EVERYBODY IS LIVING ON IN HIS OWN SIDE: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FACED WITH THE CRISIS OF SOCIAL TIES IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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Abstract

This article analyzes the state of community relations in the department of Divo (Côte d'Ivoire) and its impact on the mobilization of communities living there, in local development actions. Perceived as a set of interventions to promote the act of "living together", community development, is prescribed as an effective alternative to economic and social reconstruction in countries that have experienced war. With the episodes of political violence Côte d'Ivoire experienced, the new authorities and donors are trying to resort to this therapy to restore social cohesion and to boost economic activities. But in a context where political and ethnic polarization is still strong, the cooperation between communities is being hardly reconstituted; this makes community development actions' success uncertain.

Keywords: community development, political and military conflict, development projects, social ties, trust, Côte d'Ivoire

Résumé

Cet article analyse l'état des relations communautaires dans le département de Divo (Côte d'Ivoire) et son impact sur la mobilisation des communautés qui y vivent, dans les actions de développement local. Perçue comme un ensemble d'interventions pour promouvoir l'acte de "vivre ensemble", le développement communautaire est vu comme une alternative efficace à la reconstruction économique et sociale dans les pays qui ont connu la guerre. Avec les épisodes de violence politique en Côte d'Ivoire, les nouvelles autorités et les donateurs tentent de recourir à cette thérapie pour restaurer la cohésion sociale et stimuler les activités économiques. Mais dans un contexte où la polarisation politique et ethnique est encore forte, la coopération entre les communautés est à peine reconstituée; ce qui rend incertain le succès des actions de développement communautaire.

Mots-clés: développement communautaire, conflit politico-militaire, projets de développement, liens sociaux, confiance, Côte d'Ivoire

Rezumat

Acest articol analizează situaţia relaţiilor comunitare în departamentul Divo (Côte d'Ivoire) şi impactul acesteia asupra implicării comunităţilor în acţiuni de dezvoltare locală.

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Percepută ca un set de intervenţii pentru a promova actul de "trăi împreună", dezvoltarea comunitară, este văzută ca o alternativă eficientă pentru reconstrucţia economică şi socială în ţările care au avut experienţa unui război. Pe fondul unor episoadele de violenţă politică, noile autorităţi din Côte d'Ivoire şi donatorii încearcă să recurgă la aceasta terapie pentru a restabili coeziunea socială şi pentru a stimula activităţile economice. Dar într-un context în care polarizarea politică şi etnică este încă puternică, cooperarea între comunităţi este greu de reconstruit; acest lucru face ca succesul acţiunilor de dezvoltare comunitară să fie incert.

Cuvinte cheie: dezvoltare comunitară, conflict politic şi militar, proiecte de dezvoltare, legăturile sociale, încredere, Côte d'Ivoire

1. Introduction

This article is built on the following question. In Côte d'Ivoire's post-conflict context, how does the level of trust between communities affect their engagement in local development projects? The Ivorian society has been operating in a political and military crises environment since the early 2000s.The armed conflict the country faced from 2002 to 2011, not only compromised the continuity of the State, but also harmed social order and "living together" in a country which had long been considered as a model of political stability.

Facing the deep division between communities induced by the political and military conflict, some actions of social cohesion restoration and community development were initiated under former President Laurent Gbagbo. Thus, after signing the March 2007 peace agreement of Ouagadougou-between the former presidential side and the "New Forces", the regime of Laurent Gbagbo implemented the Programme National de Réinsertion et de Réhabilitation Communautaire (PNRRC). This program has promoted the implementation of many community-based projects in the country. In this context, special attention was given to the Central, Northern and Western areas (CNW)[1] with a massive offer from NGOs. The Ministry of National Reconciliation also conducted monitoring activities on community relations by intervening repeatedly to resolve conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous, especially in the western part of the country. These actions had not yet achieved the desired results when the post-election violence broke between March and April 2011. These latest violences reinforced further resentments and mistrust between communities.

With the advent of Alassane Ouattara's regime, politics and development strategy of Côte d'Ivoire have been redesigned. A new National Development Plan (NDP) has been developed to bring back a "strong growth" in the country and to economically put it on a comfortable "position". Locally, the National

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[1] These areas were particularly affected by the armed conflict. In addition to the destruction or abandonment of socioeconomic infrastructure, they were scenes of deadly clashes between communities.

Development Plan focuses on the implementation by local elected officials, the principle of the admissibility, the control and management of issues related to rural land by local authorities, the involvement of local communities in the development process through collective initiatives (RCI 2012). In addition, the Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation (CDVR)[2] was entrusted the task of putting an end to identity tenseness so as to institute cohesion between the different communities. In this context, it has traveled many parts of the country, to sensitize communities to reconciliation and social cohesion.

Thus, governments rely on community development as the sesame to restore social capital between local actors and create conditions for the revival of economic activities. But what is community development? It is a process of creating sustainable dynamics in a territory that mobilizes local actors around the definition and implementation of socio-economic projects, cultural and environmental (GRDR 2007). All components of the population are forced to speak, to get involved in decision making and implementation of solutions based on optimal use of local resources to solve their problems appropriately. So it is a voluntary and organized action authorizing "acting together" and "living together" (Tesson 2003). The benefits of this voluntary and/or conscious participation to the construction of the development are measured in terms of the effects on social cohesion and the establishment of a culture of collaboration and cooperation (LSM 2008). From this perspective, the restoration of the social bond becomes a major challenge in post-conflict reconstruction dynamics.

This paper assumes that in the current context, the break of the "trust capital" between communities in Côte d'Ivoire weakens their investment in community development projects. But in countries that have experienced socio-political violence, the success of group activities is related to the quality of social relationships among actors engaged in these activities. Indeed, communities must not only live together and work together (Cabin 1999), but above all work together to invent a new social contract.

2. Theoretical and methodological framework of the study

In countries emerging from conflict, the issue of social ties (understood as trust between social actors) is acute. As one element of social capital, trust is indeed essential to the relations of cooperation and partnership exchanges. It is necessary to mobilize men and women for the production of a new "living together".

For Putnam (1993), social capital refers to legal obligations and norms, social values (trust) and networks. In other words, social capital refers to social ties,

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[2] Through the establishment of the Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation (CDVR), Côte d'Ivoire indulged in a new process of national reconciliation after Alassane Ouattara had taken over the power in April 2011.

social networks, and feelings of obligation that are mobilized and created to complete projects within the community. This is based on trust and motivational factors such as sense of membership, community pride, which are essential ingredients in the development of projects. The approach developed by Putnam is particularly interesting to elucidate the question of social ties in Côte d'Ivoire in the current context. Here, social capital refers to all the trust, reciprocity and mutuality, and social networks that unite the different ethnic groups and their members. This is the set of relationships, networks and norms that might facilitate collective action among stakeholders: indigenous, non-indigenous and aliens. Links and social networks indicate the standards (feelings of obligation), social values such as commitment of different ethnic groups and confidence among communities.

This study took place in Divo in the Lôh Djiboua region. This farming area is subject to significant migrations: Burkinabe, Guineans, Malians (aliens) and Baoulé, Senufo and other local immigrants. However, Divo was the scene of violent communal clashes during the armed conflict. These clashes often oppose Dida, Godié indigenous and non-natives and/or aliens. Facing the current post-conflict context, the department of Divo is therefore a relevant field for observations considering the ongoing inter-dynamics in the country.

Data collection was based on documentary research and interviews with community leaders and institutional leaders[3] during years 2012, 2013 and 2014. These tools were complemented by direct observations. All collected data allowed to read the community participation in community development initiatives in the light of the state of social ties among them.

3. Dynamics of community relations in the department of Divo

Like other areas favorable toward agricultural production, the flow of migrants in the department of Divo has, over time, led to competitions around the land resources due to the increasing scarcity of land. Although local pacification mechanisms had helped reduce the risk of deadly clashes, it remains that the political and military conflict has greatly exacerbated the divisions between communities.

3.1. Changes in land regulation modes and recurrence of conflict between indigenous and immigrants

Many Baoulé, Senufo immigrants and aliens from Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Mali are permanently settled in the department of Divo to exploit vast forests. Dida and Godié indigenous gave these immigrant farmers land rights (Bouaouli, 2010).

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[3] These local elected officials, administrative officials, NGOs leaders, actors of the former General Council and the current Regional Council.

Foreigners[4] were given three main forms of acquiring land assets in villages: donation, loan or sale[5]. Thus, migrants will gradually develop coffee, cocoa, palm, rubber plantations in villages like Daboré, Dagrome, Gbagbam, Grobiakoko, Grobiassomé, Guitry, Hermankono, Yaoblékro, Ziki-Diès. But with the 1998 land law, the indigenous feeling of being robbed of their land acquired by their hosts has increased.

> "Since the National Assembly passed the law on the land in 1998, Baoulé has been chased away from their land in aid of Burkinabe, who they could chase away at any time. They sell lands at 150,000 francs per hectare. Land conflicts between Baoulé and Dida constitute a premeditated strategy for the latter to get back their land for fear of being deprived as stands for Ivorians. In such a situation, the matter in dispute would be more difficult to settle." (D. Young immigrant leader)

In fact, the contract forms over land were not materialized by administrative and legal documents. This led the beneficiaries[6] to challenge land transfer made by their parents. This is how Law No. 98-750 of 23 December 1998 was passed to define a new rural land code. This law intended to regulate and clarify land rights in rural estate. In practice, it has actually sparked off ethnic clashes and deepened the gap between communities. Indeed, instead of resolving disagreements, this law has raised the question of the rights acquired by foreign operators in the past concerning the land they have been farming for a long time. According to the 1998 law on rural land, only nationals could enjoy land rights. For Babo and Droz (2008), the aims of the law of land were implicitly nationalistic and intended to play a decisive role on the issue of the influence of foreigners on the agricultural sector. In the town of Divo, the Dida indigenous found, through the 1998 law, a chance to claim the land they had lost long ago. Moreover, the Baoulé are chased away and lands are sold to Burkinabe, considered as easy targets to be robbed "in due course". Therefore, the relationships between Dida indigenous and Baoulé immigrants have considerably deteriorated.

Just like Baoulé, Burkinabe, Guinean and Malian were dispossessed of their land afterwards. This created tensions between indigenous and non-indigenous. Interviews made with some community leaders and decentralized structures managers depict the behavior of Dida indigenous:

> "During these recent years, with the military and political crisis of September 18 and 19, 2002, good habits have been called into question. This can be explained by the fact that Dida found it judicious to chase Baoulé from their plantations to sell their land to Burkinabe, Malians and others, so that today some Dida families are landless. With the crisis, they are trying to claim their land and this is problematic since the land is valued

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[4] This term refers to both immigrants as alien.

[5] Information collected to a notable from Dida community confirms these three main forms of transfer of land in Divo.

[6] Here, we refer to the heirs: son and grand-son.

today by someone who does not want to give in." (L. technician and specialist in agriculture and land issues)

"One morning, we just find a relative and said, 'Sir, do not set foot in the plantation because the land on which you are working does not belong to you.' How can you justify this attitude when we know that these lands were acquired by our parents for thirty, forty, or even fifty years [...] Today we have large plantations and producing tons and tons of coffee and cocoa. Just for that, they find strategies stating that we are foreigners to snatch our plantations from us." (O., Leader of a youth association of immigrants)

These challenges are similar to those observed by the sociologist Babo (2010) in the analysis of the conflict between Kroumen indigenous and Burkinabe (non-indigenous) in Tabou, in the far south-west of Côte d'Ivoire. This study shows that in the village of Besséréké, young native are pressuring Dagari ethnic group of Burkina so that they release a portion of forest. Facing the indigenous harassment, aliens claiming the purchase of this forest, refuse. Tensions emerged in 1999 after a Dagari murdered a Kroumen, triggering violence in the Hompo tribe. These violent clashes spread rapidly not only to the entire Dagari community, but also extended to the Lobi Burkinabe living in Tabou. According to Babo, the crisis between Kroumen and Dagari occurred when the latter had gained economic power and tried to escape from the indigenous tutoring.

Like Tabou, the Department of Divo has experienced a reciprocal exploitation of agrarian and political dimensions of conflicts between communities around land resources. For aliens, a certified or non-proved success in the plantation economy would be a source of envy from Dida indigenous. They would have seized the opportunity of political and military conflict to expel them and get hold of their plantations. This situation, in conjunction with individual and collective resentment, is at the heart of land conflicts usually involving indigenous and non-indigenous. To resolve these conflicts, mediations were conducted either by customary authorities[7] or local officials or representatives of the central government. However, the September 2002 armed conflict and the post-election violence in March 2010 - April 2011 exacerbated tensions and increased the disintegration of community social capital.

3.2. Political violence and breakup of social ties in Divo

In Divo as in most forested areas of Côte d'Ivoire, the 2002 armed conflict and the post-election violence shave increased the division between communities and set a climate of mistrust and suspicion. Political violence has indeed been a shift at the community level and has developed into clashes, especially between indigenous

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[7] We refer to chiefs of village or community leaders.

who were supposed to be pockets of the FPI[8], the former power and aliens who were suspected to be the coalition's henchmen of the RHDP[9], currently holding the power.

> "In Divo, relations are really deteriorated since 2002 between indigenous and non-indigenous on the one hand, and between indigenous and aliens, on the other hand. It seems to me in general that there are groups that are created on behalf of the FPI and others for the rebellion. This situation has been exacerbated by two groups that are truly trained, namely: the LMP[10] and the RHDP. Divo has been the scene of several clashes since 2002; so that today, the communities do not see each other as before. The visible part of the iceberg is that most recently after the second round of the elections and during the postelection period, there was a clash between young people from RHDP and those of LMP on the one hand, and between young people from RHDP and the Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité (CRS) on the other hand. [...] These individuals had previously burned the premises of the Department of Water and Forestry on Feb. 3, 2010 following the dispute over the electoral sheet. December 16, 2011 at the exploded walk of the RHDP, these young people burnt the local management of water and forests and vehicles judge Divo. That very day, there was a massive destruction of possessions causing the displacement of some populations" (N., former Officer at Divo Council)

The accumulation of individual and collective resentment in connection with land issue and the controversial results of the 2010 presidential election were a favorable mixture to clashes between security forces and aliens, and between indigenous and immigrants/aliens. Indeed, the results of the second round of the presidential election announced by the Constitutional Court, on Friday December 3, 2011 claimed Laurent Gbagbo to be the winner with 51.45% against 48.55% of the vote for Alassane Ouattara. These results were called into question the figures by the President[11] of the Commission Electorale Indépendente (CEI) in the Golf Hotel and released by the international press and that presented Ouattara as the winner of the elections with 54.10% against 45.90% of the vote for Laurent Gbagbo. At the announcement of the results, the town of Divo experienced tensions between the LMP activists and those of RHDP. These clashes have resulted in the loss of human lives, the destruction of infrastructures and the displacement of people towards the nearest villages.

For youth and traditional Dida leaders, foreigners have come to show some independence and develop logical domination enjoying the armed conflict. Burkinabe were criticized for intervening in the debate on the Ivorian crisis and for

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[8] Front Populaire Ivoirien

[9] Rassemblement des Houphouétistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix, a coalition of political parties claiming to be part of Houphouët Boigny political engineering and made of the PDCI, RDR, the UDPCI and MFA.

[10] La Majorité Présidentielle

[11] Mister Youssouf Bakayoko

openly supporting the "rebels". This has led indigenous to think of being dominated on their own land.

> "Some immigrants as the Baoulé were the rebels' accomplices, even Burkinabe foreign rejoiced that Côte d'Ivoire was going through a crisis. And this embittered the situation. And it brought the Burkinabe not to respect their hosts because for them, the 2002 crisis was a foreign attack against indigenous and therefore foreigners were to take their independence by getting back their plantations. These are the facts that caused the deterioration of relations between immigrants, aliens and us." (A., Leader of an indigenous Youth Association)

> "The same foreign involved in the crisis; foreigners intervened in speeches, debates that we had in the villages about the crisis. We even caught some of them claiming their support those who came to attack us [...] who attacked the country. It is the failure of the guests, the Dida guardian cannot accept that [...] As a result, land disputes became community conflicts; because such-and-such community has a dispute concerning a plot land dispute with an indigenous community, then the entire community indulges in the matter, that means that foreigners are against Dida." (Y., Leader of an indigenous community)

Political violence often appropriates the issues of old conflicts, whose object has not disappeared (Gaborit 2009). The political and military crisis has grafted on existing land disputes in Dida and Godié villages, bringing back the latent hatred and accelerating the social division between indigenous and non-indigenous and aliens. Violences related to the called post-election crisis have further strengthened the resentment and mistrust between communities in Divo. This division has caused the relational base that existed between these communities and the relative social peace maintained so far by the efforts of community leaders and local officials to collapse.

> "Today, relations are broken. We stand between two camps: those who agree with the RHDP power and those whose relatives are in exile (the FPI)." (D. Representative of an indigenous Youth Association)

> "The political outlook displays community relations so that when you are an indigenous, you are said to be close to such a party, and when you're immigrant or alien, you are reported to be close to such a party. This means that there are two camps now." (K., Leader of an indigenous community)

> "It's not that; this is no more fraternity. So, all communities no longer love each other. People are living together because they are forced to do so; otherwise if one community could chase the other, they would have done it because we are not far from a community crisis." (T., Leader of an immigrant Youth Association)

With community violences, the perceptions of each other have changed. In reality, the manipulation of the concept of "ivoirité"[12] for political purposes (Jolivet 2003)

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[12] Forged and justified by intellectuals as describing the Ivorian cultural specificity, the concept of 'Ivoirité' has been transposed to the heart of the competition between the different antagonists of the political field and served as a tagging gun to eliminate the opponent.

and the mobilization of the ethno-religious rhetoric in Ivorian politics were a breeding ground for the gestation of implosive " identity-adjustment programs". So, in community relations, categorizations were quickly established by stakeholders based on political affiliation, on other people's ethnic or religious background.

In a study of the dynamics and conflict management capacity in western of Côte d'Ivoire, Interpeace[13] (2012) shows that from the perspective of communities, a "new class of politicians" made its intrusion into the local political field with the advent of multiparty democracy. These new political actors rely on ethnic groups to create their parties. Taking advantage of ethnicity strongly prevailing among populations to grow and develop stereotypes, mistrust and fear between communities. So, tribal hatred, disintegration of trust, the stigma of one another and identity withdrawal become the real drivers of community violence.

Similarly in Divo, relationships from one community to another one are built on violent political adversity. The actors agree that communities play on political division strings. They do not seem to be ready to overcome these strings as they show that they have nothing in common. Intra-community reconciliation is built on mistrust. On analysis, the local political discourse is built on the risk for each community in the presence of disappearing if the opponent manages to get the upper hand politically. Political affiliation is conditioned. It depends on ethnicity, as this notable from an indigenous community said: "When you are Dioula (Malinke) or Baoulé, you are RHDP, Dida or Godié, then you are LMP, that is how things work".

4. Collective actions in a context of confidence crisis

Cooperation and trust are necessary while conducting a collective action. For the theorists of trust[14], society cannot do without a dose of trust between the actors involved in its construction: mutual trust, a common destiny, confidence in the future, etc. In the current context of post-conflict, decentralized institutions and NGOs of Divo actively seek to mobilize the various communities around a number of group activities. But confidence crisis between local communities affects their participation in collective actions.

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[13] International Organization for the Consolidation of non-governmental peace. Interpeace works with local partner organizations in order to build long-term peace. The headquarter is located in Geneva (Switzerland).It has regional offices in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire).

[14] In Peyrefitte (1995), it is neither the capital accumulation nor the availability of work but trust as "third intangible factor", which triggers socio-economic and political transformations within human societies. As for Fukuyama (1195), he put it that the economic vitality of a nation is correlated with the confidence that people, especially the workers inside the company, put in each other.

4.1. Community participation in social cohesion: between resignation and hope

According to Tessereinc (1994), in a context of crisis, local development is based on the actions and mobilization phases as well as the participation of social actors in social cohesion initiatives. As for local and regional representatives, they move from a culture of delegation to a culture of action. Local development issues are then producing new collective identities, initiating partnerships and based on reciprocity and reflecting the involvement of various communities in the implementation of joint projects. This process creates, theoretically, a new community to meet the challenge that actors must view as an issue of collective action.

In Divo, local elected officials and NGO leaders rely on sensitizing meetings for reconciliation as the stage preceding group initiatives. At first glance, these actions create community mobilization. But a close reading of the speeches of local stakeholders helps to notice that these communities are not strongly involved in these actions.

"We are a civil society and we are non-political. Our strategies are based on meetings with communities, outings and sensitizing meetings on cohesion and togetherness. We multiply the outreach meetings with people to show them the merits of social cohesion. In doing so, we seek the general interest of these communities namely: the agreement, social cohesion [...]. We show them that we can only implement our projects in a peaceful social climate. However, these actions are not successful. Each ethnic group pretends to take part in our meetings but actually does not apply the resolutions taken jointly at meetings. People more often than not listen to their political leaders so they do not really invest in real peace actions. Such a situation is not favorable to the initiation of community projects." (L., Former Director of Divo Mayor's board)

"When it comes to act jointly for reconciliation, each ethnic group remains in his corner. Everyone pretends attend the meetings convened by the local authorities. But then we do not put into practice the instructions of the authorities or leaders and we do not bring the real contribution to community reconciliation. What I say here has been tested during the rehabilitation of Divo's Cultural Center, implemented by USAID, with the communal youth, religious and ethnic communities, human rights NGOs during the period going from September 2012 to May 2014. The title of one aspect of the project was 'dialogue between communities in the rehabilitation of the Cultural Center' with a view to achieving social cohesion in Divo. This project aimed at providing Burkinabe, Malians, Malinke, Dida and other ethnic groups a framework for exchange to consolidate peace in the town. The result was negative because the members of the committee of management were mostly Mossi (Burkina Faso), Malians who claimed to be Ivorians and Baoule that supported their sayings. Dida have resigned themselves; they did not want to work with their former adversaries, their opponents from the post-election crisis. Finally, all the communities did not always get in touch. This created a fake of social cohesion around that common project because all the expected ethnic groups in this project did not set their mind free to act as due. Under these conditions nothing could succeed. The project was doomed to failure." (T. Leader of an indigenous Youth Association)

The tilting of the Ivorian conflict at the community level in Divo had two major consequences. Firstly, it created the resurgence of old disputes between different communities on the one hand, and on the other hand, it caused the loss of confidence between communities. So the successful mobilization of communities in collective action becomes a major problem for local development actors in Divo.

From the perspective of Gabriel (2005), when social reality falters, loses his balance, or is about to lose it, man responds to it by opening or closing, the search for practical wisdom, hope or despair. In Divo, the lower implication of communities in reconciliation efforts, suggests that they have rather resigned. Distrust between communities delays the production of a new contract of confidence for the success and completion of group initiatives.

4.2. Community participation in local development projects faced with the logic of ethnicity

The concept of test reflects the tenseness of the situation which community development projects are facing. In the framework of this study, these difficulties fundamentally derive from the contradiction between the existence of logic of political identity among communities and the completion of community-based projects that normally require "to act together".

Indeed in Divo, local elected officials, community leaders and NGOs sensitize Dida and Godié (natives), Baoulé, Senufo and Lobi (immigrants), and Burkinabe, Guineans and Malians (aliens) to get them invest in group projects. However, the withdrawal of communities undermines their participation in community-based projects.

> "Our business is based on information, sensitizing and motivation. We show them the influences their attitudes may have on development projects we initiate. [...] In most projects we initiated Grobiakoko and Yaoblékro, all people, all ethnic groups had to work together; May it be cassava, market gardening, or the field of timber yards. We organized them to join forces. There is something like identity preservation within these communities; each ethnic group develops their ideologies that prevent them from working with others. They had better listen to the sermons of their political party. The frustrations caused by the political violences caused Dida, for example, not to be prepared to work with other ethnic groups, calling them enemies concerning Malians and Burkinabe; as for Baoulé they are treated as traitors. Under these conditions nothing can succeed. No activity can be initiated." (Y., a NGO Manager)

> "All these conflicts have affected our relationship and there is somehow a wall of mistrust, so that today we walk together but at night we don't see each other. Now, we cannot work together. Here, we live and evolve by group. A NGO in partnership with the Council of Divo has even started a youth project on Ziki-Diès road. We had to work together in planting nine hectares of rubber returning to the association of all youths of the village, may they be indigenous sons or foreigners' sons. But we did not want to work with Dida who pretend to be the bosses at all levels. And even if we were to work

together, we would need to be considered. For indigenous, we are subhuman. It is as if we were at the time of apartheid. How can we invest in such a climate?" (O., President of an immigrant Youth Association)

"Currently, it is quite impossible that the members of my community mobilize to participate in a common or cross-community project, despite the institutions and civil society sensitizing. Despite of their good faith, the quantity and quality of joint projects they initiate. We were much frustrated on our own land and we refuse to work together with our executioners on whatever project regardless of its size or the interest for the town of Divo. Dida cannot cooperate blindly with traitors even if we are hospitable." (T., Leader of an indigenous Youth Association)

To date, despite the announced policy of the end of armed conflict and national reconciliation initiatives, political and ethnic polarization is still strong in the department of Divo. In fact, social life is organized around ethnic groups and community identities. This logic of identity politics creates a rivalry and a latent conflict environment, which is not favorable to the implementation of community development - based projects.

This difficulty in mobilizing local people in collective initiatives is highlighted by Gaborit (2009) in his work on post-conflict societies in Cambodia, Mozambique, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The author pointed out that in these contexts, persistent feelings of suspicion and mistrust negatively affects development projects. For her post-conflict situations correspond to transitions that have direct influence on the lives of individuals and groups, the links of confidence they stroke up with themselves and with the institutions and on the exchanges among them. In Cambodia, for example, despite the adoption by the Cambodian government of a very liberal investment code after the war, investment remained cautious. Over three years (1994, 1995 and 1996), the flow of direct investment represents slightly more than 10% of annual GDP valued at three billion dollars. The investments also represent 10% of the licenses granted, the amount is in the range of three to four billion dollars. Yet, from a legal and political point of view, efforts are made to attract investors and fund development projects. The Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) formed in 1994 had the advantage of offering a box-office to outside investors, with the obligation to rule within a reasonable time. But the political and social instability and the resignations of the people were a disincentive to investment.

With actions in favor of reconciliation in post-conflict period in the department of Divo, community development projects should normally enjoy the membership of the concerned communities and encourage their effective mobilization. However, these initiatives happen in a context of mutual trust breakup marked by a stigma attached to other people and isolation. As described by local actors themselves, indigenous, non-indigenous and aliens live each on his side. Ultimately, communities live together without really cooperating. The weakness of their involvement in group initiatives mortgages not only the companies invested with restoring

social cohesion, but also the success of community development projects in the department of Divo.

5. Conclusion

Well before the political and military crisis, the Department of Divo was the scene of conflicts between indigenous, non-indigenous and/or alien. Centered round land resources, these conflicts were more or less confined by traditional leaders and/or local elected officials. But the outbreak of armed conflict caused existing tensions to come back, against the backcloth of the identity issue. With the post-election crisis, the emergence of individual and collective resentment served as a fertile ground for new and more violent conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous and/or aliens. Now, the political and ethnic polarization is stronger. In fact, community development initiatives developed by local elected officials and NGOs as an alternative to social cohesion do not give the expected results. Given the situation in this town, trust remains a challenge for local development actors. For a successful revival of economic and social development in Côte d'Ivoire in the post-conflict period, an analysis focusing on local mechanisms to rebuild trust between communities could be a valuable assistance tool for effective governance.

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