s (Commission Nationale Électorale – CNE) vote counting short and had his interior minister announce his victory. In response, the FPI flooded the streets with protesters calling for the resignation of the general. Shortly after, RDR supporters organized parallel demonstrations, calling for new elections. Once the CNE finally pronounced Gbagbo the official winner on October 26th, these two camps turned on each other in a massive outbreak of violence. The violence became increasingly indiscriminate, with anyone considered foreign becoming a target. In the end, at least 150 people either died or disappeared (United Nations 2001). In these “calamitous” circumstances, as Gbagbo himself put it, he finally assumed the presidency, having won 59 percent of the votes cast.

**Politickization of daily life**

28. While the country’s political leaders engaged in a protracted struggle over the presidency, tensions also began to trickle down to the general population. Not only were foreigners being accused of stealing jobs from Ivorians, but both foreigners and Ivorians with northern surnames had become targets of routine harassment (tracasseries) by the police. In 2002, President Gbagbo himself added more fuel to the fire by initiating a formal process of national identification to clarify the citizenship of all Ivorian residents. Gbagbo sparked a contentious debate on the eligibility of certain Northerners to vote in the upcoming elections, questioning the authenticity of their identity cards.
29. Simultaneously, the university campus dominated by the FESCI became an increasingly violent battleground mirroring national political divisions. In 1999, when the FESCI divided between those supporting the FPI and those supporting the RDR, it was no surprise that it was through violent confrontation that the dispute was settled. In a so-called machettage (violent confrontation involving the use of machetes) the faction supporting Laurent Gbagbo and led by Blé Goudé finally triumphed. When General Gueï decided not only to legalize the FESCI but to give it the formal role of administering university housing, the practice of violence and coercion on campus became quasi-institutionalized (Konaté 2003).

Social conflict and institutional crisis in the country side

30. In the countryside, the process of structural adjustment had forced the Ivorian state to scale back the support it had provided to the plantation economy, profoundly affecting the institutional arrangements that had underpinned the country’s stability during the preceding decades. Until then, the State had relied on a system of patronage, based on intermediary organizations, such as hometown associations (mutuelles de développement), producer organizations, the local sections of the ruling party (PDCI) as well as immigrant organizations. These served as conduits of political patronage, securing the planters’ support for the State’s economic development model. (Chauveau 2000; Chauveau and Bobo 2005).

31. When the country slid into economic crisis, the State was forced to abandon this model, thus ending its monopoly over rural development in Côte d’Ivoire. This both exacerbated the economic impacts for the planters and eroded the State’s system of political regulation. In its place, a variety of independent rural associations emerged. Driven by the same regional, ideological and political divisions as the political parties on the central level, these organizations have since been competing to gain a dominant position as representatives of rural interests in the country. The first independent rural association, the National Farmers Union of Côte d’Ivoire (Syndicat National des Agriculteurs de Côte d’Ivoire, SYNAGCI), was created in 1991, with the support of the FPI. The creation of numerous other associations representing different regional and political interests followed. The result has been the politicization of rural cooperatives and the overall system of economic governance in the countryside (Woods 1999).

32. Tensions were further exacerbated by the rising numbers of unemployed youth returning to their villages. The economic crisis and the scaling back of para-statal entities had made it increasingly difficult for educated youth to find employment in Côte d’Ivoire’s urban centers. As a result, many of these youth returned to the countryside with the intention to gain access to a piece of land in their hometown. However, by the late 1980s agricultural land had become scarce, especially in the West and South-West, and family estates were often occupied by other family members or foreign immigrants. As a result, in the 1990s increasingly violent confrontations over land erupted, pitting indigenous groups against foreigners (allogènes) as well as internal migrants (allochtones). These conflicts in turn became a subject of national debate not only due to their intensity but also due to a controversial land tenure

---

10 The culture of violence that has characterized the FESCI had developed as a reaction to the repression it had experienced by the State. Born in 1990 as a militant student movement in support of democratization, it faced brutal repression and was outlawed in June 1991. However, this simply drove FESCI to more militancy and increasingly violent methods. Its leaders, including Guillaume Soro (Secretary General, 1995-98) and Blé Goudé (Secretary General, 1999-2001), were periodically imprisoned, while on campus the FESCI soon replaced the strongmen supported by the government and took control of university life.
law passed in 1998, which formally revoked the right of foreigners to hold land (see chapter 3 for more details on the dynamics of land conflicts in Côte d’Ivoire).

FROM COUP D’ÉTAT TO POLITICAL MOVEMENT

Politicization of the army

33. The final spark that would ultimately ignite the rebellion in 2002 came from within the military. Beginning with President Bédié, Côte d’Ivoire’s political leaders had also broken with Houphouët-Boigny’s system of ethnic balancing and political co-optation previously used to contain the military. Firstly, Bédié reduced the overall military budget and removed officers from important civil positions. Additionally, in 1995, he removed the popular General Gueï from his position of army chief of staff after he had refused to use the armed forces to suppress protests surrounding the 1995 elections (Kieffer 2000). Secondly, in an effort to guarantee the loyalty of the army, Bédié increasingly promoted officers of Baoulé origin. Rather than shielding himself from intervention by the military, however, it was the combination of these measures that would in fact lead to Bédié’s downfall in 1999. A number of young officers, all representing ethnic groups from the West and North of the country (Bété, Guéré, Yacouba, Senoufou, and Dioula), staged a coup d’état, which culminated in the military government led by General Gueï.

34. Similarly, in January 2002 Gbagbo undertook a reform of the armed forces, which facilitated the promotion of FPI supporters, while those presumed close to Gueï or the RDR were demoted or removed (ICG 2003). Nine months later, on September 19, 2002, it would be former Staff Sergeant Ibrahim Coulibaly (known as ‘IB’) and a group of non-commissioned officers who had either lost their influence or been removed from the armed forces that would stage another coup d’état, this time against President Gbagbo. Having prepared and armed themselves in Burkina Faso, these soldiers quickly took over Korhogo and Bouaké but failed to take Abidjan, where they were stopped by gendarmes loyal to the regime. Shortly thereafter, the French military intervened by closing off access to the city.

Birth of a political movement

35. What had started as a coup d’état turned into a rebellion, as the group calling itself the Patriotic Movement of Côte d’Ivoire (Mouvement patriotique de Côte d’Ivoire - MPCI) decided to install itself in Bouaké and Korhogo and to move west to further expand its control. For the first weeks, the operation remained purely military. However, as it became clear that the rebels would not win an easy victory, Guillaume Soro\footnote{Soro was a former leader of the FESCI and a former FPI sympathizer and close collaborator of Laurent Gbagbo, but since leaving the FESCI leadership in 1998, he had become closer to the RDR.} seized the opportunity by providing the movement with a political platform under his leadership. His principal demand was the replacement of President Gbagbo by a new President for a period of eight months to be followed by elections. Later joined by two new insurgent groups, the Popular Movement of the Grand West (Mouvement Populaire de Grand Ouest, MPIGO) and the Movement for Justice and Peace (Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix, MJP)\footnote{These two new insurgent groups appeared on November 28, 2002 in the West of the country.}, the political organization led by Soro became known as the New Forces (Forces Nouvelles, FN). Far from a homogenous movement, the FN have managed to represent a number of different political agendas both to its supporters and its opponents (see box X for different perspectives on the FN and the military crisis).
To understand the Ivorian crisis it is also important to understand how the crisis is portrayed and hence perceived by different actors and their followers. An external reading of the crisis might place particular emphasis on the division between a disenfranchised Muslim North and the more affluent Christian and animist South. This reading is confirmed by the principal political players, Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim from the North, and Laurent Gbagbo, an evangelical Christian from the South. This reading is also favored by the Young Patriots (Jeunes Patriotes) who have painted the image of a rebellion dominated by Dioulas and foreigners in their vast majority Muslim.

Among Northerners themselves the rebellion is largely viewed as a movement to reclaim their full rights as Ivorian citizens and is also closely linked to the disqualification of Alassane Ouattara from the 2000 presidential contest. However, even among Northerners, sentiments diverge, most notably between the Malinkés and the Sénoufous. In the eyes of most Malinkés, the rebellion remains closely aligned with the political demands of the RDR. Many Sénoufous on the other hand view the RDR as dominated by the Malinkés. Their loyalty is, therefore, more closely linked to the leadership of Soro, himself a Sénoufou.

In the South-West, the same crisis is viewed as an attempt by a group of Northerners to deprive the populations of the West of their legitimate turn in power, having suffered under decades of Akan dominance. This historical vocation of the Western population is further underlined by Laurent Gbagbo’s longstanding role as the opposition leader, while Alassane Ouattara had acted as prime minister under Houphouët-Boigny.

In the West, principally among the Yacouba ethnic group, the crisis is intimately related to the role of General Gueï. His coup d’état in 1999 was viewed as an important moment for the inclusion of the Yacoubas in the Ivorian national project. With the death of General Gueï in the initial days of the rebellion, many Yacoubas have seen the MPIGO and MJP as a movement to avenge the death of the general and reclaim the rightful place of the Yacoubas in the country’s governance.

From the perspective of the Akans in the Center and East of the country, the transfer of power from Gueï to Gbagbo represents no more than a continuing usurpation of power by what is referred to as the “Western Union”, the alliance of the ethnic groups from the West. In general, the Akans have had the most ambivalent perspective on the current division of the country. Reflecting this ambivalence, Bédié and the PDCI have gone from the inventors of Ivoirité to an alliance with the RDR in the group of seven opposition parties.

Finally, followers of the president have frequently related the crisis to the meddling of foreign powers, most importantly the French, in the internal affairs of the country. According to this interpretation, these foreign powers would prefer to see a pro-Western government led by Ouattara than the nationalistic regime of Gbagbo.
CHAPTER 2. NOT PEACE, NOT WAR – GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN CRISIS

36. With the signing of the Ouagadougou peace agreement in March 2007, it appears for the first time that government and the FN are determined to find a lasting solution to the military crisis that has plagued the country since 2002. The situation throughout the country has begun to normalize, as road blocks and harassment by security forces have been reduced and circulation of people and goods has become less cumbersome. Government officials and civil servants (including education and health personnel) have begun to return to their positions in the CNW. Most importantly, the security situation has, with some exceptions, remained stable.

37. Nevertheless, important challenges remain for the preparation of the presidential elections, officially expected to be held in June 2008. Even if this political process is successful, almost six years of crisis and division have left important scars in Côte d'Ivoire’s social structure and systems of governance. This chapter outlines the risks related to the current peace process as well as a range of challenges in the area of governance and social development.

BETWEEN PEACE AND WAR

38. After the initial outbreak of fighting centered in Bouaké, major combat shifted primarily to the West of the country, where the MPIGO and MJP had appeared in November 2002. While fighting continued in the West, a series of peace agreements were signed by the government, the FN (including MPCI, MPIGO and MJP), as well as the major political parties of the opposition. Beginning with the peace accords signed in Linas-Marcoussis, France, these successive peace agreements established a so-called government of reconciliation with a consensus prime minister and a division of ministerial posts among the different parties. These governments were tasked with the implementation of a series of measures intended to resolve the major disputes between the parties and lead to new presidential elections.

39. However, until the agreement signed in Ouagadougou in 2007 and the nomination of Guillaume Soro as Prime Minister, two successive prime ministers were unable to make significant progress in advancing the peace agenda. Meanwhile, the French forces (Licorne) and the UN peacekeeping forces (ONUCI) had established a buffer zone (zone de confiance) separating the two belligerent parties. Despite some clashes, the buffer zone proved to be quite successful in keeping the warring forces apart. In the West, however, successive outbreaks of violence – between the belligerent parties and within local communities – remained a constant concern. Within the buffer zone itself, security was also highly unstable. Finally, movement between the Northern territories held by the FN and the Southern part of the country held by the government remained severely constrained, placing a heavy economic burden on the population in the CNW.

40. Within this context of neither peace nor war, governance has continued to deteriorate. With the government’s legitimacy in question and the country divided not only physically but also socially, maintaining the State’s authority has become an increasing challenge. The resulting lack of security has a significant social cost – ranging from the physical and psychological effects on the victims of violence to broader questions of social cohesion and the rule of law. Moreover, the measures agreed under the Ouagadougou peace
agreement, though apparently supported by President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro, still bear a significant conflict potential.

THE OUAGADOUGOU PEACE PROCESS AND REMAINING CONFLICT RISKS

41. The key measures to be implemented under the Ouagadougou peace agreement have not significantly changed since the previous peace accords. On the political level, they include the identification of Ivorian nationals, the preparation of elections, currently planned for June 2008, as well as the redeployment of the State administration to the North and West of the country. Concerning the security sector, they include the integration of the security forces and the disarmament and reintegration of any remaining combatants, including militia members.

42. In the latest report of the UN Secretary General (UN 2008), several challenges regarding the identification process and the preparation of the 2008 electoral process were identified. While the mobile identification teams have largely operated without major security incidents, only 33 out of the 111 planned teams are currently operational in 47 out of 727 communes. Moreover, in the absence of a strong communication strategy initial turnout has been relatively low. Since the identification process is essentially a prerequisite for the elections, it is expected that the elections planned for June 2008 will have to be delayed. Finally, while the restoration of the State administration has begun, it remains largely limited to the redeployment of the prefects and sous-préfets and certain social services. No progress has been made with the redeployment of the crucial judiciary.

43. In spite of these delays, the overall political climate in the country has remained relatively positive, with the president and prime minister appearing to cooperate. However, as the delays begin to affect the agreed electoral schedule, the opposition parties have shown first signs of discord. Most importantly, the FPI has rejected demands from the RDR and PDCI to hold the elections on time - with or without full disarmament.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants

44. Disarmament and demobilization of combatants has not significantly advanced since the signing of the peace accords more than a year ago. Though a joint command center has been established and the buffer zone has been dismantled and replaced by a “green line” patrolled by mixed government and FAFN units, the parallel process of disarmament and integration of certain FAFN combatants into the State security forces remains stalled. One challenge has been the process of determining the ranks of the FAFN elements to be integrated into the security forces. As a result, the FN command structure in the CNW remains intact, largely at the expense of fully restoring the authority of the State.

45. The disarmament process is further complicated by the apparent divisions within the FN. As attempts to assassinate Guillaume Soro seem to indicate, parts of the FN remain opposed to the rapprochement between the president and the Prime Minister. This opposition may reflect previous divisions between factions supporting Soro, on the one hand, and those supporting the ousted commander of the 2002 military uprising, Ibrahim Coulibaly (‘IB’), on the other. If significant elements within the pro-‘IB’ camp perceive the peace process to be bypassing their interests, disarmament may remain an elusive goal.

46. Additionally, there remains the significant challenge of disarming and reintegrating the numerous militia groups, primarily in the Western part of the country. Although the UN Secretary General’s report (UN 2008) cites only 1019 militia members...
still awaiting disarmament in the West, the real number may be much higher. Fieldwork in Tabou and Bangolo indicated that numerous members of militia and so-called auto-defense groups remain under arms and expect some form of compensation for their role in the conflict. In Tabou, for instance, a commander of a militia unit that fought against the FAFN explained that he had been promised that his fighters would be integrated into the government’s armed forces. The group, allegedly numbering more than a thousand fighters, is largely unemployed and now expects to be included in the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process.

47. Moreover, the presence of a significant number of Liberian ex-combatants having participated in both the Liberian and the Ivorian conflict may still pose a significant liability for the potential resurgence of combat on either side of the border. According to an interview in Côte d’Ivoire with a Liberian militia commander from the Krahn ethnic group, numerous ex-combatants still reside on Ivorian territory, ready to be mobilized for combat in both Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire, if resources become available (see Box X). Others have returned to Liberia and are working in a gold mine run by former MODEL combatants.

Box 6: A Liberian militia commander about

“I am the main MODEL Commander in this region, but I am a Liberian Krahn man from D town in Grand Gedeh. […] The situation is calm for now, but we are kept on standby. We do not qualify for DDRR here, and we do not want it. […] I have around 200 Generals under me; they are mostly here and in Guiglo, either in the refugee camps or in the towns and villages. Each of these Generals is capable of commanding 300-400 people in battle. We [Liberian Krahn fighters] are many in Côte d'Ivoire, thousands. Most cannot return to Liberia, they say we fought the war too bitterly, that we killed too many people. This government [the Liberian government] will never let us rest; there are big hands in Monrovia who will spend money on getting revenge against us. Nobody trusts this government, they are all coming from America. All we can do for now is wait here. Things will change. Those big, big Krahn people are everywhere, in America, in London; it only needs for someone with money to come and say that they are not happy with what the woman is doing in the country, that they want to destabilize her, unseat her. We are here. We are waiting.”

Source: Field notes from Moyen-Cavally, June 2007

48. The continuing presence of Liberian ex-combatants ready to take up arms is partly related to the design of the Liberian DDR process. Based on the modalities developed for the demobilization of formal military structures in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, it was not well suited for demobilizing irregular militia units in Liberia. Lacking official military records, the Liberian process depended on unit commanders to supply lists of combatants eligible for the DDR process. These commanders chose to collect the arms from the ex-combatants and sell or redistribute them via kinship or other networks to non-combatants, thus giving them access to the DDR process. The result was an explosion in the number of applicants and the inevitable decrease of resources available to each. At the same time, many of the frontline fighters were discouraged by their commanders from participating by the spread of rumors of ‘war crimes trials’, 13 These fighters, typically recruited as children during the Liberian conflict, are still under the control of their commanders. Failing to tackle the problem of militias in Côte d’Ivoire, including those composed of Liberian fighters, therefore, poses a significant conflict risk for Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire and the sub-region as a

13 This information is based on research conducted by a consultant in Liberia between 2004 and 2007.
whole. As could be seen in the Ivorian conflict, it was these units who inflicted the most severe damage on local communities.

**GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Culture of violence*

49. The conflict potential in Côte d’Ivoire is not limited to the areas controlled by the FN or to the West of the country, where militia groups have contributed to the state of insecurity. With the onset of socio-economic and political instability in the 1990s Côte d’Ivoire has become increasingly engulfed in a culture of violence. As the democratization movement gained strength, the State tried to maintain its authority by the use of force. But instead of quelling the protests, the Government reaction has increased readiness to respond with violence, particularly among certain sectors of the youth. The development of the FESCI and later of the Young Patriots Alliance\(^{14}\) (*Alliance de Jeunes Patriotes*) are emblematic of this trajectory. Their organization and methods form the social basis for the recurrent outbursts of extreme violence not only at the battlefront between the FANCI and FAFN but also in the streets of Abidjan.

50. In the West of the country, this culture of violence has given rise to numerous brutal incidents of inter-communal violence. While these conflicts, commonly triggered by disputes over land, predate the current military crisis, they increased in frequency and scale after 2002. With the current peace process, they have once again been reduced, however, an important conflict potential remains (for a more detailed analysis of different types of conflict and their stakeholders see chapter 4).

51. One of the results of this culture of violence has been a proliferation of human rights abuses both in the North and the South of the country. According to reports by Amnesty International (2003) Human Rights Watch (2004, 2005, 2006) as well as a special report by the UN (2003), these have included summary executions, beatings, arbitrary detention, torture, rape, and other acts of violence. These abuses have been committed by the armed forces (FAFN and FANCI), militia groups and others. Oftentimes, the abuses are carried out on ethnic grounds or based on the suspicion that an individual supports the opposing side. In certain cases, they are viewed as retribution for atrocities committed by the opposing side.

52. Two recent reports by Amnesty International (2007) and Human Rights Watch (2007) have highlighted the particular role that sexual violence, primarily against women, has played during the conflict (see box X for an excerpt from the Human Rights Watch report). These reports highlight that women have been targeted for political reasons, such as affiliation with a particular political party or the gendarmerie (typically via their husbands) and their ethnic or foreign background. Additionally, the context of violence, impunity and increasing poverty levels appear to have increased women’s vulnerability to sexual abuse, including domestic violence, non-politically motivated rape, child prostitution, forced marriage, and sexual abuse by teachers. The lack of support services has meant that many of the survivors of sexual abuse are left on their own to deal with the psychological trauma and other medical sequelae. Furthermore, a study conducted by an international NGO has shown that many survivors of sexual abuse are rejected by their family.\(^{15}\)

\(^{14}\) The Young Patriots Alliance was founded by Blé Goudé in response to the attempted coup d’état in 2002 and has become a network of militant youth associations in defense of the government.

\(^{15}\) The study, conducted by an anonymous NGO, is quoted in HRW (2007).
Box 7: Sexual Violence by armed groups

“Human Rights Watch documented over 180 cases of sexual violence in Côte d’Ivoire, including individual and gang rape, sexual slavery, forced incest, and egregious sexual assault. Combatants raped women old enough to be their grandmothers, children as young as six, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers. Sometimes family members were forced to watch or were forced to rape their own relatives. Women and girls had guns, sticks, pens, and other objects inserted into their vaginas. Others were abducted to serve as sex slaves or were forcibly conscripted into the fighting forces. Abducted women and girls were often obliged to become the sex slaves of their captors (“husbands”), and were sexually abused over extended periods of time. Some sex slaves and other rape survivors gave birth to children fathered by their rapists. Sexual victimization of girls and women was often accompanied by other gross human rights violations against them, their families and their communities, as armed men on both sides of the political divide massacred, killed, tortured, assaulted, and kidnapped innocent civilians.”


53. Finally, there have numerous reports of the recruitment of child soldiers both on the side of the government (militias) and the FAFN. A number of these children were ex-child soldiers who had previously been demobilized in Liberia. UNICEF estimates that approximately 3000 children are currently under arms. Around 1000 children have been demobilized by a UNICEF program.\(^\text{16}\)

Culture of impunity and corruption

54. The culture of violence and abuse is further exacerbated by the fact that these acts of violence are largely carried out with impunity. In the 1990s, a large number of human rights violations committed both by the security forces and other individuals went without judicial sanction and caused important resentments within the population. Among these violations, the most widely cited case is the punitive action carried out by the military against students in Yopougon in 1991.\(^\text{17}\) Rather than restoring order, this and other actions contributed to an increasing militancy among the opposition movement and an erosion of trust in the government. As a survey conducted in May/June 2002 indicates, the judiciary was among the least trusted institutions in the country in the run up to the military crisis (Roubaud 2003).

55. Since the onset of the rebellion in 2002, this situation has further deteriorated. As reports by Amnesty International (2003) and Human Rights Watch (2004) document, numerous grave human rights violations have remained uninvestigated by the Ivorian judicial system. A study conducted by the Ivorian government in 2006 (GOCI 2006a) shows that this has resulted in very low levels of confidence in the country’s judicial process. Over two thirds of the population views the judicial system as particularly unjust and manipulated by economic interests. A report by the United Nations (2007) on the state of the justice system in Côte d’Ivoire confirms that judges are widely considered to be susceptible to outside influence from family members, politicians, and administrative superiors as well as monetary incentives. Only a small proportion of the population has access to the justice system, due to their lack of information, their lack of resources and their distance from the nearest court.

\(^{16}\) Source: UNICEF website, Côte d’Ivoire country profile.

\(^{17}\) Other examples are detailed in the following documents published by Amnesty International: Côte d’Ivoire. Silencing the opposition - 77 prisoners of conscience convicted, 2 July 1992 (AFR 31/08/92); Côte d’Ivoire. Freedom of expression and association threatened, 13 July 1994 (AFR 31/03/94); Côte d’Ivoire. Government opponents are the target of systematic repression, 28 May 1996 (AFR 31/01/96).
house. According to a qualitative survey conducted in 2003, the lack of access to a fair judicial process constitutes the second most important fear among poor people interviewed (Akindès forthcoming).

56. **In the CNW, the problem of impunity is equally significant.** With the absence of the State, a formal judicial system has not been able to function during the crisis and human rights violations, as well as other crimes, have generally gone unpunished. As interviews conducted during fieldwork for this study confirm, the problem of impunity is an important concern among the population. Though traditional conflict mediation has been able to replace the formal justice system in certain circumstances, this is not the case in conflicts involving members of the FN.

57. **The lack of an effective judicial system has also further exacerbated the problem of corruption.** As the graph below indicates, over the past decade the perception of corruption has further deteriorated from an already relatively low level. The harassment (*tracasseries*) practiced by members of the security forces and the FAFN to extract payments from the population are the most visible form of corruption in the country and have probably contributed significantly to this change in perception. Though both the government and FN have recently made efforts to reduce this form of harassment, it remains an important challenge.

![Graph 1: Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (1998-2001)](image)

The security forces

58. **The prevalence of corruption and human rights abuses in the armed forces are symptoms of more systemic problems facing the security sector.** As described in chapter 1, ethnic imbalances within the armed forces contributed to the conditions that led to the coup d’état in 1999 as well as the ongoing military crisis. These imbalances appear to extend beyond the military into the police and *gendarmerie*. It is the perception that the so-called B.A.D. (Bété, Attié, Dida) have been systematically favored within the ranks of the security forces, including the leadership as well as the rank and file. According to an article in *Le Patriote* in 2002, for example, 800 of 1016 candidates retained as non-commissioned officers during the 2001 application process had Bété or Dida surnames (Coulibaly 2002).

59. **Furthermore, since the coup d’état in 1999, the chain of command within the armed forces has been severely weakened.** During the regime of General Guéï, numerous military units under the command of young officers began operating semi-autonomously, harassing and extorting money from the civilian population. This pattern has been reinforced since the beginning of the military crisis in 2002. According to a Human Rights Watch report
(HRW 2005), numerous members of FESCI and other pro-government youth groups have been recruited into the security forces. Due to their continuing relationship with their youth militia groups, this has created additional channels of command, bypassing the formal chain of command.

**Media and freedom of expression**

60. **In the presence of large scale human rights abuses and a polarized political climate, the freedom of expression in Côte d’Ivoire has been significantly constrained.** Both in the North and the South of the country suspected affiliation with the opposition has resulted in violence and repression. The culture of violence described above has limited the ability of individuals to engage in peaceful political activity. Demonstrators in the government-controlled zone can be arrested based on the "Anti-break-in Law" (*Loi anti-casse*). Created under the premiership of Alassane Ouattara in 1992, the law provides a legal mechanism for punishing demonstrators who have instigated or participated in acts of violence or vandalism. In practice, it has become a tool of repression, employed by successive governments to contain rallies and demonstrations by the opposition.

61. **The print media, despite significant levels of intimidation and violence against journalists, has remained extremely diverse.** However, the majority of newspapers are beholden to the editorial control of their financial backers (see Box X for the political affiliations attributed to different newspapers as well as Reporters Without Borders (2005)). As a result, newspapers have been responsible for publishing articles inciting violence and hatred. Only three out of the twenty-three daily newspapers sell more than 10,000 copies per day, which is considered the threshold for profitability, the prerequisite for editorial independence. Another factor is the low pay that journalists receive, creating incentives to accept external financing for business-related trips or for articles (Reporters Without Borders 2005).

**Box 8: Political leanings of the Ivorian print media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pro-FPI newspapers:</th>
<th><em>Notre Voie, Le Temps, Le Courrier d’Abidjan, Les Echos du matin</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-RDR newspapers:</td>
<td><em>Le Patriote, 24 Heures, Nord-Sud Quotidien</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-PDCI newspapers:</td>
<td><em>Le Nouveau Réveil, L'Intelligent d’Abidjan, L’Evénement</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatively independent:</td>
<td><em>Fraternité Matin</em> (former government controlled newspaper), <em>Soir-Info, L’Inter</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Reporters Without Borders (2005)*

62. **The national television station Radio-Télévision ivoirienne (RTI) is influenced by the government and provides extensive coverage of the president’s activities, but, according to the government-appointed National Broadcasting Council (Conseil national de communication audiovisuelle - CNCA), its news broadcasts don’t give preference to the president’s political party.** However, at various occasions the station has been held hostage by pro-government youth groups and its board of directors has been suspended.\(^{18}\) Similarly, there have been instances where pro-government militias have occupied local radio stations, forcing them to broadcast politically motivated messages. According to an ONUCI press release, both national and local radio broadcasts have contained messages inciting

\(^{18}\) From November 4, 2004 to April 12, 2005, RTI headquarters were occupied by pro-government militias.
violence against political opponents (ONUCI 2006). Recently, the CNCA has banned the French Radio France Internationale (RFI), citing their failure to appoint a permanent correspondent\(^{19}\) (CPJ 2008).

63. **In the Northern part of the country, a number of transmitters have been damaged, so that reception of the national TV and radio stations is more limited.** In the past, the FN blocked the transmission of the government-controlled media and aired their own broadcasts using the state’s remaining infrastructure. Currently, the FN maintain their own radio station, while allowing RTI to broadcast with frequent interruptions. Newspapers from the South are in circulation, though not in large numbers. Additionally, there are three new dailies entitled *Journal Officiel, Liberté* and *Tam-Tam*. In both the CNW and the South radio ONUCI broadcasts programs intended to provide unbiased factual information and to counteract any potentially incendiary messages.

64. **Despite the restrictions on access to balanced media coverage in Côte d’Ivoire, there are some positive signs.** A law passed in 2004 has introduced a number of measures aimed at reducing the inflammatory content in the print media as well as to guarantee minimum salaries for journalists to ensure their financial independence from political sponsors and encourage more balanced reporting. Furthermore, since 1995 Côte d’Ivoire has had an independent media watchdog, the Observatoire de la liberté de la presse, de l'éthique et de la déontologie (OLPED). Though it has no real sanctioning power, it has stimulated public debate on the challenge of media freedom in Côte d’Ivoire (Reporters Without Borders 2005).

**Civil society**

65. **The majority of Ivorian civil society organizations has appeared since democratization in the 1990s and remains weakly institutionalized.** According to a conference paper prepared by the US Institute of Peace (2006), a significant number of these civil society organizations are today closely affiliated with political parties. Consequently, civil society representatives perceive a degree of mistrust among the population vis-à-vis civil society. The lack of support within society in turn makes it difficult for these organizations to mobilize financial resources for their activities, making them more dependent on financing from the government, the international community as well as political parties. In the context of the current crisis, the activities of certain civil society organizations, particularly those defending human rights, have been further constrained, as they have become targets of violence. This may be related to their denunciation of human rights violations as well as to their perceived (or actual) affiliation with a particular political party.\(^{20}\)

66. **Furthermore, the Ivorian civil society appears to be relatively fragmented with little coordination across different organizations, and technical capacity is relatively limited.** According to a study financed by the European Commission (Husson et al. 2005), civil society organizations generally are weak in terms of the technical skills of their staff and have poorly institutionalized management procedures. Moreover, they typically generate little information about their activities or area of expertise. Nevertheless, a notable exception to this is a very small number of well established Ivorian civil society organizations, all active in the development field (for more details on the role of civil society organization at the local level, see chapter 4.)

\(^{19}\) The station’s FM broadcasts had been previously banned, due to alleged unethical reporting.

\(^{20}\) The Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l’homme (LIDH) founded in 1989 is considered close to the FPI, which it defended during its years in opposition. The Mouvement ivoirien des droits de l’homme (MIDH) is considered to be close to Alassane Ouattara and the RDR (Smith and Tuquoi 2003).
Governance in the CNW

67. Despite the gradual redeployment of the State administration to the CNW, governance in the northern areas remains dominated by the FN with both the security sector and economic governance under their control. Divided into ten zones, the ultimate authority in the CNW rests with the various zone commanders, locally known as “com-zones”. While at the national level the civilian leadership, represented by the Secretary-General of the FN Guillaume Soro, formally presides over the military command structure, at the local level the authority of these military commanders reigns supreme. For the civilian administration of their zones, the com-zones are supported by Cabinet Directors.

68. Security and financial matters are closely integrated in the central leadership of the FN in Bouaké. The security sector comprises subdivisions for the police and the gendarmes (paramilitary forces), a commissariat of the armed forces and an inspectorate general of the armed forces. The com-zones are appointed by the central leadership. While the central leadership has endeavored to limit the degree of insecurity and harassment of the local population, there has been a large degree of variance according to the different areas and periods of the conflict. In the West, the use of Liberian mercenaries at the beginning of the conflict led to widespread insecurity and human rights abuses. However, after their removal, the security situation could be stabilized and confidence in the FN administration has grown.

69. In Korhogo, where the State’s role was more limited even before the conflict and where the support base of the FN is the broadest, security was less of a problem during the early periods of the conflict. In fact, according to research conducted in January 2007, a number of locals have noted an improvement in overall security compared to pre-crisis conditions. As Förster (2004) explains, a weakening of the State in the 1990s had led to the resurgence of a competing system of traditional security provided by the local dozos (traditional hunters). Collaboration with these locally respected dozos and strong support among the population may have provided the FN with the needed legitimacy to nurture confidence in their system of governance (Förster 2004, Bauer et al. 2007).

70. Nevertheless, local populations throughout the country still report arbitrary harassment and lack of accountability for abuses committed by the FN. Furthermore, internal dissent within the ranks of the FN has led to periodic outbreaks of insecurity and abuses. In Korhogo and Bouaké, opposing factions of the FN have come to blows a number of times, leading to waves of violence and intimidation of the civilian population. Additionally, problems regarding the timely payment of combatants have led to mutinies within the rank and file.

71. Economic governance is organized under the umbrella of the so-called “centrale.” Through the centralized management of their financial resources, the FN have attempted to enhance the authority of the central command structure in Bouaké over the entire area under their control. The centralized system is maintained through inspections carried out in the different sub-zones. During certain periods of the crisis, the centrale was also responsible for setting rules for the import and export of goods with preference being given to exchanges with Côte d’Ivoire’s Northern neighbors.

21 As the situation on the ground is in constant evolution, it is possible that, by the time this report is made public, the following analysis no longer reflects the reality. The reference date is early 2008.

22 The dozo are traditional hunters who have a mystical status and are believed to possess special powers.
72. Taxes are generally collected from market vendors, transporters and enterprises. While the local population does not complain about the nominal rates that the FN have set for various economic activities, there is a level of uncertainty that is perceived as detrimental to doing business. A local economic actor in Bouaké stated, “With the Forces Nouvelles you are never certain to have paid. Certain elements pass to collect your money and afterwards others come to collect again. You can’t refuse because you will be threatened and harassed.” Of course, the cost of doing business further increases with the harassment at the numerous road blocks, where local combatants extort transporters and travelers to generate an income for themselves (rather than the centrale). As noted above, however, these activities have been reduced with the current peace process.

73. Finally, social services are largely left to the remaining State institutions, international humanitarian agencies, and local civil society. Nevertheless, the FN maintain a degree of oversight on these structures by requiring that they register with the local commune. To ensure that these actors can safely carry out their activities outside the main population centers, they are typically required to obtain a laissez-passer from the local commander. Failure to comply with these administrative procedures may cause complications at the various checkpoints.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND RISKS

Economic impacts

74. After two consecutive years of recession in 2002 and 2003, the Ivorian economy has returned to positive economic growth since 2004, though at a low level (1.6% in 2004, 1.8% in 2005, 0.9% in 2006, 1.7% (estimated) in 2007). Despite these positive growth rates, the economic situation for many Ivorians, particularly in the CNW, remains precarious. Growth has been sustained in part by the off-shore oil and gas industry, benefiting only a very small segment of the population. While cocoa production, largely concentrated in the South and South-West has remained stable, agricultural production in the North has declined. In particular cotton production has encountered difficulties in financing, transport and supply (inputs) because of the crisis (OECD 2007). Since cereal production in the North is highly dependent on the cotton marketing chain for input delivery, this has had important implications for the production of food crops, such as maize and rice (Stessens and Dao 2006). Furthermore, in areas directly affected by violent conflict, particularly the West, many fields have been abandoned or cannot be exploited due to an insufficient labor supply caused by displacements.

75. Transport infrastructure has not been severely damaged by the conflict per se, but it is starting to show serious signs of degradation because of insufficient (or inexistent) maintenance. Though road blocks have been significantly reduced, they still imply an additional cost for transporters and passengers. Before the normalization of the situation brought by the Ouagadougou peace agreement, transport costs had doubled or tripled. Furthermore, the lack of financing in the CNW has forced many wholesalers to stop pre-financing collectors of cash crops. This has resulted in the exit of many market actors and reduced competition to the detriment of producers. Additionally, in some areas, producer cooperatives have disappeared as a consequence of the crisis (Stessens and Dao 2006). Finally, in Abidjan, the closure of a large number of firms as well as the departure of

23 Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database.
24 Before the crisis, many wholesalers in the North depended on financing from business people in Abidjan. In a context of insecurity, these sources of finance largely disappeared during the crisis.
important international organizations has significantly reduced employment opportunities. According to a report by the Chamber of Commerce, in 2005 alone, approximately 30,000 jobs were lost.

76. **Since the last household survey was conducted in 2002, there are no conclusive figures on current poverty levels in Côte d’Ivoire.** Even before the current military crisis, poverty had climbed from 33.6 percent in 1998 to 38.4 percent in 2002. In 2006, it has been estimated that 43.6 percent of the population was below the poverty line. In Abidjan, poverty levels have risen from 14.9 percent in 2002 to 17.7 percent in 2006. Simultaneously, the Gini coefficient, indicating the level of income inequality, has dropped from 0.50 to 0.44 in Abidjan, indicating that on average richer households have been more affected by the economic consequences of the crisis.

77. **Particularly in the North and the West, the number of households facing food insecurity or facing the risk of food insecurity has increased substantially**, suggesting a deepening of poverty in those areas. An evaluation of food security focused on ten regions in the North and West of the country was conducted by the World Food Programme in 2006 (World Food Programme 2007). The study revealed the highest levels of food insecurity in the Western regions of Moyen-Cavally (43%), Haut Sassandera (15%), and 18 Montagnes (13%). The total number of food insecure individuals in the ten regions was estimated at approximately 500,000, while more than one million individuals are estimated to be at an elevated risk of food insecurity. The households most affected had low levels of education and an above average proportion was dependent on income from day labor and remittances. The revenue they derived from agricultural production was typically unstable. Food insecure households were also less likely to use credit to make purchases. Finally, the study suggested that the average cotton production per producer was insufficient for maintaining food security. The increase in food insecurity may also have had an impact on the prevalence of child malnutrition. While in 1999, about one out of every four children under five years of age suffered from retarded growth, in 2006 this figure had risen to approximately one out of three (MICS 2000/2006).

**Social impacts**

78. **In 2005, a study (GOCI 2006b) commissioned by the Ministry of Solidarity and Victims of the War estimated the number of people internally displaced by the conflict at the time at around 700,000 or more.** This figure is based on a survey conducted in five departments, considered to be the largest recipients of IDPs. The vast majority of these IDPs (around 500,000) sought refuge in Abidjan with family and friends. Other important destinations have been Toulepleu, Dalao and Yamoussoukrou, where displaced families have generally remained in rural areas. In Duékoué and Toulepleu, 45 and 38 percent of families have hosted internally displaced people. In Abidjan, a little less than a quarter of households are host families. In Duékoué and Toulepleu, the majority of IDPs are from the surrounding areas, while in Abidjan and Yamoussoukrou the majority of IDPs come from the North of the country. Since only 25 percent of IDPs were employed at the time of the survey, host families face increasing expenses. Over 30 percent of host families claimed their expenses had increased by over 80 percent.

79. **Since the gradual normalization of the situation, IDPs have returned to their place of origin though not in large numbers.** In 2006, OCHA (2006) registered the return of

---

26 The risk of food insecurity may be further aggravated by the continuing rise in world food prices.
more than 40,000 IDPs to Moyen Cavally and 18 Montagnes, located in the West of the country. UNHCR (2008) reports a number of challenges facing families wishing to return to their homes, including illegal occupation or destruction of their homes, hostility towards returnees, and fears of renewed violence and human rights violations. In certain cases, disputes over land, which may have caused the displacement in the first place, remain unresolved. This could be confirmed during fieldwork conducted in Bouaké, where the mayor reported that returnees had been threatened by the current occupants of their homes. According to him, cases where homes have been occupied by members of the FN are particularly difficult to resolve.

80. **The education system in the CNW has been severely impacted by the crisis.** Due to the departure of teachers and the destruction of school buildings, many children in these areas have had no or very limited access to education since the beginning of the crisis. Despite the gradual redeployment of educational staff, in the North qualified teachers make up only about 30 percent of educational staff (OCHA 2008) the other being volunteers. Although school attendance was already low before 2002 with a net primary enrollment rate of 56.9 percent, the net primary enrollment rate remains below pre-crisis levels at 55 percent. In the North and North-West enrollment rates are significantly lower than the national average at 27 and 32 percent, respectively (MICS 2000 and 2006).

81. **Since the beginning of the crisis a number of humanitarian agencies have guaranteed a minimum level of health services throughout the country.** With the redeployment of the administration, 80 percent of health facilities are now functional with 60 percent of qualified health staff attending patients. Despite these improvements, serious health challenges persist. Prenatal care provided by health professional has dropped from 88 to 82 percent with maternal mortality rates at 600 per 100,000 births. Moreover, HIV/AIDS rates are among the highest in West Africa at 4.7 percent (AIS 2007).

82. **The crisis has not affected access to drinking water in urban areas.** In fact, the percentage of the population with adequate access has increased from 88 percent in 2000 to 90 percent in 2006 (MICS 2000 and 2006). However, in the rural areas the crisis appears to have caused a drop in the levels of access with 65 percent in 2006 compared to 74 percent in 2000.

83. **While not of immediate concern, another alarming consequence of the crisis has been a drop in birth registrations from 71.8 percent in 2000 to 55 percent in 2006 (MICS 2000/2006).** In light of the current challenges regarding the national identification process, this development bears a significant risk for future controversies regarding the ability of these children to obtain identity papers and with them access to a number of services and rights.
CHAPTER 3. LOCAL CONFLICT DYNAMICS

84. The socio-economic and political developments that have led to the national crisis in Côte d’Ivoire have also had profound impacts in the rural areas, far away from the center of political and economic power in Abidjan. Based on an agricultural export economy, the Ivorian political and economic system remains closely intertwined with the dynamics of the countryside. Consequently, the economic crisis and the struggle for political leadership, which ultimately led to the current military crisis, are closely linked to the local-level conflicts, most notably over land, which have erupted in different parts of the country.

85. This chapter begins with an analysis of the local-level implications and manifestations of the national-level crisis and examines how they have contributed to tensions in the Ivorian countryside. It then examines different types of local-level conflicts and the existing systems for resolving them.

THE CRISIS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND INTER-GENERATIONAL TENSIONS: AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CONFLICT

86. As described in chapter 1, the collapse of Houphouët-Boigny’s system of political regulation also had profound implications for the Ivorian countryside. The simultaneous retrenchment of the State and liberalization of the political landscape provided a breeding ground for emerging conflicts over the control of dwindling economic resources. Tensions were further compounded by the return of unemployed youth from the cities to their villages in the countryside. The interests of these returning youth not only pitted them against the large number of foreigners and domestic migrants who frequently occupied the land resources they expected to claim; oftentimes it also placed them at loggerheads with village elders who typically benefited from the agreements they had made with the foreigners (Chauveau and Bobo 2005).

87. The resulting inter-generational tensions have had repercussions that go beyond the management of land resources but which extend to the management of local conflicts more generally. During the fieldwork conducted for this report, it was apparent that youth in Côte d’Ivoire are increasingly challenging the traditional governance systems where authority is based primarily on seniority. In many cases, educated youth are unwilling to accept the leadership of an older generation who often lacks basic literacy. This erosion of traditional authority severely complicates the management of conflicts, which is heavily reliant on the mediating role of traditional governance structures. Furthermore, it many cases it can also be a source of conflict in its own right. Youth groups in many areas are openly challenging existing village hierarchies.

88. Since the beginning of the military crisis, the disappearance of formal authority in many parts of the country has accelerated this trend. The proliferation of militias in the South and combatants in the CNW has further

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 9: The impact of the crisis on traditional conflict resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“There wasn’t any more respect in the families between young and old. It was enough to have a weapon to lose all respect for the elders. That was the strongest effect. The crisis has made it so that one doesn’t resolve conflicts by traditional means. One resolves them by force. I provoke a conflict and my brother, a chef de guerre [FAFN leader] intervenes in my favor. The traditional chiefs can’t say a thing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: NGO representative, field notes from Korhogo, December 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
weakened traditional authority, as village chiefs are no longer able to maintain order in the face of these armed groups. Furthermore, the culture of violence that has developed during the current military crisis has emboldened many youth to resolve conflicts through violent means and has lowered the threshold for violent confrontation in many areas (see box X).

A TYPOLOGY OF CONFLICTS IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE

Leadership conflicts

89. As described above, the frustration and economic difficulties faced by young people throughout the country has caused the destabilization of the village governance system, traditionally dominated by village elders. As a result, conflicts over positions of leadership in the traditional system of governance have become increasingly common. This trend was apparent in four of the fieldwork areas visited for the report (Aboisso, Bangolo, Danané, Korhogo) and is confirmed in a study focusing on local conflicts in the South-West of the country (Diarrassouba, N. et al 2005). The only fieldwork area where this problem was not identified was Bouaké, where the authority of the traditional Baoulé king and chiefs appears to remain intact.27

90. Typical causes for young people to challenge the authority of older village chiefs are the perception that certain traditions are not fair or that older village chiefs don’t have the skills to effectively organize village life and negotiate with the modern administrative system. With the crisis, two additional factors have come into play. Firstly, older village chiefs are less effective at guaranteeing the security of their villages in the face of violence. Secondly, a number of village chiefs who chose to leave their villages, due to the crisis, have seen their authority erode further.

91. Based on these different types of complaints, a group of youth may conspire to depose the existing chief and install a different, typically younger and more educated chief. However, without established norms for the replacement of a chief, this process tends to be hotly contested. In some cases, some form of electoral process may be held, followed by confirmation by the village elders. However, the new chief rarely enjoys unanimous support within the village. In many cases, the village population, including the youth, becomes split along family lines and village leadership remains unstable. In other cases, higher level chiefs, such as a chef de canton (district chief), or the local sous-préfet may be called upon to mediate. However, the absence of agreed norms makes these efforts very complicated, as there is no sound basis for establishing a legitimate case. For example, in Djatokro (Aboisso) the result, as one sous-préfet puts it, has been the “postponement” rather than the resolution of the conflict (see box X).

27 The fieldwork seems to indicate that the traditional governance system among the Baoulé is based on the most well established set of rules. It is, therefore, the least likely to be challenged.
Box 10: Leadership conflicts in Djatokro (Aboisso) as described by the sous-préfet central of Aboisso

“This is the situation in Djatokro, 19km from Aboisso on the road to Abidjan. In this village, the youth say that the old chief, Y. S. has memory loss and isn’t educated. But he is involved in the management of the water pump, which is very poor. In fact, the pump is leaking. So, a group has proposed D. D. as the new chief. He is an intellectual, a former teacher, only 55 years old. He had one advantage, he was the son of a former chief of Djatokro. So, they sought support for D.D. and got it. But after having appointed him chief, they failed to win over the population. They started being arrogant and behaved badly. So this caused some skirmishes. The sous-préfet was called upon and decided to install a temporary committee for the management of the village, composed of the pastor and the president of the Islamic committee. The pastor is from the Abbey ethnic group and originally from Agboville and the president of the committee is a youngster from Boundiali. He teaches the Koran to the imam and is the president of the Muslim youth. The committee was installed with the presence of the gendarmes. It will be maintained as long as the sous-préfet remains unconvinced that peace as been restored. Furthermore, the balance of the water pump will be checked by the sous-préfet. Sometimes the sous-prefect has to be a diplomat because with diplomacy one never solves a problem, like in politics, you only postpone it.”

Source: Field notes from Aboisso, November 2007

Conflicts over land

92. Conflicts over land appear to exist throughout the country. In all the fieldwork sites, some form of dispute over land was reported by the local population. However, the degree of violence and escalation associated with these disputes varies greatly. It is well-known that the most violent disputes over land have occurred in the West and South-West, although fieldwork in Aboisso revealed that the area has also had a number of deadly confrontations.

93. In general, land conflicts can be divided into three main categories: disputes between two parties from the same ethnic group, disputes between two parties from different ethnic groups (typically autochtones and migrants), and disputes between local communities and commercial entities. In addition, displacements caused by the war appear to have caused a new source of conflict. As reported in Danané, groups of Burkinabé who have been expelled from their plantations further south have, with the tacit support of the FN, violently taken possession of local forestry areas (see Box X).

Box 11: Conflicts between local Yacouba and displaced Burkinabé near Danané

According to reports by the village chief of Gbanleu, located North of Danané on the road to Guinea, a number of armed Burkinabé have installed themselves by force in forest areas surrounding the village of Gbanleu. These groups have sought refuge in the area after being displaced from their homes further south. According to the local village chief, though they have not asked permission to occupy the land, they have been accepted by the existing Burkinabé population, something that has created tensions between the Burkinabés and the Yacoubas. Although the village has informed the Forces Nouvelles of the situation, no action has been taken to remove the Burkinabés.

While this was the only such incident reported during fieldwork, it appears likely that this is not an isolated case. Moreover, while the situation in the village of Gbanleu has not erupted in violence, this may change if the perceived protection by the FN is removed.

Source: Field notes from Danané, September 2007

• Conflicts among the same ethnic group. Conflicts among the same ethnic group are typically based on disputes over boundaries between land belonging to two families or villages. These disputes bear the least potential to degenerate into violent conflict, as they are embedded in the most clearly defined institutional framework. Conflicts are
usually resolved by traditional means, with the village chief or the "land chief" (chef de terre)\(^{28}\) supported by a council of elders mediating the dispute. When conflict involves neighboring villages, a higher level traditional authority such as a chef de canton or a king may take on the role of mediator. Only in rare cases will a government representative or, in the CNW, the FN play a role. Where some form of kinship relationship exists, the traditional authority is expected to mediate; even if a sous-préfet is called upon, it is likely that he will turn the matter back over to traditional mediation.

As stated above, these conflicts are the least likely to become violent, as the traditional governance structures appear to remain up to the task of mediating these disputes. However, as traditional governance systems continue to weaken, the likelihood of violent confrontation within the same ethnic group may also be growing. Such cases, generally involving disputes between two villages, have been reported both in the South-West (Sikosso and Denis 2006) and in Aboisso. In these circumstances, a sous-préfet will, at least initially, intervene.

- **Conflicts involving autochtones (original settlers) and migrants.** Conflicts involving parties from different ethnic groups, typically an indigenous group (autochtone) and a foreign (allogène) or domestic (allochtone) migrant, are the most likely to degenerate into violence. At the root of these conflicts is a system that has remained highly informal and unregulated for many years. While the rural patronage system was able to contain tensions between the autochtones and the “others” during the years of rapid economic expansion, its failure to establish a more formalized system for the transfer of land resources is a key factor in today’s conflicts.

To convince the autochtones to cede their land to the growing migrant population for cultivation, particularly in the West and South-West, the government chose not to introduce a system of formal land transfer but to rely on the highly informal system of tutorat (something akin to sponsorship), which remains the accepted norm. In this system, the original owners of the land (the authochtones) grant migrants (allochtones or allogènes) access to a piece of land without formally ceding their control over it. They then become the so-called tutors of the migrants who have the moral obligation to provide some form of payment in exchange for the favor. The degree of formality and the terms of the particular arrangement vary widely from case to case. Traditionally, the transaction is formalized with the offering of a libation, while subsequent payments may depend more on the particular need (or greed) of the tutor than on specifically agreed conditions. Recently, it has become more common to accept an initial payment resembling a sale and to formalize agreements with some type of written document (Chauveau 2000).

\(^{28}\) The chef de terre presides over all matters related to land. He is often considered the symbolic owner of all village land.
Box 12: Ill-defined land management practices as conflict triggers

- First and foremost, the exact size and location of the piece of land is frequently ill-defined. Over the years, a migrant may, therefore, expand the size of the original piece of land without objection from his tutor. Particularly when members of the tutor’s family return and seek to reclaim this added land disputes may arise, as the migrant may have invested significant capital and labor to develop it.
- In some cases, the transfer of land may occur without the recognition of the land chief or other relevant family members. This can subsequently lead to disputes when the buyer begins exploiting it.
- Unclear boundaries may also lead to the transfer of the same piece of land – either by the same or by different autochtones - to several different foreigners. According to a sous-préfet in the South-West, “It happens frequently that an authochtone sells a piece of land to several people. That is why I have issued a decree prohibiting all sales of land until ordered otherwise.” (Sikosso and Denis 2006: 10) In other cases, an autochtone may transfer a piece of land claimed by another member of his family or village.
- Furthermore, the rules governing the transfer of land from one generation to the next are highly unclear. There is no established norm as to who has the inheritance right to a piece of land that has been ceded to an allogène or allochtone.
- The ability of a foreigner to transfer a piece of land to another foreigner is also typically ill-defined, which may lead to disputes between the tutor and the foreign buyer.
- In some cases, the specific conditions of the tutorat may also lead to conflicts, when foreigners are perceived to be eschewing their obligations vis-à-vis their tutor. A typical grievance is insufficient contributions to ceremonies organized by the tutor’s family in the occasion of weddings or funerals.
- Finally, it is generally accepted that rights to land may only be claimed if this land is consistently put to productive use. When this is not the case for a certain period of time, disputes may arise as to who may utilize the land.

Source: Filed notes from qualitative research as well as information presented in Sikosso and Denis (2006) and Diarrassouba, N. et al (2005)

Nevertheless, many important elements tend to remain undefined and thus encourage practices by both the tutors and the recipient of land that often act as conflict triggers (see box X). While this informal system of land management, implicitly promoted by the government for decades, rarely led to disputes in the past, in recent years a number of factors have facilitated degeneration into violent conflict. As described above, pressure on land resources, the return of unemployed youth and the divisive discourse of Ivoirité have all added to an explosive social climate. The national land law, designed to formalize land rights in the country and approved unanimously by parliament in 1998, has failed to improve the situation. Without an adequate campaign to inform the population of the law’s intentions and without an appropriate mechanism to manage the transition to a new, more formalized system, the law has been interpreted and manipulated by local actors in a way that has further exacerbated the disputes created by the previous system (see box X for the specific implications of the national land law). In 1999, shortly after the passage of the law, the area of Tabou was host to one of the most deadly confrontations, which, according to fieldwork recently conducted in the area, has yet to be definitively resolved (see box X).
Box 13: The national land law and its implications

The national land law (Law No. 98750 passed on December 23, 1998) reserves the right of land ownership to Ivorian citizens only and stipulates that all land rights must be claimed and formalized within a time period of 10 years. Otherwise the land right is ceded to the State and will be leased to the person utilizing the land. Foreigners can only lease land either from the State or an Ivorian citizen. To manage the transition to this formalized system of land administration and to address potential disputes, a decree (Decree No. 99-593 issued on October 13, 1999) created the Village Committees for Rural Land Management (Comité de Gestion Foncière Rurale).

On the one hand, in terms of the status of foreign ownership, this land law is no more than the formalization of existing practice, where only the autochtones can formally own land. On the other hand, by forcing land management practices into the formal sphere, it also significantly raises the stakes for the different actors involved. Moreover, in the long-term it poses a serious threat to the authority of the traditional governance system, which to date controls land management in practice.

Given these potential threats to various local interests, the law quickly became an instrument of manipulation by various political actors. In the absence of a clear understanding of the law even among representatives of the State, a multitude of interpretations and fears circulated throughout the country. In particular, the clause limiting land ownership to Ivorian nationals provided the perception among young autochtones that they were legally entitled to reclaim land previously ceded to foreigners. The role of customary law in the new system was another hotly contested issue. While some viewed the new law as a confirmation of the traditional governance system, others saw it as a usurpation of power by the State. Finally, the State had not established any clear procedure for the implementation process, creating additional uncertainties among local populations. It was in this state of confusion and fear that tensions ultimately boiled over in various parts of the country.

The practices for resolving these land disputes remain equally unclear and informal. Without a clearly established institutional path, neither party is likely to accept an unfavorable ruling by the consulted authority, be it the formal administration or the traditional authorities. The common perception of authorities as corrupt or politically biased makes things worse and in many cases foreigners will not accept the authority of the traditional system. This lack of legitimacy among the potential conflict parties also extends to the Village Committees for Rural Land Management (Comités villageois de gestion foncière rurale) established in various parts of the country in accordance with the land law. In practice, it appears that these committees, undoubtedly with certain exceptions, have largely failed to become the universally accepted forums for solving land disputes (Sissoko and Denis 2006). Rather, without a significant degree of legitimacy, it would appear that these committees simply add another competing avenue to an ill-defined institutional landscape.

It has also been suggested (Diarrassouba, N. et al., 2005) that the level of integration of the migrant population into village social life plays a role in the effective conflict mediation and overall maintenance of social cohesion. More specifically, in the villages visited, there were complaints among the autochtones about the lack of investment in common village infrastructure on the part of the migrant populations. There was resentment that the migrant population was profiting from the land without “giving back” to the community. In response to this criticism, an important number of Baoulé in the South-West have decided to move their homes into the villages of the host communities and increase their participation in village life as a way to avoid future attacks from the local autochtones (Babo and Drozo 2006).
In 1999, a violent conflict between local Kroumes and Burkinabés erupted over a 120ha piece of land, which a group of young villagers from nearby Bessékéré had sold, without the consent of the village elders, to a community of Burkinabés. When the village elders requested the departure of the Burkinabés, the village youth began to pressure the Burkinabés to return the contested land. When they refused, demanding an adequate compensation, it came to blows, resulting ultimately in the expulsion of the foreigners. After similar conflicts erupted in surrounding areas, a total of approximately 20,000 were expelled from their plantations. While many of these Burkinabés returned to their home country, a large number have refused and a group, said to be armed with machine guns and to number in the thousands, has reoccupied land near the town of Bessékéré. As a result, a series of land-related conflicts have continued to flare up, most recently in 2006, costing several lives. Though violence has subsided, without an agreement between the autochtones and the Burkinabés, the stand-off continues.

Source: Babo and Droz (2006) and field notes from Tabou, February 2008

- **Conflicts between local communities and commercial entities.** Although fieldwork for this study found conflicts between local communities and commercial entities only in Aboisso, it is worth mentioning this particular type of conflict, as it may well become more common, especially in the areas most affected by the military crisis. In the particular case encountered in Aboisso, a violent conflict resulting in significant damage to the firm’s infrastructure, erupted in 2005 between the village community and PALMCI, a formerly state-owned, national producer of palm oil. The village has laid claim to the land transferred from the State into private hands, when the firm was privatized in 1992.

  A number of factors contributed to the outbreak of violence in this case. Firstly, the perception among villagers that they continue to own the land has created the basis for the villagers’ claims. Secondly, the recent hostility towards Europeans and French nationals, in particular, has created distrust towards French-owned companies, such as PALMCI. Thirdly, there appears to be the perception that PALMCI, in this case, has not contributed to the well-being of the local population – neither through significant employment opportunities nor through investments in local infrastructure. On the contrary, villagers claim that the company has added to the pollution of the local water sources.

  While this may be an isolated case, the perception that land owned by private companies remains property of the village community doesn’t appear to be unique. In Tabou, for example, villagers expressed the same sentiment (Diarrassouba, N. et al 2005) in relation to another PALMCI plantation. Depending on the perception of the company by local populations, these circumstances may also bear conflict potential elsewhere. For instance, conflicts between companies who have exploited forestry resources during the crisis and the local communities who own the land could become violent when FN authority is removed from the CNW.

**Conflicts over fishery resources**

Conflicts over natural resources extend beyond the dimension of land, as the local conflicts over fishery resources in Aboisso demonstrate. Like the conflicts in the West, this conflict has pitted the local autochtones against foreign immigrants. Since the Agni in the area do not have a local fishing tradition, these immigrants were initially needed to
adequately exploit the abundant local fishery resources, which were created by the construction of a dam in 1959. Therefore, when the first Bozo fishermen from Mali arrived, this was not contested by the local population. However, as their numbers increased so did the pressure on the local fishery resources.

95. **By the 1990s, the lake was officially over-exploited, leading to tensions between the Bozos and the local Agnis.** The events that ensued and ultimately led to the expulsion of the Bozos in 1995 reveal important parallels to the land conflicts in the West. As the following excerpt from an interview with a local Agni illustrates, lack of clarity concerning the sale of fishing rights and limited integration of the immigrant population into the local communities are two important factors explaining the hostilities:

“The Bozos insist that the sections of the lake were sold to them. [...] Plus, despite the fact that they live by the lake, none of them has constructed something in the village. They all lived in encampments on little islands in the lake. They lived on little embankments serving as their base. Additionally, to avoid paying municipal taxes, they combined their fish and sent it with a certain number of their compatriots, depending on the size of the boats. To recover the taxes, the municipal government was obliged to go seek them out where they had their bases.”

The conflict trigger that led to the outbreak of violence and the expulsion of the Bozos was related to a fishing prohibition enacted to allow the fish stocks to recuperate. Despite their representation in committees created to monitor the lake during this period, the Bozos were accused of violating the decree and selling fish clandestinely. After the expulsion a law was passed, limiting the exploitation of fishery resources on the lake to Ivorian citizens.

**Conflicts between farmers and cattle herders**

96. **In the Northern part of the country, disputes between sedentary farmers, typically Senoufous but also Baoulés in areas further south, and nomadic cattle herders, usually foreigners belonging to the Fula ethnic group** constitute the most prominent source of tension. Like the land conflicts in the West and South-West, an explicit State policy promoting the immigration of the Fula cattle herders laid the foundation for the resulting tensions between these two groups.  

In the 1970s, the government began promoting cattle breeding in the north of the country in an effort to reduce the need for meat imports. Due to difficulties in attracting local farmers to cattle breeding activities, the State began to recruit Fula cattle breeders from Mali and Burkina Faso. Without any mechanisms for managing the resulting interactions between the traditional sedentary farmers and the newly arrived cattle herders, the two groups soon clashed over the destruction caused to farmland by grazing cattle.

97. **Despite the fact that meanwhile many traditional farmers have begun holding cattle themselves, conflicts between the Fulas, on the one hand, and the Senoufous and Baoulés, on the other, persist.** According to Kohlhagen (2003), the lack of integration of the foreign immigrants within the local social structure provides an enabling environment for conflict. While conflicts between herders and agriculturalists within the same ethnic group are

---

29 The Fula are also known as Peul (in French).
30 While in the case of Côte d’Ivoire national policies may have exacerbated the situation, conflicts between transhumant herders and sedentary farmers are common throughout West Africa. See, for example, World Bank, “Guinea Conflict Risk and Vulnerability Analysis”, June 2007.
typically resolved without violence, cultural and linguistic barriers complicate conflict management between the Fulas on the one hand, and the Sénoufous and Baoulés on the other.

98. **Consequently, a series of legal and preventive measures taken by the State throughout the 1990s have not been able to significantly improve the situation.** On the legal side, these measures have included the introduction of a binding pastoral calendar, standardized reparations for damages, and the obligation to register cattle. Additionally, the creation of village committees for conflict management as well as commissions on the level of the préfecture and sous-préfecture was initiated in 1996. Parallel to this, special pastoral associations were created to represent cattle herders in the various commissions for conflict management. Finally, a project was initiated in 1997 with the principal goal of establishing fenced-in grazing areas and areas for keeping cattle at night.

99. **However, neither local State representatives nor the conflict parties themselves appear to be committed to adopting these State imposed solutions.** Not a single pastoral association has been formally incorporated, preventing them from participating in the newly established conflict-resolution mechanisms. Furthermore, the responsible sous-préfets have largely failed to establish the envisioned commissions. In most cases, it is the sous-préfet alone who participates in the mediation process, which is often viewed as overly bureaucratic and lacking transparency. Moreover, the commission on the level of the préfecture has yet to be established.

100. **Without the full commitment of local actors, conflicts are likely to increase in the future because of the simultaneous expansion of cashew production and cattle herding (Kohlhagen 2003).** Fieldwork in the towns of Korhogo and Bouaké revealed that these conflicts do indeed persist in the surrounding areas. In Bouaké it was reported that animosities between Fula herders and Baoulé farmers had been further complicated, due to the special status the Fulas have enjoyed under the regime of the FN, principally related to their role in supplying the FAFN with meat. In one village, farmers complained that under the FN, conflicts with the Fulas were consistently being decided in favor of the cattle herders, as they are able to provide soldiers with beef in return.

**Inter-communal tensions and conflict**

101. **While disputes over natural resources, most notably land, are frequently the cause of conflicts between different ethnic groups, they do not constitute the only source of inter-communal violence.** Other common sources of conflict include political power struggles, disputes over religious sites, and different types of individual altercations that broaden to include entire communities. With the onset of the military crisis, perceived allegiances with either side of the political divide have become another important conflict trigger. Particularly in the West and North of the country, insecurity, impunity and distrust have caused latent tensions between different ethnic communities to spill over into violence with increasing frequency. In the areas most directly affected by the war, particularly in the former UN-controlled buffer zone, vicious circles of violence have developed between different ethnic communities, as each side attempts to avenge the violence previously inflicted on their kin.

102. The following incidents are emblematic of the types of conflicts encountered in the fieldwork areas:
Korhogo: Malinké (Dioula) and Sénoufou. While the Malinké (or Dioula) and Sénoufou communities in Korhogo have lived side by side without major conflict for many years, this co-existence has always been accompanied by an underlying struggle for political leadership. While both parties are, in principle, RDR supporters, there is the perception among certain Sénoufous that the RDR has become more closely aligned with the interests of the Malinkés, attributed to their increasing economic importance (see Box X). Under the authority of the FN, this perception has been further intensified, as the FAFN themselves are seen to be captive to the influence of the Dioula community. In this particular village, the Sénoufous and Malinkés finally came to blows over an incident involving a Sénoufou masque (spiritual medium) and a Malinké woman. Over the course of several months, numerous violent confrontations erupted, involving the burning of houses and the death of one village member. Despite mediation attempts on the part of the district chief (chef de canton), the FN and an international NGO, a climate of hostility persists in the village.

Bouaké: Baoulé and Dioula. Bouaké, as the headquarters of the FN, has been more tightly controlled than most other parts of the CNW. Even though most of the violence has been at the hands of the FAFN in the process of establishing their authority, clashes between Dioulas and Baoulés have occurred as well, primarily related to their respective positions for and against the FN. For example, one wave of violence took place when a number of Baoulés took to the streets, expecting the imminent “liberation” of the city by government forces. When this was followed by punitive killings of Baoulés by the FAFN, a large number of Baoulés left the city.

Danané: Liberians, Dioulas, Guérés and Yacoubas. Danané has been one of the areas most severely affected by clashes between Liberian mercenaries. Mercenaries fighting on either side committed atrocities against both the Yacouba and Dioula population in the area. In some cases, these mercenaries were joined by young Liberian refugees residing in Danané. As a result, after the Liberian mercenaries were chased back to Liberia by the FN in 2003, the Liberian community in Danané has become the victim of violence and ostracism. According to the head of the Liberian community in Danané, particularly young Liberian women are targets of abuse. Furthermore, due to the generalized hostility towards the community, they don’t have access to any assistance from the authorities in the area.

Latent tensions between the native Yacouba population and the Dioulas are also apparent in Danané. This is partly a result of the crisis, as the Dioulas are seen to be dominant among the FN, who, after more than five years of crisis, are resented by an important sector of the Yacouba population. These latent tensions led to a massive
outbreak of violence in Téapleu in 2006. The conflict trigger in this case was a traffic accident involving a Dioula and a Yacouba. The dispute that followed escalated in a large scale confrontation between Yacoubas and Dioulas, involving several killings and the burning of numerous houses. Similarly, during the most violent period of the crisis, the relatively small Guéré community in Danané was also a target of violence. Suspected to be supporters of the FPI, numerous Guéré were attacked and imprisoned in the early phase of the crisis. As a result, the Guéré population fled the area and only a handful have returned.

- **Bangolo: Guéré, Baoulé and foreigners.**
  Out of the five fieldwork areas, Bangolo has clearly faced the severest levels of inter-communal violence. In the area, the large scale inter-communal violence has become known as the “war within the war,” as the local population has effectively replicated the confrontation between the two armed forces at the community level. With the onset of fighting in the area, the autochtone (Guéré) population, supporting the government side, became entangled in continuously escalating confrontations with the local allogènes (primarily Burkinabé) and allochtones (Baoulé). While the underlying grievances remain conflicts over land, the violence inflicted by the opposing side soon became a grievance in itself. On both sides, so-called auto-defense committees, created to protect the respective communities from attacks, became the perpetrators of numerous atrocities against the opposing side, causing entire villages to be displaced. In many cases, no more than a rumor would result in attacks and counter-attacks. Each side considered itself the victim of the other side’s attempt to expel them from the area. From the point of view of many autochtones, the foreign population has taken advantage of the war to take over their land and remove them from their homes (see Box X). The migrants on the other hand, see the war as a strategy to reclaim the land they have rightfully acquired. While open hostilities have largely subsided since the initiation of the Ouagadougou peace process, tension and distrust remain deeply ingrained in the different communities. As one foreigner put it, “from now on we know who is who”.

**Religion-based conflicts**

103. **A number of conflicts are also based on religious beliefs and practices.** Typically, these conflicts involve Christians or Muslims and animists. Confrontations between Muslims and Christians on religious grounds alone were not identified during the fieldwork. Rather conflicts are typically triggered when members of the Muslim or Christian community fail to respect traditional religious practices or norms. This may involve interference in a religious ceremony, the violation of a sacred place or other prevailing prohibitions. Since these prohibitions and norms are highly localized, they usually occur within the same village community and may oppose members of the same ethnic group.
104. **These types of conflicts were identified in Korhogo, Bouaké and Danané.** While in Korhogo and Bouaké they involved Muslims and animists, thus mirroring inter-ethnic tensions (between Dioulas and Sénoufous and Dioulas and Baoulés, respectively), in Danané a religious conflict had erupted between Christians and animists within the same Yacouba village (see box X).

**Box 17: Conflict between Christians and animists in Bouagleu (Danané)**

In Bouagleu, a Yacouba village, a conflict between local Christians and animists divided the community for several years. According to the animists, the conflict started when a young Christian interfered in a traditional ritual following the death of a village woman. In the night following a woman’s death, it is a traditional Yacouba practice for the women of the village to walk the village naked, while the men are expected to remain indoors. In this case, however, a young Christian had come out of his house to observe the ritual. This was followed by violent confrontations between the Christian and animist communities and resulted in tensions that continued to escalate and lasted for several years. The Christians were subsequently accused of violating the sacred lake of the village, and the animist community no longer respected the common village chief, who happened to be Christian. The conflict was resolved only recently after the intervention of an international NGO.

*Source: Field notes from Danané, September 2007*

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: POORLY DEFINED AND COMPETING INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

105. **As the traditional governance system continues to weaken, it is leaving an important institutional vacuum in conflict management.** Even before the current crisis, the majority of the population was largely excluded from the formal justice system, and traditional systems of conflict resolution remain the preferred way for resolving disputes. However, as the traditional leadership continues to lose its legitimacy, its ability to contain the various types of conflicts has become severely constrained, and new actors are filling the void. In the different fieldwork areas, it was clear that a multiplicity of conflict resolution mechanisms exist. Though theoretically potentially advantageous, the lack of both an accepted hierarchy among the different mechanisms and of a way for enforcing resolutions means that the different parties to the conflict have little incentive to abide by decisions. Rather than providing complementary mechanisms for conflict resolution, the different structures create competing systems and claimants may be tempted to “shop around” for the most beneficial judgment.

**The traditional path**

106. **Among the same ethnic group and ethnic groups that maintain so-called alliances,** the use of traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution remains the **preferred option for most conflicts.** Where traditional authority remains strong, it may even be considered an obligation to resolve disputes without the intervention of outside authorities. The traditional institutional path usually begins with the neighborhood chief (*chef de quartier*) who mediates between two members of the same extended family. After this the village chief and his council of elders intervene, followed by the tribal chief (*chef de tribu*) or district chief (*chef de canton*) for cases not resolved at the village level. In principle, once the district chief (or in some places the king) has been consulted, the decision is final. For conflicts among two foreigners or *allochtones*, conflict mediation takes places under the auspices of the group’s leader in the village.

---

31 Alliances may be maintained between families or tribes belonging to different ethnic groups that have resided in the same area for a long period of time. Alliances between *autochtones* and foreigners with a different ethnic background are relatively uncommon.
The goal of traditional mediation is finding a mutual agreement between the two conflict parties rather than assigning culpability or imposing a punishment. Most traditional tribunals require some form of payment and/or gift. This is not only a compensation for the elders who are engaged in the process, but an incentive for the conflict parties to accept the decision and avoid further mediation efforts. When an autochtone and a foreigner are involved in a dispute, the traditional leadership will involve the head of the relevant ethnic group in the process. However, the degree to which this representative is involved in the outcome of the mediation can vary considerably. As a result, in many cases, the non-autochtones do not recognize the traditional authority or fail to accept decisions they view as unfair. In these cases, the next step will vary according to the severity of the conflict and personal preference. Mediation between the two groups can be transferred to a higher level, involving the district chief and an equivalent representative of the migrant community. Where present, a representative of the local consulate may be called upon (this tends to be the case only for Burkinabés, as no other consulates are generally present).

**State and military authorities**

When traditional mediation attempts fail, conflicts are typically transferred to the sous-préfet. In some cases, when the conflict is particularly violent or one of the conflicting parties does not trust the traditional leadership, one or both of the parties may also directly approach the sous-préfet. Alternatively, they may bring matters to the gendarmes, the police, or, in the CNW, to the FN or ONUCI/UNPOL.

Some sous-préfets, if they believe that the traditional system has not yet been exhausted, will turn the matter back over to the traditional governance system for mediation before involving themselves in the matter. When the sous-préfet does take action, he will generally also attempt to find a mediated solution rather than assign blame to one of the parties. In principle, the decisions of the sous-préfet carry more weight than those taken by the traditional governance system. However, that the ruling is seen as unfavorable by one of the conflicting parties, it may not be sufficient to solve the dispute. This is often the case where the sous-préfet or the State in general is viewed as partial, as has been the case in some of the land disputes in the West as well as the conflicts between the Fulas and Sénoufous in the North.

In the South-West, the total number of conflicts being brought to the sous-préfets for mediation appears to have steadily risen, placing increasing pressure on their resources (Sikosso and Denis 2006). As mentioned above, in areas with high levels of land conflicts, some sous-préfets have attempted to establish the Village Committees for Rural Land Management. However, it seems that the majority of such committees have not yet become operational. As one sous-préfet in Soubré stated, “I have passed ten conflicts to those committees, but ten times those conflicts came back to me.” (Sissoko and Denis 2006: p.36).

In the CNW, the local population mentioned the FN and the ONUCI posts as possible resources for resolving particularly violent or difficult conflicts. However, overall confidence in the system was relatively low. The FN were generally viewed as being partial or, in many cases, unresponsive (especially regarding conflicts involving combatants). It was clear that in Danané, for instance, the FN preferred to rely on the traditional governance system presided over by a local district chief, a man who is known for his cooperation with the FAFN. Confidence in ONUCI was similarly low, with respondents generally viewing it as unresponsive to their complaints.
112. In theory, when the gendarmerie or police are involved, they are required to investigate and ultimately refer the matter to the justice system. However, in practice these institutions also operate under a more informal system. It is up to the individual officer to decide how to handle a case. Officers may decide to mediate or impose some form of ruling on the conflict parties. Only in rare cases are matters actually turned over to the formal court system.

The role of NGOs, local civil society and religious leaders

113. In addition to the State and traditional authorities, international NGOs, local civil society and religious leaders play a role in mediating conflicts and encouraging reconciliation. Typically, these actors engage in reconciliation efforts and intervene in longstanding group-based conflicts where other methods of conflict resolution have failed. The key to success in such cases is the ability of these actors to establish their neutrality and to build trust among the conflicting parties. The role of these institutions has been particularly important in circumstances where both the traditional and the State or military authorities have lost the trust of one or both of the conflicting parties.

114. In Bangolo, Bouaké and Danané, a number of locally initiated peace-building efforts were identified. In Bangolo, they appear to be based primarily on the efforts of particular individuals who rely on their personal charisma to mobilize communities for the construction of Peace and Reconciliation Committees (see box X), while religious leaders and local civil society organizations seem to be largely absent from this sphere of activities. In Danané, on the other hand, there were a variety of efforts, including a local youth-based NGO, with the intention of establishing peace committees in various villages in the department. Both in Bouaké and Danané, the local civil society network was engaged in reconciliation efforts in cooperation with other actors, including an international NGO as well as traditional and religious leaders.

Box 18: The origins of the Peace and Reconciliation Committees in Bangolo

“It was Kadañi who approached me because here we didn't get along among the Morès and the Guérès. From Gonié, he came to see us because, for him, it wasn’t normal that we didn’t get along. And because it’s me that people listen to in the village, he convinced me to form a peace committee to help resolve the differences. […] So we had a meeting with the youth to find a solution. […] And then one day we had a big meeting, the representatives of all the foreigners and the presidents of all the youth from Glôkpeu, Glôplou, Bahibli, Bléni Nonhouin, everyone. We convened them at a big meeting here in Gonié Tawaké and effectively everyone came. […] When the mother committee of Gonié Tawaké had been created on September 12, we began creating other committees, the one in Glôkpeu, Glôplou, Bahibli, Bléni Nonhouin, Vôh 1 and 2 and so on. When those committees sent their representatives to our committee, we began educating the other villages. So that’s how we began with Zagnian all the way to Bangolo.”

Source: Committee member, field notes from Bangolo, November 2007

The role of local radio

115. Rumors appear to have contributed to the violent confrontations in the area of Bangolo by exacerbating inter-communal tensions. Local radio stations, therefore, have the potential to play an important role in providing local populations with accurate information, thus defusing tensions in the community. According to Diarrassouba et al (2005), after the worst confrontations in 1999, the local radio station in Tabou has helped dispel rumors and has

---

32 It was beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the level of success of these initiative in finding sustainable resolutions to these conflicts and in providing more effective mechanisms for conflict resolution.
contributed to maintaining social cohesion in the area. Similarly, ONUCI officials confirmed that since the Ouagadougou peace process the local radio station Ivoire FM, financed by the FN, has contributed to keeping peace in and around Bouaké. On the other hand, several incidents throughout the crisis have shown the potentially destructive role local media can also play. In several cases, radio stations were occupied and used to air messages inciting violence against certain social groups.
CHAPTER 4. THE DYNAMICS OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

116. Beyond the national reconciliation process, a central challenge for restoring a sustainable peace in Côte d’Ivoire will center on the establishment of an inclusive system of local governance. This involves not only successful systems for conflict management, as discussed in the preceding chapter, but also, more generally, the effective participation of different social groups in local decision-making processes. In Côte d’Ivoire, this raises not only the question of how to engage citizens and traditional authorities in local governance, but also the issue of what roles should be attributed to the various deconcentrated and decentralized institutions.

117. The study Assessing the Merits of Decentralization as a Conflict Mitigation Strategy (Siegle and O’Mahony 2007) suggests that decentralization processes in fragile states can either increase or mitigate the risk of conflict, depending on the form of decentralization as well as the particular context. Conflict prevention tends to occur when decentralization (a) facilitates minority group representation and increases participation, thus conferring more legitimacy to the government and strengthening local accountability, and/or (b) supports increased levels of local government expenditures and employment, thus making elected leaders less likely to succumb to ethnic conflict. Conversely, countries where decentralization introduces higher levels of local government taxes or designates structures of regional autonomy tend to be more susceptible to ethnic conflict.

118. Among the conflict risk factors related to the country context, a number of factors correspond closely to the Ivorian crisis. According to the study, conflict risks are particularly acute: (a) where political parties are organized along ethnic or geographic identity lines; (b) where large concentrations of minority groups exist; (c) in provinces where the central government does not have control over security; and (d) in countries high rates of corruption relative to their income cohort. While this does not mean that decentralized decision-making cannot contribute to a more stable and inclusive system of local governance, it certainly suggests a careful analysis of the local conditions and a clear identification of the existing risk factors.

119. In a conflict-setting one of the first entry point for addressing questions of local governance are community-based rehabilitation and development projects. During the crisis, community-based approaches in Côte d’Ivoire have primarily served to deliver humanitarian aid and rehabilitate small-scale infrastructure without explicitly addressing longer term development goals. As the country has moved toward the process of peacebuilding, these community-based projects may go beyond the more narrow goals of service delivery and humanitarian aid and begin integrating broader governance and social development goals. These may include processes for rebuilding inter-communal trust, promoting reconciliation, and making village governance more inclusive. However, like decentralization processes, these projects also bear significant conflict potential. If poorly managed, disputes over the control of project resources and mistrust within the community may exacerbate existing tensions and lead to renewed conflict.

120. To identify the opportunities for strengthening local governance and community development and assessing the risks, this chapter provides an analysis of the dynamics of local governance and community-based interventions, particularly in the CNW. Rather than describing the formal institutional framework (for a brief overview of Côte d’Ivoire’s system of local government see Annex 2), it analyzes the practices of different local
institutions and their roles in promoting effective local governance. It begins by describing
the roles of various local institutions, including the préfectures (deconcentrated institution on
the departmental level), the General Councils (Conseils Généraux, elected councils on the
departmental level) and the municipal government (mairie), and their relationships with
different social groups. After this, the strengths and weaknesses of local civil society and
village-based institutions are discussed. It concludes with a description of some of the
common challenges facing existing community-development projects.

THE DECENTRALIZED AND DECONCENTRATED INSTITUTIONS

121. In the CNW, the deconcentrated (préfectures, sous-préfectures) and decentralized
(General Councils, municipal government) institutions of the State remain in a state of
uncertainty vis-à-vis the de facto authority of the FN. Officially, the division of labor
between the FN and the returning State institutions has been clearly defined. While the
military authority rests with the FAFN, civilian matters are the responsibility of the
respective State institutions. However, in practice, this transfer of power back to the State
remains incomplete. Although administrative and elected officials are returning to their posts,
decision-making power remains in the hands of the local FAFN leadership.

122. Moreover, during the crisis a variety of community leaders have attained
important roles in the administration of the areas controlled by the FAFN. Typically
holding a lower-ranking position in the préfecture or the municipal administration or serving
as traditional chiefs, these individuals have acted as conduits between the FN and the
population. With their legitimacy resting on the fact that they did not leave the area during the
crisis, some of these leaders would like to retain their authority vis-à-vis the returning officials
(see Box X).

Box 19: Semi-formal authority in the FAFN controlled areas: the “acting mayor” at Danané

In Danané, the second deputy mayor is commonly referred to as the “acting mayor” by the local
population, as he has fulfilled this function with the support of the FAFN. He has participated in
official functions with international organizations and NGOs and acted as mediator between the local
population and the FAFN. For anyone seeking to do business in Danané, he has become the local
power broker. He is also a local district chief and has presided over the traditional system of justice in
the area. In the absence of the regular State institutions, these judicial and executive powers have
assumed a semi-formal status. Faced with the return of the administration, he refuses to accept the
authority of a mayor who was appointed by the central government to replace the elected mayor who
died during the crisis. Confronted with this situation on the ground, the returning prefect explained
that he had no choice but to acknowledge the authority of the “acting mayor” and cooperate with him.

Source: Field notes, Danané, September 2007

Préfecture and sous-préfecture

123. The prefects and sous-préfets have been the first to return in most cases. The
population generally sees their return as the most important step toward a normalization of
conditions. Their role in maintaining law and order in their jurisdiction is appreciated by a
large part of the population, and it appears that they are more likely to be viewed as relatively
impartial than are elected officials. In practice, in the CNW their ability to exercise their
authority is still limited. In some cases, the préfecture remains occupied by the FN and
important decisions cannot be made without the consent of the local commander (a situation

33 The General Council is an elected body on the departmental level. The municipal government (mairie),
responsible for the administration on the municipal level (commune), is composed of the mayor and a municipal
council.
resented by many returning prefects). Nevertheless, a smooth transitional process is possible. In Korhogo, the prefect explained that cooperation with the FN had been excellent. Rather than viewing their authority as a restriction of his own, he has availed himself of their collaboration and support for the gradual restoration of State functions.

**General council**

124. **Especially in the CNW, the role of the General Council (Conseil général) remains weakly institutionalized and poorly understood among the population.** Established in 2002, few of the General Council have had the chance to implement any activities in the FAFN-controlled territories. As a result, among those who are aware of the existence of the General Council, there tends to be a certain degree of resentment. Moreover, the President of the General Council is usually viewed as captive to political or other personal interests or perceived as representing the interests of a particular ethnic group. Overall, there seems to be a relatively low level of confidence in the institution as a whole (see Box X). Three studies conducted in Bondoukou, Daloa and San Pedro in 2005 in preparation for the government’s decentralization program (Programme de soutien à la décentralisation et à l’aménagement du territoire, PSDAT) revealed that in the South the General Council also remains relatively unknown and poorly understood by local populations (Akindès, Aka et al. 2005; Akindès, Babo et al. 2005; Akindès, Sédia et al. 2005).

125. **The process of devising a regional development plan for the General Council tends to be participatory, albeit with varying degrees of inclusiveness.** While in Bouaké it was acknowledged that each village had been included in the process, in Danané the majority of the population was not aware of the process. In both cases, due to the crisis, these plans have had little practical follow-up. Having raised expectations, therefore, the plans may have contributed to the institution’s poor image. In Aboisso, where the General Council has been able to function, opinions are highly divergent. While certain villages view the CG as very responsive to their needs, others say that it is highly partisan. One disgruntled village chief expressed the view that the frequent consultations were a farce (see Box X). It is the perception in this village that projects are not identified based on the regional development plan but on the political affiliation of different villages. Similar views were also expressed in Bouaké and Danané.

**Municipal government**

126. **The role of the municipal administration is more firmly established and more widely understood than that of the CG.** Like the CG, however, the crisis has severely
constrained the ability of the mayors and the municipal councils to operate in the CNW. Security concerns as well as the competing authority of the FN are responsible for this. One of the municipal sources of revenue, the taxation of market vendors, has been largely taken over by local FAFN.

127. In addition to these constraints imposed by the crisis, the mayors of Aboisso and Bouaké both criticized the imposition of a three year development plan by the central government. This not only prevents the municipal government from defining interventions according to the specific needs of the community, but also limits their ability to involve local communities in the decision-making process. Moreover, the mobilization of additional, external resources appears to further limit accountability towards local constituencies (Akindès 2002). In the absence of adequate systems of checks and balances, elected officials frequently view their office as a channel for accessing external funds, which may, at least in part, be used for their personal benefit. Also, to secure future electoral victories, many mayors prefer to make highly visible investments than to ensure the maintenance of existing infrastructure. Finally, relationships with local communities are rarely based on communal participation in policy decisions or program implementation, but are rather limited to appearances and donations made during celebrations or other communal events. Despite these limitations, however, and in contrast to the perceptions regarding the CG, local populations of various ethnic backgrounds acknowledged that they were involved in decision making on the municipal level (see box X).

Box 22: Perceptions of municipal government: Bouaké and Aboisso

In Aboisso youth of Malinké and Agni origin as well as the traditional authorities were supportive of the mayor:

“The mayor consults us before putting a project in place. Additionally, he implicates us once the project is implemented.” (Malinké youth)

“The municipality implicates everyone in its projects and especially in decision making. At the municipality, decisions are taken by vote. This way, any project that affects the population is put to a vote if there isn’t a consensus. There are heated debates, a confrontation of different ideas and interests. That’s what makes everyone feel concerned with the mayor’s projects.” (Agni youth)

“The mayor convenes us for everything he does. Really, it is great. On our part, we help him to make the project a success.” (traditional Agni chief)

In Bouaké, the Malinké mayor is not supported by the local Baoulé population. Nevertheless, a local Baoulé youth admits that the mayor involves them in the municipality’s activities:

“The mayor was elected in 2001 and the war erupted in 2002. We, the Baoulé, most of us don’t support him [the mayor], but one has to be honest. Before making a decision, he would always convene an extended municipal council with all the different social groups and the people would debate. When a subject didn’t have a consensus, it would immediately be put to a vote.”

Source: Field notes from Aboisso (November 2007) and Bouaké (December 2007)

Interactions between préfecture and elected officials

128. According to the studies in Bondoukou, Daloa and San Pedro, cooperation between the préfecture and elected officials is typically fairly close, with the prefects or other members of the préfecture participating in all important meetings. While cooperation is generally constructive, the close cooperation between préfecture and elected officials also suggests that a high level of control is still exercised by the central authorities.
In Aboisso, this had given rise to tensions between the prefect and the mayor over questions of urban land management, with each actor claiming authority over the process. As mentioned above, the mayors of Aboisso and Bouaké also emphasized their lack of autonomy regarding the local planning process.

Elected officials and political parties

129. Relationships between different elected officials are highly dependent on their respective political affiliation. While the relationship between the mayor and the president of the CG in Aboisso – both members of the PDCI - was highly cooperative, in Bouaké and Danané it was described as confrontational, due to political competition. The partisan nature of cooperation in Aboisso is evident, with the mayor and president of the CG coordinating their activities via the Permanent Framework for Coordination of the Institutions of the PDCI (Cadre Permanent de Concertation des Institutions du PDCI). In San Pedro, Daloa and Bondoukou, the PSDAT studies revealed a low level of cooperation between elected officials at the municipal and departmental level, largely due to questions of political competition. However, in Daloa, a joint project initiated by the PSDAT had improved cooperation between the two structures.

130. Political competition also appears to permeate interactions between elected officials and the local population. As a result, activities undertaken by these elected officials, particularly the CG, appear to have a polarizing effect on local communities. This was particularly apparent in Danané, where the UDPCI of the late General Gueï has recently divided into two. This has split the political actors as well as the traditional governance system into two camps. As a result, youth groups in the city of Danané clashed over activities of the president of the CG. According to local youth, this type of polarization can also be felt in Bouaké, particularly during and after elections. In Aboisso, political divisions also dominated associational life, as local politicians financed cooperative structures and community-based activities (see also section on Civil Society and Community Development on p. 46).

Traditional authorities

131. As mentioned in the previous chapters, though the traditional authorities are important players in local systems for conflict resolution, their overall role is not always clearly defined. While the basic structure of traditional governance (see box X) is fairly consistent throughout the country, the influence of the different levels of authority as well the practices for appointing leaders differ from group to group and, as described in chapter 3, may be hotly contested.

132. The relationship between traditional authorities and the local government lacks clear definition and varies by ethnic group and individual State authority. In some areas, there is a degree of overlap between the two, as traditional leaders assume elected positions and vice versa. This was the case in Korhogo and Danané, while it didn’t appear to be the case in Bouaké or Aboisso. The attitude of elected officials towards the traditional leadership also varied. In Aboisso, the CG is seeking to formalize the role of the traditional authorities in certain spheres, most notably conflict resolution, and intends to provide the traditional leaders with a budget for this purpose. In other places, relationships between elected officials and traditional authorities are largely symbolic, with little real influence exercised by the traditional leaders. Interactions between the sous-préfets and traditional authorities largely revolve around conflict resolution, with the sous-préfet representing a higher level of
authority. In some cases, the *sous-préfet* is called on to legitimize the appointment of a village or district chief.

**Box 23: Typical structure of traditional governance in Côte d’Ivoire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Le roi (king)</td>
<td>The role of the king differs among the different ethnic groups, and some groups don’t have a king at all. The role of the king is the strongest among the Akan, where he plays an active role in local governance and presides over several <em>chefs de canton</em>. In other places, the king’s authority may be largely symbolic and may be limited to one canton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef de canton (district chief)</td>
<td>The <em>chef de canton</em> is the leader of a group of tribes/families of the same ethnic group, living in a geographically defined area. It is a level of authority that was introduced under colonial rule to create an interlocutor for the colonial administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef de tribu (tribal chief)</td>
<td>The role of <em>chef de tribu</em> doesn’t exist everywhere. Where he does, he presides over a group of villages of the same tribe/family within an ethnic group. This tribe is not necessarily geographically defined and may expand or reduce in size through changes in alliances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef de village (village chief)</td>
<td>At the village-level, authority rests with the village chief and a council of elders. In most cases, there is also a land chief with responsibility for all matters concerning the allocation of land. The <em>chefs de quartiers</em> hold responsibility for the governance of the extended family inhabiting a particular section of a village, including the allocation of land within that family. Tensions may arise when the <em>chef de quartier</em> fails to implicate the land chief in important decisions concerning land management. The importance of foreign communities and youth representatives in village governance varies from case to case. While they are generally informed of important decisions, they may or may not have an influence over decision-making. In an increasing number of villages, youth leaders are contesting older chiefs going as far as assuming the position of village chiefs themselves. Women are represented by their president, but their formal influence in decision-making tends to be limited.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

133. The impact of the crisis on traditional governance has differed from case to case. In Bangolo and Danané the crisis has clearly added to an existing instability in the traditional governance system. By installing new chiefs and empowering certain leaders at the expense of others, the FN appear to have exacerbated local power struggles. In Korhogo, leadership struggles between the Malinké and Sénoufou communities flared up, as power was being reconfigured during the crisis. In Bouaké, on the other hand, the crisis appears to have reaffirmed the already strong role of the Baoulé king. In the absence of the State authorities, the king and his various chiefs have assumed a central role in the overall system of governance. The FN consult with the king before taking key decisions and use him as a conduit for making important announcements.
Community and traditional governance in an urban context

134. The role of traditional governance in urban areas varies according to the type of neighborhood. In those that have developed from pre-existing villages, the chief retains a larger role than in the more heterogeneous, modern neighborhoods. In the latter, the chief’s role is largely reserved to certain official business with the State authorities, and he lacks a significant role in terms of organizing life in the neighborhood. Similarly, while women’s and youth organizations exist throughout the city, the most active and influential groups are those in the older neighborhoods. In other words, the geographically defined community in the more recently established neighborhoods plays only a secondary role for its residents.

Box 24: Local NGO representatives on the role of traditional governance and community in old and new neighborhoods in Korhogo

“In a residential neighborhood [a new neighborhood], you can’t undertake a community-based activity because the people live individually. In the working class neighborhood [historical neighborhood] yes. They have a well-defined history. For example, a woman from Doklobougou told me if a woman from the Doklobougou association approaches us, she is obliged to get the permission from the president of the women’s association or the neighborhood chief. So, a community-based activity is possible in a working class neighborhood.”

“In my neighborhood [a new neighborhood], my neighbor is a Fula. He is a member of the community, but he doesn’t feel concerned by the neighborhood meetings. [...] the heterogeneous composition of the neighborhood causes the autochtones to drive activities. That creates exclusion and frustrations.”

Source: Field notes, Korhogo, December 2007

Civil Society and Community Development

135. Local NGOs remain relatively weakly implicated in local governance. The studies conducted in San Pedro, Bondoukou, and Daloa in preparation of the PSDAT suggest that the majority of NGOs lack the administrative and technical capacity to effectively mobilize resources and implement projects that have a significant impact on the local community. Moreover, civil society in the three departments lacks a necessary coordinating body to engage collectively in dialogue with local officials.

136. Fieldwork in Aboisso, however, suggests that local home-town associations (mutuelles de développement) and cooperatives have retained an important role in the department’s economic and political development. A home-town association is an organization that is generally established by urban residents to promote economic and social development in their native village or region. These associations have long served as vehicles for party officials and bureaucrats to build a clientele base in their native region. Formerly, they also served as conduits of the one-party State to exert control over the countryside. Today these organizations have become vehicles of electoral politics. By their nature, these organizations are organized along ethnic lines, as they cater to the native population of a village or region (Woods 1994, 1999).

137. Like Côte d’Ivoire’s rural cooperatives (as explained in chapter 1), home-town associations play an important role in the electoral strategies of local politicians. Both the home-town associations and local cooperatives in Aboisso draw significant financial support from local political elites, giving them a strong political coloring. Local populations and politicians alike view them as instruments of the various political parties. As a result, the relationship between elected officials and these different organizations is dependent on their respective political affiliation. In Aboisso, this has resulted in tensions between certain home-
town associations and cooperatives, on the one hand, and the CG, on the other. While a local home-town association claims that the CG has stacked a local village development committee with his cronies, members of a local cooperative accuse him of favoring those cooperatives he can control politically (see Box X).

Box 25: The politics of local associational life in the village of Akressi (Aboisso)

According to producers in the village of Akressi, their cooperative has been bypassed by the CG because they don’t support him politically. They accuse him of having created a parallel organization, which now has a privileged position vis-à-vis the local agro-industrial enterprise. They claim:

“He wanted to control all the cooperatives in the region. But since he couldn’t, he created fictitious cooperatives as a way to destroy the local cooperative dynamic. For example in the palm industry, in cooperation with the local multinational, PALM CI, he created another cooperative in competition with PALM EHANIA [the village’s cooperative]. That’s COPALEN.”

The relationship between a local home-town association, the Council for the development of Akressi (Conseil pour le développement d’Akressi, CODAK), and the CG is similarly tense. Representatives of CODAK claim that the CG is attempting to control the economic and political development of the village via the newly created village development committee. As a result, they refuse to have any association with the committee:

“We created the CODAK before their existence. We didn’t oppose the creation of the committee, but we would like to clearly separate our own activities from those of the committee to avoid the CG from taking political advantage of our activities.”

Source: Field notes, Aboisso, November 2007

The proliferation of local NGOs in the CNW

138. The economic crisis and the disappearance of the State administration in the North has given rise to a proliferation of local NGOs. Though a small number of pre-existing NGOs disappeared with the onset of the crisis, a much greater number have been created. With the retrenchment of economic activity, the founding of an NGO represents a vehicle for accessing resources available for humanitarian assistance. Accordingly, the relatively abundant supply of resources available in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention has resulted in a large number of NGOs with this focus of activities. Moreover, the majority of NGOs doesn’t exclusively focus on a particular type of intervention, but develop and shift their profile according to available funding.

139. Technical and administrative capacity is severely limited among the majority of these organizations. Nevertheless, in all the fieldwork areas in the CNW some form of civil society network or coordinating body existed. These coordinating bodies primarily served as a forum for exchanging information among the different NGOs and facilitating access to donors and international NGOs. They did not appear to engage in the coordination of the NGO activities themselves (see Box X). As a result, rivalries persist between different local NGOs in Danané. Various representatives accuse each other of developing activities to enter their particular niche.
In Danané, the local NGO network, CONGEDA, is an association of 34 local NGOs. The CONGEDA was founded by the president of one of the most successful local NGOs. The goal was to bring a certain degree of order into a rapidly expanding landscape of local NGOs. According to the current president of CONGEDA, in the initial phase of the crisis, a multitude of competing NGOs emerged, all seeking to capture available funds for child protection. To appease the resulting tensions between these organizations, a small group of NGOs decided to found the CONGEDA. Now the CONGEDA primarily serves as a mechanism for exchanging information between the various NGOs and serves as an interface between local civil society and international organizations. For instance, it has served as a vehicle for the provision of capacity building to various local NGOs. Its coordinating functions, however, remain limited. Though officially the CONGEDA is organized in five sectoral sub-divisions, these units don’t function in practice. The CONGEDA also does not provide any practical assistance to its members when they are applying for legal status or project funds.

Source: Field notes, Danané, September 2007

140. There are also some notable exceptions within a field of primarily resource-driven NGOs. One example can be found in the education sector, where the NGOs School for all (École pour tous) and the Movement of Voluntary Instructors (Mouvement des Enseignants Volontaires) have been engaged in the delivery of educational services throughout the crisis. While the former is a network of accredited educators in the CNW, the latter is an association of educators without formal training. These groups typically support the formation of a local school management committee (Comité de gestion, COGES) for the mobilization of resources and organization of local school activities. Though these COGES tend to experience a certain degree of internal conflict, they have been instrumental in maintaining some form of education throughout the North of the country (see box X).

Box 27: School management committees (COGES Écoles) in Korhogo

The formation of committees for the management of local schools has been essential for the maintenance of a minimum level of educational services in the North of the country. With the support of the few remaining teachers, the school management committees have been responsible for organizing instruction and mobilizing resources from the parents. In many cases without external support, these resources have financed the salaries of so-called voluntary teachers as well as basic school supplies. In some cases, small infrastructure projects were implemented with the support of parents.

In the following excerpt a teacher describes his involvement in a committee in Korhogo: “With the crisis all schools closed. Some university students worked with the school children to stay busy and to avoid become involved in the fighting. At that time some of the regular teachers who wanted to do the same were asked to leave the area. They were told if they stayed it was at their own risk. If they became involved in the children’s education, this could be dangerous. Lots of teachers died during the crisis. So without the teachers, it wasn’t well organized. It was learning by doing. They called it “school for everyone.” Some people thought it was just for a short period. But after a while, it couldn’t just be limited to maintaining their level. Going from one grade to the next, they were confronted with the question of exams. They finally said, if the exams aren’t given by trained teachers, they won’t be validated by UNESCO. That is how the teachers began getting involved in the effort. They contributed to maintaining the school. Thanks to that involvement the people started coming. More and more students came. That reduced the number of people leaving. So, that’s how we got involved in the 'School for all.'”

Source: Field notes from Korhogo, December 2007
Village-based institutions

141. **Village-level institutions throughout the country display varying levels of development.** Among the fieldwork areas, Danané and Aboisso represent two extreme cases. As described above, cooperatives and *mutuelles*, active at the village-level, play a significant role in local development in Aboisso. In Danané on the other hand, village-level institutions don’t appear to have a significant role beyond the village itself. Though the structures in Aboisso have also faced difficulties in recent times, this discrepancy has been further exacerbated by the current crisis.

142. **In Danané, not only larger cooperatives but also village-level credit and saving schemes have been severely affected by the crisis.** In the three villages visited, the credit and savings groups had lost their joint savings to looting by Liberian mercenaries. Confidence in these groups, therefore, has suffered. A variety of groups have nonetheless reconstituted, though often without a common pool of money. Worried that they may lose the invested resources, many groups limit their engagement to exchanges of labor. Even before the crisis, many of these credit and savings groups had primarily served to finance celebrations and cultural events. Only in rare cases had the resources been directed towards investments in economic activities or village infrastructure. In the larger villages, these associations are typically organized along ethnic lines, while it is in the smallest villages that one is most likely to find mixed groups.

143. **In the urban context of Korhogo, institutional development differs from neighborhood to neighborhood.** The older, more homogenous neighborhoods and especially those that have emerged out of pre-existing villages have stronger institutional structures. Credit and savings groups are prevalent throughout the city; however, only the oldest and most homogeneous neighborhoods have home-town associations. In the more heterogeneous neighborhoods, credit and savings groups frequently span multiple ethnic groups, but, as in Danané, only a small number of these groups go beyond the financing of celebrations and other recreational activities.

Community-based interventions

144. **Community-based interventions are carried out by a variety of actors, including international and local NGOs, home-town associations, UN organizations, State and para-statal organizations.** In the absence of functioning state institutions, they become the preferred way of delivering local services and infrastructures to the communities. Despite different levels of capacity, these organizations face a number of common challenges and in most cases utilize similar approaches for organizing their interactions with the community. Generally, an intervention is preceded by some form of participatory diagnostic exercise followed by the identification of an investment. Most actors created management committees (COGES) to implement and manage the investment at the village-level.

145. **The establishment of well-functioning management committees is a particular challenge for the implementation of community-based interventions.** In many cases, it appeared that the amount of time and supervision invested in establishing the committee was not sufficient. Frequently, villagers explained that they were asked to appoint the committee in an ad-hoc fashion without prior preparation. As a result villagers who were absent could not participate in the process. Some times individuals not present at the time were appointed without their knowledge. In general, election procedures and criteria for the formation of the committee were not well understood and appeared to be implemented in an improvised fashion without clear procedures. An exception to this rule was a village development
committee established by ANADER. In Aboisso the procedure for its selection appeared to have followed a more formal election procedure. However, as this example shows, important risks remain for the establishment of a functional committee. Here the process was perceived to lack transparency and to be politically manipulated by the CG. One village resident said: “They made it appear like an election, even though they already had their candidate. They rigged the election, so that person would win. With his collaboration, the CG can be sure to control the village politically and economically.”

146. Not surprisingly, when performed in the ad-hoc fashion, the selection procedures also seem to result in rather uneven representative structures. While women were normally represented in the committees, they frequently lacked decision-making power and their role was often limited to menial tasks related to maintaining the infrastructure in question. Different ethnic groups were inconsistently represented. By and large, village practices seemed to determine the particular composition of the committees much more than the procedures and norms established by the project. As a result, rather than promoting social cohesion, a number of committees replicated pre-existing conflicts in the community (see box X).

Box 28: Leadership conflicts replicated within a village committee in Salleu (Danané)

In Salleu, a conflict over the leadership of the village had divided the village into a group of families supporting and a group of families opposing the current village chief. When a committee was created to manage the rehabilitated village pump, this division was replicated in the committee’s composition, which according to those in opposition to the current leadership, did not represent their part of the village. As a result, the disgruntled families refused to pay their monthly quota for the maintenance of the pump. Unable to refuse these families water, the committee failed to collect the necessary money for subsequent repairs. At the time of the visit, the pump had fallen into disrepair, and the village had resorted to an open water source.

Source: Field notes from Danané, September 2007

147. Conflict resolution and social cohesion are sometimes addressed by a more direct approach, either by establishing specific peace committees or by special interventions. However, many of the implementing NGOs have limited capacity and knowledge of conflict resolution techniques and some of the deep-rooted local conflicts cannot be resolved by relatively short outside interventions. Few of the projects have adopted systematically a conflict sensitive approach.

148. Community contributions to infrastructure projects in cash and in kind were common practice in all the villages visited. Though in the CNW, these types of projects had generally stopped with the onset of the military crisis, the collection of community contributions for important community expenditures, such as celebrations or other important events, remained commonplace. These types of collections were frequently organized by the women’s representative of the village.

149. Serious problems were identified regarding the sub-contracting relationships between international organizations and local NGOs and service deliverers. Firstly, a group of local NGOs in Danané reported that it was common practice to provide the staff of international organizations with kickbacks in return for project-based contracts. In other words, a portion of the project budget is returned to the staff member managing the contract with the local NGO. Secondly, numerous cases were identified where local NGOs abused the trust of villagers to obtain community contributions for projects never implemented. In at least one case, this practice was enabled by the local NGO’s role as a sub-contractor of an international organization. As a sub-contractor, the NGO had distributed food in the
community. Having thus established a relationship of trust with community members, the NGO requested contributions from villagers to obtain access to an upcoming food delivery. This delivery, however, was never made.

150. The extent to which village committees were involved and responsible for the implementation of the investment varied greatly. Sometimes local sub-contractors were hired to implement the technical aspects of a project. However, they often lacked a clear understanding of the project goals, and project requirements were mechanically fulfilled without paying attention to participatory and capacity-building aspects. For instance, in several places, village development committees had been created without any subsequent role in the project. Thus, village communities were mobilized for the creation of a committee, which never performed any functions. The NGO representatives explained that the establishment of the committee was a requirement of the supervising organization.

151. The sustainability of community-based interventions remains a challenge. To begin with, capacity building of committee members in key aspects of project management, such as procurement or simplified accounting, was often insufficient or totally lacking. Therefore few committees were able to play an active role in the implementation and supervision of the investments. Even when capacity building was provided, in many cases the intervention was too short to allow committee members the time needed to develop new practical skills. In any case, many management committees stopped functioning with the completion of the investment and did not assume or pass on responsibility for the management of the infrastructure. Therefore many investments, as for example village pumps, where not maintained and repaired.

152. In the CNW, it was apparent that coordination of activities between different actors was problematic. Not only were activities in the fieldwork areas rather similar across agencies, with a particular emphasis on the rehabilitation of village pumps, but these rehabilitation activities were frequently carried out in the same villages. In one extreme case, an NGO had simply painted over the logo of the previous actor, without performing any additional rehabilitation.

*Linking community-based interventions with local government*

153. Given the focus of the fieldwork on areas controlled by the FN, little data were collected on the involvement of local government in community-based interventions. Moreover, operating under emergency conditions, programs have focused on delivering basic services rather than longer-term governance objectives. Before the crisis, the World Bank-financed Rural Land Management and Community Infrastructure Development Project (*Projet National de Gestion des Terroirs et d’Equipement Rural*, PNGTER) had a relatively strong emphasis on strengthening local governance. However, it lacked a local government counterpart when it was initiated in 1998 (the project was actually designed to anticipate the pending creation of rural communes). The project approach was based on the creation of Village Development Committees and Local Development Councils at the level of *pays ruraux* (a group of villages). In the local development councils, representatives of several village development committees were expected to integrate their planning and agree on priority investments for the respective group of villages. The local development council was then expected to act as implementing agency for the planned investments, cooperating with the *sous-préfecture* via a committee called the *Comité Sous-Préfectoral*. Once the rural communes are created, the local development councils should act as partners in the municipal council’s planning process.
In urban areas, the World Bank’s Municipal Support Project (Projet d’Appui à la Conduite d’Opérations Municipales - PACOM) has worked directly with municipal government’s to improve living conditions and service delivery. However, here the emphasis on community involvement has been relatively weak. Community involvement in sub-project design and implementation was organized via NGO-managed social intermediation teams who represented the community in local consultation committees. In other words, participation was largely indirect (World Bank 2002).
Conclusion: Key Priorities for Building a Sustainable Peace

156. Based on the analysis in the preceding chapters, this final chapter outlines a number of key priorities for establishing sustainable peace in Côte d’Ivoire. These priorities are divided into short-term priorities for sustaining the current peace process and longer term goals for building the foundations of political and social stability. Furthermore, the chapter identifies a number of challenges and risks facing community-based rehabilitation activities and explores their potential for supporting broader goals in the area of good governance.

SUSTAINING THE PEACE PROCESS

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants

157. To make the overall peace process a success, an effective disarmament process is essential. As indicated by the FPI camp, without disarmament the election process is also in jeopardy. Moreover, divisions between different factions among the FN increase the importance of successfully reintegrating combatants. Failure to adequately address the needs of FN combatants could further exacerbate tensions between those supporting the current political process and those who remain skeptical. These needs include not only a well-designed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program, but also progress in addressing the perceived ethnic imbalance in the army --one of the underlying causes of the uprising in 2002. Integrating certain FAFN elements in the national army will be a first step, but it will have to be accompanied by the establishment of transparent mechanisms for the recruitment and promotion of soldiers. In other words, an effective DDR process will have to be accompanied with a reform of the security sector.

158. Furthermore, the DDR process will have to ensure that all relevant groups are included in the process, from Liberian mercenaries and militia members to the regular combatants of the FAFN. This implies finding a specific arrangement for the reintegration of Liberian fighters. Though possibly the biggest challenge, these fighters also pose the greatest danger to civilian populations in the case of a renewed outbreak of violence. Secondly, a DDR program should avoid making the same mistakes as the previous program in Liberia. A more effective system for identifying combatants and ensuring they are included in the process will be needed. Otherwise the program runs the risk of not only missing important combatants but also diluting resources required for their effective integration. To further offset these risks, a parallel program to support the civilian population and a well-developed campaign to communicate the link between the two programs will be essential.

Addressing short-term conflict risks

159. Not only ex-combatants but also other unemployed youth pose an important short-term conflict risk. Like in many other conflicts, high rates of youth unemployment have been an important factor contributing to the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire. While in the medium-term economic growth will have to provide the basis for tackling this problem, in the short-term employment creation programs targeted at youth can make an important contribution towards peace-building, particularly in the West of the country.

160. Additionally, the return of IDPs involves a number of conflict risks that do not appear to be addressed in the current approach to the issue. An effective program
requires an integrated approach, which addresses both the needs of the IDPs and those currently occupying their residences. Firstly, the remaining hostility towards returning IDPs in certain communities requires attention. Secondly, the management of the return of IDPs needs to systematically incorporate an approach for dealing with current occupants. This will require the agreement and cooperation of the FAFN, since a number of occupants are FAFN soldiers. In addition, it should be acknowledged that frequently occupants believe that they are doing a service to the IDPs by preventing the looting and destruction of the building.

161. **Finally, addressing the tensions caused by the occupation of land by IDPs in the CNW will require immediate attention.** The installation of displaced Burkinabés in forestry areas around Danané indicates that this may constitute a serious risk of conflict. With the return of the State in the North, State authorities in cooperation with the FN should make the identification and resolution of these types of conflicts a top priority in an effort to prevent new outbreaks of violence.

*Mitigating key social risks*

162. **Finally, mitigating the social risks caused by the prolonged crisis should remain a short-term priority.** In light of rising world food prices, guaranteeing food security should remain a high priority. Additionally, restoring safe access to drinking water, education and basic health care services to pre-crisis levels remains an important challenge. These efforts go hand in hand with the redeployment of the State in the CNW as important challenges still exist for the normal functioning of State institutions in that area.

**BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STABILITY**

163. **The sources of conflict in Côte d’Ivoire, both at the local and national level, will not disappear with a successful national identification process and transparent elections.** While both these processes constitute crucial steps on the country’s road to peace, they will not be able to address the underlying causes of social and political instability. To preserve the fragile equilibrium that has been established, the new government will have to promote social inclusion and good governance at both the national and local level.

*Promoting social inclusion and good governance at the national level*

164. **As described in chapter 1, the roots of the Ivorian crisis lie in the disruption of an imperfect yet for many years stable model of economic and political regulation.** In the absence of a political leadership able to appeal to a broader and more heterogeneous electorate, the divisions that caused the current crisis will remain in place. This in turn is likely to perpetuate the grievances related to unequal representation in the different spheres of the State, including the military. To re-establish a socio-political equilibrium in Côte d’Ivoire, it is therefore essential to establish institutional arrangements that are able to adequately accommodate the social diversity of the country and provide forums for negotiating equitable access to economic and political resources.

165. **At the national level, this would ideally imply the establishment of a national unity government with representation of all the major political parties.** Regardless of the composition of the national government, however, a fundamental concern has to be the promotion of policies aimed at social inclusion and power-sharing, including formal mechanisms for guaranteeing the representation of different ethnic groups in the State administration and military.
Furthermore, it will be crucial to tackle the culture of violence and impunity, which has developed over the course of the crisis. In the long-term, this means that strengthening the overall justice system has to be a top priority. This implies not only ensuring the impartial application of the law and the ability to bring criminals to justice, but also broadening access to the justice system among the population as a whole. In the CNW, immediate action to reassert the authority of the judicial system will be necessary.

National reconciliation will also require a process for addressing the human rights violations on both sides of the conflict. While some form of amnesty cannot be avoided for certain perpetrators of violence, this needs to be accompanied by a process of establishing some other form of accountability as well as recognition and support for the victims of violence. The establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission or a similar mechanism should be considered for this purpose.

Another element for promoting social cohesion is strengthening the independence of both media and civil society from manipulation by political actors. Supporting the financial independence of media enterprises is a first step. In the newspaper business this might involve limiting the amount of external funds that may be provided to an enterprise from an individual. Additionally, existing efforts to advocate for fairness and independence in reporting should be supported. However, without an independent media able to finance itself through its readership and its commercial clients, these efforts will remain relatively ineffective. In the long-term the goal should be to help establish a smaller number of more independent and financially viable newspapers in the country. For the rural population an adequate coverage by community radios is essential.

In the area of civil society, it is not possible to systematically exclude political interference. However, supporting capacity-building for the establishment of more professional management structures and greater transparency among civil society would be an important first step towards making Côte d’Ivoire’s civil society organizations more effective mediators between the population and relevant government institutions. Moreover, supporting increased cooperation among different civil society organizations around specific issues might help to reduce the degree of politicization and promote constructive debate on important policy issues (see below for more detailed recommendations concerning local-level civil society organizations). In this sense, involvement in the implementation and monitoring of the PRSP represents an excellent opportunity to both encourage coordination and develop the capacity of civil society, while at the same time contributing to a more open and participatory PRSP, Therefore, it should be supported.

Furthermore, the objective of social inclusion should extend beyond the State into the sphere of economic governance. Management of the various commodity chains should promote cooperation across the different associative structures. As many cooperatives have disappeared during the crisis, the re-creation of cooperatives could constitute an entry-point for supporting the establishment of a more inclusive and less politicized system of economic governance in the country-side. Such a program should be linked with programs requiring cooperation among different actors both at the local and national level and strengthening collaboration across ethnic and political boundaries. This could include supporting the formation of cooperatives that span more than one ethnic group. While this would require significant external support to ensure adequate representation of the various groups, it could contribute to reconciliation and help mitigate the threat of manipulation by political actors.
171. Strengthening efforts in support of corporate social responsibility constitutes another important entry-point for improving economic governance in the country. As mentioned above, the presence of large companies can be a source of local conflict. At the same time, private sector development can be a source of stability, if it contributes to job creation and local economic development. This depends largely on companies’ relationships with local communities and how local populations participate in the benefits of the company’s activities. In order to make private sector development a source of stability rather than a source of conflict, an initiative to promote greater corporate social responsibility in Côte d’Ivoire could provide an impetus for engaging the private sector in the country’s peace building efforts. This could include partnerships between the private sector and local government.

Building an inclusive system of local governance

172. At the local-level, the promotion of social inclusion is based on effective participation of different social groups in local-decision making processes, ranging from the village to the departmental level. The deepening of decentralization could play a supportive role in this process, if it contributes to the local-level empowerment of groups that are only weakly represented at the central level. However, as the analysis in chapter 4 reveals, elected bodies, in particular the General Councils, are highly politicized and their implication in local governance bears important conflict risks. Especially in the North, the General Councils suffer from low levels of capacity, lack of legitimacy and a high degree of politicization. Any further transfer of power to these institutions would, therefore, have to be preceded by a capacity-building program as well as new departmental elections. Where they exist, municipal governments appear to be more firmly institutionalized and seem to be more inclusive in their decision-making processes. Greater proximity to the local population appears to facilitate participation by local communities in decision-making. Program to support decentralization should, therefore, begin at the municipal level. The basis for the continuation of the decentralization process throughout the country would have to be the creation of municipal governments where they do not exist.

173. Additionally, to make local government more effective, a clarification of roles and responsibilities of the different deconcentrated and decentralized institutions is necessary. Currently, tensions between the préfecture and elected officials as well as between the General Council and the municipal government are common, due to disputes over the mandates of the respective institutions. A combination of capacity building and, if necessary, clarifications of the legal framework, should be considered to reduce these types of problems.

174. At the village-level, improving governance implies not only better integrating migrant populations, but also addressing the grievances of village youth. This begins with the establishment of a traditional governance structure that enjoys legitimacy among all relevant stakeholders and where the question of succession is governed by clear and accepted rules. Only on the basis of a legitimate and universally accepted village leadership can a village become an effective partner for local development efforts. Such a process would have to involve different levels of traditional governance, youth, women and immigrant representatives, and if necessary, the sous-préfecture.

175. Additionally, this process may involve facilitating the formalization of traditional governance structures (e.g. written and codified). However, the expected benefits of codification must always be balanced against the potential risks. As certain traditional leaders continue to rely on mysticism, symbolism, and charisma, codification and ensuing
bureaucratization may diminish their relevance and undercut their authority. The process should, therefore, be adapted to the different local conditions.

**Establishing an effective system of conflict management**

176. **The establishment of a legitimate village leadership is also a basic prerequisite for the construction of sustainable systems for conflict management.** Traditional authorities remain the backbone of conflict resolution in Côte d’Ivoire. However, due to the erosion of their legitimacy, in many areas, their ability to effectively mediate local disputes has been undermined. In many cases, rulings that are perceived unfavorable by one or both of the conflict parties are not respected. In search of a better outcome, stakeholders may decide to seek out other authorities, such as the sous-préfecture, the police, the gendarmes or special conflict management committees, or resort to violence.

177. **At present, this process of conflict management lacks a clearly defined institutional path, and conflicting parties are not obliged to follow any pre-defined procedure.** As a result, outcomes are highly dependent on the individual perceptions and choices of the different actors, including both the authorities and the conflicting parties themselves. Therefore, in addition to strengthening the traditional governance structures, it is necessary to better define a clear order of steps for addressing conflicts - first by the traditional system and then by the State. This might include not only the formalization of the traditional system of conflict resolution but also its relationship vis-à-vis the State authorities.

178. **Furthermore, in addition to expanding access to the formal justice system, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity to mediate conflicts at the level of the sous-préfecture.** In the most explosive areas, the sous-préfets frequently lack the necessary legitimacy to be effective mediators. They are often viewed as corrupt or beholden to particular interests. To counter-balance this perception, the role of the relevant community representatives in the mediation process might be strengthened, while leaving final authority with the State. At the same time, the sous-préfets are being called on to resolve an increasing number of conflicts. This requires additional human and financial resources. Firstly, the required visits to the localities in question require time and transport, which is not always readily available to the responsible administrators. Secondly, the sous-préfets often lack the necessary skills for effective conflict management. Investments in building this capacity in the sous-préfectures have the potential to greatly increase their effectiveness.

179. **Finally, committees for conflict management, including village peace committees and those focused on land issues, may also play a role in a system of conflict management.** However, their effectiveness depends on a number of factors. To begin with, like the other levels of mediation, their role needs to be clearly embedded in the overall institutional framework. Also, it is crucial that these committees avoid simply replicating the traditional form of mediation by including those parties poorly represented or excluded from traditional mediation.

**Conflict prevention**

180. **In addition to the establishment of a more effective system of conflict management, measures can be taken to prevent conflict, particularly those over land, from escalating in the first place.** The resolution of land conflicts is often complicated by the fact that there is a lack of written documentation to verify transactions. Though in the context of strong traditional authority these documents are not necessary, the weakening role of the traditional system makes these documents increasingly important for establishing a
basis for finding an agreement between two conflict parties. Encouraging the use of written documents would be an important measure for the prevention of conflicts related to land or other natural resources.

181. **Furthermore, the debate surrounding the national land law has been an important source of conflict and uncertainty among local populations.** While the law itself provides modalities for Ivorians and foreigners to access land, it is not clear how the initial application of the law would affect different stakeholders. Consequently, local interpretations have given rise to the fear that the law provides the legal basis for the expropriation of foreigners. Any initiatives to apply the law in question should, therefore, have clearly defined procedures for managing the transition and be supported by a strong communication campaign to inform local populations. Moreover, they will require capacity-building among local officials. In other words, progress in applying the law throughout the country will be slow and resource-intensive. In the medium-term, a program to prepare communities for the full application of the law may be considered.

182. **Finally, research carried out both in the South-West (Diarrassouba, N. et al 2005) and the North (Kohlhagen 2003) suggests that low levels of integration of migrants in local village communities raise the likelihood of violent conflict.** Promoting the participation in inter-communal efforts, therefore, remains an important tool for promoting social cohesion on the local level. This might also include instruments, like local radio. Establishing inter-communal communities for managing such an initiative would ensure that the radio remains a tool for the promotion of reconciliation when tensions increase. Moreover, in some of the areas most severely affected by inter-communal violence, local grassroots initiatives have developed to promote reconciliation among the different communities. These initiatives should receive recognition and support from local authorities and international organization operating in these areas.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT**

183. **In a conflict-setting one of the first entry points for addressing questions of local governance and reconciliation are community-based rehabilitation and development projects.** To be effective, however, they have to build on local initiatives and take into account the different opportunities and risks. As the situation in the country is stabilizing, community-based rehabilitation projects will also have to shift to a post-conflict approach and medium-term capacity and institution building will have to receive more attention. The following recommendations suggest ways to build on existing local institutions and initiatives, while mitigating relevant conflict risks.

**Supporting the capacity of local civil society**

184. **In the CNW, the crisis has caused a proliferation of local NGOs.** Though largely driven by the availability of resources for humanitarian assistance, these local NGOs constitute an important resource utilized by numerous international organizations. Moreover, in many areas these NGOs are organized in networks. These local NGO networks represent an important entry-point for capacity building. A coordinated effort to build up capacities of NGOs in strategic areas, such as conflict resolution, governance and anti-corruption, can be an important long-term investment.

185. **Community rehabilitation programs should, therefore, include an important sub-component for NGO capacity building.** Firstly, such an effort would have to build capacity within the NGO network itself, in order to improve coordination among local NGOs and
ensure the transparency of the association. To address the prevalence of corruption among NGOs themselves such a capacity-building effort should include a strong component on transparency and accountability towards local communities. Additionally, it might involve a process for the development of a code of ethics for the local NGO network. Given the lack of experience of most local NGOs, education alone may have a significant impact on local practices. With sufficient capacity building, local NGO networks could act as partners for a rehabilitation program on the departmental level. It could also facilitate coordination among NGOs selected for the implementation of community level activities.

186. **School management committees in the CNW, involving parents, teachers and untrained instructors, represent another important community-level asset, which has the potential to weaken with the return of the State.** To leverage this important resource, the rehabilitation of schools should place an important emphasis on maintaining the involvement of these actors beyond the end of the crisis. In fact, a separate school rehabilitation program implicating these committees might be considered.

187. **Finally, home-town associations represent another important asset for the development of the community.** At the same time, they also tend to represent the political interests of a particular local elite. For this reason, these structures represent potential competitors for village-level development activities. An active effort should be made, therefore, to include the home-town association in community-development activities, while ensuring that they are not able to dominate the process.

**Improved coordination and longer project cycles**

188. **During the crisis, the lack of coordination among international organizations conducting community rehabilitation has had a negative impact on the quality of the projects.** In many cases, villages are confronted with successive poorly managed projects, implemented by different partners. Coordination could eliminate such a duplication of efforts in the same village. This would allow implementing agencies to lengthen the cycles of individual projects without a reduction in coverage. To facilitate better coordination, the appointment of a lead agency responsible for coordinating community-based interventions in each department should be considered. For the community rehabilitation project to be financed by the World Bank, this implies that in some departments support for the continuation and expansion of existing efforts (in cooperation with the existing actors) might be more effective than establishing new structures. In other cases, opportunities for involving other implementing agencies in decision-making structures created by a World Bank project should be explored. An increased coordination would in any case require consolidating and aligning the different approaches used at the local level.

**Village committees**

189. **Village committees represent the nexus between village-level governance and project management.** As described in chapter 4, well-functioning village committees are relatively rare, partly due to disputes over the traditional leadership in the village. In other words, establishing an accepted village leadership is also the first step for establishing an effective village committee. Secondly, fieldwork has shown that the process for the selection of village committees requires more time and resources than are typically invested. Most importantly, the process requires prior preparation and multiple visits to the community. Moreover, NGO representatives involved in the process will need extensive training to enhance their understanding of the objectives and the required process.
190. **Functioning and inclusive village committees entail a substantial investment in terms of coaching and capacity building of their members.** This investment has to be part of the projects and requires qualified inputs from NGOs or implementing agencies. The development of a flexible curriculum and the training of local NGOs for coaching and capacity building will have to be expanded. Established rural institutions, as ANADER, could potentially have an important long-term role.

191. **In order to guarantee, representation of all relevant social groups, clear rules for the make-up of committees and the appointment of committee members are required.** This cannot imply a one-size fits all approach, since the composition of villages varies considerably, even among neighboring villages. However, the representation of women, youth and the largest migrant community not only in the committee itself but within its board should be a minimum requirement. It should also be clearly stated that women cannot be relegated to menial tasks, but should have a voice in decision-making.

192. **A way of ensuring better overall representation of relevant social groups would be an appointment process, which allows sub-groups (women, youth, traditional leaders, migrant communities, etc.) to nominate representatives subject to confirmation by a community assembly and the village leadership in the presence of an NGO representative.** In the case of divisions within the community, these tensions would most likely emerge during the confirmation process, allowing the NGO representative to initiate a mediation process. To effectively manage such a process, NGO representatives would require either additional training or access to the support of trained mediators.

*Participation of local populations in urban areas*

193. **In urban areas, different types of neighborhoods require different approaches for the implication of local populations in community-based interventions.** For the older, village-type neighborhoods, where traditional governance structures remain relevant, approaches similar to those utilized in the rural areas would appear to be appropriate. Communities could propose and manage infrastructure projects to be financed and supervised by the municipality. In more heterogeneous neighborhoods, this may not be possible, due to the difficulty of ensuring the inclusion of all relevant groups. While a neighborhood committee might have a facilitating role, NGOs or the municipality itself might have to play a more prominent role in performing outreach and in the facilitation of consultations among the different social groups.

*Community contributions*

194. **Community contributions to infrastructure projects in cash and in kind were common practice in the villages visited during the fieldwork.** Though most such projects have ceased since the onset of the military crisis, the collection of community contributions for important community expenditures remained commonplace. In other words, as elsewhere, it should be feasible to incorporate community contributions into community-based interventions. On the other hand, as the management of rehabilitated water pumps in the CNW revealed, the collection of dues from villagers also bears a conflict potential. Furthermore, a secure form for safeguarding the contributions from looting, as experienced during the crisis, will be important to instill renewed confidence in a system for collection of contributions.
Implication of local government in community-based interventions

195. Where municipal government does not exist, the implication of elected officials in community-rehabilitation activities remains a significant challenge. Without established structures for participation at the village level, it is unlikely that newly created village-level structures can effectively participate in decision-making at the departmental level. As already mentioned above, low-levels of capacity, lack of legitimacy (particularly in the North) and high levels of politicization of the General Councils may not make them ideal partners in the implementation of large-scale community rehabilitation activities. Rather, the model pursued by the PNGTER, aimed at preparing communities for engaging in decision-making on the communal level, appears more suited for the volatile situation in the North of the country. This does not preclude the General Council from playing a role in the process (in a steering committee, for instance). However, management control should rest with a project implementation unit, civil society and local communities themselves.

196. In areas where municipal governments do exist, their involvement in community rehabilitation activities appears to be more promising, as these structures are more firmly institutionalized and seem to be more inclusive in their decision-making processes. The actual capacity to act as implementing agency for project activities will vary from case to case, depending on whether the municipal government has returned to their posts.

197. As in the PNGTER, the sous-préfecture might retain a role in approving investment decisions in accordance with national standards and laws. Moreover, if committees for conflict resolution are created as a part of the project, the sous-préfecture should be implicated in the establishment of clear institutional rules and mandates for these committees.

Implication of the FAFN and local power brokers

198. In the CNW, it is essential to ensure the support of the FAFN for project activities. They should be part of a steering committee or a similar structure. Similarly, in many areas, local power brokers who have assumed significant power over the course of the crisis cannot be ignored. This does not necessarily mean they should be formally implicated in project activities, as to avoid further legitimizing their role. Rather their implication will have to be defined on a case by case basis.
Annex 1: Fieldwork Approach and Methodology

The fieldwork for the study consisted of two parts. While one component focused on local-level dynamics in different parts of Côte d’Ivoire, a second component addressed cross-border dynamics between Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire.

Fieldwork on local conflict and governance in Côte d’Ivoire. Based on the initial literature review, knowledge gaps were identified in the areas of livelihood strategies, local conflicts and governance, in particular in the CNW. In light of the available resources and operational objective to provide advice for the implementation of community rehabilitation activities, it was decided to narrow fieldwork to the collection of qualitative data on the issues of local conflicts and governance with a particular emphasis on community-level dynamics. Structured on these general areas of inquiry, the fieldwork focused on the following questions:

- **Local conflicts**: This component included questions on (a) the local consequences of the confrontations between different armed forces --government forces, the Armed Forces of the New Forces (Forces armées des Forces nouvelles or FAFN) and militia groups; (b), the major stakeholders and the impact of the national conflict on local communities; (c) different types of local conflicts and their dynamics, including linkages to the national crisis; and (d). existing mechanisms for conflict management..

- **Local governance**: This component addressed questions of governance at the community (village or neighborhood), the municipal and the departmental level. At the community-level, it included questions on village and neighborhood institutions, traditional localized governance, and the interaction of local communities with external actors. In particular, this included questions on the participation of local communities in community-based interventions. At the municipal-level, the focus was on the role of local governments and their relationship with different stakeholder groups. Questions at the departmental-level included both the role of the General Council (Conseil général, an elected body) in local governance as well as the role of other local institutions, including NGOs, cooperatives, and home-town associations (mutuelles de développement). A particular emphasis was placed on an assessment of the relationships between different local institutions and local communities.

Fieldwork on cross-border conflict dynamics. The fieldwork methodology for gathering data on the cross-border conflict dynamics between Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire was adapted from the framework used for the Rapid Social Assessment in Liberia (Richards et al 2005). Aiming to complement the study on Liberia as well as this report on Côte d’Ivoire, an important component of the fieldwork focused on local governance and community development in Liberia. Additionally, data were gathered on cross-border dynamics between communities in eastern Liberia and western Côte d’Ivoire. This includes the identification of connections between communities on either side of the border and the description of cross-border movements of goods and people, particularly militia groups.
Selection of fieldwork areas

The selection of the fieldwork areas in Côte d’Ivoire was based on the existence of different conflict types and on a number of criteria to ensure the representation of different agro-climatic zones, governance types and socio-cultural groups. These criteria included:

- Different forms of governance: government-controlled, FN-controlled, former zone de confiance
- Urban and rural areas (excluding Abidjan)
- Areas of immigration and emigration
- Different socio-cultural profiles (e.g., ethnic group, religion)
- Geographic location

As it was a priority to fill an important knowledge gap on governance and social development in the areas controlled by the FN as well as the former zone de confiance, it was decided to include only one area located in the government-controlled area (see the table below for a description of the fieldwork areas according to the relevant selection criteria).

The fieldwork conducted along the border between Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia was chosen because of the important role of Liberian during the confrontations between the national armed forces (known as FANCI) and the FAFN.

Table 2: Selection of fieldwork areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fieldwork area</th>
<th>Aboisso</th>
<th>Bangolo</th>
<th>Bouaké</th>
<th>Danané</th>
<th>Korhogo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict type</td>
<td>Conflicts over fishery resources</td>
<td>Conflicts over land; inter-communal conflicts; confrontations between armed groups</td>
<td>Inter-communal conflicts; conflicts between cattle herders and farmers</td>
<td>Confrontations between armed groups</td>
<td>Conflicts between cattle herders and farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Government – controlled</td>
<td>Zone de confiance</td>
<td>FAFN (headquarters)</td>
<td>FAFN and zone de confiance</td>
<td>FAFN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban / Rural</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration / Emigration</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>Immigration (high)</td>
<td>Emigration (low)</td>
<td>Immigration of Liberian refugees</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural groups</td>
<td>Agnis, Burkinabés, Maliens</td>
<td>Guérés, Burkinabés, Baoulé migrants</td>
<td>Baoulés, Malinkés</td>
<td>Yacoubas, Liberians, Burkinabés</td>
<td>Malinkés, Sénoufous, Fulas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic location</td>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Center</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fieldwork methods and process

The research in Côte d’Ivoire consisted of a pilot phase conducted in the department of Danané followed by data collection in four additional areas (Aboisso, Bangolo, Bouaké,
Korhogo). During the pilot phase, a World Bank staff member and two local consultants tested and refined the fieldwork methods. In the subsequent fieldwork areas, these two local consultants conducted the data collection with the assistance of two junior researchers each. The teams spent three weeks in each fieldwork area.

The fieldwork methods included semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participatory rural appraisal-type methods. In each fieldwork area, data were collected on two levels. In the main towns, the teams conducted key informant interviews with representatives of the préfecture, the FN, elected officials, civil society representatives, religious leaders, business people, traditional leaders, representatives of different ethnic groups, and representatives of donor organizations and international NGOs. Additionally, the teams conducted focus groups with civil society representatives, combatants, and members of local school management committees (called COGES).

Based on information gathered in the main town, the teams selected three communities (villages and neighborhoods) for conducting participatory rural appraisal-type exercises (three days each). Criteria for the selection of the communities were the existence of community development projects, the existence of conflicts typical for the area and different ethnic compositions. For the selection of villages, secondary criteria included the degree of remoteness from the main town and, where relevant, the distance to a border area. Fieldwork on the community-level included interviews with the traditional leadership and community assemblies for the gathering of basic data on the community history, the physical environment and on the general impacts of the crisis. This was followed by focus group interviews with the village youth, women’s groups, credit and savings groups, migrant populations and members of project management or village development committees. These exercises focused on conflicts and the analysis of community governance and institutional development.

Fieldwork in the border area between Eastern Liberia and Western Côte d’Ivoire was conducted in two fourteen day visits by an international and a local consultant. During the first visit, the team focused on the area of Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties in Liberia and the Moyen-Cavally region in Côte d’Ivoire. During the second visit, the team visited Maryland County in Liberia and the department of Tabou in Côte d’Ivoire. The team conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants and focus groups, including: Ivorian and Liberian local government officials; civil authorities (City Mayors); United Nations functionaries (UNOCI & UNMIL); leaders of local ‘Traditional’ Authority structures; refugee organizations; residual refugee populations (Ivorians in Liberia and vice versa); civil society organizations; third country nationals in Côte d’Ivoire (mainly Burkinabes, Guineans and Malians); the Leaders of the Burkinabe community in Tabou Department; the Leadership of the GPP in Tabou; senior command figures and rank and file combatants of the Liberian MODEL militia based in Côte d’Ivoire; local business interests, and village youth, women’s’ and elder’s focus groups.
Côte d’Ivoire has an administrative structure based on the French model, comprising parallel systems of deconcentrated and decentralized institutions. The deconcentrated institutions at the departmental level are the préfectures. Additionally, each department is subdivided into administrative units that correspond to a sous-préfectures. The prefects (préfets) and sous-préfets are appointed by the central government and function as its local representatives. Additionally, there exist a number decentralized institutions or collectivités territoriales. These are locally elected bodies that function at the departmental (referred to as district in Abidjan and Yamoussoukro) and municipal level (referred to as commune). While municipal governments have existed in some form or another since colonial times, the departmental governments were only created in 2003. Additional elected bodies may be created for the regional level, comprising several departments, and the sub-district level (villes), sub-dividing Abidjan and comprising several municipalities.

At the municipal level, the elected body is known as the Municipal Council (Conseil Municipal) and is composed of 25 to 50 members. The Municipal Council elects one of its members as the mayor. In Côte d’Ivoire, there exist 197 elected municipal governments covering approximately 60 percent of the total population. Though not yet functional, an additional 520 municipalities were formally created in 2005 and further ones are expected to follow. Ultimately, a total of approximately 900 municipalities are to cover the country’s entire territory. At the departmental level, the elected body is referred to as the General Council (Conseil Général), which is composed of 30 to 60 members. The General Council then elects a council member as President of the General Council. Both municipal and departmental governments are financed through a combination of transfers and local taxes and fees, though at very different proportions. While the departmental governments rely primarily on transfers from the central government, the municipalities depend mostly on income that is raised locally.

In the table on the following page, the basic functions of the different deconcentrated and decentralized institutions are outlined. It should be noted that the specific distribution of functions differs between those areas that have municipal governments and those that do not. In the latter case, the sous-préfecture and the respective line ministries exercise the functions otherwise attributed to the municipal government (despite the fact that sous-préfectures and municipalities do not necessarily cover corresponding geographical areas).

---

34 The following information is based on Vaillancourt (2008).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic entity</th>
<th>Deconcentrated Institution</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Decentralized Institution</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Electoral system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Préfecture</td>
<td>Administrative functions; oversight of budgets of Municipal and General Council (in cooperation with Ministry of Interior)</td>
<td>General Council</td>
<td>Local development planning; responsibility for certain investments</td>
<td>Direct election; 30 to 60 members; Members elect a council member as president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District (Abidjan and Yamoussoukrou)</td>
<td>Governor appointed by President</td>
<td>Administrative functions; oversight of budgets of District Council</td>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>Local development planning; responsibility for certain investments</td>
<td>Direct election; 46 members in Yamoussoukrou and 70 in Abidjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality (Commune)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal Council</td>
<td>Administrative and maintenance functions; local development planning; responsibility for certain investments</td>
<td>Direct election; 25 to 50 members; Members elect a council member as mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sous-préfecture</td>
<td>Sous-préfecture</td>
<td>Administrative functions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


