Africa

Spectrum

Insurgent Nationalism: Political Imagination and Rupture in Côte d'Ivoire

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Abstract: Non-separatist insurgents unable to overthrow a sitting government often face a problem successful rebellions can avoid: They are not the only players who can claim to be acting on behalf of the nation. They will have to imagine the nation in a new way that distinguishes them from the older, established nationalism usually promoted by the existing government. This new nationalism aims to legitimise their actions, but first and foremost it has to be attractive to the population in the region under insurgent control and later to others as well. Each camp, the government and the insurgent side, articulates its understanding of the nation to the other side. In the process, both sides often also adopt different forms of imagination to render the specifics of their nationalism more visible to their followers as well as to partisans in the other camp. This article analyses this political articulation by taking Côte d'Ivoire as an example.

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Despite widespread talk of failing states in Africa, the deficiency of their administrations and the precarious statehood that they engender, most countries on the continent still profit from strong feelings of nationalism. Most rebel movements in Africa do not aspire to secession (Englebert 2009); they aim to oust incumbent presidents rather than to completely change the political regime (see the recent history of, for example, the Central African Republic or the Democratic Republic of the Congo). When they succeed, they can and often do adopt the nationalistic rhetoric of their predecessors. When they fail and become rebel movements controlling only part of the country, they find themselves in an uncomfortable situation (Clapham 1998), since they cannot simply repeat the message of their adversaries and are forced to develop an alternative view of the nation. How such insurgent nationalisms emerge and how rebels dissociate their views from those of other actors, in particular the sitting government, is the subject of this article.[1]

Insurgents have to address two sides when they formulate their vision of the nation: One is the sitting government and its (il)legitimate claims to the nation. The other is the populace under rebel domination, which often shares other images of what the nation is or what it ought to be. All actors, politicians and militaries loyal to the legal government, as well as insurgents, make use of such images of the nation in the process of political articulation, deliberately trying to impose their views as the dominant ones. The nation as an imagined community is a nodal point in this discursive formation – that is, the centre of the overlapping and simultaneously conflicting claims to nationhood that generate both alliances and antagonisms between partners with diverging interests (Laclau and Mouffe 2001 [1985]: 107-111).

Nationalism is an appealing political concept, even, perhaps particularly, where the nation-state is but a memory of a distant past. Liberia, Sierra Leone and the two Congos all serve as examples: Even after decades of war and an almost complete absence of state governance, the actors still believed in the nation as a central object of politics and in the nation-state as a powerful institution that could resolve their problems. The same holds true for Côte d'Ivoire, where the conflict that had divided the country for almost nine years was immediately forgotten when the national football team played in the African Cup of Nations[2] or the World Cup.[3] The image of one nation represented by one football team was so powerful that for a short time it

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1   Similar processes often unfold in such situations. See, for instance, the relationship of the Tamil Tigers with the central government (Mampilly 2011).

2   E.g., on the occasion of the semi-final in Libreville on 8 February 2012, when Côte d'Ivoire beat neighbouring Mali 1-0.

3   E.g., when Côte d'Ivoire drew 0-0 with Portugal on 15 June 2010. Portugal was the overwhelming favourite to win.

brought the political debates to an end. Imagined as one community, Côte d'Ivoire's football team in its orange shirts, with the national logo on the chest, was a sign of the nation's continuance that so many longed for. Mental images translate into visible pictures, and visible pictures feed into the political imaginary of a society. Political interests and claims are articulated through these images, and the actors often identify with such interests and claims more through visible pictures than through verbal statements.

Surprisingly, this interaction between visible and verbal references to the nation has not attracted thorough scholarly attention. Art historians, who are experts on pictures and their use, seldom publish on the political imageries of postcolonial nations.[4] Political scientists also rarely engage in such analyses.[5] Benedict Anderson's excellent and seminal book on nations as "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983 [2006]) is almost entirely silent on the significance of pictures and images, despite its title. Its focus is words and discourse. And anthropologists sometimes seem to forget that the political imagination also produces images, not only narratives (see, for example, Comaroff and Comaroff 1999). In political theory, the works of Charles Taylor (2004) and, in particular, Cornelius Castoriadis (1975 [1998]) have influenced reflections on imagination. However, their impact on empirical studies, in particular in anthropology, has been limited. This contribution thus seeks to outline what such an interdisciplinary approach to political imagination – an approach that recognises the significance of the visible *and* the legible – might look like. It does so by taking Côte d'Ivoire under rebel domination as an example.

Image and Imagination

Much of the literature on political imagination makes use of the notion of imagination in a rather unspecific, intuitive way. Most publications focus more on the content of imagination – for instance, political ideas and agendas – than on imagination itself. As a distinct dimension of social practice and as a concept in social theory, imagination is almost totally absent in an-

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4   There is, however, a considerable body of literature on the use of pictures and images in Western history. See, among others, Fulcher 1987, Clark 1997, Howarth 1997, Groys 2008, Hinderliter et al. 2009.

5   See Kertzer 1989, Mampilly 2011 as notable exceptions and Simone 1994 as one of the few studies on Africa. Hayward and Dumbuya (1983) and more generally Edelman (1985) adopted a similar perspective and looked more at "symbols", which would not fit here, as symbols imply that there is a fixed meaning while the case studied here shows that such fixed meanings do not exist.

thropological debate.[6] At times, it is subsumed under the Weberian concept of legitimacy, which certainly has an imaginative dimension, as the dominated populace usually has some normative understanding of what domination should look like. However, Heinrich Popitz's first element of "basic legitimacy" – that is, the power to harm as a source of superior force[7] – shows that legitimacy does not necessarily imply a normatively imagined political order. Vice versa, the imagination of the nation as a community, as a social order of how its members will want to live together, does not necessarily affect the basic legitimacy of state domination.

There is often a remarkable distance between the state as an organisation and imaginaries of the nation: The images that imagination as a social practice engenders may differ significantly from what people have to live day in and day out. It would be short-sighted to label these images of how social cohesion should be produced, lived and renewed within the nation as an ideal form of state. The nation is an imagined community, though not necessarily a state.

A comprehensive grasp of imagination as a practice that produces collective images may not be necessary to work on understanding political transformation *per se*, but it is useful to sharpen one's comprehension of imagination in order to articulate more clearly what this process is about and how it affects the political. I will therefore discuss imagination[8] more generally before using it as a concept to analyse nationalism and its transformation during the rebellion in Côte d'Ivoire.

In classical philosophy, imagination is usually thought of as the counterpart of memory. In his "Treatise of Human Nature", David Hume (1739–1740 [2003: 6-7]) wrote that imagination is the faculty that allows us to bring "a perfect idea" to mind. Hume's pairing of memory and imagination is characterised by greater vivacity on the part of memory and more freedom from "original impressions" on the part of imagination. He privileges memory because it links actors to the "original" experience and generates ideas that build on "reality". For Hume, imagination is able to transpose and change the ideas we have in mind. This distinction mirrors common parlance, which usually assumes that imagination is about imaginary things and events that exist only in human minds. This is, however, a misunder-

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6   In contrast, the literature on social or collective memory is abundant. Notable exceptions are Emirbayer and Mische 1998, who discuss imagination as an essential part of agency, and the special issue of the *Irish Journal of Anthropology* (McLean and Coleman 2007).

7   Popitz 1992. See also von Trotha (1994a,b) whose concept of basic legitimacy builds extensively on Popitz.

8   I elaborate the concept of imagination more fully in Förster (2013).

standing. Imagination is needed to anticipate the future or, from a phenomenological perspective, that which could become real – in short, what we as humans could experience in another circumstance. That circumstance could lie in the future, in the past or in a different social or physical space. For Hume, imagination has political significance in that the ideas it engenders may inform the goals that actors seek to achieve.

As a faculty of mind, imagination is an essential part of human agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). If we were not able to imagine alternatives to our present lives, we would have no reason to act or to engage in any project to change our lives. We would simply react to stimuli from without. What we have in mind when we imagine is something Hume calls an "idea": an entity in our thinking, a mental object. An image as mental object is characterised by some degree of continuity and coherence. These characteristics of images are the product of figurative thinking.[9] Therefore, imagination has two facets: the practice of *imagining* and the *image* that it produces. I use imagination to cover both imagining and image. In rough terms, imagination can then be understood as the production of images. In more philosophical terms, one could distinguish an act-phase from an object-phase of imagination (Casey 1976 [2000: 40-60]).

Imagination can be a purely individual activity, but the more we consider possible examples, the more we become aware of the deeply social character of imagining as practice and the image as object. We share ideas and mental images of what, for instance, a social order should look like. Such shared images often inform powerful political movements and motivate their members to become activists. Images are also communicated: Charismatic leaders disseminate their images of an alternative social order among their followers, who would then adopt them and make them their own. Images may grow out of unstructured interactions: Images of Europe as a "greener pasture" are so widespread in Africa that no campaign has been able to prevent Africans from leaving their homes on what Western politicians call an unsafe journey towards a precarious labour market.

Before analysing the two aspects of imagination more closely from an anthropological perspective, a word on images as mental objects will help to clarify what imagination is about. One may think of imagined, mental objects as images *tout court*, but there is more to it. The continuity and coher-

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9   One may read this sentence as a statement on how meaning is created – that is, more through figuration than through narration. The most prominent advocate of this anthropological presumption is Wittgenstein, whose understanding of image rests on five pillars (Wittgenstein 1922: 4.01-4.022). The first three, which are relevant here, can be summarised as follows: An image aims to be a model *of* reality by projecting its own logical structure *onto* that reality.

ence that Hume mentions is perhaps better framed as a specific trait of fig-
urative thought. For him, imagined objects have a vague form because they
are but distant representations of former "impressions". When we imagine,
be it as individuals or as a group, we, at least in some degree, *create* the rec-
ognisable form that later helps us to remember or to plan for the future, a
fact that Hume ignores. John Locke is more helpful here. He claims that
ideas as mental images are an important instrument of understanding be-
cause they bestow form upon sensory impressions (Locke 1689 [2008], book
IV, ch. I.9: V). Images are hence independent mental objects, and not
merely mirrors of sensory impressions. Understanding images in this sense
reveals how they may work in a setting that is, say, characterised by frag-
mentation and anomy: A coherent image overcomes the bounds of mere
representation by endowing the object, be it existent or not, with recognisa-
ble features. The longing for a better social world may then find expression
in a mental image that gives scattered experience a form. The image would
provide a key to understanding a complex situation that an individual would
otherwise perceive as confusing. In everyday language, it would simply help
in understanding a situation, but from a phenomenological perspective, an
image actually creates that situation because its form would not be percepti-
ble without it. As such, images are intentional. By providing significant form
to a contingent situation, they serve to orient the actors' agency. Images are
intentional objects in the sense that they orient actors toward specific con-
tent – for instance, an alternative social, moral or religious order that would
overcome a situation of anomy and fragmentation. Images are useful be-
cause they have the power to demonstrate, to organise experience, to figure
out what a situation is about. Put briefly, producing images means to show.[10]

   This short discussion confirms that there are good reasons[11] to adopt
the heuristic distinction introduced by W. J. T. Mitchell in his seminal work
on "picture theory" (Mitchell 1995): Pictures are material objects, images are
mental objects. In the sense that Mitchell suggests, one could understand
image as a mental (re)presentation of something that would or could also be
visible as a material object – that is, as a *picture*. But what does "intentional
object" then mean? Would this understanding not lead back to Hume and
his conception of imagination as a weaker mirror or perception? Intention-
ality, however, creates independent objects that are more indebted to actors'
need for orientation through form, through which the actors acquire means

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10   For a general, though individualistic, perspective, see Boehm 2007.
11   There are more reasons than those discussed here. The counterargument claims
     that the distinction between picture and image is heuristic only because the two
     merge in everyday experience. For a thorough discussion, see Belting 2011; Boehm
     2007; Boehm et al. 2010; Mitchell 2005.

of articulation. But intentionality is not necessarily tied to an individual. If images can be social and cultural objects, they can also be *collective* intentional objects. This raises a set of complex questions: Will images become collective objects when they are communicated? Will images retain their mental character or will they have to become pictures when they are communicated? Or are there social practices that directly generate collective images? And how would the actors articulate their views through them?

The easy answer is that collective images are but the sum of individual images that the actors have in mind. Such summative accounts presume that all or most actors will adopt such collective images if they belong to one culture – that is, if they as members of that culture know other members will have the same images in mind.[12] In the end, this is a conception of images as givens that simply belong to an existing culture as common knowledge or, perhaps more fashionably, as meaningful text.[13] This does not answer the questions raised above. One needs to look more closely at both facets of imagination: First, one has to analyse imagining as a social practice that either *evokes* collective intentionality toward images or *creates* images as collective intentional objects. The first practice would bring existing images together, perhaps adapt one or the other, and hence generate an imagery of more or less closely related images. This leads to a sharing of images, while the second practice generates joint images. Consequently, one needs to learn more about *how* actors as individuals or as groups relate to images when they engage in such social practices.

This question points to the problem of the emergence of shared intentionality. Images motivate actors to engage in collective action such as joint protests against an oppressor or against rules and regulations that, according to the interpretation suggested by the image, damage the wellbeing of all. In such cases, imagination would transform individual experience into collective experience by causing an image to proliferate among those who participate in the activity. How that is done is an open question that only empirical research can answer. But the reverse happens, too: Social practice may create shared intentionality and the intentional objects that actors then perceive as images. If imagination grows out of such sociality, we could rightly call it a distinct dimension of social practice. Imagination is then best understood as a social practice that creates images as collective intentional objects. Such

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12   Margaret Gilbert (1989) rightly criticises such accounts in her brilliant book on social facts.

13   The Geertzian understanding of culture as meaningful text (Geertz 1973) does not clarify why and how individuals accept and reproduce that common knowledge – it just takes this for granted. I recast the social philosophical account by Quinton (1975) and its critique by Gilbert (1987, 1996) in more anthropological terms.

images are as real as the intentional objects of individuals. How that social practice differs from the individual practice is again a question that calls for careful, empirically based analysis. Anthropologists may help to find an answer because of their thick participation in the social practices of others.

The Ivoirian Crisis: A Sketch

Until the end of the 1990s, Côte d'Ivoire seemed to be one of the most stable states of sub-Saharan Africa. Under the regime of the first president and founding father of the postcolonial nation, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the country experienced a period of relative prosperity. By the end of the 1970s, *le miracle ivoirien* – more or less steady economic growth, a stable social and political order and close ties to the former colonial power France – had become proverbial in West Africa and a widely accepted image of the country, willingly promoted by Ivoirian media. While its neighbours went through a seemingly endless series of crises, the population of the Côte d'Ivoire enjoyed the privilege of belonging to one of the very few economically promising African countries, attracting millions of migrants from the entire sub-region and in particular from its Sahelian neighbours to the north, who accounted for roughly one quarter of the populace by the end of the 1990s (Le Pape and Vidal 2002).

In the 1980s, the sharp decrease in raw commodity prices, in particular coffee and cocoa, brought the Ivoirian miracle to an end, though not yet the imaginary of an exceptionally successful African state. Together with the "winds of change" that blew over Africa after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the economic downturn pushed President Houphouët-Boigny, then already about 90 years old, to admit opposition parties and to allow other candidates to run for president in the elections of 1990.[14] After his death in 1993, his successor Henri Konan Bédié tried to occupy the same dominant position in Ivoirian politics. To compensate for his personal weakness, he increasingly resorted to political repression. He adopted a policy of outright political discrimination and prevented his main rival, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, who came from the north of the country and was known as ADO in Côte d'Ivoire, from participating in the presidential elections.[15]

Bédié underpinned his politics of exclusion by adopting and actively promoting the notorious idea of *ivoirité*, literally "Ivoirity" or "Ivoirianness".[16]

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14   On Félix Houphouët-Boigny's life, see Grah Mel 2003, Diégou 2000, Koné 2003.
15   Poamé (2007) and McGovern (2011: 15-30) provide overviews of the Ivoirian crisis.
16   On *ivoirité*, see the collection of primary texts in *Ethics*, 1, 1996, and, from a scholarly point of view, Dozon 2000 and Marshall-Fratani 2006.

As a cultural idea, the term was first used by Ivoirian intellectuals in the 1970s. It remained virtually unknown to ordinary citizens until the mid-1990s, when Bédié encouraged the elaboration of the idea into a political concept that could help to redefine nationhood and citizenship in the face of the multiethnic heritage of the country and the growing number of immigrants. *Ivoirité* drew a highly normative image of the nation, defined as a uniform, undivided community with only one culture and one history. The consistency of the idea of *ivoirité* excluded all parts of the population that did not meet the conditions of what was imagined as the core of the nation: local origin, Christianity and a sort of Ivoirian Western modernity.[17] The notion of a cultural "Ivoirianness" was penetrated by more and more nationalist ideas, which increasingly built on populist xenophobia. *Ivoirité* was cast in a set of legal texts and administrative regulations. The most prominent was a restrictive new *code électoral*, which stipulated that a candidate for the presidential elections had to be born of Ivoirian parents who were themselves Ivoirians by birth.[18] It targeted one person, the leader of the opposition party, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, who was suspected of originating in Burkina Faso.

Although Bédié's politics of exclusion provoked protests among the members and supporters of the two big opposition parties, they did not deeply affect daily life until they turned into a practice that informed most administrative procedures. Citizens of "dubious nationality" faced outright discrimination. Controls at roadblocks were tougher and bribes were higher for those who bore a family name considered to be of foreign origin. This particularly affected those with the Manding names, which are widespread in Côte d'Ivoire, as they are in Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso. "Muslim" costume was another indicator that could lead to harassment, because "true Ivoirians" had to be Christians. Still worse was the carrying of a foreign identity card. In particular, citizens of Burkina Faso were targeted: In the fertile centre and west of the country, where many of them had settled as cocoa and coffee planters, they were repeatedly evicted and their holdings illegally expropriated. At the time, says a 41-year-old refugee,

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17   It is sometimes argued that *ivoirité* more or less reproduces a disjuncture inherited from precolonial and colonial times, because ethnic groups in the southern half of the country would not overlap, as the peoples in the north do, with groups in neighbouring Ghana and Liberia. However, all the bigger groups in the south do so: Akan is spoken and understood on both sides of the Ghanaian–Ivoirian border, and Kru also live in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

18   Ouattara could not provide sufficient evidence as he lacked the birth certificates of his parents. His candidature was rejected in 1995 and in 2000 and in turn, his party boycotted the elections.

you tried to speak with a pure Ivoirian accent, even if it was bad French and you knew how to speak properly. Some learned *nouchi*[19] for that purpose only. You tried to avoid all encounters with civil servants, and if you couldn't, you made sure that you had enough money in your pocket – just to bribe him so that he would not insist on seeing your identity card. Travelling was terrible. You were sitting on the bus, and then the policeman came in and said that everybody should raise his identity card up in the air. The policeman went slowly down the aisle and if he discovered that you couldn't produce one and he suspected that you were not an Ivoirian citizen, he took you out of the bus and made you wait beneath the trees […]. You could spend half a day or longer there before you were allowed to move. Of course, the bus had left by then. You had to find another and you had to buy a new ticket – in addition to what he had made you pay. My god, how much time I have spent there! In the end, you always thought twice before you decided to travel. And it was worse for young girls! They sometimes had to offer their bodies before the policemen would let them go.[20]

By the end of the 1990s, *ivoirité* had become a callous image, an ethno-nationalist ideology that led to the marginalisation of the entire population in the northern half of the country. Later, in 2002, resistance to it became one of the driving forces of the rebellion that constantly tried to produce counter-images of and for the nation as an inclusive society where everybody could find a place (Förster 2012b), while *ivoirité* redefined the postcolonial politics of belonging in terms of ethnicity, autochthony and religion (Arnaut 2008b). This image stood in stark contrast to the official politics of Houphouët-Boigny, who had always labelled Côte d'Ivoire *le pays de l'accueil*, "the country of welcome". However, by the end of the 1990s, day-to-day nationalism had become exclusive, if not a political instrument of oppression. Its discursive formation did not play a role as long as it remained an affair of the elites, but when *ivoirité* turned into an administrative practice, it questioned the foundations of the postcolonial nation.

At the same time, profound problems of governance became visible. Many regions, in particular the rural areas and the disadvantaged quarters of major cities, were no longer under the control of the increasingly corrupt

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19   *Nouchi* is a type of slang spoken in popular neighbourhoods in almost all the bigger cities of Côte d'Ivoire. It is mainly based on a simplified French grammar and vocabulary, but includes words from various local languages.

20   A refugee who left the west of Côte d'Ivoire with one of the last buses in September 2002. He did not want his identity to be published (pers. comm. 14 January 2007, my translation).

police and gendarmerie. In the late 1990s, large areas of the interior turned into unruly fiefdoms that had to rely more or less on self-organisation. On Christmas Eve 1999, rising political tensions and economic decay led to the first coup in the history of Côte d'Ivoire. General Robert Guéï, soon nick-named "Father Christmas", claimed to (re)establish "true democracy" through "free and fair elections" but then took refuge in the same ethno-nationalist ideology. One of the main opposition parties[21] boycotted the elections of October 2000. In the confusing turmoil of post-election violence, Laurent Gbagbo of the Front Populaire Ivoirien, FPI, was declared the winner of the elections by the Supreme Court. Though he had fought against *ivoirité* ideology before, he soon made use of the same strategies of exclusion as his two prede-cessors. He continued to marginalise the population of the north and increas-ingly also of the west of the country, the local stronghold of General Guéï.

On 19 September 2002, insurgent soldiers, supported by allies from Burkina Faso and possibly Liberia, tried to capture the main cities of the country, including Abidjan. While they failed to overthrow the Gbagbo administration in the south, they were able to take control of the centre, the north and the west of the country. Only after the partial failure of the coup, they founded two, later three political movements.[22] In 2004, the three movements created an umbrella organisation named the Forces Nouvelles, FN, with an armed wing, the Forces Armées des Forces Nouvelles, FAFN. As a united front, they articulated their political ideas immediately against the ideology of the Gbagbo regime and claimed a country and a nation that would accommodate everyone living on its soil.

After an initial period of extreme uncertainty, the rebels, who saw themselves as "children of the soil", increasingly became aware of the urgent need to improve the situation for the ordinary population and to establish some sort of governance. They gradually established services and offices that guaranteed a more or less normal life. Some of these were direct con-tinuations of the former administrative structures, but others were new and grew out of the continuous exchange with the population and also with international NGOs and the UN peacekeeping forces that had been dis-patched to the major cities in the rebel zone in 2003 and 2004.[23] Statehood as a practice survived the end of state administration. In some fields, rebel governance was even more bureaucratic than the state's governance had

21   The Rassemblement des Republicains, RDR, an offshoot of the former single political party, the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, PDCI. See above footnote 18.

22   The Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire, MPCI, in the north, the Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix, MJP, and the Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest, MPIGO, both in the west of Côte d'Ivoire.

23   Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire, ONUCI.

ever been. In others, habitual practices were continued without any institutional support (Förster 2012a).

After the signing of the Ouagadougou peace treaty on 4 March 2007, it was planned to bring state administration back to the rebel-held parts of the country. However, the process proved much slower than foreseen and did not lead to the mere re-establishment of state authority. Until the fall of the Gbagbo regime in the south in April 2011 – and in some aspects even after that date – a new kind of parallelism between state and non-state institutions, practising different modes of governance, emerged. This phenomenon directly relates to the interaction between rebels and civilians in this part of the country and the modes of governance that had emerged since 2002.

Performing the Second Independence

In that context of violence and political competition, nationalism was performed at many levels and by both sides.[24] The settings in the north and in the south differed from each other, but were successful in their own ways. Indeed, the performances of nationalism in the two parts of the country were intrinsically related, as each side deliberately wanted to articulate its difference. In the north, the rebels were largely unprepared and had not foreseen the need to establish some sort of sustainable domination. This was a practical and a political challenge. First, they could not fall back on the existing state apparatus. Most of the civil servants had left immediately after the coup, and those who fled the south because they were of northern origin

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24 The following ethnographic descriptions are based on fieldwork conducted in various parts of Côte d'Ivoire between 2006 and 2012. As it is not always easy to conduct ethnographic research in conflict zones (see Nordstrom and Robben 1996), data sources for the two halves of Côte d'Ivoire are different. While the data from the north build on direct observations and to a considerable extent on participation in ceremonial events and daily urban life under rebel domination, the data from battlegrounds and the south stem mainly from interviews with returnees and with other witnesses (for instance, bystanders, comrades in arms, friends and relatives). These accounts were recorded over a period of approximately three months and later compared to footage that was or still is available on the Internet (hence the frequent references to websites). One of the major difficulties was that certain actors on both sides aimed to exploit the ethnographer as an intermediary who would spread their own perspectives to the wider world. They often became suspicious when they learned that I would also talk to people from "the other side". I sometimes had to choose between two unsatisfactory options: a) talking to someone from the other side and making former partners so suspicious that they would no longer talk to me, or b) not talking to the others and obliterating that other perspective. Research in such a conflict setting is often a compromise between ideal standards of empirical research and what is feasible on the ground.

were unfamiliar with the local settings. Second, there was hardly any political agenda apart from the will to overthrow President Gbagbo. Third, and most prominently, they could borrow from neither the older, Houphouëtist national propaganda nor the more recent nationalist ideology of *ivoirité*. The former was too closely associated with the former unity party, the PDCI-RDA of deposed President Bédié, while the latter was out of question. Even the Rassemblement des Republicains (RDR) of Ouattara, which would have been a natural ally, did not want to get too close to the rebels, because Ouattara rightly assumed this would discredit his future candidature at the international level. The nation and nationalism had its history, but the double dislocation[25] by *ivoirité* and the failed insurgency left it open to all sorts of enunciations, experiments and new forms of articulation. This double dislocation opened a social space that fostered the emergence of new forms of political imagination.

On the southern side, the reaction to the dislocation was bold and direct. Gbagbo and his FPI party strengthened their attempts to build a "truly" Ivoirian nation: an image of a fully independent Côte d'Ivoire advanced by the "good" intentions of "true" Ivoirians who would fight "as one" for the "second independence" of "our Côte d'Ivoire".[26] At first sight, the events that followed 19 September were a simple intensification of the xenophobic imaginary that already existed and that was subsequently staged in the violent acts against migrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and finally against French citizens living in Côte d'Ivoire.[27] Such an interpretation, however, falls short of the performative character of Ivoirian (ultra)nationalism. It reduces agency to the execution of cognitive plans that actors already have in mind. I argue against such an understanding by separately outlining the political rhetoric as narrative and the dramatic performances that (re)produced the image of a finally independent nation.

At a discursive level, Gbagbo developed a fairly stable narrative that denounced the rebellion as foreign intervention. His interpretation probably rightly asserted that Burkina Faso and its president, Blaise Compaoré, were accomplices of the insurgents. However, by embedding this point in the wider context of neocolonial struggles, he insinuated that the leaders behind

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25 I use the term dislocation in the sense of post-Marxist theory – that is, as invalidation of existing patterns of articulation; see Laclau 1996; Laclau and Mouffe 2001 [1985].

26 On the new vocabulary as a political instrument, see Gadou 2009.

27 McGovern (2011: 127-36) questions such interpretations of the most violent period in Ivoirian history, but then falls into the same trap when he posits that "actors like Blé Goudé appear to be carried away by their own rhetoric" (2011: 128).

the insurgency[28] came from the neighbouring country and that the rebellion was ultimately instigated by France, because, according to him, a colonial power would never tolerate a "really independent" African leader such as himself. Therefore, he claimed, it had failed to respect the amity treaty, which stipulated that both parties would defend each other in case of outside aggression. The Ivoirian nation, he said, would not tolerate such a neocolonial intervention. He would lead Côte d'Ivoire to its second, its "true" independence. His narrative embedded these elements in a particular figuration, which provided the model for interpreting recent events as an outcome of (neo)colonial history.

As a narrative, Gbagbo's interpretation had had its effects on intellectuals (Atchoua N'Guessan 2008; Arnaut 2008b). However, a much more influential forum for the new nationalism developed elsewhere, and it had a completely different, performative character. It involved the Young Patriots,[29] an institution that became notorious for its assaults on other citizens as well as foreigners and for its violations of human rights.[30] They served as a conduit for the performance of nationalism on the southern side of the front that had divided the country since 2002. The Young Patriots brought several youth organisations together, all in favour of Gbagbo and his party.[31] As a political movement, however, it was much more than a mere annex of the FPI. Charles Blé Goudé, a former speaker of the Ivoirian student association, founded it on 26 September 2002 as a reaction to the insurgency one week earlier.[32] Soon nicknamed *général des patriotes*, he transformed the movement into a militia of the president's party.

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28   There were many early hints that Burkina Faso's army provided weapons to the insurgents. See, among many other sources, Doudou 2002.
29   The full name clearly reveals the nationalist agenda of the Young Patriots: Alliance des Jeunes Patriotes pour le Sursaut National – "Alliance of Young Patriots for National Survival". On the movement in general, see Banégas 2007, Arnaut 2008a, McGovern 2011.
30   See various reports of Human Rights Watch accessible at <www.hrw.org/fr/africa/cote-divoire>.
31   Among them the Coordination des Jeunes Patriotes, COJEP, the association's main precursor, also founded by Blé Goudé; la Sorbonne, a discussion circle of FPI students; and a big chunk of the Fédération des étudiants et scolaires de Côte d'Ivoire, FESCI. The latter, which was the official students' organisation of the country in the 1990s, had also been the home organisation of Guillaume Kigbafori Soro, who later became the civil spokesperson of the rebellion and finally prime minister under Gbagbo and Ouattara (cf., Konaté 2003). The Young Patriots were later joined by the Collectif des mouvements de femmes patriotes (2003), the Sentinelles pour la paix (young girls and women between 15 and 23, also in 2003) and other organisations.
32   Ironically, Blé Goudé had to fly in from Manchester where he was enrolled in an M.A. programme on Conflict Prevention and Mitigation.

The Young Patriots adopted many of the arguments put forward by the president and disseminated them in public discussion and debate. The fight against neocolonialism and for liberty and an independent African nation was central to the organisation's political agenda. It then invited its members to perform the nationalism it promoted. The Young Patriots had to become *un mouvement de combat*, "a combat movement", said Blé Goudé.[33] Under his leadership, the Young Patriots, now Gbagbo's *bataillon de la rue*, organised mass meetings and protests in Abidjan and other parts of the country under Gbagbo's control, using all means of communication, including the Internet. The movement had its own slogans, T-shirts, logo, brochures, and it produced and distributed its own music on CD, including death threats against various French citizens, Nicolas Sarkozy, Barack Obama and Alassane Ouattara: *Meurtre rituel pour Alassane Ouattara*.[34] After the peace talks in Linas-Marcoussis near Paris in January 2003, the Young Patriots destroyed the French Cultural Centre. The most brutal episodes in the Young Patriots' short history were probably the extremely violent aggression against French citizens, other foreigners and international institutions in Abidjan in November 2004 and later, in 2006, their attacks on ONUCI offices in Abidjan and Guiglo in the west.[35]

The meetings and demonstrations of the Young Patriots had a highly seductive character. Many resembled sport and dance events, with continuous chanting and rhythmic parading.[36] The young men and women were often accompanied by drums and later vuvuzelas; some held Ivoirian flags in their hands while others wore the same orange tricots as the national football team or T-shirts with emblems of the Young Patriots, and still others wore no shirts at all.[37] Some smeared red oil or paint on the upper parts of their uncovered bodies, which suggested that they were covered in blood. Yet others tied red ribbons around their heads, painted their faces, some in the colours of the Ivoirian *tricolore*, some in white or orange. Sometimes, they brought huge loudspeakers to the places where they assembled, playing

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33 The term was still quoted on the occasion of his arrest in January 2013, see <http://yawowusu.blogspot.ch/2013/01/ble-goude-arrested.html> (2 July 2013).

34 *Jeune Afrique*, Les bataillons de la rue, 22 November 2004, online: <www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/LIN21114lesbaeurale0/> (12 December 2004).

35 See the report by the Worldwide Human Rights Movement of 30 November 2004, online: <www.fidh.org/IMG/article_PDF/article_a2079.pdf> (12. December 2004), and various reports at <www.interet-general.info/spip.php?article3178> (20. December 2004).

36 See, for instance, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gpRPIUPIk4> (15. March 2011). Cf., Arnaut 2008a.

37 The naked breast or upper part of the body is a sign of ritual purity in many parts of Côte d'Ivoire.

Zouglou, the music of the young urban protesters of the 1990s.[38] Indeed, the Young Patriots adopted and adapted many elements from urban youth culture. An eyewitness account shows how the participants were sucked into the performance:

> I was in Yamoussoukro where I tried to get across the frontline into the north. It was too risky to stay because I have a Muslim name, and you know what that meant at the time. So I thought it best to participate in the Young Patriots' demonstration that took place along the main road – just to pretend that I was one of them. It was really something I had never seen before! There were thousands and thousands of young people, all shouting that the French should go. You couldn't see where the demonstration started and where it ended. It seemed that the entire city was out in the street; they were just coming out of all compounds and joined those who were already marching. Everybody shouted "Down with the French" and "Don't let them escape", and things like that. Buses were standing in the middle of the crowd, they couldn't move, and there were men climbing on the top, waving their arms, shouting at the others around them, always the same slogans. "Go and get Ouattara! Bring 'im here; he'll see!" and "Gbagbo or nothing!" And then you suddenly hear yourself shouting, too. You don't notice, but then you do it. You're running together with them down the road, and you're screaming, just screaming. And the longer you do it, the more you feel how that creeps up in you, how you just want to do as the others do. In the end, you believe that all that is right.[39]

This looks like an extreme case of seduction perhaps, but one that is revealing and that conforms well to Canetti's brilliant analysis of "crowds and power" (Canetti 1960 [1962]). Joining in the rhythmic performance was essential to many demonstrations by the Young Patriots,[40] including those

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38 On Zouglou as a social phenomenon, see Konaté 2002. The musical style, together with hip hop rhythms, still served as background to songs that demanded the liberation of Gbagbo after the fall of this regime; see <www.youtube.com/watch?v=EucqcDzHvdk&feature=related> (15 July 2012).

39 As I was conducting my fieldwork in the north, I heard few accounts of such demonstrations by the Young Patriots. I quote a man somewhere between about 22 and 24 years old who, for obvious reasons, was reluctant to talk to me and insisted that I never let anyone in the north know that he had participated in such events (pers. comm. 11 January 2007, my translation). For a similar event in 2011, see <www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvI8KYxjq8E> (1 April 2011).

40 A video from the campaign for the presidential election in 2010 first shows Laurent Gbagbo dancing the Zouglou and then Charles Blé Goudé dancing on a pickup truck and animating a crowd of followers, online: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzsUxYjHmt0&feature=related> (11 December 2011).

that later turned violent. On one hand, Charles Blé Goudé, who orchestrated many of these demonstrations, was certainly a demagogue, if not a dangerous agitator, who should be held accountable for these acts. Political claims were articulated through them, and it is no exaggeration to say that they were organised whenever the Gbagbo regime needed to mobilise the youth on its behalf, in particular when it came under increasing pressure after the lost election of 2010 and during the civil war of 2011. On the other hand, it is clear that these mass demonstrations also worked when Blé Goudé was not present. The key expressions – *Anticolonialisme*, *Deuxième indépendance*, *Sarkozy et Obama assassins* and, of course, *C'est Gbagbo ou rien* – were known by almost everyone who, willingly or not, had participated in such events. As dramatic performances, they very successfully reproduced the image of the only true and undivided nation that would not allow any intrusion from outside, filled with *communitas* in Victor Turner's sense – a community of "complete equality" (Turner 1967: 100). This was a practice of imagination based on collective acts distanced from the cognitive narratives that filled other social spaces. Accordingly, words rarely constituted a narrative on such occasions. Though Blé Goudé gave speeches, he usually deployed rather simple clichés, riddles and sayings that the audience already knew. There were references to Gbagbo's narrative, but rarely did they form a text. What gave his performances more impact was his visible excitement and the fervour of his body language.

What was it then that "crept up" in the young man? First, the demonstrations created strong emotional bonds among participants – even among those critical of the Young Patriots and their political agenda, as the quotation shows. In other words, it created a joint identity and feelings of empowerment, as the following widespread slogan illustrates: *Les jeunes se lèvent en hommes*, "the youths rise up as men" (Banégas 2007). Second, they raised awareness of Gbagbo's imagined nation, what his regime thought of as Africa's "second independence" – an independence that would overcome dependency on foreign aid and France as a colonial power. It linked the experience of the past, of suffering and intervention, to the imagination of a better future, the image of a country and a people that were the masters of their own destiny. The young men and women experienced precisely this, their collective power, when they participated in the demonstrations. Most of them were not aware that they were misused – and the imagination of that second independence is still so strong that many continue to claim it.[41]

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41   See the comments on the speech by Blé Goudé after the fall of the Gbagbo regime, online: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB9NINzDHHU&feature=fvwrel and <www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcoPgXh1Yos> (12 July 2012).

"We Are Serious": The New Nation

The insurgents in the north did not immediately articulate their claims to the nation and a new kind of nationalism. There were more urgent tasks at hand. When the coup failed, the rebels had to secure control over their part of the territory. First, they needed to recruit more soldiers, which proved easier than expected because the rebellion enjoyed considerable support among the population by then. Second, there were internal conflicts to be settled, either by force or by compromise. Third, the rebellion, which had started as a military insurgency, had to build up some sort of civil organisation capable of representing the movement and of negotiating at the national and international level. Last but not least, the insurgents had to establish some sort of governance, as the state administration had collapsed.

What a new nation would look like was a topic that only surfaced with the gradual establishment of rebel governance. Until then, the general populace had other priorities. The first months of fighting had brought the economy to a standstill, and many inhabitants were more or less silently trying to survive. Traders could not access Abidjan and its harbour; markets were closed and the few factories had to close, too. Though the Muslim merchants of Korhogo and Bouaké, the two largest cities under rebel control, were well experienced in regional trade, it took them almost a year to establish regular trade with the ports of Lomé in Togo and Accra in Ghana. They also had to make the rebels understand that they needed some sort of predictable regulation of overland transport.[42] Then, however, the absence of police, gendarmerie and customs became an advantage. Many goods imported from China were far less expensive than in the south. A sort of shopping tourism slowly developed, and by 2006 or 2007 even custom officers from the south were coming north to buy tax-free Chinese motorcycles.

In Korhogo and the Senufo region, the most urgent matters had been settled by 2005 when Fofié Kouakou Martin was appointed *comzone*, commander of Zone 10, which included roughly the former counties of Korhogo and Ferkessedougou. He enjoyed a reputation as a brutal man, but unlike his predecessors, he had an agenda that went beyond mere self-enrichment – though he did not miss a chance to line his own pockets. While he seldom addressed the populace directly, he had pickup trucks with loudspeakers that drove through the city telling the people what he had planned, and there were meetings every Thursday morning in his camp where civilians could plead for a particular service or have a say in urban affairs. To some extent, these meetings replaced the urban council, which was more or less dormant during this

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42   Fees for overland transport were sorted out by their spokesperson and the rebel leader, Förster 2009.

time. Fofié repeatedly claimed that he wanted *apporter de rigueur à la ville*, "to bring rigour to the city". His aim was, he said, "to make Korhogo a nice place to live".[43] That already distinguished him from other *comzones* in the rebel-held part of the country. But he did not engage in long, explanatory public speeches. He wanted, his supporters said, to "work through his acts and achievements" for the city and the county under his control.[44] Arguing the rebels' cause was, they said, the task of Guillaume Soro, the leader of the political wing of the rebel movement and the direct counterpart of Laurent Gbagbo.

Fofié's plans "to develop" the city built on the usual international development discourse, but unlike former mayors, all of whom came from the same family, he insisted that only "delivery" would count: The city should visibly improve, not on paper only. Fofié's means were rarely compatible with those of the rule of law, but the fact that he distanced himself from the former, thoroughly corrupt mayors and their administrations was welcomed by many, in particular the urban youth. Once his position as *comzone* was secured, he invited the elites and the Muslim traders of the city to come up with ideas about what could be done. He put the screws to them, but that was seen as necessary by the youth, who had experienced urban politics as a patrimonial game to which they had no access. Fofié's politics had a double-sided character. On one hand, he deliberately staged his actions against the backdrop of the existing patrimonial networks, in particular the clan of the former mayors, to gain the support of those who had had no chance under the old regime. On the other hand, he insisted that *rigueur* meant something was actually accomplished. Both sides were interwoven with a thread of arbitrariness and, when he deemed it necessary, of violence, too. Fofié urged the rich merchants to clean the streets in front of their shops and houses and to contribute to the maintenance of public squares and buildings, either in kind or in cash. Many traders remember this time as difficult, but at least, they said, "one could see what was done with the money – while you didn't see anything under the old mayor".[45] The rebels levied fees from the owners of market shacks and obliged others to buy the plots on which they had constructed more solid stands. Fofié urged the electric power company to

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43   Interview, *Global Security*, 29 March 2006, some eight months after he was appointed, online: <www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2006/03/mil-060 329-irin05.htm> (15 May 2007).

44   This attitude was also mirrored in a mural on the walls of the Cultural Centre, which he had built. It showed Fofié with a chisel and a hammer in his hands, rebuilding the city under the supervision of ancestors (Förster 2013).

45   Pers. comm. of a wholesale trader in rice, maize and Chinese motorcycles, Korhogo, 14 January 2010.

build a power line to a disadvantaged neighbourhood, and so on and so
forth. All this gained him much legitimacy. Probably even more important
were the regulation of roadblock fees and the provision of security in and
outside the city (Förster 2009). He made clear that criminals would be killed
if they were caught red-handed. Once brought to Fofié's camp, they were
not seen again.[46]

However, Fofié successfully claimed that he, through his acts and not
through discourse, would change the social order and give everybody a fair
chance, as this quotation from a middle-aged man from Korhogo shows:

> You must know that all this was not practised this way before. We were
> always told that "discouragement isn't Ivoirian"[47] – but it was. Oh yes,
> it was. You had no chance to get a job, unless you were a child of a "big
> man". In the administration, you had to pay a one-year salary or even
> more in advance to the public officer who would recruit you. And if
> you couldn't, he would … [just forget you]. If you were poor, you had
> to stay poor […]. You went to see your parents back in the village to
> help you, but they didn't believe you. In the end, they would tell you:
> "I've nothing." And you know it's true. Oh my god, I've eaten ground-
> nuts for days, simply because it was cheaper […]. I was better than my
> classmates, but I had to leave school. I couldn't afford it anymore. And
> if you had a girlfriend, a good-looking girl, then the teacher would bully
> you until you would tell the *go*[48] that you couldn't carry on the relation-
> ship. It ends there, and sometime later you will find that the teacher has
> had her. It was outrageous! Outrageous! I don't mean that it doesn't
> happen anymore – but it has become risky for those who don't behave
> correctly. So you better take care. The commander[49] was right when he
> said that we needed some rigour. We needed it badly, and nobody
> should lie about this. Don't tell me that wrongdoing is normal! If you
> do something fishy now, you have to stand up for yourself.[50] Be a man!
> That's Ivoirian![51]

Fofié wanted to get beyond the image of brutal militia leader, not least because
he had to face the allegations of UN peacekeeping forces. When he granted

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46   Since 6 February 2006, Fofié has been sought for such violations of human rights by
      the United Nations, see <www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8631.doc.htm>
      (30 July 2008).
47   *Découragement n'est pas ivoirien* was a widespread expression under the old regime. The
      French term also covers demoralisation, faintheartedness and despondency.
48   *La go* is a *nouchi* word for a young and good-looking woman.
49   In common parlance, Fofié is usually called by his military title.
50   In the sense of being held accountable.
51   The speaker was about 40 years old, jobless and made the statement in a rather
      heated discussion, 17 January 2008.

interviews to European journalists, he stated his commitment to "development" – a signifier that is, though quite empty, easily accepted by international donors. Unlike his peers, he adopted a cultural and educational policy. In 2006 and 2009, his visions of the city under rebel domination were painted on the walls of the new cultural centre (Förster 2013). Later, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Côte d'Ivoire's independence from France in 2010, he, together with various groups and sponsors, organised a parade and feast that aimed at including all parts of Korhogo's civil society (Förster 2012b). The rebels also supported the big meetings of the hunters' associations, which were as carefully arranged as the independence festivities. Almost all the events the rebels organised followed a schedule that was fixed in advance. In Korhogo, the schedule had to be approved either by the council that the rebel leader had put into place or directly by him if he or his troops were involved. "Fofié could become quite unpleasant", a neighbourhood headman[52] told me, "when something did not work out as planned. He hated the trickeries that politicians are so famous for. Politics are dirty, and he wanted to get things done." The majority of my interlocutors agreed that Fofié's politics were about what he called another, a new and better Ivoirian nation – one that had overcome the politics of exclusion at all levels and also the clientelism and corruption that was related to it. The new Ivoirian nation that he staged was a nation for all citizens, regardless of their origin, their language, religion, wealth or age. Without doubt, it was a beautified image of what the nation should be, but one that proved highly attractive to many in the north, the part of the country that felt excluded from the nation under Gbagbo.

Suffice it to add that this image of a new Ivoirian nation was as imaginary as that on the other, the southern, side. What is more important, however, is that it grew out of a different practice, out of another kind of imagination. The image of the nation Fofié advocated was not based on spontaneous gatherings and participant excitement – it was much more a series of acts and events highlighting different aspects of the image of civil virtues that would characterise the new Ivoirians. Not only was the content, the understanding of what an Ivoirian nation could be, different from the southern version of nationalism – so was the way of imagining itself. In the final section, I argue that this difference of imagining is directly related to how the two parts articulated their political claims.

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52   The headman was about 60 years old and had been in office since 2006.

Spontaneously Controlled

In each half of the country, the formation of nationalism was built on different components. The rhetoric of nationalism was one, but an equally, if not more, important part was social practice – the performance of nationalism. While the first could be perceived and read as text, the second created images – images of what the Ivoirian nation should look like. The first was a narration, a chronologically constructed argument an audience could listen to and that actors as individuals or as groups would eventually quote. The second was a series of performances that worked because they established a relationship to the elements that made up the nation and enabled the audience to experience these elements as one. By participating in that social practice, they created a figuration, an image of the nation. Though still related to rhetoric and text, the image's normativity grew out of the social practice that the actors willingly or unwillingly engaged in. Indeed, the imageries of the nation proved to be much more attractive than the official agendas of the major politicians. The text, notably the ideological narrative of *ivoirité,* addressed the intellectual elites – hence its prominence in the literature, in particular in the writings of Ivoirian scholars.[53] The power of imagination, however, exceeded the power of reason by far.

To state that political imagination is powerful in itself is not sufficient to understanding the obvious differences in its practice in the north and the south. Each side not only developed different images of the nation but also engaged in different ways of imagining it. In their efforts to create images of the nation as collective imaginaries, they drew on different forms of social practice. These social practices are – and this is the core of my argument – intrinsically related, because they articulate these images not only for their own followers but also in relation to each other; each side implicitly claims its normative imagery depicts the only valid image of the nation.

A comparison reveals more about this articulation of difference. On the southern side, the slogan of "second independence" drew its power much more from an immensely powerful performative imagination that fascinated the younger people. It produced an image for which they had longed for years: the promise of "complete equality". Côte d'Ivoire as a free country would, for the first time in its history, recognise what it owed to its youth – a powerful youth whose fight on the right side, the side of those who stood up against the colonial power, would finally guarantee the youth the place in society it deserved. They would be equals and no longer in the endless

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53   Akindès (2004, 2011) provides good overviews. Of course, that privileging of *discours* in the French sense is the legacy of an education system that was deeply penetrated by a French understanding of culture.

waiting loop they had been caught in for decades, turning men in their for-ties and even fifties into social cadets. What captivated the young men and women were less the speeches of Gbagbo and much more their own seduc-tive participation in the demonstrations led by Blé Goudé. The image was precisely about participation in a larger social body – and the recognition and respect this involved. Imagination adopted the appropriate form: ex-haustive running and enthusiastic dancing and chanting were the suitable social practices to produce such an image. The performance was dramatic, but it was not drama.[54] It was not performed for somebody else or on a stage. Very much in the sense of Emile Durkheim's classical understanding of religious performance, it was performed by and for the participants only (Durkheim 1912). They were targets and actors at the same time, creating the image of the nation by performing it, making it perceptible through eyes, ears and the movements of bodies in unison. As imagination, it was a par-ticipatory practice that produced its images through the direct involvement of the actors: "We are powerful! Côte d'Ivoire needs us! Victory for Gbagbo! Gbagbo is the nation!"[55]

On the northern side, the political imagination also aimed for recogni-tion and respect, but it did so in another way. It was indebted to another background, that of years of discrimination and of the rejected claims to equal rights that the people who had learned that they were second-class citizens had uttered for so long. This experience was also cast in a text, in this case a history of political oppression and cultural alienation that culmi-nated in the years when they, "the Northerners", were not allowed to be what they were. Again, the text itself was not enough to create a counter-image of what the Ivoirian nation should be or become. It served as a back-ground to their way of imagining. Instead of enthusiastic – if not ecstatic – participation, it built on carefully orchestrated acts, all of which demon-strated civic virtues. The hunters held huge meetings and displayed their arms in all the major cities under rebel domination, but they always aimed to show that they were responsible, even savvy, actors in the political space they occupied.[56] In Korhogo, the central notion was *rigueur*, and that implied a whole set of civic virtues, because rigour should penetrate the daily prac-

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54   On the social significance of performance as inclusive and incorporating social practice, see Alexander 2011: 33-43.

55   Quotations from Youtube videos, see <www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBziQRyN 44Y&feature=related>, on Gbagbo as the nation <www.youtube.com/watch?v=9 DovGKn9X5I&feature=related> (11 July 2012), and footnotes 39, 4040.

56   They successfully disseminated this image through international media, journalists and researchers, see, e.g., <www.irinnews.org/report/93384/cote-d-ivoire-dozos-savvy-political-actors> (14 December 2011).

tice of rebel domination: no corruption, no clientelism, no indifference to the public interest, no negligence. The image the rebels fostered, after the initial turmoil, was one of governance that did not privilege one side or the other, or accept discrimination against anyone because of his or her religion, political affiliation, social status or whatever else. It was an image of a nation to which all Ivoirians should belong without distinction, a nation that would overcome the rotten state and the political class that had exploited it.

Such imagery called for another social practice. Seductive participation like that in the southern half of the country would not work in the north. The imagery consisted of diverse, apparently unrelated practices, from fair taxation to power lines, to monuments, cultural centres and the policing of big public events. As imagination, it had to construe these events in one image of the nation – it had to make them coherent and convincing as a set, or, more precisely, as a figuration in which the different parts gained meaning through their relationship to the other elements.[57] The image of a coming, truly Ivoirian nation, one that granted civil rights to all, grew out of the actors' perception that these scattered practices were actually one. Imagination as a social practice hence had to adopt a different character. The finely planned events were often accompanied by plans and timetables distributed to the populace. These were sober events and sometimes looked like cookbooks for meaning-making. But even when written schedules did not exist, the rebels made sure that a strict plan was respected. They framed the events and made them visible as something "well organised" that contributed to the image of the rebels as capable actors who were not like the former civil servants. These events, plans and timetables also addressed the youth, but they did more. Only through "seriousness" and "rigour" would the youth be granted their place in society – and that included to some extent their service in the rebel movement.[58]

Not only the images but also imagination as social practice had adopted different forms on each side. However, the sides related to each other. The emphasis on reliable, "normal" *rigueur* on the northern side was also a statement of difference from what had happened in the south. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of independence, many people in Korhogo noted with satisfaction that the rebels were able to hold festivities while the government in the south was unable to get anything off the ground. The political articulation of claims and interests contributed to the formation of

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57 The coherence of the image is hence a precondition of its possible legitimating function and hence different from the latter.

58 The sources are easy to divine: As the insurgents had often been officers in the former national army, they brought their own habits into the military wing of the rebel movement.

sharper images as well as to the two forms of imagination. In the meantime, the two forms of imagination as social practice have become habitual. In January 2012, some actors in the north argued that they did not want the state administration to return because it would jeopardise the more efficient forms of governance that had emerged in the intervening years. That would not be, a quarter headman told me, "truly Ivoirian".

However, as the articulation of difference between the two camps continues, partisans of both aim to maintain their own ways of imagining. The two forms of imagination still build on the former social practices and still produce similar images. They will surely surface again. And whatever kind of discourse the present government engages in will have to face the insurgent nationalism.

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Rebellischer Nationalismus: Politische Vorstellungen und Spaltung in Côte d'Ivoire

Zusammenfassung: Nichtseparatistische Aufständische, die nicht in der Lage sind, eine Regierung zu stürzen, stehen oft vor einem Problem, das sich nach erfolgreichen Rebellionen gar nicht stellt: Sie sind nicht die einzige politische Kraft, die behaupten kann, im Interesse der Nation zu handeln. Ihnen stellt sich daher die Aufgabe, eine neue Idee der Nation zu entwi-

ckeln, mit der sie sich vom bisherigen, älteren Nationalismus, wie er von der Regierung vertreten wird, unterscheiden. Dieser neue Nationalismus zielt darauf ab, die Aktionen der Rebellen zu rechtfertigen; zunächst und vor allem muss er aber attraktiv sein für die Bevölkerung der Region, die von ihnen kontrolliert wird, und später für weitere Teile der Bevölkerung. Regierung und Aufständische konfrontieren das jeweils andere Lager mit dem eigenen Verständnis der Nation. In diesem Prozess benutzen beide Seiten verschiedene Vorstellungen und Bilder, um das Spezifische ihres Nationalismus für ihre Anhänger, aber auch für Parteigänger im anderen Lager klarer herauszuarbeiten. Die Ereignisse in Côte d'Ivoire dienen dem Autor als Beispiel, um diese Form politischer Auseinandersetzung zu analysieren.

Schlagwörter: Côte d'Ivoire, Aufstand/Revolte, Politische Kultur, Nationalismus