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# Local Models of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management in the South-East and South-West of Haiti

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## Local Models of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management
## in Haiti
## PHASE II:  South-East and South-West



A Report to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

by

Rachelle Charlier Doucet

CERDECS/PRIO, November 2011

**Front Page:**

**English translation of title:** *We can Handle this Ourselves*.

**Picture: Meeting in the grassroots organization**
**"Reseau Frontalier Jeannot Succes" (RFJS).**

*Jeannot Succes is a young Haitian man who was killed because he refused to pay 100 pesos (about 3 US dollars) to a Dominican soldier who was abusing him. As a result of that crime, grassroots organizations involved in the defense of human rights on both sides of the border decided to create a network of Haitian and Dominican Human Rights grassroots activists to monitor cases of abuses in the border markets on the Dominican side, and in the borders areas in general. They report cases of violations and they offer follow-up to the victims, be these Haitians (most of the time) or Dominicans (in some cases). The theme for the celebration this year was: "los derechos humanos no tienen frontera" (human rights do not have borders). The activists work together with the legal formal system and the community organization 'Conseil de Notable'.*

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**Executive Summary**

This study constitutes the second part of a larger research project that focuses on violence and local models of conflict management in Haiti. The project began in 2007, and is undertaken in cooperation between the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and Centre d'Études et de Recherche sur le Développement des Cultures et des Sociétés (CERDECS), Haiti.

While the first part of the project focused on local models of conflict prevention and conflict management in four communities in Port-au-Prince, part two of the project - which this paper summarizes - was carried out in the Southern part of Haiti in four communities in the South-East and in Grande-Anse during the period 2008-2010. The objectives were to identify local definitions of key concepts like violence, conflicts, state and government, and to better understand what Haitians describe as their ideal of "living together" and "living in peace" - essentially to understand the nature of the social bonds. The study identifies resources in the communities as well as challenges. One important challenge is the tense relationship between communities along the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The local communities display strong variations both with regard to their ability to manage conflict and with regard to their capacity to sustain themselves through alternative modes of employment. The communities along the border with the Dominican Republic have less self-confidence and resources and are in need of more attention and assistance.

In terms of policy recommendations, initiatives that improve basic state services to the local communities and that strengthen the capacity of the Haitian National Police (PNH) to intervene should be considered. Finally, but not least important, endogenous models of conflict resolution should be valued and integrated into the justice system in Haiti. The level of violence against women in the region is observed to be high, whether this is physical, verbal or moral. This is an issue that urgently needs more attention. It is also important that this research is disseminated to state institutions, to the legal community, religious leaders, human rights workers and family advisers - and finally to the UN force deployed in Haiti, MINUSTAH.

**1.Introduction**

This project, financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focuses on local capacities for the prevention of violence in Haiti. The objective is to identify local notions of violence and conflict, state and governance, and to identify models of conflict prevention rooted in Haitian traditions or adaptable to the Haitian context. The project is divided into three phases, carried out in different regions of the country. The purpose is to establish a baseline for mapping out different types and loci of violence in the country, as well as a map of different endogenous models of conflict resolution.

Phase I of the project included a survey and ethnographic fieldwork and was carried out in 2007-2008. The survey on Haitian conceptions of conflict, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, included local perceptions of concepts like peace, justice, victims and violence and was carried out in the department of Artibonite (Gonaives, Saint-Marc and La Chapelle) by sociologist Alain Gilles, with students from the University of Quisqueya and the State University of Haiti. The ethnographic fieldwork, that was led by anthropologist Rachelle Charlier Doucet, who also worked with a team of student assistants, focused on local traditions for conflict management. The ethnographic fieldwork was carried out in four local communities in Port-au-Prince in areas where the population actively have used their own models of conflict management to preserve peace. Two communities in Martissant and two communities in Cité Soleil were selected to form the first sample. These communities were selected on the basis of specific criteria. The criteria were that the communities should be located close to areas of violence – or close to the so-called hot zones – but that the selected communities themselves should be largely nonviolent. The methods used to gather information were in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and non-participant observation.

Phase II, which this report focuses on, was carried out in the Southern part of Haiti, in 2008-2010, and included a survey and qualitative fieldwork. The same criteria as during phase I were applied for selecting the four communities for Phase II – in South-East and Grande-Anse - while also taking into account the rural-urban divide. Data collection took place in June and July 2009, and finally in August 2011, to validate the results gathered before the earthquake of January 12th

2010.  This study, like the study of phase I, is aimed at identifying the resources available to the local population to prevent and handle conflicts within their own communities.

## 1.1    Research Objectives

- To identify the local definitions of certain concepts, like violence, conflicts, state and government, etc.
- To better understand what Haitians describe as their ideal of "living together" and "living in peace"; essentially, to understand the nature of the social bonds.
- To understand the local definition of  links between state and citizens
- To establish an inventory of conflict management approaches used by the local population
- To gather suggestions from the population on how to promote good practices related to the formal legal system

## 1.2    Research Questions

- What are the local definitions of concepts such as violence, conflicts, state and government?
- What are the conflict management approaches that are traditionally used?
- What mechanisms are used?
- Which cultural values stem from these conflict management approaches?

## 2.Methodology

This is a qualitative study based on observation and in-depth interviews, which prioritizes people´s interpretation of their own experiences.  The researcher and assistants strive to understand people by their own terms, and identify the fundamental elements that give meaning to their daily practices.

The sample for phase II of the project is comprised of four communities located within the southern region of the country. Two communities are located in the southeastern department, and two in Grande-Anse. These communities were, like in phase I of the project, selected on the basis of the following criteria: proximity to marginalized and disadvantaged areas; proximity to hot spots; and relative tranquility within the community. The following groups were targeted within each community: notables, religious leaders, teachers, women's associations, youth groups, sports associations, and cultural as well as community development groups.

Information from these communities should allow us to confirm or refute our *working hypothesis,* that when social ties are weakened, interpersonal relations become more strained and conflict occurs more frequently, as peaceful resolutions are more difficult to bring about.

**2.1.Socio-Demographic Profile of Participants in the Sample (4 sites).**

**Sample Composition by Gender.**

We wanted to establish a gender balance in the sample, but this proved to be difficult as women tend to be busy, either with domestic chores, or carrying out economic activities outside their home. In the South-East females represent 36% of the respondents from the rural community of Banane, and 61% of the respondents from the town of Anse-à-Pitre. In the South-West we were also unable to achieve the envisioned balance. Within the community of Irois, 58% of the interviewees are female, while in the town of Dame-Marie they represent only 22%. Altogether in the four communities females comprise 47% of the sample, while males comprise 53%. The total number of participants in the study is of 437 persons, divided as follows between the communities: 101 from Anse-à-Pitre, 108 from Banane, 154 from Irois, and 74 from Dame-Marie. Within the four communities, we interviewed representatives from the local authorities, the notables, youth groups, women´s associations, religious groups, as well as sport and cultural associations.

A woman arriving in Anse-à-Pitre from another coastal village.

## Sample Composition by Age

In the South-East, youth below 19 years constitute 23% of the selection from Banane, and 18% of the selection from Anse-à-Pitre. Persons between 20 and 35 years constitute 38% of the interviewed from Banane, and 39% from Anse-à-Pitre. This age group is the largest in the two communities. The next largest age group is the one constituted by persons of between 36 and 39 years – with the selection distributed in the following way: 35% from Banane, and 37% from Anse-à-Pitre.  In both communities, the smallest group is constituted by people aged 60 years and beyond, with 4% from Banane and 5% from  Anse-à-Pitre, respectively.

A similar pattern in the sample is found in the South-West (Grande-Anse). Youth below 19 years represent 15% in Irois and 11% in Dame-Marie.  People between 20 and 35 years represent 37%

of the selection from Irois and 47% from Dame-Marie. This age group is the largest in both communities, followed by the group of persons between 36 and 39 years, distributed in the following way in the sample: 33% from Irois and 32% from Dame-Marie. In both communities, the least numerous group in the sample is that of 60 years and beyond, with 4% from Irois and 9% from Dame-Marie, respectively.

**Other Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

The sample for phase II of the project consists of people from the lower economic strata, largely devoted to agriculture and animal husbandry, fishing, and other small businesses, and some also to manual trades (e.g. masonry, mechanics, carpentry, housekeeping, and tailorship). A few public officials are also interviewed, representing between 1 and 3% of their communities. However, the interviewed are in general relatively well educated. Those reporting no education represent 17% of the sample from the South-East, and only 15% of the sample from the South-West.



Fishing nets in Anse-à-Pitre. Fishing is the main economic activity in the town, and it remains very traditional, and not very productive, because of the lack of equipment. The fishing nets are made of vegetal fibres (straw). The structures of these nets are typical of the area (South-East).

With regard to relationships, in total, singles are predominant in the communities under study, followed by couples with some form free relations. This is surprising, since rural Haiti has always predominately reflected different types of consensual relationships, of which customary law arrangements are the most common. Parents have an average of five children. A factor which needs to be emphasized - as it may indicate some social tension - is the number of voodoo practitioners openly declared. In the South-East, self-reported voodoo practitioners represent 4% of the sample from the rural community of Banane and 5% from Anse- à-Pitre. Yet in Grande-Anse there is 0% reported, and the same holds true for both Irois and Dame-Marie. This is indicative of the sensitivity of this issue for the rural population that remains anxious about openly acknowledging the religion they practice. Popular religion is still stigmatized by the citizens as well as by the rural population itself. Therefore, it is not surprising that recently, in Grande-Anse there was a movement with lynching of voodoo priests, under the pretext that the priests have poisoned the population with their "cholera powder". The same phenomena of lynching can be observed in the Central Plateau, based on the same allegations. Religious intolerance has increased with the arrival of foreign sects, particularly after the earthquake of January the 12th, 2010, and it has increasingly become a source of division and conflict, causing social tensions that sometimes result in violence.

## 3.Presentation of the Sites

### 3.1.Physical Environment

**Zone 1:** The Department of South-East is the second-least-populated department of the country, with a landscape dominated by mountains. With an area of 2,034.10 km$^2$, it counts 484,675 inhabitants, indicating a density of 238 inhabitants per km$^2$, placing it well under the national average of 302.3 inhabitants per km$^2$. The majority of the population in this department (87.7%) lives in a rural environment. The population is young, with more than half below 21 years.

For this study, two communities were chosen in this department, one from Banane (Bannan in Creole) located in one of the two rural sections of the Anse-à-Pitre community, and the other from the town of Anse-à-Pitre itself, which is the administrative center of the municipality. The

community of Anse-à-Pitre is the least populated in the department, with a density of 124 inhabitants per km$^2$. It is the community with the strongest lack of infrastructure (IHSI Censal Atlas 2003). Both of the communities are located along the southern border with the Dominican Republic. These border communities are of particular interest to our study, as the types of conflicts and conflict management models that exist here, may have been influenced by variables linked to the context of the border, such as migration, population mix, and interactions with a foreign culture. Findings from the study of these communities should allow us to confirm or refute our working hypothesis that when social ties are weakened, interpersonal relations become more tense and conflicts occur more frequently, as peaceful resolutions become more difficult to bring about.

**Zone 2:** The Department of Grande-Anse is located in the extreme southeast of the southern peninsula. With a mountainous relief, and numerous rivers crossing it, it is the fourth least populated department with 626,928 inhabitants (According to the 2003 census report), representing 7.5% of the total population of the country. With a surface of 3,153.80 km$^2$, this department has an average population density of 199 inhabitants per km$^2$. The majority of the population (80%) lives in rural areas (522,153 inhabitants). Much like the rest of the country, its population is young, with more than half below 21 years. In this department, two communities have been selected, Dame-Marie and Irois; both administrative centers bearing the same name as the municipalities. It consists of two coastal towns, separated from each other by a few kilometers.

**Description of the Physical Place by the Communities**

The contrast between the southeastern and southwestern self-images are impressive, with their comparable socio-demographic characteristics and the impact that this self-image has on the social organization and the life in the communities.

In general, people in Banane and Anse-à-Pitre (South-East), complain about their lack of resources, and they are vulnerable and quite dependent on the Dominican Republic to meet their

needs. Banane, where the community in the past could produce its own food for living, is currently a place where the inhabitants part for the Dominican Republic to buy and stockpile their goods. In Banane and Anse-à-Pitre, almost all of the current consumption products are purchased from the Dominican Republic - gasoline, food, water, ice, baked goods, etc. to name a few. Youth go to school on the other side of the border. These are areas in which people not only turn their back to Haiti - they are places that in practice also function like satellites to *Pedernales* - the town on the Dominican side of the border facing Anse-à-Pitre. Nonetheless, any visiting person would observe the natural resources that could be exploited within these communities. Banane is actually a fertile area, with an unexploited river, and there is no irrigation. The farmers, that depend on the weather in Anse-à-Pitre, practice some form of agriculture to sustain their lives. As this is a coastal plain, the population is devoted to fishing and livestock, but these are none-profitable activities due to the lack of support from the state and the lack of a road that could allow commercialization of their products outside of the production area. Within both areas, the largest economic activity is the small, cheap, second hand clothing resell business, commonly known as *pèpè* and the fabrication of charcoal from wood. Within both communities commerce is not lucrative, and merchants are happy to benefit from orders of 50 to 100 gourds per day (1.25 to 2.5 US dollars).

The main economic activity in Banane is charcoal production. This is a business that takes a huge toll on the environment and it is an additional source of conflict with the Dominicans, as some Haitians cut bushes and branches in the Dominican territory during night to make charcoal. This is considered a crime in the Dominican Republic, and the Dominican government is keen to protect vegetal cover. Zero tolerance to environmental crime is its motto. More and more Dominicans are involved in this business and use Haitian peasants to cut the trees and fabricate the charcoal. The Dominicans sell it at the Haitian market with huge benefits.

In these two communities in the South-East, people insist on being isolated and abandoned by the Haitian State, to the point of bitterness, expressed in these words; "here, we would say we are not Haiti." They are indeed cut off from the rest of the country, as there are no roads. Only one mud-and rock-road exists in the area, representing a challenge to all vehicles, even to the most robust ones. To go from Banane to Anse-a-Pitre, with distances of barely a few kilometers, Haitians prefer to go via the Dominican Republic, and come back through the border town of *Pedernales*. Even the Haitian authorities, including candidates that visit the area during elections, tend to choose this easy solution. The population perceives this is as a lack of national dignity and respect. Within both communities, the lack of infrastructure and basic services is obvious. Health services are lacking and the communities are developing in an anarchical way, without any apparent plan of urbanization. Since the earthquake in January 2010, and the cholera epidemic in October 2010, the health situation has become more precarious.

A UN vehicle is crossing the border at Pedernales (DR)/Anse-a-Pitre (Haiti) just before the closing. Most of the time, high ranking officers as well as lower ranks spend the night in Dominican hotels and return to their base the following day. Even Haitian visitors do the same. They visit restaurants, purchase fuel, and even make a photocopy in the DR. Anse-a-Pitre is a mere satellite of Pedernales, where the economy, in turn, depends heavily on Haitian consumption.

In the South-West, however, the physical environment is different. There is more humidity and land is visibly more fertile. Both Irois and Dame-Marie developed from traces of the old colonial cities, built in the XVII century. Contrary to Anse à Pitre and Banane, roads are paved with medium sized sidewalks and they are clean. People display a sense of pride and love for their place of origin. Dame-Marie is for example nicknamed « Province Paradise » (« Paradis des Province ») and « The City of Flowers » («La Cité des Fleurs ») by its inhabitants. People worry about decorating their houses and their gardens with flowers with radiant colors. Within the entire area, the workers dedicate themselves to fishing, agriculture (cocoa, subsistence crops) and livestock. According to residents - unfortunately - because of the lack of roads , production rots and is wasted, something they hope will change with the construction of a new road to Jérémie. Women devote themselves to commerce, for the most part: selling fish and cheap junk, something that could be qualified as "Unemployment in disguise". Some women have organized production organizations, for the transformation of agricultural products, such as cocoa and fruits.



Entrance of the town of Dame-Marie.Virgin Mary.

**Youth corner in Les Irois.** A small "cultural center" or youth center built by a youth association with own funds and labor. This represents a pride for them and for the adults in the community who encourage them. In this 'cultural center' they hold meetings, play music, rehearse for theatre, etc. It is their own little paradise. The architecture and construction technique is heavily influenced by the Arawak-Taino type of housing. Notice the decoration with plants and colorful flower sea conchs (*lambi*) and sea stars.

## 3.2 Social Organization

The core questions of the analysis are: Which institutions are likely to improve social integration? What are the components of the social bonds that we define as "that something which unites individuals within a group"? I will analyze a few of the variables generally used in studies of social bonds, such as: family, religion, education, communal solidarity (organizations, friends, and neighborhoods), occupation, political activities, misdemeanors and crimes.

**Family**

A general consensus prevails that the primary institution of socialization and social integration is the family. However, in the four communities under study, singles constitute 40% or more of our sample. In Banane and Anse-a-Pitres, they constitute 49% and 46% respectively, while in Grande-Anse, singles constitute 59% (Dame-Marie) and 41% (Les Irois).  Couples (married and unmarried) represent 47% of our sample in Anse-a-Pitre, 50% in Banane, 41% in Dame-Marie, and 55% in Irois.  In these communities there is a tendency to find more couples in the rural areas (Banane and Les Irois) than in the urban ones. This is so as - especially in rural areas - the family functions like a socio-economic unit for survival, because of the solidarity between its members.  In both urban and rural areas, the family functions with a hierarchical structure, within which the main role, in the terms of the interviewees, is that of supervision of children, and their socialization.  The man is the undisputed leader of the family, and both parents have great authority over their children, who in return owe obedience and submission to their parents.

However, several interviewees point to a certain dysfunction in their families, which can be understood as deterioration of the links between parents and children, as well as deterioration of the links between couples, because of the use of violence (verbal and physical), lack of respect, and weakening of the emotional bonds. This is confirmed by our observations.  Many young persons do not show respect for their parents, not only because their friends no longer do so, but also because of their parents' inability to cope with material obligations. We raised the same concerns in the study of the marginalized areas of Cite Soleil and Martissant. "No bread, no law" ("Pas de pain, pas de loi") are the words of youth over whom parents no longer have any moral authority, not only because they no longer can meet the needs of the family, but also because some among them close their eyes to illegal or immoral actions committed by their children and even encourage it (prostitution, delinquency) for a mouthful of bread.

The effect of abject poverty is destructive and causes instability. This can be observed with regard to couples as well as in other types of gender relationships. Even if they have a certain autonomy that enables them to carry out economic activities, Haitian rural women suffer the weight of an authoritarian tradition which demands submission to their husband. The reversal of

roles causes problems in a context where men are unemployed or earn very little, and where the daily family subsistence is assured by women. This results in violence against the women. The general observation is that women are victims of all types of violence (verbal, moral, and physical). Insults and physical brutality abound, as do sexual aggressions and rape, which are also subject to taboos. In the area of Grande-Anse, interviewees have reported that the level of violence is so high that some beaten or raped women would rather flee, and choose the uncertain path of migration. Whatever the motives for the migration of women, men, and children, it has a destructive effect on the family.

## Religion

The second generally accepted institution of socialization is religion. This is an institution that is also affected by tensions. Catholicism predominates within the sample (around 58%) and reformed cults constitute roughly up to 40%. Although the majority of the interviewees see this religion as contributing positively within their communities (establishing schools, orphanages, improving nourishment, evangelism, etc.), a small number of people questions its usefulness and moral. On the other hand, many reformed cults fight folk customs and traditions (voodoo, customary law family structures, and the Creole language). However, the main problem is with regard to voodoo, the folk religion. People are too afraid to declare their affiliation with the cult, and would rather state that they are catholic. Despite services rendered to the community by voodoo adherents (traditional medicine based on plant care in particular), witchcraft accusations are common, and many voodoo servants and priests are more feared than loved by the population. All interventions in rural areas should consider this reality.

## Education

The third institution of socialization are schools, that, ideally, would allow individuals and citizens to adapt to their surroundings and the national culture. Reports show that the general level of education is low, due to lack of infrastructure and resources of parents. In certain

locations (Irois, for example) there are no public schools available for the population. In Banane, in the South-West – migration - motivated by the need for education, begins when children attend preschool.  However, In Dame Marie, the situation is better and youth can attend secondary school, but still need to travel to other towns to continue their studies at the university level. People complain about this need to migrate in particular because of the financial costs it represents. However, the social costs are equally high, given that migration does not always give the expected results and some young people end up in slums and ghettos, surrendering to a violent and delinquent culture that exists in some parts of the inner city. When they return home, during vacations for example, they bring with them and introduce new values and new models of behavior, and through this, they sow the seeds of tension and conflict in their home environment.

**Associations**

 In the four communities, there are in general numerous and varied types of associations and organizations (production and development, culture and sports, youth, women, etc.). The motivation for participation varies from one place to another, but studies reveal that participation almost always stems from a need to confront scarcity of resources. Often there are too many associations and the tendency to establish *false associations* is a strategy for personal survival - or for the survival of the family or the social group one belongs to. This creates tension in the community as it leads to the appropriation of resources by some associations. A strong tendency to politically exploit these associations' spaces can be observed, but it is not well considered by the population.

**The Communities' Perceptions of Themselves: (Self-Image in the Communities)**

A certain co-relation between the perception that the communities have of themselves and the perception they have of their resources and their level of organization can be observed. In Dame-Marie, for example, the population has a quite positive self-image, a positive image of its environment, and of its own capacity to work for the development of the community. Social

bonds are strong – the members of the community express that they are « *a big family* » - and that their strength is *solidarity* within the community However, one social issue causes worry, which is the juvenile delinquency, related to drugs and premature pregnancy, and resulting in the abandonment of children that have to struggle for their own survival. Studies show that violence against children and women, although denied by some of the interviewees, is a widely spread phenomena.

In the South-East in contrast, the population has no awareness of their environment and their available resources. Confronted with the Dominican model of success, and with their own abandonment by the Haitian State, it has very little confidence in its capabilities to take charge and work for the development of the community. The population of Anse-à-Pitre, in particular, perceives a lack of social ties and is quite conscious about internal divisions. People worry about the rise in criminal activities related to drugs, arms trafficking and other types of trafficking – related to the proximity and porosity of the border.

In this area, the main institution of socialization (the family) appears to be more dysfunctional, mainly due to poverty, unemployment and the impact of ***migration*** out of the area to other regions of Haiti, or to other countries.  The level of violence against children and women is high. In fact a negative perception of women predominates even though women constitute fundamental pillars of their society (*potomitan).* A certain suspicion towards religion can be observed.  However, schools, as an institution of socialization and with the potential leverage for social ascension, are strongly valued.

### 3.3. Social Perceptions of Relations between Communities and State

**State and Authority**

In the four communities, notions about the relations between the communities and the state are personified. The State is in general perceived of as authoritarian and arbitrary - it has the absolute power of decision over people. The definition of the State that prevails is that of the welfare state. The population expects everything from the State (in terms of services, and the

supply of jobs). For people that are left on its own by the government, the link between the State and the citizens is defined, first and foremost, by the supply (or the lack of supply) of basic services to the population.

In the four communities, like elsewhere in Haiti, the population differentiates between: *leader* authority, based on political duties, and *moral authority* of *lidè* (natural leaders), based on the services provided to the community.



Rising the flag, the image of the Haitian state in Les Irois. A daily routine performed by a public servant of the Tribunal of Peace in Les Irois. All the surroundings, muddy-mushy, contradict the solemnity of the gesture.

## Haitian National Police (PNH) and MINUSTAH

Among people in the South-East, a general attitude of skepticism towards the PNH, and a negative attitude towards MINUSTAH can be observed. There is no presence of either in Banane. Police officers and soldiers only pass by occasionally, according to the inhabitants of the area. In Anse-à-Pitre, the interviewees are also skeptical towards the PNH, but because of the low efficiency of the police force (six police officers in the entire *commune* of 484,675 inhabitants) and because of their nearly inexistent material means to carry out their duties (one motorbike for the entire community). Moreover, allegations of corruption, and of complicity to a network of border criminality, can be heard. Concerning MINUSTAH, the attitude in the South-East is generally negative. According to people living there, MINUSTAH only has a show off role to play, and it is of doubtful utility. People are quite critical to the fact that a certain number of MINUSTAH soldiers regularly spend their nights in the Dominican Republic. In conflicts between Haitians and Dominicans, MINUSTAH has a tendency to favor Dominicans, according to the Haitians. However for some, MINUSTAH plays a positive role in deterring crime, as the rate of crime is high in the border area, in the town of Anse-à-Pitre, and in other border communities.

In the South-West, the perceptions of PNH and MINUSTAH are not much different. In the town of Irois, the presence of the police is recent: People have experienced 14 years without a police force, and they say "We are doing well in the community" (That is, they manage well without the police). With insufficient police officers, and without the material means to be efficient, PNH is perceived of with skepticism by the population. In Dame-Marie, perceptions are similar. PNH police officers are few, under-equipped or not equipped at all (only one vehicle that always breaks down). Because of this, they are considered to be powerless and inefficient by the population that has become accustomed to manage without law enforcement since the dismantling of the army in 1995. It is important to remember that according to the PNH General Director, M. Mario Andrésol, the manpower of PNH was in April 2011 of 7,746 police officers for the entire country, meaning a ratio of 0.8 police officers per 1000 inhabitants.

With regard to MINUSTAH, people in the communities report that the soldiers only are present when elections are up and during the weekends – on the beaches. The population in the South-West express that they do not really know the role of MINUSTAH. Soldiers are accused of

being perpetrators of sexual violence against women and small girls, even against young males (These cases have been reported in the Haitian press, implicating a battalion from Sri Lanka and a battalion from Argentina). Soldiers are also criticized for their disrespectful attitudes, or ignorance towards Haitian cultural norms: they gather the fruit from the trees in the fields, without the permission of the inhabitants.  Likewise, they steal the animals of the local farmers – mainly goats - which appear to be their favorite dish. This unauthorized consumption of fruits and goats belonging to the local population by the MINUSTAH soldiers  is reported throughout the entire country and causes frustration in the local population.

**Perceptions of Justice Judges and Tribunals**

The southeastern and southwestern communities, has had *no* presence of law enforcement officials, justice, or important representatives of the state since 1995. For these communities, tribunals play a certain role in the settlement of conflicts. This is the case although people in the communities are quite skeptical to their judgments, and cast doubt on the honesty of the judges. In their words "it is money that talks and influences their ruling", and consequently, the court decisions are not generally accepted as definite.

**Perceptions of Violence**

Whether interpersonal, cultural or structural in its form - violence is present in all of the four communities. According to the interviewees, the most important form of violence is the abandonment of state and society, and consequently their marginalization and exclusion.  With remarkable precision and coherence, they apply the concept of "structural violence", elaborated by J. Galtung in 1969, to their situation, but in their own words.  This systemic violence, making them virtually non-citizens, is intolerable and their patience has reached an end. On the southeastern side desperation is such that a vast part of the population admit that they have renounced the Haitian State, and that they would rather submit themselves to Dominican domination, out of pure deception.  As clearly stated by one of them, it is the president Leonel Fernandez who is recognized as *leader*, and not President Préval (declaration made in 2009).

The interviewees recognize themselves as victims of structural violence, although they will rarely admit that they themselves sometimes also are perpetrators of violence. Violence, they find with the "others" - those that live in "remote areas" - but not with themselves. A certain ambiguity can be observed in how they perceive of the connection between interpersonal and cultural violence. On the one side, the interviewees declare that they reject all forms of violence, but we can daily observe, (as has already been emphasized when describing marriage and family ties), that there are authoritarian practices that inherently accept some forms of violence, especially against women and children. All factors considered, it can be concluded that different forms of violence are present at home, between neighbors and groups of friends, between young people, and also between genders in general. Several (especially young people) have also reported more frequent use of drugs as a cause of violence.

## 4. Conflicts in the Communities – Causes of Conflict

The interviewed describe the most common conflicts by their causes and the protagonists involved.

The most common causes are the following:

- Land issues (disputes about demarcation and borders)
- Issues caused by animals gracing freely (entering into other people's properties and destroying plantations)
- Debt issues
- Disputes related to gambling
- Competition over the attention of girls ; jealousy
- Undermining honor and reputation (insults, malicious gossip and slander; rape)
- Settling scores during a carnaval or *rara*
- Political rivalry and elections

The primary cause of conflicts reported within the four communities is political rivalry and elections. Politics and elections are sources of violence that disrupts social ties. Political conflicts

are also the ones that last the longest, and permanently tear the social fabric apart through the polarization they generate. According to the interviewees (and the general analysis) a big problem is that political functions are being instrumentalized for personal ends. «*Veritab pwoblem nougenyen an se politik, tout sekte yo vin politize e yo anbraze tout la vi nou* »: « the real issue we have is politics, all sectors of our lives are currently politicized. »

Conflicts are also exacerbated by a certain *cultural valorization* of *confrontation*, *stringency* and by *fanatism* within specific fields of competition: political competition (elections) and sports competitions. According to this culture of confrontation, victory belongs to the one who physically or symbolically *destroys* his/her adversary. Likewise, we can observe a tendency towards instrumentalization of cultural spaces (carnaval and *rara*) as they also actually become spaces for violent competition. Advantage is thus taken by introducing and settling political and personal rivalries.

## 5. Models of Conflict Management

In general, the same tendency is confirmed everywhere: people in the communities prefer to resolve their disputes with their own human resources, and their own models, based on *consensus through dialogue.* They resort to the judicial system only in specific cases, when the conflict is about land, debt or theft of animals. The interviewed also largely share the idea that - calling someone to court - will produce a deadly enemy.

### 5.1. Towards a Typology of Endogenous Models

Alternative methods of conflict resolution used by people in the local communities can be classified into two main categories: consensual and judicial methods. Consensual methods are those in which decisions are discussed and taken by both parties. Judicial methods are those where the resolution process and final decisions are laid out by a third party (generally pertaining to the formal legal system, to a group or to an institution). Consensual methods are preferred. A third category may be added: symbolic and magic methods.

Local terminology used to describe different ways of handling conflict:

### Consensual Methods

- *Nou jere sa antre nou*: We ourselves will manage the situation
- *bay pinga*, *bay presyon: /*Warn
- *bay konsey:* Give advices
- *pase men nan tèt:* Let it go (passer la main sur la tête)
- *mete bouch nan sa*: immediate Intervention
- *mete ola*: Return to order
- *chita pale:* Sit down and dialogue

### Judicial and other Binding Arbitration Methods

a) Using the community's human resources:
- *ale nan asosyasyon*, *ale nan legliz*: Go to an association, go to the church (meaning going voluntarily to an association, church)
- *rele nan asosaysyon*, *rele nan komite*: Call an association and a church before the conflict escalates (One party is pressured by the other to present itself in front of the mediation council).

b) Using external resources: *retranche nan Leta, retranche devan otorite*: Bring the conflict to judgment before the State, in front of the authorities.

- *Resources of the legal system* (tribunals of peace): *very seldom* in the South-East and South-West, just like in other regions of the country. The investigation reveals a lot of distrust regarding the justice system and the judges, accused of corruption.
- The type of disruption in social ties is emphasized: « *tribinal pa ka fe nou byen, se rankin yap kite* » : « Tribunals cannot help us, they leave us – on the contrary – only with the hatred.
- Resort to local authorities (ASEC CASEC), Mayor  and PNH

This Tribunal de Paix in Banane is an example of the poor infrastructure of the Haitian state. The building of the tribunal is rented from a private individual, has only one room and lacks minimal furniture. The population - although very poor themselves – ask for more infrastructure. They feel this type of "tribunal" is an insult to the justice system and the proof that they are not taken seriously by the Haitian state. The same holds through for the majority of the tribunals we visited throughout the country during our fieldwork.

**Symbolic and Magic Methods**

Among the conflict management models, one particular type is the resort to symbolic and magic sanctions. Little information has been uncovered about this method, since it is practiced in spheres marked as taboo and since its practices, according to the interviewees, are attributed to "backward people". It is about the final stage of a problem, when offended people are not satisfied with the verdict pronounced by the formal legal system. More often than not, it is about the sanctions that go from subjugation to death by poison, passing by a "zombification", which is worse than physical death.

**Particular Cases**

*Integration of the formal system with informal systems:* Like in the cases of Cité Soleil and Martissant, the people in the communities of the South–East created a mixed model that combines the use of the formal legal system with resources from known and respected organizations in the area. For example, they mentioned grassroots organizations called "Human Rights Committees" (*KomiteDwaMoun*, from the Border Network Jeannot Succèss (RFJS) and the Support Group for Refuges and Repatriated (GARR). In the South-West, the most used organization for this is the Scouts of Haiti.

*Another original method is used in Dame-Marie:* According to the nature of the conflict, in conflicts between groups, *community radio stations* are also used as a space for public debates and with journalists participating - representing voices with enough authority to call for calmness and reconciliation. Actually, the use of *media as a space for conflict resolution* can be observed all over the country, and it is used even by the highest representatives of state authority: senators, deputies, high ranking officials, etc. go to the press to establish a direct contact with the population. This reveals at the same time the lack of other channels for dialogue and makes visible the immense need for this in Haiti. There is a lack of sufficient mechanisms for communication and mediation between the state and the population.

## 5.2. A Specific Problem: Relations with the Dominican Republic

In the areas of the South-East that are located close to the Dominican border, border related problems are common. Haitians in these communities feel powerless and are frustrated because of violence and because of all kinds of abuse (perceived of or real) by Dominicans. In addition, the feeling of abandonment by the Haitian state causes resentment and revolt, adding to the already high level of frustration. The result is that people become vulnerable and prone to violence and conflicts. In this sense, the whole border area, from north to south, merits urgent attention by the Haitian state. The press frequently reports violent confrontations between Haitians and Dominicans along the border, or even in inland towns, on Dominican territory. What took place on November 9th 2011, when incidents in Cornillon (Haiti) and Descubierta

(Dominican Republic) resulted in the death of one person on the Dominican side, and four persons on the Haitian side, numerous wounded, and 19 disappeared, illustrates the problem.



People walking to the marketplace in the Domincan border town *Pedernales.* The so-calles "binational" market was built on the Dominican side with funds from the European Union. The same pattern can be observed all along the border. The "binational markets" are all built on the Dominican side, but the Haitian merchants go twice a week to the Dominican market to buy their products and sell some of their own products there as well. The Haitian population in the border area – from north to south – are asking repeatedly, insisting that market places should be built *also* on the Haitian side, so that Haitian merchants would not feel compelled to go to the Dominican side.  If there was reciprocity in the flow of transaction and the movement of people, and clear regulations by the two states, then, they think, there should be more *respect* and less violation and abuse of Haitians, and in general less conflict among the two peoples.

Even in an area as far from the border as the South-West, sources of tension with the Dominican Republic exist. Seasonal workers, traders and young students all go to the Dominican Republic. A few come back disappointed and ill-treated; some don't even return, far too many lose their lives in total anonymity.

It is a delicate subject - one in relation to which none of the two governments can continue to close their eyes - or act as if things were improving in the relationship between the two peoples. The need for balanced and regulated relations with the Dominican Republic cannot be ignored with regard to the development of Haiti. The relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic is the source of latent conflict that cannot be overlooked.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1    Dissemination of Results from the Project

- Dissemination of the results in the communities.
- Dissemination of results to concerned institutions, such as: government, magistrates, PNH, MINUSTAH, students, legal community (lawyers, judges, students, law professors), religious leaders, family advisers, workers and Human Rights organizations for the defense of women and children.

**6.1.2.  Intervention in the communities** to reduce the level of violence and intolerance in gender relations; interventions to reduce abuse and violence against children as well as to reduce intergenerational conflicts, and finally to reduce and prevent premature pregnancy and juvenile delinquency.

### 6.2 Intervention at the level of the Haitian State
- Give more attention to local communities, offering them basic services (health, education, sanitation).
- Improve road infrastructure, port installations, public administration structures, etc..

- Supervise small producers, men and women, give them access to funds and markets for local and international commercialization of their products, often ecologically produced (cocoa, chocolate, coffee, fruits).
- Supervise fishermen (Provide motor boats, refrigeration, fishing techniques in the high seas).

## 6.3 Intervention at PNH level

- Reinforce the PNH (with manpower, materials and equipment)
- Adapt the curriculum to train local police officers, which is one of the strongest demands from the population.

## 6.4 Intervention at the Level of the Legal system

- Value and integrate endogenous models of conflict resolution into the justice system in Haiti.
- Carefully study the relations between the formal and the informal justice systems with the purpose of obtaining some system of functioning *local justice* that can serve the needs of the local population *and that can service it within the framework of accepted cultural and social norms.*

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# ANNEX I

*The New Road*



With the opening of the new road, a sense of pride is building up in the isolated communities of southern Haiti. Because of this, people do not only feel connected and empowered - they also feel that they are treated like real « citizens » by the Haitian state – and they express that this allows them to gain some respect from the Dominicans.

# ANNEX II

*Pictures from the Communities*



Main street in Anse-á-Pitre. Although classified as a town, Anse-á-pitre is still rural in many aspects, especially the type of human habitat.



Offices of Haitian administration at the border (Immigration and Emigration) on the Haitian side. People are ashamed of these « officers » whereas at the other side, the Dominican state has provided decent offices for customs, immigration and the army battalions.

Pèpè and Pollution. Pepe are second hand/waste clothing – sometimes collected in trash bins in the USA or Canada and exported to poor countries. Haitian women go and purchase this in the Dominican Republic in bulk and bring it to Haiti. Merchants sort it out and sell what may be used. The risk of illness is high in the manipulation with this waste, not only because of the dust, but also because of the uncertain origin of the clothing. Usually only a third to a half of it can be resold. The trash clothes are later burnt or abandoned, creating a serious environmental problem.



Until 2010, Anse-a-Pitre only had a mud-and-rock track that can hardly be called a « road ». The people explained that their « only road » to connect to the rest of the country is by sea. Their transportation needs are met mostly by using small boats. Usually people travel at late night, or very early in the morning, to avoid the sun. Alternatively they go through the border and through Dominican territory to connect to Haitian towns. This situation started to change after the earthquake, with the road that is being built right now. As we were able to observe in 2010, the new road had a huge impact on the self-esteem of the population and their spirit of entrepeneurship.

The Mayor's office in Anse-à-Pitre.



Marche de Pedernales. A view of the so-called « binational market » on the Dominican side.

The woman is a member of RFJS, Anse-á-Pitre. One particularity of this network is the activism of female members on both sides of the border. Female leaders can be found at all levels of the organization, and they are very vocal in defending their rights.



Village of Banane. A view from the main street showing the type of rural habitat.

Banane. Community leaders participating in validation and training workshop on leadership and development.



Banane sports activity. Haitian youth all over the country are passionate about soccer, which is the most popular sport of the country.

Main street of Banane with its rural characteristics.
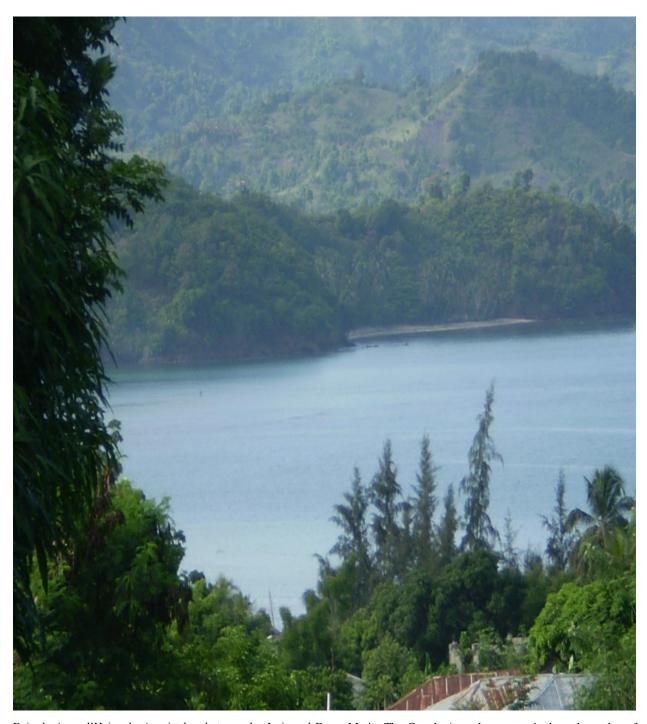


Dame-Marie.

A Protestant school in Dame-Marie.



Les Irois. A typical rural house, unfinished. Houses are usually coated and painted in white (from lime) or other colors from natural pigments.

Baie de Anse d'Hainault. A quiet bay between les Irois and Dame-Marie. The Grande-Anse department is the only pocket of « green » vegetation left in the country. Unfortunately what was left of the forest is already being threathened with the new road PauP-Cayes-Jeremie: the mountains are being cleared and the production of charcoal has increased considerably. Apparently the Haitian state was not able to take adequate accompanying measures to prevent the collateral damage inherent to a good and necessary development, like opening a road.

# Local Models of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management in the South-East and South-West of Haiti

This study constitutes the second part of a larger research project that focuses on violence and local models of conflict management in Haiti. The project began in 2007, and is undertaken in cooperation between the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and Centre d'Études et de Recherche sur le Développement des Cultures et des Sociétés (CERDECS), Haiti. While the first part of the project focused on local models of conflict prevention and conflict management in four communities in Port-au-Prince, part two of the project - which this paper summarizes - was carried out in the Southern part of Haiti in four communities in the South-East and in Grande-Anse during the period 2008-2010. The objectives were to identify local definitions of key concepts like violence, conflicts, state and government, and to better understand what Haitians describe as their ideal of "living together" and "living in peace" - essentially to understand the nature of the social bonds. The study identifies resources in the communities as well as challenges. One important challenge is the tense relationship between communities along the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

In terms of policy recommendations, initiatives that improve basic state services to the local communities and that strengthen the capacity of the Haitian National Police (PNH) to intervene should be considered. Finally, but not least important, endogenous models of conflict resolution should be valued and integrated into the justice system in Haiti. It is also important that this research is disseminated to state institutions, to the legal community, religious leaders, human rights workers and family advisers - and finally also to the UN force deployed in Haiti, MINUSTAH.

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