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Jørgen Sørliie Yri

# Rayano consciousness and the weight of history

A critical discourse analysis of borderland Dominican and Haitian youths' perceptions of each other and of binational relations

**NTNU**  
Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
Thesis for the Degree of  
Philosophiae Doctor  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Language and Literature



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Science and Technology



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Trondheim, May 2022

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## Abstract

This study examines Dominican-Haitian relations through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Through a survey and a number of focus-group interviews with Dominican and Haitian youths, conducted in four Dominican and four Haitian border towns, the main research question asks “how can the borderland youths’ perceptions of each other and of their binational relations be interpreted and analyzed in a historical and social context?”

The main reason for this framing is that the traditional antagonistic portrayal of the Dominican Republic and Haiti provides an incomplete picture. This study aims to contribute to the existing and rich literature on transnational and rayano perspectives on Dominican-Haitian relations (such as Paulino, 2016; Mayes & Jayaram, 2018; García-Peña, 2016; Martínez, 2003; Fumagalli, 2015; Torres-Saillant, 2004), by adding the perspectives of the Haitian and Dominican borderland youths. The surveyed youths and the focus-group youths were selected from an existing network of Dominican-Haitian borderland schools that collaborated between 2004 – 2009 in what was known as the Nobel Project, financed by the Norwegian International NGO Norwegian Church Aid.

CDA places great importance on contextual framings of a research process and therefore significant emphasis is placed on understanding and explaining the historical and social context of the binational relations and the borderland in this study. Three sets of contexts and discourses have been identified for the thesis: 1) Discourses of the rayano youth (the borderland youth), 2) Discourses of transnationalism (the island as one dynamic territory), and 3) Discourses of conflict (the two nations are a living dichotomy).

This study analyzes the rayano youths’ discourse in comparison with the transnational and conflict-based discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations to investigate if they represent something different. The rayano discourse includes a wide range of perceptions but brings us an additional and unusual reminder of a forgotten identity that is “hybrid, multiform and porous” (Torres Saillant, 2004). Important characteristics of the rayano discourse are:

- i. On the one hand, the schizophrenic understanding of Dominican-Haitian relations. The perceptions that the rayano youth have of each other and of the binational relations are simultaneously trujillista, transnational, and neutral.
- ii. On the other hand, there is a wide range of everyday peaceful binational interactions that the rayano youth include in their perceptions of binational relations. These perceptions are in and of themselves examples of everyday resistance against the discourses of conflict.
- iii. Thirdly, the asymmetric binational power relations in the borderland are reflected in the discourse. To exemplify, the Haitians are more fearful of Dominicans than the other way around, the Haitians see themselves as more exposed to violence.

The rayano discourse may serve as an antidote to the discourse of anti-haitianism. Even though the conflict-based discourses are very much present when the rayano youth talk about each other, they still mainly view each other as equals who should do what they can to improve the binational relations, for their mutual benefit.

Moreover, the rayano youth, particularly the focus groups, identify three conditions that must be met to improve the binational relations. These are conditions that implicitly demand a change away from the conflict-based discourses, and a shift to a transnational understanding of the island:

- There is a need for relearning what they have been taught about each other in school and at home. This goes both ways. The Dominicans and the Haitians alike have been and are taught to dislike or distrust each other, according to their own perceptions.
- There is a need for more frequent meetings between the young people from both sides. For example, through organized school activities and cultural activities.
- The Dominicans need to stop feeling superior to Haitians. This was stated in different ways from the youths of both sides of the border and is related to the point about relearning what the island is and has been. The focus groups on both sides identified a need for particularly the Dominicans to see the Haitians as equals if the binational relations are to improve.

## Dedication

Ingjerd & Eivor & Sondre, who have all carried the cost with me. Hopefully it will someday prove to have been worth it. *Tenk at vi skulle få oppleve det her!*

My supervisor Cecilie Haugen and my co-supervisor Leiv Marsteintredet, for going miles beyond the call of duty. And then yet again even more miles beyond the call of duty.

Pedro, Verónica & the Caba family.

Dionnys and my Dominican family.

Ragnhild & Harald & co. Mor & Mia & co.





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Oslo, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.

JSY

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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

### *The Dominican-Haitian borderland youths: an overlooked key to understanding the island*

Critical Discourse Analysis (..) is primarily interested in and motivated by pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis. (..) Ultimately, its success is measured by its effectiveness and relevance, that is, by its contribution to change (Teun A. van Dijk, 1993, pp. 252 - 253).

“If you want to write the history of this island, you have to write the history of the border,” I was told in 2004 in Santo Domingo, by then UNESCO ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Odalís G. Pérez.<sup>1</sup> I have, since then, worked under the assumption that the border and the borderland in themselves constitute a world of their own, and that they are an important and distinctly different territory, worthy of study and visits is the border is both a starting point and an endpoint; it is where two countries meet and separate. Professor Silvio Torres-Saillant (2004) underlined the importance of the border in an essay published the same year that I spoke with Pérez: “borderland studies, understood in a broad sense, could light the way for everyone, along the path of survival” (Torres-Saillant, 2004). We need to study the borderland, Torres-Saillant explains, for a myriad of reasons. Border studies could change it from being a territory that needs to be protected from something or someone external, into a place where we gain important knowledge about humanity and our society by studying all the interactions that take place in these borderland: “Metaphorically, the borderland condition portrays (..) the everyday transnational, multicultural, transracial and interethnic intersection of an ever growing part of the planet, in this era of mass migrations, frequent exoduses and growing diasporas” (Torres-Saillant, 2004).

“Discourse fills a special role in encounters between different groups, and we will often find predetermined attitudes and stereotypical descriptions of both “us” and “them”, according to linguist Teun A. van Dijk (2003, p. 179). Critical Discourse Analysis, with its

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<sup>1</sup> Odalís G. Pérez is a well-known Dominican intellectual and a prolific writer. I was visiting his office to receive some counselling on how to portray the Dominican-Haitian relations in my Masters' degree thesis. Only now am I following up on his advice that never completely fell off the radar for me.

emphasis on context (Fairclough, 2015; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999; Wodak, 2007; Wodak & Meyer, 2009), demands that discourses are placed into a wide sociohistorical and transdisciplinary context. According to Fairclough's model and CDA principles (Fairclough, 2015), discourse analysis also provides the opportunity to look for changes in discourse, compared with previous discourses, as well as adherence to previous discourses.

My interest in these kinds of transnational perspectives and the inclusion of the voices of the borderland youths is also connected to more recent developments in Dominican studies: there has been an emphasis on "the substantial divergence and distance between official state anti-haitianism and the quotidian, lived experiences of ethnic and racial difference among nonelite Dominicans" (Mayes, 2014, p. 6).

This study aims to provide insight into relational aspects on the island through Haitian and Dominican perceptions of "the other" and of binational relations. In this context, special attention will be given to nonelite youths in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This search for insight into the quotidian, lived experiences and perspectives of non-elite groups can then provide new insight into relations on the island, perspectives that are normally not heard.

The youths of the borderland are interesting in several ways. Firstly, they live in more direct contact with each other than what is the case in the interior of either nation. In some parts of the border, they occasionally attend school together on the Dominican side. My respondents inform us that most of them have friends from the other side of the border, they listen to each other's music and are informed about news from the other side. Secondly, they are an interesting target group considering their tender age, which might influence their perceptions. Thirdly, they are relevant as natives to the relatively abandoned peripheries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic: The Dominican borderland youths and the Haitian borderland youths are overlooked for belonging to a part of the island with little or no prestige, as compared to other, more densely populated and economically stronger areas. The fourth reason for my research on the borderland youths is of a pragmatic nature: I had access to a network of Dominican and Haitian borderland schools through the Nobel Project, which was a binational project financed



by the Norwegian state. The project aimed to create an environment of what they labelled a “peace culture” in the Dominican-Haitian borderland through joint binational activities and organization over a period of several years.

These are perspectives that are important to our understanding of what Hispaniola is and what it could be, but they are perspectives that are overlooked and rarely accounted for. I have therefore interviewed and surveyed youths from both sides of the border to fill in this gap.

#### Research question and an introduction to what is to come

The point of departure for this study is the following underlying research question: *how can the borderland youths' perceptions of each other and of the binational relations be interpreted and analyzed in a historical and social context?* This question will lead to subdivisions of research questions, specific to each chapter, and they will be included in the introduction and concluding remarks for each chapter as they become relevant.

Chapter two starts with a section on critical discourse analysis and the importance of the historical and social context behind discourse. This is followed by a section on the research process that explains how the project was designed and how my long-standing relations with the island influenced this study.

Chapter three, an analysis of the social and historical context of the Dominican-Haitian borderland, starts with a section on the characteristics of the borderland, and then I analyze the contexts behind the conflict-based discourses. Thirdly, I present an analysis of the contexts of transnationalism before I end the chapter by identifying the three discourses that frame the analysis of my data.

In chapters four and five, I analyze and present my data material, the surveys, and the interviews. Chapter four is dedicated to the discourse of conflict, and chapter five explores the transnational perspectives.

This leads to the final chapter (6), where I discuss my findings in light of a rayano discourse and focus on its characteristics, its potential as an antidote to anti-haitianism, and the opportunities for changes in discourse.

## **Chapter 2 - Theoretical and methodological framework: Critical Discourse Analysis**

The focus of my work, as mentioned above, is the Dominican and Haitian youths' perceptions of the "other" and of the Dominican-Haitian binational relations. The theoretical and methodological approach used to investigate this is critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA). In this chapter, I will explain the choices that helped me design and frame this project in the way that I eventually did, with special attention on the importance of the socio-historical context, the fieldwork periods, and the elaboration of the survey and its questions to explain both why the context matters so much, as well as the choices and procedures that were selected to create this thesis.

In the first part of this chapter, I will describe the relevant characteristics of CDA before moving on to explain the research process.

### ***CDA and the importance of context***

Insight into how people speak about certain issues provides an important tool for understanding the issues in question. CDA is a means for connecting the way we speak about the world with something “bigger”. The “way we speak about the world” in this thesis is found in the utterances in interviews and surveys conducted as a part of the fieldwork for this thesis. Through these interviews and surveys, my study presents an analysis of how the borderland youths talk about each other and the Dominican-Haitian relations. The goal is to understand the relationships between people living in the Dominican-Haitian borderland, to understand their reality and context, and to understand how they view the binational relations – by means of an analysis of their utterances and an analysis of the contexts in which they were created.

### **CDA addresses social problems**

An important aspect of CDA, relevant to this thesis, is the presupposition that discourse can change reality, that it can change power relationships and that it therefore can forge the world into something new. It is a means for studying social problems with the backdrop that change is a possibility.

I study the discourses relating to the Dominican-Haitian coexistence, the conflicts, and the perceptions the people of these two countries have of one another, and therefore I am also studying social problems. In this case, I am referring to social problems connected to or derived from the binational relations, such as racism, exclusion, abuses, prejudices against each other, mutual animosity and so on. The Dominican-Haitian relations cannot be simply reduced to those elements, but they are a part of the totality of the perspectives on the binational relations among my respondents.

### **Discourse**

Everything is potentially discourse. The way we speak. The way we dress. How we position our hands in a meeting. The manner of our gait. The way a presidential candidate poses for his or her campaign posters. The words we choose to use. The facts we enhance and the ones we question or omit. We may do this consciously or less consciously. Carefully elaborated, like a politician speaking to incite the masses, or carelessly casual, like the remarks we make and immediately regret. Our utterances

come in many shapes and may be subject to analysis. These utterances are fragments of our representations of the world, or our knowledge of the world, or as the Dominican Historian Americo Lugo once called it when addressing a similar chain of thought: “Our knowledge of the world cannot be taken for an objective truth” (Lugo, 1936). What we know, or claim to know, will not be representations of an objective external reality, but rather a product of our ways of categorizing the world (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999). I look for this categorization of the world in the utterances that my respondents made as a tool for understanding the relationship between youths in the Dominican-Haitian borderland.

Discourse analysis theory, as explained by Winther Jørgensen and Phillips (1999), points out that the reality of our world comes to meaning and significance only through discourse. Language use – my respondents’ utterances in this case – is “central to and constitutive of the ways in which human beings conduct their interactions. This idea of “social interaction” is the “common-sense” understanding of the term “discourse” (S. J. Yates, 2001).

Winther Jørgensen and Phillips (1999, p. 17) use the example of a flooding river. If a river floods, it is a phenomenon that will occur without regard for discourse, analysis, or interpretation. The flood is a material fact. What happens next, however, may alter the objectiveness of the imagined flood. Discourse enters in different ways. We may label the flood as a phenomenon of nature; we could put the emphasis on the earth’s changing climate, on the construction of people’s homes near the riverside, or on the authorities’ failure to alert its citizens, or any other perceivable point of view. At that point, already, we may see how differing discourses emerge.

The flood as a material fact may be attributed meaning according to several different perspectives or discourses. And the different discourses may point to different possible actions, as possible or relevant to that situation. In that sense, the discursive understanding obtains social consequences. (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 18)

The way one speaks about the flood may have “social consequences”, that is, the discourse could alter reality, and not only describe it. So, when we study different types of discourse, we are also studying different ways of approaching our reality, and

different approaches to changing our reality. Another key element in my use of discourse analysis is that utterances are understood as an integral part of the social field in which they are created (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 18). Discourse analysis does not permit us to treat utterances as elements isolated from the world that created them. The utterances therefore become instrumental to understanding the world that created them. We may also turn this around: the utterances force us to attempt to explain the world in which they arose and were expressed.

#### Discourse and power: status quo or change?

The discursive event – the utterances that I use as my primary sources – is shaped partly by the surrounding world, but it also participates in the shaping of that same world. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. Discourse is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it.

Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258). Indeed, the CDA approach also brings another important distinction to the table, namely the opportunities in human agency. By agency, I mean the capacity of a human being to take actions despite conditions, rather than exclusively being a product of conditions. The social conditions are not an omnipotent force. Within CDA there is consensus that while we may indeed talk about a dominant ideology, we should not underestimate people's capacity to oppose and rebel against ideologies. We also acknowledge the existence of several competing discourses, rather than one monolithic discourse, and furthermore, we must accept that one ideology never controls all discourses. This means that our positions as subjects in this world are never fixed, but potentially flexible and open to change (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 26). This openness to change, or possibility of change, if you will, resides partly in language and in the discourse's potential:

(...) Power does not necessarily derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and the long term. Language provides a finely articulated vehicle for differences in power in hierarchical social structures. (Wodak & Meyer, 2009)

On a similar path, Stuart Hall (1997) explains how meaning “is fundamentally dialogic”. Meaning is something that comes out of differences, and “the other” is “essential to meaning”. Hall argues that “meaning cannot be fixed, and one group can never be in charge of meaning” (S. Hall, 1997, pp. 328-329). The perceptions of the Dominican-Haitian relations must therefore not automatically entail a conflict-based narrative. Meanings and discourse may be changed, or put another way: the way the Dominican youths of the borderland talk about the Haitians can be used to challenge power. This goes equally for the Haitian youths of the borderland. The way they speak about the Dominicans has the theoretical potential of becoming a vehicle for changes in power, in hierarchical social structures. This is not to say that language and words always lead to change, nor that they always confirm the status quo. CDA is an approach that acknowledges the *potential* that is found within the discourses.

While understanding power relations is important for understanding the dynamics and specifics of control (of an action), in modern societies power also remains mostly invisible. (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The weight of powerful discourses is not explicitly stated, it requires thorough context analysis and understanding, at times, to be able to identify it. An important perspective in CDA related to the notion of “power” is that it is very rare for a text to be the work of any one person. In texts, discursive differences are negotiated; they are governed by differences in power that are in part encoded in and determined by discourse and genre. Therefore, texts are often sites of a struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance. Discourses will include several positions simultaneously. This helps me to trust my own observations, analysis, and findings that indicate the parallel existence of several discourses, of which the three most relevant will be commented on towards the end of Chapter three.

According to Norman Fairclough, “social conditions determine properties of discourse” (Fairclough, 2015). If we change the social conditions, discourse will also change,

whereas if we change discourse, it may change social conditions. As an example of how discourse is determined by social conditions, Fairclough uses a transcript from a police officer taking a statement from a witness to an armed robbery. He points to the police officer's lack of politeness and regard for the witness and to the witness' apparent absence of reaction to the officer's behavior. Fairclough will argue that both participants in this communication fully comply with the norm, they behave as expected, and therefore both parties will expect and accept a communication style that they would be unlikely to accept under different circumstances. Fairclough suggests that a change in the conditions, for instance if police officers were elected officials, their communication with the public would be very likely to change. This is obviously not about whether police officers should be elected, but a comment on the relation between power, social conditions, and discourse. Following a similar pattern, in my survey material, we see that the Haitians report constant abuses when crossing the border, at the hands of Dominican border guards and the military. The social conditions at that border, within a socio-economic context that puts the Dominican Republic well ahead of Haiti, make the Haitians return. Some will be repeatedly abused by the Dominican guards. However, following Fairclough's example, this is not to say that the Dominican guards would always behave in that matter – for example were they not given the power that is inherent in the military uniform of an economically stronger nation, or had there not been a tradition of acceptance of this kind of abuse. This also does not imply that the Haitians would accept that kind of treatment in all other circumstances.

This leads me to believe that an understanding of the discourses is an essential part of understanding the social conditions of the borderland. The social conditions, in turn, are modifiable according to different factors, including discourse. One of several consequences of this line of thinking is that reality can be challenged by discourse. The social conditions may be modified or altered by changes in discourse. In the final chapter, I will come back to this when I discuss the potential for change within the *rayano discourse* and its potential as an agent of change (García-Peña, 2016).

### Context and interpretation

Creating a research project within the realms of CDA demands a stringent attempt to understand and describe the relevant contexts. In this case, the Dominican-Haitian



relations (as expressed by the youth) are interpreted, considering the social, economic, geographical, and historical context of the island, with special focus on the borderland.

Extensive field studies are necessary to acquire sufficient knowledge of both the contemporary and the historical context. CDA is to be understood as a project that one needs to establish firmly each time, it is like a toolbox that the researcher needs to equip in different ways according to each project's characteristics. There are multiple approaches that one may choose to address, any one of linguistic, ideological, and political research projects, but no one predefined set of coherent analytical procedures. The theoretical framework of CDA is not a fixed set of operational instructions, but instead the researcher must define the limits of her or his project (Grue, 2017). In the following I will show how the fieldwork and the closeness to the field of study helped me define the limits of this project over time.

In a similar fashion, the theoretical preparations, and readings, made me see the discourses as intertwined in complex relationships with different social and context-based circumstances. For one, there is the concept of parallel discourses shaping our world. Norman Fairclough (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 15) states that "discourse shapes our social world", and that we cannot limit this to only one discourse. There are many parallel discourses shaping an individual and we are not – according to modern discourse theory – controlled by any one monolithic discourse, but rather by a set of discourses that at different points in time take control or lose control of us (ibid; 26). Discourse is considered to be a co-constituent of reality and there is an important connection, between discourse and reality. We are controlled by discourse, but at the same time we are shaping the discourse that again shapes the social world that we live in. We are both slaves and masters of our own reality, in other words. My respondents and interviewees are, to some extent, also masters and slaves of language and discourse, and their discourse, too, theoretically includes the power to change the reality that created it. Yet, as the context chapter (3) will establish beyond any doubt: the power relations in the borderland are unequal in several ways, and unequal power relations affect the impact of a discourse. Discourse does not carry the same weight regardless of origin and power.

This multi-dimensional understanding of discourses, their contexts, and the processes that create them, is addressed by Fairclough (2015). The text – the utterances that constitute my analysis of the borderland youths’ discourses – has its own process of production, but this goes for the researcher’s process of interpretation as well:

A text is a product rather than a process – a product of the process of text production (...) Discourse is the whole process of social interaction of which text is just a part. This process includes in addition to the text the process of production, of which the text is a product, and the process of interpretation, for which the text is a resource. (Fairclough, 2015)

My informants *produce* text, and the researcher – myself – interprets that text. In that sense, there is a context both for the production as well as for the interpretation. Fairclough calls for an analysis that includes the *social conditions of interpretation* (Fairclough 2015, p. 58). This means the position of those who interpret and the context of those being interpreted. The social embeddedness of research and science, the fact that the research system itself and thus CDA are also dependent on social structures, and that criticism can by no means draw on an outside position but is itself well integrated within social fields has been pointed out by Pierre Bourdieu (1984). Researchers, scientists, and philosophers are not outside the societal hierarchy of power and status but are subject to this structure. They have also frequently occupied and still occupy rather superior positions in society (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

My readings as a researcher of my respondents’ meanings will therefore differ from what Fairclough and Wodak (1997) call the “uncritical audience”: “they differ in their systematic approach to inherent meanings, they rely on scientific procedures, and they naturally and necessarily require self-reflection of the researchers themselves” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 279). Another important note on meaning is that “CDA takes on the view that any text can be understood in different ways. A text does not uniquely determine a meaning, though there is a limit to what a text can mean”, and that this limit in different meanings is related to the “properties of the text” as well as “the properties (social positioning, knowledge, values, and so on) of the interpreter” (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 67). What is important here, is that I too, as a researcher, determine meaning, I do not simply collect it from my respondents. It is not

uniquely embedded in their utterances, but rather it is extracted and categorized by the researcher.

I must also use these “properties” while looking for a connection in meaning, in the characteristics that the respondents associate with a given term. As an example, in my survey, I asked both the Haitians and the Dominicans what they associated respectively with the word “Dominican” and “Haitian”, and the same procedure was repeated about the neighboring nation. That is a way of exploring these semantic relations which in turn provides material to analyze in search for patterns of discourse.

This is something that demanded consciousness on my part. I am not located outside the contexts that I attempt to describe and analyze. I benefit from a societal structure that allows me to travel to the Dominican-Haitian border to conduct my fieldwork. I have tried to be aware of my position and I have tried to gain knowledge and to listen to the interviewees, the surveys, the teaching from my time at the OBMICA. I have tried to reduce the impact of whatever prejudices I may carry with me into this project, brought forth by my own background, position, and place in the social hierarchy of the borderland.

### Analysis of text

So, in seeing language as discourse and as social practice, one is committing oneself not just to analyzing texts, nor just to analyzing processes of production or interpretation, but to analyzing the relationship between these texts, processes, and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of the situational context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures. Or, (...) the relationship between *texts, interactions* and *contexts* (Fairclough, 2015).

The analysis of text, following Fairclough’s model and CDA principles leads to reflections on whether the discursive practices are reproducing or restructuring the existing order of discourse. When initiating and simultaneously preparing the collection of my data material I have made use of the traditional sources within the social sciences, and perhaps history in particular: archival documents and written accounts of my field of interest. However, after these initial rounds of thematic probing I ended up collecting

data material through what the Spanish historian Pilar Folguera labelled the “newest and at the same time the oldest way of writing history” (Folguera, 1994), which is oral testimonies, and in my case, collected through interviews and focus groups.

Within social studies, studying “the other” or any other abstract topic on foreign soil and in foreign cultures is a hunt for perceptions of meaning, but within the cultural ramifications of for instance social codes, language, and sociohistorical conditions that may be unknown or diffuse to the researcher. This lack in understanding is something that the researcher must work hard to compensate for. In my own case, the years of studying and visiting both the Dominican Republic and Haiti, the time and space given to me as a visiting researcher at the OBMICA Institute<sup>2</sup> in Santo Domingo in 2013, my collaboration with Dominican NGO MUDHA since 2008, my opportunity to listen to Dominican and Haitian activists, researchers, intellectuals, teachers, and – of course – youths, all of this has made me able to make sense of my material. For this to happen, I aim for and depend on a high degree of contextual awareness, in the recognition that context is of the highest importance both to my project, and to CDA in general. I will delve more into my own preparations in the final sections of this chapter, where I address the research process and the simultaneous on-going design of this research project. In short: my approach had to be intra-disciplinary, which is reminiscent of CDA in itself: “Critical Theory should be directed at the totality of society in its historical specificity(..) Critical Theory should improve the understanding of society by integrating all the major social sciences, including economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology and psychology” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). As I interpret the youth’s perception of the other and of the binational relations, I needed precisely that kind of wide approach in my reading and contextual understanding. I needed context to become an important part of my study, which is why I dedicated a full chapter (3) to the different contexts that I have found most relevant for understanding my respondents’ realities and discourse.

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<sup>2</sup> OBMICA is a research center focused on migration and social development in the Caribbean which advocates for the human rights of migrants and their families as a key to development, democratic consolidation and a inclusive citizenship.

### Social processes and CDA

The significant difference between DS (Discourse Studies) and (...) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lies in the constitutive problem-oriented, interdisciplinary approach of the latter, apart from endorsing all the above points. CDA is therefore not interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena that are necessarily complex and thus require a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological approach (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

There is an assumption within CDA that there is a “partly linguistic-discursive character” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) to social processes and movements. Social movements are not essential to my studies, whereas social processes are indeed of importance. The Dominican-Haitian binational relations, the conflicts, and the perceptions of the other that I study are all phenomena that could be categorized as social processes. While this means that, according to CDA assumptions, they may be studied from a linguistic and a discursive point of departure, it also means that there is a relationship between social processes and this “linguistic-discursive character”. This relationship between social processes and discourse and language goes both ways, as Norman Fairclough notes, and this is important to my research: “(Language) is conditioned by other, non-linguistic, parts of society” (Fairclough, 2015). Language is conditioned by social processes and social processes are conditioned by language. An important question then is exactly *how* language use and context are connected. According to Simeon J. Yates, one of two editors of the extensive reader *Discourse Theory and Practice* (S. J. Yates, 2001), there are two main approaches to this question within the CDA framework:

The first one is essentially “sociological” and focuses on the social behavior and practices that make up language use in social context. The second line of work is linguistic and explores the relationship between social context and the structure and function of language itself (S. J. Yates, 2001).

This thesis relies on the first of the two, which means that I analyze the discourse in relation to its social context, and less so from a purely linguistic point of view. The interviews are an important part of this process, in the sense that they help me explain topics that I find in the surveys. An important way of picking up on “behavior and practices that make up language use in a social context” is by being present and observing in that specific social context. My years of preparation, both privately and professionally, working on the island and living on the island, have helped me to

understand that social context. In the following, I will go into detail as to how the different phases of the research process have shaped my study and how they have changed it during the course of the research project.

### ***The research process***

This section will explain how my project was designed so I could capture and understand the borderland youths' perceptions. The fieldwork periods of 2011 and 2013 changed the direction of this work, as they helped me define and redefine the limits of my project. This will be addressed in the following sections.

I will go into more detail on the characteristics and importance of the Nobel Project network in Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Norway, I will explain my long-standing relations with the island and how this has been relevant, and how that led me to a deeper focus on the Dominican side of the border. The research process and the periods of fieldwork and preparations were essential for defining and eventually finishing my project, and the following sections aim to explain how this was done.

Writing about the research process is motivated by Fairclough's model on discourse as a series of interactions between the context in which my data material was produced, interpreted, and created (Fairclough, 2015), as commented on in the previous sections on CDA. This description of my research process therefore also becomes a description of my *process of interpretation* (Fairclough, 2015, p. 58), which is something that has taken years of work, acquisition of language and cultural knowledge, and that has enabled me to ask the questions that I did, and subsequently interpret the answers and the statements made by my respondents and interviewees. The survey questions were an example of how I would draw on a mixture of theory, fieldnotes, interviews, and contextual knowledge

My research depended on a familiarity with established discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations, and then, additionally, I had to learn about the borderland. This is a process that started before the fieldwork periods and that continued beyond them as well. One example is my mastery of Dominican Spanish, which helped me to open doors all throughout my fieldwork periods, but that has also enabled me to follow news outlets, social media, music, and literature from the Dominican Republic in the years leading up to my PhD and in the years during the research and hopefully also after its completion. My four years, and counting, as a consultant for a Norwegian encyclopedia (*Store Norske Leksikon*) on their entries relating to Haiti and the Dominican Republic

broadened my understanding of the Island's history. Speaking and participating at the Transnational Hispaniola session of the 2016 Caribbean Studies Association annual conference in Port-au-Prince helped me to appreciate the transnational perspectives that became so important to my understanding of my respondents' answers and worldviews. I have lived on the island both as a young man in high school in Santiago de los Caballeros (Dominican Republic) (1994/1995) and during my main fieldwork (2013). I have also organized field trips for Norwegian students on three separate occasions to the Dominican Republic (2008, 2010 and 2015) with my Dominican colleague and friend Pedro Caba Ulloa, in collaboration with respectively the University College of Lillehammer, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), and Studyaway AS. On all three occasions the Dominican-Haitian relations, including visits to Dajabón, were at the core of the academic program of the students' field trip. These field trips of course required an inestimable amount of preparation and contextual understanding to put together a decent program,<sup>3</sup> including visits to the Dajabón province in 2007, 2008, 2010, and 2015. This was an important set of experiences and learning, and everything before 2011 is therefore also to a certain degree relevant to my fieldwork periods.

#### [Keeping journals to keep track of my projects](#)

Keeping journals is an important part of my working life, and this has also been true for this project. They have been indispensable for creating a research design and delimiting my project. Any topic will be written down – using key words and names to remember, or through internal written monologues – and sometimes the journals will contain summaries of meetings, presentations, or conversations. The journals are testimonies that I return to when looking for material that at the time seemed less relevant, but that later became more important. Or I may look to find *when* did “topic X” first interest me. The journals help me remember my standpoint at a specific moment in time. During all

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<sup>3</sup> The students – when combining all three visits – visited FLACSO, OBMICA, MUDHA, Servicio Social de las Iglesias Dominicanas, the Red Jesuita in Dajabón, the Bosch Foundation in Santo Domingo, Odalis G. Pérez in UASD, the borderland and Santiago de los Caballeros, Villa Mella in Santo Domingo, the Mirabal Museum in Salcedo, and also lived with host families in Moca. They went to the batey of Palmarejo, batey Libertad, the Ouanaminthe-Dajabón binational market, the Centro León exhibitions, to “La ruta del café” in Salcedo. They assisted local schools in Moca as teaching assistants, attended a folkloric workshop with Dominican musician and cultural expert Roldán Marmol. And yes – two of the student groups were also granted a short visit in Bayahibe (1st group) and Las Terrenas (2nd group).



the visits to the borderland, and more so during the field-work periods in 2011 and 2013, I kept these journals to keep track of meetings, of the places where I stayed, and of minor details like distances covered by car or the frequency of gas stations in certain remote areas. The journals are a mixture of academic references that I needed to remember, mind maps, phone numbers, time schedules, quotes of things that I read in a newspaper, or something interesting that someone told me, inserted take-away menus, ideas for framing my project based on that day's experiences, and random thoughts on any topic, on fieldnotes and general observations. From time to time, I go back to my journals to organize what is of value to the project I am working on.

Keeping field journals is not just a way to look back into the past, it is also an important part of the fieldwork itself and my getting to know and understand the context of the borderland better. The fieldwork journals held information that I found useful for becoming a more trained observer of the borderland, such as key data from official statistics of life in the borderland, notes on the illegal deportations of Dominicans of Haitian descent, notes on the speculations about what was labelled "a future gold rush in Haiti", due to the alleged existence of unexploited gold deposits in the borderland on the Haitian side, notes on reports from the borderland by foreign agencies (the UN, Norwegian PRIO research center), and notes from Haitian and Dominican research on the same topics. These are but a few random examples, the essential part of this is my attempt to be in a position to make relevant observations, and keeping notes and information with me was one of several approaches.

Writing down experiences, things I had learned, and observations as they presented themselves was also important. For instance, my note taking following multiple border crossings helped me to understand the great variation in the ways to cross what is in theory the same border and subject to the same set of regulations. Writing down what I learned when a 14-year-old Haitian boy took me walking around Ouanaminthe to meet his family and his surroundings in March 2013 was another kind of experience, also of relevance to me. He explained the ease, for him, of living between his hometown and Dajabón. He would attend school in Ouanaminthe and then cross the border to earn some money before nightfall, mainly as a shoe-shiner, and then return home. His were quite typical rayano experiences of a certain level of co-existence, yet at that time I was

unfamiliar with the rayano concept. My field journals helped me to revisit my experiences as the framing of my research evolved. A sit down with a Dominican journalist in Pedernales and a short drive with the principal of a local school in Anse-à-Pitres, were similar learning experiences. They both spoke about the huge discrepancies between the two towns, but also about the level of collaboration on a personal level. They both, independently, explained to me that they saw the existence of binational conflicts as a product of bad governance on both sides, more so than as a sign of any kind of unavoidable hostility between the two nations' citizens. The field journals are also a means of maturing towards a narrowing of what the project should involve. Early in spring, during the fieldwork of 2013, I debated with myself in my notebooks, and ended by concluding that I needed the surveys and the binational set of youths, in addition to the youths inside the Nobel Project structure. This written exercise was an important part of reaching that conclusion.

#### [A brief overview of my time spent in the borderland](#)

Before, during, and after the fieldwork period, I have spent a total of 60 days in the borderland, of which 44 were in direct relation to the fieldwork in 2011 and in 2013. This overview is included to bring clarity when it comes to how much time I have spent on each site. The additional 16 days include private visits to Monte Cristi, Dajabón, driving the "Carretera Internacional" along the border from Pedro Santana to Villa Anacaona, and visits to Jimaní and overnight stays enroute to Port-au-Prince by car, and tourist visits to Ouanaminthe, Anse-à-Pitres and Pedernales. As the table shows, I had spent some time in Dajabón before and after the fieldwork periods of 2011 and 2013. This was mainly related to the three field trips with Norwegian students mentioned in the previous section and was therefore not directly related to my PhD fieldwork.

## Overview of days spent in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands

	2007	2008	2010	2011	2013 (beyond surveys and interviews)	2013 (survey and interviews)	2015	Total at each site
Dajabón	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	22
Ouanaminthe				2	2	3	1	8
Elias Piña (Comendador)				2	1	3		6
Belladere				1		3		4
Jimaní				2	2	2		6
Fond Parisienne				1		2		3
Pedernales					3	4		7
Anse-à-Pitres					1	3		4
				Days spent in the borderlands in 2011 and 2013		44	Total	60

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Table 1 Overview of the days spent in the borderland. The grey columns represent the fieldwork periods.

### Pilot interviews and the initial shaping of the research project

As I stated in the first sentence of Chapter 1, the Dominican-Haitian border had been on my radar since 2004 as an area of importance that could help me understand Dominican-Haitian relations and history. Seven years later, during the summer of 2011, I eventually conducted a series of 10 interviews with 12 key informants within the Nobel Project network to gain an insight both into the project and into life at the Dominican-Haitian border,<sup>4</sup> as well as to collect useful information on the running of a cross-border dialogue project.

The selection of interviewees for the 2011 field trip was based on the Nobel Project structure, which is to say that all of them had been involved in binational collaboration

<sup>4</sup> I have crossed the Dominican-Haitian border somewhere between 30 and 40 times during my work on this thesis. This includes mainly legal land crossings (Dajabón – Ouanaminthe, Elias Piña – Belladere, Jimaní – Fond Parisienne, Pedernales Anse-à-Pitres) as well as illegal crossings (near Dajabón and near Elias Piña) and by plane.

over the course of the last five to six years. I was provided with names and phone numbers of teachers and school directors in the Nobel Project borderland schools from the national leaders and national administration of the Nobel Project in Santo Domingo, and they all agreed to meet me during my fieldwork in 2011, a total of 12 informants, of which 10 lived in the borderland, in Ouanaminthe, Dajabón, Elias Piña, Belladere, Jimaní and Fond Parisienne (I did not visit Anse-à-Pitres and Pedernales until 2013). Their positions as school borderland teachers and school directors made me hope that they would be knowledgeable on the living conditions in their communities. The fact that they had been participating in the binational Nobel Project allowed me to assume that they would have experience from cross-border contact.

### Interviewees field work 2011

	Local leaders in the borderlands Nobel Project (NP)	Regional leaders in the borderlands NP	National administration NP	National leaders NP
Haiti	5	0	0	0
Dominican Republic	4	1	1	1
Total	9	1	1	1

Created with Datawrapper

Table 2 Overview of the 2011 preliminary interviews conducted in August that year.

My Dominican and Haitian informants talked about perceived and real differences in the borderland, they explained the living conditions in the eight main border towns, and provided insight into development gaps between the two nations and how that impacted life and relations between the nations and their people. They gave accounts of how unequal power relations, favoring the Dominican side, also affected personal and institutional relations. They let me in on how Haitian kids would go to school on the Dominican side in several areas near the border, crossing the border in the morning and returning to Haiti after school, without the Dominican authorities stopping them. I also met and spoke with several religious leaders on the Dominican side (inside and outside of the Nobel Project structure), who explained the history of the border in the light of long-standing transnational solidarity and co-existence, which for me was a precursor to the transnational perspectives that became so important for my data analysis. I also

interviewed representatives from Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and the Ministry of Foreign affairs in Norway to learn about the motivations behind Norway's previous engagement in the area, which I will return to in the following sections. I also interviewed representatives of NCA's collaboration partners locally in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. This was done both to further my understanding of the border areas – their challenges, particularities, strengths, and other characteristics – as well as to further my understanding of what measures were believed to be adequate to improve the relations between the two countries.

All of this helped me greatly at the time of my fieldwork and at the time of developing the interview guides for the focus groups and the questions that constituted the survey. Had it not been for my initial pilot interviews, within the Nobel Project, I would also not have been able to gain access to the youths in the participating Nobel Project schools, through whom I conducted the interviews and the surveys during 2013.

On selecting interviewees for my pilot interviews, I followed a thesis explained by the historian Fransisco Alía Miranda, who stated that when it comes to oral sources, like mine, quantity may translate into quality (Miranda, 2005, p. 350); a higher number of respondents will increase the certainty of the conclusions. The idea is that after an unknown number of interviews, the researcher will discover what is known as saturation of a certain topic. This means that the researcher no longer finds new views on a given topic as the respondents start to repeat the same or similar views. Naturally, the number of respondents needed to achieve this cannot be pre-defined universally, as this will be subject to individual differences and local context. Given also that the field of study that I have chosen is very far away, I could not count on an unlimited amount of time. As the table above shows, I aimed for a balanced representation from both sides, and my focus was from the start to speak to people at the border. In the table, they are placed in the “regional leader” and “local leaders” columns. Out of my 12 preliminary interviews, 10 were with informants living in the borderland. I believe this early focus on talking directly to people in the borderland to gain insight, knowledge, and contacts, facilitated my analysis of the respondents' utterances later on in the project.

These preparations also allowed me to trust my observations more and made it possible

to include them as part of my contextual understanding, and as an additional source of data: “Interviews are a primary source of data in qualitative research; so too are observations,” this can be the case in different “types of qualitative research” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). An important argument making the case for observations as an additional primary source is that “observations represent a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon of Interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I include my observations and interpretations of both the interviews and survey responses and in that way, I am acknowledging the importance of observations in line with Merriam. My ability to make and trust my observations has been strengthened by the years of professional and private contact with the island, but without the people and structures of the Nobel Project, I would not have found my way into the classrooms of eight schools in the Dominican-Haitian borderland, and now it is time to go into more detail on that specific group of informants.

#### [The Nobel Project \(2004 – 2009\) and its importance for framing this study](#)

I started Chapter 1 by quoting then-ambassador to the UNESCO in Santo Domingo, Odalís G. Pérez and his advice to me, that I study “the history of the border” in order to understand the island. Pérez’ suggestion directed my attention towards the borderland, and seven years later – in 2011 – I conducted my first initial pilot interviews on both sides of the border, in the towns of Ouanaminthe, Belladere, and Fond Parisien in Haiti, and Dajabón, Elias Piña, Santo Domingo, and Jimaní in the Dominican Republic. The access I obtained, both for the pilot and the following fieldwork (2013), and the insight these interviews and contacts provided for me, would not have been possible without substantial assistance and good will from a trilateral set of stakeholders – Norwegian, Haitian, and Dominican – inside the structure of a then already abandoned endeavor, called the Nobel Project. The Nobel Project was financed to a large extent by the Norwegian NGO Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), which receives most of its funding from the Norwegian State, channeled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The Nobel Project, in my opinion, turned out to be a disappointment to the stakeholders in the Dominican-Haitian borderland, but it was an indispensable door opener for me and my research. The Nobel Project influenced the framing and the directions of my research, and I will explain how below.

The stated goal of the Nobel Project was to “Create a psychosocial climate favorable to the creation of spaces for exchange and dialogue and development of mutual positive perceptions”(NORAD, 2009). In other words, it was a simple idea: get young people together from the Dominican and the Haitian sides and create a space where they could develop an understanding about each other, and – in the end – create a new way of co-existing, both in the borderland and in the rest of the two countries. Bringing people from both sides of the border together would help to develop an improved understanding of each other and help to counteract the prejudices of the past. This would be brought to life by a cross-border collaboration between eleven schools in what was originally eight selected communities along the border. Six of these would eventually go on to bring the Nobel Project to life: Ouanaminthe, Belladere and Fond Parisienne on the Haitian side, and Dajabón, Elias Piña and Jimaní on the Dominican side<sup>5</sup>. This, again, would be vital in creating what the Nobel Project’s leaders had labelled a “culture of peace”. The most important single factor of the Nobel Project that stood out among all the people I interviewed was a firm belief that binational relations on the island could be changed into something more productive and mutually beneficial. Nobody that I interviewed saw the project as some sort of aid directed towards the Haitians, but rather they were clear that had the project succeeded, it would have benefitted both sides equally. This was also a shared perception expressed by the youths on both sides, in my surveys, which will be dealt with in the analysis in Chapters four, five and six.

While the main stakeholders in the Nobel Project were Dominicans and Haitians, most of them belonging to the borderland, the project had come into existence within a familiar international geopolitical context. The United States was involved, as was Norway. The endeavor came to life in the wake of a request made in 1997 by the then US Secretary of State Madelaine Albright to her Norwegian colleague, Knut Vollebæk. That request would set in motion an escalation of the Norwegian presence in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Washington was looking for a contribution to an internal dialogue in Haiti that they thought could lead to greater stability, which in turn would benefit US interests in the country. The United States could not participate directly in such a dialogue given

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<sup>5</sup> Anse-à-Pitre (Haiti) and Pedernales (Dominican Republic) did not participate in the Nobel Project, although they initially attended in the dialogues leading up to the project.

their long and troubled trajectory in Haiti, including a military operation or invasion just three years earlier (Operation Uphold Democracy in 1994 –1995). Norway, on the other hand, had no business interests or any other involvement in Haiti on a government level, and therefore had nothing to lose in Haiti. Their tight Washington connection notwithstanding, the idea was that Norway would be perceived as a neutral partner in this internal Haitian dialogue, with goals that were vaguely defined, but that were aimed at a stabilization in Haiti. Norway's motivation was easily identifiable, according to two Norwegian sources who had participated in the early days of the Nobel Project: the Norwegian authorities saw an opportunity to satisfy a request from its most powerful ally. That is how Norway became involved in Haiti on a government level, and that is also the start which would eventually lead to Norway financing years of Dominican-Haitian dialogue and in the end also the Nobel Project. It soon became clear, several Norwegian sources told me, that improvement in Haiti also included some sort of improvement of the binational relations. And in the light of this transnational perspective on the island, a network of religious (mainly) protestant leaders became involved on both sides of the border, connected by Norwegian Church Aid. These were contacts and networks that preceded the US-Norwegian "big politics", and that had little or nothing to do with the Norwegian desire to aid a powerful ally, the USA, but that at this point in time (the early 2000s) they were brought together systematically, funded by Norway through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NORAD, and the NGO Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). Gradually, the idea was born and set in motion that borderland schools could and should be brought together as a part of the Norwegian initiatives on the island, and by the request of the leaders of and participants in – Dominicans and Haitians –what became the Nobel Project. This was always presented, perceived, and defined as a grassroots initiative, with a firm focus on the project stakeholders' own initiatives and priorities. The Norwegian participation was rather low-key in terms of media interest. It was by no means a secret, but rather what a NORAD evaluation of 2009 described as low-profile:

The ambitions were sober. Norway did not claim to engage in "peacebuilding" in Haiti, but would look instead for ways to contribute, in a low-profile manner, via transparent and extensive consultations, to building trust between stakeholders in combination with small-scale seed funding for various initiatives by local actors. (...) The comparative



advantage of Norway was and still is its unique position of being small, flexible and independent with no prior connections with Haiti. (NORAD, 2009)

The Nobel Project involved the participating border towns and local committees organizing activities that brought youths together across the border. This continued for some years, the exact duration depends on who you ask and which town you ask about, but approximately from 2004 to 2009, some activities initiated before, and some ended before, but the project was mainly within this time frame. This led to a contact network of people who knew who to call in each town and in each school. These committees' willingness to assist me with contact information and by facilitating meetings with teachers, staff, and students from their respective schools was of great value to my being able to connect so rapidly with so many people in all the eight border towns relevant for this project.

This was organized under an umbrella of binational dialogue work on the island in the years leading up to the Nobel Project and was a relatively important part of Norway's peacebuilding activities from the late nineties and into the following decade.

Approximately 10% of the Norwegian funds for peacebuilding-related activities in the period between 1998 and 2004 were given to support improved dialogue between Haiti and Dominican Republic. The rationale for the support was that improving the relationship between the two countries would contribute to stabilizing the situation in Haiti. (NORAD, 2009)

This bias towards the situation in Haiti is apparent in the Norwegian approach from the beginning, as this NORAD evaluation insinuates. This is not automatically something that would play well with the Dominicans. This "pro-Haitian" bias – if you will – also echoes the preoccupations of Dominican ultranationalists, who claim that the international society only cares about Haiti and is basically prepared to step all over Dominican interests to achieve improvements in Haiti. This is something that will be dealt with in Chapter three. I will briefly add, though, that my interviews and survey data show very clearly that the youths on both sides did not subscribe to this ultranationalist perspective. Rather, they expressed ideas of mutual solidarity when it came to concerns regarding progress: if one improves, the other will benefit, if one drowns, we both drown.

An important finding that directly influenced my own research and work was the transnational nature of the Nobel Project's point of departure. It focused on shared experiences, on identifying common ground, mutual acknowledgment, and equal access to funding, project management, and resources. I have spoken to people in the six border towns that participated in the Nobel Project, and there is no doubt that the participation in that project was an important part of their lives. Sadly, though, according to the testimonies from the participants it was cut off too soon to have any lasting and transformative impact on its surroundings.

I learned about the periphery of the borderland, not only geographically, but also politically and as it is shown in the "pecking order" of a venture like the Nobel Project. On two separate occasions I was asked by leaders on the Haitian side if I knew whether the Haitian national leader of the Nobel Project had survived the earthquake more than three years earlier. Happily, I could inform them that he was alive and well, and that in fact recently I sat down with him in Port-au-Prince, but this too came as a surprise, and provided an insight into the lack of communication internally in the Nobel Project. I am fully aware that the chaos post-2010 in Haiti made communication more difficult than before, and that there were far more urgent matters to attend to than informing some border schools about a cut in their funding. Nonetheless, it remains a fact that on either side of the border, in the communities at the heart of the Nobel Project, the information on the project's current standing had not yet arrived, more than three years after the project had been ended. This is the responsibility of the Norwegian partners, and of the respective national leader in Port-au-Prince and Santo Domingo.

These anecdotal examples speak of the periphery of the borderland and reflect their position on the outskirts of both Dominican and Haitian national spheres, in the sense that most major decisions are taken far away, also the decisions that affect the inhabitants directly. This is not particular to the Nobel Project structure, quite to the contrary, the reflects the power balance that existed before and after the project, and something that proved to be impossible to challenge, if indeed, it was at all a concern.

Another aspect that became clear was the perceived asymmetric relations between the Dominican and Haitian partners in the project, with the Haitian side being the weaker. On the Dominican side, most of my interviewees in the border communities gave very synchronized answers, in that they agreed that all decisions within the Nobel Project were made locally, and that they themselves decided which activities to include, in collaboration with their Haitian homologues. However, on the Haitian side, most of the community leaders expressed a sense of having to do what the Dominicans decided and to follow their lead, a view that was also very much confirmed by the national leader on the Haitian side in an interview with me. He stated very clearly that, in his opinion, “the Nobel Project was a Dominican-led disappointment”. This is not only a matter of who controlled the money within the project, but also a reflection of life in the borderland and a reflection of two nations with very unequal economic situations. The Dominican Republic vastly outnumbers Haiti in every thinkable area as far as the national economies are concerned (more on this in Chapter three). I included this kind of perspective in the survey and in the interviews, for instance in the questions relating to the border crossing experiences, where I found that same lack of symmetry in the surveyed youths: the Dominicans had hardly ever encountered any problems with migration officers, while most of the Haitians reported facing troubles while crossing the border. The idea of a “Dominican-led disappointment” and the border crossing experiences are different expressions of perceived and lived inequality. The importance of this inequality was not unknown to me, but the pilot interviews and the subsequent preparations for the field-work made it clear that the unequal relations between the nations was an important factor in people’s lives, and more explicitly so on the Haitian side.

#### **The methodology of the Nobel Project**

According to *Servicio Social de las Iglesias Dominicanas*’ (SSID) own description (2011), the Nobel Project was “based on a methodology of ‘brotherhood between Schools’” through which a Haitian school would be paired with a sister Dominican school (SSID, 2011), and together they would develop annual plans for shared activities on both sides of the border, such as reforestation projects, shared sports events, and cultural exchanges. The SSID (2011) identified four main intended outputs of this project:

- The promotion of peace through a process of reflection and finding similarities between educators and students, Dominican and Haitian.
- A contribution to the establishment of a cultural exchange program between Dominicans and Haitians, emphasizing their participation in community festivals.
- The promotion of a climate of mutual respect and solidarity through participation in sporting events.
- The creation of a public opinion that is more tolerant and respectful throughout the island by promoting peace and tolerance between the nations.

This collaboration between schools in the borderland was tightly connected to bilateral activities on a parliamentary level, with support from the OAS and Norway. Examples of this international approach were the *First International Conference for the Future of Relations between the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti 2006*, in May of 2006, celebrated in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, followed in 2007 by the *Second International Conference for the Future of Relations between the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti*, celebrated in Kaliko Beach, Haiti. The creation of the *Block of parliamentarians of Dominican Republic and Haiti for the development of sustainable border communities (2007)*, and the “Declaration of Kristiansand” (2006)<sup>6</sup>, came out of the same network, according to SSID documents (2011). The Nobel Project was one of the grassroot initiatives from this binational dialogue process.

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<sup>6</sup> The first and second conferences on the future of the island “consisted of presentations by specialists and authorities from both countries, whose information, facts, and opinions were then used as a reference point for small group discussions and meetings between the following groups: churches, media, civil society, Senators and Congressional Representatives, and Governmental Representatives”. The “Declaration of Kristiansand” was named after a town in southern Norway that hosted one of the binational dialogue meetings. The aspects that were discussed during the Kristiansand sessions were disaster and emergency plans and responses, violence prevention, issues related to migration and a promotion of “education towards the improvement of relations between the two countries”. (SSID, 2011)

## A brief timeline of the Nobel project

1997 - 2000	2000 and onwards	2006 - 2010
<p>US initiative towards Norway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norway becomes involved in a process of "internal dialogue" in Haiti, on behalf of the US. The protestant Norwegian NGO <i>Norwegian Church Aid</i> is included due to its long-standing relations on the island.</li> <li>First formal meeting takes place in Moulin sur Mer in Haiti, October 1998. Over the following years, meetings are held several times a year, mainly in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, but also in New York and Oslo, Norway.</li> <li>Dominican-Haitian relations become an essential part of the process, and as a result, a protestant church-led dialogue is initiated in the early 2000s.</li> </ul>	<p>Dialogue process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bilateral Commission: 18 protestant leaders in the two nations constitute the start up of the Dominican-Haitian Dialogue of the Evangelical Churches.</li> <li>Focused on building connections between Haiti and the Dominican Republic by cooperating and working together on a grassroot level and a parliamentary level.</li> <li>Grassroot projects: 1) the Nobel Project and 2) support of the development of gender equality along the border.</li> <li>Formalized meetings of Haitian and Dominican parliamentary members.</li> </ul>	<p>The Nobel Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on building closer relationships between communities along the Dominican-Haitian border.</li> <li>Eight sister-schools in eight sister-towns, four on each side of the border. Six of which eventually participated in the Noble project.</li> <li>Activities in both nations: field trips, mutual visits, cultural exchanges, reforestation, school visits.</li> <li>The project was ended prior to the Haitian earthquake in 2010.</li> </ul>

Table 3 Timeline of the Nobel Project. Sources: The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs's archive, SSID documents, interviews with stakeholders in Haiti and DR, interviews with Norwegian stakeholders (MFA and NCA).<sup>7</sup>

There was a belief that "when you put people together in a room the prejudices disappear", as one of the Norwegian stakeholders expressed to me in an interview in 2012. Yet, contact between groups is no guarantee for an understanding between them. Contact may also exacerbate relations, which was a concern seemingly not dealt with or discussed in the Nobel Project, or at least not to my knowledge at the time of the fieldwork periods in 2011 and 2013. Laura B. Perry and Leonie Southwell (2011) argue in a review article on intercultural understanding that contact between people of different cultures does not alone ensure increased intercultural understanding. Contact may also lead to a decline in the quality of intercultural relations. Intercultural understanding includes a cognitive as well as an affective aspect. The cognitive aspect

<sup>7</sup> Sources for this table:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA): Registry of activities 1997 – 2003 (MFA archives).

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) Country programme Haiti 2009 – 2010

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) Country programme Dominican Republic 2009 – 2010

Two individual interviews (Santo Domingo and Oslo, 2011) with two representatives of SSID.

One individual interview (Port-au-Prince, 2013) with a representative of Social Mission of Haitian Churches (MISSEH), Haiti.

Individual interviews with representatives of the Norwegian stakeholders from MFA (2012) and NCA (2021, 2012, 2013 and 2014).

relates to knowledge, for example about one's own culture and about the cultures of others, but also about the defining differences between one's own culture and the other culture. Knowledge is therefore not enough for there to be intercultural understanding, there must also be "positive attitudes towards other cultures" (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 470). These positive attitudes towards the other were something that the Nobel Project sought to nurture. They called on their participants to look for similarities, aimed for a development of mutual positive perceptions and also for "a public opinion that is more tolerant and respectful throughout the island" (SSID, 2011).

These kinds of attitude and subjective experience are examples of the affective aspect in intercultural understanding. The cognitive and affective aspects of intercultural understanding must both be in place for there to be improvement in the relations following intercultural contact. This is something that I address in the survey when I ask for attitudes towards the other by focusing on associations to the other nation and its people. In the final chapter I will return to the teachings of the Nobel Project, and the extent to which they are identified in the survey data and the focus-group interviews. In the following sections, I will continue to explain the research design, as I review the focus groups of 2013, the impact of a professional researcher and the rationalities behind the 60 survey questions before I conclude this chapter with a section on the analytical process.

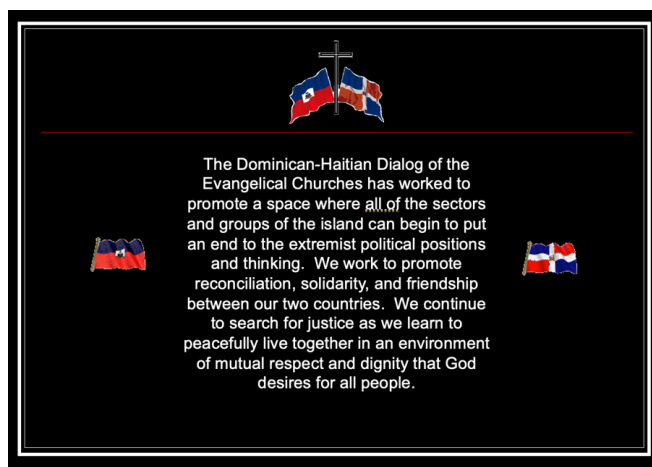


Figure 1 SSID's own description of the Dominican-Haitian dialogue of the Evangelical churches (SSID, 2011).

### The focus groups of 2013

The focus groups were based entirely on the Nobel Project structure. In the following I will explain the selection criteria and the importance of these focus groups. In an extended sense I will explain their importance in and of themselves as well as the importance for this thesis of the workload and time needed to identify, visit, and understand the social and historical context of the borderland. Firstly, I will comment on some technicalities of the focus groups and the interviews before looking back in time and dealing with how I came to need them.

The selection criteria for the focus-group participants were quite specific: I asked the participant schools in the Nobel Project to identify students who had been involved in its activities. This meant that they would be from a similar socio-economic background as the survey participants, but with the important distinction that they had participated in the binational Nobel Project. Would their perceptions differ significantly from the survey results? Would the project's teachings be visible in their answers, their perceptions, and their hopes for the future? The comparative aspect of having a number of focus groups that had experiences of systematic binational collaboration was of interest to me, especially as I was looking for indicators of co-existence.

The survey informants and the focus-group participants were of the same age, which is to say a median age of 16 years, and the gender balance was 60/40 female-male for the focus groups.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Source</b>
Dajabón	Two focus groups
Eliás Piña	Focus group
Jimaní	Two focus groups

Table 4 Overview of focus groups – Dominican Republic 2013.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Belladère	Focus group
Fon Parisien	Focus group
Ouanaminthe	Two focus groups

Table 5 Overview of focus groups – Haiti 2013.

All the focus groups had from three to five participants, chosen from the Nobel Project structure, and always from the same schools as the survey respondents. The interviews would last between 20 and 50 minutes according to the participation of the respondents. The interviews were semi-structured in that they followed a guide that ensured I asked the focus groups questions that were along the same line, albeit following their lead on what they seemed to consider to be of most interest. We would always ask them about their relation to the neighboring country, about indicators of co-existence, about experiences of travelling to the other nation, as well as perceptions on conflict and binational relations as such. Quite a few of the questions focused on issues related to the Nobel Project, such as *What was your relation to the Nobel Project? How many students participated? Could you describe the project?*, and similar questions. As I have mentioned, the project itself became less significant, and for the borderland youths much more so, partly because of these interviews. Therefore, in my subsequent analysis, I went on to explore other aspects of the interviews, the parts where they spoke about life at the border, their experiences, and their perspectives. This meant questions on the general situation between the two nations in the borderland, on the extent to which they thought that the borderland inhabitants were more borderland citizens than respectively Haitian or Dominican, on power relations, on who would benefit should the relations improve, and so on. The process of interviewing and digesting the resultant data was an important factor not only in that they brought me material for analysis, but also in the sense that the interviews were an essential part of defining and sharpening my framing of this study, and they serve as an example of how the fieldwork guided my research focus.

The preliminary interviews and the focus-group interviews were always recorded and transcribed. The Haitian interviews were conducted by a professional interpreter/translator who also transcribed/translated (into Spanish) all interviews conducted in Haitian Creole. I was always present, of course, at the Haitian interviews, but I was less directly involved in conducting them as I spoke very little Haitian Creole. To establish some sort of contact, I would speak what little Creole I knew, and this would generally result in some laughs, but I was unable to communicate properly



myself, and therefore dependent on my professional and experienced interpreter. We made sure that the interviews were conducted in what we considered safe spots, meaning that we did not allow teachers, other adults, or even other students to be present or even nearby while talking. We did not want our respondents to feel that they could be held accountable to their peers or their teachers, or others for what they said to us. I am aware that this alone does not guarantee accuracy nor honesty, but it was a measure I deemed necessary and relevant to at least improve the accuracy of my respondents' statements.

There were no focus groups in Anse-à-Pitres nor in Pedernales, that is, in the two most southern border towns on the island. This was a decision that was taken while in the field, conducting the surveys, and preparing the interviews. The reason was initially my inability to identify the exact school in Anse-à-Pitres that had collaborated with the Nobel Project (which defined my structure and my sample), despite several visits to the town, and nothing but helpful people along the way. Anse-à-Pitres and Pedernales had been excluded – or had excluded themselves – from the project earlier than the other towns. This made it more difficult than in the other towns to find the right people quickly enough (usually within a day or two was my time frame when I was visiting the different towns for the focus-group interviews). For that pragmatic reason, I decided to exclude focus-group interviews from Anse-à-Pitres and Pedernales. I did, however, in the end, find a school with the same profile as those within the Nobel Project structure, and therefore was able to proceed with the survey.

#### [The professional interpreter and her impact on this research](#)

A researcher faces several challenges when conducting fieldwork far away from home. Of the many barriers, language might be the most obvious. I speak fluent Spanish, but I do not speak Haitian Creole, which meant that getting information on the Haitian side of the border would require assistance from someone speaking both Haitian Creole and Spanish or English. An interpreter is no casual or optional part of an interview-based research, of course. It is also not easy to deal with. I had two very different experiences in relation to this during the two main periods of my fieldwork which I will comment on below.

During my preliminary fieldwork, in 2011, I was left to deal with whomever I was able to find either at the border on the day that I crossed to go into Haiti, or I collaborated with NCA's partners and they would provide someone to interpret for me. When I conducted my pilot series of interviews in August 2011, I had a total of 14 days available to visit eight schools in two countries, spread out over a rather large territory. For example, it would take about 11 hours to drive by car from the southernmost Dominican border town, Pedernales, to the main northern Dominican border town of Dajabón. This left relatively little time for mistakes or second chances, so I depended completely on NCA's contacts and people for this initial part of my research. In addition to the driving time, each new border crossing was also rather time consuming.

In the north and in the interior, in Dajabón as well as in the Comendador – Belladère, I was able to find a decent interpreter who spoke Spanish very well. In Jimaní, however, I ended up contracting a person from the border crossing who turned out to speak only a very basic Spanish. Rudimentary "border-crossing Spanish" will suffice at the border but does not cut it when more complex issues are up for debate. His vocabulary simply did not match my needs, meaning that I had to completely discard the interviews conducted on that day. I was unable to communicate properly with the informants, and therefore I could not trust that their answers were really responding to what I was trying to ask them. My having to discard the recorded material from a few interviews that day is completely unimportant, of course. Additionally, the interpreter did his best, and he is obviously not at fault for my not speaking Haitian Creole. The real danger in a situation like this, for me as a visiting researcher, is the potential of losing the trust of my informants. They might clearly think less of me for not being able to communicate in a proper fashion. My take on assessing whether it is worth chancing this is that this is something any researcher must do before going on reconnaissance fieldwork, like I did. In the other two Haitian towns, for instance, I learned a great deal that in turn helped me to continue to forge my research through visits that I would not have been able to make should I have concerned myself with too many precautions.

Not finding a good enough interpreter was something that did not come as a surprise to me. It was more of a calculated risk. I knew I might find it hard to encounter a decent interpreter on such short notice, given the scarce time at my disposal as I was travelling

my route. Nevertheless, in hindsight, I could have decided to visit fewer towns and to engage more deeply in each of them with more time on my hands.

For my 2013 fieldwork, the circumstances were very different. On that occasion, I was a visiting researcher at the OBMICA headquarters in Santo Domingo and was able to benefit from their network, which included a highly professional interpreter, a Dominican of Haitian descent with considerable experience from research interpretation. This was to be invaluable for my work. Much in the same way that a bad interpreter may damage your work, a good one is indispensable to the researcher, and her value can hardly be overrated. The interpreter needs to understand both their role as a mediator between worlds – that of the researcher and the interviewee – and of course also be fluent in both languages. Additionally, the interpreter needs to be able to identify errors that the researcher may not pick up on due to his lack of fluency in the language in question. For example, we discovered several errors in the Haitian version of the questionnaire along the way that could have led to errors in the data. One of the questions asks who the respondents live with. One of the answer options in the original edition, which was in Spanish, was “*con otros familiares*” – *with others in (my) family*. In the Creole version, this had become “another family”, another thing altogether. This was something I was not able to notice on my own, and was addressed by us before each group of respondents as we approached that question, and therefore we were able to avoid the misunderstanding. This is an example of the value of a professional interpreter who understands the importance of being precise and critical, in the best meaning of the word.

Obviously, it is more difficult to conduct surveys in a foreign language than in one’s own language. One of the challenges is that you are depending on another person’s judgment in that the interpreter might have to make judgement calls on your behalf: have the respondents understood the questions correctly? Have we explained the purpose of the survey clearly enough for them to engage wholeheartedly while also understanding what they are doing? Furthermore, you are depending on your own ability, as a researcher and as a part-time employer (of the interpreter), to give precise enough instructions so the interpreter is able to do their job in accordance with your needs.

### ***The rationalities behind the survey questions***

This section explains the rationalities, motivations, and intended outcome of the 60 questions that were included in my survey. I try to gain and create insight into how the borderland youths' perceptions of each other and of the binational relations relate to the relevant discourses. In Chapter three, I will identify the three main discourses selected for this thesis: the transnational, the conflict-based and the rayano, and in the subsequent chapters I analyze how the borderland youths view each other and how these views relate to these discourses. At the time of conducting the survey, the literature that would later become important to me, on transnational and rayano perspectives (such as García-Peña, 2016; Mayes & Jayaram, 2018; Murray, 2010b; Torres-Saillant, 2004) was unfamiliar to me and instead I spoke about what I then labelled "indicators of coexistence and shared experiences". In 2013, as I was preparing the survey, I was looking for what I at that moment understood as ruptures in established discourses. It took me some time and effort to realize that I was not mainly looking at ruptures within one type of discourse, but rather at competing discourses. I designed the survey questions so I could explore whether the borderland youths represented something other than the conflict-based discourses I had previously known, and when I learned about the transnational perspectives and the rayano perspectives, the survey data finally fell into place.

The 60 questions were divided into 10 sections, see the table below, and I will go through each section in the following paragraphs. Not all questions turned out to be as equally fruitful, and I will comment on this as I review the survey section by section.

## Survey overview

Survey section	Topic(s)
Section 1	Gender, age, living situation, migration within the family.
Section 2	Associations on the other's nation and people.
Section 3	About direct contact, friendship, awareness of each other.
Section 4	About shared and opposite characteristics of the two nations, skin color, religion and mutual assistance in times of need.
Section 5	About rights to citizenship in a nation.
Section 6	About individual and national perspectives on the future.
Section 7	About crossing the border, about problematic relations with the other.
Section 8	About perceived threats to the island, about school discourse on the other, about the perceived number of Haitians in the Dominican Republic.
Section 9	About associations with the word "MINUSTAH" and about fear of the other.
Section 10	About perceptions of the other's levels of criminality and of confidence in the other. About perceptions of general relations and the question of "unification" of the island.

Created with Datawrapper

Table 6 Survey overview.

In sections 1 – 4 I was looking for how the youths understood their life and the general characteristics of themselves and of the other. Section 5 was specifically created bearing in mind the long-standing citizenship debate<sup>8</sup> in the Dominican Republic, regarding Dominicans of Haitian descent. Section 6 is an attempt at learning about the youths' lives as understood through their perspectives and plans. Then in the final four sections, I address potentially more problematic perspectives of the coexistence: border crossing experiences, about whether relations between the two nations need to improve, about threats to the nations and perceived Haitian presence in the Dominican Republic, their view on the alleged unification of the island, and other similar questions. I would add that all the questions allow for both a transnational and a conflict-narrative response.

To display the rationalities behind the survey questions I have summarized the eight categories that capture their essence (see the table below), including an explanation of

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<sup>8</sup> Note that my fieldwork was carried out before the 168/13 ruling – Juliana Deguis Pierre vs. the Dominican Electoral Board, yet the debate regarding rights to Dominican citizenship had already been on the agenda for years in the nation and I therefore considered it interesting whether the youths of the borderland felt strongly about this issue. I have dedicated a section in the following chapter (context) on the 168/13 ruling.

how I intended that each of these categories would inform my analysis and work. I will comment briefly on each section’s motivations, the consulted literature and how the questions were seen as playing into the selected discourses.

### Survey question categories and explanation

Category	Brief explanation of each category and its intended purpose
Demographic information	Intended for general knowledge of the respondents life and context.
Perceptions of the other	Do the borderland youths' perceptions adhere to existing discourses? Do they differ? Similarities and differences between Haitian and Dominican youth.
Perceptions of oneself	Do the perceptions on themselves and their own nation adhere to existing discourses? Do they differ? Similarities and differences between Haitian and Dominican youth.
Perceptions of conflict	What characterizes the borderland youths' perceptions of conflict? What solutions do they envision? Do these perceptions align with established discourses?
Co-existence and contact	The borderlands have a history of co-existence, of
Shared experiences	Are there similarities in life experiences, in hopes for the future or otherwise, that indirectly connect the youths of the borderlands? Relevant as counterweight to conflict-based discourses.
Context related topics	Different topics that I selected, based on readings, interviews, feedback from fellow researchers at OBMICA, etcetera. Examples: 168-13, MINUSTAH, crossing the border. These were intended to establish perceptions that may be more typical of borderland youth, in comparison with the selected discourses.
Hopes for the future	Intended to indicate respondents' individual and societal hopes. Through these I hoped to identify common ground as well as differing perspectives.

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Table 7 Explanation of intended purpose of survey questions by category.

### The survey and the preparation of the respondents

During my main fieldwork period in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, it gradually became clear to me that I needed and wanted to conduct a survey in all eight border towns. I ended up surveying a total of 243 teenagers, asking them the same 60 questions, in Spanish in the Dominican Republic, and in Haitian Creole in Haiti. In this section, I will address the rationalities behind the survey questions, how I conducted the survey in the schools, and how I prepared the teenagers for the survey. The survey had a median age of 16 (Haiti) and 17 (Dominican Republic) years of age at the time when the survey was conducted. I will start this section with a general introduction to the survey and the process of creating it before I go into detail on each of the 10 sections of survey questions.

## Survey overview - participant data

Haiti	Dominican Republic
117 respondents	127 respondents
Youngest: 13 years	Youngest: 12 years
Oldest: 23 years	Oldest: 21 years
Average age: 16.7 years	Average age: 16.7 years
Median age: 16 years	Median age: 17 years
Male: 53 %	Male: 36 %
Female: 47 %	Female: 64 %

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Table 8 Survey overview - participant data.

The questions were created on the basis of years of studying, going back to my Master's degree<sup>9</sup>, on an evaluation of a "test run" of the survey in a school in the small Dominican town of Moca, and on feedback from fruitful discussions with fellow OBMICA researchers. The pilot interviews in 2011 in the borderland in Dominican Republic and Haiti were of course also very important for defining what were relevant issues for the people of the borderland.

Several of my questions demanded that the respondents had to respond freely by means of immediate associations to a word ("Dominican", "Haitian", for example). I worked under the assumption that free association is not something that has been a traditional part of education on either side of the border, and that I therefore should address this issue with the respondents. This assumption that student participation and a student-centered approach to teaching is not common in neither Haiti nor Dominican Republic, is based on discussions with teachers from both sides of the border in relation to this project. When I asked students with a median age of 16 years (Haiti) and 17 years (Dominican Republic) to respond using their free associations, I had to try to ensure that they answered according to their own beliefs. We dedicated some time before each

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<sup>9</sup> My Master's degree thesis from the University of Bergen (2008) was entitled "*El bárbaro vago y la isla indivisible: La representación de lo haitiano en la oficialidad dominicana ejemplificada por la lectura de El ocaso de la nación dominicana y La isla al revés – Haití y el destino dominicano*". It dealt with Dominican-Haitian relations and the discourses represented in two books by Manuel Núñez and Joaquín Balaguer.

interview for warming up to the survey, explaining it and discussing the concept of free association.

We explained what a survey is and why we were conducting one with them. We talked briefly about our motives for gathering information from many people from certain areas to gain knowledge through analyzing their answers before proceeding to talk about the concept of free association. We would ask the students “what color is the most beautiful?”, and they would answer according to their taste. Then we would ask “so, you like red and the other one likes blue, which one of you is right?”, and the respondents would quickly get the point, that the right answer was the answer that was right for each individual. We would repeat the procedure asking about favorite songs and fruits, with the same results. We would also explain that the survey was in no way an examination, that there would be no grades and – of course – what anonymity means and that their anonymity would be guaranteed. We did this while always pointing out that the most important of all was that they responded with complete honesty. We made it clear that we were looking for answers and opinions from the youth, so to get those answers and opinions, they had to answer honestly. No students were allowed to participate if they had not been present during the explanation of the research project as well as during the explanation of how their privacy would be protected. Students who arrived after these explanations were either rejected or the explanations were repeated.

I ran a pilot survey in the inland town of Moca. This selection was due to prior collaborations I had had with the ADP in Moca, *la Asociación Dominicana de Profesores*, a trade union for teachers. They provided access to a local school and a group of students the same age as the target population at the border. The goal of the test run in Moca was to go through the procedures of a survey in a classroom setting. Therefore, I was not interested in what the respondents replied or how they felt about the survey questions relating to binational relations and Haiti. There were several issues that needed to be thought through before running the actual survey.

When I discussed my project with a colleague at the OBMICA center in Santo Domingo, she expressed a valid concern: would the students be able to read and understand the questions quickly enough for them to complete the survey? At the time of this survey



(2013) the Dominican Republic reportedly had more than a million analphabets<sup>10</sup>, indicating that I would need to take precautions to ensure that the survey questions would be understood by the respondents. The border areas on the Dominican side, in general, showed significantly higher levels of illiteracy than the rest of the country according to statistics from ONE, the Dominican National Statistics Agency. A suggestion was made to conduct the survey one-on-one, with me sitting face to face with each individual student. This, however, would obviously dramatically reduce the number of respondents due to the time-consuming nature of such a procedure.

What I instead tested in my pilot in Moca was to gather the whole class and go through the survey, question by question with the students, but as a group, and not individually. I would read the question, the respondents would then fill in their answer, I would watch to ensure that everybody had replied, and we would continue to the next question. My original idea of simply handing out questionnaires had been discarded, and it proved to be the correct solution for my work, not least because it is impossible for me to predict exactly where the doubts or misunderstandings of the students would occur. My review of the answers from Moca did not indicate that the students were having trouble understanding the questions. By going through the survey in this way, I believe I increased the chance of obtaining good answers, given that the students could spend their energy on responding to the questions instead of on trying to understand the questions. As a rule, the implementation of the survey at the eight schools, as well as at the pilot school in Moca, took slightly over than 90 minutes, including an introduction and an explanation. Establishing a set way of arranging the survey with the young respondents became the most important lesson learned from of the pilot in Moca.

The survey was divided into ten sections and before going into detail about each question, I will quickly review the main topics.

### **Section 1: Gender, age, living situation, migration within the family**

Section one deals with demographic information, shared experiences, and context-related topics, such as mobility and migration. The questions on migration (8-10) were a

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<sup>10</sup> I deal with this, and other particularities of the border areas, more in depth in the sections on the borderland in the context chapter.

part of my search for indicators of co-existence and shared experiences, and this was also the case with the question on mobility. The questions on mobility (7) and an ID card (6) proved less useful to the analysis. However, the context related to the debate on citizenship that was also included in section 5 was somewhat more fruitful.

### Survey - section 1

Question number	Question	Demographic information	Shared experiences	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
1	Place of residence	x			Questions 1 - 5: Basic information about the respondents.
2	How long have you lived here?	x			
3	Gender	x			
4	Age	x			
5	Who do you live with?	x			
6	Do you have a document that identifies you?	x		x	Related to the debate on citizenship in the Dominican Republic.
7	Have you ever travelled to...?	x	x	x	The idea was to get to know about the respondents' mobility.
8	In your family has anyone gone to live in another country?	x	x	x	Questions 8 - 10 address the respondent's personal experience with migration.
9	If yes - who?	x	x	x	
10	To what country?	x	x	x	

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Table 9 Survey section 1.

Question 6 was motivated by the debate on citizenship in the Dominican Republic, at that time, informed by Katerina Civolani Hischnjakow's "Vidas Suspendidas" (2011), by what I had learned from my time at OBMICA and by my collaboration with MUDHA, independently of this research. There was a large body of work and research on statelessness in the Dominican Republic: the 2013 conference "Challenging statelessness in Dominican Republic" (OBMICA), the constitutional challenge presented to the Supreme Court of Justice in the DR in 2005 and more. I intended to connect the findings from this question with findings from section five, but that did not make its way to the final cut.

## Section 2: Associations on the other’s nation and people

Section 2 deals with the first thing that comes to the respondents’ minds when they think about their neighboring country and its people. Do they echo established discourses on what a Dominican and Haitian is and is not, or do they have their own perspectives on these matters?

### Survey section 2

Question number	Question	Perceptions of the other	Perceptions of conflict	Co-existence and contact	Rationality and sources (key words)
11	What do you think when I say "Haitian"/"Dominican"? Write the first 3 – 5 words that come to mind.	x	x	x	Questions 11 & 12: Associations on the other. Perceptions of the other nation. Traces of established discourses?
12	What do you think when I say "Haiti"/"Dominican Republic"? Write the first 3 – 5 words that come to mind.	x	x	x	

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Table 10 Survey section 2.

At the time of creating and conducting the survey, I had recently published an article with my colleague Alissa Vik on student-driven research activities, including a segment on Norwegians’ preconceived ideas on Spain and its inhabitants (Vik & Yri, 2012). We wrote about how the categorization between an “us” and “the other” appears to be an essential part of human behavior, and about how one way of exploring the ideas on the other is to ask about spontaneous reactions to a given word, topic, name, brand, and so on. In this case, I chose to ask, “What do you think when I say “Haitian”/ “Dominican”? Write the first 3 – 5 words that come to mind.” The Dominicans were asked about their reactions and ideas regarding “Haitian” and “Haiti” and the Haitians were asked about their reactions and ideas regarding “Dominican” and Dominican Republic”. The intended outcome of these questions was to learn about how the youths viewed each other and the other nation, the terms used to describe each other and if they were mainly positive, negative, or neutral towards one another.

### Section 3: About direct contact, friendship, awareness of each other

This section's main rationality was looking for the respondents' perceptions of contact between Dominicans and Haitians in the borderland, which is connected to the history and context analyzed in Chapter three, in two ways:

- 1) The information from this section informs about frequent contact and shared life experiences across the border.
- 2) The information from this section therefore also serves as a counterweight to parts of the conflict-based discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations.

#### Survey - section 3 (I)

Question number	Question	Perceptions of the other	Co-existence and contact	Rationality and sources (key words)
13	Have you ever visited Haiti/DR?		x	Questions 13 - 17 were intended to provide information and indicators of co-existence, of contact and of shared experiences.
14	If yes, how often?		x	
15	If yes, on what occasion(s)?		x	
16	Would you like to visit Haiti/DR?	x	x	
17	Why? Why not?	x	x	

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Table 11 Survey section 3 (I).

These questions were thought to provide insight into everyday contact between young Haitians and Dominicans in the borderland. Mutual visits (question 13) and the desire to visit the other (question 16) would indicate levels of contact that are rarely acknowledged or included within the conflict-based discourses. The same goes for the questions on having a romantic partner (18), having friends from the other side of the border (19), and listening to each other's music and being up to date on current events in each other's country (20 and 21).

While I find that the section brought me important insight, there was at least one question that I – in hindsight – would not have included. Asking the youths (question 23) whether they are more often in contact with the other side than their parents was something that I had imagined would tell me about change in the borderland. But the

respondents mostly replied that they did not know, and I admit that the question was of little consequence to this research.

### Survey - section 3 (II)

Question number	Question	Perceptions of oneself	Perceptions of conflict	Co-existence and contact	Shared experiences	Rationality and sources (key words)
18	Do you think that your family would disapprove of your having a romantic partner from DR/Haiti?	x	x	x		Perceptions on acceptance of close contact.
19	Do you have friends from Haiti/DR?			x	x	Indicator of co-existence.
20	Do you listen to music from Haiti/DR?			x		Indicator of co-existence and shared experiences and references.
21	Are you informed on news from Hatiti/DR?			x		Indicator of co-existence and shared experiences and references.

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Table 12 Survey section 3 (II).

### Survey - section 3 (III)

Question number	Question	Perceptions of the other	Perceptions of oneself	Perceptions of conflict	Co-existence and contact	Shared experiences	Rationality and sources (key words)
22	Where you live, are most neighbors (All Haitian/Dom., mostly Haitian/Dom., a mixture of both)?		x		x	x	Intended to indicate perceptions of generational change.
23	Do you think that your generation is more frequently in contact with the other than your parent's generation?		x		x	x	Intended to indicate levels of co-existence and contact.
24	Can someone from the other country be trusted like someone for your country?	x	x	x			Intended to indicate perceptions of trust.

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Table 13 Survey section 3 (II).

**Section 4: About shared and opposite characteristics of the two nations, skin color, religion, and mutual assistance in times of need**

Section 4 deals with perceptions of each other and oneself, of conflict, and perceptions of shared experiences and co-existence. The rationality behind this section was the search for perceptions that confirmed, rejected, or added to the relevant discourses for this thesis. For instance, if the survey results indicated that Haitians and Dominicans expressed that they had more in common than what separated them, we could talk about a counterweight to the conflict-based discourses. Therefore, the first two questions simply asked about what Dominicans and Haitians had in common and what were the differences between the two.

**Survey - section 4 (I)**

Question number	Question	Perceptions of the other	Perceptions of oneself	Perceptions of conflict	Co-existence and contact	Rationality and sources (key words)
25	What do we have in common?	x	x		x	Questions 25 & 26 were related to my search for indicators of co-existence, shared experiences and conflict.
26	What are the differences, between Dominicans and Haitians?	x	x	x		

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Table 14 Survey section 4 (I).

Questions 27 and 28 explore the perceptions on the willingness to assist each other in times of need. The intended outcome of these questions had to do with levels of mutual trust. Should the results show a mutual trust in the other being ready to assist in times of need, this would be an indicator of co-existence, and a perception of the other as something other than the dichotomies of the conflict-based discourses.

Following the Haitian earthquake in 2010, the Dominicans were quick to assist the Haitians in their time of horrifying need and calamity (García-Peña, 2016; Wooding, 2010). The representation of this assistance as somewhat exceptional is something that I discuss in Chapter 3, in relation to the characteristics of the *rayano* citizen.

## Survey - section 4 (II)

Question number	Question	Co-existence and contact	Shared experiences	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
27	In case of an emergency, do you think that the Haitians would help the Dominicans?	x	x	x	Interviews (2011) in the borderlands spoke about Dominican assistance following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. García-Peña (2016), Wooding (2010), showed how Dominicans and the Dominican state had assisted Haiti in their time of great need. Was this relevant to the borderland youths?
28	In case of an emergency, do you think that the Dominicans would help the Haitians?	x	x	x	

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Table 15 Survey section 4 (II).

I also included a question in this section on whether skin color was relevant for trust, and another question on the perceived skin color of Dominicans and Haitians. This was guided by my understanding that these were relevant questions for my analysis of binational relations among the borderland youths. My understanding was that questions of skin color in the Dominican Republic carried significant weight as identity markers. Would there be other perceptions on skin color in the borderland than elsewhere? There were the trujillista, and to a certain degree balaguerista discourses that were obsessed with whiteness and European heritage (see Chapter 3) as Dominican national identity markers. In a book that received the Dominican *Premio Nacional del Ensayo* (1990) and the *Premio León Jiménez* for its second edition in 2001,<sup>11</sup> Manuel Núñez claimed that the Haitians do not “feel as part of a nation, but rather a race” (Núñez, 2001, p. 223). Edward Paulino (2016, p. 157) wrote that “more and more Dominicans, according to the electoral registry, are self-described or viewed as mixed. As a consequence, the black population continues to decrease”. Paulino views this partly as an exclusion of the Dominicans’ own blackness (2016, p. 159). There is a vast amount of literature on race and color in the Dominican Republic, and I wanted to see if this was something that I would find among the borderland youths, particularly as one of several

<sup>11</sup> I include this information about the prizes not to give merit to the argument, but to justify my use of Núñez’ arguments as examples of established discourse.

indicators of the conflict-based discourses on what is Dominican and what is Haitian. Yet, while examining Dominican and Haitian racial identities and racial self-identification can be a relevant topic, obviously, the questions would have to be framed differently to have value. I initially thought that these questions would be relevant to the analysis, but when it came down to it, I did not put much emphasis on them.

### Survey - section 4 (III)

Question number	Question	Perceptions of the other	Perceptions of oneself	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
29	Is the religion of the people on both sides of the border quite alike?	x	x		Questions 29 - 33 were intended to help establish similarities and divergence between the borderland youths' perspectives and the conflict-based discourses on what is Haitian and what is Dominican.
30	What color or colors are Dominicans?	x	x	x	
31	What color or colors are Haitians?	x	x	x	
32	Can skin color tell you whether you can trust someone?			x	
33	Why?			x	

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Table 16 Survey section 4 (III).



### Section 5: About rights to citizenship in a nation

This section contains three statements rather than questions that the respondents would have to take a stand on. They were all related to the debate and struggle for citizenship in the Dominican Republic. The intended outcome was to explore how my respondents felt about three of the core issues of the citizenship debate according to my assessment at the time. Later that year (2013), the 168-13 ruling would make international headlines, and this is something I will come back to in Chapter three. This section, according to my intention, would implicitly help me understand the respondents' position on a contemporary issue, which was an issue that was very much involved with the binational relations on the island.

#### Survey - section 5

Question number	Question	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
34	A person born in a country has the right to be a citizen of that country	x	Questions 34 - 36: Related to the debate on citizenship in the Dominican Republic. At that time, informed by Katerina Civolani Hischnjakow's "Vidas Suspendidas" (2011) and by learnings from my time at OBMICA.
35	The child of undocumented ("illegal") immigrants should be granted the right to nationality	x	
36	A child should not suffer for things his/her parents did	x	

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Table 17 Survey section 5.

### Section 6: About individual and national perspectives on the future

Section six deals with perceptions of conflict, co-existence and contact, shared experiences, and hopes for the future. It seeks perceptions that are related to the conflict-based discourses, as well as transnational or rayano discourses on binational relations. This section was important for this thesis, mainly due to questions 39 and 40, where I asked if the relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti should improve, and the follow-up question was simply why or why not.

## Survey - section 6

Question number	Question	Perceptions of conflict	Co-existence and contact	Shared experiences	Hopes for the future	Rationality and sources (key words)
37	Where would you like to live in 10 years?			x	x	With questions 37 & 38, I was exploring shared expectations and hopes for the future.
38	How do you reckon you will make a living in the future?			x	x	
39	Do you think that relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti should improve?	x	x	x		39 & 40 were intended to give me the youths' perceptions on why binational relations should or should not improve.
40	Why?	x	x	x		

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Table 18 Survey section 6.

## Section 7: About crossing the border, about problematic relations with the other

Section 7 deals with perceptions of conflict and context-related topics connected to border crossings and perceptions on problems between Haitians and Dominicans. This section was included to give me information about how the surveyed youths experienced and perceived problematic parts of the Dominican-Haitian binational relations, both on a personal level and on an institutional level.

## Survey - section 7

Question number	Question	Perceptions of conflict	Shared experiences	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
41	If there are problems between Dominicans and Haitians, how should they be resolved?	x		x	Partly motivated by Nobel approach that included church communities and partly by Latinobarómetro (2011) and the question of confidence in institutions.
42	Have you heard of someone who has had problems with a Haitian/Dominican?	x		x	Interviews (2011 & 2013) that spoke of troubles between Haitians and Dominicans.
43	Have you had problems with a Haitian/Dominican?	x		x	
44	Have you personally ever had problems with the border authorities?			x	Interviews (2011 & 2013), field notes, Petrozziello & Wooding (2012).
45	If, yes, what kind of problems?			x	

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Table 19 Survey section 7.

Questions 41 to 45 on border crossings and problems with the other were motivated by my interviews in the borderland in 2011 and 2013, where I was told about frequent troubles related to entering and exiting the two countries, however, more so for the Haitians and to a lesser degree for the Dominicans. There were also frequent references to different kinds of trouble between Haitians and Dominicans, so I wanted to explore if this was of importance to the youths as well. A report by Allisson Petrozziello and Bridget Wooding on violence towards Haitian women in the borderland (Petrozziello & Wooding, 2012) was also important on this point. Question 41 asked the respondents to decide who should intervene in cases of problems between Haitians and Dominicans. This was motivated by the Nobel Project structure (working through a community based on religious communities) and by the 2011 Latinobarómetro – a regional survey on attitudes, values, confidence in institutions, in democracy, and other topics.

My multiple border crossings during my preparations for the fieldwork, as well as throughout the early phases of the field-work itself (prior to conducting the surveys), were also important learning sessions for me. The Dominican-Haitian border is host to several parallel realities. On the one hand, you will find a strict set of rules, fees and

regulations, applicable and understandable and agreed upon. On the other hand, you will find extra and hidden charges and unexpected obstacles – some understandable and others not so much (additional tax without a receipt “for having dark windows”, the internationally well known “a little something for the local youth club”, and similar examples). These hidden or extra charges may or may not be asked for, and should you refuse to pay them, you might have to wait. However, you might also experience that nothing will happen when you do not pay and you are allowed to continue.

For instance, one day crossing the border in Jimaní – Malpasse (on the main route connecting the two nations’ capitals), in August of 2011, included more than two hours of waiting just to get out of the Dominican Republic. We later understood that we had paid bribes in Dominican Pesos, Haitian Gourdes and American Dollars, thinking that we were paying only the normal fees and taxes (entering and exiting both nations). We were in a hurry to make it on time to the town of Fond Parisienne and return to Jimaní before nightfall. Upon our return to the border after having completed the interviews in Fond Parisienne, things got even more complicated. A Dominican friend, travelling with us, was kept at the border due to what they called “some problems with her documents”. They threatened to throw her in jail for trying to enter her own country allegedly in an illegal manner. The threat was carried out by the very same person who had allowed us to exit the Dominican Republic a few hours earlier. At that point, we neither had the cash nor the desire to pay, so we ended up waiting it out, and eventually entered Dominican Republic again.

So, when I ask my respondents in the survey about whether they had encountered difficulties crossing the border, this was in no way a random question. Quite to the contrary, it was the result of both what I had been told in my preliminary interviews, and of my own experiences from my own border crossings.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Another example of this was our visit to Belladère in Haiti, also during the preliminary interviews in 2011. The border at Comendador/Elias Piña – Belladère closes at six o’clock every evening, just like the rest of the border, and we were uncertain whether we would be able to make it back to the Dominican side in time. The military representative on the Dominican side told us that this would not be a problem, we should just “do as the Haitians”, he told us, explaining that there was a hole in the border fence next to the large iron gate, through which we should enter. The only problem was that when we returned later on that same night, and entered “like the Haitians”, there had been a change of guards, and the guards on the new shift were not too eager to let us back in, just like that. Quite understandably so, one might add. After some discussion we did, however, enter by promising never to enter “like the Haitians” on another

## Section 8: About perceived threats to the island, about school discourse on the other, about the perceived number of Haitians in the Dominican Republic

Section eight deals with perceptions of conflict, shared experiences, and context-related topics. Question 46, on the number of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, was intended to explore the degree to which the Dominicans and the Haitian youths had an idea of how many Haitians lived in the Dominican Republic at that moment. The Dominican ONE (Oficina Nacional de Estadística) released the first national survey on immigrants in 2012, and we therefore had numbers available for comparison. The question specified, and this was read out aloud to the respondents, that by “Haitian” we were referring to someone born in Haiti – as opposed to Dominicans of Haitian descent. The question was not an important part of my analysis.

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occasion. As a visiting researcher, I found most guards on both sides of the border to be inclined towards assisting the visitor, at least in the case of Scandinavians like myself. My research later showed – unsurprisingly – that this relaxed and solution-minded way of handling situations may not be representative of the treatment offered to Dominicans and Haitians who cross the borders on a more regular basis than what I did.

## Survey - section 8

Question number	Question	Perceptions of conflict	Shared experiences	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
46	How many Haitians do you think there are in the Dominican Republic? By "Haitian", we refer to a person born in Haiti.			x	The Dominican ONE's (Oficina Nacional de Estadística) first national survey on immigrants in 2012.
47	In your opinion, which of these phenomena most threaten your country?	x	x	x	Partly based on Latinobarómetro (2011) and additionally more specific phenomena thought to be of interest (international agencies and migration).
48	Have any of your teachers spoken negatively about Haiti/Dominican Republic in class?			x	Questions 48 -49: Pilot interviews (2011) and school leader interviews (2013) indicated that both Haitians and Dominicans identified the school system as one of the sources of negative perceptions of each other.
49	Have any of your teachers spoken positively about Haiti/Dominican Republic in class?			x	

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Table 20 Survey section 8.

The options available to choose from, in question 47, were based on the Latinobarómetro survey (2011) in which perceived threats to the nation constitute a theme every year. I included topics from that list, such as corruption, economic problems/inequality, violence, unemployment, confidence in institutions like parliament (translated to "the politicians" in the survey), and additionally I added phenomena thought to be of interest, but that bore no relation to the Latinobarómetro (such as international agencies and migration).

Questions 48 and 49 were arrived at after both periods of field interviews in the borderland showed that teachers and local Nobel Project leaders on both sides had claimed that education – particularly in the Dominican Republic – had an important role in shaping and reshaping the ideas that Haitian and Dominican youths had of one another.

### Section 9: About associations with the word “MINUSTAH” and about fear of the other

Section nine deals with perceptions of conflict and fear (questions 51 and 52): “Are you afraid of the Haitians/Dominicans?”, followed by an open ended “why?”. Section nine also includes a question (50) on the perceptions of the MINUSTAH in the borderland.

The motivation behind the MINUSTAH question was to learn if the presence of foreign military forces was perceived as a relevant issue by the borderland youths. I had visited the borderland on several occasions prior to my fieldwork and MINUSTAH were always visibly present, heavily armed, at the border checkpoints and in the surrounding areas on the Haitian side. Haitian anthropologist and researcher Rachele Doucet explained that “empirical data collected throughout the country show that the population is not clear at all as to the mandate of MINUSTAH. ‘We don’t know what they’re doing and why they’re here’ is the usual answer”, (personal communication, January 15, 2013). Doucet was also clear that “empirical data and systematic observation show that since 2004 to the present, the level of confidence in MINUSTAH among the population has not increased, and this is rather trending in the opposite direction” (R. Doucet, personal communication, January 15, 2013). The question on MINUSTAH was intended as one of the questions that could broaden my understanding of particularly the Haitian side of the borderland, yet it did not become an important part of my subsequent analysis.

The other issue refers to fear. Do they fear each other? And – if so, why? In Chapter three, I will explore the systematic installation of fear in the Dominicans when it comes to what the Haitians supposedly represent of evil, witchery, and other negative and often racist portrayals. Likewise, the Haitians could be expected to fear the Dominicans, based on contemporary experiences at the border, the collective memory of the 1937 massacre, or what friends and family might have told them from experiences in the Dominican Republic. Knowing *why* the borderland youths were afraid – or not – could provide me with information on how they perceived binational relations and how they indirectly positioned themselves in relation to the conflict-based discourses on binational relations.

## Survey - section 9

Question number	Question	Perceptions of conflict	Shared experiences	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
50	Do you associate anything with the word "MINUSTAH"?			x	Interviews that spoke of MINUSTAH's presence in Haiti and in the borderlands, field notes.
51	Are you afraid of the Haitians/Dominicans?	x	x	x	The conflict-based discourses (see chapter three for context on this) have portrayed the Dominicans and Haitians as eternal counterparts. Fear of the other is to be expected, but what would my respondents say about fear?
52	Why?	x	x	x	

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Table 21 Survey section 9.

### Section 10: About perceptions of the other's levels of criminality and of confidence in the other. About perceptions of general relations and the question of "unification" of the island

Section 10 collects data on a set of topics related to confidence in the other, and on perceptions of the binational relations. It relates to how the youths view each other in light of several contextual particularities that I will comment on below.



## Survey - section 10 (I)

Question number	Question	Perceptions of the other	Perceptions of oneself	Perceptions of conflict	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
53	Do you think there is a "peaceful invasion" of Dominican territory by Haitians?			x	x	Was the myth of a "Haitian invasion" also alive in the borderlands?
54	Does a Haitian person commit more crimes than a Dominican person?	x	x		x	54 & 55: preliminary interviews on both sides indicated mutual distrust. Was this the case among the youth as well?
55	Does a Dominican person commit more crimes than a Haitian person?	x	x		x	

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Table 22 Survey section 10 (I).

Questions 53 and 56 are on perceptions of the myths of an invasion and the alleged unification of the island. Both topics belong to the trujillista legacy – although not invented by Trujillo – and are presented in Chapter three. Would my respondents echo these ideas? Question 59 was related to the same myths, but with another point of departure – does the Haitian workforce inside the Dominican Republic replace Dominicans? The inclusion of this question under this umbrella was partly motivated by a Dominican economist and researcher, Agustín González, who published a book on the importance of the Haitian workforce to the Dominican economy (González, 2012). The increased visibility of Haitians in Dominican urban zones (FLACSO, 2004), and the significant importance of Haitians to the Dominican economy, in combination with an

increasing population density (Ceara Hatton, Marsteintredet, & Yri, 2016; González, 2012), could turn the Haitian presence into a perceived threat.

### Survey - section 10 (II)

Question number	Question	Perceptions of conflict	Co-existence and contact	Shared experiences	Context related topics	Rationality and sources (key words)
56	In your opinion, which of these statements are more correct? (regarding the alleged unification of the island)				x	Was the myth of the "forced unification" of the island also alive in the borderlands?
57	Do Haitians who come to the Dominican Republic suffer abuse?				x	Abuse of different sorts against Haitians in the Dominican Republic is widely documented, but was this on the borderland youths' radar?
58	Why do we have the binational markets?				x	Who gains from the existence of the markets, according to the borderland youth?
59	Do you think that the Haitians displace the Dominican workforce?				x	González (2012) on the importance of the Haitian workforce to the Dominican economy.
60	Which of these words best describes the situation between Dominicans and Haitians where you live? You can choose more than one if you want.	x	x	x	x	What key word(s) would the youth prefer to describe the co-existence in the borderlands?

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Table 23 Survey section 10 (II).

Questions 54 and 55 basically ask who commits more crimes, a Dominican or a Haitian? Perhaps an odd question, admittedly, yet there is an explanation. On both sides of the border, the interviewees from the Nobel Project structure had told me to remember that the Haitians were not to be trusted, and vice versa on the Haitian side, that the Dominicans were not to be trusted. I therefore included this question to see if this was a perception that the respondents shared.

Question 57 was based on the widely documented abuses against Haitians in the Dominican Republic. Was this something that my respondents were aware of, and would the perception differ from the Haitian respondents compared to the Dominicans?

The final question of the survey asked which key words the youths would prefer to describe the situation between Dominicans and Haitians where they lived.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The options were *conflict, indifference, culture of peace, understanding, collaboration, brotherhood, shared destiny, hostility, misunderstanding, trade, and other.*

### ***The analytical process***

My research revolves around encounters and coexistence between the Haitians and the Dominicans. To search for structures in each discourse – in this case the groups mentioned – I had to start analyzing the topics that emerged from the interviews.

*The topics* represent the most important information in a discourse, and they explain what the discourse is about. We also need to search for and define what constitutes a specific discourse and what makes it understandable and identifiable: “For a discourse to be understandable, it depends on a series of shared perceptions” (Neumann, 2002, p. 38). I identified these “shared perceptions” through an analysis of the interview transcriptions and an analysis of the survey conducted in the borderland. Repeated – and therefore also *shared* – perceptions on the other, on binational relations and perceptions on co-existence and transnational experiences, have shaped the core of my material. These shared perceptions constitute the discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations, as seen and lived by the youths of the borderland. Examples of shared perceptions in my material is that the Dominican-Haitian relations need to improve; an example of a shared perception that is shared by a large majority of the youths on both sides of the border. In that sense, this also becomes part of the “indicators of co-existence” in that it constitutes a shared experience and a shared world view. At the same time, it could also be used to justify the conflicted-based discourses. These shared perceptions need not be shared by everyone, but we may identify them within or across groups. Examples of a shared perception among some of the Dominican respondents is that Haitians are hard-working and organized, while at the same time there is also a shared perception among segments of the Dominican respondents that they “cannot be trusted” and they are more likely to be a criminal than Dominicans. The same was true the other way around. A shared perception among the Haitians was that the Dominicans are “bad mannered”, “scary” and (also) “cannot be trusted”, while at the same time the Dominicans are perceived as being “respectful” and a “sister and brother of the Haitians”.

Some utterances are casual or random, while others are recognizable within a larger sample of the population. Some utterances belong to a sole individual, some are shared by many. The latter are those of interest to me.

To understand what is random and what is not, I followed the concept of “shared perceptions” as a key to separate random utterances from what seems to be discourses on different levels. These discourses are created by a historical and social context. This again means that for me to understand these utterances, I must also understand their context. Another important reason for the need of context is for me to be able to distinguish between what is significantly different among the discourses identified amongst the Haitian and Dominican borderland youths. I need a deep understanding of the context to be able to understand the ways in which the rayano discourse distinguishes itself from other relevant discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations.

My most important approach is indeed the qualitative one, but I also need the quantitative. As Burke Johnson and Anthony Onwuegbuzie also pointed out in 2004, mixed research can be “the natural complement to traditional qualitative and quantitative research”(Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A researcher may find key stories that highlight the research question “better than quantitative data could do alone” (Utvær, 2013). A mixed-method approach can be viewed as a pragmatic combination of approaches with a focus on the research problem rather than on the method. If a researcher finds that either a quantitative or qualitative approach by itself is not sufficient, he or she may opt to combine them, which I did. By comparing sample groups to each other, within the population that we study, we gain knowledge that we may not be able to collect individually, and that tells us something about the group. In my case, the use of statistics and numbers allows me to investigate a larger population than the one I have been able to talk to directly. My objective was not to represent the Dominican and Haitian populations, but rather to gain knowledge about a specific demographic group, that is the youths on both sides of the border regions, found within the Nobel Project network. I need and use the quantitative data as a means of completing the focus-group material, to broaden the perspective, and to go beyond what I was able to see from the interviews.

This combination is also characteristic of CDA itself and I discovered it was an absolute necessity for my own work. I needed to read the work of historians (for example Edwards, 2016; Vega, 1998; Price-Mars, 1953; Sagás, 2000) to understand the historical context of the fear planted during Trujillo and Balaguer, the work of sociologists

(Cedano, 2010; Dilla Alfonso, 2007) to learn about previous studies of attitudes in the borderland, and the work economists (Ceara Hatton, 2014; 2017; 2016; Gonzáles, 2012) to teach me about Haitian contributions to the Dominican economy and about the development gap between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. I needed a multidisciplinary set of articles and books debating the discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations and stereotyped depictions of Dominican-Haitian relations to enable an analysis of the transnational perspectives and the rayano condition (García-Peña, 2016; Torres-Saillant, 2004; Mayes & Jayaram, 2018; Fumagalli, 2015). A number of OBMICA-related research papers were indispensable in improving my understanding of the current situation between Dominicans and Haitians (Petrozziello, 2017; Petrozziello & Wooding, 2012; Belliard & Wooding, 2011; Tejada & Wooding, 2012).

### ***Concluding remarks***

This research project is the result of a multi-layered set of preparations spanning over more than two decades of relationships with the island that I am studying. This includes non-academic endeavors, such as living on the island, and subsequent visits all over the Dominican Republic and Haiti, both for professional and for private ends, as well as the more strictly defined preliminary fieldwork and eventually the main fieldwork and the gathering of data for my analysis. This extensive and time-consuming approach to fieldwork is a necessity for me to begin to understand and explain the sociohistorical contexts that will be dealt with in the following chapters, but it was also crucial to my ability to identify the right questions for my questionnaires and to be able to search for the different discourses that exist within my material. CDA places great value on the understanding and interpretation of context, and it stresses the close relationship between discourse and reality, which also includes the researcher's interpretation as a part of the analysis. In the next chapter I will analyze the contexts that define and constitute the discourses that I found to be the most relevant to my research, and towards the end of the chapter I will also give an account of the three discourses defined to be of most interest for this thesis.

I have dedicated Chapter three to an analysis of the relevant context of the Dominican-Haitian relations, with special focus on the borderland. This has to do with the

importance of context for understanding and analyzing my respondents' utterances. Embedded in the CDA is the idea that we are neither totally free from our context – or social world, if you will – nor are we totally bound by it. There are external powers pushing us in different and at times opposing directions, at the same time as we are theoretically free *not* to follow these external powers all the way.





## Chapter 3 – Rayano contexts of the borderlands, of conflict and transnationalism

The underlying research question is *how can the borderland youths' perceptions of each other and of the binational relations be interpreted and analyzed in a historical and social context?* In answering the part of the question that relates to the historical and social context in this chapter, I will use three sub-questions to structure my approach:

- 1) *What characterizes the historical and social context of the Dominican-Haitian borderlands?*
- 2) *What is the relevant historical and social context behind the discourses of Dominican-Haitian binational relations?*
- 3) *What are the relevant discourses for framing my data analysis?*

This chapter provides the necessary background and thorough analysis for understanding my informants' responses in the following chapters. This chapter is dedicated to an analysis of “the social field in which (my informants' world views and discourses) are created” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 18). I have framed selected parts of Dominican-Haitian relations and history with the aim of understanding both the existence of conflict-based discourses and the historical and contemporary background for the transnational discourses, which are the two most common discourses mentioned by my respondents. I will focus on what is specific for the borderlands, and more weight will be given to Dominican sources and history, as explained in Chapters one and two.

This is followed by a third category, which will be instrumental for the final analysis in Chapter six. The title of the chapter – *Rayano contexts of the borderlands* – is inspired by writings on the “rayano”, the borderland inhabitant (García-Peña, 2016; Torres-Saillant, 2004) whose existence and perspectives are what I am researching through the lens of my Dominican and Haitian respondents.



### ***Colonial treaties, autonomy, and US invasions: the making of the borderland***

This section will explain how the border came to be defined through several treaties, agreements, and foreign interference<sup>14</sup>. Special attention will be given to the US-Hispaniola relations, and in particular their impact in the borderland and the likelihood that they were a co-creator of anti-haitianism in the Dominican Republic. This section also shows how since its inception, the borderland has existed to a certain degree in defiance of standardized national identities and discourses. The Dominican-Haitian borderland inhabitants share a history that has been “more collaborative than adversarial” (Paulino, 2001, p. 18), even though the opposite has been the most common portrayal, and this is an insight that connects the history of the border with the main purpose of this thesis.

#### **An autonomous borderland**

In his doctoral thesis on the making of the Dominican-Haitian border (2001, pp. 26 – 31), Edward Paulino points out that already at the beginning of the sixteenth century the center parts of the island – today’s borderland – were inhabited by runaway indigenous Tainos and African slaves. These regions, remote and out of reach for the Spanish colonial authorities, were mainly located in the south-eastern parts of the island. “In essence,” Paulino explains, “the border was born out of a democratic need where people existed on equal terms” (Paulino, 2001, p. 27). The communities that grew in this largely autonomous region were multicultural, multilingual, and to a certain degree neglected by the colonial authorities. Consequently, they would pose a threat both to the Spanish colonial masters of the sixteenth century as well as to “Trujillo’s twentieth century nation-building schemes” (Paulino, 2001, p. 28). This original autonomy of the borderland during the 16th century does not, however, indicate that the border areas were left to themselves, quite to the contrary. The border was created over the course of a long and periodically dramatic history.

#### **The colonial border is born**

The first foreign forces on the island were European. Following Cristopher Columbus’ shipwreck on the northern coast of Hispaniola, before Christmas in 1492, the Spanish

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<sup>14</sup> The border as it is today, was born from the colonial division of Hispaniola. This means that the previous indigenous division of the island into five chieftaincies will not be dealt with here.

went on to colonize large parts of what is today the American continent. On Hispaniola, Spain would eventually be followed by the French, and by “1629 some wandering Frenchmen sought a home in the little island of Tortuga, six miles of the North Coast of San Domingo” (James, 1989, p. 4), and in that way, French colonial settlement was – unknowingly at the time – initiated. The French would go on to establish a colonial rule on the Western parts of Hispaniola that was so barbaric that it would be unparalleled in the Americas, but what is important to bear in mind here is the division of the island between two European colonial powers. The eastern Spanish part would be known as Santo Domingo or San Domingo, while the French western part would be known as Saint Domingue. Eventually, these two colonies would become the Dominican Republic and Haiti, respectively. Territorial claims have been at the heart of the island’s existence ever since colonialization, and inside the “colonial archives of Sevilla and Aix-en-Provence, entire catalogues are dedicated to “Border Affairs” between Saint Domingue and Santo Domingo” (Bragadir, 2018, p. 23). This is indicative of the complexity of the border, but one point is most important to consider: the two parts of the island were difficult to isolate from the other.

#### [Treaties, the Haitian revolution, and the unification of the island](#)

The Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 is commonly and mistakenly referred to as the first border treaty on the island (Paulino, 2001, 32). The treaty put an end to conflict in Europe between France and Spain, and while the treaty did not specify anything about the borderline on Hispaniola, it was interpreted among the French as a recognition of their possessions on the western and northern part of the island. Following the treaty a number of violent clashes flared up between the Spanish and French colonial forces, and this was followed by a border agreement in 1731. This established the first formally recognized colonial border on the island.

Between 1731 and 1777, France and Spain entered into a series of border agreements in efforts to secure the economy and territorial limits of French Saint Domingue and Spanish Santo Domingo. Thanks to the 1731 border treaty, which established the first border limits on the island and made possible the stabilization and increase in commercial trade between the two colonies, new border towns were founded to repopulate the Spanish frontier. (Paulino, 2001, p. 37)

With the Treaty of Aranjuez (1777), “the border became a tangible reality when stone pyramid shaped markers were placed to demarcate the agreed-upon border between the colonial governments of Saint Domingue and Santo Domingo” (Paulino, 2001, p. 38). Paulino (2001) explains that this treaty also facilitated and legalized certain cross-border trade, which became important on both sides of the border. The existence of these and subsequent treaties that in different ways attempted to define the border line does not mean that the colonial authorities controlled the border and its inhabitants. Indeed, they did not. The constantly changing demarcation line simply meant that the people of the borderland, “mostly contrabandists, escaped slaves, free people of color, and immigrants from the Canary Islands (..), found ways to thwart the rules and limitations of this border” (Bragadir, 2018, p. 28). Not only did they fail to obey the regulations and limitations, continues Bragadir, but the French as well as the Spanish authorities constantly failed in their attempts to create any sort of allegiance to the colonial endeavors in the borderland.

As Hispaniola was approaching the final decade of the eighteenth century, the Haitian revolution started its path towards what would become Haiti, in 1804. During this period, the Treaty of Basilea (1795) dictated that the entire island of Hispaniola would belong to France, thus eliminating the border for a while, before it was brought back to life once again as soon as Spain retook Santo Domingo in 1809. The Haitian revolution and its impact on the hemisphere, the world and Dominican-Haitian relations is dealt with later in this chapter. Here it is important to point out that following the Haitian revolution there were also binational consequences, including in the borderland. During what is known in the Dominican Republic as the Haitian invasion (1822-1844), traditionally depicted as the darkest hour of Dominican history, many border towns on the Dominican side sided with the Haitians. Again, we may observe the ever shifting allegiances of the borderland (Bragadir, 2018). Those Dominican border residents who were descendants of runaway slaves knew all too well the barbarity that awaited them if slavery were to be reinstated on the island. Therefore, the inhabitants of Monte Cristi and Dajabón had “resoundedly opted to support (Haiti’s) military campaign” (Paulino, 2001, p. 42).

It is true that the Republic of Haiti unsuccessfully attempted to conquer the Dominican Republic on three different occasions in the nineteenth century. These events have become a prominent part of the national memory. However, it is important to point out that although the traditional historiography neglects it, the reality is that Dominicans today should be grateful for the 1822-1844 Haitian unification of the island, which essentially abolished slavery. (Paulino, 2001, p. 18)

After the Haitian domination of Hispaniola between 1822 and 1844, the Dominican side went back to the frontier limits of the Treaty of Aranjuez, while the Haitians claimed the indivisibility of the island. In 1867, both nations initiated a bilateral process with the aim of consolidating the border demarcation line and ending the conflict once and for all. This endeavor stalled and was reinitiated in 1874. Constitutional reforms were made on both sides, new agreements were reached in 1896, and in 1929 a new bilateral agreement on the demarcation line was finally in place. In 1930 the demarcation process was suspended due to Haitian objections, before negotiations were restarted again, and finally, in 1936 a bilateral border treaty was signed in acknowledgement of the 1929 agreement (Franco, 1983, pp. 146 - 149).

The censuses from the borderland Dominican towns late in the nineteenth century were the first in the area to take origin into account, displaying a much more culturally diverse population than later Trujillo propaganda would have people believe (Paulino, 2016, pp. 150 - 156). "From the mid- to the late nineteenth century and through the twentieth century, Haitian and Dominican border residents created an interdependent and mutual space where negotiation, understanding, and daily interaction were the norm" (Paulino, 2001, pp. 18 - 19). Like Paulino, Bragadir explains how "borders are fundamentally contested spaces and why they provoke anxiety in state powers that want to assert their hegemony. This was notably the case among state officials on Hispaniola" (Bragadir, 2018, p. 32).

This fluidity and cross-border flux of people, ideas, trade, and culture took a gruesome turn to the worse after the U.S. invasion (1916-1924) and during the early days of the Trujillo dictatorship. In 1936, a "border treaty between Haiti and the Dominican Republic resolved the problem of border demarcations". However,

...Haitians who resided within what had been newly defined as Dominican territory, remained in their place of residence. This permanence presented a prominent barrier for Trujillo's plan to consolidate the nation. The 1937 Haitian Massacre became an enforcement mechanism for the 1936 treaty as military men and civilians (many of whom were long-time border residents) killed Haitians throughout the border area and beyond (Paulino, 2001, p. 8).

The massacre of 1937, its significance, and the Trujillo era will be dealt with below. At this moment in history, the missing piece of the puzzle is the relations to the United States and how they also shaped the borderland and the two nations.

### [The triangular asymmetric relationship with the United States](#)

The United States have had and continue to have an enormous influence on life in Hispaniola, within and beyond the scope of this thesis. For instance, the U.S. invaded both nations twice during the twentieth century,<sup>15</sup> and the United States is the most popular destination for both Haitian and Dominican migrants (Noe-Bustamante, Flores, & Shah, 2019; C. Yates, 2021). There is also a history of “meddling in Dominican affairs by U.S. government agencies and unfair exploitation of Haitian labor by specific U.S.-based businesses” (S. Martínez, 2014, p. 175). The United States sponsored the creation of the Dominican National Guard that would help facilitate Rafael Trujillo's subsequent rise to power (García-Peña, 2016; Paulino, 2001). The U.S. is also among each nation's most important trade partners, and remittances from Haitians and Dominicans in the U.S. are an integral part of the island's economy. For this thesis, the most important aspect of American influence is how the occupation of the Dominican Republic (1916–1924) may have played an important part in strengthening and institutionalizing anti-Haitian sentiments in the Dominican society.

In 1915, “US Marines landed in Haiti, occupying the second-oldest nation of the Americas for a period of nineteen years” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 61). This came on the back of “a long history of US interference in Haiti extending back to the country's

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<sup>15</sup> Haiti was occupied by the United States from 1915–1934, and during the military intervention *Operation Uphold Democracy* in 1994–1995. The Dominican Republic was under United States occupation from 1916–1924 and was also invaded by the U.S. during the Dominican Civil War in 1965.

founding” (Bellegarde-Smith et al., 2016). The following year, 1916, the United States invaded the Dominican Republic following a decades long series of interference and intrusion into Dominican affairs (García-Peña, 2016, p. 60). This was an occupation fueled by racism and violence. It is difficult to precisely measure the impact of the U.S. occupation when it comes to anti-Haitian sentiments among the Dominican elites (Mayes, 2014, pp. 111 - 113), but it appears that the most conservative nationalist Dominican sectors, from which eventually Trujillo would emerge, and that would embrace him, were built on a racist hierarchy that elevated whiteness and subordinated and dehumanized blackness. Therefore, even though the U.S. did not invent Dominican anti-haitianism, their racial hierarchy at least matched that of the Dominican conservative nationalists at the time of the occupation.

During the occupation, the United States had shown and expressed a desire to consolidate the Dominican-Haitian border. One of the perceived problems of the frontier was the “mixed border population”. The consolidation of the Dominican-Haitian border was fueled by the racist idea that sealing the border line would help the U.S. to civilize the Dominicans teach them how to behave (McPherson, 2016). The Dominicans were more light-skinned than the Haitians, and were “European enough and therefore equipped with the capacity to learn how to govern correctly under U.S. tutelage” (Mayes, 2014, pp. 105 - 108). Yet not all Dominicans were eager to learn “how to govern correctly” or “how to behave”, and therefore, as in previous times, the borderland became a hideout for insurgents. The porous Hispaniola border of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had been a continuous source of irritation for all the involved authorities at the time: Haitian, Dominican, and the United States. Insurgents from both sides of the border would go to the borderland to regroup, organize, and hide, and therefore the region was a constant thorn in the side of the authorities in Port-au-Prince and Santo Domingo. The borderland “became an asset for Dominican anti-American insurgency. Its inaccessibility and remoteness from both capital cities made it a perfect meeting place for Dominicans and Haitians to conspire against the U.S. occupation forces and reinforce their long-standing inter-border collaborative relationship (Paulino, 2001, pp. 64 - 65).



The United States intended to control the borderland, and even though they eventually failed, they partook in shaping the border, and they strengthened and cultivated already existing racist ideologies against both nations, but particularly against Haiti (Paulino, 2016, pp. 36 - 39). The anti-black and anti-Haitian narratives that the U.S. soldiers brought with them from home, of “flesh eating zombies and criminal black emperors (...) probably grew as they encountered local rumors of Haitian monsters who killed virgins and raped their dead bodies in broad daylight”(García-Peña, 2016, p. 81). The US perceptions of the two nations were based on similar dichotomies that the Trujillista Dominican authorities would later come to consolidate, and this was essentially born from a colonial anti-Black sentiment. The US occupation fostered “a criminalization of Afro-religious practices and practitioners through official and unofficial channels (...) raids of religious celebrations, including birth blessings and funerals in the borderland towns (...) and the branding of the Afro-religious as savage or bandit” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 60). There was a growing amount of US literature before and during the occupations that depicted the Haitians as “a land of savages without history” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 78), but this was not limited to negative stereotyping of the Haitians: Before and during the initial phases of the occupations, between 1904 and 1919, “articles (in the U.S.) referred to Haitians and Dominicans as childlike, lazy, ignorant, and savage. The United States thus had to step in and rescue them from savagery” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 74). Yet, savagery was not avoided, quite to the contrary, as 1937 and the Trujillo dictatorship would later demonstrate all too drastically, and something that will be dealt with below.

This brief section on the vast topic that comprises US-Haitian-Dominican relations has hopefully helped to place Dominican-Haitian relations within a paradigm larger than the natural borders of the island of Hispaniola, and within an ideological framework that shaped the region and that continues to shape it.



### ***Dominican-Haitian relations and life in the borderlands***

An important point of departure for me is that Dominican-Haitian relations make life worse for the inhabitants of the borderlands, from both nations. This first section explores the historical and social contexts of life in the Dominican and Haitian borderlands. I concur with Lauren Derby on the importance of the border when aiming to understand Dominican-Haitian relations. Derby wrote that: “The Dominican Republic has a history of defining its national identity in relation to Haiti, and the border has a privileged position therein, as the site where power relations have been measured throughout the centuries” (Derby, 1994). The inhabitants on either side of the border are hostages to a number of circumstances beyond their control but that very much affect their lives and realities. These realities again affect the way they perceive themselves and the other. Some of these perceptions may be rooted in Trujillo-era anti-haitianism, some in contemporary framings of conflict, and some may be rooted in personal life experiences.

#### **The need for a new view on the border**

Eighteen years ago, the Dominican researcher and writer Rubén Silié expressed the need for a new perspective on the border in the opening of *Una isla para dos* – “An island for the two”. He suggests that we should stop viewing the border as merely a divisive zone that marks the end points of each nation, and instead see the borderlands as a starting point for collaboration and, simply, for co-existence (Silié & Segura, 2002, p. 13). However, he continues, adopting this kind of framing of the overriding border issue is a long stretch for sectors of the Dominican society who see the border as a chaos of Haitian migrants, and as a zone of warlocks and witch doctors, something very far removed from the urban nests of the Dominican world. This framing that Silié refers to, seeing the border as virtually a “no-go zone” for certain sectors of Dominican society, could be a contributing factor to the different levels of abandonment and relative lack of progress experienced by my respondents. Torres-Saillant (2004) also portrays the opportunity to view the border in a new way, an approach that does not entirely follow the colonial definitions of a border line, and which in its turn also demands a new view on the two nations.

### Dominican-Haitian relations make life worse for the borderland inhabitants

An example of how the Dominican-Haitian official relations make life worse for the inhabitants of the border is the frequent abuses experienced at the hand of various Government agencies. The border is a source of both legitimate revenue but also the personal enrichment of some of the officials working there, be they migration agents, military personnel, or the special agency for border protection, CESFRONT. For instance, in 2013, the Dominican senator Sonia Mateo, representing the border province of Dajabón, denounced the abuses perpetrated by the special border patrols, adding also that “if there’s no money, you won’t find the CESFRONT (...) the army does the work, and the CESFRONT collects” (Wooding, 2008). During my fieldwork and a later visit, I have also witnessed how the CESFRONT takes part in informally organized corruption, charging Haitians who cross the border at well-established crossing points that in fact do not exist officially. The routes that the immigrants can choose when entering the Dominican Republic illegally are so frequently in use that you will find well-trodden paths marking the entry and exit points, leading from the *Masacre* river and into the villages along the northern parts of the border. This is nothing new, as Turits (2003) points out, this has been going on since Dominican independence, becoming something of a headache for the Dominican authorities in the 1920s as they initiated endeavors to collect customs taxes along the very porous border. A lot of wealth was made from contraband, and local caudillos stood to gain from poor control, and continue to do so. This is relevant because this absence of government control of the border was pivotal in the rise of Dominican efforts “to establish agricultural colonies in the region” as a way of obstructing Haitian presence in the areas, as we also saw in the previous sections about the history of the border and the United States’ influence in the borderland. There was also a legitimate worry that an open border would make it easier for revolutionaries to establish themselves in these areas, organize their activities, smuggle arms via Haiti, and profit from contraband (Turits, 2003, pp. 151 – 157). Sending European farmers to populate the borderlands was something that started before Trujillo, and something that demonstrated the aim of stopping or impeding “the slow but incessant advance of the Haitian people”, as the Dominican authorities described the situation in *Comisión para el establecimiento de Colonias de Inmigrantes. Informe para estudiar las tierras de la Frontera* (Turits, 2003, p. 153). These settlements of imported white farmers would rapidly become less interesting to the Dominican authorities for various reasons, but the

anti-Haitian ideology that had fueled this experiment, alongside the need for a less abandoned Dominican borderland, would remain and “have a severe and transformative impact on the Dominican Republic, the frontier world, and visions of the Dominican nation during the Trujillo regime and beyond” (Turits, 2003, p. 155). This is to say that the borderlands are the home of a long history of disputes, something that affects those who inhabit the border.

### The urban complex in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands

The concept *Transborder Urban Complex* (TUC) has been used to categorize three of the four Dominican-Haitian town pairs that are of particular relevance to this thesis (Dilla Alfonso, 2015a, 2015b, 2008). Jimaní – Fond Parisien is the exception, and could be described as a “strongly connected town pair”, which is a concept used to describe Jimaní – Malpasse (Dilla Alfonso, 2015a, p. 11), brought closer to each other by the binational market and the international border. Dilla Alonso has provided general characteristics of a TUC that are of relevance for my understanding of the Dominican-Haitian borderlands and their inhabitants.

### Population - border towns

Town	Total	Urban
Ouanaminthe	106 000	71 000
Belladère	86 000	13 000
Fond Parisiene	n.a.	21 000
Anse-à-Pitres	22 000	n.a.
Dajabón	28 000	20 000
Elias Piña (Comendador)	19 000	12 000
Jimaní	16 500	15 000
Pedernales	24 000	16 000

Created with Datawrapper

Table 24 Border towns: population overview at the time of my fieldwork. The population estimates are from around the time of my fieldwork periods.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The source for the Haiti statistics is the *Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique*<sup>16</sup> and the numbers date to 2015. The counted population only includes the adult population of 18 years and up. The exception is the Anse-à-Pitres listing, that has the same source, but dates to 2003. The Dominican source is the *Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas* and the statistics are based on the Dominican 2010 census.

First, the towns or cities in a TUC exist in geographical proximity to each other, without necessarily implying adjacency. Ouanaminthe (H) and Dajabón (DR) constitute the biggest urban complex at the border, they are located shoulder to shoulder in the northern part of the Dominican-Haitian border and are divided by the somberly named *Masacre* River, making it possible for anyone to cross by foot or by small boat, either via the international bridge at the checkpoint or at any one of the many illegal crossing points in or outside of Dajabón. Belladère (H) and Comendador (DR), a town pair located some 150 kilometers south of Dajabón and Ouanaminthe, belong to the more peripheral parts of the borderlands. The two towns, found inland, are relatively small and separated by 15 kilometers of gravel road. Comendador in Elias Piña is located close to the border, while Belladère is found approximately 13 kilometers from the border. Fond Parisien (H) – Jimaní (DR) is the least connected town pair among the border towns included in this study. They are located 16 kilometers from each other. Jimaní is a small town located right at the border itself, in the same way that all my Dominican border towns are also situated right at the border, or very close to it. Even though there is not much tourism in Jimaní, it is a town frequently visited from the outside. According to Haroldo Dilla Alonso “nobody goes to Jimaní. Everyone goes *through* her” (2015b, p. 28). As in all other border towns, the main contact is through market-related activities, but the border crossing in Jimaní is – in my experience – by far the most hostile of the four main border crossings. Anse-à-Pitres (H) – Pedernales (DR) is the southernmost town pair on the island, remote to most of their respective compatriots, located right next to each other, with only approximately two kilometers separating the town centers, a few minutes’ calm drive from each other, not including the border crossing.

Second, a TUC is also characterized by economic interdependence, yet with an asymmetric relation. This is reflected in the Dominican-Haitian binational economic relations. The two “major societal forces” (Kaye, 2012, p. 96) in Comendador and Elias Piña, are the binational markets and the border. The international border between Fond Parisien and Jimaní is economically very important, being the main line between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, with the highway that connects the two nations’ capitals, with as much as 60% of the transborder traffic passing directly through the Jimaní – Malpasse border crossing (Dilla Alonso, 2015b, p. 28). All four town pairs are connected

through their binational market in a similar fashion in an interdependent relationship where the Dominicans generally have most control (Ceara Hatton et al., 2016; Cedano, 2010; Murray, 2010c).

Third, a TUC is characterized by social relationships between the inhabitants of both cities. An example of the complexities of such relationships is described in Matthew D. Kay's doctoral thesis (2012) about Haitian children who attend school in Comendador. Kay points out how there is acceptance and empathy with the Haitians and inclusion in the local primary schools on the one hand, while at the same time there is skepticism, lack of interest in social interaction with the Haitians, and mutual distrust on the other hand. This dualism echoes Sobeida de Jesús Cedano's (2010) findings in Dajabón, and is echoed in the findings of this thesis, in all four town pairs. Dilla Alonso also points out that a TUC usually has a shared perception of mutual need, which does not exclude the existence of negative representations (racist, chauvinist, and so on) of the other nation's citizens. The perception of mutual need, in all the town pairs, is expressed when the youths talk about the binational market and the belief that the other nation's citizens would come to help should a crisis arise. In the same way, all four town pairs also showed the existence of negative representations of each other, as for example the Haitian fear of Dominican violence, and the Dominican fear of a Haitian invasion.

A final characteristic of the TUC comprises cross-border formal institutional relations – random or systematic – from the State and civil society. An example of systematic institutional relations on a government level is the Dominican Government's *green border* - Frontera verde - initiative in 2011, a reforestation project for the borderlands (Grullón, 2014, p. 94). An example of civil society systematic relations is the Jesuit-led collaboration between Dominican and Haitian authorities in 2013 to assist Haitian works in obtaining the necessary documents from Haitian and Dominican authorities to allow them legal entry into the Dominican Republic (R. Martínez, 2013). Another similar example is the Nobel Project, a systematic institutional civil society initiative.

To summarize this section, the relevant Dominican-Haitian town pairs are characterized by geographical proximity, an economic asymmetric interdependence, social relationships between the inhabitants, a shared perception of mutual need, the existence

of negative representations, and the existence of cross-border formal institutional relations. In the following sections, I will examine how the borderlands are distinguished from their respective nations.



### The Dominican borderlands and how they are distinguished

An important issue at stake for the inhabitants of the borderlands is the level of poverty. Haiti is significantly economically worse off, measured according to infrastructure and living standards (Ceara Hatton, 2014; Ceara Hatton et al., 2016), but on a subnational level, the indicators for the Dominican border provinces place them as being significantly worse off than the rest of the Dominican Republic. What follows below is based on figures from the two available statistics, one set was published by the *Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas* (ONE), the Dominican official bureau for statistics, prior to my fieldwork in 2013, and the figures referred to are from 2010 unless otherwise noted.

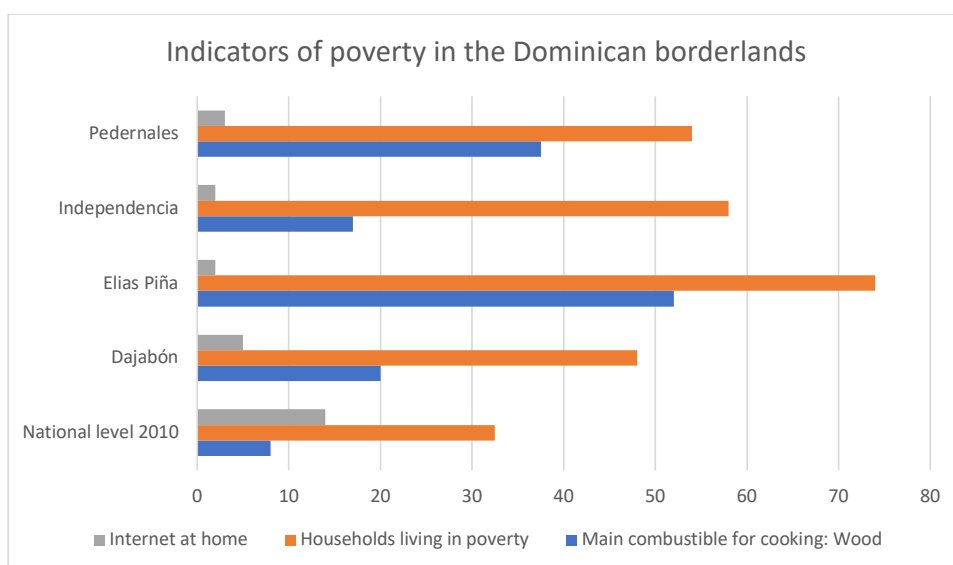


Table 15 Statistical Indicators Borderland from ONE 2014.

When I compared the statistics from ONE 2008 and ONE 2010, there is an over-all reduction of poverty that has also affected the borderlands positively. This does not change the fact that the western Dominican provinces are poorer than the national average, and by a solid margin as well.

I included four factors for this inquiry into how the borderlands compare to the rest of the Dominican Republic: the use of wood as a main combustible in cooking, the number of households with internet access at home, the percentage of households living in

poverty, and indicators of education. The use of indicators for measuring poverty and education in an area needs no further explanation, but perhaps the other two do. Internet access<sup>17</sup> is related to the United Nations Millennium Goal: making “available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications”,<sup>18</sup> and the ONE numbers show that the national average is almost three times higher than the technologically most developed border province, Dajabón. The other three provinces are even further behind. The low figures from ONE 2010 are indeed already ten years old and will have changed significantly by now. The numbers do, however, give a hint as to the level of connectivity with the outside world at the time of my survey and interviews in 2013. The reason for including the use of wood as a main combustibile for cooking relates to two facts: first, the border regions stand out in comparison to the national average, which is indicative of less access to electricity and gas for cooking, and indicative of a comparatively less developed area. There is far more widespread use of wood for cooking in the borderlands than in the rest of the country. The use of wood for cooking is also of some interest because cutting of wood in the border areas is normally associated with Haitians, but the numbers show that the use of wood for cooking also apply to the Dominicans in the area.

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<sup>17</sup> These numbers do not indicate the percentage of people in the borderland who are using the internet because there are of course many other ways of accessing it (schools, smart phones, universities, public WIFI-spots, internet centers, internet cafés, and so on).

<sup>18</sup> “Target 8F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications”. Source: <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/global.shtml>



Figure 2 Making charbon or charcoal by the traditional method, in St Luis du Sud, Haiti, 2015. Photo: JSY

Second, the burning of wood to make *charbon* or charcoal is associated with illegal cutting of trees in Haiti and the borderlands. The debate concerning the level of damage caused by these practices as well as the benefits,<sup>19</sup> is not something that I can go into here, but the ONE figures show that using wood for cooking is in no way solely a Haitian phenomenon, but rather something common in the borderlands.

Poverty is a borderland trademark. The national statistics for households living in poverty in 2010 were 32.5%, whereas 74% of Elias Piñas' homes lived in poverty according to the same estimates published by ONE, of which 48% are inside the bounds of the extreme poverty category. The surveyed community of Comendador is the least affected of the seven towns assessed in the official statistics, but nevertheless features a stunning 37% in extreme poverty. In Independencia, the share of households living in poverty was 70% in 2008. Among these, 24% are categorized as being in extreme poverty. As in the other provinces, there is a significant difference between the urban center of Jimaní (19% in extreme poverty) and the more peripheral towns and communities, ranging between 15 and 50% in extreme poverty. Pedernales also suffers poverty in numbers significantly higher than the national average. 60.5 % of the

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<sup>19</sup> A source on the topic of charcoal and Haiti is the UNEP report: "Haiti – South Department Forest Energy Supply Chains" (2016).

households are poor, including 27% living in extreme poverty. In Pedernales, as well, poverty has decreased.

Borderland poverty is shown in the average monthly salaries as well. As the table below shows, the salaries of the three poorest border provinces are less than half that of the national average. Dajabón, although significantly higher than the rest of the border, still shows salaries at approximately two thirds of the national average.



Table 26 Monthly Dominican salaries 2010.

The second target of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is to “ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”,<sup>20</sup> and this has also been a priority of the Dominican Government.<sup>21</sup> By 2017, Pedernales was the only province still in the “red”, meaning that it had failed to meet the expected and desired outcomes of the national literacy campaign. Prior to my fieldwork, Pedernales registered nearly 40% illiteracy, slightly more than three times worse than the national level for the same year. Independencia

<sup>20</sup> Source: <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml>

<sup>21</sup> According to government figures, illiteracy has been steadily reduced from 2014 – 2017, through the “*Quisqueya aprende contigo*” program. Program home page: <https://minpre.gob.do/transparencia/proyectos-y-programas/plan-nacional-de-alfabetizacion-quisqueya-aprende-contigo/>

and Elias Piña have poor figures, with Dajabón better off, and closer to the national average.

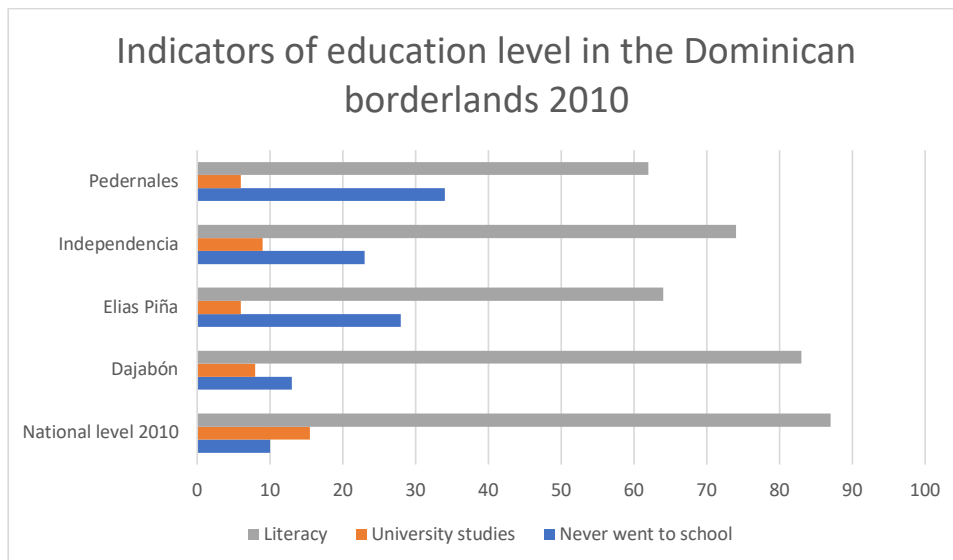


Table 27 Indicators of education level (DR).

According to the figures from ONE (2010) in the table above for Pedernales, at the time of my survey, you would be approximately five times more likely to encounter a person who never went to school (34%) than a person with university studies (6%).

Independencia has the highest score (9%, 2010) of all the Dominican border provinces when it comes to inhabitants with university studies, yet they are 6.5 percentage points behind the national level.

The average for years of schooling is three years lower among the inhabitants of Pedernales and Elias Piña than in the rest of the Dominican Republic. Independencia and Dajabón are also behind the national average.

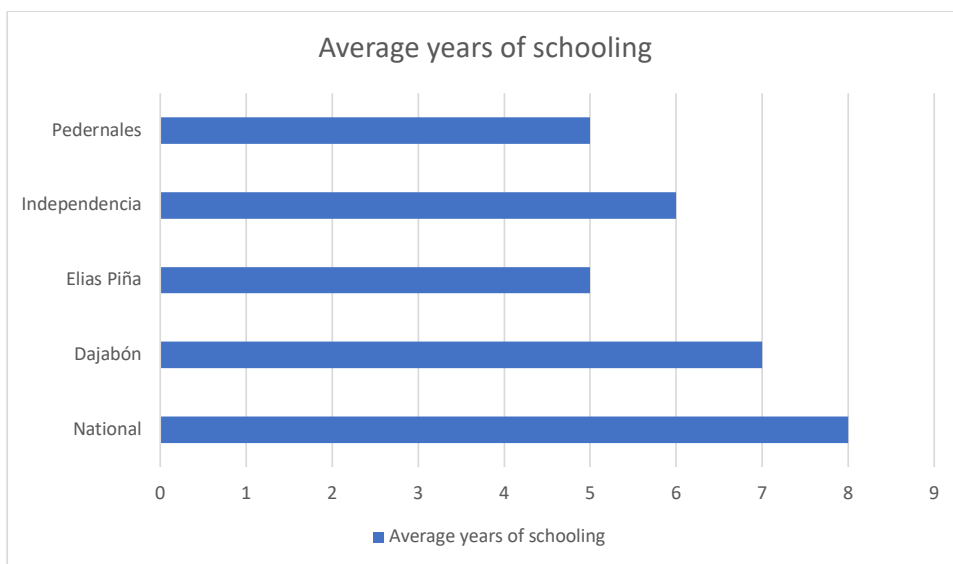


Table 28 Years of schooling (DR).

The border areas have been given a very specific position as defined by Article 10 in the Dominican Constitution of 2010. The Dominican authorities are constitutionally bound to develop the borderlands as a means of maintaining that side of the border. The Constitution clearly defines an obligation to prioritize public spending in – among other areas – infrastructure, and to ensure that property in the same areas is in the hands of Dominicans to protect the interests of the nation. There is an *ambition* to control the border from the Dominican side through state presence, as opposed to the de facto Haitian official abandonment on the Haitian side of the same border. As both Maria Cristina Fumagelli (2015) and Frank Moya Pons (2004) point out, the Dominican border provinces are not uniform in any way. They differ in their contact with Haiti, in the distance to the capital, Santo Domingo, in the strictness enforced in the border control, and in the “tolerance of Haitians on their territory” (Fumagalli, 2015; Moya Pons, 2004).

The borderlands and Pedernales are regularly hosting international NGOs working mainly on the Haitian side, yet these projects do not always include or engage the local communities.

I interviewed Pedernales veteran journalist Odalis Baez for this thesis in 2013.<sup>22</sup> He explained that...

...any number of NGOs have come here, but they are always working with Haiti. They prefer to stay here (on the Dominican side, my remark), eat here, it's a lot better to be on this side, but we don't know what they're doing, (nor) what they want. A lot of the time, people come here, well paid, and do their job. We who live in Pedernales do not know anything about this.

Mr. Baez also addressed the general situation of the two nations, from his perspective as a journalist right at the border, and he makes the important distinction between relations on state levels and relations between the inhabitants: "The relations between us and Haiti are good, but the authorities do not cooperate."

#### [The Haitian borderlands and how they are distinguished](#)

According to a report by the Haitian National Observatory on poverty and social exclusion (ONPES, 2014), the Haitian borderlands are more similar to the rest of Haiti than is the case in the Dominican Republic. The northern part of the border is the poorest part of the borderlands, according to the statistics. At the same time, these figures are uncertain, given the disparities that exist within each region. As an example, the Ouest statistics include both the metropolitan economic center of Port-au-Prince as well as the small border town of Fond Parisien (ONPES, 2014). There are fewer sources focusing on the Haitian side of the borderlands (Dilla Alfonso, 2015a, p. 11), but some data are available, and the following sections describe what characterizes the Haitian side of the border.

More than half of Haiti's population at the time of my survey and field visits is urban (Smith, 2014). Most of the urban population lives in Port-au-Prince and some 26% live in "autres villes" – cities that are not Port-au-Prince. Of those living in urban Haitian areas, 91% were born in the same place that they live, a number that is – as is expected – far lower in the metropolitan areas (47%). Access to public electricity is significantly lower in the rural areas (10%) in comparison to the metropolitan areas (76%) and other

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<sup>22</sup> Alberto Odalís Baez is a journalist with more than 40 years of experience, working for different radio and written media. I interviewed him in his home in Pedernales on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

cities (45%). Garbage pick-up is practically non-existent outside of the urban areas (0.4 %) as well as public sanitation, at only 2.5% (J. et al., 2014).

Analphabetism in rural Haiti is above and well above the national average in all age groups, but in the age group most relevant for my work, the 15 – 19 age bracket, analphabetism is just barely above the national average, meaning that my respondents should be expected to be no more nor less literate than their fellow countrymen and countrywomen of the same age. In rural Haiti, 51% of adults 25 years of age and up had no formal education at all, as compared to 15% in metropolitan areas and around 25% in the remaining Haitian cities. (J. et al., 2014). According to a 2014 United Nations estimate<sup>23</sup>, only 11.4% of the Haitian population were using the internet at that time, which is approximately the time of my fieldwork. The same UN database (2014) estimates a total of almost 50% of Dominicans using the internet. Official numbers from 2008 showed that while Dajabón at that point in time only had internet access in 1% of the homes, the town had a coverage of internet centers that was just over four times higher than the national total (ONE, 2008). This is included simply to suggest that internet availability is not only decided by indicators of in-house internet connection and smart phone use.

In a report published in June of 2013 – at the same time as I was conducting the final parts of my fieldwork – four core points regarding life at the Haitian border were outlined by a group of UN experts (UN, 2013):

- 1) Haitian poverty, food insecurity, and underdevelopment affect virtually all parts of the border zone.
- 2) Environmental degradation manifests itself mainly in soil erosion, deforestation, and a degraded marine environment.
- 3) Weak governance, especially on the Haitian side of the border, affects all facets of the economy and society.
- 4) Finally, the economic and resource inequalities between the two countries are the cause of many of the trans-boundary problems identified in the border zone.

Weak governance has also been addressed by other researchers. While the Dominican borderlands have been a territory that the Dominican authorities sought to command

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<sup>23</sup> 11.4% of Haitians use the internet. Source: <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Haiti>



and control, the Haitian borderlands are a territory that has been abandoned by the Haitian authorities (Fumagalli, 2015; Moya Pons, 2004).

This is a potentially volatile situation. The same UN report deems the environmental issues not only to be a hazard in terms of the natural resources immediately available to the population of the borderlands, but also a catalyst for the “high instability and conflict risk to the relations between the two countries” (UN, 2013). The report goes on to conclude its executive summary with a list of recommendations concerning possible improvements for the borderlands. One of them is that the Haitians replace the use of charcoal for cooking with LPG (liquefied petroleum gas). While the use of charcoal frequently has been mentioned as one of the main contemporary reasons for Haiti’s deforestation in the borderland areas, it is also something that directly affects coexistence in the borderland. Haitians and Dominicans alike, clandestinely cut down trees on Dominican soil to create charcoal that they sell to Haitians. This is damaging to both sides, and on the Dominican side, the Haitians are routinely scapegoated for this illegal cutting down of trees. It is unlikely, though, that no Dominicans are involved in this business; it is more likely to be another clandestine binational endeavor. The charcoal situation at the border, to my judgement, is also an issue that carries different connotations for the two nations. In the Dominican borderlands, the use of charcoal may be more frequently associated with poverty and an environmental hazard – depending on the context, while on the Haitian side, charcoal is a broader issue. The cutting of trees is a major concern on the Haitian side too, off course, but it is also a very important business.

If you travel the most transited Dominican-Haitian border crossing, at Jimaní – Malpasse, through which the highway from Santo Domingo to Port-au-Prince passes, you are likely to observe sacks of charcoal ready for transportation from the Dominican side to be sold in Haiti on small sailing boats. According to the UN, again, on average two of these boats arrive per day at a place called *Ravin de Dyab*,<sup>24</sup> just shortly after crossing the border to Haiti, along Lake Azuei. What they carry is the same every day: charcoal, brought in illegally from the Dominican Republic. An estimated 2800 sacks per week of

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<sup>24</sup> Haitian creole for “The devil’s ravine”.

charcoal are brought in at this point alone (UN, 2013), and this is probably one of the most accessible and visible parts of the Dominican-Haitian border, given that it is situated along the main road connecting the two capital cities of the island.



Figure 3 Charcoal brought to Haiti. Photo by J.S. Yri, on August 13, 2011. Ravin de Dyab, Malpasse, Haiti.

In more recent times, late 2016, the charcoal situation was brought to the attention of documentary enthusiasts worldwide by the release of “Death by a thousand cuts” (Kheel & Botero, 2016), a film debating the charcoal industry in the borderlands, circling around the brutal murder of a Dominican forester in a crime linked to the illegal burning of wood on Dominican soil to create charcoal to be sold on the Haitian side. Even though the documentary never asks or answers *why* Dominican-Haitian relations are so violent, it shows very well the harsh nature of life along the border, including the burning of Haitians’ homes, a possible revenge lynching of the alleged murderer’s close family, and the deportations of Haitians and Dominicans who have lost or failed to provide documentation that they are legally in the Dominican Republic, following the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal’s 168/13 citizenship ruling. These are aspects of life in the border that will be addressed later in this and subsequent chapters.

Furthermore, at the same part of the southern border the inhabitants are facing an unprecedented challenge because the two lakes – one on each side of the border – are slowly, and apparently inexplicably rising beyond their previous limits, causing all sorts of chaos: the flooding of roads and markets, and destroying large areas of what little

fertile land is found in these parts of the island. The photo below shows a road previously connecting the main Dominican border town of Jimaní with the small towns along the northern shores of Lake Enriquillo. The boy featured in the photo told me the road had turned into a good spot for small time fishing. The same phenomenon is occurring on the Haitian side, with Lake Azuei<sup>25</sup> outgrowing its original size.



Figure 4 A road near the western bank of Lake Enriquillo has been transformed by the rising of the lake into a decent fishing spot, in 2013. (Photo: JSY)

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<sup>25</sup> Lake Azuei is also known as the *Etang Sâumatre*. It is the second largest lake on the island, after the Dominican Lake Enriquillo.



Figure 5 Lago Enriquillo is rising. These roofs belong to the customs' office and is where I went to have my luggage checked as I crossed the border in 2008 on a bus from Santo Domingo to Port-au-Prince. (Photo JSY 2011)

The Haitian border provinces are peripheral in several ways. First, they are sparsely populated, compared to the urban areas. Modern day Haiti has a slightly larger urban than rural population, however, this is a phenomenon that has emerged over the last two decades or so. The Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot wrote in his book *Haiti: State against Nation* (1990) that in Haiti, “the peasantry is the nation”, warning that after four years, Haiti’s structural problems had not been resolved by the ouster of the Duvalier dynasty in 1986. Trouillot was not primarily basing his argument on demographics, but rather on his analysis of the power structures in Haiti, with an extremely centralized form of government based in and run from the capital of Port-au-Prince. As of 2010, the demographics have followed the power structures, in that the country has become mainly urban, without abandoning in any way its rural characteristics, in the sense that a large portion of the population is still rural in mentality:

While Haiti's peasantry has decreased significantly since the middle of the 20th century, it still makes up a larger percentage of the total population than in most Latin American countries, and many scholars continue to reference Haiti's "peasant majority." Nevertheless, as of 2010, more than half the population lives in urban centers, most notably Port-au-Prince. (Smith, 2014)

The relevance of this to my work is simply to point out that life in the four Haitian border towns is affected by the distance to Port-au-Prince, and that they should be considered inhabitants of very peripheral parts of their nation. The decisions are made in Port-au-Prince, and the borderlands are further away from the capital than the travel distance would suggest. This is something that is shared by the borderland towns, the importance of the distance to their respective capitals. Nevertheless, the Dominican border towns have to a larger degree enjoyed some benefits from Dominican consolidation policies in the borderlands, whereas the Haitian border towns have suffered more from abandonment.

#### [An exaggerated discourse of the borderlands' exceptionalism](#)

While the borderlands are indeed different from the rest of their respective nations, there has also been an exaggerated discourse on the exceptionalism of the border: "The old attitude hyper-marginalized the border" Silvio Torres-Saillant (2004) explains, making the border an alien place, a stranger to the Dominican nation and a zone where danger is always imminent:

Oddly, that position always benefited the smugglers, the protagonists of an illegal trade that has created big fortunes in this country, including inside the military. It serves them well to keep the border in darkness, as a grotesque place, constantly risky to navigate. In the former tradition, the border was never presented as a place to get to know. Ignorance was systematically fostered. (Torres-Saillant, 2004)

The borderlands are also suffering from neglect, as Miguel Ceara Hatton points out:

Ignorance and indifference, have it so that in the Dominican Republic there is no "West", only "Deep south" when referencing borderland provinces such as Pedernales and Independencia, or those (...) like Elias Piña. In spite of sharing an island with a geographical and environmental continuum, the geography of the island is not taught at any level of Dominican education. (Ceara Hatton, 2017, p. 17)

The exclusion or marginalization of the borderlands in Dominican education is also related to the binational relations. The borderlands are far away from the rest of their respective nations. This remoteness is a part of the shared life experiences and transnational similarities between the Haitians and the Dominicans in the borderlands. In her thorough examination of the Dominican-Haitian borderlands, Maria Fumagalli (2015) found several references to the abandonment that is lived and felt in the borderland provinces on either side. She relies on an extensive analysis of literature of fiction, poetry, music, art and movies, and approaches the island as one, and more specifically the borderlands, without focusing in particular on either of the two nations as such, and writes and reveals “*the existence of transnational sets of allegiances, connections and trajectories which are often disavowed in the nation-building process*” (Fumagalli, 2015), as she explains in the introduction to her book. In this sense, the borderlands as well as the allegiances in the borderlands, are described as alien to the more urban parts of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This is an important part of the framing of the “savage” borderlands, a region that needed “dominicanization”, in the eyes of Trujillo and his successors. In a section on the 1937 massacre in the borderlands, on Dominican soil, the Haitian and the Dominican elites are portrayed as having more in sympathy with each other than with their countrymen. When discussing the Haitian writer, politician and poet Anthony Lespès and his *Les semences de la colere* (“The seeds of anger”, 1949), Fumagalli notes that “the Haitian elite’s prejudices against the (Haitian borderland’s) peasants were not so different from those which had characterized Trujillo’s murderous policy” (Fumagalli, 2015, p. 213). The Haitian elites are described as despising their poor countrymen. In a similar fashion, Rubén Silié describes how the distant glance that Dominican elites have in their connections with the borderlands see them as backward, dry, and dangerous. They spoke about the need to “dominicanize” the border, as if the inhabitants were not by their own merits fully aware of whether they were Dominicans or Haitians, or perhaps they were not Dominican *enough?* (Silié & Segura, 2002). The peripheral Dominican-Haitian borderlands are remote from the rest of their nations, as we can see, and this abandonment is also in a way a shared experience.

### Lack of symmetry in the borderlands – the border as an uneven meeting point

There is a lack of symmetry which I will investigate in this chapter and that is also present in the survey and interviews when it comes to the huge socioeconomic divide between the nations. This manifests itself in several more obvious ways, such as very different experiences at border crossings, or perceptions of Santo Domingo controlled activities inside the Nobel Project. However, it is also visible in matters of language, according to the Anthropologist Gerald Murray in his article *Lenguaje y raza en la frontera dominico-haitiana: apuntes antropológicos* (Murray, 2010b). He examines the border as a meeting point of two languages and of two racial systems. As far as languages are concerned, Murray also emphasizes the differences in power that exist between the Dominicans and the Haitians, and the repercussions this has. He defines three characteristics of the bilingualism in the borderlands, two of which are very relevant for my work: 1) The bilingualism is asymmetric: the Haitians learn Spanish, but the Dominicans generally do not learn Creole. 2) It is partially clandestine. Occasionally the Haitians will hide their Creole, for four different reasons: *fear of being killed*, this is related to the massacre of 1937 and is not representative of any contemporary danger; *to avoid fines, incarceration, or deportation*, to this day, a Creole name, accent, or skin tone may land a person in trouble in the Dominican Republic, more so perhaps in the border areas due to the relatively large military presence and the number of check points looking for undocumented immigrants; *to avoid social alienation*, contrary to the “Dominican-yor” – the Dominican who successfully migrated to New York and made money and returns – permanently or during vacations – the Dominican Haitian will not boast of his or her bilingualism, according to Murray’s analysis; a general denial of Haiti that is found with some who have migrated and successfully integrated into the Dominican Republic. Silvio Torres-Saillant commented on this rejection of the borderland bilinguals in a seminar for the Dominican Armed forces in 2003: “Why worry about a growing bilingualism in the borderlands if you are not worried about the multilingualism required by tourism, of any fellow countryman who desires a simple job in, for instance, Zona Colonial in Santo Domingo?” (Torres-Saillant, 2004).

Murray also points to the surge of a new Creole dialect in the border areas called “Creoñol”, a mixture of Spanish and Creole. The *Creoñol* is structurally a Creole that has included Dominican and Spanish words turned into Creole. Murray names several

examples of words<sup>26</sup> used by his informants on the Haitian side, Creole speaking people, that would not necessarily be understood in other parts of Haiti (Murray, 2010b). This is a part of the co-existence that may be found in the borderlands, and it is a trait that sets the borderlands apart. It tells us about contact and about the need to communicate.

The border itself also sets the borderland apart, quite naturally. My survey reveals a lack of symmetry that is also palpable when it comes to the experiences while crossing the border. A young Haitian girl reported about her experiences from crossing the border into the Dominican Republic: "When I'm going to Pedernales, they (the immigration officers) ask me for money, and there are those who take advantage of me sexually". Sadly, this is not an isolated case. In a report released in 2012, the researchers Bridget Wooding and Allison Petroziello (Petroziello & Wooding, 2012) found that "there are high levels of routine violence against women in the region, which takes on various forms: physical, sexual, economic, and verbal/psychological violence, as well as high risks of illicit human smuggling and trafficking, including for purposes of forced sex work". Being a woman in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands means in itself being at risk to a high degree. Several of the Haitians I surveyed answered that they had been asked to pay bribes when crossing the border, and they also reported physical abuse from the migration officers. This was not the case at all amongst the Dominicans, where 98% of them had never had any problems while crossing the border. Fifty-one percent of the Haitian youngsters, on the other hand, reported having faced problems at the border. Even though this should come as no surprise, it confirms the positions of one of the groups as the stronger party, and where the weaker party is often at the mercy of the stronger. This is an important factor to consider; the reality of life in the borderlands informs the youths almost daily that they are in fact not equal.

Mutual fear and suspicion are important ingredients in how the youths of the borderlands view each other. This applies both to their perceptions of each other and their views on binational relations. I will be addressing the mutual fear of one another, the idea of a Haitian invasion, the contemporary Dominican "culture war" in defense of sovereignty, the 168/13-ruling, race, language and "anti-Dominicans", but to make sense

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<sup>26</sup> In Murray's interviews, he found several examples. Some of them are "boukong", from the Dominican "buscón", "kompanyel", of "compañero", instead of "kamarad" or "zanmi" (Murray, 2010b).



of all this, I must first look into what the legacies of Trujillo have meant for Dominican-Haitian relations.

In the following sections I will then go on to discuss the opposite perspective. In the section on indicators of co-existence and transnationalism, I will address the multicultural past of the borderlands, the sense of brotherhood and shared lives, the economies that unite the two nations, migration and the porous Dominican-Haitian border. Perhaps surprisingly, the most common perspectives on “the other” – on both sides of the border – is that of everyday co-existence. The ways in which the young Haitians and Dominicans describe each other are more often than not propelled by hatred, racism, and conflict.

### ***Contexts behind the conflict-based discourses***

The main arguments behind this section are that the conflict-based discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations were accelerated during the early years of the Trujillo regime, and that they have been kept alive and continue to surface even today. This is, according to my respondents, an important contextual framing. The conflict-based discourses were utilized in the 1930s, by Trujillo to fuel and nurture the sense of fear towards everything Haitian among the masses that “were not inherently anti-Haitian”, and borderland inhabitants who “became anti-Haitian when the Trujillo regime violently imposed a state building program on the border” (Mayes, 2014, p. 5). This is to say that anti-haitianism obviously was created, and this is something that occurred after a period of relatively peaceful or indifferent co-existence, and even periods of multiculturalism (see the section on “Contexts of transnationalism” for more detail). These discourses of conflict and of Dominican-Haitian incompatibilities have been kept alive and nurtured up until and including our contemporary times, and they are found in the survey responses and the interviews conducted with the contemporary youths from the Dominican-Haitian border. The *trujillista* perspectives on Haiti and the Haitians, continued by Balaguer, and to a lesser degree by Leonel Fernández, and therefore well into contemporary Dominican-Haitian relations, arose from what Ernesto Sagás (2000) labeled “the long-term evolution of racial prejudices, the selective interpretation of historical facts, and the creation of a nationalist Dominican ‘false consciousness’” (p. 21) going back to colonial Santo Domingo.

In this section, I trace the conflict-based discourses and look for a path from colonial Santo Domingo to today’s borderland discourses. I have dedicated a section on memes from the cultural war as a part of the contexts within which we find the conflict-based discourses. A Dominican contact provided me with different types of nationalist propaganda during and after my fieldwork in 2013. These were memes, flyers, and communications that he came across via social media and by simply living in the country as a Dominican. I have decided to include some of these communications here to show what kind of arguments have been used in the more radicalized nationalist sectors of Dominican politics at the time of my field interviews.

### The colonial background that reaches into our time

I regard the Trujillo era as an important accelerator for the anti-Haitian sentiments that eventually turned up in my survey results and during my fieldwork, almost 70 years after the dictator's death. Yet even Trujillo operated within a historic context, and even he was a product of preceding historical events and currents. In this part I will therefore comment briefly on the century or so that preceded Trujillo and his anti-Haitian strategies. Ernesto Sagás explains that *anti-haitianism* is a result of race and class having "been closely intertwined since the creation of the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo" (Sagás, 2000, p. 21), and that race therefore became essential in the creation of a Dominican identity. April Mayes (2014) "places Trujillo-era nationalism in a historical context – as a product of earnest debates about the Dominican national character in the late nineteenth century and exclusionary governing practices in the early decades of the twentieth" (p.11). The Dominican-Haitian antagonisms have been created and re-created throughout the twentieth century, and into the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Miguel Ceara Hatton identifies the Trujillo years and the 1937 massacre as a period of establishing the "Dominican identity as a negation of the Haitian", and with it came a demonization of Vodou, and the birth of the emphasis on the White Hispanic Dominican and the Black African Haitian (Ceara Hatton, 2013). The borderlands were to be dominicanized during the Trujillo era, and subsequently "the Haitian community (in the borderlands) came to be labeled as foreign" (Derby, 1994).

An important point for me in this regard is to avoid viewing the Dominican state's exclusionary practices (regarding issues relevant to my thesis, such as citizenship debates in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, accusations of Human Rights abuses, deportations of Dominicans of Haitian ancestry, and so on) to avoid viewing this exclusively as exceptional Dominican trujillista practices. They were, in other words, the result of political choices and of a specific time in history. The rejection of Haiti was also not unavoidable, which is another core issue for me. There were "alternatives to the antiblack, white nationalism that served the interests of the Trujillo dictatorship" (Mayes, 2014, p. 141). Some of the perspectives put forth by researchers such as Torres-Saillant (2004), Fumagalli (2015), Paulino (2016), Mayes & Jayaram (2018) and others point out other possibilities in Dominican-Haitian relations. I will come back to this, but I mention it here to underline that I do not read the Trujillo era politics as either

unavoidable or as uniformly agreed upon in the Dominican Republic. There has always been Dominican resistance to the anti-Haitian dogma, and there still is. Despite this resistance, though, arguments reminiscent of the Trujillo era are found in my survey, and therefore the necessity to look at the background of this specific era.

Although Spanish white elites of Santo Domingo may have dreamt of a white colonial Santo Domingo, “there was really little they could do to stop the interbreeding of whites, blacks, and mulattos in this colonial backwater of the Spanish empire” (Sagás, 2000, p. 24). Sagás also exemplifies how even in colonial Santo Domingo there were racially based biases towards the western part of the island under French colonial rule. In short, *anti-Haitian sentiments* were born before Haiti itself was born, and they are closely connected to the profoundly racist colonial world views that had permitted slavery and colonization in the first place. This is connected to a Caribbean past that should be written in plural, argues Pedro I. San Miguel, given the Caribbean’s particularities. Due to its multiple origins: “the problem of identity has tortured the intelligentsia of the Caribbean. The complex historical evolution of the region (...) has made it difficult to reach a consensus on identity” (San Miguel, 2005, p. 35). What sets the Dominican national identity creation processes apart and makes them so special is the juxtapositioning with Haiti and the Haitians:

The definition of “Dominican” became “not Haitian”. This dichotomy could be seen in almost every sphere: Haitians practiced voodoo, Dominicans Catholicism; Haitians spoke Creole, Dominicans Spanish; Haitians were black, Dominicans were of mixed race or white. More than this, Haitian culture and society were seen as an extension of Africa, whereas Santo Domingo clung to its pure Spanish origins. In short, the ideology of Dominican nationality has been markedly influenced by a sense of contrast, of “otherness”: Haiti. (San Miguel, 2005)

During the colonial era the French colony of Saint Domingue had become “one of the most lucrative colonial possessions of the eighteenth century” (San Miguel, 2005), p. 39). It was, however, built with the blood, sweat, and lives of enslaved Africans living under French tyranny. Haiti’s dramatic overthrow of the colonial powers through what is known as the Haitian revolution established Haiti as a black republic, slavery was abolished, and Haiti’s ties to Africa became a symbol of national pride and an important

part of the nation's history. The abject cruelties of the colonial time and of slavery in *Saint Domingue* demanded that Haiti create their nation on a strong anti-colonialist platform. Consequently, the Haitian revolution had transformed the enslaved of Saint Domingue "from slave to bloodthirsty menace" (San Miguel, 2005), p. 45), in the eyes of the Dominicans. In contrast, the Dominican Republic's relatively unspectacular separation from Spain did not create the same need for the country to distance itself from the former colonial master, indeed the ties to Spain and Europe would later be enhanced to biblical proportions under the Trujillo regime (1930 – 1961) and continued by Joaquín Balaguer well into the last decade of the twentieth century. This Eurocentric construction of a national Dominican identity would of course collide "with the country's deep Afro-Dominican cultural heritage, as well as the bicultural Haitian-Dominican character and constructs of local and national community pervading the Dominican frontier" (Turits, 2003, p. 145).

Scholars like Ada Ferrer, Marlene Daut and Julia Gaffield (Daut Zaka, 2017; Ferrer, 2014; Gaffield, 2015) have written extensively on the importance of the Haitian revolution, and also on how the idea and reality of a successful slave uprising was considered a threat to the contemporary Americas and Europe. It is important to bear in mind that the birth of Haiti as a modern nation was a rebellion against French white colonization and slavery. When Trujillo and Balaguer forged their ideologies more than a century later, they looked towards Europe with profound admiration: "European and indigenous heritages in the Dominican Republic have been celebrated at the expense of an African past" (Howard, 2001). This is an example of how "Dominican identity is constructed vis-à-vis Haiti, most notably with respect to race and nation" (Howard, 2001). This construction is not something that originated amongst the Dominican popular classes., it was rather an orchestration for nation-building purposes, "to buttress elite hegemony" (Mayes, 2014, p. 4). These are differences that are accentuated inside the conflict-based discourses, as I will address in this chapter.

Another important issue from the past, relevant to the context of the borderlands and the discourse on binational relations, even today, are the Haitian invasions of what was then known as Santo Domingo, today the Dominican Republic. Both the revolutionary heroes L'Overture and Dessalines, and Haitian president Boyer, took part in different

kinds of invasions and interventions of what would later become Dominican territory, in 1801, 1804-05 and 1822-1844 (Sagás, 2000; San Miguel, 2005). The Dominican Republic even voluntarily rejoined the Spanish empire after having initially gained its independence, indicating that the fear of Haiti was a more decisive motive than the urge for independence. Towards the end of the third Haitian invasion – between 1822 and 1844 – Juan Pablo Duarte and his fellow Dominican heroes of the independence – known as *La Trinitaria* – organized their forces and eventually drove the Haitians out. The Dominican Republic had regained its independence. Famously, the Dominican Republic is the only former colony of the Spanish empire that does not celebrate its independence from Spain, but rather from another nation – Haiti. There is a very relevant debate about whether these hostilities should be viewed as an invasion or not, where, for example, the Haitian occupation of the entire island may also be viewed as the defense of an anticolonial position in the fight against slavery. There is, however, a historical context to the idea about a Haitian invasion, and that the use of precisely the concept of *invasion* is something that is very much alive in the contemporary Dominican discourse, something that is also identifiable in my findings. An important observation about the years under Haitian rule between 1822 and 1844 is that they were “not simply the result of Haitian imperialist machinations; rather, Haitian rule proved both repressive and significantly progressive for various sectors of Dominican society” (Mayes, 2014, p. 4), but this has traditionally been understated or omitted. After these periods of unrest, what followed was “a (Dominican) treaty of nonintervention with Haiti in 1874 [which] provided for a guarded tranquility” between the neighboring islanders for the rest of the nineteenth century (Horst & Asagiri, 2000).

The early nineteenth century Atlantic discourse on the Haitian revolution was in general dismissive of the idea of a Black sovereign state, in the same fashion that European colonial power in the Americas rested on an ideological framework that demanded the submissiveness of indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans across the continent. More specifically, regarding Haiti, the French did surrender or accept the loss of *Saint Domingue* – Haiti – and continued working under the assumption that Haitian independence was just a temporary setback. The Cuban authorities treated Haiti as a “nonentity”, in the hope that this would somehow undo the revolution and Haitian independence (Gaffield, 2015, pp. 18 - 20). The British were at one point (1807) the only

Atlantic power that allowed trade with Haiti, yet they did not recognize Haiti's independence as a sovereign nation (Gaffield, 2015, pp. 179 - 180). These are but a few examples of the general rejection of the emancipation of Haiti. Marlene L. Daut writes about *Black Atlantic Humanism* in her book on the Haitian writer Baron de Vastey (1781-1820), and efforts to counter widespread ideas that justified slavery:

By chronicling in various forms the depredations of color prejudice that they had personally experienced, including in autobiographies, slave narratives, sermons, and lyric poetry, these writers argued for the recognition of black humanity in a world of chattel slavery. (Daut Zaka, 2017, p. 18)

It is necessary to keep in mind that the victory of the Haitian revolution, implied “the end of white domination in (Saint Domingue/Haiti)” (James, 1989, p. 127). Santo Domingo and subsequently the Dominican Republic, on the other hand, was tightly connected to Spain, the nation that once inaugurated Trans-Atlantic human trafficking (James, 1989, p. 4). This makes the nineteenth century Dominican Republic an unlikely candidate to challenge the tide and welcome Haiti's emancipation and independence. And as we now know, Haiti instead became the mirror against which an exclusionary part of the Dominican national identity was created.

There are three issues at stake here that are relevant to this thesis. First, the Dominicans celebrate their independence from Haiti and not from Spain, unlike all other former Spanish colonies who celebrate their Independence Day from Spain. Second, this provides some background that can explain the fear of a Haitian invasion that is still found in the Dominican Republic today. And third, this also tells us that since the mid-nineteenth century, Haiti and the Dominican Republic have been at ease with each other, there have been no invasions, wars, or other blatant conflicts.

#### [Trujillista discourse on race, language, and religion](#)

Rafael Trujillo's legacy as an authoritarian dictator is that his rule was “widely regarded as the most repressive in Latin American history” (Jordan, 2014, p. 446). He was also the author of the 1937 massacre of Haitians in the borderlands, which makes him important for my examination of the historical context of Dominican-Haitian relations. The focal

point here regarding Trujillo is to view his regime (1930-1961) as a co-creator of anti-Haitian sentiments in the Dominican society.<sup>27</sup> When these sentiments arise, they have been created for and are among the contributing factors to the discourses on Haitians and Dominicans, respectively. According to Dominican historian Bernardo Vega, anti-haitianism in the Dominican Republic was at a very low point in 1930 when Trujillo ascended to power. In fact, Vega deemed the anti-haitianism at that time to have been “the lowest in 86 years, since 1844” (Vega, 1988, p. 23).

The alleged dichotomies of Dominican-Haitian relations were imposed on a borderland that was much less antagonistic than the rest of the two nations, in the sense that Haitians and their descendants “lived together with ethnic Dominicans in a highly transnational and integrated frontier world” (Turits, 2003, p. 144). Additionally, as UCLA professor Lauren Derby expressed it in her 1994 award-winning<sup>28</sup> article on the borderlands: “Official anti-haitianism in the Dominican Republic, the reigning national dogma ever since the massacre, sharpened the meaning of the border, seeking to render previously a porous border into an immutable scar” (Derby, 1994, p. 491). She argues that to the elites of the Dominican capital the borderlands were “savage and uncontrolled backlands”, and that parts of the reasoning on and explanations for the 1937 massacre are to be found in these perceptions of the borderlands. These “backlands” at the border were opened up to rural European migration in the hope that this would counter the influence of the Haitian settlements in the borderland, within the Dominican Republic (Turits, 2003). Amelia Hintzen (2016) explores the Trujillo dictatorship’s need to break up Dominican-Haitian networks in the borderlands as a precursor to the massacre, as a means to secure Dominican state control of the borderlands, and as one of the motivations behind the anti-Haitian ideologies (Hintzen,

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<sup>27</sup> Anti-haitianism is linked to the erasure of African roots in the official narratives and nation-building processes in the Americas, which is not a uniquely Dominican feature. For instance, Karin W. Usanna wrote an interesting comparison between Argentina and the Dominican Republic on the issue of the absence of African heritage in the official national history (Usanna, 2010) and she points to “the social imagery of a Euro-white nation” as one of the characteristics of the nations where Black heritage has been denied, ignored, or even hidden.

<sup>28</sup> “Her article on Dominican notions of race in the Haitian-Dominican borderlands entitled ‘Haitians, Magic and Money: *Raza* and Society in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands, 1900-1937,’ in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, won the Conference on Latin American History award from the Council on Latin American History, American Historical Association.” Quoted directly from Derby’s homepage at UCLA, <https://history.ucla.edu/faculty/robin-lauren-derby>



2016). She also addresses the existence of “large Dominican-Haitian communities both in border regions and on sugar plantations” (Hintzen, 2016), and this transnational connectivity was something that Trujillo aimed to disentangle. Trujillo’s strategy involved “forcibly purchasing the bulk of foreign interests” (Turits, 2003, p. 233), making the Dominican sugar plantations mainly his own or the property of his allies. This industry connected him very closely to the importation of Haitian laborers to the sugar fields. In other words, he sought the economic benefits of a forced nationalization of the sugar industry, while wanting nothing of the cultural connection between Haitians and Dominicans that came with the economic upsides stemming from that connection.

The Trujillo era saw the brutal slaying of thousands of Haitians on the Dominican side of the border in October of 1937. This horrific state sponsored killing is sometimes referred to as the “Parsley Massacre”, but I will refer to it as the 1937 Massacre. The massacre “signaled a new chapter in the Dominican relations with Haiti, which considered the border to be a racial line to be defended with state violence” (Paulino, 2016, p. 56). Even though the massacre has been thoroughly debated, both in academic and fictional works (for instance the much-celebrated *Farming of bones* (1998) by the Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat), there are few direct testimonies<sup>29</sup> from the survivors, in part because the Trujillo regime prohibited both foreign investigations and any attempt to convene truth commissions (Paulino, 2016).

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<sup>29</sup> Some exceptions to this lack of testimonies exist, however, such as Dominican Historian Bernardo Vega and his extensive volumes on *Trujillo y Haiti* (Vega, 1988), where both direct testimonies as well as second-hand testimonies of those who managed to escape can be found. A terrifying, yet highly interesting read are the telegrams from the Haitian and US military envoys to the northern Haitian border, near Ouanaminthe/Juana Mendez on the Haitian side, and Dajabón on the Dominican side. Vega points out that the massacre was both well organized and already in motion by the second day of October, a date often referred to as the starting point of the massacre. According to Vega, the Haitians living and working on the bateyes of the sugar plantations were spared from the atrocities. This detail is of some interest, as it confirms the Dominican use of the Haitian laborer already at this stage of Dominican-Haitian relations.<sup>29</sup> Another important detail is that within a month of the massacre, still in 1937, the Dominican sugar plantations were hiring Haitian cane cutters again (Vega, 1988). The industry had to continue, of course, and the Haitian cane cutters were still in demand on the Dominican side. The point of including these kinds of figures and old history is to show the long history of a Haitian presence on the Dominican side of the border. Some 16 years later, in 1953, the Haitian Historian Jean Price-Mars wrote about “a rural exodus from Haiti” (Price-Mars, 1953/2000) to the Dominican Republic, thus providing evidence from both sides of the border that concur with the insight that Haitian migration is not a new phenomenon.

The massacre took place at a point in Dominican-Haitian history when the idea of the Haitian as the “perpetual invader” was created in an intellectual climate in which “civilization began and ended on the border” (Paulino, 2016). Amelia Hintzen adds to this that the rupture produced by the massacre was used by the Trujillo era intellectuals to create what she labels a “timeless ethnic conflict” between the two nations (Hintzen, 2016). The massacre must also be viewed in light of its historical context, with the Nazi horrors about to unfold and the extremely bloody Spanish Civil War raging in Europe, argues Pedro L. San Miguel (2005): “these were the years when the most atrocious crimes were committed in the name of the purity of the ‘nation’”, including the “cleansing” of anything that did not match the essence of that nationality (p.57-58). In other words, the 1937 massacre is not just a tale of Dominican authoritarian exceptionalism, it is also a historical event that tragically places the island inside a larger picture of this era when the massacre took place.

At that time, these ideas were not deemed “anti-Haitian”, as they would be, and are, today, but there were reactions, also among the Dominican elites. In a letter from 1943, written to associates in the Dominican Republic, the then exiled Dominican dissident politician, and intellectual, and later President, Juan Bosch, strongly criticizes the anti-Haitian sentiments he had detected from the (Dominican) recipients of the letter, who had recently visited him in Cuba. They had left Bosch disgusted with the attitudes he had observed amongst his friends and associates from the homeland:

I have wondered how it is possible to love one’s own people and despise others; How it is possible to love one’s children while hating the neighbor’s children, just because they are the children of others. I believe that you have not meditated on the right of a human being, whether Haitian or Chinese, to live with the minimum of indispensable well-being so that life is not an unbearable burden; (I believe) That you consider Haitians to be less than animals, because you wouldn’t deny the pigs, the cows, the dogs the right to live. (Bosch, 1943)

Edward Paulino<sup>30</sup> concurs to a certain degree in his book *Dividing Hispaniola* (2016), when he comments on some peculiarities of Dominican-Haitian relations post 1937.

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<sup>30</sup> Edward Paulino is a US historian with Dominican roots, and one of the cofounders of *Border of Lights*, a network that promotes Dominican-Haitian collaboration.

Contrary to other genocides perpetrated by national states, such as Rwanda and the Holocaust, in the Dominican case, the propaganda and systematic fueling of hatred towards the Haitians did not start until *after* the massacre (Paulino, 2016; Turits, 2003).

This suggests the importance of this bloodbath as a transformative event in the diffusion of anti-Haitian ideology and constructs of a monoethnic nation in the Dominican Republic and, above all, the subjection of the frontier peasantry and society to metropolitan nationalist norms and central state authority. (Turits, 2003, p. 146)

The Dominican discourse on a Haitian invasion is a part of this kind of anti-Haitian propaganda. It is alive today, as demonstrated below in my own findings and in modern Dominican rhetoric on the idea of an invasion. According to Paulino, this framing of the Haitian as a dangerous invader was the creation of the Dominican border campaigns against Haiti throughout Rafael Trujillo's dictatorship:

How could the state convince or indoctrinate Dominican border residents and the nation in such a way that they could see themselves as different than – even culturally superior to – their Haitian neighbors? Through various institutions such as the church, schools and the Dominican Party, the state disseminated its anti-Haitian ideology throughout the border. (Paulino, 2016, pp. 116 - 149)

This kind of Dominican official framing of binational relations relies on a reductionist idea of the borderlands as “purely Dominican”, as something untouched by Haitians (or others, for that matter). It is a framing that lacks the “heterogenous reality of daily border life” and a framing that more than anything is brought to life as “government propaganda [that has] attempted to diminish the resilient interaction among border residents” (Paulino, 2016, p. 117). Yet, it was a framing that gained significant support, and a framing that basically converted the Haitian presence in the borderlands into a “pacific invasion (..) rendering popular Dominican culture as more savage and backward, and injecting new and undesirable African admixtures into the Dominican social composition” (Turits, 2003, p. 151).

Bernardo Vega expresses similar thoughts; anti-haitianism was not a matter of much importance prior to the 1937 massacre, but rather something the dictator resorted to as a means of justifying the massacre after the fact (Vega, 1988, p. 23). This phenomenon is

of great importance when analyzing the past of Dominican-Haitian relations, as well as relations specific to the Trujillo regime. These anti-Haitian sentiments, known as “anti-haitianism”, are “shared by the various intellectual and common sectors of the Nation, and naturally influence the actions of the political leaders”(Vega, 1988). The animosities at display when approaching each other on this island should therefore not be attributed to any one leader, not even to Trujillo. In fact, according to Vega’s analysis, the roots of the Dominican-Haitian problems go way beyond Trujillo and may not even have been very important to him in the early years of his regime. Nonetheless, I will use the term “trujillista discourse” to describe the anti-Haitian propaganda that arose during the early years of his regime.

There were openly racist elements in the Dominican politics of the time, exemplified in the comments of then Dominican Chancellor Max Henríquez Ureña in 1932, when the need for new immigration regulations was explained to representatives of the North American Legation, saying, according to Vega, that “...the black blood harmed the traditions and the Hispanic culture of the Dominicans” (Vega, 1988, p. 391). Almost identical statements were made by former president Joaquín Balaguer,<sup>31</sup> 51 years later in his book *La isla al revés*, where he stated that “the influence of Haiti has had (...) a disintegrative effect on the Dominican soul” (Balaguer, 1983, p. 48). The Haitians in the Dominican Republic were also described by Balaguer as a “generator of laziness”(Balaguer, 1983, p. 52). These were not views exclusive to Balaguer, of course, as the Dominican elites in the early days of Trujillo and during the creation of anti-haitianism had a “long standing mode of racism that valorized cultural practices associated with Europe and derided those associated with Africa” (Turits, 2003, p. 144). Similar arguments are found in articles published by the Dominican party – Trujillo’s party – on the “barbarous rituals inherited by the Haitians from their African ancestors” (Paulino, 2016, p. 135). Balaguer’s book rests heavily on arguments related to the perceived inherent and incompatible differences between the Haitians and the Dominicans. He also connects the essence of the Dominican nation directly to race (San

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<sup>31</sup> Joaquín Balaguer (1906–2002) is one of the most important figures of the last century in Dominican history, society, and politics. He has influenced Dominican perceptions of Haitians since Trujillo’s time. Balaguer served as a president under Trujillo’s dictatorship (1957 – 1960) and would later go on to serve as president from 1960 – 1962, 1966 – 1978, and finally from 1986 – 1996. This summary does his legacy no justice, regardless of how one judges his merits. For this thesis, his role in Dominican-Haitian relations is what is of interest.

Miguel, 2005; Yri & Marsteintredet, 2008). Balaguer's understanding of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic is that it constitutes an invasion, propelled by the Haitians' growing population, making migration into the Dominican Republic inevitable due to the lack of opportunities on the Haitian side. Even though Balaguer also includes the Dominican sugar plantation and the state sponsored imports of Haitian workers, the underlying idea is that the Haitians pose a biological threat to the *balaguerista* idea of a European-oriented Dominican nation. Using this racist interpretation of nationhood, the Haitian migration automatically becomes a sign of denationalization (San Miguel, 2005). At the same time, Balaguer recognizes the shared fate of islanders: if one drowns, the other is also at risk. He acknowledges and praises the need for brotherhood and collaboration, but his descriptions of the Haitians are a little if not quite racist and essentialist, finding little honor with them. Nationalist Dominican historian Manuel Arturo Battle referred to the Trujillo regime as one that provided great victories to the Dominican nation when it came to the preservation of the Spanish culture – in a purer version than that of Spain – and a period that consolidated and dominicanized the borderlands through “the dictator's efforts to set definitive boundaries between his country and Haiti” (San Miguel, 2005, p. 57).

The border has always been a natural meeting point as well as a demarcation line, but the 1937 massacre and its repercussions in the borderlands had devastating and monumental effects: “the murders of thousands of people, the decimation of a once vibrantly bicultural and transnational Dominican borderland, and the reconfiguration of local constructs of ethnicity, race and nation” (Turits, 2003, p. 146).

During the Trujillo regime, the border was a means by which to defend the nation against the Haitians, and the influence of their culture, language, and race. This consolidation of the borderlands as a defensive wall against Haiti is an important part of the conflict-based narratives of the island and the borderlands themselves, and therefore of interest as a background for the analysis of my respondents' attitudes and utterances. Even though Dominican-Haitian relations cannot be understood solely based on race and Dominican state-sponsored racism, there is an element of both race and racism in them that cannot be ignored. Some of the roots of the Dominican views on race

are found along the border, and date back to the days of Trujillo and his ideas of a whiter Dominican Republic.

Trujillo wrote to the Dominican President Peynado in April of 1939, two years after the 1937 massacre, that it was “evident that the towns in or at the border line need(-ed) an injection of new blood, especially from the white race”. This need was to be communicated to “Jews or foreigners of other races” to motivate them to come and inhabit the borderland. Tragically, in one sense, the European Jews were thus offered salvation from Hitler’s ethnic cleansing just to become part of another racially motivated experiment (Vega, 1986/2013, p. 145).<sup>32 33</sup> There was a perception among Trujillo’s closest allies that they needed to defend against Haiti’s imperialist ambitions. These racist elements were neither coincidence nor innate Dominican qualities. They were rather the product of “generations of scholars (who) deployed their research to buttress the official nationalism of the regime, which elevated whiteness, Hispanic culture, and racial antagonism against Haitians as key elements of Dominican identity” (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018, p. 5).<sup>34</sup> This is connected to the heritage of the colonial Americas, and this racism was also a product of the power relations of the colony, argues Pedro L. San Miguel (San Miguel, 2005, p. 5). There is a mixture of colonial racial hierarchies and twentieth century racist politics that lay the foundations for the *trujillista* representation of Dominican-Haitian relations and Haiti.

Language was another matter of great concern. Bernardo Vega (1986/2013) includes an example from Elias Piña, close to Belladère on the Haitian side. Dominicans and Haitians living in the area would communicate in Spanish, but also in “Patuá”, meaning Haitian

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<sup>32</sup> At this time, also according to Bernardo Vega, Trujillo was not formally the president of the Dominican Republic, instead he ran the country through a puppet leader, in this case Jacinto B. Peynado. As an example of Trujillo’s power also without being officially president, Vega exhibits a letter from President Peynado to Trujillo. Peynado signs the letter with the exclamation *God and Trujillo!*, in addition to explaining how he will follow up on Trujillo’s so-called “suggestion” to whiten the border, inviting Jews and Spanish fugitives from the (then on-going) Spanish Civil War (Vega, 1986/2013, p. 146).

<sup>33</sup> A 1948 memorandum, signed by Armando Oscar Pacheco, a counselor to the Dominican government, shows an interpretation of Trujillo’s borderland policies in the light of Hitler’s version and use of the “Lebensraum” ideology. According to Pacheco’s memorandum, this was “*of great interest to (the Dominican) nation*”, in light of “*the Haitian Republic’s historical and political hunger*” (Vega, 1986/2013, p. 123).

Creole. Much to the horror of a Trujillo informant, included in Vega's work on Trujillo and Haiti:

...some of the citizens of the city of Elias Piña (converse) frequently in the disgusting Patuá – the language of the West – in public spaces. A few days ago, I surprised three couples in the Public Market (..), speaking amply in Patuá. (Vega, 1986/2013, p. 142)

This overt disgust towards all things Haitian must be interpreted in the light of the ideological framework of the Trujillo dictatorship when it comes to relations to Haiti. Edward Paulino (2016) addresses the issue of language as a symbol of being Dominican in a time when there was significant concern inside the Trujillo regime that the borderlands were being “haitianized”. Paulino points to the “racist popular phrase “El que sea prieto que hable claro” (If you are black, speak clearly)” and explains the importance of speaking Dominican Spanish for black Dominicans to be identified as Dominicans. Paulino also comments on how nationalizing the Spanish language was “the most important tool in the process of Dominican identity since the birth of the republic in the nineteenth century” (Paulino, 2016, p. 149).

Another important part of Trujillo's legacy is the labelling of Dominicans of Haitian descent as “Haitian”, regardless of their origin: “Politicians, journalists, and state-serving intellectuals use the term “Haitian” to refer to Dominican citizens of Haitian descent, rayanos, immigrants and seasonal cane workers” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 204). This is part of a depiction of any black person as foreign, according to former Harvard professor Lorgia García-Peña, who has written extensively on topics of Dominican national identity and blackness.

This framing of the “Haitian” as someone incompatible with ideas of Dominican ways of living is also closely associated with Joaquín Balaguer. Even at a point in Dominican history when his country had only recently been freed of an American occupation (1916-1924), Balaguer wrote to warn the Dominicans against “the eternal enemy” and that “the proximity of Haitian imperialism is more dangerous than Anglo-American imperialism”. In the aftermath of the 1937 massacre, Balaguer argued that the Dominican Republic needed to “realize a complete and scientific colonization of the border” in order to control and counteract Haitian imperialism (Paulino, 2016, p. 129).

Another example of Balaguer's ceaseless anti-Haitian campaigning is his support of Leonel Fernández in the mid-nineties. Balaguer was never shy about his racist views on the Haitians or Dominicans of Haitian descent, and Edward Paulino (2016) references a political rally in 1996 as an example. The rally was in support of the then rising star of Leonel Fernández and his candidacy for president from the *Dominican Liberation Party* (PLD, *el Partido de la Liberación Dominicana*). At this rally, announcing his support for Fernández' candidacy, Balaguer pronounced the following:<sup>35</sup> "what we're trying to avoid, is that the country falls into hands that are not truly Dominican". Just like he had done in the previous campaign, Balaguer turned to the fear of the Haitian in search of political support for the up-coming election. Presidential candidate José Francisco Peña Gómez<sup>36</sup> was on the receiving end of that particular stick, where yet again, the claim was that the Dominican nation was in danger due to the influence from its western neighbor – Haiti. All of this was according to Balaguer, who spoke like he did in his 1983 book on the Dominican-Haitian future, *La isla al revés*, and like he had done for so many years during the Trujillo dictatorship and beyond. He talked about the eternal dichotomies of the island, of good versus evil, of chaos versus order:

On this side is chaos and disorder; on the other, democracy, progress, and institutional stability. We want to prevent the country from falling into the hands of those who are not truly Dominican because this candidacy represents the sacred interests of the nation. (Paulino, 2016, pp. 160 - 161 )

Peña Gómez was of Haitian ancestry, thereby his hands were "not truly Dominican", according to Balaguer's standards. The fact that Peña Gómez was of Haitian descent was used by Balaguer and his party (Partido Reformista Socialista Cristiano, PRSC) as the PRSC "played kingmaker by publicly endorsing Fernández" (Paulino, 2016, p. 160). Fernández went on to win the elections in 1996, and – as a token of the many odd turns of life and politics – 12 years later he would present a homage to the very same Peña Gómez' legacy by commissioning an exhibition in his honor in Independence Park in

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<sup>35</sup> "...lo que queremos impedir, es que el país caiga en manos, que no sean verdaderamente dominicanas". From the documentary "*Balaguer, 96 años de historia*" by Saul Pimentel, released in 2006. Also quoted here: <http://www.elnuevodiario.com.do/mobile/article.aspx?id=384267>

<sup>36</sup> José Francisco Peña Gómez (1937-1998) was an eternal political opponent of Balaguer. He was a three-time presidential candidate for the PRD (Partido de la Revolución Dominicana), for which he was also the leader. He was a black Dominican of Haitian ancestry, and was an important figure in the 1965 Dominican Civil War – the April Revolution and the following US invasion. He was "the closest anyone of his complexion and heritage would come to being president of the Dominican Republic in the twentieth Century" (Paulino, 2016, pp. 160 - 161).



downtown Santo Domingo. The exhibition emphasized the profound importance of Peña Gómez' contributions to Dominican history.

Some of Balaguer's views on Haiti and the Haitians are found among my respondents. Balaguer was, at least in his writing, openly racist in matters concerning the Haitians. He was also from a very young age a fervent defender of Dominican territory against what he labelled "the crow of the west", i.e. Haiti (Paulino, 2016, p. 129). Both Trujillo's and Balaguer's descriptions of Haiti and anything Haitian are still alive, also in the borderlands, as we shall see.

#### Discourses on "anti-dominicanism"

One of the most fervent carriers of the "anti-dominicanism" argument in recent decades, Manuel Núñez, represents an important part of the modern nationalist discourse on Dominican-Haitian relations. I was introduced to his ideas for the first time when I read *El ocaso de la nación dominicana* (Núñez, 2001). He criticizes the Haitian historian Jean Price-Mars for being biased in his descriptions of Dominican society, and for his descriptions of Dominicans as a people who believe themselves to be Spanish, and who believe they belong to Europe, more so than to the Caribbean. Núñez finds that this has been harmful to Dominican society in the sense that the acclaimed Price-Mars has influenced not only fellow Haitian historians and society, but also Dominican writers, such as Rubén Silié, Franklin Franco, Franc Baéz Evertsz, and Emilio Cordero Michel (Núñez, 2001, p. 253). The most important part of Nuñez' critique of Price-Mars appears to be the effect his writings have had on Dominican authors and historians, that is the effect on the domestic representation of Dominican history, identity, and people. The logic is that the Dominican intellectuals have been infected by a "pro-Haitian" virus in their efforts to be – for instance – anti-racist: "Anti-racism means pro-Haitian. To be anti-racist, in the style of the Negrocentric, we must put ourselves at the service of denationalization" (Núñez, 2001, p. 621). The nation is at risk, because the "negro" is put at the center of the universe and the world order, according to Núñez. And the real victim of these politics and writings is the Dominican Republic. By allegedly pretending to be advocating human rights, the real and also hidden objective is to attack Dominican sovereignty: "In the name of anti-discrimination policies, the Dominican nation is discriminated against" (Núñez, 2001, p. 85). Additionally, these alleged attacks on the Dominican nation are motivated by the intention "to demonstrate to the world that

Haitians are not responsible for their own failures” (Núñez, 2001, p. 89). The enemies of the Dominican nation are

foreigners (who) influence magazines, newspapers, accusing the Dominican Armed Forces of various monstrosities, campaigning against the migration authorities, using all the mechanisms of the rule of law to prevent the exercise of authority, guided by the will of hindering the repatriations of the people who penetrate the national territory daily. (Núñez, 2001, p. 90)

This paranoia finds enemies with the shared purpose of destroying the Dominican Republic: “The goal of all these machineries is to transfer Dominican sovereignty to international organizations, in which Haitians have developed a fabulous crop of anti-Dominican stereotypes” (Núñez, 2001, p. 91).

Manuel Núñez is one of the main representatives of this perception over the last three decades in the Dominican Republic, in my judgement. Undoubtedly, there is a skepticism in the Dominican Republic in the number of studies in the country, documentaries, articles, and conferences that discuss the situation of Haitians living in Dominican territory. Reactions tend to arise particularly when the Dominican side is portrayed in a less than favorable light. Manuel Núñez discusses this issue in his acclaimed 2001 colossus on the Dominican society and its challenges, *El ocaso de la nación dominicana*:

When one compares the enormous number of studies, conferences, publications, on the anti-Haitian prejudice and the null intellectual production on the anti-Dominican prejudice abundant in the prose of its intellectuals, novelists and in the violence of many of its manifestations, it is clearly perceived that we stand before the copious use of a stereotype against an entire country, to try to strip it of its sovereignty”. (Núñez, 2001, p. 622)

Indeed, my own research has led me to acknowledge that research and writings on Dominican-Haitian relations on the Dominican side of the border by far out-weigh similar works based on the Haitian side. And – as my data from the border clearly shows in the following chapters – there is no shortage of prejudice, racism, and intolerance, also from the Haitian side of the border. There is a case to be made for further investigations into the Haitian anti-dominicanism, or whatever you would prefer to call it. However, there is a difference between acknowledging gaps in research and public

debate, and linking these gaps to attacks on Dominican sovereignty. Núñez has been one of the loudest voices in framing as “anti-Dominican” any criticism towards the Dominican Republic and its treatment of Dominicans of Haitian descent and of Haitians.

The Dominican Historian Pedro Rivera, assistant professor of Latin American Studies at the University of Savannah, in the USA, published another perspective on the anti-dominicanism, in his article on the lack of balance in international representations of Dominican reactions to the often so troubled relationship with Haiti. Rivera indirectly concurs with the observations, seeing that “...the world seems to be lacking stories that show Dominicans in identification with human rights or blackness” (Rivera, 2015). Pedro Rivera wrote this in response to the *Black in Latin America* film documentary and its book version, in which the Dominican relationship with the blackness in their own identity and heritage is deemed “schizophrenic”. Rivera connects the dots and travels back in time to 1967 and the release of *La comunidad mulata* (The mulatto community) by the exiled Dominican Pedro Andrés Pérez Cabral, and the latter’s fascination with the *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*, the work of psychiatrist Frantz Fanon). He links this to the notion that Dominicans are trying to be white, and that the Dominican Republic is represented as a negation of black Haiti: “Herding Dominicans in as the sheep gone astray is as mistaken as are rants to keep Haitians out”. Rivera criticizes Professor Gates and his *Black in Latin America*-chapter on Dominican-Haitian relations (Gates, 2011) for being overly simplistic when it comes to the question of Dominicans and race. Historically, it is a well-documented perception that the Dominican Republic has had a very complicated relation to questions of race, and I did not personally view the mentioned documentary in the same way that Rivera did. However, I understand Rivera’s argument in the sense that it is important to take the debate on Dominican-Haitian relations away from the villain-victim discourse (Murray, 2010c), with the Dominicans as the perpetual perpetrator and the Haitian as their victim, and it is equally important not to reduce the conflict analysis to questions relating to a supposed Dominican yearning to be white.

The core of Dominican-Haitian relations is not race alone. It is also not a question of contemporary Dominicans believing that they are Spanish, or of direct Spanish heritage. While it is true that the heritage from Europe and Spain has been celebrated in the past,

particularly during the Trujillo era and later by the Balaguer regimes, as we have seen, there is no significant evidence of this in the contemporary discourse on nationality in the Dominican Republic. The idea of the “*hispanofilia*” as an important component in the contemporary Dominican self-portrayal as a nation was in fact ridiculed already in 1990 by the above-mentioned Dominican nationalist and writer Manuel Núñez (1990/2001). His book was awarded prestigious Dominican prizes, both for the original edition in 1990 and the second expanded 2001 edition (Núñez, 2001), which illustrates the praise awarded and the position the book has given Núñez in some sectors of Dominican society. Indeed, Núñez also acknowledges the creation of a national myth as part of writing the Dominican nation’s history, and that this is something dating to the Trujillo years: “During the Trujillo epoque (1930-1961), the Dominican historians for the first time felt the need to invent an official past” (Núñez, 2001, p. 567).

#### Contemporary popular discourses of incompatibility

To aid in the understanding of the contemporary context behind my respondents’ utterances, I have included some memes and newspaper articles that appeared during and following my fieldwork. The aim is to show examples of the more extremist segments of Dominican nationalism. The memes exemplify crude versions of the ideological framework of contemporary Dominican ultranationalism, which generally portrays “the Dominican Republic as the affected party in the Dominican-Haitian relationship and Haiti as the offending party” (Sagás, 2000, p. 70). This could be considered a “street version” of Manuel Núñez’ works, of letters to the editor in *Listín Diario*, of the clerics like Cardinal Nicolás de Jesús López Rodríguez, and of the ideologues and politicians like Joaquín Balaguer or the *Fuerza Nacional Progresista*, to name just a few.<sup>37</sup> The memes are also similar to the cartoons and leaflets showcased by Ernesto Sagás (2000) from the racist campaigning against José Fransisco Peña Gómez in

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<sup>37</sup> Vinicio Castillo Semán – leader of the nationalist Dominican political party *Fuerza Nacional Progresista* (National Progressive Force) suggested in 2014 that the Dominican Republic create a fund to build a wall to separate the Dominican Republic and Haiti, or, more precisely, to keep the Haitians out of the Dominican Republic. Castillo Semán is an example of the small yet steady support for a physical barrier between the two nations. His claim is that nobody wants the Haitians – not the Cubans, not the US, not Venezuela – the whole world has abandoned the Haitians, and therefore the Dominican Republic must protect itself from the inevitable flow of Haitians that will have no other options than to venture into the Dominican Republic. If the border is not protected, the entire Dominican nation is at risk, according to Castillo Semán.

1994 (pp. 129-140), linking them to the *balaguerista* and *trujillista* discourses, already commented on above.

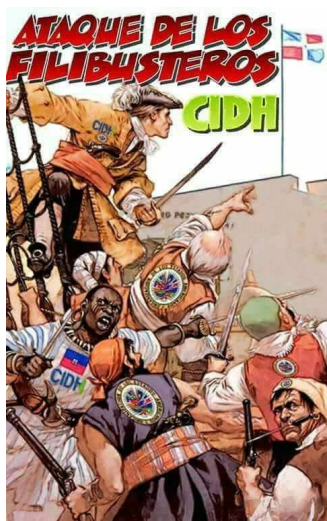


Figure 6 Meme circulating in social media before the 2018 session in the Dominican Republic of the Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos – the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH in Spanish).

This is one of the more recent memes, circulating in social media before the 2018 session in the Dominican Republic of the *Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos* – the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (*CIDH*, Spanish abbreviation<sup>38</sup>). The session was a series of workshops, roundtable discussions, debates, resolutions, and “hearings on Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela, along with regional hearings” (IACHR, 2018). This is to say that the Dominican Republic was not the sole focus of this session, far from it. Yet the ultranationalists felt invaded, again. The meme shown here is an example of the ideas that allude to the history of foreign interference in what is today Dominican territory. We see a depiction of the violent Haitians, the *CIDH*, the pirates of the Caribbean have all joined forces in the threat against the Dominican nation. The “Haitian” in the meme is decorated not only with a Haitian flag and the letters *CIDH*, but also dressed in a cartoon-like African tribal warrior caricature. Clearly a paranoid patriotic piece of propaganda, more than anything else, the meme harkens to a number of historically speaking interesting perceptions about Dominican-Haitian relations: there is the allusion to the Filibusters, and the division of the island into two territories, belonging to Spain and France, following the Treaty of

<sup>38</sup> “The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) held its 168th session in Santo Domingo, at the invitation of the State of Dominican Republic (...) The Commission held 8 working meetings on implementation of precautionary measures of Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela; 9 working meetings on friendly settlements referring to Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Guatemala; 4 working meetings to follow-up on the recommendations of Merits Reports referring to Brazil, Chile and Colombia. (...) Thirty hearings were held during this session, on Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela, along with regional hearings.” (IACHR, 2018)

Ryswick in 1697. In the meme, this is portrayed as an invasion force, directed towards the Dominican flag and nation. A nation that of course did not exist at the time of the filibusters and the pirates of the Caribbean. The pirates, the Haitians, and the international community are joined in a war cry, approaching the Dominican flag – the nation – with the clear aim to attack. Not much is left to the imagination here.

This following meme is simply an expression: *"I am 100% anti-Haitian, make no mistake about it!"*. One of the core arguments of the



Figure 7 Meme celebrating being "100% anti-Haitian"

contemporary patriotic sectors of Dominican political and economic officialdom is that there is no such thing as "anti-haitianism". Admitting to such a phenomenon would be to admit to the structural injustices suffered by Haitians in the Dominican Republic, and at least partially, it would be to admit to a degree of state-sponsored targeting of Haitians, which is exactly what the Dominican Republic has been accused of on many occasions. Thus, whereas some sectors may not want to be associated with the

concept, others have found the term "anti-Haitian" useful and coined it with pride as a slogan. The image represents the idea that can be traced all the way back to Trujillo and Balaguer, which is why I find it interesting: the Dominican Republic as the antithesis of Haiti. Here lies the eternal dichotomy, and the importance of being anti-Haitian in defining oneself as Dominican.

The blackened areas in the maps below are illustrations that circulated on the internet in the aftermath of the 168/13-debates and international reactions to the Dominican immigration policies that mainly had impact on people of Haitian descent. The Dominican Republic is supposedly being invaded by Haitians, and the Government of Danilo Medina is under fire for being too soft on issues relating to the Haitians.



Figure 8 Meme on the alleged Haitian invasion (2014).<sup>39</sup>

These memes have not been shown here to debate their accuracy, but to illustrate perceptions. One such perception is clear enough: there is an invasion going on, and it has been going on for at least the last few decades. As the following chapters will show, this perception is shared to some degree by – interestingly – both Haitians and Dominicans in the borderlands.

There are those who are less explicitly occupied with race and Haiti per se, and more concerned with shutting down the border in order to “save the nation”. *Sons and daughters of Duarte* – named after one of the Founding Fathers of the Dominican nation, Juan Pablo Duarte, is a small group of nationalists who are calling for “true Dominicans” to rise and defend the nation, and to be vigilant towards the traitors. In the article below, there is mention of rallies in favor of strengthening the border controls, in addition to more vague demands of “defending Dominican values”.

<sup>39</sup> Top left corner is “DR under Trujillo”, with the Haitians supposedly in Haiti. Top right indicates a softening in the borderlands under Joaquín Balaguer, and then subsequently the nation is being covered in Haitians, according to the graphics, under Presidents Leonel Fernández and Danilo Medina (respectively the nineties/early 2000s and present day).



Figure 9 Newspaper Hoy on "Hijos de Duarte" (2014).<sup>40</sup>



Figure 10 Meme on the loss of sovereignty, La Sociedad de la Guardia Nocturna.

This meme is another reminder of the sentiment that Dominican sovereignty is being targeted and that actions to save it are urgently needed: “Dominican – don’t give up on what little sovereignty is still left for you. If you give it

up, you will lose EVERYTHING.” The message states that there is very little sovereignty left for the Dominicans to watch out for, adding urgency to the call to action.

<sup>40</sup> “Sons of Duarte” has an insignificant and – as of 2014 – inactive Twitter account, with the following quotation as their calling card: “Mientras no se escarmiente a los traidores como se debe, los buenos y verdaderos dominicanos serán siempre víctimas de sus maquinaciones” (“as long as the traitors are not scolded as they should be, the good and true Dominicans will always be victims of their plots and schemes”).



Usually, a key argument in defense of this theory is that the “international community” wishes to rid itself of the alleged responsibility it holds over Haiti and pass this responsibility on to the Dominicans. This “stamp” with Uncle Sam is another example of the same idea. In this case, the “international community” is reduced to the US only, as it pushes the burden of Haiti upon the Dominican people. The idea of the Haitian invasion<sup>41</sup> is not taken out of the blue, there is a specific historic context dating back to 1822-1844



Figure 11 Meme on Uncle Sam and loss of sovereignty.

and the years of the Haitian take-over of the whole island. This period can first be viewed as a time when the island stood together against foreign – European – former colonial powers, but it may also be viewed as proof of the Haitian imperialist ambition. It is the latter view that has prevailed within the *trujillista* discourse.

#### Incompatibility expressed through legislation: the 168/13 ruling

The *trujillista* and *balaguerista* discourses of conflict and the alleged perils of Haitians taking over and damaging the Dominican nation have indirect legacies that are found not only in memes but also within the rule of law. What the law does and does not dictate can also be considered a discourse, and the discourse within the 168/13 ruling is unequivocally anti-Haitian. The point in reflecting on the 168/13 ruling<sup>42</sup> is that its foundation is that Haitians and their descendants are unwanted on Dominican territory to such a degree that the Dominican state will go very far to exclude them from having legal cause to be on Dominican soil. This is something that I interpret as an expression of perceived incompatibility between the two nations. And this is also a ruling that is

<sup>41</sup> I am using the translation “silent invasion”, for what is known in the Dominican Republic as *la invasion pacífica*. It is an interpretation on my part because the more literal translation would be *the peaceful invasion*. However, during the time I’ve been studying Dominican-Haitian relations, my understanding of the use of the idea of an *invasion pacífica* fits better with how I understand *silent invasion*: A hostile and intended take-over that goes mostly unnoticed, or that is concealed. This idea is not something new.

<sup>42</sup> The 168/13 ruling sent hundreds of thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent into a legal limbo of statelessness as they were stripped of their citizenship rights, a situation that still today – in 2021 – persists for countless numbers of them.

telling of the state of the relations between the two nations. It is part of “the social conditions of production” (Fairclough, 2015), part of the context behind the discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations at the time of my fieldwork, and therefore also necessary background material for my analysis.

I view the 168/13 ruling in direct relation to the aforementioned anti-haitianism and the legacies of Trujillo and Balaguer. The ruling is an example of how discourses are transformed into policies, and how these policies change and detrimentally intervene in people’s lives, thus making it an example of how discourses are co-creators of the same realities that they describe (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 29). In her book *The borders of dominicanidad* (García-Peña, 2016, pp. 203-210) Harvard associate professor Lorgia García-Peña, views anti-haitianism in light of a global war on blackness and in the light of the 168/13 ruling. While the Dominican authorities communicated that the ruling’s intentions were all about migratory control, García-Peña argued that the need for border control was subordinate to three myths relating to the Haitians: 1) That the Haitians are trying to recover the Dominican Republic’s territory to unify the island like they did in 1822, 2) that Haitians are “murderous rapists coming to pillage and destroy” and 3) that the Haitians are intent on undermining Dominican language and culture (García-Peña, 2016, p. 204). All these myths are found in abundance within my respondent’s answers, particularly in the survey. García-Peña also comments on how this has become a merger of the historical anti-haitianism and contemporary anti-immigrant xenophobia, “demonstrating how (...) the past can persist in sustaining structures of power that create oppression” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 205). Miguel Ceara Hatton described the ruling as a “product of a long chain of social and economic exclusion” (Ceara Hatton, 2013).

For my respondents, the 168/13 ruling was not in itself relevant – as it occurred a few months after I talked to them and had given them the survey. Yet the two decades prior to the ruling that García-Peña is referring to are parts of the context that my respondents have lived in their entire lives, and therefore also a part of the context that shaped them and their ideas.

The ruling was “the climax of two decades of legal actions aimed at disenfranchising ethnic Haitians and divesting them of civil liberties and citizenship rights” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 204). Shortly thereafter, the same Dominican Constitutional Tribunal also “declared that the country’s adherence to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) was unconstitutional (...) the last step in a more than ten-year long legal battle over control over the Dominican citizenship regime” (Marsteintredet, 2014b). The Dominican Republic has sought to establish an autonomous regime for citizenship, and they do not want any more interference from the outside world:

Despite the State’s obligation to comply with the IACtHR sentence and IACtHR’s understanding of the Dominican citizenship regime, large parts of the Dominican political elites mobilized domestically since the early 2000s to counter what was perceived as an attack on national sovereignty and the loss of control over the citizenship regime. (Marsteintredet, 2014b)

This connection between human rights advocacy and perceptions of attacks on the Dominican nation is essential. I deal with a version of the same issue in the section on *Contemporary popular discourses of incompatibility*, the perceived threats on the Dominican nation. The battles for citizenship may be interpreted as the legal version of that same cultural war, and therefore an important part of the national context, while also relevant for the borderlands.

The Dominican authorities have been repeatedly accused of mistreating Haitian immigrants, failing to respect their civil rights, and even ignoring their own constitution regarding issues of citizenship of children born in the Dominican territory of parents of foreign descent (in this case: of Haitian descent). As expected, the existence of a discriminatory policy on the part of the Dominican authorities against the Haitian immigrants has been strongly denied from the Dominican side.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Haitians in my field work repeatedly expressed fear of being physically abused if they entered the Dominican Republic, this is – of course – not just due to the memory of the 1937 massacre, but rather a reflection of a violent society, on either side of the border. Most of the violence unfolds unnoticed, while some incidents attract international attention through legal and court procedures. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights declared in October 2012 (“Corte IDH CondeNast a República Dominicana,” 2012) that the Dominican Republic was guilty of numerous human rights violations when seven people were killed and ten injured in what has been known as the “Guayubín massacre”, on June 18, 2000. After the truck in which the victims were passengers failed to stop on a signal from soldiers at a checkpoint near the Dominican-Haitian border, the military opened fire and started a pursuit that ended with the truck

The 168/13 ruling was another blow to the Dominicans of Haitian descent, as well as to Haitian immigrants in the country. It was also a major blow to the Dominican Republic's international reputation, which again fueled the Dominican nationalists as they headed out to defend their homeland, which they saw as being under attack. There is commonly a link between any criticism towards the Dominican Republic and perceived attacks on their national sovereignty, "*la soberanía nacional*" in Spanish. Following the 168/13 ruling, the then head of the Dominican Central Electoral Board, Roberto Rosario, spoke out in a session held in the Organization of American States (OAS): "The Dominican culture is one, there are no two Dominican cultures", referring to the criticism from the OAS of the 168/13 ruling. He claimed that criticism against the Dominican Republic in this matter was an attack on their sovereignty and was being led by "particular interests", without being more specific. He went on to compare the situation to the 1965 US invasion of the Dominican Republic, which had also been supported by some of OAS member states, according to Rosario (Rosario Adames, 2013). This is an example of the discourse within Dominican official circles, connecting criticism against the nation as an attack on their right to self-determination, an attack on the Dominican Republic as a free and independent nation. And the threat emanates from both Haitian forces and the alleged Haitian enablers or pro-Haitian forces. These discourses are found among my respondents as well, where, for instance, some of them talk about the fear that Haiti is aiming to unify the island.

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overturning. During the pursuit, four of the passengers in the truck were shot and killed and another three were killed, either in the crash or were shot as they tried to flee.

The Dominican Republic was ordered to pay compensation to the victims or their survivors, and the Dominican government was ordered to conduct a media campaign about immigrant rights, it was instructed to adjust its legislation to prevent similar incidents in the future, the army was informed of its need to be updated on topics such as discrimination, and the government was ordered to publicly and internationally acknowledge responsibility for the case, and where they have now been convicted. Whether or not court cases like this contribute to an improvement in the lives of those affected by state crime is unclear. However, the fact that the Dominican Republic has been tried several times in international human right courts – in cases involving either Haitians or Dominicans of Haitian descent – is an indicator of some level of conflict. Anthropologist Samuel Martínez has done extensive research on questions of conflict and race in the Dominican Republic as well as on the impact of international court systems on human rights situations in the country. Martínez' view is that for the affected populations of the Dominican Republic, "Legal confrontations in Dominican and international courts seem thus to have had largely negative effects" (S. Martínez, 2014, p. 174).

Thus, while the Dominican nationalists feared international defamation, the Dominicans of Haitian descent feared deportation. There are numerous testimonies of raids in the cities and in the Dominican fields in which large numbers of Haitians, descendants of Haitians or simply black Dominicans, with or without documentation, are detained and deported to Haiti.<sup>44</sup> Following the 168/13-ruling, these deportations continued, but were surpassed by the so-called self-deportations of Haitians fleeing from the Dominican Republic, and where several thousand established themselves in improvised tent “cities” along the border.<sup>45</sup> The international attention on the Dominican Republic following the 168-13 ruling was almost exclusively disapproving of the Dominican authorities, sympathizing with the victims of the ruling, the Dominicans of Haitian descent. The criticism included a particularly painful letter, for the author, to the editor of the Spanish newspaper *El País* from the Peruvian Nobel Laureate Mario Vargas Llosa, who only three years earlier had received symbolic Dominican citizenship, receiving the *Christopher Columbus Order*, celebrating his authorship and his long-standing relationship with the Dominican Republic. Vargas Llosa had compared the 168/13 ruling with Hitler Germany’s persecution of the Jews before WWII, calling the ruling a “judicial aberration” (Vargas Llosa, 2013). The Dominican historian and nationalist activist Manuel Núñez later exclaimed that nobody in history – from outside of the Dominican Republic – had ever caused such damage to the Dominican Republic as had Vargas Llosa. A remarkable claim, of course, coming from a historian, considering, for instance, that the Dominican Republic has been invaded by foreign powers on several occasions. Núñez claimed that Vargas Llosa had forced the nation to its knees in front of its insulters, celebrating those who “step on our beloved flag”, but – he insisted – “we will rise from this horror”(Núñez, 2016).

On the opposite side of the playing field, there was no lack of domestic opposition to the 168/13 ruling, of course. This is important for several reasons, but the main one for me is because it shows an example of discourses that counter the conflict-based ones. Lorgia

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<sup>44</sup> Source: MUDHA founder *Solange Pierre* in a conversation with me and a group of Norwegian students on a field trip in the Dominican Republic, on February 26, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> The New York Times visited the Haitian border town of Anse-à-Pitres in 2016, in the south, documenting one of these camps, the Parc Cadeau:  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/magazine/haitians-in-exile-in-the-dominican-republic.html?\\_r=1](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/magazine/haitians-in-exile-in-the-dominican-republic.html?_r=1)

García-Peña named some key participants in the activism, analyses, and debates that followed *La sentencia*, including

the organizations Reconocido (recognized) and Participación Ciudadana (Citizen participation); the journalists Marino Zapete, Juan Bolívar Díaz and Patricia Solano; scholars Quisqueya Lora and Edward Paulino; and writers Junot Díaz and Rita Indiana Hernández. Their political actions include several efforts to obtain humanitarian visas to the United States, Canada, and Europe for denationalized youth, conducting “know your rights” workshops in ethnic Haitian communities, building intra-island community structures, and raising global awareness about the human rights violations. (García-Peña, 2016, p. 206)

I would add the newspaper *Acento*, and two of the entities that I have worked with closely, the NGO MUDHA and the OBMICA research center to this list. In the years following the 168/13 ruling, many of these “individuals who voice opposition, however, have been subjected to harsh criticism, cyber-bullying and even death threats” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 206). They are routinely portrayed as traitors and as anti-Dominican for voicing their concerns and their criticism.

#### Remarks on the changed framing of the “Haitian threat”

During the same period as the one leading up to the 168/13 ruling, it is my understanding that we have seen a change in the framing of the Haitian threat, which I have tried to visualize in the model below. Well into the eighties of the last century we saw arguments directly connected to race as an issue with Balaguer and Trujillo. Balaguer’s *La isla al revés – Haití y el destino dominicano* (1983) was nothing if not also racist, claiming for instance the biological threat from Haiti to be an imminent danger to the “Dominican soul” (Balaguer, 1983, p. 48), that the Haitian – in general – was a “generator of laziness” (p. 52), and a practitioner of incest (p. 83). According to Balaguer, the (Spanish) language and the Hispanic tradition were “the only defense walls against the dreadful wave of color, and (...) the forces that since 1795 uninterruptedly and systematically have been invading Dominican territory” (p.63).

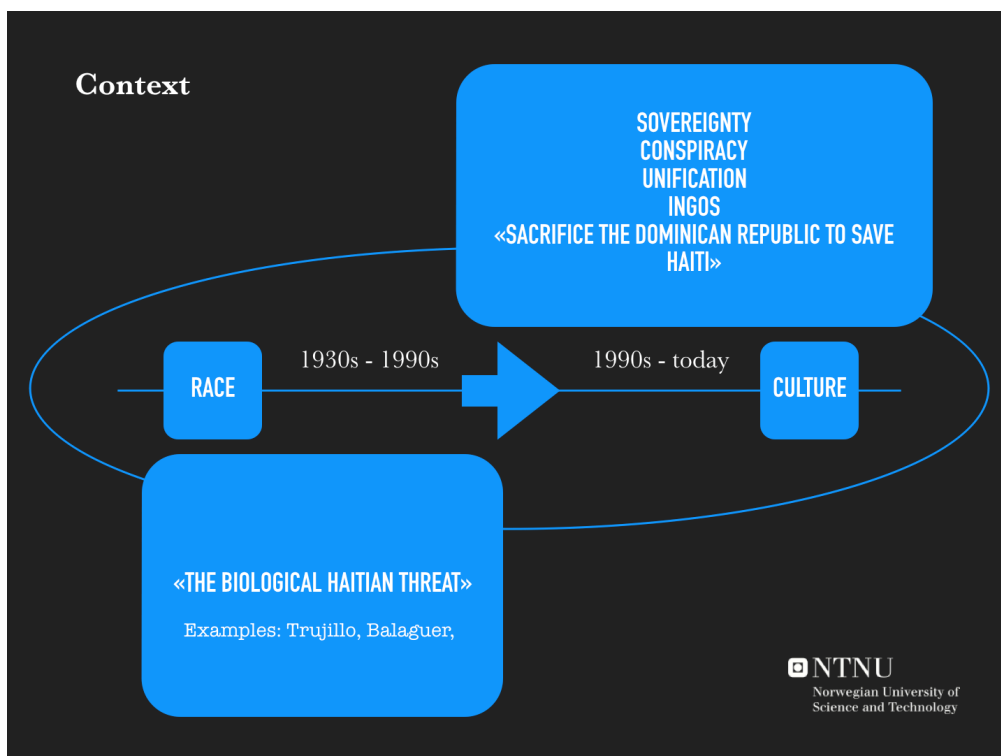


Figure 12 Changes in the framing of the “Haitian threat”.

This is some of what David Howard labels “the propagation of the idea of the Haitian population as a threat to the Dominican nation” (Howard, 2001) p 194). Traces of it are found within my interview and survey material. The debate as of the nineties and onwards into our time has slowly turned towards questions of culture instead of race. This has a backdrop of such concepts as the fight for a continued Dominican sovereignty over Dominican soil; the idea that there is an international conspiracy to unite Haiti and the Dominican Republic; the notion that the loosely labelled International NGOs are a part of this conspiracy in that they are fighting the Haitian’s case and the idea that there is a pronounced bigger goal here, to sacrifice the Dominican Republic in order to save Haiti. This idea of a forced merger of the two nations was brought to the attention of everybody by Joaquín Balaguer in 1994 during his presidential campaigns. This marks the rebirth of current day Dominican anti-haitianism, according to Miguel Ceara Hatton (Ceara Hatton, 2013), and the fear of the forced merger is found in contemporary discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations, as well as in my own material collected for this thesis.





### **Contexts of Transnationalism**

This section is dedicated to the common grounds, to the hidden parts of history, and the experiences that do not comply with the *trujillista* legacies of division and hatred. As mentioned above, the borderland youths view each other mainly in either a friendly or neutral light. Some of this is emanates from their own experiences of growing up in the borderlands. I will discuss the multicultural past of the borderlands and address the sense of brotherhood and perceptions of shared life experiences. This will include the economies that unite Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the fact that both nations are heavily impacted by migration and the the porous Dominican-Haitian border that they share.



Figure 13 Port-au-Prince banner, photographed by Jørgen Sørliie Yri in Port-au-Prince in 2015: “No to barbarianism, no to hatred. Respect and peace on the island”.

### **The multicultural past of the borderlands**

Contrary to the conflict-based discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations, historically,

the northern region on the Dominican side was once a thriving multicultural zone. Around the end of the nineteenth century, the city of Montecristi (approximately 35 kilometers from Dajabón to the north) was home to businessmen, tradesmen, and workers from a wide range of backgrounds. “Spanish, Italians, Haitians, Arabs,<sup>46</sup> Germans, Cubans, North Americans and *cocolos* (a term which generally defines colored people from the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean) contributed to” the creation of an ethnically very diverse Montecristi at that time (Fumagalli, 2015). This is an interesting observation in contrast to the continued emphasis on conflict and racism in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands. As Gerald Murray argues, “anthropological observations (on matters of conflict in the border areas) have yielded a portrait that indeed differs from a simplistic victim-villain caricature” (Murray, 2010c). Murray asks for a portrait beyond the “simplistic victim-villain caricature”, which I call for in my work as well. This portrait is something that demands an examination of perspectives before Trujillo’s time, and the perspectives of the *rayano* contemporaries. The borderlands were practically bicultural, prior to Trujillo, as a result of Haitian immigration and co-existence with Dominican residents due in part to the scarcely populated Dominican border regions which provided an opportunity for settlement (Turits, 2003, p. 146). This was a border that was “entirely porous to travel and held little meaning for local residents” (Turits, 2003, p. 147). Lauren Derby and Richard Lee Turits interviewed border inhabitants in Dajabón and Ouanaminthe in the late 1980s and Turits quotes one Haitian respondent, stating that “although there were two sides, the people were one, united” (Turits, 2003, p. 147), which is a very different perspective from the dichotomies of Trujillo and Balaguer, and much more similar to – for example – the *rayano* perspectives on what the borderlands are, as seen by those who inhabit them.

In an article on the working relations between the Dominican and Haitian workers of a banana bately in the Montecristi area, anthropologist Kimberly Wynne summarizes early twentieth century Dominican-Haitian relations: “Though there was a socially significant notion of difference between the groups, it was not based on skin color or a perceived

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<sup>46</sup> The Arabs were an “influential ethnic minority who began migrating to the Dominican Republic towards the end of the 19th century, and who have firmly established themselves in the political, economic, and social spheres of national life” (Howard, 2001, p. 23). These Arab migrants, “like their counterparts in Ecuador and elsewhere in Latin America, were attracted to areas experiencing economic growth (Román & Mayes, 2011, p. 9).

Dominican national superiority” (Wynne, 2015). Wynne, like Fumagalli and Gerald Murray (Fumagalli, 2015; Murray, 2010c), also describes the pre-Trujillo borderlands as a world apart from the “cosmopolitan capital”, with ruling elites who saw the “presence of Haitians in the Dominican borderlands” as a sign of “a pacific invasion that would threaten Dominican territory and identify with the Eastern sector’s ‘Haitianizing’ and ‘Africanizing’ influences which were believed to be savage and backwards” (Wynne, 2015). Yet, in the borderlands, Haitians and Dominicans alike, would – for example – baptize their children in Haiti, and Haitian children who lived in Dominican territory would cross the border on a daily basis to attend school on the Haitian side. Dominicans would attend markets inside Haitian territory, in the same way that Haitians would buy some of their goods from the Dominican side (Turits, 2003, p. 147). Turits and Lauren Derby, in their series of interviews from Dajabón and Ouanaminthe, also encountered testimonies of a border world exempt of hostilities in days gone by, like this one senior Dominican citizen who talked about travelling frequently into Haiti:

In those days, we crossed the border without problems. We went over there as much as they came over here. *Papá* had many friends over there. And he would drop us off with his *compadres* and they would take care of me. (Turits, 2003, p. 147)

Turits also explains how transnational families were not uncommon in the pre-Trujillo borderlands, how oral sources remembered Port-au-Prince as a metropole that people from either side would dream about experiencing. Language was not described as a divisive issue, as Haitians tended to understand Spanish and the Dominicans Creole, in addition to examples of linguistic borderlands fusion (Murray, 2010b; Turits, 2003).

Turits (2003) makes another interesting observation, namely that there were differences between the southern and the northern borderland regions when it came to the transnational movements and relations early in the last century. The north saw more transborder interconnectedness than what was the case in the south. Some of this is explained by low levels of development in the northern regions at the time and the remoteness from the sugar plantations: the northern parts of the border were “underdeveloped and unsurveyed” and therefore of less interest to the governments on the island. Even though we know less about the southern regions at that time, Turits writes, we know that there was less transnational contact in the south than in the north, pre-Trujillo (pp. 148-150).

The knowledge and the testimonies of a time before the conflict narratives is important to us today because it speaks of a period with a different discourse than today, a time in which the contact in the borderlands would appear to have been less polarized than today. Interestingly, Turits also comments on something that I encountered in my own interviews as well: “despite the high levels of Haitian-Dominican integration in the frontier, cultural identities as “Dominican” or “Haitian” nonetheless existed” (Turits, 2003, p. 149). This is important, because it indicates – as does my own research – that there is nothing contradictory in acknowledging the existence of mutually integrated borderlands while at the same time maintaining separate national identities. Dominicans and Haitians identified as such and would distinguish in different ways what constituted a Dominican and a Haitian, respectively, according to Turits’ (2003). But unlike the conflict-narratives of today, “Haitians did not occupy an inferior position (...) And Dominican denizens had generally viewed Haitians neither as a poorer and subordinate group nor as outsiders”. The everyday experiences in the borderlands were not aligned with the anti-Haitian sentiments that arose mainly from urban Santo Domingo (pp. 149-150), much in the same way that the *rayano* experiences of today may differ significantly from the perspectives found in the conflict-based discourses.

#### The Haitian earthquake: brotherhood and fear of cholera

My respondents are clear about one thing on both sides of the border: the two nations will indeed help each other in an emergency. This is not just wishful thinking, as recent history shows. The period following the Haitian earthquake of 2010 is an important part of the context of the two nations and also very much for the borderlands. The earthquake shook the whole island “though only Haiti suffered massive destruction” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 145). Some of the repercussions of the Haitian earthquake are solidarity, the rising cholera-fueled anti-Haitian rhetoric, and the *rayano* experiences, like Sonia Marmolejo, whom I will return to towards the end of this chapter when I discuss the *rayano* discourses.

Sixteen hours after the earthquake had devastated significant parts of Port-au-Prince and with countless dead bodies under the rubble on January 12, 2010, the then Presidents Leonel Fernández of the Dominican Republic and Rene Preval of Haiti, were photographed in a fraternal embrace as the Dominican President visited his Haitian

counterpart. This was indeed an act of solidarity and a way for the Dominican President to pay his respects after the disaster had struck Haiti, while at the same time he was sending a message both to the Haitians and the Dominicans: no efforts would be too big. The island was momentarily “unified”, if anything, in solidarity. Before travelling to Haiti that day, the Dominican president held meetings with his staff and the conclusions were that no expenses should be spared. The Dominicans organized thousands of volunteers, private Dominican companies made available personnel, while others ensured shiploads of medicine were sent to Haiti. The borders were kept open for fleeing Haitians, while the Dominican authorities assisted in a swift rebuild of the Haitian tele-communications system, just to mention a few examples (Antonini, 2012). At the time, one might have thought that the earthquake might even bring the two nations closer together, and for a while it most certainly did. The Dominican Government initiated operation “*Mano Amiga*” – the helping hand – and became the first nation on site, ready to assist after the tragedy had struck Haiti. The United Nations deemed the Dominican response “exemplary” and “inspiring”, while then US President Barack Obama publicly praised the Dominicans and their President (Paulino, 2016). The cholera outbreak in Haiti, less than a year after the earthquake, would, however, propel the binational relations in a far more restrictive direction, seen from the Dominican side. The understandable fear of cholera spreading to the Dominican Republic was crucial to the *Directiva Diecinueve* – Directive Nineteen – a presidential decree issued to seal the border to prevent the spread of cholera (Paulino, 2016). Even though many Dominicans have continued their work to assist both Haitians and Dominicans in times of need, the binational relations have not retained their initial post-earthquake warmth.

### The binational markets and transnational economy

All the border towns are highly dependent on the binational markets, and this is linked to a gradual reopening of the border, following the emerging democracies in Haiti (as of 1986) and the Dominican Republic (as of 1978). Slowly, the border guards became more tolerant of the transborder commercial activities, and the authorization to organize common markets was given by Joaquín Balaguer early in the 1990s, which played an important part in turning the border region into what it is today, a place of commercial exchange between Dominicans and Haitians (Bourgeois, 2018, p. 82).

During the Trujillo era, as seen above, the border was closed, and it remained closed after Trujillo's assassination in 1961. The border was partially reopened during the 1990s and this led to an increase in the commerce that was specific to the borderlands in what Haroldo Dilla Alonso labels a certain "revenge of history" (2010). Dilla Alonso is referring to the trujillista border policies that basically shut down binational legal commerce, and how this closing went against the established traditions of far more integrated borderlands. Today, the two nations are connected economically and socially in the borderlands through commerce and the binational markets. These markets were historically organized on Haitian soil – throughout the nineteenth century and during the early phases of the twentieth century – but they were discontinued because Trujillo closed the border. In the period following the fall of the Haitian Duvalier dictatorship in 1986, there was a slight return of transborder commerce, yet without any kind of legality. It was not until the United States' embargo of Haiti in the early nineties, with the subsequent scarcity of several basic products in the Haitian market, that the Dominican Republic was motivated to authorize transborder trade under a slogan of humanitarian aid for Haiti (Dilla Alfonso, 2010, pp. 106 - 110). This resulted in the binational markets of today, and all four Dominican border towns of relevance to this study have their own markets. Dajabón is by far the biggest and is of great significance to the economy on both sides of the border. It is mainly located in and around the market building by the international bridge and in the surrounding areas. Between 3000 and 3500 Dominican and Haitian merchants sell their goods on a market day in Dajabón, according to Dilla Alonso (2010, p. 115). The Comendador market will be commented on in a section of its own, suffice it to say at this point that it is somewhat smaller than Dajabón, and that it is plagued with systematic abuse of the Haitian merchants, in particular female Haitian merchants (Petrozziello & Wooding, 2012).

The Pedernales market is much smaller, some 200 – 350 merchants, mostly from Pedernales and Anse-à-Pitres, as opposed to the bigger markets that attract a bigger crowd of traveling merchants (Dilla Alfonso, 2010). The market is located in a building and an open space adjacent to the border offices. The Jimaní market is on the Haitian side of the border, which, according to Dilla Alonso (2010, p. 119-120), has been negatively affected by the level of conflict at the border crossing and by the rising lakes on both sides. Dilla Alonso concludes that what characterizes the effects of reopening the border has been a reactivated economy which has benefitted the borderland citizens, yet without a sustainable model. The focus is on short-term gains with societal and environmental costs. Dilla Alonso suggests a modernization of the administration of the markets to increase the predictability of the organizations of the markets, and therefore also the opportunities to create systematic improvements in the way the markets are run (2010, pp. 128-129).

I will comment on several aspects to the binational markets in the following section, but because the markets are so intertwined with the economies and the lack of symmetry between the nations, I will start with a section on the uneven transnational economy.

#### *An uneven transnational economy*

Two nations sharing an island is an anomaly. Two nations sharing a border that are as economically unequal, as is the case with the Dominican Republic and Haiti, is also an anomaly (Marsteintredet, 2014a). Haiti has the lowest GDP per capita in the Americas, whereas the Dominican Republic is approximately mid-range in the region (ONPES, 2014). According to the Dominican economist Miguel Ceara Hatton, the economic growth necessary for the Dominican Republic to achieve a standard of living comparable to that of the United States is less than the growth required for Haiti to reach Dominican standards<sup>47</sup> (Ceara Hatton et al., 2016). The economic divide between the two nations is among the world's highest of any countries sharing a border. A few examples of how they differ are: according to the Human Development Index (2013), the Dominican

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<sup>47</sup> The reference is to an article co-authored by me and Leiv Marsteintredet (University of Bergen), in which mister Ceara Hatton was responsible for the main arguments on Dominican-Haitian relations and economic connections and disparities. He has later been appointed as Minister of Finance in the Dominican Republic (2020).

Republic is situated 66 spots above Haiti; life expectancy on the Dominican side is 73.4 years, while 63.1 in Haiti; indicators of both general poverty and extreme poverty could include as many as nine million Haitians, according to Ceara Hatton (2016), although the numbers are admittedly uncertain. Inequality also hits harder on the Haitian side of the border, with Haiti as the world's sixth most unequal nation, while the Dominican Republic is in the 19th spot on the same index. According to 2012 figures, the Dominican Republic had a child-mortality rate for children five years of age and younger of 27/1000 births, while Haiti suffered 2.81times that figure, at 76/1000 births (Ceara Hatton et al., 2016). This divide has existed even before Trujillo. Already in 1916, the Dominican Republic traded with the outside world at 1.5 times the size of similar Haitian trade, and the disparities would only increase as the twentieth century unfolded and into the new century. According to a speech by Ceara Hatton before the Inter-American Human Rights Commission in 2013, Haiti already had the lowest GDP per capita of the Americas in 1947 (United Nations figures) (Ceara Hatton, 2013). This lack of economic symmetry between the two nations is therefore not just a contemporary issue; it has been this way for a long time.

In the following, I will address some perspectives on the interconnection in the borderlands as well as the huge disparities between the two national economies. The general complexity of Dominican-Haitian relations is also identifiable when we look into the economies: The two are tightly connected, constantly intertwined and simultaneously galaxies apart from each other.

#### *Regional and borderland commerce: a transnational meeting point*

When we talk about commercial exchange in the borderlands, we must separate between transborder commerce on the one side and regional and borderland commerce on the other. The latter two are the most relevant to my work in the borderlands because they include daily or frequent interaction between the citizens of both nations – including the binational markets, whereas the first uses the border mainly as a transit space, leaving little or nothing in the actual borderlands besides contamination from the trucks and fees paid to the national authorities and less so locally (Silié & Segura, 2002, p. 68).





Figure 14 Market Day in Ouanaminthe/Dajabón. The photo is taken on the Haitian side (JSY, 2013).

Every Monday and Friday, the border is open in the main Dominican border town of Dajabón in the north. Haitians cross the border bridge over the *Masacre* River and venture into the binational market to sell and buy all kind of goods. “It is the most important commercial activity of Dajabón since 1971 (...). A single market day moves more than 20 million Dominican pesos”<sup>48</sup> (Del Sid, 2016). The scenes surrounding the marketplace may seem chaotic to an outsider, with thousands of people moving about quickly, seemingly in all possible directions and at an accelerated speed in the overwhelming dry heat of the borderlands. Huge loads of everything from flour sacks and used clothing from charities to fake French perfumes and excellent Haitian rum, are transported by handcarts over a bridge linking the two countries crossing the *Masacre* River. A massive military presence along the river and around the inside of the city, and not least the numerous control points along the roads leading away from Dajabón and further into the Dominican Republic are thought to prevent most of those who might consider remaining on the Dominican side of the border after the border closes. When the gates close, around six in the afternoon, the Haitians are mostly back again in

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<sup>48</sup> The exchange rate at the time of the publication of Del Sid’s article was approximately 46 Dominican Pesos to the dollar, meaning that the market in Dajabón on average moved around 435 000 US\$ in a single market day at that point in time.

Ouanaminthe, on the Haitian side of the bridge and the border. Dajabón is a dusty and rather worn city where high ranking military officials allegedly earn good and easy money from deciding which cargo to control and what will be slipped through without inspection during the other five days of the week, when the border is closed.<sup>49</sup> .

Back in 2009, the border authorities on the Dominican side prohibited the import of secondhand clothes for a short period of time. The Jesuit priest, and longtime social activist with a particular fame for his activity on the border through his network *Solidaridad Fronteriza – Solidarity on the Border*, Father Regino Martínez, ferociously opposed this ban. He stated that the only ones benefitting from these kinds of regulations would be the guards and soldiers at the border, who would feel enabled to charge bribes from anyone entering with clothes to sell at the market. He described the international border markets as the lifeline of the border from which many Haitians and Dominicans made their living, and where they bought most of their products or a significant part of what they needed.<sup>50</sup>

#### *The binational markets and the visibility of the Haitians*

The binational markets have also participated in changing the visibility of the Haitians in Dajabón and the border towns in general. By chance, while attending the launch of a poetry book in Santo Domingo, during my fieldwork, I struck up a conversation with a lady who had moved from Dajabón towards the end of the seventies, and she described a border that was at that time totally and completely closed, very unlike today, which is telling of the changes brought about by the markets in the borderlands over the last two to three decades. "There was one Haitian in town, and he knew me, he worked for my uncle on his farm," she said. An anecdotal memory like this proves, of course, nothing, but it reflects an increased visibility of Haitians on in the Dominican Republic in general and in the borderlands. The Haitian presence in the Dominican Republic was studied in detail in FLACSO's 2004 landmark report *Encuesta sobre inmigrantes haitianos en la República Dominicana*, in which they also comment on the relatively recent visibility of the Haitian migrant in the Dominican Republic:

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<sup>49</sup> <http://caribbeandigital.blogspot.com/2010/08/cesfront-arresta-militares-en-trafico.html>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.elnuevodiario.com.do/app/article.aspx?id=160259>

(The) temporary migration was made up of day laborers of rural origin, concentrated in the activities of sugar production and slightly less in other kinds of agricultural activities. This made the Haitian immigrant concentrate in the sugar enclaves, with very little visibility for the urban social sectors of the receiving country. Also, it was an essentially male workforce, dotted with women who came rather to complement men in domestic activities (...). (FLACSO, 2004)

#### *Binational markets or “binational” markets?*

Calling the markets “binational” is not really a correct denomination, as Gerald Murray points out in his 2010 report *Sources of Conflict along and across the Haitian–Dominican border*. They are international in the sense that both Haitians and Dominicans participate, both as vendors and as consumers, but the term “binational” insinuates some level of equality, a partnership of sorts, which is clearly not the case. First, the markets are situated on Dominican soil, not in Haiti. Historically, this was not always the case. Murray describes a post-Trujillo era in which the flow of people and merchandise was in fact bi-directional, as the border control became more relaxed than during the Trujillo regime, and Dominicans and Haitians would cross either way with more ease than today. Fast forwarding to the 1990s, the border as we know it today was shaped, with an increased fear from the Dominican side about traveling to Haiti for security reasons, as the Haitian state lost control, or gave up control of the border areas. This is not to say that the authorities are absent, but the Haitian authorities are far less present on the Haitian side than is the case with the Dominican authorities on the Dominican side (Murray, 2010c). Murray identified several problems related to the markets, without insinuating that they should cease to exist. The markets are of vital importance to the inhabitants on both sides of the border. But the power relations are also reflected in the binational commercial exchange. According to a 2012 World Bank report, the Dominican trade with Haiti increased significantly (from 3% of the GDP to 15%) between 2000 and 2009, making Haiti the second largest trade partner, second only to the US. This shows the importance of Haitian contributions to the Dominican Republic, and not just the other way around. By 2012, one year before my fieldwork, the Dominican exports to Haiti were valued at a minimum of 700 million US\$ a year, but there are also larger estimates (Antonini, 2012; Bourgeois, 2018; Silié & Segura, 2002).

However, Murray's report also indicates that the Haitian economy is far more reliant on the Dominicans than vice versa. This leads to the Dominican Republic being less affected by the fluctuations in the binational commerce, whereas Haiti will be hit harder by any instabilities. The functionality of the markets suffers from an abusive organization, among them the use of completely arbitrary fees that are very much in the Haitians' disfavor (Murray, 2010c). There is also a problem with a mutual lack of trust rooted in "political conflicts and racial prejudice" (Silié & Segura, 2002, p. 74).

#### *The Comendador market: an uneven power balance*

The power relations are uneven, also within the transnational meeting points, such as the binational markets. In this section, I will comment on how this plays out at the border market in Comendador. The customs duties applied to the Haitian vendors when entering the Dominican Republic on market day will change from one day to the next (Murray, 2010c), and if they do not sell all their goods, they might be charged export taxes when returning to Haiti, only to be charged again for the same goods next market day. The different markets also have differing practices regarding the market fee. According to Gerald Murray, the fees may vary from 20 to 50 Dominican pesos<sup>51</sup> for a one-day spot at a market, to a notably higher 1000 Dominican pesos, sometimes charged in the privatized Comendador market. A vendor might find him- or herself sitting next to another vendor who has paid 10 to 20 times the fee for the same service. The Comendador market is special in that the management of the market is subject to an auction, where the highest bidder wins the right to run the market for a defined period (reportedly six months or a year). The tax collectors will charge the vendors with no transparent criteria, and they will use physical force, theft of merchandise, and even violence to maintain control over the vendors and the market. The female vendors in the Comendador market additionally run the risk of systematic sexual abuse, crimes that go largely unpunished. But the markets are the most important binational activity in the borderlands. Winning the above-mentioned auction includes the right to charge the sellers. At the Comendador market, a woman reported having to pay 100 pesos to the

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<sup>51</sup> Dominican pesos to US Dollar exchange rates, as of June 2017:

20 Dominican pesos = 0.42 US\$

50 Dominican pesos = 1.06 US\$

1000 Dominican pesos = 21.16 US\$

collector for the right to sell her merchandise. The fee was not the issue. The collector also stole goods from her, for a value exceeding the 100 pesos. Far more disturbing, however, was the fact that this collector was a well-known rapist. He would take women from the market to the hillside nearby – to *el monte* – and he would rape them there. When the market administration was confronted with this, they admitted knowledge of the situation but refrained from taking action. The reason for not addressing these very serious allegations was that the collector in question was a widower (Petrozziello & Wooding, 2012). This is an indicator of another highly important aspect of life at the border: the levels of violence in general are high, making it a dangerous zone in which to live, and even more so as a woman. The levels of gender-based violence are of course very concerning. When fueled in addition by racism and nationalism, this becomes a highly dangerous area in which to be a young woman and even more so to be a young Haitian woman. When my respondents talk about fear and violence in relation to border crossings, this should therefore come as no surprise to us.

The Dominicans would not accept such abuse without complaining to the mayor of Elias Piña, which is why the collectors take their profits from the Haitian vendors, who are mainly female. They therefore are seen as running all the risk and suffering all the abuse (Murray, 2010c; Petrozziello & Wooding, 2012). Despite the dire conditions and the danger, the vendors and the buyers keep coming to the market, twice a week every week. This is an indicator of the hardships of life along the Dominican-Haitian border. However, warns Murray, these harsh conditions should not lead us to buy into the conflict-narrative, as the markets in themselves are generally cordial and peaceful affairs between Haitians and Dominicans, with the exceptions mentioned above.

#### Migration as a transnational connector

In the survey described in Chapter two, I asked the respondents about their experience of migration in the family. This was due to the importance of migration to the nations' history, economy, and society. Haiti and the Dominican Republic are two nations that share experiences of migration as a core element of their existence. Both nations were born out of European colonial migration and forced African slave migration, both nations have large diasporas today, and additionally there has been a steady Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic over the last century, much more so than the other

way around. This means that there is a lack of symmetry to the migration patterns as well (Bourgeois, 2018). For my respondents, on either side, migration is a seemingly inevitable part of life; it has become “a prominent theme in everyday life” (Howard, 2001). Yet the migration pattern that is most often referred to when discussing Hispaniola’s migration flows is that of Haitians into the Dominican Republic.

The Haitian presence in the Dominican Republic fits into the general international tendencies of migration in that it is a migration flow where both the migrants and the receiving country belong to the Global South or developing nations. It is slightly more common for a person to migrate from one developing country to another, than to migrate from a developing country to a developed country (Grullón, 2014). The Caribbean and Latin America provide for a mere 16% of the world’s migrants, however, the main tendency within this particular group of migrants is their migration to the economic north (Grullón, 2014). In general, the Caribbean is a region of migrants. The Dominicans migrate to the US and Europe, primarily to the US, and the Haitians migrate to a number of countries. “Haiti’s 2013 net migration statistic is -5.5 migrants per 1000 people in the population, [8] meaning that the outflow of individuals exceeds inflow. The Haitian diaspora has established the largest ethnocommunal enclaves in primarily the Dominican Republic, Canada, and especially the United States” (Fang, 2015).

Two facts can be discerned from looking at population density. One is that the two countries have more or less the same population size. An important difference is that Haiti has the same population on less land, and in addition Haiti has a much larger share of uninhabitable land due to the more mountainous western side of the island. In other words, there’s a larger struggle over available resources on the Haitian side, and this is undoubtedly a factor that pushes Haitians towards the Dominican Republic and has done so for more than a hundred years. The second is that the Haitian population is growing faster than the Dominican population (Caeara Hatton, Marsteintredet, & Yri, 2016; González, 2012). This means that the differences in population density will only increase. Thus, if this is a factor influencing migration from west to east there is nothing to suggest that this will decline, rather the opposite.

### *Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic*

The sections on the binational markets established the uneven economic realities between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. One of the inequalities is that the Haitian dependence on the Dominican Republic is greater than the other way around. While this is certainly true, Dilla Alonso (2010, p. 108) points out that Haiti sends its workforce “in return”. Most of the Haitians that travel to the Dominican Republic have some kind of employment there and when they are inserted into the Dominican workforce, they are all too often exploited and underpaid. This is an advantage for the Dominican employers who stand to gain from the lower wages and benefits of their Haitian employees (Dilla Alfonso, 2010, pp. 108 - 109). The Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic is an essential part of the binational relations, and I will comment briefly on this migration in the following.

The first national survey on immigration to the Dominican Republic was published in 2013, *Primera encuesta nacional de inmigrantes en la República Dominicana - ENI-2012* (ONE, 2013). It set out to gather information on all aspects of the immigrants’ lives and status, such as geographical location, visits and type of residence, country of birth of the mother, the father and the respondent, characteristics of the home, sociodemographic characteristics, economic activity, marital status and children, migratory history, links with the country of origin, as well as origin and occupation before migration.

According to the results from ENI-2012, the total number of immigrants is 524,632 people, or 5.4% of the total population of the country estimated at 9,716,940 at the date of the survey. Of this total, 458,233 immigrants were born in Haiti, representing 87.3% of the immigrant population, while 66,399 come from other countries, 12.7% of the total, which shows the high prevalence of Haitians in the total number of immigrants.

Most of the Haitians that enter the Dominican Republic cross the border through or close to the towns where I conducted my fieldwork: “According to the first National Survey on Immigrants, ENI 2012, 87,7 per cent of immigrants to the DR arrive in cross-border migration from Haiti” (ONE, 2013). This means that the borderland youths on either side are likely to encounter this migration in their everyday lives, although in different ways on their respective sides of the border. Therefore, the borderland youths

are part of the international migrant puzzle and part of their respective nations. In general, an estimated 12% of the Dominican population and around 25% of Haitians live abroad, so both nations are no strangers to emigration. Officially, the Dominican Republic is a country with negative net migration. However, the unofficial border crossings of Haitians to the country are not included in these statistics (Riveros, 2012).

The Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic is nothing new, neither as a migration pattern nor as a field of study that has public attention. The Haitian historian Jean Price-Mars pointed to what he labeled a “rural exodus of Haitian workers” as early as in 1953, signaling at that point in time that this was indeed nothing new, and quite to the contrary: this had already been going on for several decades. This was due to a number of different circumstances, including what he described as uncertainties relating to the limits that separate the two territories (Price-Mars, 1953/2000, pp. 776 - 777). Despite this long history of migration, there has been an increase in the *visibility* in Dominican society of the Haitians in general. This is something that is relatively new and is likely to have changed the perception on the Dominican side when it comes to the Haitian presence (Cedano, 2010; FLACSO, 2004). The Dominican-American Historian Edward Paulino summarizes the Haitian experience in the Dominican Republic in the introduction to his book *Dividing Hispaniola – The Dominican Republic’s border campaign against Haiti*, published in 2016: “In the past fifty years their rising and visible population has been relegated to either second-class citizenship or statelessness while viewed by many Dominicans as synonymous with blackness, poverty, inferiority and peril” (Paulino, 2016).

#### *Migration and remittances on the island*

An important part of being nations of significant net emigration is the impact of the diaspora. The Haitian diaspora is as diverse as Haiti itself and has also been labelled the “11th department” of Haiti (M. R. Hall, 2012). The Haitian diaspora contributes steadily to the Haitian economy by means of remittances. Between 2007 and 2012, the remittances coming into Haiti were equivalent to at least 25% of the total GDP, peaking at just over 30% in 2007. The Dominican Republic receives more in absolute numbers, but given a vastly superior GDP, the remittances are equivalent to a smaller part of the total GDP, between five and seven percent in the same period (Maldonado & Hayem,



2013). This is something that ties the two nations together. They are both nations with a significant part of their population living abroad sending money back home. This is reflected in my survey, for instance on the question of how they view their future – both Haitians and Dominicans see their future somewhere else and have close family members that have migrated to other countries. The remittances to Haiti from the Dominican Republic are to a large extent part of the informal economy; Haitians working in the Dominican Republic send money home. In 2012 an estimate made by the *Observatorio del Mercado Laboral Dominicano* showed that each Haitian sent home an average of 77 US Dollars monthly. The numbers of Haitians in the Dominican Republic are varying, and the estimates differ greatly, but this amounts to millions of dollars each month.<sup>52</sup> This is another face of transnationalism on the island, something that does indeed connect the two countries.

#### Co-existence along a porous border

Co-existence comes in a variety of shapes and forms. In this final part of the chapter, I will address examples of how Dominican and Haitian lives are interconnected in the borderlands. This is something that affects the lives of my respondents directly or indirectly and something that shapes their views and perceptions of one another.

In Belladère, I learned about the binational initiatives for reforestation. I was told by several respondents that there have been so-called *jornadas de reforestación* – reforestation days – and after some initial problems (the Haitian authorities refusing to receive trees from the Dominican side, among other issues), eventually the necessary permissions were granted. There were approximately 20 “viveros” – greenhouses – in which they cultivated different species of trees that the population could come and pick up and plant. There were also photos taken of Dominican and Haitian youths in their school uniforms parading through the town of Belladère together to show the local community what they were doing, and – more importantly – that they were doing it together, Dominicans and Haitians on Haitian soil. These kinds of encounters are also a part of the borderlands however unusual that may be. This is an example of the willingness to go against discourses of separation.

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.elcaribe.com.do/2012/02/07/las-remesas-hacia-haiti-enigma-924#sthash.ZWVJGegX.dpuf>

Transnational contact and everyday experiences are important aspects of life in the borderlands. This is shown and lived, in different ways. At the time of my fieldwork, one of the key legal issues related to the binational relations on the island was the question of stateless Dominicans of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic. In the Dominican Congress, in February of 2013, I attended a session on Statelessness in the Dominican Republic, during which a congressman from Pedernales – Radhamés Caamacho – spoke about the importance of history in the creation of the binational relations. Caamacho explained how he, when working as a teacher in Pedernales, several times had admitted Haitian children into his classes, a common occurrence in the border areas. In all four Dominican border towns I heard similar claims, that the teachers would to a large extent allow Haitians to attend school on the Dominican side. Caamacho also underlined the seriousness of the Statelessness, for the Haitians: “I am from Pedernales. I am a friend of the Haitians. This is an emergency.” Both Caamacho and other congressmen and -women present at the session referred to anti-Haitian discourses in Dominican history writing and storytelling as a part of the contemporary problems and animosities along the border.

Anse-à-Pitres, on the Haitian side, is the poorest of the four mayor border crossings that connect the Dominican Republic and Haiti (*Dominicana en Cifras*, 2014). The differences between the two nations is highly accentuated here in the southernmost point of the border. This was exemplified to me when I escorted the director of the Haitian school in my survey on a quick trip to Pedernales to photocopy the exams needed for the following week’s national tests. He explained that the photocopier in Anse-à-Pitres was out of order, something that forced him to make his copies in Pedernales. That is to say that the Haitian education authorities could not even provide the schools in Anse-à-Pitres with a proper photocopier, or at least that was the case on the occasions in 2013 when I visited them. According to the director, this was business as usual. They depended heavily on Pedernales to get the supplies they needed, both privately as well as for the schools and public services. The border is generally open on Mondays and Fridays for the binational market, but from time to time, the authorities on either side will prohibit the crossing, much to the frustration of particularly the Haitians, but also the Dominicans.

The respondents were asked about whether they had encountered problems while crossing the border. I asked the same question in the survey. I include this as a shared experience, as a part of the transnational experience, because the different levels of lawlessness or what could be labelled as “flexibility within the law” apply to both the Dominicans and the Haitians. I do not reduce shared experiences to being only positive views on each other or ideas of brotherhood and co-existence. Indeed, the troubling segments of life may be understood as shared experiences and similarities in living conditions.

An unknown number of Haitians are working in the Dominican Republic while living in Haiti. In the borderlands, some of these people cross the border daily. A few kilometers away from one of the four main border crossings, near Dajabón and Ouanaminthe at the northern part of the border, I met a group of Haitian nationals returning to Haiti after a day’s work in the Dominican Republic. Some cross in the daytime to sell goods at the binational markets, others work as housekeepers and cross either weekly or daily. A significant number work on the banana plantations or elsewhere in the agriculture sector and another important group work in construction. The Haitians I met – on three different occasions<sup>53</sup> – at the same unofficial crossing point crossed the river by means of a boatman who told us he had been working the last 22 years at the same spot. His job had been and continues to be crossing the river in a small boat, rowing the Haitians across the border river. He charged 50 Haitian gourdes for a two-way ticket, about eight Norwegian kroner – slightly less than one US dollar - at the time (spring of 2013). To get to the boatman, when arriving from the Dominican side, the Haitians have to pass the CESFRONT, the border patrol. They told me the guards normally charged between 50 and one hundred Dominican pesos (approximately 1 – 2 US\$ in 2013) to allow the Haitians to enter and exit illegally each day. This is but one example of the institutionalized irregularities on the border. Very rarely do the soldiers stop people from entering, they told us. It makes no sense to them, as they can make more money from bribes than from their employer, the Dominican state. This was repeated to me on three separate occasions when visiting that specific border crossing. I have spoken with

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<sup>53</sup> Twice during the spring of 2013 and once during a visit in March 2015.

border guards from CESFRONT, with shoe shiners in the Dominican town of Dajabón, and with a group of women who cross the border illegally every day to go to work, and they all concur on one important point: whenever the army wants to close the border, the Haitians cannot cross and enter the Dominican Republic. However, on normal days, the closed border is just a formality.

### ***The discourses identified for framing my data analysis***

This final section of the chapter closely related to the previous sections on social and historical context. There are three main discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations that define my analysis of the surveys and the focus-group interviews, the primary sources for this thesis. One is rooted in the discourse responding to the “fatal conflict model” (S. Martínez, 2003), in the narratives of Dominican-Haitian relations as a reflection of hatred, incompatibilities, and dichotomies. Another is what I have labelled the transnational perspective – inspired by *Transnational Hispaniola* – a book on Dominican-Haitian relations, edited by April J. Mayes and Kiran Jayaram (2018), in which the whole island, the people of Hispaniola and their relations, is the subject of the analysis. Then there is the third perspective, the borderland-specific perspective, represented through the ideas of a characteristic *rayano* consciousness, which I will deal with briefly here and then return to in Chapter 6. These are the defining discourses for my analysis and the three main ways of exploring the Dominican-Haitian relations relevant to my work.

#### **Discourses of the rayano youth**

Harvard Professor Lorgia García-Peña discusses the term *rayano consciousness* in her 2016 prize winning book<sup>54</sup>, *The borders of Dominicanidad – race, nation and archives of contradiction*, and the term has become important for my own understanding of what I found in my interviews and surveys. A “rayano” can be translated as a borderland inhabitant, and García-Peña’s framing of the *rayano consciousness* considers that the everyday contact and co-existence along the border eventually will affect the perception of one another in ways that do not necessarily fit the nation-building discourses, created and propagated far away from the border. In this section, I will address the relevance of *rayano consciousness* for this thesis before discussing writing specifically about the rayano youth. The rayano perspectives are a blend of transnationalism and conflict. Giving more power to the rayano perspectives may serve as a gateway to the past, as well as possibly to a different future, and that is what makes them both unique and important. The rayano discourse is therefore the third discourse for my data analysis, in

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<sup>54</sup> 2017: Gloria Anzaldúa Book Prize, National Women’s Studies Association.  
2016: Isis Duarte Book Prize in Haiti-Dominican Studies.  
2016: Latino Studies Book Prize, the Latino Studies Section of LASA.

addition to the discourses of conflict and transnationalism, and its characteristics and potential will be discussed in the Chapter (6).

García-Peña has dedicated a full chapter of her book to the concept of *rayano consciousness*, analyzed in the light of the Haitian earthquake of 2010 and its repercussions in the borderlands. The concept builds on the work of Dominican scholar Silvio Torres-Saillant, particularly his essay on what he labelled the “*rayano condition*” (2004). The essay was published as a part of a seminar for the Dominican Army in 2003 in the Dominican Republic, chaired by Mr. Torres-Saillant. In his address to the representatives of the Army, he expressed some hope that the official Dominican view on the borderlands could be changed into something fresh and positive, moving away from the old perspectives of leaving the borderlands in a willed state of darkness and oblivion where only hatred, mutual skepticism, and smugglers are able to thrive. In the invitation to the seminar with the Armed Forces, the Dominican General Soto Jiménez described the border as “a conducive space for self-reflection, a place of opportunities and a virgin land in which respect for differences could be rooted” (Torres-Saillant, 2004, pp. 222-223). Torres-Saillant welcomed this opening for change and spoke about the destructive forces embedded in what he calls a “trujillista culture”, and the opportunities that lay in envisioning the border in a way that emphasizes “inclusion, social justice and redemptive ideals (which will permit) that we look outwards from the border from an ecumenic perspective of the nation” (Torres-Saillant, 2004, p. 226). In choosing to allow himself to be an optimist— as he puts it in his essay – Torres-Saillant does not avoid commenting on the deep rooted, state-sponsored, skepticism towards the Haitians. It will be hard for the Dominicans to look towards the borderlands “through a prism that has been freed” and that therefore there is a need for a reeducation regarding Dominican-Haitian relations (Torres-Saillant, 2004, p. 226). An important question for me is whether the prism of the *rayano youth* is in competition with the discourses of conflict, and if there is something in the *rayano* discourse that can contribute to this reeducation. Torres-Saillant’s ideas resonate well with the transnational discourses – to be discussed later in this chapter and then in Chapters 5 and 6 – in that a new way of discussing and discovering Dominican-Haitian relations and the border will reveal “things about ourselves that were always there, but that we could not see because of trujillista education. We will be up against the hybrid, multiform and

porous structure of what we are” (Torres-Saillant, 2004, p. 227). This multiform, hybrid porous “we” could also be a fitting description of my respondents and their utterances.

García-Peña’s starting point is the story about the *rayana* – *the borderland inhabitant* – Sonia Marmolejos, who became momentarily famous in January 2010 after breastfeeding an injured Haitian child at a hospital in Santo Domingo. While waiting for doctors to attend to her own toddler, Marmolejos had observed a Haitian baby among the injured Haitians that had been airlifted to the Dominican Republic for medical treatment. She picked the infant up, breastfed him, and helped him calm down and eventually get some sleep. In the following days, she helped 12 Haitian infants in a similar fashion. A photo of her, published in the national Dominican newspaper *Listín Diario*, smiling and nursing a wounded Haitian baby, became a symbol of how the Dominicans had opened their hospitals and their hearts, in spite of all the years of conflict and hatred. Marmolejo was even awarded a medal of honor for her gesture of kindness towards the Haitian children at the World Summit for the Future of Haiti, in the Dominican Republic in 2010, in the presence of former US President Bill Clinton, and then Presidents René Preval (Haiti) and Leonel Fernández (the Dominican Republic).

Marmolejos is important for several reasons. Obviously, her acts of kindness are admirable by any standard in that she was helping infants in need. She is also a highly symbolic person in the context of Haitian-Dominican relations. She showed the whole world that “... dominant structures can always be contested through performances of everyday life that often contradict official discourses of the state (García-Peña, 2016, p. 132). The *rayanos* live in close contact with each other, move back and forth across the border, and their life experiences are not compatible with strict dichotomies, such as those often used to portray Dominican-Haitian relations:

(The) dichotomist discourse (on Dominican-Haitian relations) obscured the earthquake-affected *Línea Fronteriza*, where a Dominican-Haitian culture has existed for centuries and where the *rayanos*, such as Sonia Marmolejos, experience the same poverty and disenfranchisement journalists and scholars tend to associate with Haiti. (García-Peña, 2016, pp. 130-131)

These types of shared experiences on either side of the border are often overlooked due to the enormous disparities between the two countries on the macro level. This is not to say that these differences do not exist, and do not favor the Dominican Republic, but an important observation about the specific characteristics of the borderlands is that there are features of life there that are more similar on both sides of the border than what the traditional conflict-based narratives would have us believe. The Dominican borderlands are generally worse off than the rest of the nation according to most socio-economic indicators, and therefore also at times closer to the neighboring Haiti than to the rest of the Dominican Republic. This is an important part of the *rayano* perspective that García-Peña pursues in her book, and it is one that also connects with the perspectives of, for instance, Edward Paulino (2016), Mayes & Jayaram (2018), and Fumagalli (2015), who are all in different ways contradicting the conflict-based narratives and discourses. These are findings in my own material as well: An important and somewhat overlooked part of Dominican-Haitian relations is that people are just getting on with their lives. They do so both with and without regard to the “Dominican-Haitian-ness” of their immediate circumstances. Far away from the grandiose pathos of nation builders, PhD-candidates, intellectuals, and the NGOs, the youth of the borderlands, Haitian and Dominican alike, live their lives and simply co-exist, while also being separated from one another.

Marmolejo did not consider her actions to be that noteworthy regardless all the attention it drew:

Rather than an extraordinary action, nursing another woman’s baby is, in Marmolejos’ own words, simply “what mothers do.” In poor peasant and *rayano* villages, breastfeeding is a communal endeavor. Poor women often nurse each other’s babies, sharing household chores, childrearing, and farming tasks. All of these things are part of the daily strategy for survival in impoverished communities throughout the *Línea Fronteriza*. Marmolejos’ decision to nurse the wounded baby did not result solely from an individual instinct, but rather from an understanding of her responsibility to a community in need. (García-Peña, 2016, p. 132)

Thus, while being awarded a medal of honor was a gesture that Marmolejo may appreciate and something that she surely deserved, García-Peña argues that the enormous attention given to her photo and her altruistic act of nursing a Haitian baby



shows us something else as well. The attraction around the photo of a Dominican woman nursing a Haitian infant also indicates a lack of understanding for what life in the borderlands is really like. It seems to presuppose that all Dominicans are anti-Haitian and that we expected the Dominicans to act differently. Really, why would a mother *not* run to the aid of a helpless infant? A situation in which Marmolejos did not come to the rescue for those little babies would perhaps be more uncommon. In García-Peña's words, "(the) rayano episteme—Marmolejos's way of understanding motherhood and community—was silenced to make room for the production of an international narrative of Haitian-Dominican reconciliation" (García-Peña, 2016, p. 132). This imagined reconciliation may have served as a photo-opportunity for both the Haitian and Dominican authorities, as well as for Bill Clinton and his Clinton Foundation, but it does not do justice to lives in the borderlands.

There is a very important aspect to the *rayano consciousness* in that it enables "artists, writers and the general public (to) confront anti-haitianism within and beyond the island territory and find communal ways to create and historicize their own everyday realities" (García-Peña, 2016, p. 133). These everyday realities are the lives that create the context for my respondents, and perhaps they are also representative of the future of Dominican-Haitian relations.

Rayanos and the organizations that support them understand that the future of the borderland region lies neither in the hands of the state that excludes them, nor in the corporations that exploit them, but in the mutual cooperation of the communities that inhabit the region. (García-Peña, 2016, p. 205)

It is as within these kinds of rayano experience and consciousness that we find the core of the discourses of the youths of the borderlands, and that is also why they are interesting. They are living contradictions of the conflict-based narratives and discourses regarding Dominican-Haitian relations and history, at the same time as they confirm parts of the same dichotomies that they contradict. A validation of that kind of complexity is an important part of the value of this thesis. García-Peña also introduces the idea of "*rayano consciousness* as an antidote to the colonial imagination that dominates and cuts Hispaniola into two antagonistic halves" (García-Peña, 2016, p. 139), which is something I will return to in Chapter 6.

### Discourses of transnationalism

While the conflict-based discourses that I will address below view the island as opposite forces, opposite people, and living dichotomies, the transnational views, as presented by April Mayes and Kiran Jayaram in their co-edited book *Transnational Hispaniola* (2018), search for common ground, and look for indicators of co-existence and shared experiences while viewing the island as one. Not “one”, as in one nation, but one as in having a shared history, and pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, and present-day connections that unite and unify experiences across the colonial border.

The transnational perspective is about that interconnectivity across the border, not only in the past and the present, but also for the future: “In our historical moment, Haiti and the Dominican Republic offer new lessons about how entanglement and dual-consciousness form the basis for new ways of framing justice, effecting change and mobilizing resistance” (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018, p. 15). The framing of Dominican-Haitian relations in research needs this kind of approach, one that is not entirely dominated by searching for conflict and dichotomies.

While conflict is one of many ways to frame Dominican-Haitian relations, it is also the most simplistic, reductive, and overused. The conflict narrative is often accompanied by equally pessimistic adjectives – broken, divided, and pathological – that render it questionable as a guiding principle for change. (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018)

Mayes and Jayaram define the ambitions of their work as an attempt to include the creation of new narratives, including the encouragement to conduct “more social scientific research, particularly anthropological, historical and sociological studies of social movements and everyday life” (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018, p. 3). My work is not a direct response to their call, as it was started before I had the pleasure of reading their book. However, this thesis intends to be a fruitful part of that very same conversation on Dominican-Haitian relations. This approach is not entirely new. One of the key arguments of the US researcher and anthropologist Samuel Martínez, in his 2003 article *Not a Cockfight: Rethinking Haitian-Dominican Relations*, is that trying to understand Dominican-Haitian relations mainly from a conflict perspective is too narrow an

approach. Martínez labels it the “*fatal-conflict model of Dominican-Haitian relations*”, and argues that this model draws on two exaggerations:

The first is that the citizens of Haiti and the Dominican Republic are consumed with animosity toward their island neighbors. The second is that the two nations are engaged in some sort of contest for control over the island of Hispaniola. These two assertions constitute the core of a “fatal-conflict model” of Dominican-Haitian relations. (S. Martínez, 2003)

This understanding does not imply, on the other hand, that there is no conflict between Dominicans and Haitians. It cannot be forgotten, for example, that there is not even a single agreed upon name for the whole island that does not provoke a sentiment or possibly resentment on one or the other side (Albert, 2013; Balacer, 2012; Caeara Hatton et al., 2016; Doucet, 2014), so for this thesis I am referring to the respective nations’ names. However, Martínez makes the important observation that from a researcher’s point of view, there has been an emphasis on the anti-Haitian Dominican nationalist discourse at the expense of other existing perspectives. From my own research, I can mention coexistence, mutual acceptance and dependence, trade, shared life experiences, solidarity, and every-day interactions as examples of ignored perspectives in the fatal-conflict model. This model leads to a slanted representation of Dominican-Haitian relations that omits the complexities in the perceptions of both Dominicans and Haitians.

The transnational approach that April Mayes and Kiran Jayaram propose in their book *Transnational Hispaniola* (2018) also does not downplay conflict, but rather addresses the same lack of recognition of the complex nature of Dominican-Haitian relations. Embracing this transnational approach means aiming “to promote narratives that validate the full humanity of Dominicans and Haitians, and that avoid exceptionalism and pat abstractions – for example that although Haitians are poor, they are “resilient” and that Dominicans’ anti-haitianism is both ancient and resistant to change” (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018, p. 3).

This need for a less conflict-based approach makes the border a natural starting point for me. The border is, as mentioned above, more than just a demarcation line because “while borders create political, social and cultural divides, they also reveal the existence

of networks of communication across them” (Bragadir, 2018, p. 25), as Nathalie Bragadir explains in her chapter on the Dominican-Haitian border in *Transnational Hispaniola: new directions in Haitian and Dominican studies* (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018). The border represents transnationalism in the sense of people living on either side of the border. Some live in Haiti while working in the Dominican Republic. There are Haitian children who cross the border to attend Dominican schools (Kaye, 2012). Haitians and Dominicans inter-marry, the binational markets are important to people on both sides, they live side by side, sometimes literally. The economies are mutually embedded in one another, as are the lives of the inhabitants. I will highlight these kinds of coexistence in the analysis chapters.

Yet, on the ground, along both sides of a border, we find the borderlands. They are far more ambiguous and a lot less definitive than the borderlines. The borderlands are complex spaces of continuous human transnational interactions, on both a conscious and subconscious level. The people of the borderlands have no choice but to be aware of both their own and their neighbor’s nationalities, as it is an important part of navigating the day-to-day life in those areas. Simultaneously, a resident of the borderlands must know how to transcend these national distinctions, for example regarding language. While today the main languages in the borderlands are Dominican Spanish and Haitian Creole, the northern region on the Dominican side was in fact at one point in time a thriving multicultural zone, for example as we saw above with the city of Montecristi. [See comment JA1]. The meeting of cultures is nothing new to neither Haitians nor Dominicans, of course. This is rather an important part of the island’s history that is less often communicated to the world.

In the introduction to *Transnational Hispaniola*, the authors also mention encouraging research that facilitates

analysis of moments of collaboration and convergences of interests among Haitians and Dominicans. (..) Dominicans and Haitians have long cooperated with each other in political, social and economic projects that challenge oppression. We consider it our job to find and share those stories. (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018)

One of these stories of transnationalism relates to the economic transactions that tie the island closer together: “There are no transnational economic transactions that exist independently of social relations or transnational social networks (...) (Pries, 2013). Pries states that our understanding has shortcomings if we fail to take into account the transnational nature of our societies. Pries is in no way limited to the economic aspects of transnationalism; his approach is holistic:

Haiti and the Dominican Republic became symbols of the transnational in the late 1980s and the early 1990s when this term emerged in social science research, particularly sociology, anthropology, and history. (...) unlike earlier generations of immigrants, Haitians and Dominicans could remain connected to home; whenever possible, these immigrants constructed lives that straddled two worlds. (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018, p. 7)

Of more contemporary and shared issues between the two nations are found Haitian deforestation, the interdependent economies of the borderlands, poverty on either side of the border, the cooperation in trade, the Dominican swift reply to the 2010 earthquake disaster in Haiti, and the day-to-day contact between the inhabitants of the borderlands (Alexandre, 2004; Antonini, 2012; Fumagalli, 2015; Murray, 2010c; Peña, 2008), as well as the important Haitian contributions to the Dominican economy and vice versa (Ceara Hatton et al., 2016; González, 2012). There are long-standing traditions of co-existence and collaboration, as for example the Mixed Binational Dominican-Haitian commission – on and off since its founding, in 1996, by then Presidents Preval (Haiti) and Balaguer (Dominican Republic) – which came about as an initiative from both Governments to improve and facilitate relations between the two nations. The transnational and shared background of the island has a long-standing history. My job is to analyze the presence of this type of discourse in the youths of my material.

### Discourses of conflict

The most common way to portray the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and their binational relations inhabitants is to highlight the contradictions and conflicts between them, which is how I understand “discourses of conflict”, based on the above-mentioned fatal-conflict model (S. Martínez, 2003). This is important to this thesis because of the interdependent nature of context and discourse (see Chapter two for more on Critical

Discourse Analysis). Traditional framings of binational relations are therefore parts of the context that create and negotiate the binational relations.

The image of the Dominican perpetrator and the Haitian victim, both trapped inside an endless Dominican-Haitian conflict, has been perpetuated, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, both through hard evidence, such as reports, research, and the experiences of those who live in the borderlands, and through myth making, as for instance in the nationalist propaganda, with former president Joaquín Balaguer's presentation of Haiti as the "eternal enemy" and the imminent danger of a Haitian invasion as examples (Balaguer, 1983; Paulino, 2016). The NGOs in the Dominican Republic and the "international community" become a part of this depiction, as they mainly identify with the Haitians and their descendants, something that has been portrayed as a "campaign against the Dominican nation" among nationalist sectors in the Dominican Republic.

Guns are rarely blazing on the Dominican-Haitian border, and when they are, they tend to be fired by civilians and not by the army. There is no military conflict between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Defining what characterizes a conflict when there are no shots fired is not an easy task. An example of this was the initial reluctance from both the Dominican and the Haitian partners within the Nobel Project when they discussed the need to create what the Norwegians had labelled "a peace culture" between the Dominicans and the Haitians in the borderland. Norwegian representatives of the Nobel Project, both from Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told me about the skepticism on either side of the border when approaching the issue of peace. Why would there be a need to create a "culture of peace" when there was no war? Initially, both money and political control in Norway were located in the section for "*Peace and reconciliation*" at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was a problem, because there was obviously no war between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and feelings were understandably hurt on both sides of the border. Were the Norwegians working under the assumption that there was a war to be ended? My own initial research, going through archive material on the Nobel Project, and interviews with key stakeholders, clearly indicates that Norway did not in any way believe nor make the claim that there was a war between the two nations. However, the *insinuation* implicit in the talk about creating peace was unsettling for some participants

on both sides of the border. The NCA representative, Ingvild Skeie, with a long history of working with Dominicans and Haitians in dialogue-related activities, including the Nobel Project, also wrote about local reluctance to accept this analysis of Dominican-Haitian relations, departing from a conflict perspective:

Personally, I have over the years many times met resistance from local actors in different positions and at different levels towards framing this issue in a conflict perspective – and towards characterizing the relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic as a conflict. On one hand this resistance might relate to people’s immediate conception of a conflict – it is easily equaled to contexts of large-scale violent conflict or war. Relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic in no way fill the criteria for being termed neither an armed conflict nor a war. (Skeie, 2016)

Therefore, the dialogue talks between Dominicans and Haitians, and facilitated by the Norwegians, had to focus on the fact that there was indeed – despite the absence of war – a real conflict that caused real problems for many people, that there were in effect two states that were failing to cooperate in a fruitful way.

Documentaries produced in recent decades have also imparted similar versions of the same starting point: the divided island and the eternal conflict.<sup>55</sup> We know that both Haitians<sup>56</sup> (L'Information, 2014) and Dominicans alike have been found to fear an invasion from the other, or a forced unification of the two nations, albeit a clearly more widespread fear on the Dominican side than in Haiti. *The Trojan horse metaphor* is a way of describing “someone or something intended to defeat or subvert from within,”<sup>57</sup> and it may be used to paint a picture of how a certain type of migration is not only migration, but rather a covert operation with a specific goal of conquest. As an example, the Haitian

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<sup>55</sup> Documentaries such as “Sukkerslavene” (“The sugar slaves”) (2000), “Black In Latin America: Haiti & The Dominican Republic: an island divided” (2011), “Death by a thousand cuts” (2016) “Sugar Babies” (2007), and “The price of sugar” (2007) are examples of very different projects with at least one thing in common: they portray the history of the island with the conflicts as a starting point.

<sup>56</sup> On the Haitian side, the fear of a Dominican invasion is – to the best of my knowledge – not widespread, although the survey referenced indeed indicated that approximately one fourth of the surveyed Haitian population feared a Dominican invasion. The Haitians have been living under another kind of invasion in the presence of UN troops, MINUSTAH – the UN mission for Haiti. Specific for the borderlands is the perspective that the International community – embodied by the former MINUSTAH-soldiers patrolling the border on Haitian soil – would systematically side with Dominicans in cases of conflict (Doucet, 2012).

<sup>57</sup> Definition retrieved from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trojan%20horses>

migration to the Dominican Republic was labeled “The uterus invasion”, in DR Newsnet,<sup>58</sup> comparing the Haitian “invasion” to Muslim immigration to Europe, and what they describe as a conscious “politics of the womb” – *política del vientre* in Spanish – to replace the Dominican population with Haitians. The “replacement” theory is also widespread in far-right anti-Islam rhetoric in Europe as well as in the US, with the claim that Islam is taking over and replacing the European and US populations. However, the anti-Islam ideology is currently irrelevant in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, so what we may observe are similar patterns of arguments rather than similar arguments in themselves. What is portrayed to be at stake is not so much the Dominican race, even though there are blatantly racist elements to this rhetoric as well, but rather the sovereignty of the Dominican nation and culture. The ideas of a Haitian invasion, found in the survey results of my own research, as well as other analyses of Dominican-Haitian relations, are closely linked to that kind of argument. The migration from Haiti and the subsequent coexistence of both Dominicans and Haitians on Dominican soil is given an added layer of conflict in that there is a supposed intention from the Haitian side to take over the island. When the respondents of my survey so clearly approve of the idea of a Haitian invasion as something real, then we must see this in the light of a specific way of portraying the migration as an invasion.

My respondents’ initial statements are a testament to a fear that exists between Dominicans and Haitians. It is a fear that is as real as anything else you will find in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands and that is widespread on both sides of the border. This explicitly expressed fear that another group or individual may cause you severe harm in any number of ways is damaging to Dominican-Haitian relations. However, if fear is indeed present between groups or between individuals, then an important first step to overcome it is to acknowledge its presence and then proceed to deal with it.

I have learned through my many travels to the island, my fieldwork, and the analysis of my respondents’ answers, that fear is a real and important ingredient of the multi-layered existence of the youths of the Dominican-Haitian borderlands, on both sides of the border. There are so many reasons why fear and conflict are used as a starting point,

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<sup>58</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3wre3gf01U>



as has been made clear above. Thus, in one way, on working with this thesis I have confirmed that the island is a living dichotomy, not unlike the stereotypical perpetrator-victim portraits. The Dominican-Haitian border does not just represent a territorial divide, but also a dividing line between two different peoples, separated in part by a mutual and deeply rooted skepticism of one another. At times, this also stretches into outspoken hatred.

Fear is here, but that is not the full story. There is also hope, and there is a duality between the two that must not be ignored. "Conflict" can include conditions that are not found in Dominican-Haitian relations, as in incompatible claims made by the governments or armed disputes. A purely conflict-oriented approach may also lead a researcher to lose sight of the complexities of Dominican-Haitian relations in search of the "juicier" conflictive parts of the relations:

...there is excessive focus on conflicts between Dominicans and Haitians. The selection of conflict as one of the major foci of the investigation was guided by a widespread perception, both national and international, that relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti are characterized principally by antagonism and hostility. Despite strong empirical evidence to the contrary, the evidence is often filtered out in favor of stereotypes concerning hostility. (Murray, 2010c)

The binational relations on the island are indeed destructive, and at times even dysfunctional (Skeie, 2016), both for Dominicans and Haitians, but they are neither innate nor inevitable and also not constantly the same. This thesis aims to contribute to the field of study of Dominican-Haitian relations by adding the perspectives of the youths from both sides of the border and their rayano perspectives.

### ***Concluding remarks***

I set out to answer three questions in this chapter, and I will repeat them here to tie together the loose ends.

- 1) *What characterizes the historical and social context of the Dominican-Haitian borderlands?*
- 2) *What is the relevant historical and social context behind the discourses of the Dominican-Haitian binational relations?*
- 3) *What are the relevant discourses framing my data analysis?*

The first two questions serve as a direct response to CDA's demand for contextual understanding (Chapter 2). The main findings are that the borderlands exist in a social and historical context in which certain perspectives have been the official discourse while other perspectives have been hidden or forgotten. The borderlands are different from the rest of their respective nations in living conditions, more so on the Dominican side than on the Haitian side. The context of discourses of conflict reaches from colonial times until the present day and is much more well-known than the contexts of transnational experiences and perspectives, yet they are equally important to understand the borderlands, and – I would add – the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The importance of a creation and a recreation of the Haitian enemy, during the Trujillo era and beyond had been underlined in this chapter. Another key point to understand in this chapter is that there is a well-documented past and present that does *not* revolve around the conflict narratives of the binational relations. There is a multicultural past of the borderlands that is often overlooked. There are additionally transnational contemporary elements such as trade, shared life experiences, mutual assistance to the other, and Haitian migration. The third question, on the relevant discourses for framing my data analysis is also a way of grasping the contextual part of this chapter, just as it points towards the chapters on analysis that follow, because in addition to the contexts of conflict and transnationalism, question three includes the insertion of a third parameter for the analysis, namely the question of a rayano consciousness and discourse, which I will return to in the final Chapter (6).





## Chapter 4 - The conflict-based discourses in the borderlands

*What characterizes the discourses of conflict found among the Dominican and Haitian borderland youths? What are the similarities and differences in the discourse between the Dominican and Haitian respondents?*

This chapter aims to answer these questions to bring us closer to answering the main research question: *how can the borderland youths' perceptions of each other and of the binational relations be interpreted and analyzed in a historical and social context?* This is the first of three chapters where I analyze and discuss the “the borderland youths’ perceptions of each other and of the binational relations”. The previous chapter presented the relevant historical and social contexts necessary for understanding the three main discourses that frame my analysis. In Chapters four and five, I will present the discourses as I have found them in my material. In the final chapter I will discuss these discourses in the light of Lorgía-Pérez’ (2016) and Torres-Saillant’s (2004) studies of the *rayano consciousness* (see Chapter 3 for explanation and Chapter 6 for discussion).

This chapter on the conflict-based discourses has been divided into three main discourse categories identified in the surveys and the interviews:

- 1) Contemporary versions of the trujillista discourse
- 2) Discourse of fear and lack of trust
- 3) Discourse of incompatibility

### **Contemporary versions of the “trujillista” discourse**

This chapter focuses on conflict and perceptions of incompatibility, and I start with the perceptions that I link directly to the heritage of Rafael Trujillo – hence the term *trujillista* – and Joaquín Balaguer, whom I have included under *trujillista* even though at times I identify some utterances as specifically *balaguerista* (for example the idea of alleged foreign plans to force a unification of the island). The essence of both Balaguer and Trujillo’s rhetoric are negative portrayals and perceptions of the Haitians when it comes to race, culture, religion, language, and the idea that the Haitian is someone that the Dominican needs to defend himself against.

In the previous chapter I contextualized the *trujillista* perspectives on the Haitian threat, of the Dominicans’ perceived racial and social incompatibility with the Haitians, and their perceived religious eccentricities. Below I will investigate how this plays out among my Dominican and Haitian respondents.

#### **The Dominican fear of Haitian supernatural powers**

One particularly daunting feature of the Haitians, according to my survey and my interviews, is their supernatural powers. The fear of them is both real and widespread. The Haitians are “diabolical”, “they rely on Satanism”, and “they practice a lot of witchcraft”, as two survey respondents replied. These responses would surface when answering various questions, whether about what separates the two nations, associations with “Haiti” or the “Haitian”, binational relations, and more.

An important distinction should be made between the survey material and the focus groups in terms of this fear. The focus groups on the Dominican side would mainly concur to some degree that the Haitians had supernatural powers,<sup>59</sup> but they did not appear to be afraid, in the sense that they had already visited Haiti and unanimously found it to be a safe place to visit. The fear is real, but so is the possibility of overcoming it, or so it would seem. The following are extracted responses – from various individuals – to the survey questions on what the respondents associated with Haiti:

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<sup>59</sup> By “they would agree” I am referring my own reflections since the participants in all the focus groups on the Dominican side gave statements that indicated a belief in supernatural Haitian powers.

They are human beings just like the Dominicans, but they use witchcraft // some are robbers, they look for fights, they look for witchcraft // (Haiti is a) low-income country, they rely on Satanism and Buddhism<sup>60</sup> (sic) and they need a lot of help.

It is clear that the surveyed and interviewed Dominicans believe the Haitians have magical abilities and evil features through which they practice unspecified “witchcraft”. Some claim that they do not fear the Haitians because they are black, it is not a racial matter, they say. What they are concerned about is the Haitians’ alleged use of sorcery. Others dislike the Haitians both for being black and for their involvement in witchcraft or Vodou. These utterances represent the essence of the dominant discourse among the informants: the supernatural Haitian, a dangerous person, as opposed to the Dominican. The juxta-positioning of the “supernatural Haitian” and the Catholic Dominican is a trait dating back to Trujillo’s and Balaguer’s discourse (see context chapter).

The conflict-based arguments or perceptions underline the differences between the two nations, and there are abundant examples of this among my informants. A common Dominican idea about the Haitians is that they have contact with dark forces and witchcraft or sorcery, or – as one respondent put it, “they are very noisy and brujos” (“brujos” means warlocks or witches). This is a variation of a rather common response. The religious factor is also a key factor in the *balaguerista* discourse that supports the idea of the incompatibility between Dominicans and Haitians. This is again related to the notion that most things Haitian are African which is linked to being Vodou practitioners. This could be summarized as *the Dominican fear of Haitian supernatural powers*. Even though I am not able to establish causal relations between *balaguerista* sentiments on Haitian magic and witchcraft and the contemporary discourse of borderland youths, I still recognize the same kind of arguments within my respondents. These arguments are repeated in many stories, like this one told by a Dominican respondent from a focus group:

People talk about so many things, for example, at the time of the earthquake I heard on one occasion that a (...) foreigner who came to help (...) something had happened to him (...) he was supposedly dead, and later on, his wife saw him (..) again, that was a very

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<sup>60</sup> The respondent’s use of “Buddhism” is most likely a misunderstanding, wanting to say Vodou, as the two sound somewhat similar when pronounced in Spanish.

strange thing and according to the man who told me about this, Haiti had resurrected him. Just like many people say, they have this belief in the zombies, that's one of the characteristics over there in Haiti, and those are things that are scary.

This is a part of the *trujillista* heritage, of *Hollywood-esque* depictions of black magic and Vodou, of a narrative on the Haitian revolution and its Vodou connections, and part of the myths on Haitian folklore that are most known outside of Haiti. Another example was my question in the survey about what the religion in Haiti was. According to one respondent: "some are warlocks and some Christians, but the Dominicans are mainly Christians and over there (in Haiti) they do not use (that religion) much. They use witchcraft more." The Dominican view of the Haitian as having supernatural powers is very much alive, yet not all-consuming, as this dialogue excerpt between me and a focus group is but one example of:

Focus group (FG): I saw a movie once where a Haitian transformed another man into an animal.

Interviewer (I): Ay, ay, ay! But do you really think that this has happened?

FG: Yes! (everybody at once).

I: Okay, so, this really happened, that a Haitian was able to...

FG: Yes, yes! After they transform him into an animal, they sell him.

I: Oh! But, if so, isn't it dangerous for you to cross the border?

FG: No.

Thus while some Dominican respondents believe the Haitians delve into sorcery, they do not seem to be too concerned about it. Different versions of a narrative in which visitors to Haiti were transformed into animals were common throughout my conversations with the youths on the Dominican side. Oddly, perhaps, this was not portrayed as a danger to me. As in the excerpt above, they did not worry about crossing the border, even if someone could have transformed me into a chicken or a bird. In other words, while the discourse on "the supernatural Haitian" is indeed real, it is not a discourse that automatically instills fear in the Dominicans. Some of my focus-groups member shared this light approach to the alleged Haitian supernatural connections: "...it was more about hey, watch out! ...that their religion is Vodou, you know, those ancient beliefs." Moreover, once the focus-group informants had been directly involved with Haitians, mainly through field trips and school-related activities (mostly organized by the Nobel



Project infrastructure), they tended to lose some of their initial fears, or at least that is what was stated in the interviews.

#### Racist Dominican ideas on the other

The surveyed Dominicans display a wide range of racist sentiments about Haitians. An unavoidable product of the conflict-based discourses is a negative view on the other, on either side of the border. In this section I shall be looking at some examples of Dominican ideas or prejudices about the Haitians and Haiti. An example of one such idea about the others could be that they do not mean well and will cause you harm. This could be on an individual level or elevated to the regional or national level. As one would expect, there is a profusion of negative views on the other – from both sides of the border – in the survey results and the interviews. I am referring here to statements from one side (Haitian or Dominican) that in one way or another describe the other nation or their idea of a non-specified citizen of that nation.

Blatant racism is a defining part of the negative idea of the other. This is obviously not an exclusively Dominican feature. Racism is a global pandemic and has been relevant to the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic ever since colonization and slavery. The Haitians are “disgusting, ugly blacks”, they are “stinky”, “smelly”, “black persons of low quality”, and they have “ugly hair”.

Some examples of the racist Dominican discourse, found in the survey, from different individual respondents are:

The Haitian likes to walk around with a bad smell, and the Dominican doesn't like that // They're disgusting, ugly blacks with no family // Darker color, poorer, dark and ugly hair // (A Haitian is a) miserable person, stinky, ugly and with dark skin // (Haitians are) blacks and persons of low quality // The Haitians are very filthy and also very black // the Haitians are filthy and ugly blacks

The Haitians are – according to this segment of my surveyed Dominicans – characterized for their color, and hygiene, in addition to the racist reference to the good hair/bad hair dichotomy. “Good hair” is the same as straight hair, whereas “bad hair” is synonymous with an afro hairstyle. As mentioned in the context chapter, Dominican women are

struggling to be allowed to have an afro hairstyle at their workplaces, and this struggle is gradually being won (Paredes, 2013). However, the reason why they have to argue for this right is the existing discourse maintaining that curly Afro hair is *bad* compared to *good* straight, hair and this is unsurprisingly also found among my respondents' answers.

#### Dominicans: the Haitians are selfish and have no skills

Another way of speaking negatively about the Haitians, which also blatantly echoes the *trujillista* past, addresses the perceived innate lack of skills when it comes to organizing their society. "(We,) the Dominicans are people who set goals to follow, and they're not worried about that kind of thing," which is most likely another way of saying that Haiti's many misfortunes are a result of Haitians "not worrying" about things. This also echoes the classical *balaguerista* depiction of Haitians as a people who do not produce anything if not forced to do so. Similar to this, the respondent implies a more selfish side to the Haitians, apparently not seen in Dominicans: "The Dominicans work hard to get a good education, while they're just thinking about getting ahead for themselves and their families with no concern for an education". This is another element of the dichotomy-based understanding of the island in which the Haitians are said to live in chaos due to their inability to overcome their own failures, whereas the Dominicans are in control of their destiny and their opportunities. In addition to the perceived lack of interest in education among Haitians, the supernatural factor is mentioned in relation to the way that many of my respondents identify Haiti as a disorganized country: "(Haiti is) a country where they're not organized, there is a lot of evil and they don't know how to live."<sup>61</sup> This idea of not "knowing how to live" is a derivative of the idea of Haiti as a backward nation, notwithstanding the fact that the poverty and social exclusion they experience is a transnational phenomenon, which is something I will return to when discussing the transnational discourse. In addition to not knowing "how to live", the Haitians are also "very selfish, and we're not", according to a Dominican survey respondent. That selfishness of the Haitians is accompanied by the Haitians perceived sense that they are more worthy than the Dominicans: "The difference is that the Haitians think of themselves as being more (worthy) than the Dominicans." In a sense,

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<sup>61</sup> Original quotation: "ellos no saben vivir".

this is a way of portraying the Dominican as more modest, people who do not value themselves more than others, while the Haitian is the one who does not value the Dominican. It is interesting to note that the Haitians say almost the same thing in their surveys, they see Dominicans as people who disdain the Haitians, something that I will return to.

Other descriptions are even more culturally and historically loaded. For instance, the many references to being “evil”, warlocks and sorcerers: (When you say Haiti) “you’re referring to a country full of evil”. This kind of statement is very frequent and representative, and the presence of violence and fear is notable. The Dominicans also show an unsurprising, yet discomfoting level of racism towards the Haitian. They are “ugly blacks”, “diabolical” and “backward”, for example. But let us cross the border and investigate what the Haitians say about Dominican-Haitian relations. They – as well as the Dominicans – embrace the idea the binational relations need to improve, but why? Below I will look at different characteristics of the Haitians’ perceptions of Dominican-Haitian relations, starting with the shared Dominican-Haitian perception of a mutual incompatibility.

#### [“The evil Dominican culture” and Haitian bigotry](#)

Perceiving the other with prejudice and generalizations is nothing exclusive to the Dominican borderland youths, to be blunt. the Haitians are racist as well and the idea of incompatibility is a mutual sentiment. While the Dominicans focus on religious and racial differences, the Haitians talk about *the evil Dominican culture*, as one respondent described it. An important part of the conflict-based discourse revolves around Dominican abuse of Haitians and the Dominican hatred for Haiti. While there is enough evidence to prove that abuses are being committed on the individual and state levels against Haitians in the Dominican Republic, less attention has been paid to the similar sentiments on the Haitian side of the border. But we should pay no less attention to Haitian bigotry if we are looking for ways to break with old discourses and create new ones. The following utterance from a Haitian survey respondent is no different from a *trujillista* vision of the Haitian, only reversed: “The Dominicans have more evil (in them) than Haitians”.

While it is not as common to look at Haitian attitudes, it is both relevant and interesting for our understanding of the dynamics of the borderlands. Do the Haitians also perceive the relations from a dichotomy-based discourse? Do they differ? My findings do not find significantly fewer racist views on the Haitian side than on the Dominican side. To state that “Dominicans like to kill Haitians”, or that Dominicans are a nation of thieves, is no less racist than what the Dominican youths say about Haitians. The youths in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands do not only share certain socio-economical similarities, in comparison with their respective homelands (as in for example the disadvantages of living in the peripheral parts of their nations), they are also quite racist against one another.

The power relations between the two nations cannot be isolated from the relations between the people in the borderlands and are present also at this stage of the analysis. The following utterance from the survey on the Haitian side is an example of this: “Dominicans are a racist nation that doesn’t consider Haitians at all, they look at us like dogs.” There is a revealing lack of symmetry embedded in that statement: the Haitians have a clear tendency to complain that the Dominicans do not appreciate them. The fact that this seems to matter so much is indicative of differences between the two nations: the Dominican is the stronger, the Haitian the weaker: “They always think they’re better than us”, as one Haitian survey respondent wrote. True or not, it is a perception on the Haitian side that the Dominicans do not consider them to be a nation worthy of respect. However, the Haitians dislike the Dominicans and their country in much the same fashion as they claim their dislike of Dominicans, as this Haitian survey respondent exemplifies: “(I don’t like the Dominicans) because they’re white”. There are various Haitian references in the survey responses to “the evil Dominican”, depicting the Dominicans as thieves, aggressive, violent, and compulsive liars with evil in their hearts and knives in their pockets; always ready for a fight with Haitians. Some statements reveal racial prejudice against the Dominicans: again, “because they are white”. It is certainly ironic that the *trujillista*’s eternal arch enemy – Haitians – end up being the ones to call the Dominicans *white*.

The Haitians say that the Dominicans like to pick fights and: “they like to act badly, and they do not reflect about it (..)”. According to this segment, the surveyed Haitians, the Dominicans are inherently *bad*, they abuse the Haitians, and they do not care that they do. They have hard hearts because, as one respondent stated, (relations could not improve): “because they don’t have the same blood (as we do)”. The Haitian statements saying that it is impossible for the Dominicans and the Haitians to get along because they have different blood are examples of the same kind of discourse as heard from the *trujillista* Dominicans.

#### Haitians on perceived Dominican superiority

The economic differences between the two nations have been described in Chapter three, and we see those discrepancies surfacing in the youths’ perceptions of one another. The Haitians both recognize the more advanced Dominican economy and see the Dominican feeling of superiority. A respondent in one of the focus groups on the Haitian side talked about being taught not to be with Dominicans because they would never accept the Haitians: “They always told us that Dominicans and Haitians would never be together because the Dominicans are very petty, they’re never going to appreciate the Haitians.” This is related to the disparities between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Some parts of the Haitian discourse are rooted in the typical human response, “they don’t like us, we don’t like them”. In the survey one respondent stated that “I hate them very much, because they don’t care for me either. If they would like us, we’d like them”. Others point to discrepancies in borderland mobility, as in how the Dominicans are allowed to move around more freely than the Haitians: “The Dominicans come and go in Haiti as they like, and we can’t do that in their country, even if you have a passport, and not everybody can get a passport. I’d like to see that change.”

The market has mainly been found to be a unifying feature in this thesis, but as we saw in Chapter 3, the Comendador market has difficulties, and this respondent refers to the Dominican control of the markets: “They have the market. We have no market, they can enter our territory when they want, but we can’t enter (into their territory) when we want.” The Dominicans enter more freely than the Haitians, who are mainly limited to the two days a week the market is open on the Dominican side of the border. Several of my focus-group interviews on the Haitian side, during the pilot interviews, also

mentioned this issue: the binational market is not binational, but rather an international market that is organized on Dominican turf and terms. The lack of balance between the two parties was described by the following respondent as mainly being due to a lack of confidence, something that harkens back to the perceived Dominican superiority:

It's not that we're afraid of the Dominicans, but when we're hanging out with them, we don't have total confidence, we're always distant, (..) because the Dominican never sees the Haitian on equal terms as them, who have the same blood.

This perception of the Dominican as someone who feels superior to the Haitian is of course an idea that breeds distrust.

### **Discourse of fear and lack of trust**

The conflict-based discourses cultivate the sense of fear and distance between Dominicans and Haitians. I claim that the *trujillista* discourses are important creators and co-creators of the discourses of fear and lack of trust that are the main pillar of the argument in this section. Discourses on invasion, different levels of incompatibility, and racial, religious, and cultural dichotomies, all contribute to fear, and this fear of each other is very prevalent in my survey and – to a lesser degree – in the focus groups. This fear and lack of trust in the other is expressed in different ways. There is little room for trust in relations based on fear, while fear may grow in relations where there is little or no trust, so I view the two together.

#### **Afraid of each other**

Fear has an important role in the traditional conflict-based discourse, and this is a fear of violence, of a loss of one’s culture or of one’s national sovereignty, and also fear of abuse and the other’s witchcraft powers. It was expected that fear would be found on both sides of the Dominican-Haitian border, and while it was indeed found, it was not an all-consuming fear.

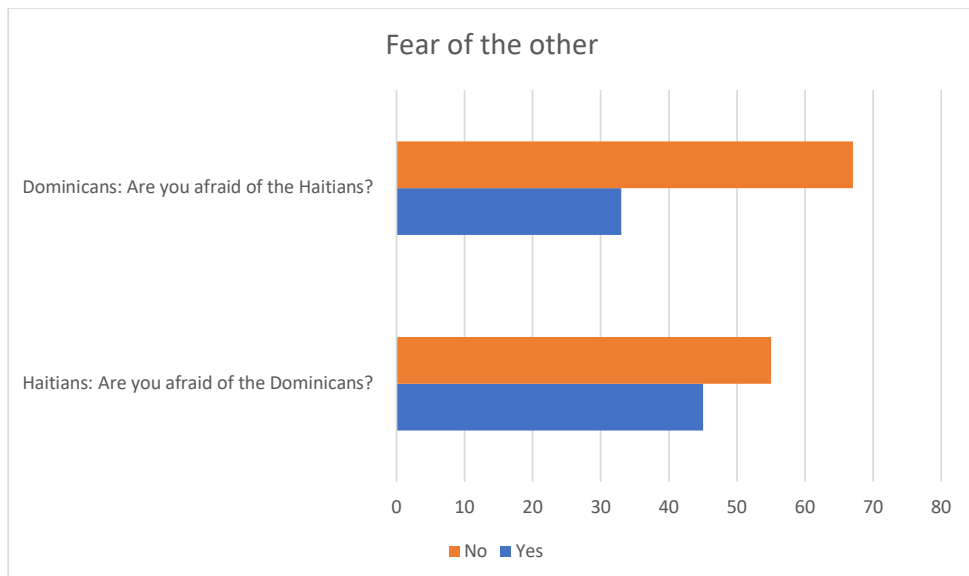


Table 29 Comparative fear of the other (survey) DR and H.

Thirty-three percent of the surveyed Dominicans stated that they are afraid of the Haitians and 45% of the Haitians stated they are afraid of the Dominicans.

The sense of fear is real, the Haitians fear for their lives because they see the Dominicans as inherently violent. Forty-six percent, virtually half of the surveyed Haitian youths claim they are afraid of the Dominicans. This is 13 percentage points higher than the Dominicans' answer to the same question. The lack of symmetry between the two nations is thus also prevalent under the fear category; the Haitians youths are more afraid of the Dominicans than the other way around. The Haitian youths fear violent abuse because they perceive an intention amongst the Dominican youths to inflict harm upon them. One Haitian respondent replied that the binational relations "should change, because we're afraid of them". One survey respondent reckons that "it is not difficult for (the Dominicans) to shoot at people or attack people with a machete," implying that the Dominicans enjoy fighting with Haitians and are quick to use a gun or machete. This fear is accompanied by the mutual lack of trust and the perception that the Dominicans do not want to have anything to do with the Haitians: "I'm afraid of them because they're always on the alert, and they're never really your friend."

The Dominican youths are afraid of the Haitians, on the other hand, because they consider the Haitians to be the more violent of the two, and less trustworthy: because they are "weird" and come from a more violent country.

The Dominicans fear the Haitians because they are "warlocks", behave "weirdly", and because of the perceived anti-Dominican attitude among them ("I fear the Haitians *because I'm Dominican*"). They perceive a savageness to the Haitians ("they rob, kill, and rape"), and their selfish ambition makes them dangerous, because "sometimes their eagerness to get ahead in life makes them commit crimes against us." These are all echoes of both the *trujillista* and *balaguerista* discourses, and contemporary nationalist Dominican ideas about the Haitians and their society, as described in the previous chapter. The discourse is at times violent, also when responding to why they are afraid,



like one Dominican survey respondent who stated that: “If (the Haitian) messes with me, I’ll kill him.”

#### Focus groups: afraid the first time they crossed the border

There were several similar mutual descriptions in the focus groups about how the first border crossing had been experienced as something quite frightening. Some spoke about not wanting to get off the bus, on how they dreaded entering Haiti for fear of something happening to them as soon as set foot in the country. Another one of the Dominican focus-group informants described closing the curtains on the bus during the first crossing: “I untied the curtain on the bus window so I wouldn’t see out the window”. Imagine entering a new country on a school activity, just kilometers away from your home, and being too afraid to even look outside.

#### Can a Dominican be trusted like a Haitian and the other way around?

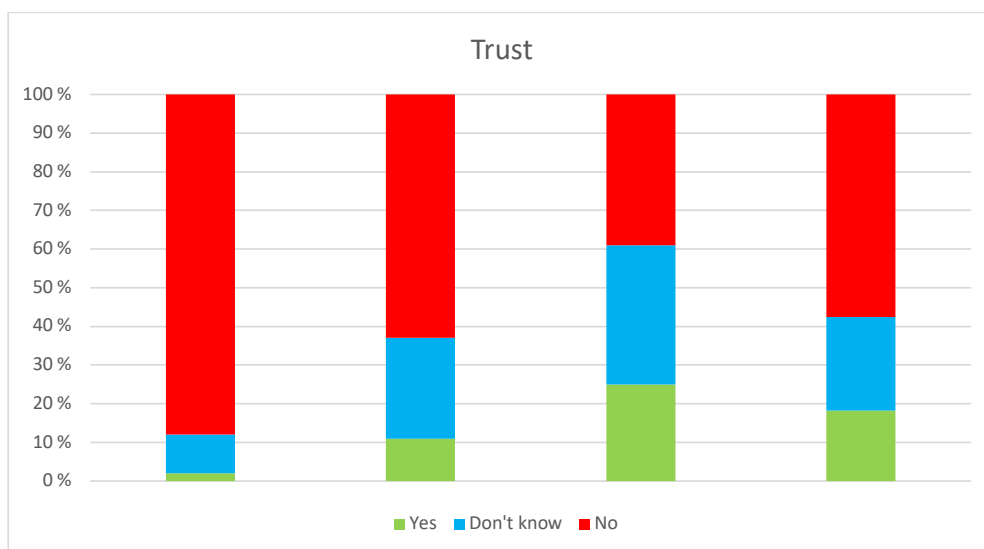


Table 30 Survey: summary of trust-related questions.

Only 25% of the Dominicans feel that a Haitian can be trusted like a Dominican and there are corresponding numbers for Haitians. However, this is not necessarily in reference to race, because 88% of the Dominicans and a 63% of the Haitians do not claim that race is any indicator of whether you can trust someone.

	<b>Borderlands (DR) Combined all four towns</b>	<b>Dajabón</b>	<b>Comendador</b>	<b>Jimaní</b>	<b>Pedernales</b>
	<b>Trust</b>				
Trust and nationality	25% yes 39% no	20% yes 45% no	17%: yes 43% no	39% yes 28% no	19% yes 42% no
“A Haitian can be trusted just like a Dominican.”	36% don't know	35% don't know	35% don't know	33% don't know	39% don't know
Does a Haitian commit more crimes than a Dominican?	35-% yes 56-% don't know 9-% no	10% yes 65% don't know 25% no	17% yes 83% don't know	47% yes 44% don't know 8% no	42% yes 49% don't know 9% no
Does a Dominican commit more crimes than a Haitian?	13-% yes 63-% don't know 24-% no	25% yes 70% don't know 5% no	0% yes 87% don't know 13% no	19-% yes 42-% don't know 39-% no	12% yes 60% don't know 26% no

Table 31 Summary (II) survey questions on trust.

Trust and distrust are not equally distributed along the border. Thirty-nine percent of my surveyed Dominicans claim that trust is connected to nationality, in the sense that they do not feel that a Haitian can be trusted like a Dominican. Although most of the surveyed youths do not know (56%), a relatively high percentage, 35%, state that they believe Haitians commit more crimes than Dominicans. The two most southern towns in my survey (Jimaní and Pedernales) both score significantly higher than the other two, respectively 47% and 42% feel that Haitians commit more crimes than Dominicans, whereas only 10% in the Dajabón survey feel the same way. No one – 0% – in Comendador believes Dominicans commit more crimes than Haitians, but a solid 25% of the respondents in Dajabón and an almost equally high 19% in Jimaní think that Dominicans commit more crimes than Haitians.

On the Haitian side, trust is also scarce. Fifty-seven percent do not feel that a Dominican can be trusted like a Haitian. But there are significant disparities between the four Haitian border towns. While 35% of the surveyed Ouanaminthe youth felt a Dominican could not be trusted – fewer than those who answered that they did not know – the situation in Anse-à-Pitres is quite different. Eighty percent felt that a Dominican could not be trusted like a Haitian. This is also reflected in their view of who commits more crime. The southern Haitian towns of Fond Parisien and Anse-à-Pitres are convinced (respectively 66% and 61%) that Dominicans commit more crime. The same two towns also reject the idea that a Haitian commits more crimes than a Dominican (0% and 6%).

### The Haitian fear of Dominican violence

An important finding on the Haitian side is the fear of violence, which is equal between the survey respondents and focus-groups informants. The Haitians are more afraid of the Dominicans than the other way around, and this is most evident in those the parts of the survey where the youths are asked to comment freely on various topics. Dominican-Haitian relations are affected by the major differences between the nations, and this is another way in which that lack of symmetry surfaces. While the surveyed Dominicans are afraid of Haitian violence, the fear of violence is a much more frequent topic on the Haitian side of the border. This is exemplified by this passage from a focus-group conversation on the Haitian side:

Sometimes a Haitian is afraid of the Dominicans because the Dominicans never get along with Haitians, they're not your friends. In any conversation, if they don't agree with what you say, and if they have a knife, they take it out and stab you. Dominicans don't value Haitians, they see (us) like animals.

There is a prevalent perception that the Dominicans view Haitians like animals and are prepared to kill them should a conflict arise. I asked the respondent who said the above to elaborate on why they felt that way about Dominicans.

Because I went to the market with my mother to sell, and when we were going to enter the market (we saw) a Dominican had agreed with a Haitian to sell her some meat. Then the Haitian saw the meat and she did not like it and said she didn't want to buy it. So, the Dominican said, "What was that you said, that you're not going to buy the meat anymore?" So, she cut the Haitian with her knife, and the Haitian woman had to run to the hospital. When there are disagreements about something over there and the Haitians are hardheaded (stubborn), and because they have to go and buy food (in the DR) and when they come to cross the border, they shoot you or they hit you.

The Haitians have no choice but to cross the border, as this respondent points out, which exposes them to dangerous situations. The same is not true for the Dominicans as they do not have to cross the border. The Haitians are afraid of the Dominicans more than the other way around, and they are afraid of Dominican violence This is another example of a lack of symmetry: "The difference is that if a Dominican tells a Haitian not to touch something and he touches it, well, in that case he gets into trouble with the Dominican,

the Dominican kills the Haitian for that.” There are not infrequent reports in Dominican newspapers on the lynching of Haitians. Lynch-mob justice does indeed occur in the Dominican Republic, and this is a threat to Haitians while they are in the country. This respondent’s reply is a reminder of that dire situation: “When a Dominican has problems with a Haitian, all the Dominicans chase that Haitian, the Dominicans will kill more Haitians to revenge the killing of a Dominican.”

There are different explanations that arise in my material for why the relations are as they are, and a frequent explanation given by Haitian respondents is that they feel the Dominicans will not change their view on Haitians under any circumstances:

Q: Why do Dominicans never end up being friends with Haitians?

A: That’s a good question. The question is very important.

Q: Why do you think this is so?

A: I think that no matter what you do, they’ll always look at you as being lower than them, even if you’re well dressed.

#### Border crossings: lack of symmetry

So, even being well dressed is not enough. Another problem, mentioned by another respondent, was Dominican border agents’ stereotyping on market days. Even though the market days are supposed to be open for all to cross and enter the binational market freely, the guards have the power to deny anyone access, and they will do so according to what they see fit:

Respondent (R): Even in the market, last Monday my cousin and I went to buy clothes (...). when we arrived at the border the border authorities told us that we couldn’t cross. As I don’t speak Spanish, I told my cousin to explain what we were going to do there, and the agent wanted me to give him money to let me cross.

Interviewer (I): But on the market day everyone can cross.

(R): That’s what I want you to understand. On market days, if you’re going to cross the border and you don’t have tattered and dirty clothes, a sack on your head that identifies you as (a market vendor), they will not let you cross. If you try to enter wearing clean clothes, they think that you’re taking advantage of the market to go to DR, to the capital.

(I): Do you think that if you put on dirty clothes you can cross easier?

(R): Yes. If I had had dirty clothes, they would not even have looked at me.

(I): And what do you guys think about that?

(R): Well, that's the way it is.

(R): Yes.

In other words, the Haitian has to look poor to be accepted as a guest at the market. The response to my question on how they felt about this is also telling: "well, that's the way it is". This is an example of the unwritten and racist rules and regulations that the Haitians might be subjected to at the border crossings. They are at the mercy of whoever oversees the exact border crossing at any specific time. Lack of coherent rules will affect the weaker party more than the stronger party, and economically speaking, the Haitian nation is the weaker party. This imbalance is also visible when the respondents talk about the border crossing, as in the extract below, which refers to something that almost exclusively affects the Haitians in my survey. The Dominicans are almost unanimous in their experience of problem-free border crossings, whereas more than half of the Haitians reported having faced troubles while crossing (51% of the Haitians responded "yes", while 98% of the Dominicans had not faced problems while crossing the border). The most common type of "trouble" was being asked to pay a bribe or being physically abused. These are life experiences that will create and further divide the two groups of youths. A relevant comment on this from the Haitian survey, in reference to the question of the need for improved relations, was seen from the perspective of someone who from time to time faces closed borders and soldiers in the mountains on their way to buy everyday necessities: "Because when they don't want the Haitians to cross and buy (at the market) they send the authorities (the border guards) everywhere into the mountains."

Haitians are supposed to be able to cross along the border twice a week on market days. The perception that the border from time to time will close with soldiers going into the mountains to stop the Haitians was shared by a pair of Dominican CESFRONT soldiers in a conversation with me, in March of 2013, at one of the many informal crossing points along the northern part of the border. They were patrolling an area by the riverbed, on the Dominican side of *Masacre* River. "These days we're okay with everyone coming to work or sell stuff at the market. But other times, we don't let anyone pass. Full stop, for a couple of days." They went on to explain that while the border was in theory always closed, the reality is that the border is an ongoing arena of negotiations. From time to

time their superiors would give them orders to lock down the border, and on those occasions, they would close it and nobody could pass. The Haitians passing at this informal crossing point explained how they were charged between 50 and 100 pesos per person by CESFRONT for each crossing. The two soldiers did not mind us talking to the Haitians about this and did not do anything to counter their story. The bribes and the possible lock downs of the border affect Haitians but not Dominicans, at least not directly, so these stories confirm the asymmetry of the binational relations and life in the borderlands.

This same lack of symmetry is manifested in the Haitian fear of violence. Haitians fear for their lives much more than the other way around. This is not meant metaphorically; they fear that they could be killed at the hands of Dominicans. This fear might stem from the collective memory of the 1937 borderlands genocide to the lynching of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in contemporary times, or due to any number of other reasons, but the findings are clear: the Haitians are in part afraid of the Dominicans and to such an extent that they may fear for their lives. This is a serious matter.

#### **Fear of conflict versus experiences of conflict**

Few among the respondents have experienced conflict with the other and yet they fear each other. My findings show that this fear is instilled and created by the many parallel discourses of conflict, in addition to other people's experiences of conflict. This is similar on both sides of the border. Here I will briefly look at examples of both Dominican and Haitian fear of the other and contrast this with what the survey says about personal experiences of conflict with the other.

The conflict-dichotomies are traceable in the conversations with my focus groups and point to a continued creation of fear of the other, sometimes directly but also indirectly as a reference to what they have been taught in the past and how they were influenced by these teachings. The following passage is from a conversation with a focus group from the Dominican side of the border where we were discussing whether they were afraid to go to Haiti prior to their first visit there.

Q: If you had the image that the Haitians were dangerous, did you not feel afraid to go there?

R: The first time, yes, having all those prejudices, you're looking over your

shoulder because many things are said. From the beginning, ever since you are in school, and this was something that shaped me, you would hear comments like "Haitians hate Dominicans" and they burn the (Dominican) flag, "I don't want to go there", so those things shape you a little, since I was a child, listening to those comments. (...) They highlight the bad that has happened in the relationship between Haiti and DR and good things are almost never highlighted.

This is an example of a young Dominican referencing a discourse of conflict and dichotomy, while at the same time unknowingly suggesting the need for another discourse where the "good things" are also included. The desire for "good things" to be included indirectly represents taking a step away from the conflict-dichotomy discourse on Dominican-Haitian relations. This desire for more good news about Dominican-Haitian relations emerged while discussing how negative stories about the Haitians had been an influence in the past. On a related note, I asked the survey respondents on both sides whether they had heard about someone who had been in conflict with the other, followed by a question on whether they *themselves* had ever had a conflict with someone from the other country. Almost everyone (Haiti 90% and Dominican Republic 95%) has heard of someone who had had trouble with someone from the other side ("sometimes" and "many times" combined). As few as 9% on the Haitian side and 5% on the Dominican side had *never* heard of anyone getting into trouble with someone from the other side. When asked if the respondents *themselves* had ever encountered trouble with the other, 67% of the Haitians and 62% of the Dominicans said "no".

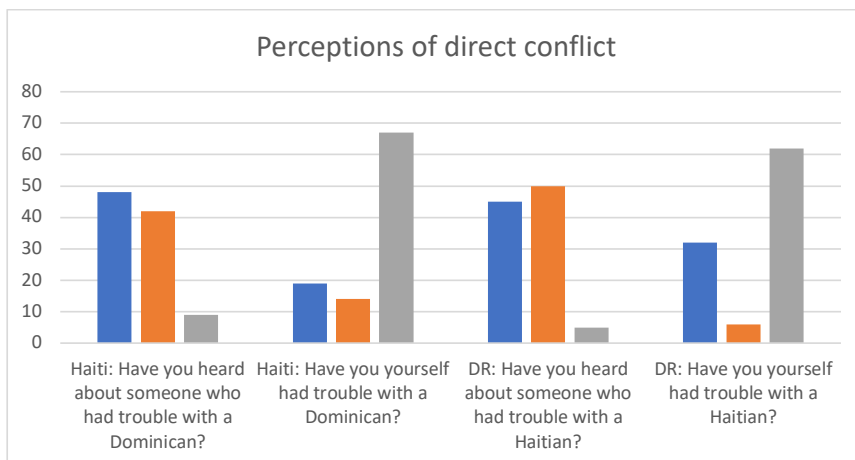


Table 32 Comparative perceptions of direct conflict (survey) H and DR.

Just about all the informants have heard about someone who had a conflict with the Haitians amongst the Dominicans and vice versa on the Haitian side. Yet far fewer had experienced this themselves. This indicates that the perception shared by the Dominicans and the Haitians is that the other is likely to cause you trouble, while in fact a significant minority on both sides has actually had trouble themselves – 33% of the Haitians and 38% of the Dominicans.

#### Fear of the “silent invasion” and “unification”

One of the basic elements in the conflict-based discourse and narratives is the portrayal of the Dominicans’ fear that their nation is being overwhelmed by Haitians who will eventually take over the entire island. The idea of the “Haitian invasion” is expressed by many social strata in the Dominican society. As an example, I was told by the then ambassador of Dominican-Haitian relations, at the Dominican Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Santo Domingo (2013),<sup>62</sup> that the Dominican Republic was being “engulfed by a black wave from the West”, and he claimed to be quoting a member of the American embassy staff. He was also indirectly quoting Balaguer’s words as to how the Spanish language and Dominican culture were a protective wall against the Haitians (Balaguer, 1983, p. 62). The discourse on the Haitian invasion is alive both in the peripheral Dominican borderlands and in the airconditioned offices of the ministries.

The fear is rooted both in old ideas about Haitian imperialist ambitions as well as racist attitudes about skin color or derogatory views on cultural practices. This respondent is an example of the borderlands’ version of the same discourse: “It’s our enemy’s border – they want to take (us) over. The Haitians want to own our country”.

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<sup>62</sup> To be able to cross the Dominican-Haitian border multiple times with my vehicle, I had to have a “carta de ruta”, which authorized me to enter and exit the Dominican Republic with my car as often as I wanted within a specific time period. The “carta de ruta” contains a number of formal approvals from the Dominican Police, Dominican Army, Dominican Customs, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At one point during this process, I was interviewed by the ambassador for Dominican-Haitian relations to decide whether I was worthy of this document. He spent most of the interview complementing my wife’s looks, before talking about the foreign-led conspiracies that sought the unification of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and about all the shaming of the Dominican Republic in international media and academia. Finally, he asked me what I would be doing in the borderlands and whether I thought that uniting the two countries was a good idea. I responded honestly that I had never subscribed to the alleged idea of a forced unification, and that I was not a part of any such conspiracy, to which he smiled and said, “*there you go, son, now you have earned your carta de ruta, have a safe journey*”.



There is no doubt that the *balaguerista* fears are still thriving in segments of the Dominican population, including the borderland youth. I am not claiming that the 45% who confirmed the “Haitian silent invasion” share the *balaguerista* views on what Haiti is and is not. What matters to studies of discourse is the link between material realities and ideas about those material realities. Therefore, as a small piece of the puzzle that makes up the Dominican-Haitian realities, we must also try to understand how those relations are perceived.

The above-mentioned ambassador of Dominican-Haitian relations was referring to a supposed unification of the island, a common fallacy used in the debates on Dominican-Haitian relations. In the context chapter, this was dealt with both as a topic for contemporary memes, as well as a part of the *balaguerista* legacy. Is anybody actually conspiring to force the two nations to unite under one flag? According to my respondents, there indeed is. The discourse on the unification of the island feeds on the discourses of conflict, presenting the two nations as living dichotomies with absolutely no common ground, and it is therefore of interest to this thesis to comment on the existence of this idea in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands.

Rather to my surprise, 18% of the surveyed Dominicans responded that the Dominican Republic wants to unify the island. I have not been able to identify a historical discourse matching that specific opinion. Nonetheless, as seen in Chapter 3, a Haitian survey showed that 26% support the idea of a possible Dominican invasion of Haiti (L'Information, 2014), and one could argue that these two findings represent similar ideas on the relations between the nations: some Haitians believe that the Dominicans would like to invade them, and some Dominicans believe that the Haitians want a unification of the island. A less surprising total of 50% of the surveyed Dominicans claim that either the Haitians or “international organizations” are behind efforts to forcibly unify the island.

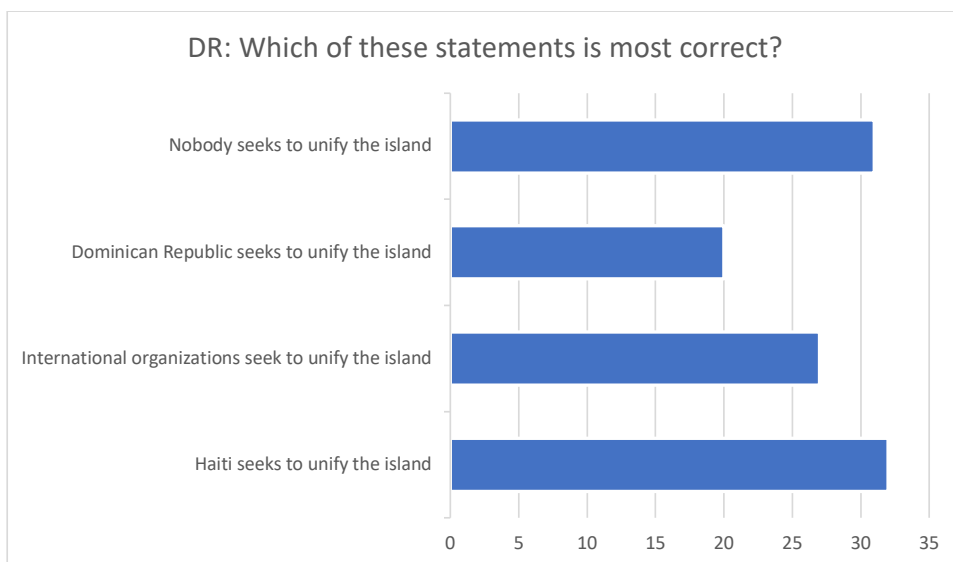


Table 33 Survey summary: unification (DR).

It is important to note that 28% of the surveyed Dominicans responded that “nobody is trying to unify the island”, and equally interesting is the fact that this position is only marginally higher than “international organizations are trying to unify the island”.

The Haitian youths, as shown in the table below, answer that first, international organizations are trying to unify the island, while the second choice is “nobody is trying to unify the island”, as was the case with the Dominican youths. This means that the most common reply on either side of the border is that someone in fact is trying to unify the two nations.

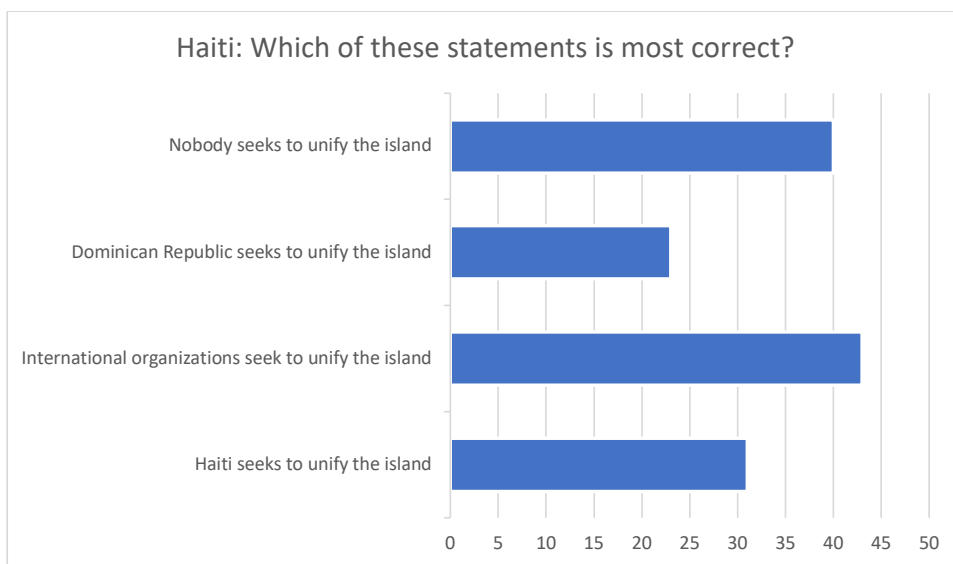


Table 34 Survey summary: unification (H).

It was also important to identify whether this idea of a silent Haitian invasion of the Dominican Republic was in any way present in the borderlands. This is an idea that has been expressed in many different ways in the Dominican Republic. There is, of course, a significant Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic, and the question about the “Haitian invasion” must be interpreted in light of the connotations from the word “invasion”. Invasion means conflict, it is violent and a threat, whereas, if you describe movements of people from one region to another as “migration”, another image is created. I was expecting the Dominican respondents to confirm the existence of a Haitian invasion, to some extent, but I did not foresee that the Haitians, too, would support the claim of a Haitian invasion.

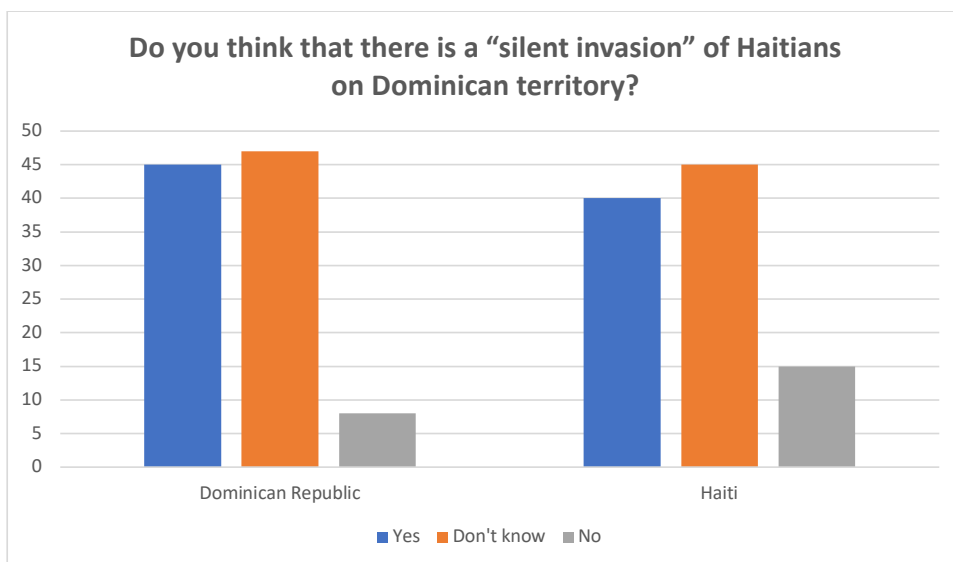


Table 35 Comparative summary on "silent invasion" (survey) H and DR.

A somewhat surprising 41% on the Haitian side confirmed the perception of this “invasion”. The Dominican respondents are aligned with their Haitian counterparts: 45% of the Dominicans asked also agree that a Haitian silent invasion is underway. I understand this to be in direct relation to the exaggerated perceptions of how many Haitians there are in the Dominican Republic. When asked “How many Haitians are there in the Dominican Republic?”, both the Haitians and the Dominicans believed it to be “more than two million Haitians”. That is at least three times as many Haitians as there actually are in the DR, according to the Dominican authorities (Grullón, 2014; ONE, 2012, 2013).

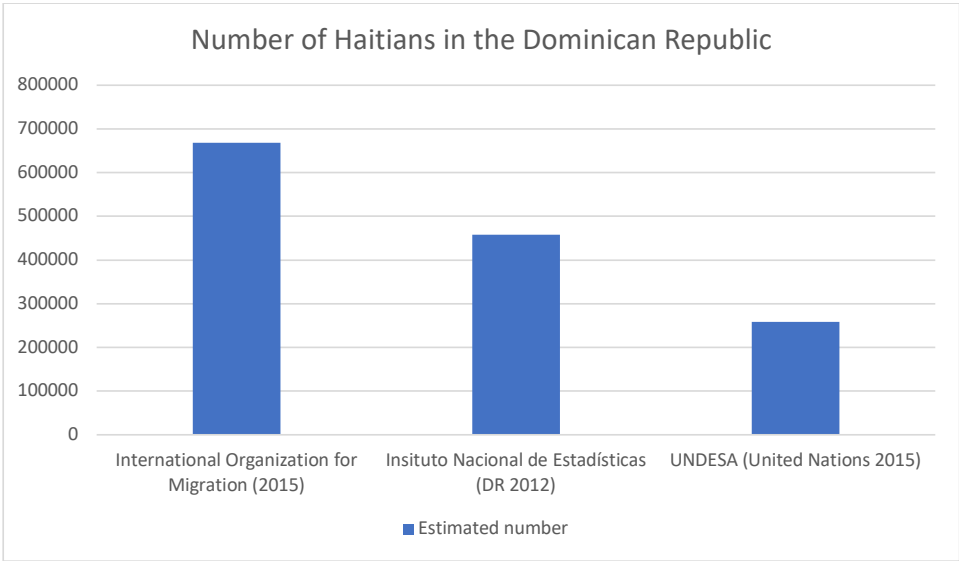


Table 2 Three sources on the number of Haitians in the Dominican Republic.

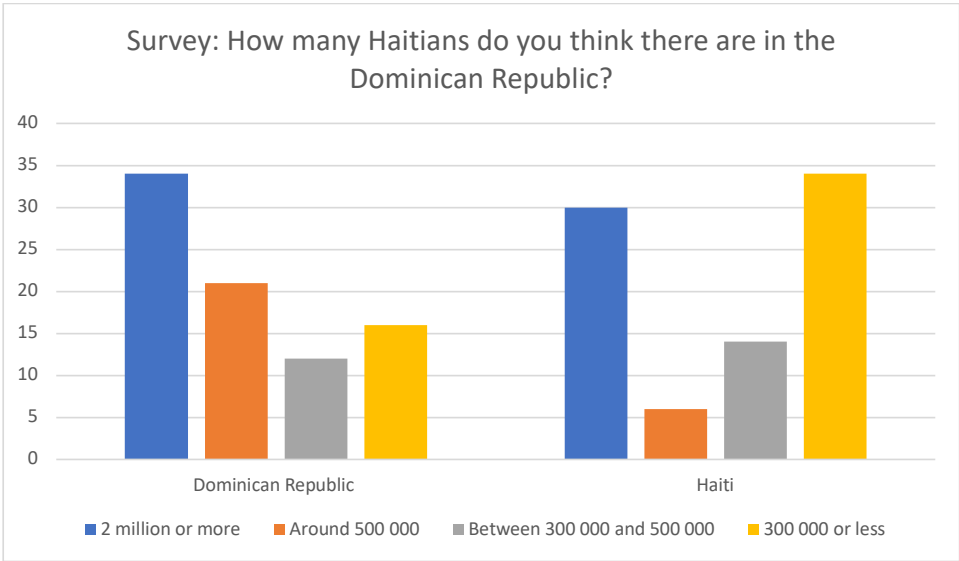


Table 37 Comparative perceptions on numbers of Haitians in the Dominican Republic (survey) H and DR.



### ***Discourse on incompatibility***

I have labelled this section “discourses on incompatibility”, and the data material for it stems from both sets of respondents – the Haitians and the Dominicans – who apparently agree that the relations between the two nations should be improved. I will show that even though my respondents expressed a desire to have improved relations, in their reasoning for *why* they want an improvement a significant number of the respondents from both sides of the border refer to what appears to be incompatible innate qualities of the other. Therefore, their call for improvement is undermined as they understand the incompatibilities to be of an essential nature. I have decided to end this chapter with a look into this incompatibility as I see it as a way of bridging the discourses between a desire for improvement and a parallel belief that such improvement seems impossible.

#### **Dominicans: the relations should improve - “if not, we’ll kill each other”**

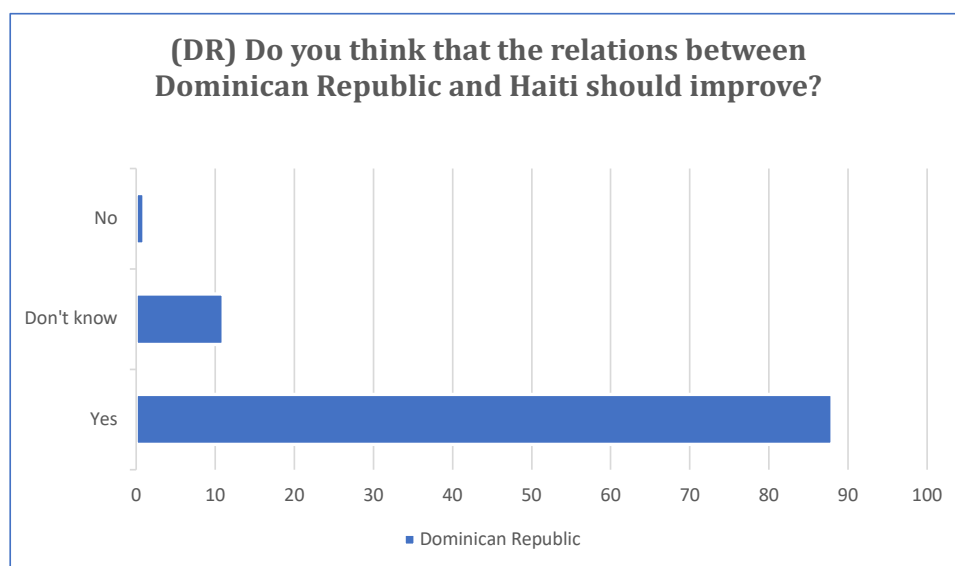


Table 3 Should relations improve? (survey) DR.

A convincing 88% of the surveyed youth on the Dominican side felt that the relations between the nations needed to improve. This can be said to have some weight, even if the question is somewhat leading and normative (“Do you think that the relations

between Dominican Republic and Haiti should improve?"). The follow-up question was open ended and asked the participants to give reasons why they thought that the relations should or should not improve. Among the 88% who say "yes, we need an improvement in the relations", there is a wide range of opinions and some of these survey respondents perceive and express that the Dominican Republic and Haiti are on a pathway to war, or towards violent conflict.

The surveyed Dominicans believe in the need for an improvement in the binational relations for a variety of reasons, and some of them confirm the conflict-based discourses and the incompatibility of Dominicans and Haitians.

Q: Do you think that the relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti should be improved?

A: Yes.

Q: Why?

A: Because if not, we'll kill each other.

An improvement in Dominican-Haitian relations is perceived by some of my respondents to be a life or death issue. This is an important aspect to bear in mind when taking the hatred and fear that will we dealt with previously in this chapter into consideration. There is a fear of losing one's life in addition to the fear of seeing the Dominican *nation* annihilated. The Dominican survey respondents additionally identified "conflict" as the most fitting single word to describe the binational relations.

To stop the situation between the Dominican Republic and Haiti from deteriorating further, the respondents have identified the need to have better relations, but in the sense that "If we don't get along, we'll end up in a war," as one survey respondents stated. Collaboration, indeed, but where the aim is to avoid something even worse. This is an example of a perspective that does not fit into the same category as – for instance – "(relations should improve because) we are all humans and equal", which was also a common answer to why the relations needed to change.

Yes, the relations should improve, "in order to avoid a war, because we are all humans" is another interesting statement, in the sense that it recognizes both sides' right to a



peaceful existence on the island, while at the same time addressing the fear that if nothing changes, war will be the outcome. Again, hostilities are the only perceived outcome if things continue in line with the status quo. Others agree that the relations must improve to “avoid a war”, “because there is a lot of rivalry” and so that “there would be no mistreatment or violence between us”.

When bearing in mind that the question – although admittedly normative or even leading (“*Do you think that the Dominican-Haitian relations should improve?*”) – was open ended, in the sense that what we are looking at now are responses to the follow up question “Why?”, selected from those who checked “yes”, the general sentiment appears to be that relations need to improve. This means that when the youth on both sides raise themes of killing, rivalry, war, and violence, this is not something that the question itself demands or even encourages. I identify this as the youths’ own perceptions of Dominican-Haitian relations and of incompatibilities that they urgently feel must be addressed. The answers to this question give a brief account of the ideas that immediately come to the youths minds with respect to why the relations need to change, and this in turn reveals their views on the relations and indirectly also on their perceptions of themselves and their neighbors.

## Haitians: There is too much conflict between the nations

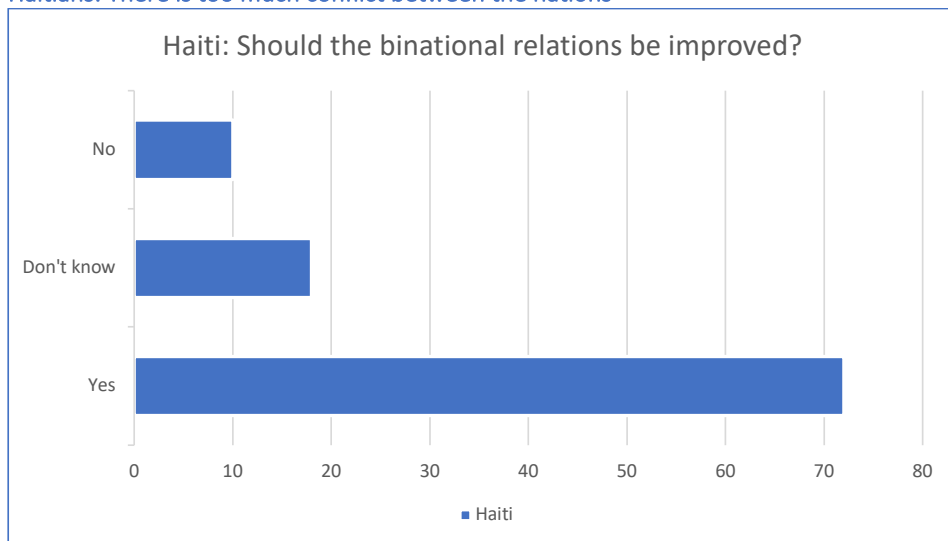


Table 39 Should binational relations be improved? (survey) H.

Seventy-two percent expressed that the relations should be improved. As with the Dominicans, the more interesting part is *why* they felt the need for improvement: “I would like the relations to improve so the Dominicans would like Haiti and stop fighting the Haitians.”

The Haitians in the focus groups as well as in the survey show a distinctly more skeptical approach towards the Dominicans than the other way around. This does not mean that the Haitians are not positive about the opportunities for a change in the relations, but it highlights some differences between the two nations. The conflict-based discourses are also well established among the Haitian respondents. What becomes clear is that improvement can mean so many things: perhaps Haitians stop throwing stones at Dominicans who cross the border, as explained by one of the focus group participants:

Q: Do you remember if it was different before than it is now?

A: Yes, before it was different

Q: What differences do you see now?

A: For example, when the Dominicans came, they threw stones at them, ran at them and made them run back, and now (the Dominicans) can come freely.

Q: Who told you about that, throwing stones at the Dominicans?

A: The grown-ups.

Regardless of what did or did not happen, *the perception* of the young participants answering this question is that this situation was a reality. Dominicans regularly experienced Haitians throwing stones at them. This was something that the grown-ups talked about. I found a similar idea in one of the interviews with the Dominican focus groups, where the respondent talked about the fear that Haitians might throw stones at them: “A seller from this side had some trouble with a seller from over there (Haiti) and the Haitians started throwing stones.”

As I have already commented, there is more fear among the Haitian respondents than among the Dominicans. The Haitians and the Dominicans share the idea that introducing some sort of peace would lead to an improvement in relations, as shown in this extract on the reasons why the relations should improve: “Yes (the relations should improve) so that we can live in peace”.

This confirms the narrative of an existence that is perceived as full of conflict, or at least one that has too much conflict. Anyone stating “so that we may live in peace” is implicitly also implying the absence of peace. The relations should improve: “So that we can live together, to stop the fighting”, “so that we are not fighting”, “So that we learn to live with one another.” In this absence of peace between the two sides, as seen by the Haitians, there is a noticeable skepticism regarding whether the relations can indeed improve. As one of the respondents put it: “I don’t know what could make the relations change.” This proportion of the surveyed Haitians views the troubled parts of the relations with the Dominicans in an essentialist way, portraying the Dominicans as unable to change what is simply their way of being. This doubt on the Haitian side as to whether the Dominicans can change their mindset when it comes to how they see the Haitians is prevalent: “I don’t know if they could improve”. One Haitian respondent called for an improvement in relations because “they make the Haitians go through misery...why?”. The Dominicans are also perceived as superior in the binational power relations as the ones calling the shots, “because when we go to their house, they push us out, they throw us out”. There are also comments on how the Dominicans “close down the market whenever they want to”.

To the surveyed Haitians, the Dominicans lack respect for the Haitian, and they behave in ways that humiliate the Haitians: “(relations should be improved) because they humiliate us.” This perception of humiliation is also found elsewhere in the survey, for example in relation to border crossings. Fifty-one percent of the surveyed Haitians had experienced problems with the border authorities (in stark contrast to only 2% of the surveyed Dominicans answering the same). These kinds of problem at the border are reflected in one respondent’s view on why the relations should change: “Yes, because when you go to buy something, you have to cross “por el monte” (illegally) and when we try to cross at the gate (the border) they don’t want you to cross.”

This also alludes to the aforementioned lack of symmetry between the two sides. Apparently, Dominicans have little to worry about being harassed at the border, whereas a Haitian should expect it to happen.

### ***Concluding remarks***

*What characterizes the discourse of conflict found among the Dominican and Haitian borderland youths? What are the similarities and differences in the discourse between the Dominican and Haitian respondents?* Those were the two initial questions that guided this chapter, and three main categories were used to organize my findings:

- 1) Contemporary versions of the trujillista discourse which included the Dominican fear of the Haitians’ alleged supernatural powers; racist Dominican perceptions of the Haitians; Haitian racist perceptions of the Dominicans and the perceived Dominican superiority.
- 2) Discourse of fear and lack of trust, which included how the two groups fear each other, and how this fear differs (the Haitians fear Dominican violence and the Dominicans fear Haitian violence as well as the “silent invasion”).
- 3) Discourse of incompatibility, which includes the Dominican and Haitian youths’ views on why an improvement in binational relations is desirable, but unlikely or impossible.

Another way of categorizing the discourses could have been chosen. It could be claimed that all the discourses are of incompatibility, or that they are all discourses of fear and

lack of trust, or – at the very least – that fear and lack of trust is the foundation of the trujillista discourse, and therefore also inseparable from it.

To me, however, this division is important. The trujillista perspectives and their endurance in the borderlands is notable. Despite the many positive findings that we will see in the next chapter, the trujillista perspectives cannot be ignored if the aim is, and as it is here, to tell the full story of the borderland youths' view of each other. When it comes to the section on fear and lack of trust, these sentiments were so widely present that I wanted to give them extra attention in a separate category. Even if the rayano discourse contains seeds of hope for a less polarized future within Dominican-Haitian relations, we cannot ignore that my respondents also clearly show a deep-rooted fear of one another, and that this fear must be accounted for and taken seriously before it can one day be reduced. The Haitian fear of the Dominican includes fear that they will be killed, and that the Dominicans enjoy killing Haitians. This part of the fear also points out an importance difference between the two nations' youths, in that the Haitians were notably more fearful of violence than the Dominicans, while the Dominicans expressed more fear of the Haitian culture and of the Haitians' dangerous, even supernatural qualities. These are perceptions that are recognizable from the contexts and discourses defined in the previous chapters, and something we will return to in the final chapter (6).



## Chapter 5 - Transnational discourses



Figure 15 This illustration, based on a map of the entire island of Hispaniola, was created for the former Facebook group "We don't all hate each other", dedicated to promoting peaceful co-existence. Concept by Heidy Rodríguez and design by Julíto Maríñez Campill (the illustration is used by kind permission of Heidy Rodríguez).

*What characterizes the discourses of transnationalism among the Dominican and Haitian borderland youths?*

This chapter represents the opposite of the conflicted-based dichotomies and incompatibilities of the previous chapter. This includes perspectives and discourses that consider the island as one, utterances that do not reduce the other into a *trujillista* caricature, ideas on binational relations and co-existence in the multicultural borderlands that are not dominated exclusively by fear of the other. This very broad understanding of what “transnational” means for this thesis allows me to include everyday experiences, such as love, music, and markets or shared experiences of poverty, abandonment, and migration. It also allows me to include ideas on the other that are “positive or non-polarized”, as I labelled them in my analysis, meaning that I include different kinds of positive or neutral descriptions of the other inside the “transnational” chapter. This is because I identify these kinds of utterance as a different framing than those of the *trujillista* past and the contemporary discourses of incompatibility. To put it another way: this chapter is dedicated to the substantial parts of my respondents’ utterances that do not echo the antagonist past, and dedicated to the discourses that reciprocate Sonia Marmalejo’s nursing of a Haitian child following the Haitian earthquake in 2010 (see Chapter three).

***The most common perspective: Positive or non-polarized ideas about the other***

Two contradicting discourses exist in parallel to each other. While the negative and fearful statements found in Chapter four may well be the ones that attract the most attention, there are also statements that I labelled during my analysis of the survey answers and the focus-group interviews as: “positive” and “non-polarized”. They constitute the other discourses, the transnational discourses, and are more common in my material than the conflict-based discourses. Here I found more balanced statements, and also a perhaps overlooked part of life in the borderlands. These are utterances that do not simply revolve around the opposites, the dichotomies, and the conflicts, and whatever conditions Dominican-Haitian relations may be in at any given point in time. They refer to the co-existence in the borderlands that is not a part of the history of opposites and animosities. Here can be found examples of friendship, of listening to each other’s music, of knowing about important news stories from the other side of the border, everyday things that are an important part of life everywhere, including the eight towns along the Dominican-Haitian border. They may seem a little banal, but in the light of the *trujillista* past, the legacies of Balaguer, the repeated stories of the Dominican villain and the Haitian victim, and in the light of the reductionist portrayals of the island as a living dichotomy, these testimonies are important reminders of a less told story, of an island with a long history of co-existence and shared experiences. The borderland youth turned out to be more of a living “antidote” to the conflict discourses (García-Peña, 2016) than an echo of the *trujillista* past.

**They are like us, and they work hard**

The Haitians “are like us and they work hard”, they are “people who work for a living”, “(they are) our brothers, we are different but the same. They are good workers”, are descriptions that two survey respondents wrote for their associations to the word “Haitian”. Others responded in a similar fashion using words like “friend, sister”, and saying things like “other people on the other side of the border”, “human beings just like us; they have the same rights” when associating with the word “Haitian”.



Some respondents went even further, like this respondent: “I think of them as if they’re members of my family”.

The idea of the hard-working Haitian is pivotal among my respondents, both in the survey and the focus-group interviews. This is a type of utterance that could be relevant under several analytical framings. When the Dominicans were asked in the survey about improving binational relations, some referred to the positive effect that such an improvement would have on the economy. One specific utterance on this point was that (yes, Dominican-Haitian relations need to improve) “because Haitians do all the hard work”. This is interesting because it validates the Haitians’ plight from being an asset as workers within the Dominican economy, both formally and informally, and it is a *Dominican* and local validation of this plight.

#### [We should help each other](#)

A more straightforward Dominican expression of transnationalism is “because we are neighbors, and we have business together”. The core message in this phrase is a common view among my respondents, and it also encapsulates parts of what I label the discourse of transnationalism: the acknowledgement of a shared existence and mutual dependence and benefits. The phrase has both an economic and pragmatic side to it (we have business together) as well as a moral side (because we are neighbors). The latter moral reasoning for why the relations should change, differs from the economically based arguments. Neighbors do not need to help each other, nonetheless, the idea that because they are neighbors, they *should* treat each other more respectfully and in a better way is strong amongst both the Haitians and Dominicans. Thus, we could say that this is an idealized version of Dominican-Haitian relations, seen from both sides; being neighbors should include getting along better than today. My reason for including these kinds of answer on the *transnational discourse* side of the fence is that they all share an idea about equality as a standard to strive for. This again counters the dichotomy-based descriptions of Dominican-Haitian relations.

These sentiments are just as real as the hatred, fear, and division. They are less suited for headlines in newspapers or as bait for funding from NGO projects, or as fuel for advocacy. Nevertheless, they are an essential part of perceptions of life in the

borderlands among my surveyed youth. To a large degree, the borderland youths from both sides express that they like each other. For example, in response to my question “What do you associate with a “Haitian?”, the response was that they (the Haitians) “are nice people.”

As simple as that.

### The other is not so different

It is categorically incorrect to reduce the Dominican youths in the borderlands to a caricature of generations of animosity and *trujillista* views on the Haitian. The Dominican youth in the borderlands effortlessly challenge both the traditional and the contemporary anti-Haitian discourses on Dominican-Haitian relations. These types of positive or neutral statements are found in the survey material as well as among the interviewees from the focus groups. In a way, they are responding to the conflict-based discourses in that they are countering old ideas about the other, for example as this Dominican focus-group member said after having traveled to Haiti:

Q: What most surprised you when you went there (to Haiti)?

A: Their sympathy.

Q: Why did that surprise you?

A: Because I didn't think they socialize with other people, and they showed me the opposite. They were very friendly. To me, that was a great experience because I could see for myself and understand, (that) they tell you that “the Haitians are like that” and I could understand that that is a lie and that we're all equal. (it was) amazing because it was the first time, we all met, we went to Haiti for the first time, then we were surprised to know that country, we were neighbors, but we had never been there before.

The notion that the Haitians – in this case – were antisocial and unfriendly was countered by real-life experiences, and that was something that struck a chord in the Dominican respondent. This is an important observation that arises in similar fashion from all the focus-group interviews, on both sides: the hope for a positive change in the relations lies to a large extent in making people get together, across the border. Those who had participated in organized activities talked about how their perceptions had changed because of these organized binational encounters, how they had realized that their old ideas or what they had been taught were simply not true. The Haitian was more

than just a myth, as it turned out. The Haitians also spoke about how their experiences did not match their expectations, in a positive sense. Respondents in a Haitian focus group spoke positively about their first trip to Dominican territory:

Q: What was it like to be there for the first time, what do you remember?

A: I felt strange because I had come to a place that I was not used to.

A: When we arrived, they welcomed us with joy, they gave us a good welcome.

A: I think the way they welcomed us was very nice, they agreed to play with us, dance with us, communicate with us, everything was very good.

The Haitians above spoke about the positive feelings from their first visit to the Dominican Republic, and one respondent also pointed out that it was not necessarily such a big deal for everyone: “We didn’t see anything different because everything we saw there, we have seen in (Haiti).” This utterance also represents a change in the discourse, in that it shows little regard for the differences and incompatibilities that are espoused by the conflict-based discourses.

#### Mutual positive or neutral descriptions of each other

The borderland youths’ experience of a change in attitude towards the other was almost exclusively a change for the better, according to their own judgement. Some had already been to Haiti for different reasons, they had traveled to visit family, had participated either in binational school projects (uncommon), or had crossed the border with Haitian friends (also not very common).

A few of my Dominican respondents put the Haitians in a better light by emphasizing what they define as bad characteristics in themselves as these two Dominican youths said: “The difference is that the Dominican is more organized than the Haitian, and also more racist.” This is a borderline example of a “transnationalist” discourse, but I have chosen to include it as it also expresses concern over the other’s experience that is impacted by one’s own attitudes. It could just as easily have been placed in the dichotomy category as it is categorizing the Dominican as racist, which is a typical way of generalizing the Dominicans and their state’s treatment of people of Haitian descent. The Dominican *state* may be responsible for any number of attacks on the Dominican-Haitian population, and these actions could be fueled by hatred, nationalism or the fear

of loss of sovereignty. But this does not allow us to define the Dominican per se as racist or anti-Haitian.

This category includes a multitude of statements on the differences between the nations. For instance, “the Haitians are poorer than the Dominicans”, “they speak a different language”, “a lot of the Haitians migrate to the Dominican Republic”. On the Haitian side, we see similar statements: “we are two different nations, that’s all”, and “I don’t see what the problem should be with the Dominicans, because my parents taught me that the Dominican Republic and Haiti are on the same island”. The Haitian survey also showed lots of positive or neutral statements about what a Dominican is and what the Dominican Republic is: “they’re people, just like us” and “a Dominican is a good person at the border”, “they speak Spanish”, and other similar utterances that show few, if any, traces of the conflict-based discourses. The mutual descriptions of each other in these segments of my analysis are less interested in the mythical features of the other and more interested in the palpable, tangible and measurable. Some of this could be explained by living close to the other, of having to share and co-exist because of everyday matters and chores, as the following conversation in a Dominican focus group bears witness to:

A: Yes. It’s another type of coexistence (in the borderlands) because they share a lot, Dominicans and Haitians are very related through commerce as well.

A: You see this more in the binational market.

Q: Today is market day, right?

A: Yes, Monday and Thursday. As we are the closest town to that country, it’s also a town that can be said to live with both races, the Dominican and the Haitian.

A: The market days, there’s a lot of migration.

A: They come a lot to buy on the market days, because what they don’t have there (in Haiti) they find here, and what we don’t have here we find there.

Binational connections come in many forms, mutual dependence is one of them, based on the shared border economy and the aforementioned markets. My respondents expressed several ideas on Dominican-Haitian relations simultaneously, one of which was that the relations between the two nations should be improved – as mentioned several times above. The respondents’ reasons for feeling like this varied according to a broad field of reasoning; from fear of war and slaughter to more prosaic suggestions that

the economy would benefit from such an improvement, or that they simply thought the present day and historical animosities to be wrong from a moral standpoint.

#### Improving the relations is an option

Respondents in the surveys and in the interviews on both sides identify several mutually beneficial reasons for improving the relations, one of which is the economy: “because it would be good for the economy” and “because we are neighbors, and we have business together”, as two Dominican survey respondents stated. They understand that they have a shared interest in improving relations between the two nations, and they view this as an option, as compared to the respondents quoted in the previous chapter who identified a need for improvement in relations, but could not really see this happening. These Dominican expressions of shared needs and shared destinies based on the economy are something that I attribute to a *transnational discourse*, that is, a discourse or a narrative which considers the island as one, without ignoring the fact that the island consists of two nations.

It is not hard to find examples of discourses of transnationalism within the Dominican respondents when asked about the need for an improvement in Dominican-Haitian relations. Both the Dominican and Haitian respondents keep coming back to the wish for a more harmonious coexistence on the island and in their borderlands, and an utterance like “(relations should improve) so that there can be peace” is evidence of that. This respondent also understands peace as a function of improved relations between the nations and with a resultant positive impact on the binational markets and the economic relations per se. The markets are understood as being vitally important for peace and the economic situation in the borderlands, which makes sense in more ways than one. First, the markets represent a meeting point for the inhabitants of the borderlands, and therefore also a point of reference for discovering what the other is like. This takes us back to the anecdote from the context chapter about the lady from Dajabón remembering her childhood when there were practically no Haitians in Dajabón, at a time before the binational-market boom, starting in the nineties. This is a stark contrast to today’s situation in Dajabón and at the border in general, where the Haitians are much more visible on the Dominican side, and a lot of this is due to the binational markets, where the Dominicans and Haitians meet twice a week. They also share an

interest in keeping the markets productive and ongoing. Therefore, it makes sense that a perception of whether there is peaceful coexistence between the two nations is related to the way the binational markets are run. Improved relations between the two nations would also – again according to the same respondent – benefit the markets of the two nations. This is something that many respondents came back to, that the markets could be a gauge for measuring “the temperature” at the border. When the border is “hot” – due to protests, conflicts, fighting, and such – sometimes the markets are shut down, and closed markets hit people on both sides of the border hard. When the border temperature is at a healthy level, the markets and the economy run their usual course.

Just as I found on the Dominican side, on the Haitian side a fair share of the responses to the question regarding associations to the word “Dominican” were just simple observations, for instance, that a Dominican is a person, a person from the Dominican Republic, someone from another nation: “Dominicans are good people, people of quality”, “They like “los conoucos<sup>63</sup>”, “they like the discotheques and they like to raise animals”. They refer to simple, everyday activities and descriptions.

The Haitians are – like the Dominicans – very positive towards their neighbors, and the following extract expresses this: “They are a nation with a good heart.”

There are also those who distinguish between the two nations and focus on life at the border:

I cannot speak about the two nations specifically, but I can indeed speak about life at the border. The relations are good, because when I was little, I would never see Dominicans visiting Haiti. Now, the Dominicans come to live here, they come and go to the discos and then they go back home again without problems.

Several respondents identify that the unsettling parts of Dominican-Haitian relations are the result of poor actions on the part of both nations’ authorities, and that the people mainly get along fine in the borderlands.

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<sup>63</sup> Conuco is a small farm.

So far, I have argued that despite the continued existence of the traditional and well-established conflict-based discourses among the borderland youths, what is more frequent in my material are perceptions that acknowledge each other as human beings, as counterparts, as brothers and sisters who are much more than just mutually exclusive people.

### Transnational perspectives from the rayano youth: we are neighbors and should live in peace

In the context chapter, I examined the multicultural past of the borderlands and the increased levels of visibility and co-existence found in the Dominican Republic in general and the borderland in particular. This is reflected among my respondents as a counterweight to the “trujillista” discourses of conflict and division. Both the Dominicans and the Haitians concur that there is a need to improve relations, for a variety of reasons. Here, I will situate my respondents’ call for an improvement inside the transnational perspective.

Below I present statements from the survey, regarding the need for an improvement in Dominican-Haitian relations, utterances that indirectly acknowledge conflict while at the same time expressing that the two peoples and their respective nations should be more equal. This is not, therefore, an expression of Dominican or Haitian nationalism, but rather a perspective that validates the other and their rights.

Some of these utterances express *morally based reasons* for improving relations.

Dominican examples of this are that “they are humans and God made them as well as us”, and that it “is not about the skin color, but about the person”. Another observes *that* “there is a lot of discrimination”, while one adds that “*we should not have enemies and we should treat each other well.*” These are Dominican utterances that validate the existence of conflict, of abuses, and of relations that do not benefit the people of the borderlands. “Because it’s not about skin color” contradicts the typical black/white dichotomy, and “everything is better with peace” is indicative that the borderland youths also see Dominican-Haitian relations as troublesome. In the same way, these are Dominican utterances that also consider the Haitians and their experiences. While they refer to or insinuate conflict, they do not also come with the claim that improvement of relations is impossible.

At the same time, these utterances do not appear to subscribe to either Dominican or Haitian nationalist prejudices. They see the other as someone with the same rights as themselves. The surveyed Haitians are just as concerned with finding a better way of coexisting as the Dominicans. Some of the arguments are practically the same as on the Dominican side: “we should live united because we’re all humans”, and “because we’re



all children of God”, “because one nation should help another similar nation”, and – quite simply – “because I would like the Dominicans and the Haitians to become friends.” As this Haitian survey respondent put it, the relations should be improved “because we are two countries that should reunite when there is something bad going on so that the authorities can fix it, but since they don’t reflect, they create disorder.” The authorities cannot fix the relations, but they should, is the message.

These are all examples of the same reasoning as they acknowledge the existence of problems between the two nations, but do not see these problems as unavoidable or impossible to overcome by two nations sharing an island. Another aspect of the morally based reasoning for improvement of the relations is the feeling that “we are brothers”, and that as such they should be able to get along. This was mentioned repeatedly in the survey, from Haitians and Dominicans alike. These two Haitian respondents accurately summed up the sentiments of brotherhood that were present in the survey answers: “Because we’re two neighbors on the same border”, and “when we (behave like) brothers and sisters, things work well.” This is to say that they have experienced that things may work well along the border if the inhabitants remember that they are “brothers and sisters”.

The key to these shared perceptions is that the Dominican and Haitian youths see an improvement in the relations as something mutually beneficial. For instance, some of the Haitians expressed their mutual interest in improving both sides “so that we can get along better and end the tyranny between both (sides)”. These are strong words that recognize conflict as a major ingredient in Dominican-Haitian relations, while at the same time not closing the door on a better future. Another Haitian respondent looked at conflict in the light of history: “we should break down the barriers that have been built in the past”. This is also an acknowledgment of how Dominican-Haitian relations do not need to be inherently complicated, but rather that they have been created and re-created throughout history.

Haitian respondents also point out that injustices in the borderlands go both ways – it is not just a matter of Dominican abuses towards Haitians. If the relations improved one respondent said, “there would be less injustices both towards them as well as towards us”, and another Haitian respondent answered in a similar way, “that some people abuse

the Haitians, and some Haitians abuse the Dominicans”: The implied idea is that an improvement in the binational relations would put an end to this. In the words of another Haitian respondent, “we should be united to move forward”.

These are examples of how Haitian respondents in the survey find reasons for wanting to improve the binational relations. The feeling of a mutual need for improvement is clearly present. At the same time, they also identify different existing problems – *tyranny, conflicts, injustices, abuse, poverty, animosity, and lack of communication* – while claiming a mutual benefit in resolving and improving these situations: “Because there is a lot of poverty and in that way, we could move ahead.” Another Haitian respondent stated that “we might need them, and they might need us”, and it would make sense to support one another, or as a fellow Haitian expressed it: “we’re an island, and we should improve our conditions for the best of our co-existence and business. It is not good to have enemies.” Having enemies undermines the island’s progress, is the claim. Thus, again, while the respondents identify animosity, they also express interest in seeing that the solution, is transnational, for the entire island. Their proposed solution is not a border wall or nationalistic isolation, but rather finding common ways out of shared problems.

Entrenched in the idea of mutually beneficial changes in Dominican-Haitian relations is the transnational perspective of viewing the island as one territory and not just two individual nations. Transnational reflections do not necessarily point towards unification, something that I will deal with below, and are more frequent on the Haitian side than on the Dominican side. My respondents also do not mention words or concepts like “transnationalism”, but they do to a certain degree express it in other ways. When a respondent states “lack of communication” as a reason for improving relations, I assume that the background is that the respondent thinks that more communication will improve relations. Isolation is not the key to improvement, much like the ones who dryly assessed that “it isn’t good to have enemies” and “because in some cases we mutually mistreat each other”. There could be mutual benefits from there being less animosity, and “the barriers that have been built in the past” should be broken down. In general, improvement in Dominican-Haitian relations is also perceived in the focus groups as something mutually enriching. An interesting point is that within this category

the respondents appear to agree in different ways that cooperation makes progress more likely or is even a precondition for improvement.

These wishes to unite, to improve relations, the talk of brotherhood and the shared perceptions of different types of mutual benefit clearly contradict the old thinking and the old discourses. In the previous chapter on conflict, and in this chapter as well, I have had a certain emphasis on the perceptions regarding a need for improvement in the binational relations. This is due to the nature of the question: do they feel the need for improvement, and if so, why? As we know, a vast majority of the borderland youths feel that the relations should change. This change is a potential within the borderland – or *rayano* – youths, and one of the ways that it is apparent is in their intuitive transnational reasoning and discourse.

### Transnational connections: Markets, music, and news

The markets are important both economically and socially, economically, because they are vital to the whole border as an integrated part of life, both for the vendors as well as for the buyers, and socially, because the markets bring people together – *people of both races*, as one respondent stated. The markets are largely perceived by the youths on both sides as having mutual benefit. It is important to note that not just the Haitians see these benefits; 94% of the Dominicans also see the markets as something that benefits both nations. In the dichotomy-based narratives, these markets could be understood as Dominican aid to Haitians, or as a “Trojan horse” through which the Haitians enter the Dominican territory. Yet the borderland youths are fully aware that this is something beneficial for people on both sides of the border.

#### *The binational markets as a connector*

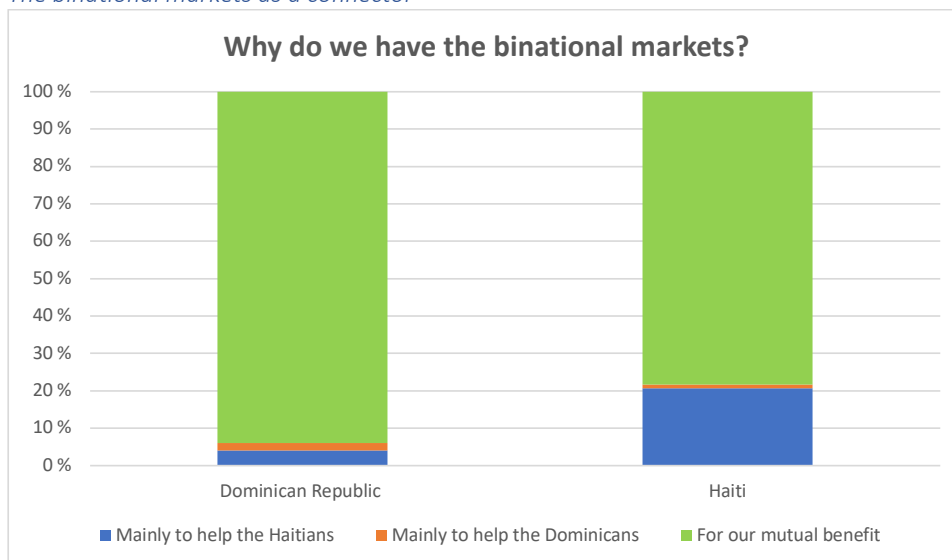


Table 40 Survey summary: Why do we have the binational markets?

Both groups of youths agree that the binational market is indeed binational when it comes to the benefits. This is parallel to the acknowledgment that the markets are held on Dominican ground and on Dominican terms, which has been mentioned in the previous chapter.

*Music as a connector*

Co-existence does not have to be a conscious decision to integrate with the other. It may also be as simple as sharing some references. One such reference is music: “(The Haitians) dance Dominican reggaetón.”

During my repeated field trips to Haiti, both to the Port-au-Prince areas as well as the borderlands, I kept hearing Dominican bachata. I am not claiming that bachata is everywhere in Haiti, but it is a type of music that the Haitians are very familiar with. This is a way of sharing and co-existing without necessarily having any specific agenda or underlying intentions. It is just music, one of many elements that constitute our identity as human beings. If we share music, then we also share parts of our identity.

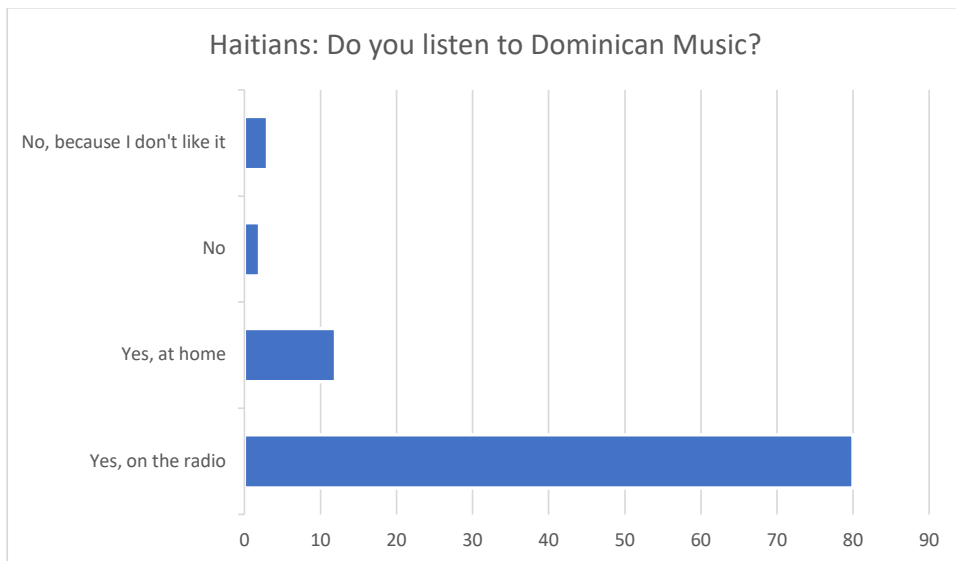


Table 41 Haitians: Do you listen to Dominican music?

If Haitian music is listened to by Dominicans and vice versa, then this is a sign of a shared island identity, in addition to the national identities. It is understated and subtle, and a tacit common point of reference. According to my surveys, 80% of the Haitian youths in the borderlands “listen to Dominican music on the radio” and 61% of the Dominican youth in the borderlands make similar claims to listening to Haitian music on the radio. This is something that does not show in the conflict-based discourses on the two nations. Relatively few do not like or do not listen to the others’ music (a total of 18% on the Dominican side and 5% on the Haitian side). Sharing music preferences is a

way of co-existing. It does not matter if one is expressly aware or this or not, it is common ground.

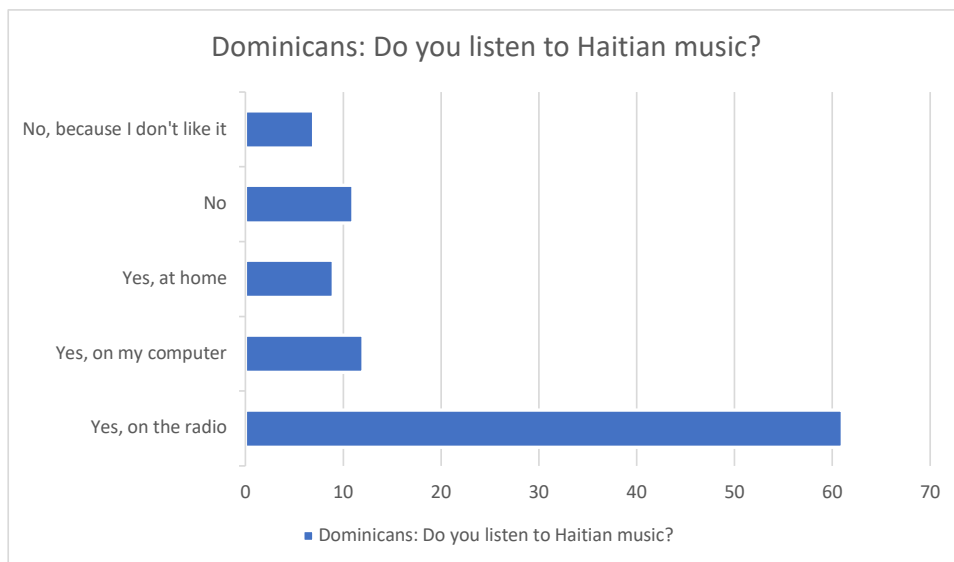


Table 42 Dominicans: Do you listen to Haitian music?

*News as a connector*

Thus, we know that the borderland Haitians and Dominicans listen to each other's music. Additionally, they also keep updated on news from the other side of the border. The youths themselves perceive that they are informed to a certain degree. About a quarter of the Haitians surveyed and 10% of the Dominicans state that they have no information about what is happening in the neighboring country, however, the vast majority (76% on the Haitian side and 90% on the Dominican side) are informed about the news from the other side of the border. This tells us that there is some degree of interest in current affairs on the other side, something that makes perfect sense given the proximity. Close to one quarter of the surveyed youths on each side (Haiti: 22% and DR: 24%) told us that they obtain news from the other side by talking to someone from that nation. This is a sign of a degree of everyday communication, which is another example disproving the narratives of two totally disconnected people who can only be understood as living dichotomies. We do not know exactly how this takes place, but we can establish that it exists, and this is a positive aspect of the relations. Contact of a

mundane, everyday sort across the border is one of many counterparts to the idea of the absolute barrier separating the two nations and their peoples. These are example of shared references, shared tastes, and shared experiences however ordinary they may seem to be. They are a blatant contradiction of the conflict-based discourse on separation and an existence as dichotomies.

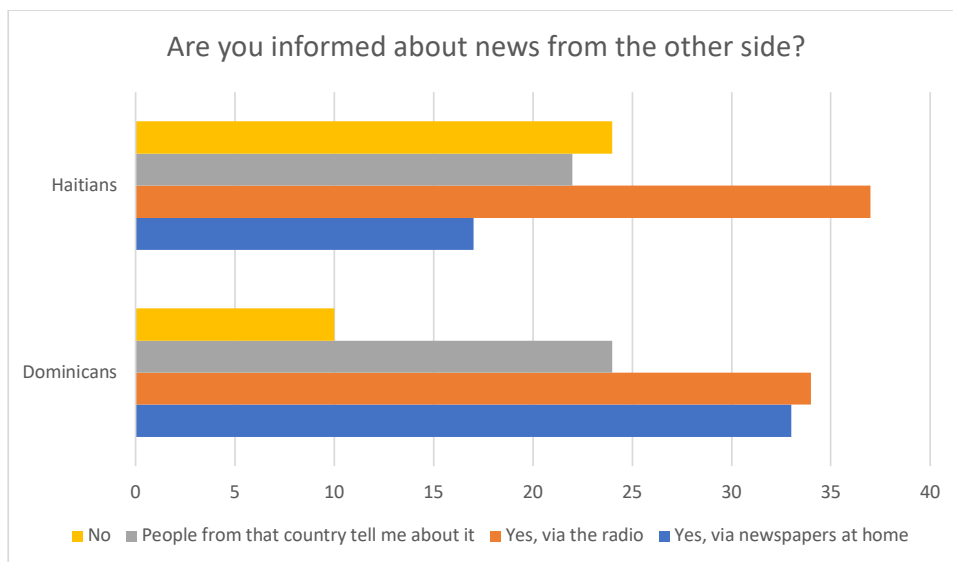


Table 43 are you informed about news from the other side?

What the table does not inform us about is what type of news they are exposed to or what kind of perspectives are given to them via this news. Those who obtain their news exclusively from the national newspaper or the radio might just as easily be receiving a discourse of conflict and antagonism through the news stories purporting to be updating them. Another shared reference is alcohol as the following passage from a Dominican focus group on the topic of what they know about Haiti shows:

R: I like the drink they make there.

Q: Ah! which one? Barbancourt?<sup>64</sup>

R: The clerén.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Barbancourt is a renowned Haitian rum, sold internationally, and is one of many well-known Caribbean rums.

<sup>65</sup> The *clerén/clairin* is “a distilled spirit made from cane sugar produced in Haiti that undergoes the same distillation process as rum”, according to Wikipedia, consulted on October 19, 2018. It is widely consumed in Haiti as well as the Dominican Republic, even more so in the borderlands than in the rest of the

Q: That's strong. Do they drink (the clerén) a lot around here?

R: Yes.

R: Next to my house they buy it and drink it a lot.

Q: The clerén, oh my God!

R: ...not only to drink, but also give it to the roosters.

The roosters and the cockfights are an important part of both Dominican and Haitian tradition, and even more so in rural areas. In this case, the respondent is referring to the use of the *clerén* to get the roosters fit for the cockfight. In the same way that you can often easily purchase Dominican *Presidente* beer on the Haitian side, you will be able to purchase Haitian *clerén* on the Dominican side.

#### Multicultural past and present: Friendship, collaboration, love and everyday life

This section examines the findings of coexistence that relate to friendship, collaboration, love, and everyday life. These are indicators of possible remains of what was presented in Chapter three as the multicultural past of the borderlands.

My research shows that there is also a multicultural present. Almost all the Dominicans surveyed indicate that they have friends from Haiti, and more than half of the Haitians say the same. Most of the interviewees additionally defend the necessity of meeting each other across the border. Crossing the border to share in activities, play, or to go to Dominican-Haitian camps is something they consider to be very valuable in their lives. Even though the fear is notable, the opposite is also present. “*Are you afraid of the Haitians?*”, 67% of the Dominicans say no. Most of the Haitians asked believed that Dominicans would help Haitians out in a crisis (the 2010 earthquake is an example), but they were less sure (42% “yes”) about whether the Haitians would help the Dominicans out. Many of the perceptions of “the other” are shared on both sides of the border, both the positives and the negatives. They have friends of both nationalities, listen to each other’s music, and both agree that the main problem in their nation comes from domestic threats, and not threats from the neighboring country. But they also agree that there is indeed a “silent invasion” of Haitians into the DR.

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Dominican Republic. Clerén has a distinct, raw taste. To this author’s inexpert taste, it is slightly reminiscent of *rum agricole*.



The youths of the borderland show all the complexities of Dominican-Haitian relations, but they add to the mix the relative ease of frequent contact and everyday friendships. This everyday non-polar grey area could point to a positive way forward.

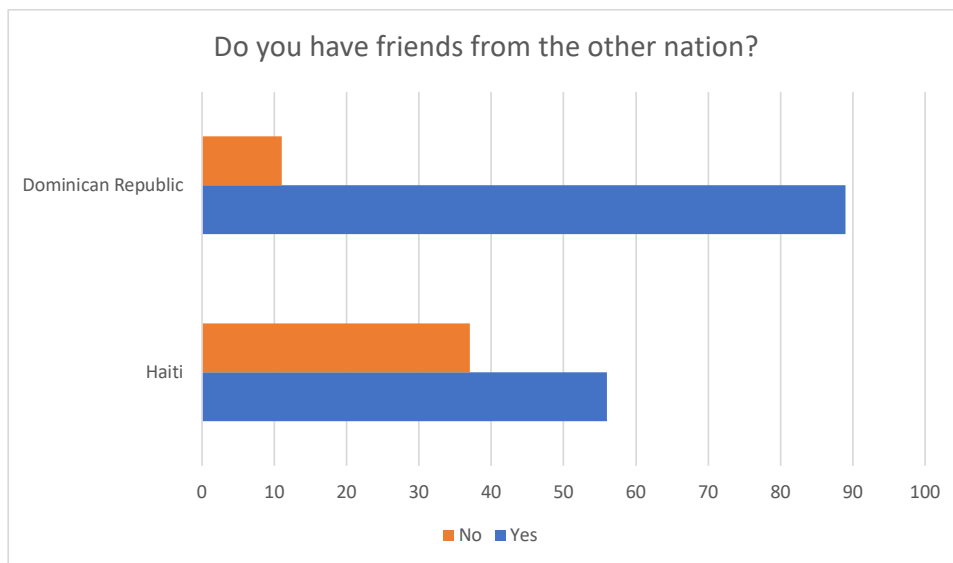


Table 44 Summary on question regarding friendship.

Fifty-six percent of the Haitians and 89% of the Dominicans confirmed that they have friends from the other side. The most common situation in the borderland, according to my respondents, is therefore to have friends from the other side, or who hail from the other side. This latter point *could* help explain the discrepancy between the Haitian and Dominican answers to the question on friendship, given the higher number of people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, compared to Dominicans in Haiti. Another possible explanation could be rooted in some of the findings from the previous chapter, on perceptions of conflict, which revealed that Haitians are more skeptical of the Dominican than the other way around. There is another difference in those who answered “no”, where the Haitian towns varied from 25% to 45%, averaging around 37% who did not have friends on the other side. The Haitian skepticism towards the Dominicans is more prominent than the other way around. On the Dominican side, only between 4% and 15% answered “no” on that question.

It is more common than not to have friends from Haiti and from the Dominican Republic, from the other side of the border. This is another shared experience in the borderlands that contradicts the discourse of conflict and incompatibilities.

Finally, there is the question concerning whether the surveyed youths lived in neighborhoods of mixed origin or not. This is of interest for at least two reasons. For one, it is relevant to know the extent to which the surveyed youth are used to living close to one another. Second, I was interested in seeing whether the aforementioned lack of symmetry between the two nations leads to a situation where the Dominicans would live in somewhat mixed areas, due to Haitian migration, while the Haitians would live in predominantly all-Haitian communities. This was not entirely the case. The borderland surveys reported that 19% of the Haitians and 24% of the Dominicans lived in mixed origin neighborhoods. Thus, most respondents live in all-Dominican or all-Haitian surroundings. Nevertheless, almost one in five surveyed Haitians and one in four surveyed Dominicans reported living in mixed neighborhoods. The numbers for the Dominican side are not surprising, but I find the prevalence of Haitians with Dominican neighbors in Haiti to be telling of a more interconnected life at the border – both ways – than what is generally reported.

Shared perceptions are shared understandings

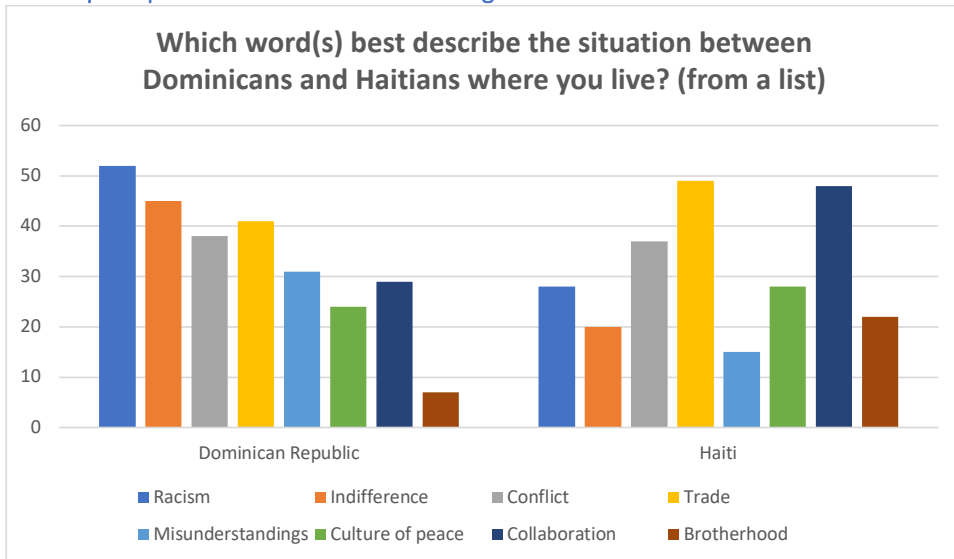


Table 45 Associations on relations (survey) H and DR. Multiple options available, and therefore the sum exceeds 100.

This section is included as an example of transnational discourses, with the aim of showing how shared understandings of the situation between Dominicans and Haitians could be seen as shared perceptions of the binational relations, and therefore as transnational perspectives.

The table above summarizes perceptions of the situation between Dominicans and Haitians. Seen from the Dominican side, Racism (52%), indifference (45%), trade (41%) and conflict (38%) are the four most frequently chosen key words. Racism and conflict fit right into the conflict discourses, and rightly so. Yet, I argue that they could also be included as transnational topics. This is because while Haitians and Dominicans share the perception that “conflict” is a relevant key word here, they also agree – as seen above – that the relations should be improved. The same can be said about racism. Both sides say that racism is a relevant key word, yet they do not acknowledge that there *should* be racially motivated differences and abuse on the island, even though this is the case today.

Trade is most certainly a transnational issue and resonates with the findings presented in the previous sections on the binational markets as a connector in the borderlands. Brotherhood is three times more commonly chosen on the Haitian side than on the

Dominican side (respectively 22% versus 7%), perhaps then an indicator that the Haitian youth see themselves as somewhat more connected to the Dominicans than the other way around. The selection of “indifference” does not really fit into either of the main discourses. However, the notion that “indifference” comes to mind as a key word could imply that the conflict discourse is not monolithic in the borderlands. This is another argument in favor of the *rayano* discourse as something different from the conflict-driven discourses.

*Comendador, Belladere and Anse-à-Pitres stand out...*

The borderlands are not one, but many, and relations may differ, from time to time and from place to place. One town that stands out on the Dominican side, is Comendador. The top three chosen words to describe Dominican-Haitian relations there were trade (78%), collaboration (56%) and peace culture (43%), followed by conflict (26%) and indifference (26%). Racism and conflict did not even make the top five. Neighboring Belladère, on the Haitian side, has similar characteristics. Collaboration (61%), peace culture (56%) and trade (43%) are the top three choices, making the Comendador – Belladère corridor a more friendly zone, binationally speaking. This shows that there is room for local differences. Comendador and Anse-à-Pitres are the only towns where racism was not in the top five, while every list included trade. This is another example of how several experiences co-exist in the borderlands.

*...while the rest are as heterogenous as the border itself*

While the pair Comendador – Belladère indeed shows similar traits, this is not automatically the case with the other three pairs of border towns. When I compare the top three choices in each “corridor”, I find that the pairs of border towns tend to differ.

Dajabón and Ouanaminthe are separated only by the *Masacre* River and the international border bridge and are geographically very close. Dajabón’s top three words are racism (60%), indifference (60%) and trade (50%), while Ouanaminthe’s top three are trade (39%), collaboration (32%) and indifference (23%). The Dominicans are notably less positive than the Haitians. The same is true for Jimaní and Fond Parisien in the south: the Dominicans are markedly more negative. Jimaní’s top three words are conflict (56%), indifference (53%) and racism (50%), while Fond Parisien listed trade (64%) and collaboration (54%) ahead of racism (36%). All the way down south, the

Haitian town of Anse-à-Pitres has 78% of the respondents marking “conflict”, ahead of trade (49 %) and collaboration (49 %), while the Pedernales youth named racism (65%), indifference (42%) and misunderstandings (39%).

#### *A culture of peace?*

The starting point of this thesis could be said to be exemplified in the examples above, in which “a culture of peace” and “racism” are equally represented on a national level in Haiti when the respondents are asked to choose the words from a list that best describe the situation between Dominicans and Haitians. However, the discrepancies between the Haitian towns is significant. On a national level, “trade” and “collaboration” are the two most common answers, adhering to the transnational discourse, we could argue, yet when we break the survey results down for each town, we see that Anse-à-Pitres replied “conflict” more than twice more than “brotherhood”.

The two towns of Ouanaminthe and Dajabón, in the north, also show signs of similar experiences and references. The youths most commonly live among their fellow countrymen, they report having friends from the neighboring country, and they are unaware of whether having a romantic partner from the other side would cause problems at home. To me, this suggests that if the youth shared the more traditional dichotomy-based perceptions on Dominican-Haitian relations, they would have no doubt that their parents would not accept such a cross-border union. In this case, they do not know one way or the other, which I interpret as an example of a rayano or transnational consciousness, of not being obsessed by the differences or the dichotomies.

The survey respondents from Dajabón (Dominican Republic) and Ouanaminthe (Haiti) basically give the same answers: They mainly live among their own nationality; they have friends from the other side, and they have no opinion as to whether it would pose a problem to their parents should they have a boyfriend or a girlfriend from the other country. I included this as relevant under the transnational umbrella because in a context driven exclusively by the conflict-based discourses, it would be expected that a romantic relation with the other would be perceived as problematic. The surveyed youths do not seem to emphasize whatever differences may exist between the Dominican Republic and Haiti in their responses. Of course, there are internal

differences along the border in this regard. While only 4% in Comendador considered a romantic relation as something problematic, 28% in Jimaní foresaw problems with their family if they were romantically involved with someone from the other side. On the Haitian side, 17% thought their family would react negatively to them having a girlfriend/boyfriend from the other side, and the internal differences vary between 11% in Fond Parisien and 20% in Anse-à-Pitres, who confirmed a perception of dislike towards romantic cross-border relations.

This is to say that by far most of the Haitians and Dominicans interviewed for my survey saw no problem or any significant problem in a cross-border romance. The differences are in some cases greater internally between the different towns in each nation than between the two nations per se.

#### Indicators of poverty and abandonment

Transnational discourses may come in many different shapes, and not necessarily in response to questions regarding the other, neither the other nation nor the other as an individual – real or imagined. Transnational discourse is also about shared experiences across the border, evidence of similarities and destinies that are the same or reminiscent of either side of the border. Therefore, I also looked for indicators of the youths' perceptions of life and of hopes in general. Life in any border region, anywhere, does not just revolve around the border and the binational relations. My survey is also an indicator of life in general in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands. The first point of interest is when the respondents are asked where they see themselves located in ten years' time. Contrary to elements of fear and conflict, *hope* is not located in the here and now, but rather in a non-specific imaginary future. Fear and hardships are here and now. Hope is elsewhere and at another moment in time.

*Where would the borderland youths like to be in 10 years' time?*

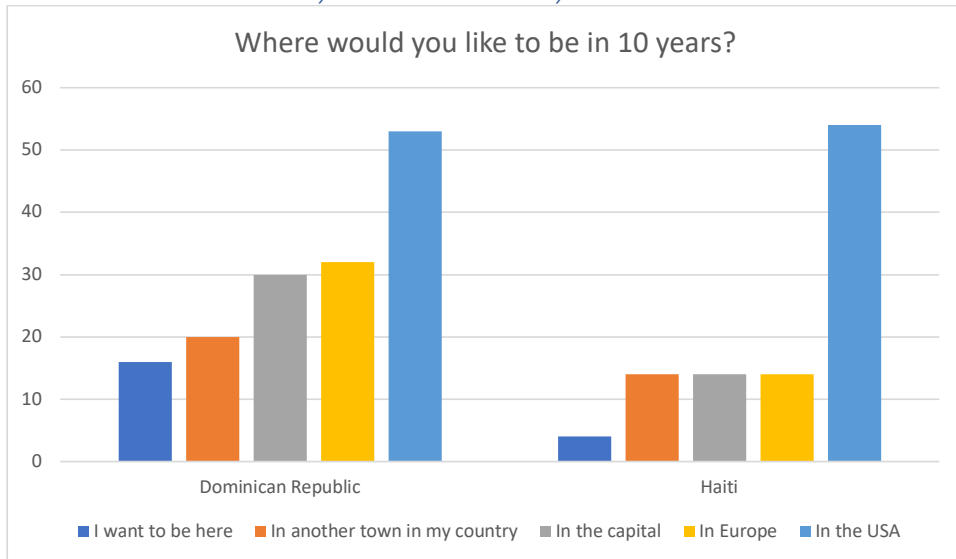


Table 46 Comparative future (survey) H and DR.

The Haitians and Dominicans in the survey are very clear in their answers: they want to be somewhere else in ten years' time. This is an example of a discourse that is less obvious than the expressions of hatred and distrust. This is equally significant when understanding Dominican-Haitian relations. Fifty-four percent of the surveyed Haitians and 53% of the surveyed Dominicans expressed that they wanted to be in the United States in ten years' time.

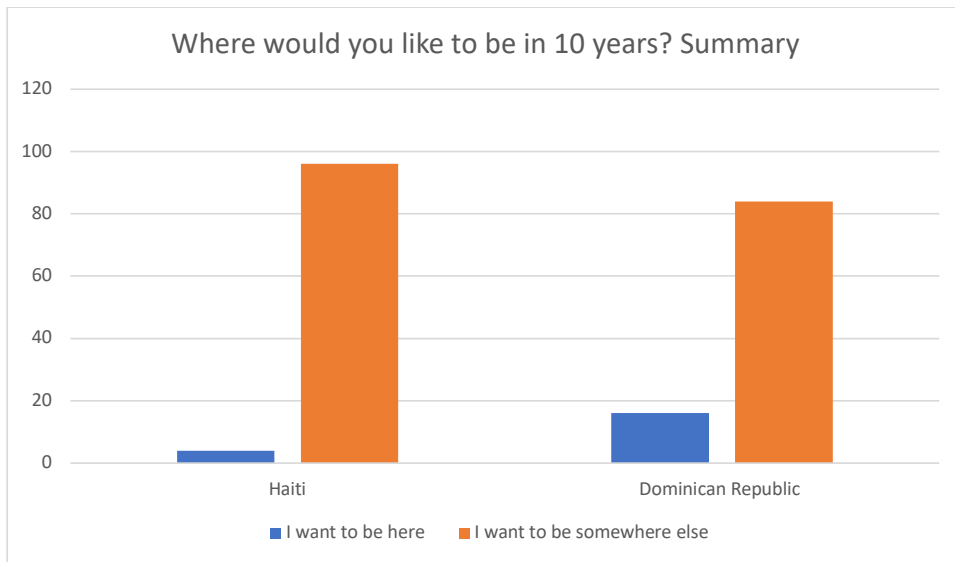


Table 47 Summary "Where would you like to be in ten years?" (H and DR).

Note that the question is phrased to discern their wishes and not a perceived probability. *Where would you like to be in 10 years?* is different from *Where do you think you will be in 10 years?* My interpretation is, therefore, that the statistics related to that specific question allow me to identify a shared transnational wish to leave and find something else, preferably abroad or in another town or city in their own nation. Only 4% of the surveyed Haitians and 16% of the surveyed Dominicans wanted their future to be at the place where they were currently living, which is to say the border towns. Even though there is a four times higher percentage of Dominicans (16%) than of Haitians (4%) that see themselves remaining where they are, there is still a noteworthy 84% of the Dominicans who would prefer to live some place other than what is currently “home”, in addition to the 96% of the Haitians surveyed, who would also prefer that their future will be elsewhere.

We have seen already – in the context chapter – that the border regions are prone to a low score according to all available measurements, compared to other parts of both countries. The available data is wider in reach on the Dominican side; therefore, we have more material for comparison between my findings and relevant research on the Dominican side than we do for the Haitian side. Nonetheless, we can compare discourses and perceptions amongst the respondents. When asked about how they pictured their future, in terms of making a living, a significant number of both Haitians and Dominicans



revealed that they were hopeful they could become professionals (49% on the Dominican side and 39% on the Haitian side). This is a sign that they have faith in their educational efforts eventually paying off. This is a shared perception, but one that is notably larger amongst the surveyed Dominicans.

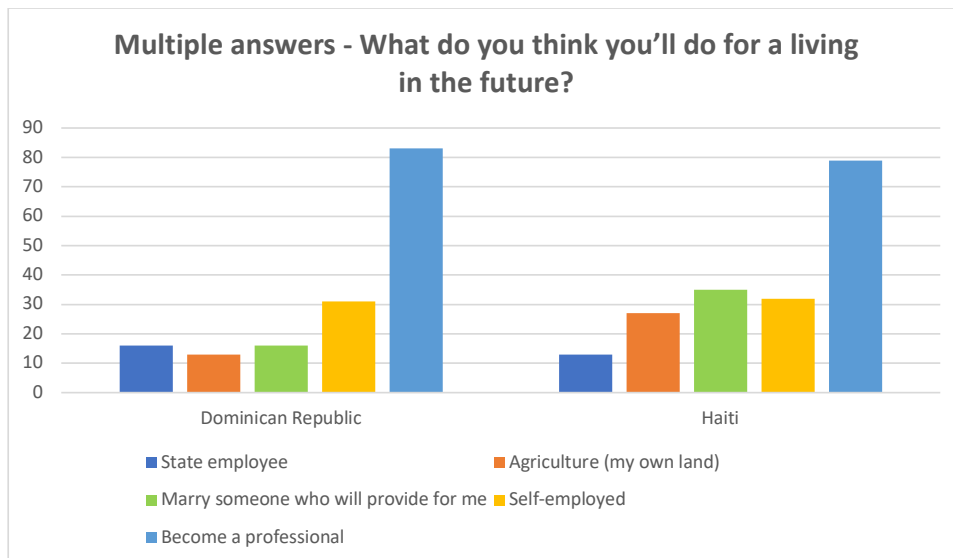


Table 4 Comparative future employment (survey) H and DR. Multiple options available, and therefore the sum exceeds 100.

There is also a surprisingly widespread perception that the most likely way to make a living in the future is by marrying someone who will provide for them: 16% on the Dominican side, and an even more worrying 35% on the Haitian side. A surprising 26% in Dominican Comendador is closer to the Haitian average than the Dominican score on this question.

*Education is the primary plan*

However, most of the surveyed youth on the Dominican side have plans of acquiring an education as a means to make a living (83%). This is of course a positive finding as the general idea appears to be that education represents an opportunity. There is also a strong sense of entrepreneurship among the surveyed youth. Apart from Jimaní, which shows a significantly lower score on this point, the Dominican youth of the border see themselves starting their own business to make a living in the future. Another way of interpreting this is of course that there are few options available to them in terms of employment, and that founding your own business is the most probable way of finding employment. All in all, the response to this question reveals a subculture of dependence

on others, and a lack of belief in one's own ability to create a future and also reveals a culture of marrying young. This is the same on both sides of the border, even though, as usual, the conditions appear to be grimmer on the Haitian side. While human agency is a difficult matter to measure, it is nevertheless of importance and interest. This is another shared part of the experience of being young in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands.

#### *Perceptions of mobility*

Obtaining a sense of my respondents' mobility is also important in this thesis as it allows for an understanding of the experiences of the borderland youths and the world they live in when it comes to travel. I asked them to be honest about how they saw the people of the neighboring nation, the relations between the two countries, and how they depicted the characteristics of individuals and/or groups from the neighboring country. It is therefore relevant to know where these feelings and associations have come from. Are they the result of traveling and seeing different parts of the country or of the world, or are they a co-product of having stayed mostly in the region where I visited them? Generally, it can be concluded that the borderland youth do not travel all that much, as expected, with a slight exception made for Dajabón. By "mobility" here, I am therefore talking about physical mobility as in the experiences they have of traveling, both inside and outside of the country.

Mobility can be both a privilege and a necessity, a privilege because it requires resources and the opportunity to pay the fare for transport, resources that may be scarce in certain areas and therefore not available to everyone. Documents are demanded to have access and move within a certain area or a nation, where the availability of these documents is often based what nation or ethnic group you incidentally belong to. The less privileged have less mobility where the low mobility shown in the survey findings indicates the same that has been described in Chapter three, on typical characteristics of the borderlands: poverty and hardship.

We observe some significant discrepancies between the Dominican towns in my survey. In general, we see that Dajabón's position as the largest border town is also reflected in its citizens' mobility, according to the respondents in my survey. Eighty percent of the respondents from Dajabón have visited a beach by the coast, as opposed to 26% and 42% in Comendador and Jimaní. Of course, this alone is not only conditioned by

economic considerations. Both Comendador and Jimaní are located significantly further away from the coast than Dajabón, requiring more time and effort to reach a beach by the coast. However, the question relating to whether or not the respondents have visited a town outside their own province shows the same tendency, even stronger: 95% in Dajabón confirm that they have visited another town, compared to only 26%, 28%, and 19% in respectively Comendador, Jimaní, and Pedernales. All the respondents in Dajabón have visited Santo Domingo, whereas the corresponding numbers for the other three cities are 74% (Comendador), 81% (Jimaní) and 72% (Pedernales). The tables are turned somewhat on the question relating to visits to Haiti, where only 45% of the *Dajaboneros* report having visited Haiti.

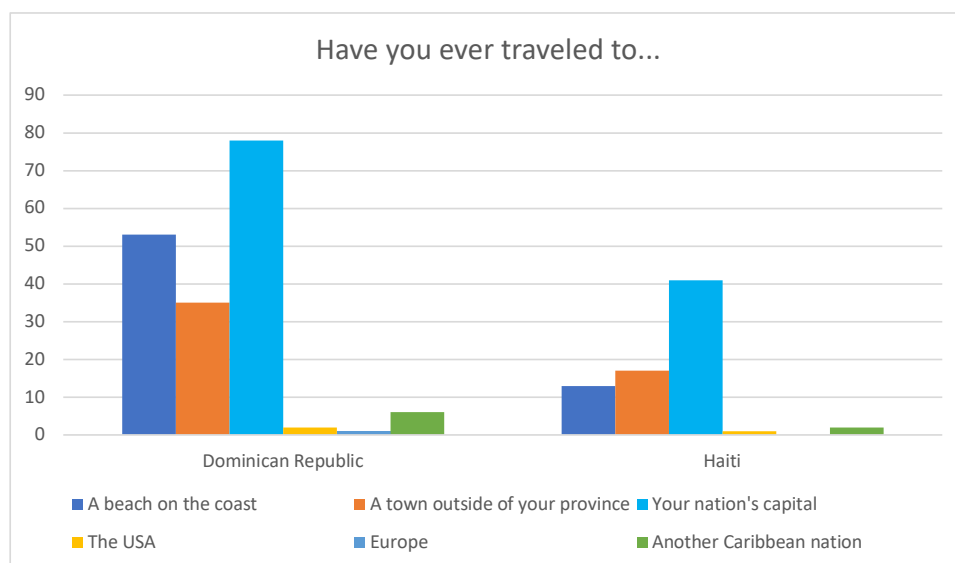


Table 49 Traveling (survey) H and DR.

In the other border towns, the most common situation is to have visited Haiti, respectively 70%, 75% and 81% in Comendador, Jimaní, and Pedernales. In other words, the increased mobility in Dajabón is focused on domestic traveling, whereas the other three Dominican towns show a significantly higher degree of contact with Haiti.

### Experiences of migration

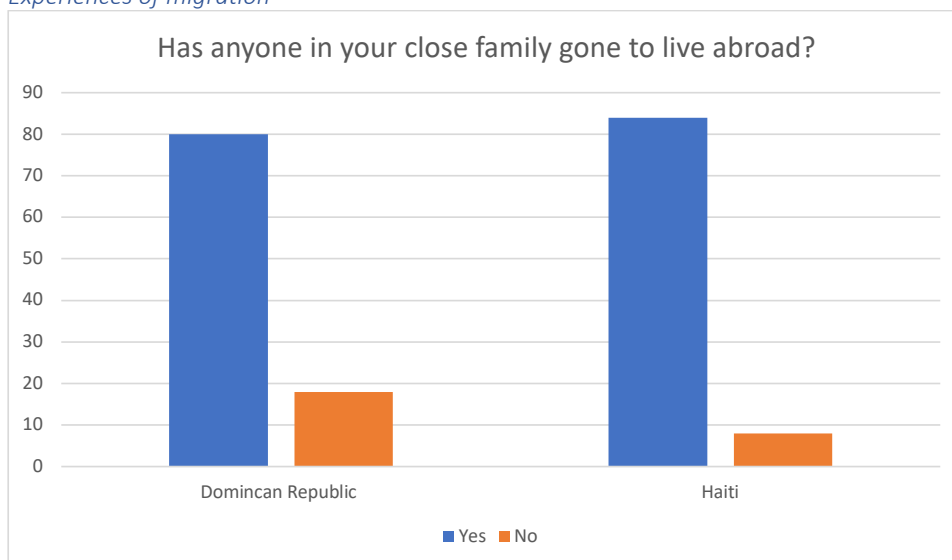


Table 50 Migration in close family relations (survey) H and DR.

Mobility is also sometimes a necessity. Migration is one of the core characteristics of our species, and both Haiti and the Dominican Republic are nations with a significant diaspora. The Dominican Republic is of course also a recipient of migrants due to the steady Haitian migration into the Dominican Republic. In short, a vast majority of the surveyed youths (80%) have someone in their close family who has migrated to another country. With the exception of Comendador (57%), all towns answer more than 80% “yes” on the question of whether they have someone in their close family who has gone to live abroad. The same is true for Haiti, with 84% having seen members of their close family migrate to another nation. It is therefore fair to assume that no young person on the Dominican-Haitian border is a stranger to the fact that people move to other countries. This is an important shared experience. Even though it is more common to talk about Haitians migrating into the Dominican Republic – for obvious reasons – the *rayano* youth on both sides have very similar life experiences when it comes to traveling and when it comes to having people in their immediate family migrate to other countries. The *rayano* youth know about the costs and the experiences of migration.

### ***Concluding remarks***

The question that defined the analysis in this chapter was in essence both very simple and very radical: *What characterizes the discourses of transnationalism among the Dominican and Haitian borderland youths?* Simple, in that it is a logical and foreseeable continuation of Chapters three and four, but also radical, in that it emphasizes the multicultural and binational aspects of Dominican-Haitian relations.

This chapter has presented the most common views that the Dominican and Haitian borderland youths have towards the other and binational relations on the island. This is important to underline and to repeat: there is more evidence in my material of Dominicans and Haitians just getting along than of Dominican and Haitians seeing each other as mortal enemies in competition over a limited territory. This comes to light through shared life experiences, through friendship and trade, through their mutual neutral descriptions of each other, and through the respectful acknowledgments of the other. The Dominican and Haitian youths of the borderlands listen to each other's music, and are to a certain degree aware of news from the other side. They are fully aware of each other, and often, they are inclined to accept the other and even wish the other well.

The graphic I used for this chapter, an illustration that shows a map of the two nations, with two shaking hands integrated into the drawing, exchanges the divisive map of discord with the map of two reconciling nations. This illustration points to the core of my findings and also summarizes this section: the handshake is much more common than the fist in the borderland binational contact. Friendship is more frequent than hatred. Listening to each other's music is more frequent than rejecting it. Some share neighborhoods, while others do not. But the fist and the conflict discourses have been given much more attention, both historically and in the contemporary landscape. Therefore, highlighting the stories of the everyday handshakes is of some significance. They represent the possibility of changing the discourse, or better yet, they represent the borderlands. This is a perspective on the binational relations that has been overlooked and it is a perspective and a finding in this study that I will discuss further in the following chapter on the rayano discourse and the weight of history.



## Chapter 6 – Rayano discourse and the weight of history

In this, the final chapter, I will discuss my findings, before I conclude by looking into possible ways to move forward, and at further research ideas, including reflections on strengths and weaknesses of this thesis, and then everything will be rounded off by looking at one final hope for the time ahead.

CDA establishes a relation between the contexts of production and interpretation and the realities described in the discourses of the survey respondents and the focus-group informants (Fairclough, 2015). This relation allows us to see a change in discourse as also a potential agent for change in the material world. The success of any CDA research project is ultimately “measured by its (...) contribution to change” (Teun A. van Dijk, 1993, pp. 252 - 253). It is my hope, that identifying the strong presence of a transnational discourse may be a constructive contribution to lifting the rayano perspectives into the light within Dominican, Haitian, and Dominican-Haitian studies.

In this final chapter, I will discuss my findings, and their possible implications and reach an understanding of what the rayano discourse entails, and how it can serve as an antidote to anti-haitianism, where the respondents identify openings for a change in the discourse, and thus also a potential for change in Dominican-Haitian relations.

I stated in the introduction that the underlying research question was *how can the borderland youths' perceptions of each other and of the binational relations be interpreted and analyzed in a historical and social context?* Chapter three led us to a definition of the discourses that I used to frame my analysis, and I answered the following three research questions:

- *What characterizes the historical and social context of the Dominican-Haitian borderland?*
- *What is the relevant historical and social context behind the discourses of the Dominican-Haitian binational relations?*
- *What are the relevant discourses for framing my data analysis?*

This led me to Chapter four, where I analyzed the discourses of conflict under the following two questions:

- *What characterizes the discourses of conflict among the Dominican and Haitian borderland youths?*
- *What are the similarities and differences in discourse between the Dominican and Haitian respondents?*

And then, in Chapter five, I followed the transnational perspectives, to answer what I called a simple, but radical question:

- *What characterizes the discourses of transnationalism among the Dominican and Haitian borderland youths?*

The importance of the transnational perspectives takes me back to the start of Chapter one, to my notes from a meeting in Santo Domingo back in 2004, and the advice from Mr. Odalís G. Pérez that I study the border to study the island. That is what I will finalize below: I will respectfully identify and represent the rayano discourse as found in my material.

The *rayano* citizen is the borderland inhabitant (García-Peña, 2016; Torres-Saillant, 2004), the focus of my study. “The rayano discourse” is the distilled version of the utterances made in my surveys and interviews in which the rayano youth talk about themselves, about their perceptions of “the other”, their perceptions of binational relations, and about life in the borderland. This final chapter will therefore tie the findings of the previous chapters together, while debating three main interrelated topics which constitute the thematic division:

1. *Characteristics of the rayano discourse*
2. *The rayano discourse as an antidote to the discourse of anti-haitianism*
3. *Opportunities for changes within the rayano discourse*

The first topic is an analysis of the main traits of the rayano discourse and how they simultaneously confirm and reject the other two discourses considered in this paper (the transnational and the conflict-based). The main question here is what characterizes Haitian and Dominican youths of the borderland and the way they perceive each other, and what characterizes their binational relations and their life in general. The first topic is therefore about the complexity of the rayano discourse. The second part is a continuation of this, but with an important distinction: it deals with the idea of the rayano citizen and perceptions as a possible agent of change (García-Peña, 2016). To what extent



do I find evidence to support García-Peña's idea that the rayano discourse could be an antidote to the anti-Haitian and official discourse? I concur that there is evidence of the rayano as an antidote, but the opposite is simultaneously also true: the borderland youth echo the *trujillista* past almost as much as they reject it. This again leads me to the third main topic: *Opportunities for changes in discourse within the rayano discourse*. In addition to the rayano consciousness in and of itself, the focus-group interviews also showed interesting changes compared with the traditional discourse. The common denominator within these focus groups, something that separated them from the surveyed youth from the same eight towns, was their participation in the trinational project in the borderland, described in Chapter two, the Nobel Project. This meant that they had participated in joint organized activities in both nations, with participants from both nations, and this appears to have had an impact on the perception of each other. Do the respondents attribute a positive change in their view of the other and on the binational relations to their participation in organized cross-border activities?

I will quickly summarize the main contents of this thesis to this point before proceeding. The table below identifies the main topics of each chapter.

<i>Rayano consciousness and the weight of history</i>	
Chapter 1	The motivations behind this thesis. Introduction to the research question: <i>How can the borderland youths' perceptions of each other and of the binational relations be interpreted and analyzed in a historical and social context?</i>
Chapter 2	Critical Discourse Analysis: the connections between context, reality, and discourse. The impacts of the research design and the research process.
Chapter 3	Contexts behind the conflict-based discourse, the transnational discourse, and the rayano discourse. The discourses identified for framing my data analysis: 1) The discourse of the rayano youth 2) The discourse of transnationalism 2) The discourse of conflict
Chapter 4	Discourse of conflict found in my material.
Chapter 5	Transnational discourse found in my material.
Chapter 6	Discussion on the findings from the previous chapters. The thematic division follows three main topics: 1) Characteristics of the rayano discourse 2) The rayano discourse as an antidote to the discourse of anti-haitianism 3) Opportunities for changes in discourse within the rayano discourse

Table 51 Overview of the thesis.

### ***Characteristics of the rayano discourse***

What is specifically “rayano” in the rayano discourse? This section examines the main traits of the rayano discourse, and how it simultaneously confirms and rejects the other two discourses considered in this paper (the conflict-based, Chapter 4, and the transnational discourse of Chapter five). To summarize the main characteristics of the rayano discourse, I will paraphrase Torres-Saillant (2004), quoted in Chapter three: the rayano discourse is a reminder of a forgotten identity on Hispaniola, a reminder of an identity that is “hybrid, multiform and porous” (p. 227). The *rayano* discourse, as it is articulated by my respondents in the survey and in the focus-group interviews, points to a wide array of ideas on what the Haitians and the Dominicans are to each other and to themselves. It echoes both *trujillista* ideas on dichotomies and incompatibilities and transnational perspectives, such as perceptions of shared experiences and conditions.

### **Schizophrenic relations**

According to the Dominican researcher Alfonso Dilla, the Dominicans in the borderland in general have a contradicting set of perspectives on Haitians, and this is what he labels “schizophrenic attitudes” towards them (Dilla Alfonso, 2011, p. 8). This is something that I have also found with my respondents. However, there is one important distinction between Dilla’s and my findings in that he describes the acceptance of Haitians among Dominicans as mainly utilitarian, as Cedano does in her study from Dajabón on attitudes on the Haitians in Dajabón. This means that the Dominicans in Dajabón accept the Haitians because they are of use to them (Cedano, 2010; Dilla Alfonso, 2011). This appears to be somewhat different in my material, perhaps due to the age of the participants or other factors that I am not aware of. My findings show that my respondents are largely more accepting towards the Haitians, regardless of whether or not the Haitians have utilitarian value for the Dominicans.

In his call for a new view on the border, Torres-Saillant (2004) talked about it as a meeting point instead of a zone of mutual exclusion. I would add that the border is a meeting point *as well as* a zone of mutual exclusion, according to the youths’ perceptions. One important finding is therefore that the conflict-based discourses alone are simply not valid descriptors of the nature of the Dominican-Haitian relations, as seen by my respondents. The examples of peaceful co-existence and shared life experiences

are far too many to be ignored. The conflict-based or anti-Haitian – on the Dominican side – discourses are suffering from a constructed selective amnesia that excludes the rayano condition and consciousness (García-Peña, 2016; Torres-Saillant, 2004) from the collective national memories. Reclaiming those rayano discourses to provide a valid parallel gateway to the understanding and framing of Dominican-Haitian relations is a way of combatting this widespread amnesia. At the same time, issues relating to conflict, mutual hatred, and racism, in addition to abuses, are frequently mentioned by my respondents and therefore must be considered relevant factors in their lives in addition to their perceptions of each other. The conflict-based discourses are therefore present, to a large degree, but they are not monolithic, and this distinction is important.

They both hate – and do not hate – each other; they fear, and do not fear, each other. Both sides are openly racist towards one another, and both sides simultaneously agree that race is of no concern in matters of trust. Most of the perceptions of “the other” are shared on both sides of the border. Both the positives and the negatives. They listen to each other’s music. They both agree that the main threats to their nation emanate from domestic issues, and not from their neighbor, while they also agree that there is indeed a “silent invasion” of Haitians into the DR.

The richness and complexities of the discourse of the youths of the borderland is notable in the sense that their understanding of each other, of the binational relations and of themselves encompasses several competing discourses. The youths see themselves as opposites of each other, as members of a state in a conflict with a Haitian or a Dominican enemy, respectively, yet they also see themselves as friends, neighbors and co-islanders with a lot in common. This means that several parallel perceptions are manifested at the same time, and this multiform mosaic of ideas is an important part of the rayano discourse. It is not purely trujillista and it is not purely transnational. Within it, there are opportunities for a change in discourse compared to the conflict-based understandings of the island, and there are also opportunities for perpetuating discourses of incompatibility.

We saw in Chapter four that the Dominican youth fear the “supernatural Haitian”, and refer to the Haitian as diabolical and someone who dabbles in witchcraft and magic. All these characteristics are present in my survey material, which is to say that the *trujillista* and *balaguerista* pasts live on in contemporary discourse, also in the borderland. The two most chosen words on the Haitian side, when asked what best described Dominican–Haitian relations were “cooperation” and “trade”. The Dominicans, on the other hand, say that conflict is more present than cooperation, and that problems between Haitians and Dominicans are frequently resolved by means of violence. As one of the Dominican survey respondents stated: “when there’s a problem between a Dominican and a Haitian, they both gang up like they were football teams to fight”. This kind of statement is very frequent and points out the presence of violence and fear. Almost half of the Haitians answer that they fear the Dominicans, while it is not so much the other way around there is still a noteworthy 33% who claim to fear the Haitians. The reasons for this Dominican fear vary, as in these assorted examples: “because they’re very noisy and “brujos” (warlocks or witches)”, “they’re very strange and that scares me”, “they practice a lot of witchcraft and a lot of evil”, “even though they all don’t have the same heart, some rape young girls and kill them”, “I don’t like their culture”. All of which are quite typical declarations amongst both the interviewed and surveyed informants.

These sentiments are mutual, according to my analysis. The Haitians also express to a large degree that they need to defend themselves against the Dominicans, who are essentially dangerous for Haitians. For instance, when asked why they were afraid of Dominicans, one Haitian respondent replied, “because they like to kill Haitians”.

The surveyed Haitians are notably fearful, as some of the responses show: “the Dominicans like to kill Haitians”, “they like to abuse Haitians”, “they stab the Haitians”. Several others mentioned the fear of receiving one or more “machetazos” – to be hit with a machete. Although the Haitians also have their fair share of neutral or positive descriptions, including that they remember well the help from the Dominicans after the earthquake in 2010, there are more negative responses on the Haitian side than on the Dominican side when asked in the survey to describe their associations with the Dominican Republic and Dominicans: “They’ve done me a lot of harm”, “they’re

criminals, they're not people", "they always think that they're superior to us", "Dominicans have more evil in them than Haitians", "I respect their nation, but they harm us way too much", "a racist nation, they look at us like we were dogs". The perceptions of conflict are very clearly present, and the Haitians express as much racism as the Dominicans. As I explained in Chapter four, I found no significantly fewer racist remarks from the Dominicans in the Haitian survey than the other way around. The Dominicans are described as liars, inconsiderate thieves, perpetrators of evil, and they are different and incompatible for all sorts of reasons, including "because they are white". This part of the Haitian discourse is in some sense like a reversed *trujillista* perspective, even though I will add that there is a context behind these utterances that is important to bear in mind: there is a history of anti-Haitian policies, abuses, and conflict that is directed towards the Haitians. The Haitians' negative descriptions of the Dominicans are frequently accompanied by modifications on how the Dominicans will never see the Haitians as their equal.

When asked specifically about the differences between the two countries, a Haitian survey respondent simply stated that "everything is different". Others were slightly more specific, with references to skin color, religion, nationality, and language.

The Haitians in my survey and interviews fear the Dominicans more than the Dominicans fear the Haitians. Trust is a mutual matter, as is also *lack of trust*. The traditional conflict-based discourse on the Dominican-Haitian relations is practically devoid of trust. I would argue that the traditional *balaguerista* discourse on the Haitians indirectly discouraged trust, which makes lack of trust an interesting factor in my analysis. Low levels of trust are suggestive of a presence of the conflict-based discourse. A sign of this kind of incompatibility in a relationship is mutual fear. Fear grows when trust is slim or non-existent. I view fear as a function of a low level of trust. Both Dominicans and Haitians view the other as more criminal than themselves, which also combines well with the trust issues. Only 25% of the Dominicans feel that a Haitian can be trusted like a Dominican. The corresponding number for Haiti is similar: a Dominican cannot be trusted like a Haitian. However, this is not necessarily a race issue because 88% of the Dominicans and 63% of the Haitians do not feel that race is an indicator of whether you can trust someone.

We have seen that both Dominican and Haitian youths have a real fear of violence. This is worrisome as it cannot be treated only in the light of the binational relations. The statistics for 2012, given in the 2018 report *Atlas de la violencia en América Latina*, show us that the Dominican border is plagued by violence, but so is the rest of the region and the nation. The Dominican Republic is divided into 32 provinces, five of which border Haiti. Following the Dominican side of the border, from North to South, there is Monte Cristi with a homicide rate of 24.6/100 000, then “my” provinces of Dajabón (17.2/100 000), Elias Piña (20.6/100 000), Independencia (30.4/100 000) and Pedernales (15.8/100 000).

Bahoruco, a neighboring province of Independencia, has an even higher (and the highest national) rate at 34.1 (Solís Delgadillo & Moriconi Bezerra, 2018, p. 249). To put these numbers into context, we can look at the corresponding figures for the Americas and Europe, for comparison. The homicide rate in the Americas for 2017 was 17.2/100 000, while Europe had a homicide rate of three murders per 100 000 inhabitants for the same year (UNODC, 2019). The borderland does indeed have alarming numbers, but they are not exceptional, not in a Dominican context nor in a regional context, with the exception of the high numbers from the Independencia province (Jimaní). Pedernales is the least affected border province, with a homicide rate of 15.8, yet this is more than five times the European average and close to the regional average of 17.2. The Dominican and Haitian fear of falling prey to violence is therefore not something that should be treated solely in the light of Dominican-Haitian relations. The fear of violence is therefore also a widespread feature of life in the region, not only in the borderland.

### Peaceful interactions

One key finding that separates the rayano discourse from the conflict discourse is the relative ease with which a large portion of the transnational everyday interactions is carried out in the borderland, and the extent of the contact between the inhabitants of both nations. This is something that distinguishes the borderland and makes it special and noteworthy. The traditional conflict-based narratives do not open for such a complexity, nor do they include the humanity of the people in the borderland. It takes little effort to discover traces of conflict, fear, and lack of understanding, but when I

interviewed and spoke to people in the borderland, including my respondents, I was surprised – due to my own prejudices, perhaps – by the level of transnational contact that existed parallel to the discourse of conflict. This contact went beyond the market-day semi-compulsory co-existence. Parts of the explanation could be found in this statement, by journalist Baez in an interview with me, on May 7, 2013, in his home in Pedernales: “The relations between us and Haiti are good, but the authorities do not cooperate.”

An important part of the analysis of the rayano discourse is not only what is being said in it, but also what is not being said. For one, the rayano citizens are not in favor of a border wall, neither literally nor figuratively. They are concerned about the future, they identify the need for an improvement in binational relations, but they do not seem to suggest that the best way forward is isolation or mutual exclusion of the other. The rayano youths express a desire to improve relations and life in the borderland, and this improvement is not something they envision one side needs to fix, but rather that a joint effort is the path towards improvement. My material shows that there is a part of the rayano discourse that embodies opportunities for a change in discourse, and therefore also potentially a change in the living conditions in the borderland and on the island.

#### [The Dominican rayano fear of Haiti is not purely Dominican](#)

At this point, I want to make a slight detour back in time because another trait of the rayano discourse is that references to Haiti’s alleged imperialist ambitions are found repeatedly in my survey. These are young contemporary Dominicans who express their fear that the Haitians want to take over the island or in some way invade the Dominican territory. This fear of Haiti is a result of Trujillo and following regimes’ demonizing of anything Haitian. Trujillo’s rejection of Haiti was additionally fueled by American anti-haitianism, as has been commented on in Chapter three. Therefore, we should not over-emphasize Dominican exceptionalism in the country’s troubled relations with Haiti. There is a connection between my survey respondents’ fear of a Haitian “pacific invasion” and the aftermaths of the Haitian revolution, and thus the birth of Haiti as a nation and the starting point for the *perceptions* of the Haitian nation, both worldwide and in the borderland of today. J. Michael Dash wrote about Haitian exceptionalism in 2008, challenging what he labels a myth about Haiti being beyond comparison and logic. He quotes the Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, who claimed that “Haiti is



not that weird. It is the fiction of Haitian exceptionalism that is weird” (Trouillot, quoted in Dash, 2008, p. 32), and made the connection between the creation of a black state and the rejection of anything Haitian: “The fact that Haiti was not meant to fit any paradigm or model is a myth that goes back to nineteenth-century Eurocentrism, which saw the creation of a modern black state as an aberration” (Dash, 2008, p. 32). The Dominican rejection of Haiti is therefore not only about Dominican exceptionalism but about colonial racial hierarchies and world views that have no understanding or sympathy for the Haitian revolution. It is important to acknowledge this observation: the rejection of Haiti is not (just) a Dominican feature. It is also a trait of a wider racist historical and geopolitical context. This also allows for the transnational parts of the rayano discourse to become a bridge to a wider recognition of Haiti as a nation, with all its complexities and humanity, beyond the simplistic “failed state” exceptionalisms.

#### Lack of symmetry, reflected in the rayano discourse

There are important differences between the two sets of youths, for example, the Haitian youths frequently experience abuse at the border, while the Dominican youths almost never experiences this. The Haitians are more skeptical of the opportunities of an improvement in the relations. The Dominicans are less fearful of the Haitians than the other way around. The Haitians’ fear of the Dominicans and what may happen to them when entering the Dominican Republic is notably higher in the survey, but is also quite high within the focus groups. The Dominicans are above all worried about losing their culture or way of life. This is another kind of fear than the Haitians’ fear. There are clear indications that the Haitian youth view themselves as more exposed to violence and abuse than the Dominicans, and that their concerns are clearly substantiated. This asymmetric relation reflects the economic power balance between the two nations. And the youths live these experiences every day, telling them that they are indeed unequal.

To briefly recap, some youths on both sides of the Dominican-Haitian border fear the other, show great dislike of the other, claim the two peoples are incompatible, are mutually racist towards the other, and are notably pessimistic when it comes to hope for improvement in the binational relations and in the relations between individuals from each nation. The youths of the borderland show all the complexity of the Dominican-Haitian relations, but they add to the mix the relative ease of frequent contact and

everyday friendships. This everyday *non-polarized* greyness, that also exists could be a fruitful way to follow to try to make progress in the years ahead, but if this is to happen, the youth and their perceptions and their opinions must be included, respected, and understood.

### ***The rayano discourse as an antidote to the discourse of anti-haitianism***

In this section, I will discuss the competing discourses within the rayano discourse; the discourse that counteracts the conflict-based discourse. The aim here is to show the potential within the rayano discourse to counteract the anti-Haitian discourses and the conflict-based discourses in general.

An example from the transnational part of my survey findings was that the Haitians and Dominicans in my surveys wanted to visit the other nation. If the conflict-based understanding of binational relationships were monolithic, this would not be an actuality. If they all hated each other, if the fear of Haitian Vodou or Dominican violence was all-encompassing, if the youths saw each other as totally incompatible, this outcome would be less than likely. This is an example of the rayano discourse serving as a possible antidote by being a perception that counters the anti-Haitian and conflict-based narratives.

Lorgia García-Peña has written about the context and history behind the idea of a *rayano consciousness* – a mindset and perspectives that are indigenous to the borderland – and explains the idea that the everyday realities and actions may serve as an antidote to the discourse of anti-haitianism in the Dominican Republic (García-Peña, 2016). While these experiences and perspectives are generally silenced or ignored, they are an important part of what makes the Dominican-Haitian borderland different from the rest of their respective nations. The Dominicans and Haitians in these territories are somewhat closer to one another compared to their countrymen in other parts of their countries (García-Peña, 2016). This is part of what makes the borderland so interesting for this kind of research. Does this proximity offer any openings in the discourse when it comes to the way the Dominicans and the Haitians perceive each other?

While I can identify this rayano consciousness among my respondents, and while they clearly distinguish themselves in some respects from the rest of their respective nations, my respondents are also very much aware of what side of the border they belong to. They are Dominicans or they are Haitians, and the two are not the same nor to be confused with one another. This is to say, that when I examine transnational perspectives and the rayano discourse, I am analyzing them as an additional part of the identity of my survey and focus-groups informants. They are rayano-Haitians and rayano-Dominicans, or perhaps the other way around, for some: Haitian-rayano and Dominican-rayano. The rayano perspectives or discourse comprise shared life experiences: friendship, music, binational markets, collective reforestation, and much more. This is not something new, but rather something that has been hidden for a long time.

I previously (Chapter three) addressed what Silvio Torres-Saillant labelled the *need for a reeducation* with respect to Dominican-Haitian relations (Torres-Saillant, 2004, p. 226). This is highly relevant to the Dominican and Haitian *rayano* youths' discourse on one another. Torres-Saillant talks about the multiform, hybrid, and porous "we" that has been hidden since Trujillo, but that had always been there. Highlighting the *rayano* discourses is therefore not really a matter of finding something new as it is about reclaiming what has been forgotten and repressed; a counterweight to the stringent homogenous definitions of what is and is not Dominican (Torres-Saillant, 2004, p. 227).

I also wrote about Sonia Marmalejo in the section on rayano consciousness in Chapter three, the Dominican woman who became famous after nursing 12 Haitian babies in a Dominican hospital after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. What the answers from my survey and my interviews taught me about the aftermath of the earthquake and the two nations' willingness to help each other is that they will indeed answer the call when the other is in need. That is what the surveyed and interviewed youths have experienced in the borderland and what they believe to be the right thing to do. They are also mainly in agreement on both sides of the border that the mutual desire to help each other is something that benefits both nations and peoples. Lorgia García-Peña describes Marmalejo's actions as an example of how "...dominant structures can always be contested through performances of everyday life that often contradict official discourses

of the state” (García-Peña, 2016, p. 132). Everyday life can be turned into a weapon against the powerful official discourse. My findings from the rayano youths’ discourse are an example of perceptions on everyday life, and how they, while complying with the official state discourses, they are also defying and contradicting them.

In accordance with theoretical framings of the island as a whole – the transnational and the rayano perspectives –an important part of the answers in the survey and in the interviews can be categorized as being neutral or positive towards the other where other ways of understanding the island as something other than the traditional dichotomies are expressed. For instance, “a Haitian is a person from Haiti”, “our neighbors”, “a person of another race, but similar to us”, “hard workers”. They are aware of the news from the other side, both through news media in their homeland, but also because they hear about it from Haitians and Dominicans, respectively, which is indicative of direct contact and communication. One in four of the Dominicans and one in five of the Haitians surveyed lived in mixed neighborhoods, which is to say that there is co-existence on both sides of the border, and not only on the Dominican side. One Haitian respondent spoke about how nowadays Dominicans would come to Haiti “to go to the disco and go back again without any problems”, which is also an attitude that could serve as an antidote to the discourse of incompatibilities and conflict. Both Haitians and Dominicans frequently spoke of the other as “our brothers”, in different ways, some even describing the island as one family. They are “nice people”, as one Dominican survey respondent quite simply wrote about the Haitians. They mutually recognize each other’s rights and need for a peaceful coexistence that they do not find today, they respect each other as nations and as individuals, they have friends from the other side, they listen to each other’s music on the radio, and they want to visit the other side of the border more frequently than what has been possible in the past, and – more importantly – they emphasize the shared history, as opposed to what separates the two nations.

A significant finding here is that these kinds of utterances are just as normal as the hateful and conflictive ones. Awareness of this is a part of the re-education that Torres-Saillant spoke about, and it is part of the antidote that García-Peña foresees.

Another factor in the relations on the island and the perceptions of “the other” on either side of the border is the visible presence of Dominicans inside Haiti and of Haitians inside the Dominican Republic. The Haitian migrant used to be invisible to most Dominicans, but this changed in the nineties when Haitian migrants started working inside the cities and the populated areas to a larger extent than before. In their extensive survey on what they labelled the new Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic, published in 2004, FLACSO concluded that this visible presence was one of the significant new factors that had to be taken into account (FLACSO, 2004, p. 12). What this means here is that as Haitians became a much more discernable figure inside the Dominican Republic 25 – 30 years they can be considered to be a common sight to the youths that I have interviewed and surveyed. Yet, if I were to interview their parents, they might view the Haitians as a far less common sight in the Dominican cities and towns. This change was commented on by one of the Dominican focus-group informants who had also perceived this change in visible presence, but added that whenever his family saw a Haitian, they would associate him or her with something negative: “My family commented that they were not used to seeing many Haitians around, and that when they saw them coming, they related this to things that were not positive, if you get my drift.”

For Haitians living far from the border, Dominicans in Haiti are a rare sight. According to anthropologist Gerald Murray, “most Haitians may never see a Dominican. Because of the Haitian presence in the Dominican Republic, however, virtually every Dominican sees Haitians, usually engaged in lower status economic activities” (Murray, 2010a). This is another possible opening in the life experiences of the borderland compared to the rest of Haiti. The survey indicates that the Haitian youths of the borderland have Dominican friends, one out of five on the Haitian side live in neighborhoods where Dominicans also live. This means that the visible presence of Dominicans in the borderlands is more common than in the rest of Haiti. The rayano perspectives and life experiences therefore open for more direct contact between Dominicans and Haitians than in the rest of the two nations.

The rayano youths also see eye-to-eye on several societal matters and on the cross-border political climate, such as believing that the binational relations urgently need to

be improved. Both the youths interviewed, and the respondents in my survey concur that a change in the relationship between the two nations is necessary. Neither group perceives the other *nation* to be a relevant threat to their own nation's wellbeing, the main threats are mainly domestic.

Even though the youths do not see the other nation as one of their most important threats, only 2% of the Dominicans and 4% of the Haitians reply that there are no problems to solve between the two nations. This confirms the perception of a troubled relationship, but it also reminds us that binational conflict is not the main priority when it comes to the borderland youths' concerns. This opens for something even more promising, as echoed in the words of Pedernales journalist Odalís Baez and cited in Chapter three: there really are no mayor problems between the borderland inhabitants. The problems have been created by and between the two nations' authorities, according to him. The youths point out quite frequently that there are problems to be solved and that relations must be improved. It seems they agree with the journalist in the sense that 84% of the Dominicans and 80% of the Haitians replied that both nations' governments need to solve their binational problems. They cannot be solved by the youths, churches or the international community, for example.

Another aspect where the rayanos set themselves apart and represent a possible antidote to the conflict perspective is through the amount of shared life experiences and mutual dependency on each other, even though the Dominican Republic is far better off on the macro level. The rayano youth view each other to a large extent as people who benefit from each other's existence, they see mutual advantages in progressing together and they want an improvement in the binational relations, not because they want to help Haiti or the Haitians but rather because they are all affected by the dysfunctional relations at the border. Both sides' respondents consider the animosities of the past to be morally wrong ("because we are brothers") and economically wrong ("because we have business together"). Another argument is that the relations must improve "so that there can be peace" between the two nations. While this identifies conflict between them, it also suggests that the youths are looking for something else, an improvement that will enhance business relations and open for brotherhood in the borderland without the present-day conflicts. They also share life experiences, such as poverty,

migration, the desire to live somewhere else in the future and the desire to improve relations between the two nations.

The antidote that the youths of the borderland represent is important for several reasons. For example, the general media coverage of Dominican-Haitian relations tends to reproduce the official discourse more often than not, but grassroots changes in the discourse, may also help to challenge the narratives of the national media, according to a media survey conducted by the Dominican Jesuit NGO, *Centró Bonó*. This survey, conducted a year before my fieldwork, found that while Dominican-Haitian relations were frequently a topic in their media sample, most of the articles were not signed nor identified as coming from news agencies (58% of the articles in *Centro Bonó's* sample). The report points to the apparent failure to use several sources, and the lack of investigative journalism when reporting on Dominican-Haitian relations. The report also states that 65% of the articles in question are simply a “reproduction of the official discourse” (*Monitoreo de Medios Digitales*, 2012). The rayano discourse has the potential to serve as a counterweight to this kind of biased general media coverage as it includes perspectives that are omitted from the traditional official discourse.

#### The young rayanos, compared to the adults from Dajabón

Another interesting finding refers to the discrepancies and similarities that similar research on rayano citizens, albeit adult rayano citizens in Dajabón, has uncovered. In 2010, the Dominican researcher working with FLACSO<sup>66</sup>, Sobeida de Jesús Cedano, published an article on the perceptions of the Haitians in Dajabón, the main town on the Dominican side of the border (Cedano, 2010). Her research focused on Dajabón and exclusively on the Dominican side of the border, but nevertheless, she provides some valid points of reference for this research. Cedano found that the *dajaboneros* – the inhabitants of Dajabón – viewed the Haitians through a “utilitarian lens” in the sense that they accept their presence, given the mutual independence between themselves and the Haitians, but they do not appreciate any contact beyond what is dictated through the economic transactions. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the youths on both sides do not share this sentiment as they confirmed having friends from the other side and

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<sup>66</sup> FLACSO is the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales*, is an international agency, a research institution, with offices in 13 Latin American countries, as well as in Spain. <http://flacso.org.do>

expressed joy and positivity over the concept of getting together, while also admitting to fear, abuses, and asymmetric relations.

Her study finds some openings among the younger population, perhaps leading towards a faint optimism for the future of the borderland. Cedano also addresses the “schizophrenic relations” (Cedano, 2010; Dilla Alfonso, 2011) between the two nations, exemplified by the Dominican understanding of the binational market. On the one hand, the *Dajaboneros* buy products at the market, and more than half of the surveyed informants declared that they have income from the market. Her respondents also felt that Dajabón would be worse off if the Haitians were not selling their products at the market. Furthermore, they associated the market with the benefits that it produces for Dajabón, and most of the respondents stated that a potential closing of the market would be catastrophic for the town. However, most of Cedano’s respondents saw the binational market as a type of humanitarian aid provided by the Dominicans to the benefit of the Haitians. This is an example of where my findings digress markedly from Cedano’s, in that most of my respondents, both within the focus groups and the surveys, agreed that the binational markets were mutually beneficial: in fact, 94% of the surveyed Dominican youth and 76% of the surveyed Haitian youth.

Cedano concludes – and I concur – that her findings reveal and describe the complex nature of the reality both in the borderland as well as in Dominican-Haitian relations. They should not be reduced to simple dichotomies, as for example solidarity versus confrontation, which should both be considered fixed positions rather than actual descriptions of the relations. The *Dajaboneros* are pragmatic in their approach to the Haitians and consider them essential to life and society in Dajabón. At the same time, they most certainly view them as “the other”, as strangers and as undesirables. Cedano points to the extreme economic disparities between the Haitians and Dominicans. This again leads to the subordination of the Haitian to the Dominican, both in a material as well as ideological sense (Cedano, 2010). All of this is found in my material as well. Cedano additionally found the Dominicans to be accepting towards sharing public resources, such as hospitals and education. Her respondents denounced the injustices and unfair treatment of Haitians, most of her respondents would defend a Haitian in a situation of conflict (yet 37% said that they would not). More than 50% stated that the



Haitians are hard workers, yet 84% would not start a business with a Haitian. The *dajaboneros* are against Haitians being allowed to reside on Dominican soil, and that they should not be permitted to own land or houses in Dajabón. Cedano's respondents also expressed that Haitians should have no rights in the Dominican Republic at all (34%), and that they have a negative impact on crime (71%). My Dominican respondents agree with Cedano when it comes to Haitians replacing the Dominican workforce (48% "yes", 28% "no"), while the Haitians do not agree (42% "no" and 12% "yes"). With respect to crime levels, my Dominican respondents mostly do not know if Haitians commit more crime than Dominicans (56%), but 35% say yes on this point. Bearing this in mind, we could argue that my Dominican respondents provide some support to the claim that Haitians introduce more crime due to the 35% affirmative replies. However, the Haitians feel the same, only stronger, about the Dominicans. About 50% of my surveyed Haitians claim that Dominicans commit more crimes than Haitians. This again points out that the rayano youth are accepting of each other in some ways, while simultaneously rejecting each other due to perceived characteristics of the other. Cedano's respondents in Dajabón also expressed that organizations working to promote Haitians' rights in the Dominican Republic have a goal of unifying the two nations. This is a perfect example of classic anti-Haitian discourse, embedded within the rayano discourse. It is present in my survey as well. Interestingly, the youths on both sides see more or less eye to eye on the issue of the alleged unification of the island:<sup>67</sup> some agreed that Haiti wants to unify the island (DR: 30% and H: 23%), others agreed that international organizations want to unify the island (DR: 24% and H: 31%), slightly fewer thought that the Dominican Republic wants to unify the island (DR: 18% and H: 17%), while more than a quarter of the respondents on either side reject the idea of a planned unification (DR: 28% and H: 29%).

The traditional anti-Haitian discourse is assimilated in Cedano's and my own findings. My surveyed youths agree to the limitations and problematic aspects of Dominican-Haitian relations, but they go much further in addressing opportunities for a change in discourse. Cedano's research shows that the *dajaboneros* could never themselves use Vodou as assistance in financial or familial matters. They also do not associate the

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<sup>67</sup> The total percentage exceeded 100% on this question because the respondents could choose as many options as they saw relevant.

Haitians directly with witchcraft, and none of the respondents identified the Haitians directly with satanic practices. This is an interesting difference from my own material, in which I found repeated references to the “magical Haitian”, black magic, evil and the like. A second difference is that while this feature within the Dominican discourse on Haitians is far more present in my material than in Cedano’s, it also appears that my respondents can easily ignore this fear. And this is what leads us to the final section, on opportunities for changes in discourse. My material suggests that the rayano discourse indeed opens for opportunities to challenge the traditional conflict-based discourse, and some of this is in the rayano discourse itself and the resistance and counterweight that it represents through the transnational perspectives, the experiences of shared lives in the borderland, the relative ease with which a major portion of my respondents perceive the other and the binational relations. In the final section, I will continue to look for opportunities for changes in discourse, as found within the rayano discourse, as I will comment on how the focus-group youths talked about what it would take to change mentalities and open for the improved binational relations that the survey revealed most of them crave.

### ***Opportunities for changes in discourse within the rayano discourse***

The first of these three final sections describe the rayano discourse as complex and multipolar, the second explores the rayano discourse as an antidote to the anti-Haitian discourse, and in the third I will discuss how the youths in the focus groups believe and suggest that changes in relations and in discourse towards a more inclusive understanding the Dominican-Haitian relations are possible, and how they suggest this could be done. It must be remembered that I am studying how the young people talk about this – as shown in Chapter two – because “language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and the long term. Language provides a finely articulated vehicle for differences in power in hierarchical social structures” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

### ***The teachings of the Nobel Project: a cautious, conditional optimism***

The focus-group youths had something that distinguished them from the survey respondents: they had participated in the Nobel Project, meaning that they had been a part of a network of collaborating schools on both sides of the border. This included several joint activities organized by the schools and the Nobel Project. I will repeat the four main intended outcomes of the Nobel Project, as defined by the Dominican partner, the Servicio Social de las Iglesias Dominicanas (2011):

- The promotion of peace through a process of reflection and finding similarities between educators and students, Dominican and Haitian.
- A contribution to the establishment of a cultural exchange program between Dominicans and Haitians, emphasizing their participation in community festivals.
- The promotion of a climate of mutual respect and solidarity through participation in sporting events.
- The creation of a public opinion that is more tolerant and respectful throughout the island by promoting peace and tolerance between the nations.

If we summarize these four intended outcomes as a set of teachings from the Nobel Project, these could be 1) mutual respect and solidarity may be achieved through a search for similarities, 2) a situation where peace and tolerance between the inhabitants and nations is the norm is something achievable, and 3) this will not happen on its own (there must be, for instance, organized shared binational community festivals, sporting events, school collaborations or similar activities).

While the teachings are indeed possible to identify in the focus groups (Nobel-Project participants) and in the surveys (overwhelmingly non-participants), I will start by addressing why I see the Nobel Project as an opportunity lost.

The Nobel Project was an opportunity lost for the rayano youths of the borderland and for the two nations. While the project showed signs of potential impact, we will never know what could have happened as it was cancelled. First, it was an opportunity lost because it ended too soon. Changing attitudes takes time, especially when negative perceptions of the other are dominant. It appears that people tend to attribute more value to negative experiences than positive ones when interacting with the other (Barlow et al., 2013). We are also more aware of the other person's "group membership" if we experience a negative encounter with the other (Rubin, 2014). This makes changes in perceptions and in discourse a complicated and difficult task, but nevertheless, it remains a possibility. The Nobel Project would most likely have needed much more time than the four years it was given for us to see any real impact. Second, the Nobel Project was also an opportunity lost because it did not properly address the lack of symmetry within Dominican-Haitian relations. The project was unable to overcome or even negotiate this lack of symmetry in the borderland on the leadership level. By "leadership level", I am referring to the adults involved in the project, the teachers I spoke to on both sides in 2011 and 2013, the borderlands school directors, and the project facilitators. Even though the Dominican project partners unanimously celebrated the symmetry and "we-are-all-equal" attitudes within the Nobel Project structure, the Haitians almost unanimously rejected this notion of equality. The leaders and organizers on the Haitian side repeatedly and independently of one another claimed there was a perceived Dominican dominance. Moreover, one significant Haitian stakeholder in the project told me that "the Nobel Project was a Dominican led failure".

Despite what may be called the shortcomings or incomplete outcomes of the project, the perceptions of the focus-group participants are of interest. I found a cautious and conditional optimism among the Haitians and Dominicans and possibly some keys for improvements in the binational relations (which I will comment on in the following three sections). They had experienced more organized contact with the other than what is common in the borderland. While contact alone is not in itself enough to spark a

positive change in relations, my focus groups showed interesting and contrasting views to those of the surveyed youth in that they were far more positive towards the other than what I found in the surveys. This positivity towards the other is a necessity for intercultural understanding to be achieved (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 470). The focus groups thus represent an important and significant part of what could be labelled a change in discourse, compared to the traditional discourse, and they are therefore also in theoretical alignment with Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis as possible *agents of change* in the relations (Fairclough, 2015; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999). Direct peer-to-peer contact is an interesting approach to improving Dominican-Haitian relations, as it has the potential to challenge the anti-Haitian and conflict-based discourse and teachings (García-Peña, 2016; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

### Three conditions for improving the binational relations

I identified three necessary conditions for improving the binational relations, as suggested by the participants in the focus-group interviews, conditions that implicitly demand a moving away from the conflict-based discourses, and an approach to a transnational understanding of the island:

- Relearning what they had been taught about each other in school and at home.
- More frequent meetings between youths from both sides.
- The Dominicans need to stop feeling superior to Haitians.

#### *1: Relearning what they have learned about each other*

On the first point of relearning what they had been taught in schools and at home, both Haitians and Dominicans agreed that this point is an absolute necessity in remodeling the Dominican-Haitian relations into something better. They are thus echoing the words and ideas of Silvio Torres-Saillant, who has advocated the need for a reeducation of the people (Torres-Saillant, 2004, p. 226). The Dominicans especially felt that they had been taught to see the Haitians in a particular and negative way, as seen in earlier sections and chapters. The Haitian focus groups made similar claims, but they were also concerned about whether the Dominicans would be able to change. Their hope was that a new way of seeing each other could create better relations and a better future, and, as of one the Dominicans put it : "The adults already have their minds made up, but we

young people can condition our minds so that in the future there will be less trouble.” They are hopeful, but they do not see being young as something that automatically gives them more openness or willingness to change. They needed to meet Haitians and the Haitians needed to spend time with Dominicans. And then, maybe, things could change for the better, as another Dominican stated:

This (getting together across the border) should be done more often, because just like I changed my ways of seeing Haiti and got to know new things, other kids can do and learn the same, and maybe in 20 years the situation will have changed.

Some of this relearning comes through experience, by encountering someone or something that made the participants rethink what they thought they knew. All the focus groups had one or more informants who expressed being pleasantly surprised by how well they had been received, and how well they had been treated. Even the youths who have a strong set of prejudices sense this, and those who had visited Haiti had seen the need to revisit their beliefs about what Haiti and the Haitians were. They concluded that a significant part of their previous ideas had been wrong and based on false or misleading information. In other words, the focus-group participants do not feel that what they encountered when visiting Haiti matched the images they had created in their minds since childhood. The general perception among the focus-group participants on the Dominican side is that these ideas about the other – the Haitian – have been forced on them, and that this is something that affects their lives and their co-existence with the Haitians. They see that someone else’s discourse has been shaping their reality, without using those terms or concepts, of course. They identify a need to change these misleading concepts of the other if the relations between the nations are to be improved.

According to the survey, the borderland schools may be a reasonable starting ground for binational projects of this nature. Seventy-five per cent of the surveyed Haitians said that their teachers had talked positively about the Dominican Republic in class, and only 23% answered that teachers had spoken in a derogatory manner about the Dominican Republic. The statistics for the Dominican Republic on this point are practically identical. This means that both the Haitian and Dominican survey respondents took positive impressions from school with them, as far as they reported to me. The focus groups add to this idea of needing to relearn history when it comes to what the Haitian is like:

“People still tell you that the Haitians are no good, and it is not right to insist that young Dominicans accept this (that the Haitians are no good), they should get to know that things are not like that.” In order to achieve “a fair deal” with Haiti, it is necessary to “change the mindset” of young people, one Dominican focus-group informant argued, also including without question what they are taught in school:

I would say that talking about History in (another way), when we talk about History, we make the Haitian the bad guy, and what you hear about them, that they ate the French, they ate them in pieces, and I would go “What?”, if (history) has two versions, let’s consider ourselves, let’s be objective. Usually, how history was taught, those little things stayed with us, and I say that you have to teach history from another perspective, so that a growing child says, look, this happened as a result of this, and not just to blame them.

History, according to this respondent, must be told differently to avoid simplistic generalizations that aim to make the Haitian the enemy. They want to hear less about the barbaric Haitian and more about *how* things came about. They would also like – as is the case with most young people – to be given the opportunity to form their own ideas of the world they live in. One of the focus-group informants insisted that young people should be the ones teaching the adults, they should be the teachers “because the adults have their minds made up. It’s the young people who have to train them, to condition their minds so that in the future they will have fewer problems”. These young people definitely see the possibility to achieve something qualitatively better, but getting there requires a different way of teaching what a Haitian and Haiti is.

According to my analysis of the focus-group interviews as well as the surveys, there was no direct blaming of the Dominican or Haitian school systems, even though they refer to “teaching”. I interpret this to be a more general use of the concept of teaching, in the way that we are taught from our surroundings, not only our teachers, about how the world is put together, who is good and who is bad, and about who we are and are not. Teachers and educators know that learning is not only a curricular activity. Learning is more like a perpetual process of digesting input, creating output, and going through this again and again. The input comes from any number of sources. Friends and family, for example, and what one is told or overhears from strangers or acquaintances, and through social media, and traditional media. Our learning is not exclusively conditioned by our formal

education. This is what makes the social, economic, and historical context such an important factor in a study like this. And therefore – as has been stated in Chapter two – understanding the contexts in which these utterances have been produced is of major importance. If the schools are not solely responsible for the learning of fear of the other, then perhaps they are not suited to having the responsibility for the *unlearning* of that hatred and fear. Change perhaps needs to be found outside of the schoolyard, and in everyday contact, “hanging out”, playing basketball and baseball, and just being awkward teenagers together.

#### *2: More frequent meetings between the youths from both sides*

The second condition for improving the binational relations is about creating more opportunities for Dominicans and Haitians to just “hang out”. Seeing each other and hanging out together are of course two very different things. The recent history of the last few decades in the borderland have led to an increase in the *visibility* of Haitians on Dominican soil, as I explained in Chapter three, but that does not automatically lead to more direct contact between individuals from either side. The focus groups diverged from the survey respondents on issues of contact. The surveyed youths claimed to have friends and more frequent contact, but the focus groups did not express the same. These groups addressed a need for more frequent direct contact to convert the attitudes towards each other into something more productive. The everyday contact already existing due to the porous border, the steady flow of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic, and the binational markets, is not the same as meeting people as equals, they argue. One Haitian respondent reported that the Nobel Project “was the first time I was in direct contact with Dominicans”, and another said that “visiting them changed something in me, I felt that they would not play with me, but they did.” And it was unique, also in the sense that – according to a Haitian focus-group informant, “It was the only good experience with Dominicans that I have had on the Dominican side of the border.”

Direct contact between the people on both sides of the border may give hope for positive progression on the island, and preferably also for the young people, as they believe themselves to have a more open mind than the adults. “Going there changed something in me”, was a topic in all the Haitian and Dominican focus groups, and in one Dominican



focus group they added that “normally, we don’t get together much.” This was a perception that was shared by all the focus groups. As one Haitian interviewee pointed out: “We live right at the border, but when we go there, we go to buy, not to have a dialogue with the Dominicans”. So, even if they see each other a great deal and live close to one another, they may not always share activities and get to know each other. A Dominican commented on his or her first trip across the border:

Well, amazing, because it was the first time, we all met, we went to Haiti for the first time, then we were surprised to get to know that country, we were neighbors, but we had never been there.

A Haitian interviewee also felt that the borderland should not be the only target of a project like this: “We did this so that there can be peace. There is peace now, but we would like it to grow. I would like all our society to do the same kind of activities (with the Dominicans) as we did.”

They all expressed in some way this longing for more projects like this, or more precisely, for more opportunities to get together. The Haitians saw a value in the Dominicans learning to observe that there are many good things to see and experience in Haiti: “This should be done more often. They should be able to come here more often, as well. To learn that it’s okay here as well.” The Dominican youths’ longing for more contact, should not be confused with an approval of the idea of a union of the two nations, at least that is not what my focus groups and the survey respondents conveyed. Quite to the contrary, the main argument is about reducing the borders of the mind, more so than the actual border of the island, as this respondent debated:

we have linked up a lot, but not integrated, (...) I very, very agree that (both nations are) respected and that we can have a (fair deal) with Haiti, which I consider a brother country, but not unify, I want to keep my nationality and my belief and my culture and I respect theirs, I imagine that they feel the same about that.

This is a common state of mind. There is no yearning for a union of the two nations among my respondents and focus-groups informants. When it comes to the question of

unification of the island, it is clear from my interviews on both sides of the border that the youths of the borderland will respond in this way:

More unity between the two nations? Yes.

Unification of the two nations? No.

The youths from both sides agree that they must integrate more, not just observe each other because the Dominican youth of the borderland already see Haitians as a natural part of their surroundings, and vice versa: “We see Haitians all the time, and we deal with each other” as several stated, as well as this one participant, who described the everyday aspect of the relations with the Haitians: “They’re part of our everyday life, they’re part of how we grow up, because we’re born with this, we see them every day, and, for instance, I always buy handicrafts over there”. The focus-group interviewees showed examples of the same kinds of change in discourse and life experiences as the survey respondents. This is why I suggested that this could be an example of *change in discourse through co-existence*, in the sense that there is a part of the interviewed youth that they share with each other on a regular basis. But most of them do not do this. The next step, the focus groups say, is to move beyond just seeing each other, to being in contact, a point on which all the focus groups agreed.

### *3: The Dominicans need to stop feeling superior to the Haitians*

The first condition to improve relations, according to the focus-group informants, is the need to relearn the history of the island and of the binational relations. The second condition is about creating opportunities for direct contact between the youths of both nations, and the third necessary condition for the binational relations to improve is the demand – from both sides – that the Dominicans need to stop feeling superior to the Haitians.

For things to improve, the Dominicans must stop feeling superior to us, but they’ll never do that. We’ll probably never get closer to one another. (But) the project was important, it made me feel good with the Dominicans.

The Haitian respondent quoted above is not too optimistic, but at the same time talks about having had a good time with the Dominicans. This indicates an *opportunity* for change, however slight, and the informant is clear as to what needs to be done from the

Dominican side for relations to be better than they currently are. The same perception is visible in the Haitian survey, where similar phrases are heard about what the Haitians associate with Dominicans (“someone who thinks themselves superior to us”) as to why there is a need for improved relations, and why they fear Dominicans. The focus groups on the Dominican side also comment on this, and it was an integrated part of the Nobel Project to create awareness of racism and discrimination, something that the participant youths took to heart:

When we meet with the Haitians to talk about things like discrimination and racism, we reduce conflict back home. Some of the conflicts come from ignorance in ourselves – the youths. Sometimes we think that we’re superior because we’re more light-skinned.

Coming together may provoke reflections similar to what they are calling for above, and an example of that is offered by this Dominican respondent, who asked for an opportunity to get to know the Haitians, an opportunity to understand them on their own terms:

I knew some (Haitians) who felt rejected at first and I realized that when we saw ourselves as one, when they received us that way, we danced and talked, they felt more open, we learned new things from them and realized that they are very intelligent, they are very nice, they are warm, (..) It’s a matter of giving us an opportunity, understanding that we can have differences even though we come from the same story, we have different beliefs, we believe in other things, we do things in different ways, but from there to discriminate against them, to treat them as less, I think no, not at all.

Yet, of course, just as in the survey, some did not carry negative perceptions of the other with them from their early development, as this Haitian focus-group informant, who was frustrated that Dominicans had such negative feelings about Haiti said: “I don’t get what the problem is for the Dominicans because I grew up learning that we share an island”. A Dominican respondent shared a similar experience, in that in his household the relations with Haiti had always been good, and that his uncle had married in Haiti and was living there. He said a lot of people from his part of town had Dominican relatives living in Haiti and that this was common to him, which is yet another repudiation by the rayano youth of the conflict-based discourses of times past and of today. These kinds of relation

and cross-border connections were a headache already to Balaguer (1983), but when compared to the conflicts at the border, they are severely under communicated, and therefore important to bring into the light.

As I have stated above, the focus groups share the complexity and the wide range of ideas and discourses seen in the surveys, but they are different in the way that they talk about the other. The focus-group informants showed a cautious optimism regarding the possibilities of an improved future or improved future relations with each other. I say “cautious” optimism because the youth’s optimism was clearly conditional and much more restrained on the Haitian side than on the Dominican side. There is at the very least an opening for a change in discourse towards the other, and this is something that is shared by both Dominicans and Haitians. A focus group on the Dominican side discussed how meeting each other is essential to changing what they had been told in the past: “They highlight the bad that has happened in the relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, while good things are almost never highlighted”. This perspective echoes ideas proposed in books like *Transnational Hispaniola* (Mayes, Jayaram, 2018), *Dividing Hispaniola* (Paulino, 2016) and *On the edge – writing the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic* (Fumagalli 2015). It also – of course – echoes ideas debated by García-Peña (2016) and Torres-Saillant (2004) on the possibilities of reclaiming the rayano consciousness as a valid and crucial understanding of Dominican-Haitian relations.

The focus groups – as well as an important part of the survey respondents – “promote narratives that validate the full humanity of Dominicans and Haitians and that avoid exceptionalism and pat abstractions” (Mayes & Jayaram, 2018, p. 3). This is another kind of change in discourse, through which one avoids the false sense of exceptionalism, typically highlighted by the dichotomies and the conflict-based discourses. One of the Haitian teachers spoke to me, in an additional interview outside of the focus groups, but on the same topics, about how he felt that the Nobel Project represented something very rare in the borderland

It was a marvelous thing to see the youth get together, to travel together, to spend three days together in Santiago de la Cruz. It was interesting to see how the students from both

sides started noticing that blood has only one color. Now there is no more project, and there has never been a project like this. This is not common in the borderland.

And while there was a lot of praise from the youths who had participated, from teachers, organizers, national leaders in Port-au-Prince, Santo Domingo, and Oslo, while everyone spoke very highly of this project, teenagers will still be teenagers, like this young Haitian showed: “I really don’t know why we went there. The school director told us to go, and so we went there.<sup>68</sup>”

There is a potential for change by highlighting discourses that promote co-existence as opposed to conflict, and therefore also being a tool for change. As mentioned above: the borderland youths are more of a living rupture with the trujillista past than they are an echo of that same past. This comes to light through changes in their discourse. There is change in discourse that can be seen in the more easy-going co-existence they have, as shown in Chapter five. There is a change in discourse that can be seen, implicitly, in the youths’ narratives of shared life experiences. There is change in discourse embedded in the rejection of racism. There is change in discourse – implicitly – in avoiding the false sense of exceptionalism. There are opportunities for changes in the discourses, meaning that the ideas on the other are not fixed or permanent (S. Hall, 1997, p. 329). All to the contrary, the discourses are susceptible to change. The youth identified simple acts of community, like meeting each other and spending time together, as efficient means to combat what they considered to have been erroneous teachings about the perils of engaging with the other.

Before concluding this study with one final hope, I will comment on some limitations that I have identified in this thesis, including suggestions for future study.

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<sup>68</sup> The focus-group informants in general showed that they had a clear sense of why they participated in the Nobel Project.



### ***Limitations and suggestions for future study***

There are, of course, several limitations to this study, and I will address some of them in the following. Some of these limitations are due to my own research design, some to unforeseen circumstances and some to my inexperience as a researcher. This reflection on the limitations in my study is connected to my thoughts and suggestions on possible future areas of study, so I will therefore include them here.

I know my way around the Dominican Republic much more than I do around Haiti. This is mainly due to my background, having lived in the Dominican Republic, and having a command of Dominican Spanish. While this was a strength on the Dominican side of the border, it was a clear shortcoming on the other side with my glaring absence of a decent command of Haitian Creole. I tried to compensate for this by using a professional translator, which helped me immensely, but there is no doubt that I would have been able to achieve more had I spoken Haitian Creole. This relates to establishing trust and confidence in an interview setting, understanding first-hand the immediate surroundings you are in as a researcher, and having the ability to access sources, both written and oral. However, perhaps the most important limitation is related to the overall framing of the research. From the beginning, I was more focused on the Dominican context, history, and perspectives. While this is justifiable for many reasons, it is still a limitation of this study. If a similar project like my own had been conducted, but only with Creole speaking researchers on the Haitian side, it would be interesting to see what kind of findings might have been obtained.

The survey was too big, and I partly blame this on my own inexperience as a researcher at that point in time. I was advised to cut down on the number of questions, and – believe it or not – I did precisely that. Even though I can justify the inclusion of every question, as I did in Chapter two, I cannot deny that somewhere around half the number of questions would have been enough. I cannot say what the result of a more focused survey design would have been. It might have brought more information on fewer subjects; it might have allowed the informants to go more in depth in their answers.

My informants were mainly limited to the youths in the Nobel Project schools. While there were reasons for this, which I addressed in Chapter two, there might be other

perspectives in schools that had no previous participation in projects like the Nobel one, or in schools that might have similar programs or Haitian-Dominican joint ventures. Perhaps other kinds of groups could have been identified for a similar research project: youths involved in the markets, slightly older youths, youths employed in borderland businesses, playing on soccer teams, or participating in other associations outside of school, to name some possibilities.

The study involved eight towns. This could be an asset as well as a limitation. Perhaps I would have benefitted from spending more time in fewer towns. I might have been able to uncover more had I spent more time at fewer sites. Personally, I am interested in a follow up study in Pedernales and Anse-à-Pitres due to events in recent years and the number of Haitians, including Dominicans of Haitian descent, who have “self-deported”, or just simply been deported from the Dominican Republic to Anse-à-Pitres following the 168-13 ruling. How – if at all – has this affected Dominican-Haitian relations in those towns? The Dajabón-Ouanaminthe corridor is relatively well covered, but the southern border towns less so. That could be an interesting focus for a future study.

My survey informants and my focus-group informants concurred that an improvement in the binational relations was necessary. The focus-group informants were more positive regarding the possibility of an improvement than the survey informants. A future study explicitly focusing on rayano perspectives as a way of improving binational relations could also be of interest. Bearing this in mind, it might be interesting to start with the idea about relearning or re-educating each other on binational relations. How would such a relearning take shape? What would it take to be successful?

This is also connected to a possible follow up on the Nobel Project itself. What could have been achieved and what steps are needed to create the kind of change they were aiming for? If such a study were to be conducted, I would have focused solely on the rayano experience and perspectives, seeing as I believe that the rayano discourse embodies opportunities for a new way of viewing and living Dominican-Haitian relations, if the positive, inclusive, and mutually accepting parts of the rayano discourse are allowed to grow and spread.



### One final hope

A less obvious motivation for working towards a change in Dominican-Haitian relations is the thought of what could be achieved if the two nations and their citizens had a more peaceful co-existence and therefore could spend less time fighting to improve relations or suffering in different ways from the dysfunctionality of the binational relations. At the time of my fieldwork, in February of 2013, I attended a meeting held in the Dominican National Congress about “resolución 012-07”. The “012”, as it was known, had allowed the Dominican authorities to revoke the citizenship of tens of thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent, and the activists, researchers, and representatives of those affected met with members of the Dominican congress. The people who had lost their citizenship talked about their hardships and the failures to find a solution to their situation. This struggle has been going on for decades now with no solution to this situation up to this point in time. After the meeting, I stood outside of Congress feeling naively hopeful after listening to the inspired and seemingly courageous outbursts from several of the congressmen and -women. This situation was clearly intolerable, they said. Something must be done. This injustice cannot and must not go on, they said. But it did and it does.

Later the same year, nobody spoke up again on “012” because on September 23 the Dominican Constitutional Court passed a sentence in the case versus Juliana Deguis Pierre (see Chapter three, for more on the 168/13 sentence), which accelerated the denationalization processes of Dominicans of Haitian descent. But in February 2013, outside of Congress, this was unknown to us, and I asked my colleague and friend at OBMICA, Dominican researcher Eddy Tejada, how he felt about the day’s session in Congress, and whether he shared my optimism. He answered smilingly that we would probably have to come back to Congress again and again. They had spent so much time talking about the same subject, repeatedly, he said, over so many years. And those affected by the ruling, could still not establish bank accounts, could not get birth certificates for their children, and could not even legally have a cell phone in their name. Before we left Congress that day, Eddy made one final remark: “I wish we could get this over with, already. Imagine all the exciting stuff we could have been doing instead”.

This study is my modest contribution in the hope that my friend Eddy Tejada, and everyone else on the island, at some point will be allowed to do all the “exciting stuff” that they should have been doing instead.

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## **Appendices**

- 1: Permission form: survey
- 2: Survey in Haiti (Haitian Creol)
- 3: Survey in the Dominican Republic
- 4: Project description for sources
- 5: Affiliated researcher confirmation letter - OBMICA

## 1: Permission form: survey

Each school, on both sides of the border, signed the form below. A translated version in Haitian Creol was used in Haiti.



### Confirmación permiso de realizar encuesta

Con lo constante confirmo que el señor Jørgen Sørлие Yri, nacido el 22 de marzo del 1976, empleado de la NTNU (La Universidad Noruega de Ciencias y Tecnología) ha tenido el permiso de nuestra escuela para realizar su encuesta "Cuestionario jóvenes de la frontera 2013".

Fecha/lugar: .....

Nombre de escuela/liceo: .....

Nombre del director/la directora: .....

Firma del director/la directora: .....

## 2: Survey in Haiti (Haitian Creol)<sup>69</sup>



### Kesyonè Jèn fwontyè a 2013



**Sondaj sa a konplètman anonim, sa vle di okenn moun pral konnen ki sa ou te reponn.**

Nou mande ou reponn ak senterite ke li posib. Se opinyon ou ke nou bezwen dokimante!

Li se yon pati nan yon rechèch pou *Inivèsite Nòvejyen nan Syans ak Teknoloji*, nan vil Trondheim Nòvèj.

**!Mèsi anpil pou kolaborasyon ou!**

#### Pati 1

1. Kote ou rete :

- 1 Nan Nobel  2 Pa nan Nobel  3 Pliòt Moca

2. ¿Depi konbyen tan ou te rete isit la?

3. Sèks

- 1 Maskilen  
 2 Feminin

4. Laj: \_\_\_\_\_ .

5. ¿Avek kiyès moun w rete?

- 1 M ap viv avèk papa m 'ak manman  
 2 M ap viv avèk manman  
 3 M ap viv avèk papa m  
 4 M ap viv avèk lòt fanmi  
 5 M ap viv avèk yon fanmi  
 6 M ap viv nan yon ofelina oswa nan lòt enstitisyon

6. ¿Eske ou gen yon dokiman ofisyèl ki idantifye w?

- 1 Wi, mwen gen batistè/ ak de nesans  
 2 Wi, batistè ak paspò  
 3 Mwen pa konnen  
 4 Non, mwen pa gen dokiman ki idantifye m

7. ¿Èske w te janm vwayaje nan...

- 1 Yon plaj sou kòt la?  
 2 Yon lòt vil nan menm pwovens ou a?  
 3 Yon lòt vil nan pwovens ki pa menm pwovens ou a?  
 4 Kapital peyi ou a?  
 5 Etazini?  
 6 Lewòp?  
 7 Lòt peyi nan Karayib la?

8. ¿Nan fanmi ou gen yon moun ki te ale viv nan yon lòt peyi?

- 1 Wi  
 2 Mwen pa konnen  
 3 Non

9. ¿Ki moun, oswa kiyès nan yo?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. ¿Nan ki peyi?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Pati 2

11. Ki sa ou panse lè m 'di "Dominikèn"?

Ekri premye 3-5 mo sa yo ki nan lide w.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1

<sup>69</sup> No students were allowed to participate if they had not been present during the explanation of the research project as well as during the explanation of how their privacy would be protected. Students who arrived after these explanations were given, were either rejected or the explanations were repeated.

12. **¿Ki sa ou panse lè m ‘di “Repiblik Dominikèn”?**  
Ekri premye 3-5 mo sa yo ki nan lide w.

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**Pati 3**

13. **¿Èske w te janm vizite Repiblik Dominikèn?**

- 1 Wi  2 Non

14. **Si ou te reponn wi, ¿konbyen fwa?**

- 1 Yon sel fwa  
 2 Plizyè fwa  
 3 Regilyèman

15. **Si w reponn wi, jeneralman, ¿poukisa ou ale lot b bò? (Ou ka chwazi plizyè nan opsyon yo)**

- 1 Pou fè lajan  
 2 Pou vizite fanmi  
 3 Pou vizite zanmi  
 4 Lòt: \_\_\_\_\_

16. **¿Èske ou ta renmen vizite Repiblik Dominikèn?**

- 1 Wi  
 2 Non

17. **¿Poukisa?**

---

---

18. **¿Èske li ta yon pwoblèm pou fanmi w si ou te gen yon mennaj nan peyi vwazen an?**

- 1 Wi  2 No sé  3 No

19. **¿Eske ou genyen zanmi nan Repiblik Dominikèn?**

- 1 Si  2 Mwen pa konnen  3 Non

20. **¿Eske kek fwa ou konn koute mizik Dominikèn?**

- 1 Wi, nan radyo  
 2 Wi, nan òdinatè mwen an  
 3 Wi, lakay mwen tande mizik  
 4 Non  
 5 Non, paske mwen pa renmen l

21. **¿Eske ou apri nouvlè sou Repiblik Dominikèn?**

- 1 Wi, nan journal peyi mwen an  
 2 Wi, nan radyo  
 3 Moun an Repiblik Dominikèn di m  
 4 Non

22. **¿Kote ou rete, nan ki zon pi fò nan vwazen yo soti...?**

- 1 Tout oswa prèske tout se Ayisyen  
 2 Pi fò nan yo se Ayisyen  
 3 Yo se yon melanj

23. **¿Ou panse ke ou ak zanmi ou yo gen plis kon tak ak Ayisyen yo/ Dominiken yo ke jenerasyon paran ou yo?**

- 1 Wi  
 2 Mwen pa konnen  
 3 Non

24. **¿Èske ou ka fè konfyans nan yon Dominikèn tankou nan yon ayisyen?**

- 1 Wi  
 2 Mwen pa konnen  
 3 Non

**Pati 4**

25. **¿Kisa ki genyen an komen antre Ayisyen yo avek Dominiken yo?**

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26. ¿Kiyès diferans ki genyen antre Dominiken yo ak Ayisyen yo?

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27. ¿Ou panse ayisyen yo ta ka ede dominiken yo nan ka yon evènman kriz?

1 Wi  2 Mwen pa konnen  3 Non

28. ¿Ou panse dominiken yo ta ka ede ayisyen yo nan ka yon evènman kriz?

1 Wi  2 Mwen pa konnen  3 Non

29. ¿Eske relijyon moun yo sou tou de bò fwontyè a sanble anpil?

1 Wi  2 Mwen pa konnen  3 Non

30. ¿Ki koulè dominiken yo ye?

---

31. ¿Ki koulè yo ayisyen yo ye?

---

32. ¿Koulè yon moun ka di nou si nou ka fè l konfyans?

1 Wi  2 Mwen pa konnen  3 Non

33. ¿Poukisa?

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#### Pati 5

34. Eske yon moun ki fèt nan yon peyi yo gen dwa pou l sitwayen peyi sa a

1 Wi  2 Mwen pa konnen  3 Non

35. Eske yon pitit gason / pitit fi imigran san papye (“illegal”) yo dwe ba li nasyonalitye a

1 Wi  2 Mwen pa konnen  3 Non

36. Yon timoun pa dwe soufri pou bagay paran li yo te fe

1 Mwen dakò  
 2 Mwen pa konnen  
 3 Mwen pa dakò

#### Pati 6

37. ¿Ki kote ou ta renmen ap viv nan 10 ane?

1 Mwen vle rete isit  
 2 Nan yon lot kote na peyi a  
 3 Sou kapital  
 4 An Ewòp  
 5 An Etazini

38. ¿Kisa w pral fe pou viv nan yon fiti?

1 Travay pou Eta a  
 2 Travay Enfòmèl  
 3 Travay nan agrikilti (nan yon tè pa m)  
 4 Travay nan agrikilti (jaden lòt moun)  
 5 Marye avek yon etranje ki pou okipe m  
 6 Marye avek yon moun nan peyi mwen an pou l okipe m  
 7 Vin yon pwofesyonèl  
 8 Sa yon fanmi ki ap viv aletnaje voye bann  
 9 Antreprann yon biznis  
 10 Delekans  
 11 Mwen pa konnen

39. ¿Ou panse ke relasyon antre Repiblik Dominikèn ak Ayiti ta dwe amelyore?

1 Wi  
 2 Mwen pa konnen  
 3 Non

40. ¿Poukisa?

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**Pati 7**

41. Si gen pwoblèm antre Dominiken yo ak Ayisyen yo, ¿koman yon dwe rezoud pwoblèm sa yo?

- 1 Gouvènman tou le de bò yo dwe ajì pou rezoud pwoblèm yo
- 2 Legliz tou le de bò yo dwe ajì pou rezoud pwoblèm sa yo
- 3 Jèn tou le de bò yo dwe ajì pou rezoud pwoblèm yo
- 4 La polis dwe ajì pou rezoud pwoblèm yo
- 5 Kominote entènasyonal dwe ajì pou rezoud pwoblèm yo
- 6 Pa gen pwoblèm pou rezoud

42. ¿Eske ou konn tande pale de kek moun ki konn gen pwoblèm avek yon Dominikèn?

- 1 Wi, kek fwa
- 2 Wi, anpil fwa
- 3 Non

43. ¿Eske ou konn genyen pwoblèm avek yon Dominikèn?

- 1 Wi, kek fwa
- 2 Wi, anpil fwa
- 3 Non

44. ¿Eske pèsònèlman ou konn gen pwoblèm kek fwa avek otorite nan fwontyè a?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Non

45. Si ou te reponn “wi”, ki kalite pwoblèm?

- 1 Yo konn vle pou m peye pa anba
- 2 Yo refize m antre, san yon eksplikasyon
- 3 Yo vòlè bagay mwen
- 4 Yo maltrete m fizikman
- 5 Yo joure m
- 6 Yo arete m san yon eksplikasyon pouki
- 7 Lot: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pati 8**

46. ¿Konbyen ayisyen ou panse genyen nan Repiblik Dominiken? Lé nou di “ayisyen” nou fe referans sou yon moun ki fet Ayiti.

- 1 300,000 (twa san mil) oswa mwens
- 2 Antre 300 000 (twa san mil) ak 500,000 (demi milyon)
- 3 Api prè 500 000 (yon demi milyon)
- 4 Api prè 1, 000,000 (yon milyon)
- 5 Api prè 1.5 milyon (yon milyon senk san)
- 6 De milyon oswa plis

47. Pou ou, kiyès nan fenomèn sa yo menase plis peyi ou la?

- 1 Òganizasyon entènasyonal
- 2 Koripsyon
- 3 Politik yo
- 4 Trafik dwòg
- 5 Imigrasyon (lòt etranje ki vini nan peyi a)
- 6 Biznik miltinasyonal
- 7 Delekan
- 8 Chomaj/manke travay
- 9 Vyolans
- 10 Pwoblèm anvivonmantal
- 11 Inegalite antre moun yo
- 12 Migrasyon (nasyonal ki kite peyi a)
- 13 Inegalite antre fi ak gaso
- 14 Okenn nan sa yo

48. ¿Èske kek nan pwofesè ou yo konn pale negativman sou Repiblik Dominike nan klas la?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Mwen pa konnen
- 3 Non

49. ¿Èske kek nan pwofesè ou yo konn pale positivanman sou Repiblik Dominike nan klas la?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Mwen pa konnen
- 3 Non

**Pati 9**

50. ¿Ou asosye yon bagay avek pawòl “MINUSTAH”?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

51. ¿Èske w pè Dominiken?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Mwen pa konnen

52. ¿E poukisa?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Pati 10**

53. ¿Eske ou panse genyen yon evasyon pasifik nan teritwa dominiken a koz de ayisyen yo?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Mwen pa konnen
- 3 Non

54. ¿Yon ayisyen komet plis Krim ke yon dominiken?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Mwen pa konnen
- 3 Non

55. ¿Yon dominiken komet plis Krim ke yon ayisyen?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Mwen pa konnen
- 3 Non

56. Nan opinyon w kiyès nan afimasyon/deklarasyon sa yo kòrèk?

- 1 Ayiti ap chèche inifye zile a
- 2 Òganizasyon entènasyonal chache inifye zile a
- 3 Repiblik Dominikèn ap chèche inifye zile a
- 4 Pesonn pa ap chèche inifye zile a

57. ¿Èske Ayisyen yo ki ap vini nan Repiblik Dominikèn soufri abi?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Mwen pa konnen
- 3 Non

58. ¿Poukisa nou gen mache binasyonal yo?

- 1 Prensipalman pou ede ayisyen yo
- 2 Prensipalman pou ede dominiken yo
- 3 Pou benefis tou le de
- 4 Lot: \_\_\_\_\_

59. ¿Eske ou panse ayisyen yo prann travay ki te pou dominiken yos?

- 1 Wi
- 2 Mwen pa konnen
- 3 Non

60. Kiyès nan pawól sa yo dekri pi byen sityasyon antre dominiken ak ayisyen kote w ap viv?

Ou ka chwazi plis ke yon si ou vle.

- 1 Konfli
- 2 Indiferans
- 3 Kilti nan lapè
- 4 Konprensyon
- 5 Kolaborasyon
- 6 Fratènite
- 7 Destinasyon pataje
- 8 Ostilite
- 9 Erè
- 10 Komès
- 11 Lòt: \_\_\_\_\_

# Mèsi anpil



**pou  
kolaborasyon ou!**

### 3: Survey in the Dominican Republic

#### Cuestionario jóvenes de la frontera 2013<sup>70</sup>

Esta encuesta es completamente anónimo, esto quiere decir que nadie sabrá lo que tú contestaste. Forma parte de una investigación realizada para la Universidad Noruega de Tecnología y Ciencias, de la ciudad de Trondheim en Noruega.

Te pedimos que contestes con absoluta sinceridad. ¡Es *tu opinión* lo que necesitamos documentar!

¡Mil gracias por tu colaboración!

*Código:*  
*Registrado (fecha/iniciales):*  
*No escribas aquí.*

#### Parte 1

1. Lugar de residencia (ESPACIO ABIERTO)

- 1 En Nobel
- 2 No en Nobel
- 3 Piloto Moca

2. ¿Cuanto tiempo has vivido aquí?

3. Sexo

- 1 Masculino
- 2 Femenino

4. Edad

5. ¿Con quién vives?

- 1 Vivo con mi papa y mi mamá
- 2 Vivo con mi mamá
- 3 Vivo con mi papá
- 4 Vivo con otros familiares
- 5 Vivo con una familia
- 6 Vivo en un orfanato u otra institución

6. ¿Tienes un documento oficial que te identifique?

- 1 Sí, tengo acta de nacimiento
- 2 Sí, acta de nacimiento y pasaporte
- 3 No sé

---

<sup>70</sup> The layout for the Dominican version of the questionnaire was identical to the Haitian version. However, due to computer troubles, by which some PDFs were lost, I was unable to recover the finished Dominican PDF. However, this occurred after the surveys had been conducted. This is to say that for all research purposes, the two questionnaires looked identical to the respondents. As the replies were immediately registered and stored safely, the data was not harmed in any way.

4 No, no tengo documentos que me identifiquen

7. ¿Has viajado alguna vez a...
- 1 ... una playa de la costa?
  - 2... otro pueblo de la misma provincia que la tuya?
  - 3... otro pueblo de una provincia que no sea la tuya?
  - 4... la capital de tu país?
  - 5... los EEUU?
  - 6... Europa?
  - 7... otros países del Caribe?

8. ¿En tu familia – hay alguien que se ha ido a vivir a otro país?
- 1 Sí
  - 2 No sé
  - 3 No

9. ¿Quién o quienes?

10. ¿A qué país?

#### Parte 2

11. ¿Qué piensas cuando yo digo "dominicano"/"haitiano"? Escribe las primeras 3 – 5 palabras que te salgan.

12. ¿Qué piensas cuando yo digo "Haití"? Escribe las primeras 3 – 5 palabras que te salgan.

#### Parte 3

13. ¿Has visitado alguna vez Haití?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No

14. Si respondiste que sí, ¿cuántas veces/con qué frecuencia?

- 1 Una vez
- 2 Varias veces
- 3 regularmente

15. Si respondiste que sí, generalmente, ¿por qué vas allá? (puedes elegir varias opciones)

- 1 Para ganar dinero
- 2 Para visitar a familia
- 3 Para visitar a amigos
- 4 Otro:

16. ¿Te gustaría visitar a Haití?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No

17. ¿Por qué?

si tuvieras un novio/una novia del país vecino?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

18 ¿Crees que sería un problema para tu familia

19. ¿Tienes amigos o amigas de Haití?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

20. ¿Escuchas alguna vez música haitiana?

- 1 Sí, en la radio
- 2 Sí, por mi computadora
- 3 Sí, en mi casa se oye
- 4 No
- 5 No, porque no me gusta

21. ¿Te informas sobre las noticias de Haití?

- 1 Sí, en los periódicos de mi país
- 2 Sí, en la radio
- 3 Personas de Haití me cuentan
- 4 No

22. ¿Donde tú vives, de que origen son la mayoría de los vecinos?

- 1 Todos o casi todos son dominicanos
- 2 La mayoría son dominicanos
- 3 Son una mezcla

23. ¿Tus crees que tú y tus amigos tienen más contacto con los haitianos que la generación de tus papas?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

24. ¿Se puede confiar en un haitiano igual como en un dominicano?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

#### Parte 4

25. ¿Qué tenemos en común los dominicanos y los haitianos?

26. ¿Cuáles son las diferencias entre los dominicanos y los haitianos?

27. ¿Crees que los haitianos les ayudarían a los dominicanos en el caso de una crisis?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

28. ¿Crees que los dominicanos les ayudarían a los haitianos en el caso de una crisis?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

29. ¿La religión de la gente en ambos lados de la frontera se parece bastante?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

30. ¿De qué color o colores son los dominicanos?

31. ¿De qué color o colores son los haitianos?

32. ¿El color de una persona puede decirnos si podemos confiar en él o ella?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

33. ¿Por qué?

---

## Parte 5

33. Una persona nacida en un país tiene el derecho a ser ciudadano de ese país

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

34. A un/a hijo/hija de inmigrantes indocumentados (“ilegales”) se le debe conceder el derecho a la nacionalidad

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

35. Un hijo no debe sufrir por cosas que hicieron sus padres

- 1 Estoy de acuerdo
- 2 No sé
- 3 Estoy en desacuerdo

## Parte 6

36. ¿Dónde te gustaría vivir dentro de 10 años?

- 1 Quiero estar aquí
- 2 En otro pueblo de mi país
- 3 En la capital
- 4 En Europa

5 En los EEUU

37. ¿De qué crees que vas a vivir en el futuro?

- 1 Trabajar para el Estado
- 2 Trabajo informal
- 3 Trabajar en la agricultura (en una finca propia)
- 4 Trabajar en la agricultura (en la finca de otra gente)
- 5 Casarme con una persona extranjera que me mantenga
- 6 Casarme con una persona de mi país que me mantenga
- 7 Hacerme profesional
- 8 De lo que me mande algún familiar del exterior
- 9 Empezar un negocio propio
- 10 Delincuencia
- 11 No sé

38. ¿Piensas que las relaciones entre la República Dominicana y Haití deberían mejorar?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

39. ¿Por qué?

Parte 7

40. Si hay problemas entre los dominicanos y los haitianos, ¿cómo deben de resolverse?

- 1 Los gobiernos de ambos lados deben de actuar para resolverlo
- 2 Las iglesias de ambos lados deben de actuar para resolverlo
- 3 Los jóvenes de ambos lados deben de actuar para resolverlo
- 4 La policía debe de resolverlo
- 5 La comunidad internacional de actuar para resolverlo
- 6 No hay problemas para resolver

41. ¿Has oído de alguien que ha tenido problemas con un haitiano?

- 1 Sí, algunas veces
- 2 Sí, muchas veces
- 3 No

42. ¿Tú has tenido problemas con un haitiano/dominicano?

- 1 Sí, algunas veces
- 2 Sí, muchas veces
- 3 No

43. ¿Tú personalmente has tenido problemas alguna vez con las autoridades de la frontera?

- 1 No
- 2 Sí

44. Si respondiste que "sí" - ¿Qué tipos de problema?

- 1 Me han pedido sobornos
- 2 Me han negado la entrada sin explicar
- 3 Me han robado
- 4 Me han maltratado físicamente
- 5 Me han insultado
- 6 Me han detenido sin explicar por qué
- 7 Otro \_\_\_\_\_

## Parte 8

45. ¿Cuántos haitianos crees que hay en la República Dominicana? Con “haitiano” aquí se refiere a una persona nacida en Haití.

- 1 300 000 (trescientos mil) o menos
- 2 Entre 300 000 (trescientos mil) y 500 000 (medio millón)
- 3 Aproximadamente 500 000 (medio millón)
- 4 Aproximadamente 1 000 000 (un millón)
- 5 Aproximadamente 1 500 000 (un millón y medio)
- 6 Dos millones o más

46. Para ti, ¿cuál o cuáles de estos fenómenos amenazan más a tu país?

- 1 Organismos internacionales
- 2 La corrupción
- 3 Los políticos
- 4 El narcotráfico
- 5 La inmigración (extranjeros que vienen al país)
- 6 Empresas multinacionales
- 7 La delincuencia
- 8 El desempleo
- 9 La violencia
- 10 Problemas del medioambiente
- 11 La desigualdad entre la gente
- 12 La emigración (nacionales que se van del país)
- 13 Ninguno de estos

47. ¿Alguno de tus profesores ha hablado negativamente de Haití en clase?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

48. ¿Alguno de tus profesores ha hablado positivamente de Haití en clase?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No sé
- 3 No

## Parte 9

49. ¿Asocias algo con la palabra “MINUSTAH”?

50. ¿Te dan miedo los haitianos?

- 1 Sí
- 2 No

51. ¿Y por qué?

## Parte 10

52. ¿Piensas que existe una invasión pacífica del territorio dominicano de parte de los haitianos?
- 1 Sí
  - 2 No sé
  - 3 No
53. ¿Una persona haitiana comete más delitos que una persona dominicana?
- 1 Sí
  - 2 No sé
  - 3 No
54. ¿Una persona dominicana comete más delitos que una persona haitiana?
- 1 Sí
  - 2 No sé
  - 3 No
55. En tu opinión, ¿cuál (o cuáles) de estas afirmaciones son más correctas?
- 1 Haití busca unificar la isla
  - 2 Organismos internacionales buscan unificar la isla
  - 3 La República Dominicana busca unificar la isla
  - 4 Nadie busca unificar la isla
56. ¿Los haitianos que vienen a la República Dominicana sufren abusos?
- 1 Sí
  - 2 No sé
  - 3 No
57. ¿Por qué tenemos los mercados binacionales?
- 1 Principalmente para ayudar a los haitianos
  - 2 Principalmente para ayudar a los dominicanos
  - 3 Para el beneficio de ambos
  - 4 Otro: \_\_\_\_\_
58. ¿Tú crees que los haitianos les desplazan a la mano de obra dominicana?
- 1 Sí
  - 2 No sé
  - 3 No
59. ¿Cuál o cuáles de estas palabras describe mejor la situación entre los dominicanos y los haitianos donde tú vives? Puedes elegir más de uno si quieres.
- 1 Conflicto
  - 2 Indiferencia
  - 3 Cultura de paz
  - 4 Comprensión
  - 5 Colaboración
  - 6 Hermandad
  - 7 Destino compartido
  - 8 Hostilidad
  - 9 Malentendidos
  - 10 Comercio
  - 11 Otro: \_\_\_\_\_



#### 4: Project description for sources

The general description of the project was handed out to all respondents and read out loud in all classrooms and for the focus groups.



#### Descripción del proyecto

Esta entrevista forma parte de la recolección de material para fundamentar un proyecto de doctorado, es decir una investigación científica. El fondo para el tema son las relaciones dominico-haitianas y se estudiará el proyecto Nobel en particular.

El hecho de que se grabe la conversación es para garantizar la mayor posible exactitud y puntualidad a la hora de analizar lo que se ha discutido. Después de finalizado el doctorado, las entrevistas se borrarán.

Todos los entrevistados quedarán anónimos, y las grabaciones no se utilizarán con ningún otro fin que no sea de fuente primaria anónima para este proyecto de investigación.

El investigador trabaja independientemente del Proyecto Nobel, para la Universidad de Trondheim (NTNU), Noruega y no para la SSID ni para sus homólogos noruego y haitiano (MISSEH).

Sinceramente,

Helene Norbeck  
Coordinadora administrativa,  
Departamento de lenguas modernas,  
NTNU

Jørgen Yri  
Investigador  
NTNU

## 5: Affiliated researcher confirmation letter – OBMICA



Santo Domingo, D. N.  
June 1, 2012

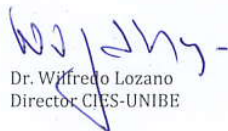
To whom it may concern

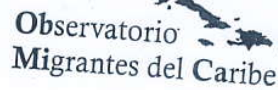
We hereby confirm that Jørgen Yri has been accepted as an affiliated researcher of the Observatorio Migrantes del Caribe (OBMICA) as of January 2013 until the end of June the same year. He will be able to work from our offices and will be given a space there, as well as being a regular participant in the activities of our research group.

Yri's investigation on Dominican-Haitian relations through the Norway-funded dialogue process in the borderlands is of considerable academic and practical interest for us. We are sure that both Yri and the OBMICA will benefit from this cooperation.

The Observatorio Migrantes del Caribe (OBMICA) operates under the Ibero-American University (CIES-UNIBE) of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Yours faithfully,

  
Dr. Wilfredo Lozano  
Director CIES-UNIBE

  
Observatorio  
Migrantes del Caribe

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