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# Power-Sharing in the Local Arena: Man – a Rebel-Held Town in Western Côte d'Ivoire

Kathrin Heitz

**Abstract:** In general, peace agreements with power-sharing provisions are analysed at a national level. This article offers insights into the practices of power-sharing in the local arena of western Côte d'Ivoire, in the town of Man. It investigates what brought about a change towards peace in the region of Man and then presents local forms of power-sharing between the community leaders and the rebels who have established a rather complex system of domination and taxation in the territory they occupy. Moreover, the implementation of a territorial power-sharing device, which is part of the peace agreement negotiated among the warring parties at the national level, is analysed: the redeployment of state administration to the rebel-held zones of the country. The ethnographic data on which the article is based reveals that the actors at the local level have their own strategies to address urgent needs and that they play a more active role in peacemaking than is usually acknowledged.

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**Keywords:** Côte d'Ivoire; Power-sharing; Post-conflict phase; Municipal/local policy

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In his latest book, internationally renowned political scientist Patrick Chabal makes a strong case for turning to the local, i.e. the ground level, in order to search for complementary elements for our reflection on and understanding of politics in Africa (Chabal 2009: x-xi, 30). In the same way, this article aims at shedding light from a local angle on an issue that is usually dealt with at a national level, namely power-sharing. Armed conflicts are fought at a local level and this is where solutions for peace, such as power-sharing arrangements, ultimately have to be implemented. I shall argue and demonstrate that the local political arena a) is the key for a better assessment of political strategies decided at the national level and b) plays a much more active role in peacemaking than is commonly acknowledged. The empirical data for this argument draw on long-term field research which was conducted for the author's PhD study in the rebel-held city of Man, the main New Forces<sup>1</sup>-controlled town in western Côte d'Ivoire.

After an introduction to the history and dynamics of the conflict as well as conceptual and methodological considerations, the article explores whether peace agreements negotiated among national actors with international mediators are able to address concerns at the local level. I look at the local perception of the peace process and ask what the relevant steps towards peace were in the local arena. Then, I focus on two forms of power-sharing: First of all, I describe local forms of power-sharing, which have been negotiated autonomously – independent of national peace accords – among local actors. In a second step, I focus on territorial power-sharing, namely the redeployment of state administration to the rebel-held parts of Côte d'Ivoire and ask what it means when rebels and state-appointed prefects have to live and work side by side. In the conclusion, power-sharing at the national level and forms of power-sharing in the local arena are juxtaposed.<sup>2</sup>

## Conceptual and Methodological Considerations

In the last decade, power-sharing has become Western peacemakers' preferred tool for ending wars (Roeder and Rothchild 2005: 5; Tull and Mehler 2008: 376). The literature on power-sharing has developed three strands of analysis: A first strand focuses on so-called (ethnically) divided societies or

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1 *Forces Nouvelles*, New Forces or FN hereafter. I will also use rebels/ex-rebels to refer to the same violent non-state actor.

2 I would like to thank the following scholars for their comments on previous versions of this article: Kerstin Bauer, Sadia Chérif, Gregor Dobler, Till Förster, Kone Gnangadjomon, Andreas Mehler, Christian von Soest and two anonymous reviewers. Nevertheless, I remain fully responsible for the text.

post-war constitutions (e.g. Lijphart 1977; O'Flynn and Russel 2005; Noel 2005). A second strand looks at power-sharing in peace negotiations (e.g. Hoddie and Hartzell 2005; Sriram 2008; Mehler 2008, 2009), whereas a third strand of research has come to link the two and analyse the durability of peace agreements with power-sharing elements and long-term implications for sustainable peace and democracy (e.g. Roeder and Rothchild 2005; Jarstad 2008). This article is a contribution to the second strand of research, namely to power-sharing in peace settlements.

In their research, Hartzell and Hoddie transferred and applied the concepts of power-sharing based on the classic book of Arend Lijphart to the context of peace settlements (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003: 319). Power-sharing provisions in peace settlements are used as incentives to bring the warring parties at the negotiation table to end violence (Sriram 2008: 184). They also function as encouragements to belligerents to undertake "costly" steps in a balanced and therefore secured environment (Hoddie and Hartzell 2003: 304-305). A costly step is, for example, disarmament. In Côte d'Ivoire, power-sharing is used in the peace agreements in a temporary way and not at a constitutional level as, for example, in Burundi (Sriram 2008: 55). To think about the Ivorian peace process in terms of costly signalling helps to understand the small, cautious steps that Ivorian actors make in the current situation.

Literature on peacemaking<sup>3</sup> and power-sharing often lacks data taken from the local level and practitioners fail to address local dynamics and their security concerns in peace agreements (Mehler 2008: 6, 2009: 472). Therefore, scholars have recommended that there should be more attention paid to the local level during all phases of conflict (e.g. Mehler 2008: 38). In order to be empirically open to forms of power-sharing in the local arena, I will use power-sharing in a very broad and basic sense (Sriram 2008: iv), namely that one party gives up some of its power and shares it with another party, so that more people can have a say in and thus influence public affairs in a community.<sup>4</sup> Defined in this way, there are more studies that describe forms of power-sharing at the local or at least at the regional level in a peace process, see for example Georg Klute's studies on northern Mali (Klute and von Trotha 2004).

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3 See Chetail (2009: 1) for a distinction of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

4 Compare with Hartzell and Hoddie's definition: "power-sharing institutions as those rules that, in addition to defining how decisions will be made by groups within the polity, allocate decision-making rights, including access to state resources, among collectivities competing for power" (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003: 320).

In the literature on peacebuilding, the necessity of involving the local level has become a much-cited *desideratum* (Poulligny 2009: 175). However, “local” is an ambiguous and context-dependent term that needs clarification. The way “local” is frequently used in discourses of peacemaking is as “local versus international” (Jarstad 2008: 107). Here, “local” refers to the stakeholders from the country at war, the national actors are distinguished from outside or international actors. This is in the context that national actors have to be involved in peace negotiations in order to assure that agreements are reached locally rather than imposed from outside by the international community. Whereas in the just mentioned discourse “local” equals “national”, I will use the terms “local versus national” as opposites in this article. In this sense, local is frequently used in the social sciences in general; for example, in Chabal’s book mentioned at the beginning (Chabal 2009: 30), in literature on power-sharing (Mehler 2008: 38), as well as in discourses on statehood from a socio-anthropological perspective (Förster 2006: 56).<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that in the context of today’s power-sharing arrangement between state and non-state actors in Côte d’Ivoire, “local” does not equal “non-state”, neither is “national” synonymous with “the State”.<sup>6</sup> What is meant by “local” as a counterpart to “national” is based on the observation that actors coming from the capital city, which is the heart of the national scene, are often perceived as outsiders when they visit places remote from the capital (Poulligny 2009: 175). If we do not want to neglect ordinary people’s lives in the local arena outside the capital, we have to ask what is salient for them and look at social reality from an ordinary actor’s point of view.

For this change of perspective, we shall leave the central government’s scene and zoom down to the main town of a region in the Ivorian hinterland, called Man. The authorities here do not usually appear on the national scene and are rarely present in media coverage. In peace negotiations, they are represented only by the top-ranks of their hierarchies. In the local arena, however, they are the king of the castle. When I talk about the local level or the local arena, I refer to the town of Man and its surroundings (see footnote 10 below). Corresponding to this, local actors are residents of this area.

The empirical data for this article is based on my first long-term field research for my on-going PhD project, in which I look at security, trust and

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5 For a theoretical discussion of the relationship between local, national and global from an anthropologists’ perspective see Appadurai, Arjun (2008), *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, Minneapolis (Minn.): University of Minnesota Press.

6 I owe this point of clarification to the comment of an anonymous reviewer.

socio-political orders in Man.<sup>7</sup> The methodological approach of my research is qualitative and inductive and orients itself on grounded theory. Most of the data was collected in the period between September 2008 and April 2009, including a short trip in August 2009. The material presented here is mainly based on interviews<sup>8</sup> with actors from a wide range of social groups<sup>9</sup> in the area of study, which is primarily the town of Man and zone six of the New Forces.<sup>10</sup> Additional information was collected by systematic observation of specific events. The contextualisation of the data is based on the regular reading of the news and the systematic study of a local newspaper, *Le Tambour*, which was published during the war in Man, as well as with participation in everyday life. During the exploratory phase of my field research, I came across local forms of power-sharing between the rebels and the civilians in Man that shall be described in this paper.

## The Violent Crisis in Western Côte d'Ivoire

In the context of a difficult economic environment, causes for the outbreak of the Ivorian armed conflict must be searched for in the power vacuum following the death, after more than 30 years of rule, of the country's first President Félix Houphouët-Boigny in 1993. The struggle for his succession led to fierce competition among the candidates from the three main political parties (PDCI, RDR, FPI)<sup>11</sup>. A discussion was launched about *Ivoirité* (an ideology of Ivorian citizenship) geared towards excluding in particular the

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7 My PhD project is part of a comparative study "Regaining Trust in Post-Conflict Societies", conducted by Kerstin Bauer, Gregor Dobler, Till Förster and myself. It is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

8 Most of the data was collected with semi-structured interviews, about 120 of which have been recorded, and with roughly 150 informal talks (including follow-up talks) which were written down immediately after the talks.

9 In the course of my research, I made contact with roughly three hundred people. The aim was not to reach a representative number, but to get qualitative data from the widest range possible. Included are representatives of neighbourhoods, villages and religious groups; as well as young people, women, economic actors, state-representatives, politicians, civil servants, foreigners, UN staff, and about fifty combatants of the New Forces, ten of them in leading positions.

10 Man is the capital of the New Forces' zone six. The bulk of my data stems from Man. The data was completed with shorter trips and interviews held within the area of domination of the zone commander, stretching from the Liberian and Guinean border to Sémien and Kouibly to the East, as well as from Logoualé and Podiagouiné towards the South to villages in the North of Man.

11 Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire – Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (PDCI-RDA), Rassemblement des Républicains (RDR); Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI).

RDR candidate from the elections; he represents the marginalised northern, Muslim population of the country, who have close historical links with populations in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali as well as the many immigrants from other Sahelian countries (Akindès 2004: 26-33). After another round of unfair elections in 2000 and the gradual militarisation of politics (Le Pape and Vidal 2002), the Ivorian civil war began on 19 September 2002. A handful of exiled military men formed the rebel movement *Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI) which aimed to fight for a fairer political order and to depose President Laurent Gbagbo (FPI). The coup failed, but they instantly managed to occupy two major towns in the North, Korhogo and Bouaké.<sup>12</sup>

Two months later, on 28 November 2002, the western parts bordering Liberia and Guinea were seized by two new rebel movements, the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP) and the *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO), the latter of which was dominated by foreign mercenaries (HRW 2003: 12). All three rebel groups soon afterwards continued as one group under the name of the New Forces (see footnote 1 above). Representatives of the FN today say that these two groups had been created to continue the territorial conquest towards the South without breaching the cessation of hostilities that the MPCI had agreed on with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in October 2002.<sup>13</sup> The fact that there were three rebel movements at the beginning of the conflict has no considerable influence on the situation and rebel structure in the West today.<sup>14</sup>

Until today, the western parts of Côte d'Ivoire, which include the regions of Man, the capital of the Dix-Huit Montagnes, and the region Moyen-Cavally, are considered to be the most unsafe and unstable parts of the country, also due to the fact that they share borders with Liberia and Guinea (ICG 2009). Sometimes this part of the country is referred to as the "Wild West". This alludes to the fact that the West has experienced more violence than any other part of the country, which is also due to a Liberianisation of the conflict (Ero and Marshall 2003). It seems, however, to make sense to distinguish between a northern and a southern West. Ethnically motivated violence, which the West often stands for, has played a much bigger role in the demilitarised zone and the South than in the rebel-held,

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12 The seizure of Abidjan, the economic centre, failed.

13 Personal communication, December 2008.

14 Nevertheless, in committees located at the national level, such as the Independent Electoral Commission, the FN have been able to maintain three times the number of seats that they had during the Linas-Marcoussis peace negotiations at the beginning of 2003.

northern part of the West. The northern region suffered from heavy battles between the government and the rebels and the subsequent looting and sexual violence by armed men. After Man was taken for the first time by the rebels, in November 2002, it was re-conquered by the government, so-called loyalists, shortly afterwards. On 19 December 2002, after two weeks of severe fighting with the government forces, Man fell into the hands of the rebels, under whose control it remains.

After several rounds of negotiations, the direct fighting ceased in the first half of 2003. A demarcation line, which has been controlled by French peacekeepers since its installation, divided the country into two halves. The population has lived in a no-peace-no-war situation ever since (Engels 2007: 16). The South is controlled by forces loyal to the government under President Laurent Gbagbo (FPI). In the northern and western parts, the rebellion has succeeded in destroying the state's monopoly of force over its territory. Roughly 60 per cent of the country is now controlled by the rebel group New Forces. Many of the state's institutions were targeted; some of the buildings were physically destroyed and most of the personnel fled to the South. The state institutions ceased functioning: the armed forces, the police, the gendarmerie, the court system, the corps of prefects, the customs service, water and forest divisions as well as large sections of the school system, the *conseil général*<sup>15</sup>, and the *mairie*.<sup>16</sup> The void was gradually filled by a structure that groups of armed men put in place.

The rebel-held part of Côte d'Ivoire is today divided into ten loosely linked zones (ICG 2009: 12), each of which is headed by a military governor or zone commander, called *comzone*. The structure can be described as an authoritarian military administration, with a patrimonial network, although some personnel were also recruited, based on account of merit and brotherhood, during the war. Since the FN had not managed to overthrow President Gbagbo, they had to find a way to generate income in the territory that they occupied. They started to systematically raise trade taxes on all businesses in their zones, taxes which have made the commanders and their entourage rich. The order that emerged demonstrates a pronounced image of the well-known tendencies which social scientists have described concerning the state of power and domination in Africa. Based on observations and accounts from combatants and non-combatants, I will now describe the order in zone 6 (Man) which is divided into a northern and southern sector.<sup>17</sup>

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15 Encompasses a department in Côte d'Ivoire, the president of the council is elected.

16 Encompasses a town council and its communities, the mayor is elected.

17 Comparative studies have revealed that local conditions shaped the rebel governance that emerged (Bauer, Dobler and Förster 2007).

The highest rebel in the zone is the zone commander Losseni Fofana, called “Loss” or “Papa Cobra”. He was a corporal in the Ivorian army; today he is a commander by rank. He has a second in command, and his right hand is the chief of security, called *Cobra* whose name was given to the military unit as a whole. Most of the high-ranking commanders are former military men; many of the low-ranking rebels are so-called *débrouilleurs*<sup>18</sup>, who had enjoyed casual employment, if any at all, before the crisis. To ease tensions with the populace, the New Forces’ commanders in zone 6 made use of and created organs, in which the non-military population is represented. Apart from this civil branch, the financial and military power are the pillars on which their domination rests. A prison and gendarmerie and police stations were opened with their personnel. There are parts of the population who choose to benefit from these institutions in cases of dispute with business partners or with family members, whereas others would never consider addressing them. What is lacking most in terms of civilian security and justice is a separate judicial body. Often “right is might” and people call it the law of the jungle or law of the strongest.<sup>19</sup>

Another main actor that has to be taken into consideration in order to understand the balance of power in the local arena is the international peacekeeping force. The French military operation *Licorne* has been present to separate the two sides of belligerents since the violent outbreak of the crisis and later became part of the *Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire* (ONUCI) as a support and rapid-intervention force. In April 2004, the ONUCI started working with military observers and police deployment, but without an executive mandate. This limits their scope of action decisively. UN staff working on the ground mainly observe and write reports to be sent off to the headquarters where decisions will be made and then implemented top-down. A large portion of the population is often unaware of these procedures and does not understand why the UN does not intervene more. Although it is not always easy to prove, the presence of the UN and the French has an effect on the rebels’ behaviour: the population has somebody to complain to and the FN feel they are being watched by the international community.

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18 A *débrouilleur* is a person without regular income who lives by his or her wits.

19 The description concerning the provision and non-provision of public goods could be continued here, but does not relate to the issue of power sharing.

## Power-Sharing Provisions in Two Peace Agreements at the National Level

Efforts to negotiate peace began soon after the onset of the violent crisis (Mehler 2008: 23). The ups and downs of the peace negotiation process of Côte d'Ivoire with a special focus on power-sharing arrangements can be found in Mehler's comparison of several peace agreements in Africa (Mehler 2008: 23-26). The first large-scale agreement was the Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement.<sup>20</sup> It addressed many key issues of the conflict (citizenship and land ownership) and included power-sharing arrangements, such as a common government. In the eyes of President Gbagbo, power was distributed in an unbalanced way, for the rebels were to get the Defence and the Interior Ministries which would give them too much control in security issues. The Marcoussis-agreement lacked clear power-sharing formulas concerning the reunification of the national territory and the future army. Although the agreement failed, it must be acknowledged that it was negotiated at an early phase of the violent conflict and helped to reduce direct armed confrontation. The second peace agreement we will turn to now was negotiated four years later when the conflict was at a stalemate.

After negotiations lead by the ECOWAS, France and the South African President Thabo Mbeki on behalf of the African Union, the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement (OPA), signed on 4 March 2007<sup>21</sup>, was initiated by the protagonists themselves: first, the agreement was suggested by President Laurent Gbagbo, and then the Secretary-General of the New Forces Kigbabori Guillaume Soro accepted the proposition. The peace talks were soon called "direct dialogue" and were facilitated by Blaise Compaoré, the President of Burkina Faso and chairman of ECOWAS. The rebels had prepared themselves in his country and he still maintains close ties with the leaders of the rebellion. In a second step, a permanent framework of concertation including the two main party leaders and candidates for the Presidency, Bedié (PDCI) and Ouattara (RDR), as well as international actors, was set up. Furthermore, an Evaluation and Monitoring Committee chaired by the mediator for periodic evaluation started working with monthly meetings.

The agreement negotiated between Laurent Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro yielded much hope. This first accord was followed by four supple-

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20 French text of the Linas-Marcoussis Peace Accord from <[http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/pays-zones-geo\\_833/cote-ivoire\\_339/colonne-droite\\_1347/textes-referenc\\_1348/accord-linas-marcoussis\\_1636.html](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/pays-zones-geo_833/cote-ivoire_339/colonne-droite_1347/textes-referenc_1348/accord-linas-marcoussis_1636.html)> (accessed: 7 October 2009).

21 French text of the Ouagadougou Peace Accord from <[http://www.operationspaix.net/IMG/pdf/Accord\\_politic\\_ouagadougou\\_2007-03-05\\_.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/IMG/pdf/Accord_politic_ouagadougou_2007-03-05_.pdf)> (accessed: 12 July 2009).

mentary accords. Important components of the agreement and the accords that followed are:

- the dismantlement of the demarcation line “confidence zone”, which separated the belligerents
- the formation of a new common government with the FN Secretary-General Soro serving as its Prime Minister (political power-sharing)
- the initiation of first steps to address the conflict’s key issues: Ivorian citizenship and legitimacy of power
- the redeployment of state administration to the rebel-held parts of the country
- the creation of mixed units in the Integrated Command Centre (military power-sharing)<sup>22</sup>

Initially and on a national level, the OPA was able to bring about change towards peace and normalisation. On 26 March 2007, Guillaume Soro became Prime Minister of the new government, in April the dismantlement of the demarcation line was started by progressively replacing the international peacekeepers with mixed Ivorian units. This meant the end of the separation and complete freedom of circulation within the entire country. However, at a local level in the North, the OPA has not had the same resonance and impact. Two years after the signing of the agreement, not much has changed for people in the northern part, for the rebels are still in control.

Doubts have sprung up concerning the willingness to implement the agreement in costly domains. Symbolic acts and verbal reassurances cannot hide the fact that genuine actions are being postponed to often unknown subsequent dates. Major issues of citizenship, the electoral process, the disarmament, demobilisation and reinsertion (DDR) of combatants, the merging of the army as well as the genuine reunification of the administration still remain unsolved.

To analyse why this might be so, I consider Hoddie and Hartzell’s approach useful. They argue that in the aftermath of a violent conflict, there is a lot of distrust among the former warring parties and in order to overcome distrust, “costly signals demonstrating their genuine interest in peace” are required (2003: 304-305). The lack of mutual trust between the belligerents has been widely recognised (ICG 2009: 9-15). Time and again, commanders in zone 6 (Man) say that they have heard of new recruitment of groups and training on the Liberian side of the border, loyal to the South. As long as this apprehension persists, they will not relinquish their means of coercion

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22 See also Mehler 2008: 19.

to the state administration. Indeed, to relinquish protection, such as disarmament, is arguably the most difficult or costly step (Sriram 2008: 22) and therefore needs much reassurance or mutual steps to balance it.

Many point their fingers at the zone commanders who do not seem ready to leave and therefore make a genuine re-unification impossible. However, if the zone commanders step down, the FN zones, together with their security and taxation system, would be dissolved. Consequently, the commanders of the New Forces would lose their territory, military power and their source of income; in short, their territorial, military and economic standing. This step is very, if not too, costly; there seems to be no gain from power-sharing devices intended to counterbalance this. It presupposes that the FN would fully trust that the Gbagbo camp will keep its word and organise fair elections or could rely on the third-party guarantor. The rebel leaders cannot give up power because there are not enough power-sharing devices to counterbalance their loss of power before the elections are held. As long as this is so, the best way to go for local people is to engage in local power-sharing arrangements with the New Forces.

## National Peace Agreements in the Local Perception

The Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement, signed in January 2003, gained much attention in the national and international press; in what follows, I shall examine its reception in the local arena. The space of time in which the agreement falls is remembered as *temps sauvage*, barbaric times. It was still a time of direct confrontation: battles between the loyalists and the rebels, as well as violent confrontations among rival rebel groups. It was also a time dominated by severe physical threat, many fled to the South or to nearby villages, if they could. But even in the villages they were not safe, so they had to sleep in encampments or simply out in the bush. Some experienced or witnessed horrible scenes. There are areas that were bombed, and mercenaries from the sub-region, as well as Ivorians, looted the area, raped women and killed civilians.<sup>23</sup>

Since the rebel-held areas were cut off from the commercial capital in the South, newspapers hardly reached the north-western parts. A local journalist, Balla Doumbia, therefore created a newspaper called *Le Tambour*. Its first issue was published on the 5th February 2003, two weeks after the Marcoussis peace agreement was signed. Local war heroes, commanders and

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23 Based on testimonies of victims and eyewitnesses, personal communications.

a female soldier dominate the front page in the first issue, but among the latest headlines the Linas-Marcoussis agreement is featured: for example, “an analysis of the negotiations of Paris and Lomé” and “why the soldiers of President Gbagbo are afraid of the application of the peace accords” (Dolumbia 2003a: 1). The tone and gist of the articles are in line with what the rebels said at the time about the Marcoussis accords, which is not surprising. To avoid violent reactions, everything that was uttered publicly in the rebel-held parts had to be in accordance with the rebels’ opinion. Obviously, the local newspaper found the nationally negotiated peace agreement relevant enough to comment on in the paper. The local level profits from ceasefires reached at the national level and, after all, sustainable peace means tackling the problem in its entirety and above the local level.

Nevertheless, it is physical security that people need most and which was their primary concern during and right after the violent conflicts in the local arena at the beginning of 2003 (Bauer, Dobler and Förster 2007; Hills 2009: 7). That people structure their narratives of the violent conflict and its aftermath along the gradual improvement of the security situation underlines this. I will, therefore, here link the abstract term “peace” with the more concrete experience of security to offer an empirical concept of the peace process in the local arena, rather than a definition from outside (Mehler 2008: 38). This ties in with the fact that differentiating the rebels as good and bad ones was by far closer to everyday immediate concerns than any decision about a power-sharing government made in Paris, whose effect might be felt months later, if at all. Reality was dominated by what the rebels did and did not do. Two events impacted the security situation and improved people’s living conditions in the local arena in 2003: firstly, the Ivorian rebels’ success in chasing the largely Liberian and Sierra Leonean mercenaries from Ivorian soil (roughly in April and May 2003); and secondly, the installation and establishment of the newly appointed rebel leader in July 2003 (Dolumbia 2003b: 3).

This rebel leader was the afore-mentioned commander Losseni Fofana. He came with his armed men, the *Cobras*, from Bouaké and gradually established their control. The beginning of the rebellion saw much competition for positions and resources among different rebel groups. Rivalries claimed many deaths among the rebels. To cement their position, rebel leaders had to fight those who were not prepared to comply until they had established a monopoly on the use of violence in their territory. Gradually, rival rebel leaders and their groups were eliminated, subjected or pushed into exile; yet there were still some rebels who abused their power and made life unpredictable for people. With this rather complex system of administration described above, Losseni Fofana, together with his entourage, has controlled

Man ever since. Decisive in the local arena of Man is what the New Forces do; this has led to bottom-up forms of power-sharing arrangements, which we will turn to now.

## Local Forms of Power-Sharing

Whereas in the chronology of the conflict, the first part of my article has dealt with the first half of the year 2003, the second part is situated in the second half of 2003, leading into 2004. Towards the end of 2003, the political situation was as follows: The Linas-Marcoussis agreement had never been implemented, further rounds of negotiations had not led to a remarkable improvement either and the divided country was at an armed stalemate. The northern part had been without state control or local UN supervision for over a year. It is in this context that local forms of power-sharing emerged in the local arena.

When I talk about local forms of power-sharing in this context, it is not between the rebels and the government but between the rebels and local community leaders and corporations.<sup>24</sup> A prerequisite to comprehension is to understand how the rebels are viewed by locals. It would lead too far to provide a full description, but the statement of a local youth leader will suffice: he said that the rebels gave them a hard time but they were not as bad as one might think.

It goes without saying that not everybody would be acceptable to the rebels as a power-sharing partner. In Man, Mamadou Soumahoro Maméry, however, was such a person. He belongs to a well-known merchant family in Man and has worked for several mayors in various positions. Furthermore, he is the former local leader of the RDR, the political party said to have close links to the rebellion. In the eyes of the loyalists in the South, he was a rebel and they suspected him of helping the rebellion. He openly says that he shares the political aims of the New Forces and that one could have seen the war coming, but he does not agree with the means, the violence, and particularly the human rights violations against civilians.

Before the rebellion reached Man, he was arrested at home at night and locked up in La MACA (*Maison d'arrêt et de correction d'Abengourou/Abidjan*), a much-feared prison in the capital. After his dramatic liberation from this prison, he returned to Man in August 2003. Here, he strived to bring all local associations and NGOs together in a civil society organisation, for the usual representational bodies of the State had ceased functioning at the

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24 It would lead too far here to also address non-permanently institutionalised social organisations.

outbreak of the violent crisis. Organised in a group and thanks to his personal history, Maméry Soumahoro was able to address the rebel leadership and make claims for the population. Every Thursday, he met Losseni Fofana, the FN zone commander, and gave him a general account of things going wrong in town. Among other things, he reported the misbehaviour of combatants against civilians. The commander was willing to punish the soldiers concerned among his men. This affected Maméry Soumahoro, the outspoken critic, in that he was sometimes threatened by young rebels because they had been imprisoned due to his objection.

The fact that a) two sides sit down to talk and make decisions, that b) an association is formed which makes claims, and that c) the rebel leadership to a certain extent gives up part of its power by being criticised can be interpreted as a local form of power-sharing. This political form of power-sharing – in Hartzell and Hoddie’s typology – has led to a substantial improvement of the security situation and to a more peaceful everyday life for the population (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003: 320).

Since its beginnings in 2003, the civil society organisation – which in this form is unique to the city of Man – has undergone many changes in terms of leadership. But it continues its efforts to this day, with Maméry Soumahoro in an advisory role. He himself has been offered the position of the local representative of the *Coalition de la Société Civile pour la Paix et le Développement Démocratique en Côte d’Ivoire* (COSOPCI), which, among others, was founded by human rights associations (LIDHO, MIDH)<sup>25</sup> in the capital Abidjan in 2004. They have relations to international NGOs, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), among others. The founding of COSOPCI is a direct reaction to the political crisis. Its aim is to work for a peaceful, democratic culture. One of the primary tasks is to observe the identification and electoral process. They write reports and, if necessary, they can publicise wrongdoings via the media in Abidjan. This may also serve as an example that the local level is strongly linked to the national and international level. Whereas in the first time, during and right after the war, Man was more isolated due to frequent breakdowns of communication, these networks today strongly contribute to the security situation in the local arena.

Further forms of local power-sharing can be found between the rebels and the remnants of the decentralised state administration. The municipality (*mairie*) – as part of the decentralised institutions and staffed by people from that region – has never been closed for long in Man. Deprived of some

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25 *Ligue Ivoirienne des Droits de l’Homme* (LIDHO), *Mouvement Ivoirien des Droits Humains* (MIDH).

functions, they continued work during the crisis in two domains: They kept on registering births and handing out certificates and served as an interface between the population and the military authorities of the New Forces. As before the war, the mayor has spent most of his time in Abidjan, the economic capital, but there has always been at least one of the five vice-mayors present. One among them, who died recently, is said to have had a particularly good rapport with the New Forces authorities. Although the New Forces hold on tightly to their economic revenue system, the mayors have successfully negotiated a share in the taxation of the market for the municipality. In a broad understanding of power-sharing, this constitutes another informal form of local power-sharing, an economic one, so to speak.

As a comparison among different zones and towns in the FN-held areas has revealed (Förster 2009: 331-345), there are remarkable differences with respect to security provisions, the administration and taxation system. In Korhogo, for example, another local power-sharing arrangement can be observed between the *dozow* (hunter associations) and the New Forces. Only the *dozow*, who are part of the local culture system, are allowed to patrol inside the city; the rebels' domain starts at the roadblocks leading out of the city (Förster 2010: 7-13).

## The Implementation of a National Power-Sharing Device at the Local Level

This last part of my paper focuses on the time after the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement. One of the most salient changes at the local level was certainly the arrival of a new powerful actor, manifested in the return of government-appointed corps of prefects and sub-prefects whose role in the Ivorian administration is generally to represent and promote the president's politics across the country. The redeployment of the state administration was initiated with an official ceremony in Bouaké, the headquarters of the New Forces, in June 2007 (The Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire 2007: 6). Although federalism or territorial autonomy are usually considered territorial aspects of power-sharing (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003: 320; Sriram 2008: 22), the redeployment can be interpreted as territorial power-sharing at the local level, for it resulted in the spatial cohabitation of two antagonistic powers.

## The Redeployed State Administration: Like a Fish Without Water

According to the sub-prefect of Man, the prefect and he returned to the region in October 2007. Until the beginning of 2009 they worked in preliminary buildings. Similar to the municipality, their main work was the issuing of certificates as part of the identification process. Everything concerning security or taxation, customs and justice was, and continues to be, firmly in the hands of the New Forces.

In order to avoid unnecessary provocation, each side keeps to itself, according to the sub-prefect. For official meetings, such as the opening of business branches or the celebration of Independence Day, both authorities are represented: the prefect and a representative of the zone commander. They shake hands, sit next to each other and may share a meal. Certain topics will be strictly avoided because the two representatives would not agree with each other. It can be described as a careful coexistence of two parallel structures, whose standing is uncertain. The manner in which the local representatives of the former belligerents work together is decided on a national level. The logic is that as long as Gbagbo and Soro can work together, their representatives in the local arena will do the same. In this respect, local actors follow their hierarchy's instructions and do not actively bring about change from the bottom. It is a top-down approach. On the other hand, factional divisions, for example, those between Soro and some of the comzones, are well known. It is evident that the prefects are interested in having good relations with the FN commanders, for it is the ex-rebels who will offer them protection – and not the state – in the case of factional insurgency, provided that the local zone commander continues to support Soro and the OPA agreement.

In smaller, more remote towns, such as the sub-prefecture of Podiagouiné in the South of Sangouiné in the region Dix-Huit Montagnes, the administration came back reluctantly. Residents of Podiagouiné say that their sub-prefect came and presented himself to the population by organising a small ceremony during which two cattle were slaughtered and shared together. But after that, he left again. People ask themselves what he was meant to be doing in their town, given that he has not much scope of functions and little or no protection in case of a renewed outbreak of violence. In the words of one of the youth leaders, the prefect is “like a fish without water”. If there is no water, the fish is nothing, he said. The institutions and the means the prefect is usually equipped and surrounded with are lacking. He cannot act properly. In this respect it does not make a difference

whether the prefect is present or not, and therefore the village was not surprised to see their sub-prefect leave again.

## Handover of Administrative Powers to the Prefects: The Politics of Small Steps

For months, people have been talking about the “handover of administrative powers to the prefects”. It had been postponed on 15 January 2009 following the fourth supplementary OPA agreement from December 2008. Finally on 26 May 2009, the comzones handed over their administrative functions to government-appointed prefects, in a symbolic act in Bouaké. Although many of the ten zone commanders had been expected, only one of them was actually present at the ceremony; it was Martin Kouakou Fofié from Korhogo, the only zone commander sanctioned by the UN (ICG 2009: 12). Everybody had envisioned a big change, and that the rebels would leave to clear the way for the elections, as originally foreseen in the timetable of the Ouagadougou agreement. But people had not reckoned with the inventiveness of the Ivorian stakeholders. They are masters of small steps. They equated the handover with yet another small step in a peace process the outcome of which remains to be seen. Whether or not the goal of the trajectory will be the re-establishment of the pre-war state administration only time will tell. So far, the comzones have retained their security powers and taxation system, which means that the restoration of the civilian state authority and the country’s reunification under central control have remained incomplete.

In Man, no direct handover of administrative powers between the comzone and the prefect has taken place (Droh 2009). One FN representative said: “They have done that in Bouaké for all of us”. In theory, it means that all “issues” concerning the person in charge of a region have to be addressed to the prefects or sub-prefects now. Such issues can be the opening of a new branch of a company, the arrival and reception of an official visitor or the organisation of a concert. The organiser of a concert, who had been in Man during the crisis, informed the zone commander as usual about the up-coming event. The zone commander then referred him to the prefecture. Only with the prefect’s authorisation are the FN allowed to act under the new regulations in public events. If the prefect needs protection when he travels in the region, he has to address the zone commander or his acting commander. The zone commander has put his soldiers at the prefect’s disposal. It was the concert organiser who decided to give some drinks to the FN soldiers who came to provide security at his concert. As the FN chief of security assured me, he is in “daily” phone contact with the prefect and

there are no problems. 800 mixed Integrated Command Centre soldiers (*Centre de Commandement Intégré*, CCI) are expected to be deployed in the near future and the prefect states that only then will the full recovery of his powers be felt (Droh 2009).<sup>26</sup> Prefects have not received the financial and logistical backing for their work yet (ICG 2009: 15). Houses are still occupied by FN foot soldiers, and while the military camps to regroup the soldiers are not ready yet, they cannot be put on the streets without risking serious security problems in town.

Seen from the point of view of state and constitutional law, it is contradictory that the prefect regularly calls upon rebels – who are commonly referred to as ex-rebels<sup>27</sup> – in order to assure the security of state personnel. This practice has legitimised rebels as security providers on a national or state level, notwithstanding the social reality this everyday practice had become at a local level during the conflict. At least in some of the rebels' minds, they are doing an ordinary job as security providers, worthy of remuneration, and their view has been confirmed to a certain extent by the state administration working with them. The government, however, does not pay them; direct employment would mark the final step. Thus, the signal, that rebels and their service as security providers have been recognised by the State, and to a certain extent legalised, should not be underestimated. As Tull and Mehler argue, rebels are rewarded for using violence and this practice “thereby creates incentive structures which turn the rebel path into an appealing option” for obtaining either professional or even political goals and posts (Tull and Mehler 2005: 376). Arguably the resulting mixture of security providers – state and non-state actors/former rebels – is the future of many African states.

A next step in the redeployment of the administration was the re-opening of the Court of Justice in Man in March 2009. However, only part of the personnel, including a magistrate, has been deployed, meaning that only civil jurisdiction is working. For the criminal jurisdiction, a police force, a prison and bailiffs at state command are indispensable. They are waiting for the Integrated Command Centre; if and when it is in place, they can

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26 This article covers the period until October 2009. Recent developments such as the arrival of less than a hundred gendarmes and police officers from the CCI in Man in late December 2009 and the plundering and subsequent closure of the Court of Justice during the political crisis in February 2010 have not been taken into consideration.

27 The rebels' participation in the negotiation of peace agreements and their subsequent incorporation into power-sharing arrangements, such as the formation of a common government, seems to have made their mutation from rebels into ex-rebels possible.

begin work. At the moment, the police, gendarmerie and prison are still in the hands of the New Forces and, as the following example demonstrates, they are not ready to surrender their position.

Due to personal rivalries and disagreements, the New Forces' warden of the prison in Man was put under arrest by the acting zone commander. He was kept in custody at the gendarmerie, next to the prison. At the time the court had just reopened and the first magistrates had come back. Although the former warden was not able to leave the gendarmerie, he was still allowed to have his mobile phone on him and to make calls. However, when he called the magistrates to enquire about when they would take over their full duties – also over the prison and its occupants – this did not please the commanders, so they took his mobile phone from him, locked him in prison (his former place of work) and prohibited visits. For the FN, he had gone too far by calling upon the official justice system. The New Forces commanders asserted their position, their domain, and the consequences of interfering in what they consider their rightful affairs.

Power-sharing has led to a situation in which there is a heterogeneous plurality of authorities or power holders present in the local arena who hold a fragile power balance today: remnants of the decentralised state administration, the New Forces, international peacekeepers, government-appointed corps of prefects and, most recently, policemen and gendarmes from the mixed units. Each group is under a different command which at first gives the impression of a patchwork-like structure. The actors' impact on the lives of the population, however, varies significantly. From this perspective, the real force in zone 6 are the ex-rebels. Decisive is what they do. The post-conflict order has not “two heads” (ICG 2009: 12); I would argue that there is one dominant head, the FN, and two further heads, the state administration and the international peacekeepers.

## Conclusion

This article has described power-sharing arrangements in the local arena of a rebel-held, post-war society. The first example dealt with the Linas Marcoussis agreement at an early time of the conflict. Whereas the power-sharing provisions in the peace agreement certainly were able to calm the situation in general, they were unable to address pressing needs for security at the local level. This was not a time of power-sharing at the local level, but rather the coercive establishment of control under a single command. The initiative to restore order and predictability here came from the Ivorian rebels themselves, which was an important complement to the peace agreement at the national level.

In my second example, I looked at local, bottom-up forms of power-sharing that are unrelated to national power-sharing. Whereas the civilian population is often excluded from peace negotiation tables (Mehler 2008: 6), it is they who initiate talks in the first place in order to improve concrete situations. Those who negotiate are respected insiders and maintain good relationships with the power-holders. It is power-sharing between unequal partners, between armed and non-armed actors. Respect for each others' positions and knowing one's limits provide the basis and trust that makes power-sharing possible. Last but not least, there is no neutral, third party guarantor present in the local arena to watch over these informal arrangements.

The implementation of the national power-sharing provisions of the Ouagadougou Peace Accord brought about a need for territorial power-sharing at the local level in 2007. For the first time, power was directly shared between the former direct enemies, the rebel forces and the state. The way power is shared is decided at the national level. The practice at the local level shows that the New Forces are in control and tolerate the presence of the state personnel as long as they keep to their limited space of action which is mainly identification in preparation for the elections.

The examples have shown that Côte d'Ivoire is moving very gradually and carefully towards peace. Although the prefects have been redeployed and received their administrative powers, no ground-breaking changes had taken place at the local level by the end of 2009. The big question at the moment is whether the implementation of the Ouagadougou Peace Accord is just taking a bit longer than initially planned or whether the country will fall back into violence. Nevertheless, it is an important sign that the prefects can live side by side and start working towards normalcy with the New Forces still in place. It requires trust on the side of the prefects to offer themselves without a protection force *in situ* to their former opponents. On the other hand, power-sharing seems to have a rather questionable long-term effect, because it remains a problematic sign for civilian solutions to conflicts that the state works with ex-rebels as security providers.

The benefits of peace agreements, including power-sharing arrangements, arrive at the local level last, due to the fact that it is a top-down process. However, the local arena has its own agency to address immediate needs. Local forms of power-sharing provide direct and quick solutions. In local power-sharing arrangements, violent actors are socialised into working together with civilian actors, and have to step back and compromise (Jarstad 2008: 106). With their local forms of power-sharing initiatives, local people help to re-integrate violent actors into administrative structures governed by civilian rules. Arguing normatively in favour of the returning State, one

might conclude that these local forms of power-sharing prepare the ground for the implementation of top-down peace agreements. However, if we take this a step further, beyond a mere restoration of the State, we might argue for a new take on post-conflict politics. We may take these local forms of power-sharing and political legitimacy as building blocks for future hybrid modes of governance.

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### **Machtteilung auf lokaler Ebene: Man – eine von Rebellen kontrollierte Stadt im Westen der Côte d'Ivoire**

**Zusammenfassung:** Im Allgemeinen werden Friedensabkommen, die Machtteilungsklauseln vorsehen, im nationalen Rahmen analysiert. Der vorliegende Beitrag vermittelt Einsicht in die praktische Wirkung solcher Klauseln in lokalem Rahmen, und zwar in der Stadt Man im Westen der Côte d'Ivoire. Untersucht wird, wodurch in der umliegenden Region ein Wandel hin zum Frieden erreicht werden konnte. Es werden lokale Formen der Machtteilung zwischen den führenden Persönlichkeiten lokaler Gemeinschaften und den Rebellen ermittelt, die ein komplexes Herrschafts- und Steuersystem in den von ihnen besetzten Gebieten eingerichtet haben. Zudem wird die Durchführung einer territorialen Machtteilungsregelung untersucht, die auf nationaler Ebene als Bestandteil des Friedensabkommens zwischen den Kriegsgegnern ausgehandelt worden war: die Wiedereinsetzung der staatlichen Verwaltung in den von den Rebellen gehaltenen Gebieten des Landes. Das ethnographische Material, auf dem der Artikel basiert, belegt, dass Akteure auf lokaler Ebene ihre eigenen Strategien haben, drängende Bedürfnisse anzugehen, und dass sie eine deutlich aktivere Rolle bei der Schaffung von Frieden spielen, als gewöhnlich anerkannt wird.

**Schlagwörter:** Côte d'Ivoire; Machtteilung; Nachkonfliktphase; Kommunalpolitik