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Community Participation Beyond Idealisation and Demonisation:
Biodiversity Protection in Soufrière, St. Lucia

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Contents

Introduction

The Soufrière Maritime Management Association (SMMA) is one of the best-known examples of "participatory environmental planning" in the southern hemisphere. Created in 1994 after more than three years of intensive stakeholder consultation and negotiation, involving resource users, governmental and non-governmental agencies, it is still entrusted to date with the management of 11 kilometres of the most valuable coastal resources of Saint Lucia, a small Caribbean island whose economy is increasingly dependent on tourism.

At the beginning of the 1990s, overuse and escalating conflicts involving fishers, divers, snorkelers, yachts, hotels and other stakeholders led public authorities to try to regulate the situation through traditional top-down regulatory efforts. Disappointment with this approach led to a rethinking of how natural resources were to be allocated, this time in line with a more inclusive "community participation" (CP) approach. This process was financially supported and technically facilitated by a range of national, regional as well as international actors and donors.

The resulting institutional structure, the SMMA, was formally endorsed by the St. Lucian government as a new, multi-purpose not-for-profit organization overseen by a multi-stakeholder board of directors, including private and public actors. SMMA concerns itself with conflict resolution among user groups, surveillance and enforcement of a zoning agreement, some scientific research, and the monitoring of coral reefs, water quality and other environmental issues. It has now been functioning for over 15 years. As an internationally supported initiative, the SMMA has been subject to regular and comprehensive evaluations that have resulted in largely positive appraisals. The SMMA has also received a range of international prizes and recognitions for its innovation and effectiveness in pacifying user conflicts and in obtaining environmental results through participatory methodologies and principles.

In this article, however, we will argue that previous work and evaluations have considered the SMMA through a limited analytical framework, and this has resulted in them overlooking parts of the "story". As is typical, power and history have been little called upon to help place developments in Soufrière within a wider socio-political context. This has led to an incomplete understanding of what "participation" means in Soufrière — how it is felt, perceived, used or ignored by locals. It has also hampered a sharper understanding of the long-term challenges that the SMMA faces in delivering environmental results through interaction with stakeholders.

Our re-opening of the analysis has led to interesting insights and conclusions, some of which differ from those presented in the past. The work here has drawn upon a range of primary and secondary sources of data, including over 60 interviews conducted during two months of fieldwork in the summer of 2008. The analysis also heavily relies on an analytical framework defined in two previous articles (Charnoz, 2009*a* and 2009*b*).

First, this article provides background information on Soufrière, to show how conflicts developed regarding the coral reefs. Then, it analyses the genesis of the SMMA participatory scheme, its initial proponents and initial consultation process (1992-1994), based on archival research, as well as interviews with, and accounts by, policymakers and observers, collected during two months of fieldwork in the summer of 2008. The article next scrutinises the way the SMMA has been implemented, in practice, as a participatory institution: its inclusiveness, scope, participatory intensity and allocation of benefits over time. This is presented in two chronological phases: a) the early functioning of the newly created institution (1994-1997); b) the revamping that resulted in a "new SMMA",

and its functioning since then. We then look at changes in *social control*, namely the way certain people have seen their behaviour increasingly framed and *contained,* while others have been left unmonitored and unquestioned. We argue that this new balance of social control has underpinned the ongoing *commodification* of the local community – making its spaces and people more like tradable assets on the global tourism market. Finally, we investigate how the SMMA has interacted with the *social capital* of the community – its fragmentation, the inability of its poorer segments to access institutions and the resulting psychological withdrawal from "Babylon", the "unfair modern world".

Throughout, this analysis tries to keep its distance from the caricatured (and extreme) views of "community participation" (CP): on one side, the *idealised* view of CP that emphasises the gains in local autonomy and the environmental harmony supposedly resulting from more open local dialogue; on the other, the *demonised* view of CP that emphasises the power structures at work and the typical unfairness of some of the end results. The author believes that CP may not be an ideal path, but an ideal path to reforming the governance of environmental resources *does not exist*. CP is indeed one of the few alternatives that takes into account concerns about social justice and local preferences, versus a status quo or "business-as-usual" approach, reliance on free-market "mechanisms" or the application of sheer power. At the same time, there is a need to keep the eyes wide open and acknowledge the various effects (both positive and negative) that CP schemes do have on local society and its power structures, despite the well-rounded rhetoric regarding CP.

1. Fighting for Coral Reefs: the Soufrière Context

Background information on St. Lucia is provided here to present a context for the mounting human pressure on the local natural resources. The rise of open conflicts among resource users in Soufrière is then presented, as well as the early governmental attempts to enforce certain rules. From there, we consider the origin of community participation (CP) ideas in Soufrière, and the nature of the public consultation process that took place during the 24 months preceding the instatement of the SMMA as a participatory institution for coastal management.

1.1 Growing Coastal Pressures

St. Lucia is located in the heart of the Caribbean, with Martinique to the north and St. Vincent to the south (cf. Map 1). The island is 43km long and 22km wide – and with 617 sq km of valleys and hills, it is the second-largest of the Windward Islands after Dominica. The population is about 160,000, a third of which lives in the Castries, the capital on the northwest coast. Close to 85% of the people are of African ancestry, 10% are mixed (with British or French blood) and 4% are of pure European or East Indian descent, making the island fairly multicultural (2001 census). The socio-economic context is marked by deep problems, such as high unemployment, a high birth rate among teenagers, a growing drug trade and a declining banana industry. At the same time, St. Lucia boasts a rich and scenic natural environment, making the island a highly desirable touristic destination. The center of St. Lucia is dominated by mountains covered with dense vegetation, including large areas of primary rainforest. Bathed by the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, St. Lucia has varied marine life, including 90 sq km of coral reefs (cf. Map 2).

In recent years, however, these marine resources have come under rising pressure from natural disturbances, such as tropical storms and hurricanes (Burke & Maidens, 2004). In particular, the hurricanes of 1994 ("Debbie") and 1999 caused landslides and erosion resulting in heavy siltation[1] due to runoff. At the same time, water temperatures have been rising in the Caribbean leading to massive and adverse coral bleaching. Beyond these natural challenges, the coral has also had to endure a growing population along the coasts. Related threats include over-fishing, overuse by the tourism industry (yachts, divers, tour operators), as well as pollution and sedimentation from land-based activities, such as construction, water discharges from towns and resorts, pollution from agricultural fertilizers, etc. Map 2 shows that most of the remaining coral is located on the east coast, which has been traditionally less populous and economically underutilised. The west coast thus harbours most of the island's ecological problems.

The vicinity of the town of Soufrière has been particularly problem-prone, with a high concentration of activities competing for coastal use. Although St. Lucia's capital is Castries, most nationals acknowledge that the soul of the island is Soufrière, the former capital during French rule. Centrally located on the island's western coast, Soufrière is a picturesque rural town of about 6,000 people, which rises to 8,000 when the surrounding communities are taken into account. Known for its rich natural, cultural and historical heritage, Soufrière boasts most of St. Lucia's key tourism attractions, including the famous Pitons (twin volcanic peaks

[1] Siltation refers to the accumulation on the coral reefs of various particles (sand, clay, etc.) coming from land; this can cause corals to die.

that are a national pride) and the Diamond waterfall, which has attracted famous film directors. St. Lucia also features one of the world's only "drive-in" volcanoes, containing open sulphur springs (a geothermal field with sulphurous fumaroles), as well as historic mineral baths, an old-growth rain forest and a remarkable belt of coral reefs. Combined with crystal-clear coastal waters, Soufrière offers an incredible bounty of natural beauty. Modernisation has been slowed by Soufrière's physical isolation, which was alleviated by an improved west-coast road that nevertheless reinforced economic (as opposed to touristic) concentration in Castries. Photo 1 provides an overview of this site. By the beginning of the 1990s, an explosive situation had emerged due to the developments described below.

1.2 The Rise of Conflicts

Starting in the second half of the 1980s, traditional fishing activity combined with the growth in tourism required more access to marine spaces. By the early 1990s, competition was becoming intense for limited space and resources, and a vast array of discontent emerged,[2] resulting in a series of conflicts among coastal users:

- Conflicts first arose between seine-net fishers and overnight yachters, both of whom increasingly depended on the same sandy bays, deep and protected, that had become important resting sites for yachts on their way through the Caribbean. Fishers of coastal pelagic species were especially affected. Seine-net fishing, which involves encircling large groups of fish as they progress through the bay, is difficult. But since it can be highly lucrative, it is extremely important to the community. However, yachters were hardly willing to pull up anchor during dawn or dusk to make room for this activity.
- Additional tension crystallised over a new jetty, centrally placed in Soufrière Bay to welcome the inflow of tourist boats from the capital Castries, or from abroad. This structure further obstructed seine-net fishing and deepened the conflict between the fishers and the yachters and tour operators, who were bringing in visitors from Castries (cf. Photo 4).
- Clashes emerged as pot and bottom-net fishers accused divers of deliberately damaging their fishing devices during dive expeditions, by "freeing the fish" and negatively impacting coral reefs.
- Fishers accused researchers of taking too many fish and coral reef samples, causing environmental degradation.
- Local residents, who wanted access to beach areas for fishing and recreation, were in conflict with hoteliers, who felt that the presence of "noisy" locals did not suit the taste of foreign tourists looking for rest and relaxation.
- Tourist boats were accused by fishers of disturbing fish and damaging fishing gear by coming too close to fishers at work, or in the direct path of fishing gear.
- There were also countless reports of "visitor harassment" by disorganised water taxis trying to sell services to visitors, annoying them and detracting from their overall experience in Soufrière.
- Furthermore, indiscriminate anchoring on coral reefs by yachters was also often reported, to the dismay of both fishers and environmentalists.
- Entry of boats, divers and snorkelers into this fragile habitat was still unregulated, including entry of unauthorised or improperly prepared scientific researchers.
- Waste accumulation (plastics, as well as incoming untreated water from both the city and the resorts) was also denounced.

In the end, the decrease in near-shore fisheries, in water quality, in coastal landscapes and in the general health of marine life was becoming apparent to all users, with each group blaming the other. Coastal conflicts thus became a structural feature of life in Soufrière, and their rising intensity had a serious negative impact on both the tourism and fishing industries. The unwritten rule of "open access" to marine resources, traditionally enjoyed by fishers and increasingly by tourism-related operators, was proving to be no longer sustainable.

[2] Tensions at this time have been described by a range of government observers and local actors (George 1996; SMMA 1998; Pierre 2000; Pierre-Nathoniel, 2003).

1.3 The Social Significance of Reef Fishing in Soufrière

The Soufrière district has an estimated population of 8,200, and around 150 officially registered fishers, of whom 60% are full-time (around 90 fishers), while the rest fish on a part-time or seasonal basis. However, many locals revert to fishing, even though they are not formally registered and do not own a boat, so that the fishing community is far larger than the officially reported numbers. Slightly more than 100 fishing vessels operate from the town, including canoes, pirogues and chaloops,[3] with many owners renting their boats to others, depending on demand. Moreover, when one takes into account the number of families that depend significantly on fishing for their livelihood, it seems more realistic to assume that the fishing community is at least 10% of the local population – a raw estimate supported by most interviewees.

Even this figure, however, does not do justice to the significance of fishing for the local community. Not only is fishing at the core of Soufrière's traditional identity, but most families in the district have relatives involved in this activity. Moreover, the fragile socioeconomic situation of most of the population makes fishing an important recourse in case of unemployment. So much so, that despite a relatively small community, fishing very much governs a large part of Soufrière's psyche and its self-hood.

Approximately 80 tons of fish are caught annually,[4] most of which is sold on local markets and the rest consumed by the fishers and their families. In Soufrière, nevertheless, the fishing sector has been slow to modernise, or simply to follow trends on the island. Soufrière fishers have indeed remained particularly dependent on near-shore resources, unlike other communities to the east, south and north that have moved much more into offshore fishing. A key reason for this is that Soufrière's location puts it at a disadvantage, since compared with other communities, it is furthest from the migratory routes of the valuable ocean species - such as tuna, dolphin-fish and kingfish.

This larger distance increases operational costs and discourages fishers from investing in the gear and vessels required to work offshore. Thus, the majority of Soufrière fishers have not made the transition to offshore fishing (George, 1996; Pierre, 2000); they continue to rely heavily on passing schools of coastal pelagic species (such as balaoo, jacks, and sardines), which they catch using "seine nets". These are large nets that hang vertically in the water (with weights along the bottom edge and floats along the top), which are used like a fence to encircle a school of fish, as a boat drives around the fish in a circle. Photo 2 shows the seine nets and the small, open vessels from which the fishers operate, reflecting an artisanal-type of fishing.

However, since seine-net fishing is possible only from December to July, fishing activity extends to the coral reefs, where the fish are numerous throughout the year. Reef fishing is done using devices such as fish traps (known as "pots" or "tombé levé",[5] see Photo 3) or bottom nets,[6] and it is important for many individuals in the community because it is cheap, easy and always possible. So reef fishing very much functions as insurance against unemployment or loss of income, "when a man has nothing left to feed his family", as one interviewee put it. Accordingly, several full-time fishers engage in more than one type of fishing, while most of the part-timers specialise in pot fishing.

1.4 From Top-Down Regulation to "Community Participation"

As early as 1986, the government tried to relieve pressure on coastal resources and alleviate conflict. The Department of Fisheries, under the Ministry of Agriculture, introduced Fishing Priority Areas in key seining locations, as well as several Marine Reserves for reef protection. It also tried to establish a range of regulations against coral collection, gear and pot tampering by divers, as well as marine pollution.

These solutions, however, proved short-lived and were not accepted by the locals. Funds were lacking for proper

[3] FAO (2006) and author's estimates.

[4] Pierre-Nathoniel (2003) and the author's estimates, based on interviews at the Fishermen's Cooperative.

[5] In French, "tombé levé" means "dropped down and pulled up".

[6] Bottom nets (or "gillnets") were banned in the SMMA in September 1998 due to their damaging impact on the coral reefs.

demarcation and enforcement of the priority zone boundaries. Moreover, the creation of marine reserves was based on the geographical distribution of resources, so that the richest areas were set aside for conservation, with little attention given to the socioeconomic consequences for the fishers. Some meetings took place between public agencies and local stakeholders to try to resolve the situation. Nevertheless, decisions eventually came from the capital a few days later and rarely gained local acceptance. As a fisher recalls:

At the end of the 1980s, when things started to get worse, some harsh zoning decisions came from Castries after some people sent by ministries came around here for a few hours, pretending to meet people here and there. In other words, the government did not want to hear us. Why should we have obeyed? This was going nowhere.

The situation in Soufrière deteriorated as people passively or actively opposed any governmental scheme. The feeling thus emerged that a different approach was needed, one leaving more room for local collaboration and discussion – a process that could potentially secure more commitment from local stakeholders. At the beginning of the 1990s, in Soufrière as in the rest of the world, the discourse on "community participation" thus began to burgeon, fed by the disappointment created by top-down attempts. Voluntary participation by local stakeholders was thus sought in order to design a commonly agreed-upon maritime management plan, including consensual zoning for "what activities could be performed where". This process was technically and financially supported by a range of international donors.

After two years of public negotiations, the resulting institutional structure, the Soufrière Maritime Management Association, was formally established in 1994. Better known in professional circles as the SMMA, it was endorsed by the St. Lucian government as a new kind of not-for-profit organisation led by a multi-stakeholder board, bringing together a range of private and public actors. To date, the SMMA is still responsible for the surveillance, enforcement and potential evolution of the zoning agreement that regulates the use of 11 km of coastline between two coves: from Anse Jambon in the north to Anse L'Ivrogne in the south[7] (Map 3).

The SMMA has now been functioning for 15 years. It has attracted international fame and received a range of prizes for its CP approach to pacifying conflicts among users. As early as 1997, it won the first award given for national parks and protected areas by the World Conservation Union/British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow, and it received that award from the world-renowned environmentalist David Bellamy. The SMMA was later chosen as a demonstration site by the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) – a scientific network for coral conservation.[8] It has also been subject to regular evaluations by international donors, leading to largely positive appraisals, including a recent assessment commissioned by a key French contributor (French GEF, 2008). In what follows, however, we shall go deeper into the origins and institutional practices of the SMMA to provide a more refined analysis of this "success story".

[7] "Anse" means "cove" in French.

[8] ICRAN is an international network of scientific and conservation organisations supported by the United Nations Environment Programme.

Map 1. Location of the island-state of St. Lucia, in the Caribbean

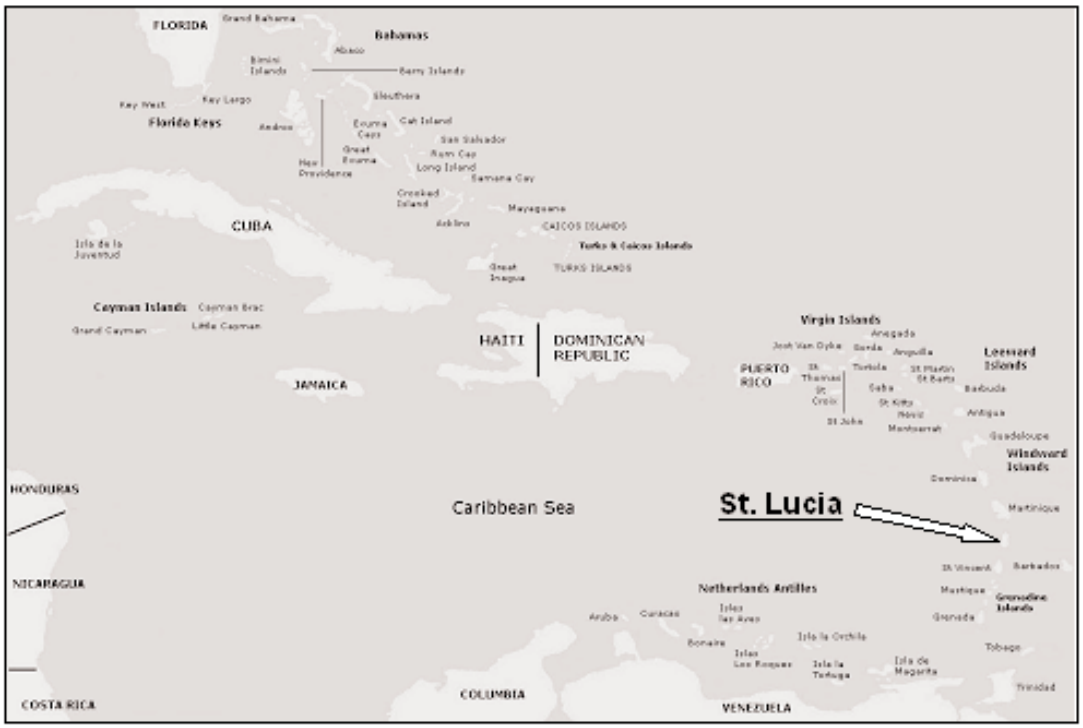
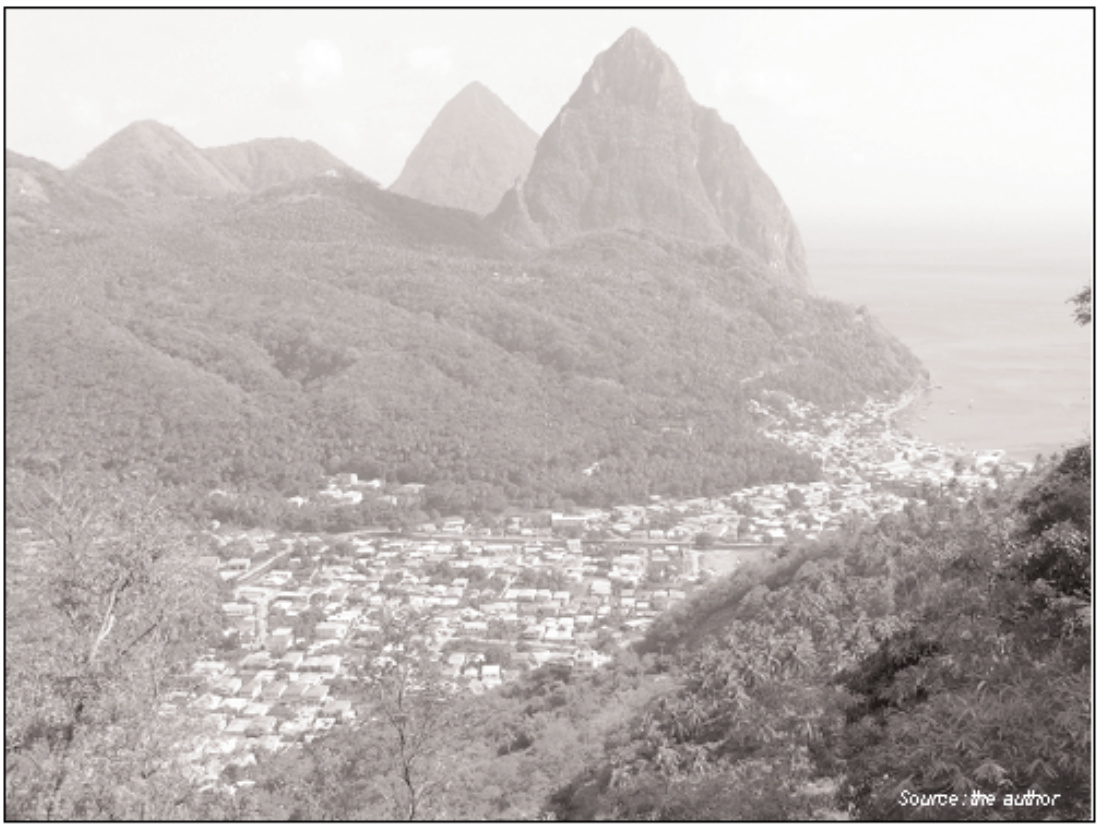


Photo 1. Soufrière town and its two famous "Pitons"



Map 2. St. Lucia, its coral reefs and the location of the SMMA

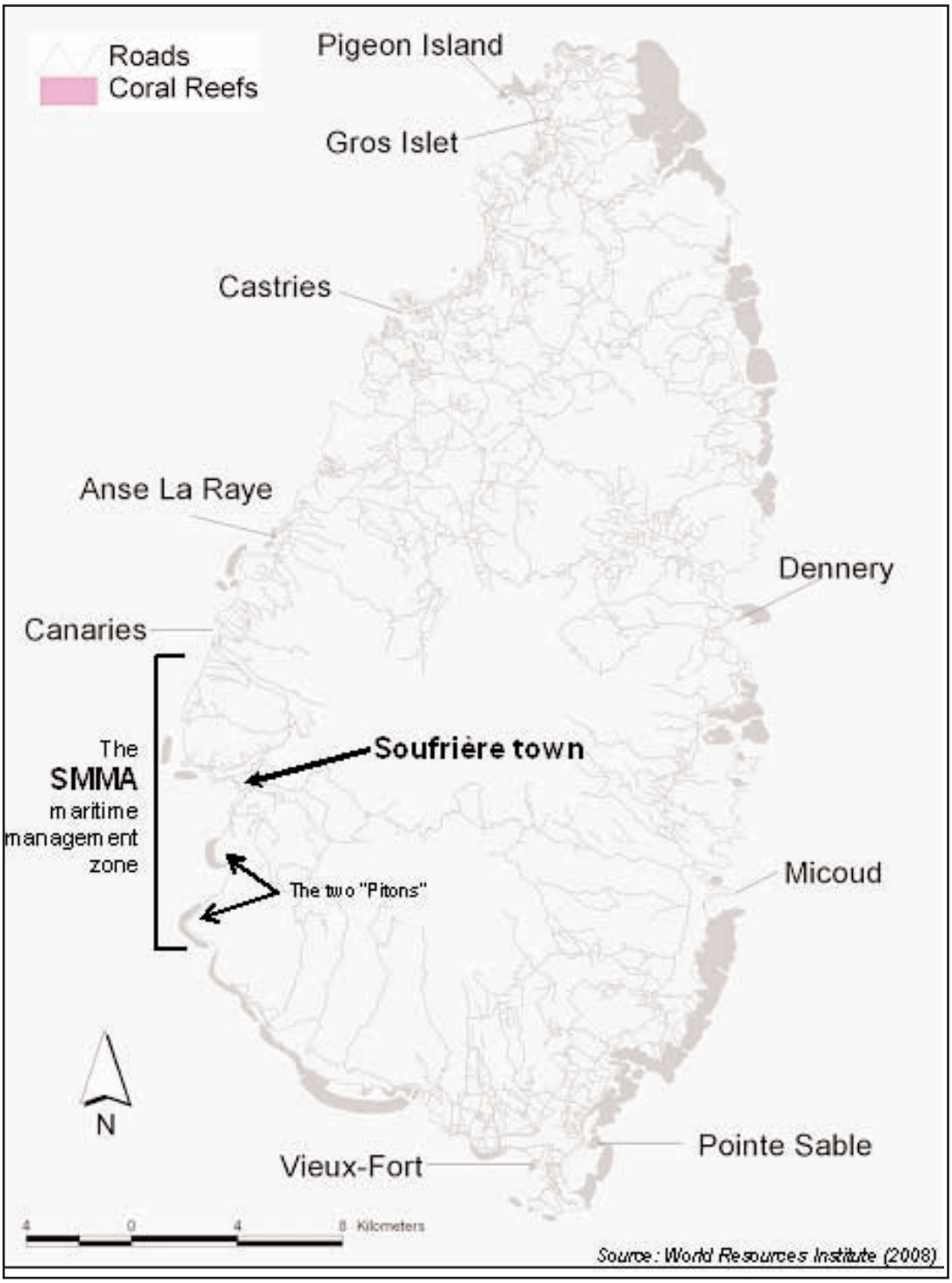
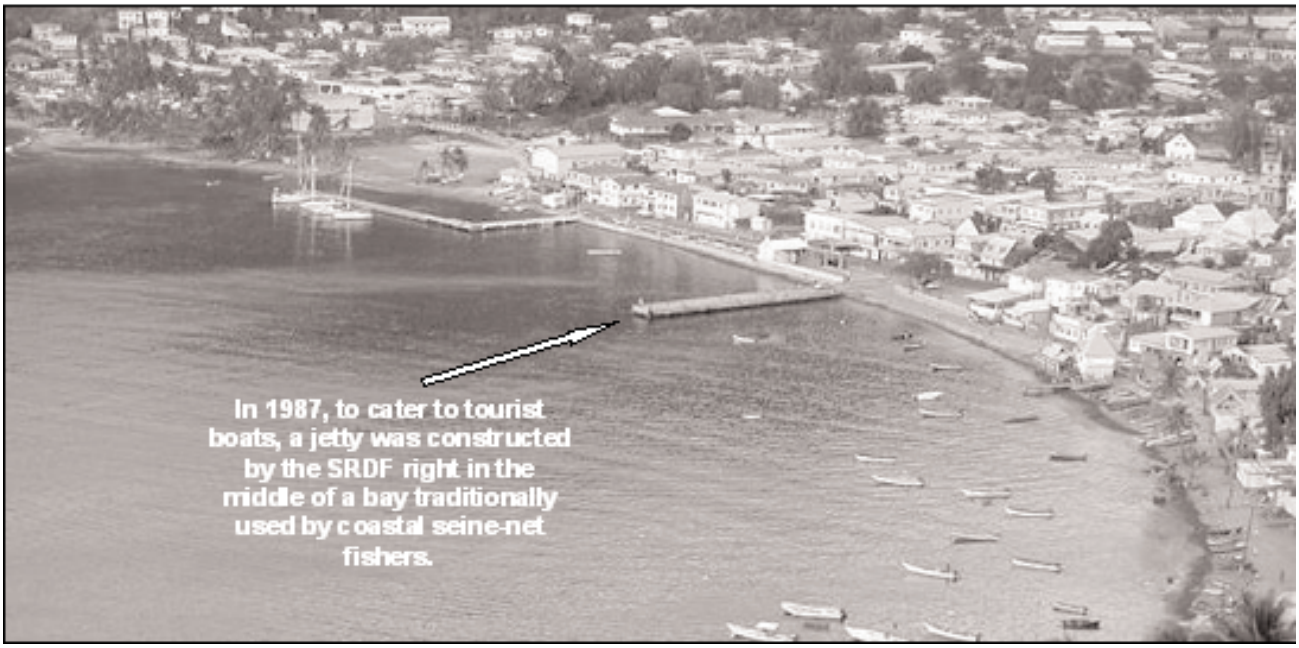


Photo 2. A traditional fishing boat and its seine nets

Photo 3. Trapping fish with "pots" in Soufrière's coral reefs

Photo 4. The Jetty: built in the middle of Soufrière Bay



Source: Soufrière Maritime Management Association

2. Project Genesis: The True Origins of the SMMA

Standard accounts of the SMMA, in public and project documents, present it as a process initiated by the local community – often with little more explanation. This section argues, however, that SMMA's origin lies in the will and vision of a local business elite concerned with promoting Soufrière as a tourism destination. Early on, these people partnered with the government (which had been unable to manage the worsening Soufrière situation), as well as with a regional think tank that had practical experience throughout the Caribbean and donor connections worldwide.

On the instigation of this threefold alliance, a "consultation and negotiation process" was indeed launched in Soufrière. After a period of "intense public participation" – with high inclusion, scope and intensity – the process became more complex, difficult to follow for the non-institutional actors, socially split (with a pre-eminence of various elites) and influenced by non-community actors. It was during this second phase of the process that decisions were made about the most controversial issues. Nevertheless, an idealised story of "democratic conflict resolution" was disseminated by the elites involved and speedily "bought" by international donors.

This analysis does not aim to show that true CP is impossible or useless — much to the contrary. Rather, it highlights the delicate nature of CP processes, and how easily they can miss their social objectives regarding inclusion, despite good intentions and strong efforts.

2.1 The Originating Alliance

Who initiated the move to create a "participatory" management institution? Who designed it, conceptually and institutionally? Who brought the money in initially? Who made the subsequent financial and scientific contributions? Such questions, on the origins of the SMMA and the nexus of actors behind it, shed light on what the SMMA is really about.

The typical report on the creation of the SMMA, found in most project and policy documents, is brief and elusive. For instance, French GEF (2008, p.5) states:

In 1992, a local NGO, the 'Soufrière Regional Development Foundation', supported by several funding agencies - particularly the French funds FAC and French GEF and USAID - started an independent and participatory planning process.

Such specific word choice easily makes the SMMA look like a bottom-up process exemplifying participation from within the community:[9] *here comes a local NGO that simply calls on external donors to help a community set up its "independent" planning process*. The epithet "independent" notably gives the impression that the State is far in the background - and maybe not even there.

What really happened was rather different. The initial idea of the SMMA, as a participatory management institution, came indeed from the so-called Soufrière Regional Development Foundation (SRDF). But what kind of NGO is this? Certainly not one characterised by community-wide leadership.

The SRDF was created in 1987 based on the will and personal involvement of three high-profile local business people.[10] Two of them owned large real estate properties in the area, as well as businesses in tourism: Soufrière's first

[9] We rely here on the analytical grid presented in Charnoz, 2009a and 2009b.

[10] Mr. Clem Bobb, Mr. Troubetskoy and Mrs. Joaner Devaux.

and well-known luxury hotel (Anse Chastenet) and a vast botanical garden (Diamond Gardens), famous throughout the Caribbean. Since its inception, the SRDF has focused on the promotion of Soufrière as a tourism destination. It tried, notably, to make the city more attractive to foreign eyes, fixing run-down paved streets and buildings, financing part of the annual carnival, beautifying the waterfront with trees, benches, lampposts, etc. The SRDF also worked on promoting tourist safety and tranquillity by trying to curb the habit of some locals to "go up to tourists and convince them into buying some petty service" (as an interviewee put it). To finance its activities, the SRDF very adeptly obtained from the government the right to manage the Soufrière Sulphur Springs, a prime public property on volcanic terrain that produces consistent and rising touristic revenues.

The government entrusted the SRDF with management responsibility for reinvesting these revenues for the benefit of the local community - hence the term "foundation" in the name of the NGO. This "amazing deal" – as an interviewee put it – was secured on the basis of good personal relations between the Prime Minister at the time and the business people who founded and directed the SRDF. Given its revenue base and elite leadership, this organisation is thus a very particular entity that bears little resemblance to a typical local NGO. Although the SRDF's Board includes a few representatives drawn from local civil society, there is little doubt that it was, and still is, managed by the local economic elite, with strong social capital and political connections.

The first significant project carried out by the SRDF was the creation of a jetty so as to welcome more tourist boats. This caused significant problems for traditional seine-net fishers because the jetty was built right in the middle of a bay they had been using for generations (cf. Photo 4). In that sense, to say the least, the SRDF did not have a good starting relationship with Soufrière's fishers. At the beginning of the 1990s, the SRDF was still led by people with direct stakes in tourism and a future centred on this industry. Its Board was frustrated by the continuing tensions on the coast, notably between the tourism and fishing sectors, as well as with the lack of results from government intervention. The SRDF board thus looked for a new approach. Confirmed by other interviewees, an SMMA proponent at the time recalls: *Who had a vision for the whole Soufrière area, in the absence of any serious local authority? Who had the administrative and political networks to start a process? Who had interests at stake and money to make? The answer is always the same: the business people who made the SRDF. The SMMA was their idea.*

While the SRDF was the initiator of the SMMA process, it immediately looked for help from two other actors to form an initial *alliance* and to share the role of facilitator. First, the Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture, which was happy to find a dedicated partner and a way forward after years of issuing regulations that were not being enforced in Soufrière. As several interviewees recalled, the prospect of sharing the costs of environmental monitoring was strongly appealing to this Ministry; hence, it offered to defend the scheme before the government. Secondly, through the personal connections of both the SRDF and the Ministry, a think tank focused on the Caribbean region, with expertise acknowledged by several international donors, was also brought into the picture. The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute – better known as CANARI – proved indeed instrumental in designing, setting up and running things.

Thus, the Soufrière CP process stemmed from the joint initiative of three partners that formed a mixed public-private-scientific alliance, rather than from the individual efforts of a local NGO, as is often depicted. As the *initiator*, the SRDF provided the initial impetus (the local "community" dimension that could attract donors), as well as high-level political contacts and a demonstrated ability to run technical projects in the area. The Department of Fisheries contributed its authority, legal mandate and ability to lobby the government: it was the main *supporter* of the scheme at the beginning. Meanwhile, CANARI added to the endeavour its perceived independence, scientific expertise and experience; it later acted as the key *designer* of the SMMA as an institution, providing technical support and facilitating and synthesising public consultations. In other words, based on the typology that we built (cf. Charnoz, 2009*b*), **Community participation in Soufrière originated from "balanced sources", mixing an initiator *from within*, a supporter *from above* and a designer *from the outside***.

The remarkable characteristic of this process was the total absence of the fishing community, which was nevertheless

a key actor on Soufrière's coasts. As one interviewee put it: *The fishers were to be brought into a new process, to obtain their consent. [Participation] was a way to move this inflexible community.*

Still, the analysis of the origins of CP in Soufrière does not end here, since the *originating alliance* worked hard to mobilise funds from international donors – and this complicates matters. Since the CP project was designed entirely to be eligible for such funds, the *upstream influence of money coming from abroad* cannot be overstated. The consultation and negotiation process leading to the SMMA was financed by the American government through USAID, its international aid agency. Since 1991, USAID had developed an Environmental and Coastal Resources project (known in the Caribbean's as the ENCORE project[11]), whose main stated objective was the diffusion and legitimisation of the CP discourse - or in official words: *To demonstrate that the collaboration between public, private and community interests can conserve the natural resource base and enhance biodiversity while promoting economic development (CEHI, 1997, p.7).*

The ENCORE project had two components: a regional one comprising all the countries in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and a local one, as was implemented in St. Lucia. The idea was to allocate grants to local projects in line with the ENCORE philosophy. According to interviewees, there is little doubt that the financial incentive provided by USAID was of central importance in choosing CP as the operational mode. Had the SRDF and the St. Lucia government simply asked for more money to enforce regulations on Soufrière, USAID would not have responded. The originating alliance of the SRDF knew what kind of projects could obtain financial support - and CANARI also had experience with donors' environmental concerns.

After a two-year consultation process (analysed in the next section), the French government also joined this project, paying for most of the set-up costs of the SMMA.[12] It is critical to note, however, that the French only contributed on the basis of CP taking place, and based funding on the reassurance that:

A local NGO, associating the local population and representatives from various ministries, has already carried out a large public consultation (French Republic, 1994, p.24).

In other words, use of the CP discourse proved to be key to securing international funding. This latter included money from the United Nations Environment Programme/Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP/CEP) and Saint Lucia's National Commission for UNESCO. The role of CANARI was critical, in that respect, since this organisation had experience putting into practice the CP social terminology expected by donors, through explicit or implicit pre-conditions. Thus, external donors were instrumental in rooting the CP discourse at the local level, through the soft but compulsory power of their financial incentives and pre-conditions.

2.2 Popular Consultation and Elite Negotiation

Supported by American funds, a public consultation and negotiation process was launched in 1992. It started as a highly *inclusive* and *intense* CP process, with a large and upstream *scope*, but soon changed in nature. As the hardest to resolve issues were being identified, this broad-based public consultation slowly turned into a more *formal* process, giving *de facto* pre-eminence to organised interest groups. As the discussion left the informal and public sphere, institutional power stepped in and a less transparent elite-centred negotiation took over, driving out weaker groups, such as the poorer fishers. The resulting SMMA agreement, in the form of a zoning plan, was indeed based on "consensus" as is claimed in most documents, but a consensus among the strongest actors and interest groups. To amass the facts for this period, we relied on various interviews, a small set of archives, as well as a

[11] This project was a partnership between the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Member States of the OECS, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) and the United States, acting through the Agency for International Development (USAID). The partnership was sealed by an initial six-year project (ENCORE) for the period 1991 to 1997, and was funded by a US$11-million grant from USAID.

[12] While USAID provided close to € 50,000 for the consultation process, the French "Fond d'Aide et de Coopération" (FAC) provided about €120,000 and the French Global Environment Facility (French GEF) €240,000. French agency money paid for the initial moorings, patrol boat, communication equipment, SMMA office, salaries for the manager and marine rangers for three months, as well as for a national service volunteer for 16 months. French technical assistance was provided to the SMMA for a total of 46 months.

detailed account provided a few years after by Renard (1996) - although it should be noted that our conclusions are quite different from his. The schism we pointed out between a broad-based process and an institutional/elite-based one was to deepen even further in the early years of SMMA operations – as we shall see in the next section.

At the beginning of the consultation process, state-of-the-art, best practices of CP were implemented under the technical guidance of CANARI, so as to stimulate a "genuine dialogue within the community and with other stakeholders". The first step took place on August 27, 1992, when a three-day community consultation meeting was convened. It brought together more than 60 people from 25 different sectors or institutions, as recollects Renard (1996, p.3). Each interest group was supposed to be represented by multiple people. Fishers, divers, hotels, restaurants, small or large businesses, diving operators, parent associations and school teachers, taxis, construction companies, etc. — all seemed to have attended one way or another.

According to all interviewees, the inclusiveness at the beginning of the CP effort was thus *wide* and *socially mixed*, including people from very modest backgrounds.[13] People had been invited in by the SRDF, the Department of Fisheries and CANARI, and were told that "all previous decisions and management arrangements were reopened for discussion". Not only was the CP effort being strongly inclusive, but the *scope* was also *large and upstream*, since the diagnosis of problems and any potential solutions were open to debate. During these days, a range of typical CP methods were used to foster group discussion, including the drawing of large coloured maps. Several groups of participants were also taken on boats trips to map resources, their uses and the location of conflicts.

One may note, however, that during these first days, the *originating alliance* (the SRDF, the government and CANARI) made its leadership acknowledged and approved at the first community meeting. The *originating agents* thus transformed their initial advantage of being the first movers in launching the CP scheme, into an institutional advantage that would last throughout the negotiation process. Thus, the SRDF was formally designated as the lead institution, while the Department of Fisheries and CANARI were to act as joint facilitators.

In November 1992, a second large meeting was convened. Participants were asked to confirm the information on resources and locations of conflict, established during the first session. The point was to "reach agreement on all areas and issues for which agreement appeared relatively easy to reach". Meanwhile, the most severe conflicts were identified, "with the understanding that they would be addressed after the meeting" (Renard, 1996, p.4).[14] Here started, arguably, a "splitting process" whereby decisions on real conflicts were postponed and discussed later in a completely different setting. This *displacement of participation* slowly took place during the whole of 1993, after the initial heat of the 1992 "participatory consultations" cooled down.

The main outcome of the November 1992 meeting had been the idea of a new zoning system specifying the various coastal uses and demarcating their exact boundaries. But how to define such a zoning plan in detail was another matter. Negotiations regarding places of conflict were transferred into another sphere, a much less public and transparent one, through an accumulation of small practical changes and a more technical discourse.

Decisions were reported to "other meetings for further discussions". Various "working groups" were created that had more technical legitimacy and restricted membership. Time also proved an important factor in taming public involvement: the passing months eventually diverted most of the lay people away from the negotiation, about which they would hear less and less and from an increasing distance. The frequency and attendance of public meetings sharply diminished, and a large opportunity opened for organised interest groups to negotiate directly with the three organisations in charge. Unlike the local fishers, the major hotels, dive-tour operators and Anbaglo (St. Lucia's diving association) held direct talks with the Department of Fisheries. Meanwhile, key players in the community, notably "business interests with major stakes in the outcomes of the negotiation process" held numerous discussions with the SRDF (Renard, 1996, p.4).

[13] There are no available archival documents on who exactly participated to this first meeting, but many interviewees confirmed that attendance was high and socially broad-based.

[14] These issues included the location of marine reserves around Gros Piton and Anse Chastenet, as well as regulations for land-based activities affecting the coast.

Another defining characteristic of the 1993 "negotiations", was the sending of written draft proposals to stakeholders, to which they could respond in writing. Such a formalisation of the discussion was surely not designed to help fishers contribute and make their voices heard: these men are usually illiterate, let alone masters of correct English. Moreover, few fishers can afford to invest in a lengthy and formal dialogue. A form of institutional power was thus arguably exercised over them in the evolution of the SMMA process. The *intensity* of their participation was radically weakened.

In the following extract, Renard (1996, p.4) recalls this second phase of the negotiation process. We have underlined noticeable techniques of formalisation and institutionalisation.

In a meeting of March 1993 the Department of Fisheries presented draft recommendations on zoning and regulations, which were discussed, modified and approved, [save for two decisions]. In conclusion, the meeting mandated a small working group to examine in more detail the outstanding matters, to conduct negotiation and to formulate recommendations. It was further agreed that all recommendations would be contained in an agreement, which would be drafted by one of the facilitators and submitted for final review. [A new draft agreement was prepared and circulated]. Several institutions provided written comments, which were integrated in the subsequent versions of the document". (…) Then the SRDF convened a meeting with a small number of institutions to examine in greater detail the legal and institutional arrangements for the implementation of that agreement. On [this basis], a final section of the agreement was drafted. (Renard,1996, p.4).

Renard discusses here only "institutions" responding to "proposals", prepared by other institutions. From this recollection, it appears that lay people had completely disappeared from the picture. Meanwhile, "working groups" and proposals drafted by the *originating agents* led the rest of the "discussion". The use of "working groups" deserves special attention since it arguably muted the demands of the fishers and enabled polluters with powerful allies not to be bothered by the SMMA.

The working group on land-based pollution, for instance, initially raised concerns about deforestation in the Soufrière district resulting from construction (impacting costal zones through sedimentation), pesticide run-off from large agricultural properties, oil discharge from the gas station near the jetty, caustic waste from the copra factory (coconut processing) and sewage and solid waste from yachts and the city of Soufrière itself. These issues, however, were not considered further, since the working group did not offer any practical solutions. Thus, nothing was done to include land-based polluters in the overall SMMA scheme, even though this had been a clear initial demand from the fishers.

As for the working group on marine reserves, it was soon dominated in practice by environmentalist voices suggesting that the healthiest coral reefs should be set aside for conservation. This view nicely suited the large hotels, since snorkelers and divers could have access to these areas for a small fee.

The need for these "working groups" and their legitimacy was based on the notion that "technical negotiations must involve fewer people to be feasible", as an interviewee recalled. But this new discourse, which emerged during the middle of the CP process, provided a "privileged position given to certain actors". This is exactly an instance of "productive power" through the use of technical and anti-political discourse (as defined in Charnoz 2009*b*).

In conclusion, the initial CP process soon lost its inclusiveness, scope and intensity. It essentially became an elite-centred deliberation with shared interests and objectives among environmentalists and tourism businesses. The ordinary fishers were confined to a purely *consultative* process, mostly held in 1992, the main outcome of which had been the identification of "really conflictual issues" - settled through a vastly different process. This displacement took place based on the application of both institutional and productive power.

2.3 The Founding Agreement

After the deployment of "community participation", a final agreement was reached in February 1994[15] and submitted in March to the government, for approval by the Minister of *Tourism* – which suggests which interests were primarily taken care of. The Cabinet Ruling 253/1994 authorised demarcation of the proposed fishing priority areas and marine reserves. It also allowed the collection of fees from yachts and divers to finance the SMMA. The latter was thus created to oversee a multiple-use marine-protected area, with over 11 kilometres of coastline, from the shore to a depth of 75 meters, divided into the following zones (c.f. Map 3):

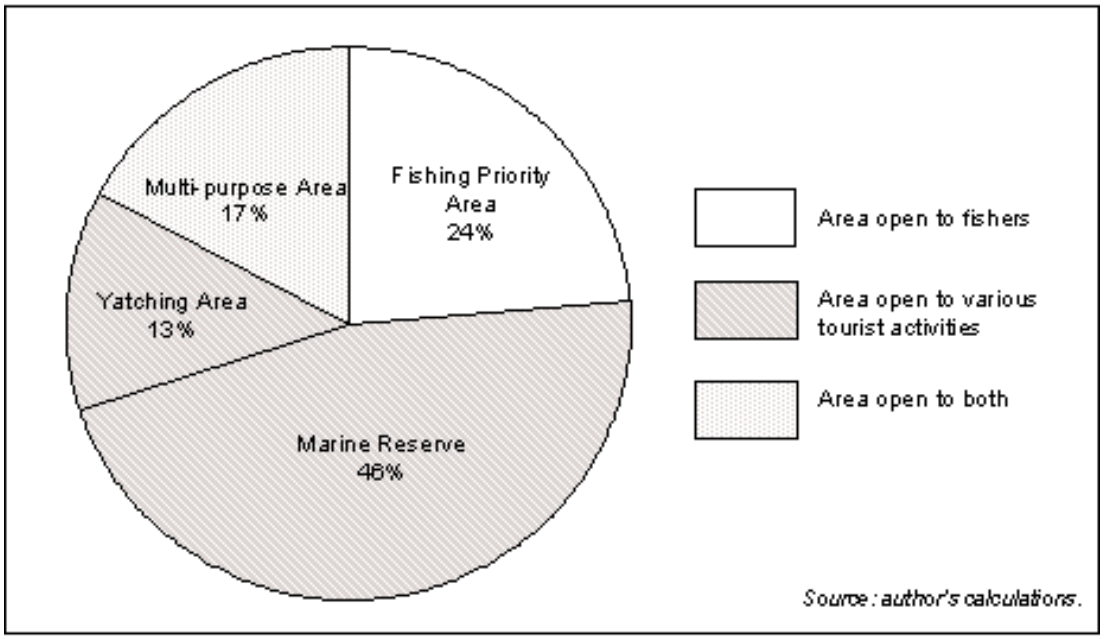
- Marine Reserves were designated for the protection of natural resources. They do not allow for any extractive activity. Entry is for a fee and by permit only – whether it is for diving, snorkelling or research. Such reserves were instated at Anse Chastanet Reef, Turtle Reef, the reefs from Grand Caille to Rachette Point and along Petit Piton and Gros Piton.
- Fishing Priority Areas were dedicated to fishing activities, taking precedence over any other use. They were established in the northern half of Anse Chastanet Bay, Trou Diable, between the Soufrière River and Bat Cave, south of the main jetty, at Malgretoute, north of the Jalousie beach, and at two points north and south of Gros Piton.
- Yacht Mooring Sites were designated for yachts and pleasure boats, in order to protect sea-grass beds and coral reefs. A fee is charged for use of the moorings, which enable boats to remain overnight with minimal impact on the seabed.
- Recreational Areas are marine and terrestrial areas (including beaches), reserved for public access and recreation, such as swimming and snorkelling. Public access was guaranteed.
- Multiple Use Areas allow for fishing, diving, snorkelling and other recreational uses, within the confines of existing regulations.

[15] Under the name *Agreement on the Use and Management of Marine and Coastal Resources in the Soufrière Region*.

Map 3. Allocating user rights: the SMMA Zoning Map

Despite its cheerful colours and icons of beach umbrellas, Map 3 from the SMMA nevertheless presents a strict demarcation of costal spaces. As Graphic 1 shows, in this SMMA zoning, fishers are barred from accessing 60% of the coastal space, even though they had access to most of it previously. Meanwhile, almost half of the coast is set aside for conservation, but this actually allows for diver and snorkeler access. Only 24% of the space does not allow, in principle, for touristic fee-based activity, although as one can see on Map 3, "recreational areas" are aligned with almost all fishing priority areas.

Graphic 1. Allocation of access rights within the SMMA marine area



In the 1994 zoning, this unbalanced allocation of benefits and access rights to marine resources was not redeemed by any "Economic Demonstration Project", cash (or payment in kind) or any other kind of compensation to benefit the fishers. The overall reaction of the fishing community to this "agreement" was one of utter shock, given the size of the marine reserves. Their concerns had been only slightly addressed by the discourse trying to *persuade* them that the reserves would result in more fish – and that more reserves would mean more fish in the end, through a "spill over effect".

2.4 Conclusion

This section has shown that neither the origins of the SMMA nor its initial consultation process were broad-based within the community. The creation of a new coastal-management scheme was advocated by an alliance of three actors with little connection to Soufrière's fishers, but with strong interest in economic development through tourism. Meanwhile, the choice of CP as the mode of action was supported by strong financial incentives from international donors. As for the preparatory process leading to the SMMA zoning map, it rapidly moved from broad-based public consultation to an elite-centred negotiation, undergoing several evolutions of institutional and productive power. This drove fishers out and protected some land-based polluters from being identified in the SMMA set of rights and duties. The resulting "agreement" was in fact a "deal" struck in the virtual absence of most of the fishing community. Essentially, it prevented Soufrière fishers from accessing 60% of the coast. Under such a process, asserting the legitimacy of the SMMA as a community-based, democratic organisation was soon to prove impossible, as the 1997 events were to demonstrate.

3. Early Implementation: Resistance and Politics

This section demonstrates that the newly created SMMA did not put into practice its proclaimed participatory philosophy. First, the implementation of the original agreement through the creation of a precise management plan and institutional design was done outside of any participatory context. Second, the first years of SMMA operations confirmed the limited inclusion of the poorer fishers in key decisions, leading to their growing discontent. Third, failing to *institutionalise* an ongoing dialogue, the SMMA faced an increasingly politicised resistance – so much so that outright politics eventually was reverted to by all the stakeholders in their efforts to prevail. What can be observed, then, was refusal of "institutional participation" and recourse to "political participation": as non-elite community members were not heard within the institution, they voiced their discontent in the public space, provoking the types of crises and conflicts that can sometimes force a re-negotiation of the rules of the game. This process of "re-appropriation" by the less-advantaged in the community was opposed, nevertheless, by waves of "scientific expertise" and the lobby for potent interest groups. To support these claims and re-examine the early years of the SMMA, we relied on archives, a range of interviews, as well as accounts and analysis provided by Brown (1997), Sanderson & Koester (2000), Pierre-Nathoniel (2003) and Trist (2003).

3.1 The Pre-eminence of the Initial Alliance

The agreement of February 1994 was followed later that year by a three-day implementation workshop (September 21-23), at a luxury hotel in Soufrière, which led to the adoption of a Management Plan for the Soufrière Marine Management Area. This key meeting was attended by 13 people, among whom were virtually no fishers from the local community. Present were three people from the government, two from the SRDF, one biologist consultant, one researcher, two representatives of the French donor and two of the American donor. Key local decisions were thus to be jointly made by a range of non-community actors of various backgrounds: a clear example of "domestic-global power formation" (cf. Charnoz, 2009*b*).

The first decision of the resulting management plan was to entrust the SRDF (essentially linked to tourism interests, as we previously established) with the everyday running of the SMMA: the latter was to be "a distinct programme of the Soufrière Foundation" (SMMA, 1994, p.4). The SRDF had the responsibility to recruit and supervise all staff. Meanwhile, it had to report and work "under the guidance" of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). This committee, despite its administrative name, was the mechanism that was supposed to ensure an *inclusive* and *active* participation of the community in the decision-making. It was intended to comprise "representatives from all major resource users and monitoring groups" (SMMA, 1994, p.12).

Within the TAC, however, fishers were very weakly represented, as well as being encircled by a massive showing of tourism-related interest groups and public authorities - all concerned with promoting "modern-type" development. The TAC included 11 people directly representing private interests in the tourism sector, notably representatives of the large hotel resorts, the St. Lucia Tourist Board, the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association and the Day Charter Boat Association. A representative

from the French donor was also part of TAC, as well as conservationist NGOs, such the St. Lucia National Trust and, of course, CANARI.

The only way fishers were ever represented on the TAC was through two people from the *Soufrière Fishermen's Cooperative*: its president and sometimes its vice-president. This Cooperative, however, misrepresents the fishing community, which is socially diverse. The current president of the Cooperative explained to us in an interview that only 30% of the fishers in Soufrière own their boats, indicating that most (70%) have to rent them. Members of the Cooperative, however, are all boat owners.[16] This is not a formal requirement, but merely due to circumstances – the primary goal of the Cooperative is to buy equipment and gas at a cheaper price, which benefits mostly capital owners and offshore fishers who own their boats. Moreover, not all boat owners are members, and the involvement of younger fishers in this Cooperative is rather low. Thus, the Cooperative brings together a relatively small set of the wealthier fishers who are involved in deep-sea fishing and not dependent on near-shore and reef resources, unlike the rest of the community. In other words, the larger and poorer faction of the fishing community had no say on the TAC. Therefore, from the start, institutional power was at work, through "encirclement" and "misrepresentation".

Another type of containment was the "enrolment" of key people, drawn especially from the Soufrière fishing community. In May 1998, at a ceremony in which the SMMA was being awarded an international prize for its "participatory work", its manager gave a speech to thank "all important parties". After authorities, donors, scientists and other facilitators, the very last person to be thanked was the president of the Soufrière Fishermen's Cooperative. Here is what the SMMA manager said about him:

Last but not least, the person who always makes a very special effort (…) is Mr. Edward Mongroo, president of the Soufrière Fishermen's Cooperative. Not only has Mr. Mongroo proved to be a very engaged and vibrant TAC member, but ***he was also expected to fulfil a very difficult task, namely to 'sell' the idea of the SMMA to the Soufrière fishermen****.*

These words are worth repeating: the president was *expected to sell the idea* to the fishermen. Such wording acknowledges that the SMMA was surely not an idea of the fishers, but also that the president of the Cooperative had been enrolled to perform a specific and crucial job.

The SMMA staff also had to report once a month to a Technical Working Group (TWG) established by the TAC to "provide technical advice and guidance to the day-to-day implementation of activities" (*ibid*. p.4). The composition of the TWG was as follows: the Manager of the SMMA; a representative of CANARI; a representative of the Department of Fisheries; and "other experts as required" (*ibid*. p.14.). Under such conditions, the process was further removed from the community by a mixed-power structure, consisting of conservationist, governmental and tourism interests.

3.2 Weakening Trust: the First Year of Operations

In June 1995, the SMMA was formally inaugurated. During the first year and a half, a volunteer from the French Mission for Technical Cooperation took on the role of SMMA manager, until a permanent appointment could be made. The influence of this key donor, on a daily basis, was thus ensured. Four marine rangers were hired, trained and assigned the responsibility of fee collection and surveillance through several daily boat patrols. Marine reserve "dive passes" (for divers) and a "coral conservation fee" (for the use of yacht moorings) were also established and expected to account for most of the operating budget.

Being barred from using 60% of the coast, and embroiled in an institutional process they could not control, many fishers already felt that the SMMA agreement was strongly biased towards conservation and tourism. Moreover, soon after its inception, doubts started to arise in the community about the collaborative spirit claimed by the SMMA. It was soon widely felt that the Technical Advisory Committee was not

[16] These estimates were confirmed in a range of other interviews.

properly representing the fishers' interests. Moreover, more and more decisions began to be made outside the TAC itself, by small groups of people, with even less transparency.

To begin with, it was decided — with no evident discussion — that part of a priority area dedicated to seine-net fishers would be shared with yachters, allowed to anchor there, to facilitate access to an adjacent waterfront restaurant (the Hummingbird Resort). This arrangement imposed a rotation, allowing fishing activities during only certain hours. Although this decision was made behind closed doors, it may seem fair at first. But the fact is that rotations are incompatible with seine-net fishing, and the fishers publicly manifested their discontent. As a fisher explained:

The fish have no watches! Who knows what time is best for seine fishing? Only the fish!

Seine-net fishing, conducted in near-shore, sandy areas, cannot be time-bound. Various interviews with fishers confirmed that this issue is unresolved, although rotation legally holds. This early disagreement with the SMMA was deeply understood by most fishers to be a breach of a promise – since they expected that the few areas left to fishing (less than a quarter of the coast) would at least be off-limits to interfering activities. This encouraged the already existing suspicion that the SMMA was going to be more sensitive to the demands of tourism than to those of traditional fishers.

A comparable lack of public consultation characterised another important issue. As fishers were manifesting a growing discontent towards the number of marine reserves, the SMMA tried to regain some trust in this community by acknowledging the potential losses of older, displaced fishers. Their lack of willingness, and/or ability, to take up alternative livelihoods was declared legitimate by the TAC, while it was not recognised as such for younger fishers.

The Technical Working Group thus selected a small number of older fishers and gave them access to certain sections of two marine reserves. Four pots (reef fish traps, cf. Photo 3) were tagged for each of the 12 pot fishers, and one bottom gillnet for each of the three gillnet fishers, with the intent of reviewing the arrangement after three months. The process of selection, however, was not transparent and no discussion was held with the larger fishing community; this was perceived as unfair, inaccurate and led again to open criticism. The younger fishers were supposed to switch to deep-sea rather than near-shore fishing, but such a shift requires far more capital (a different boat, a good engine, nets and fuel) that virtually none of them had. Moreover, moving to deep-sea fishing meant turning professional, while a large faction of the Soufrière community had always relied on part-time/traditional reef fishing as a secondary source of revenue, especially useful in difficult times.

In this context, fishers were feeling increasingly threatened by the establishment of the marine reserves. The loss of 60% of the coast meant a sharp decline in the fish catch. Meanwhile, proponents of the SMMA zoning had justified the marine reserve areas to fishers on the grounds that they would increase fish stocks by allowing regeneration and repopulation through the export of organisms, from the breeding to the fishing grounds. Since this "spill over effect" was not observed, fishers blamed the SMMA for unkempt promises or even betrayal. Disenchantment was high and in the fishers' opinion, their livelihoods were directly compromised. An increasing number of them began violating SMMA regulations by using fishing gear in marine reserve areas.

Communication between the TAC and the fishing community became even more fragmented, and almost absent. In contrast to what they thought they had agreed to, affected fishers were not present when decisions were being made. Poorer fishers felt confused by recurrent changes in access rights based on meetings they had not attended. Later on, non-attendance and misunderstanding "eventually became effective forms of resistance" (Trist, 2003, p.60).

3.3 Fishers' Active "Exit" Strategy: Politicisation

Thinking their identity and livelihoods endangered, the poorer fishers (and the most numerous by far) embarked on a process of active contestation. This took place through activist politics, outside the SMMA itself and its governance structure. Contestation cannot be said to reflect a "Voice" strategy – that is an engagement with the CP structure – but rather an active "Exit" strategy from outside the structure (cf. Charnoz, 2009*b*).

The idea that the SMMA had been created for the tourism industry alone was also evidenced in the contradicting claims that while marine reserves were meant to increase fish stocks, reef fishers should find other jobs. Finding new jobs in Soufrière was not a viable option for most, however, given their low level of education, the high unemployment rate and the shortage of opportunities.

Trying to ease growing tensions, in a spirit of *compromise* the SMMA delivered some temporary access permits, as well as interim agreements for short periods of access to marine reserves. But these partial responses proved unable to keep discontent in check. Marine reserves were increasingly violated and non-compliance with SMMA regulations slowly became the rule. As for the SMMA manager, although he was getting his instructions from the TAC, he was directly held responsible by the locals and was subjected to verbal and physical threats.

An atmosphere of overt war began to develop among the coastal stakeholders. Responding to fishers' breach of marine reserves, divers reverted to their long-standing practice of destroying fishing gear and pot traps found underwater. As for yachters, given the rising ambience of anarchy, they also began to dishonour previous arrangements, by anchoring in fishing areas. In what seemed like retaliation, robberies on yachts became increasingly frequent, so much so that Soufrière became known in the yachting sector as a place to avoid for safety reasons. Tensions also increased due to the locals' perception that "rich white tourists" – and their operators – were the ones benefiting from the zoning, and the way it was enforced. It was especially noted that divers and yachters were inconsistently controlled and even under-fined, while fishers were closely monitored. Some rare cases of scuba diving gear being confiscated did little to alter the perception of a massive imbalance and preferential treatment.

The situation was getting out of control. Initially, some policing efforts were made to keep the situation in check but they were soon abandoned, as things became politicised. This process was first started by the fishers, who felt their only remaining recourse was open politics. They managed to secure strong and open support in the Parliament from the District representative of Soufrière. Since national elections were approaching, the perceived injustice suffered by Soufrière fishermen was turned into a key political issue. Given the rising politicisation of Soufrière's issues and the attention they were being given at the national level, the SMMA and the Department of Fisheries became increasingly reluctant to confiscate fishers' materials. As a result, both the legitimacy and the credibility of the SMMA were directly challenged, and by the end of its second year, these troubles brought it to the verge of extinction.

3.4 Bypassing Participation through Politics

One of the most contentious issues was use of the northern part of Soufrière Bay. In the SMMA original agreement, one of the key concessions to fishers was the relocation of an important yacht-mooring site from the north to the south of the Bay, near Malgretoute beach (Map 3). However, this move unexpectedly resulted in a sharp decline in the number of yachts visiting Soufrière. The new anchorage space was less convenient for yachters and also made boats more vulnerable to robberies. Pressure to restore Soufrière as a central yachting destination was increasing throughout the entire island. Fishers, meanwhile, were claiming that this Fishing Priority Area was critical to their continued existence, and that its regulation could not be negotiated further. It became a symbol of their livelihood, the cornerstone of their negotiation and embodied the last stand of resistance against the inexorable intrusion of tourism.

Nevertheless, the power and economic interests at stake were unevenly matched. Based on pressure from interest groups lobbying in Castries, the Prime Minister of St. Lucia personally asked in December 1996 for the fishers to cooperate by giving up on their demand. As compensation, they obtained a slight modification of some marine reserve boundaries. But the message was clear: high-level political intervention could circumvent, whenever needed, "participatory agreements" reached through the SMMA. This display of strength on the part of the yachting industry, as well as of its political and administrative connections, further upset local equilibria and weakened the essential claim that SMMA zoning was being run based on community-consensus.

The fishers, however, thought they would soon have their revenge, since their situation had been widely debated and publicised during the 1997 general-election campaign. After decades of national leadership under the United Workers' Party (UWP), a landslide victory in May 1997 returned the St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) to power. While campaigning in Soufrière, the SLP candidate had gained substantial support from fishers by promising to restore lost fishing grounds. After the election, the new government, personified in Soufrière by the parliamentary representative, became directly involved in SMMA matters. Since "their" party was now leading the country, most fishermen felt they no longer had to compromise with the SMMA and reverted to fishing in their customary areas, prior to the SMMA zoning. They felt "strong enough as a group to throw out the whole thing" as one interviewee put it.

Things, however, were not to end here. The new government's position on Soufrière's issues remained unclear for several months, as it was intensely lobbied in Castries by the same old interest groups. To reinstate a working mechanism, several meetings took place over the summer, but tension had still not reached its peak. The government was showing signs of internal strife. Influenced by the fishers' view, the Department of Fisheries submitted a proposal to the Prime Minister to reinstate as fishing areas important sections of two marine reserves, Gros Piton and Grand Caille. It also pressed for the creation of a "total reserve", where no use whatsoever would be allowed. This was to address the concern that only fishers were bearing the impact of marine reserves, and that these were "playgrounds for tourism businesses", as one fisher put it.

The backlash to this proposal, though, was swift and strong. Diving operators announced that they would stop paying entry fees. The French donor warned that it could suspend its financial backing. Pressure from experts also picked up, with the emergence of a tough environmentalist discourse in the media claiming that fishers needed to be kept out. The national press took hold of this debate. A furious article published in *The Star*, on August 2, accused the Soufrière Representative of denying "a tide of scientific evidence". The SMMA manager was removed and this institution appeared dead at last. As Trist (2003, p.63) explains however, things were not to end here. A few months later, after an outpouring of support from a coalition of business interests, environmentalists and researchers, the same manager was reinstated. In December 1997, the new government reinstated part of the Grand Caille marine reserve as a fishing area for pot fishing only. It left the Gros Piton reserve intact and agreed to pay during one year financial compensation of EC$400 per month to 20 (older) fishermen considered to have suffered the most from lost access to fishing. As for the French donor, it agreed to support initiatives to modernise the fishing sector.

Who had won this political fight after all? The fishers had obtained the modification of some marine reserve boundaries, but had to accept yachts on spaces that were once dedicated to fishing in the original agreement. As for the financial help they secured, it was just for one year and only for 20 of the older fishers.

3.5 Conclusion

This section has shown how the initial implementation of the 1994 SMMA agreement kept important segments of the community out of the decision-making processes. It also pointed out that trust was further eroded after the SMMA started functioning. As a consequence, frustrated stakeholders chose overt politics (an active "Exit" strategy) as a way to solve re-emerging disputes. In a nutshell, as a purportedly "participatory institution", the SMMA was unsuccessful in its effort to institutionalise dialogue, negotiation and consensus-building on an ongoing basis. At the beginning of 1998, however, having secured some compensation through political strife, fishers seemed ready for a fresh start, and the SMMA claimed a renewed commitment to participation and stakeholder inclusion. Would this goal be realised, so that the issues at stake would not need to be politicized from then on?

4. The Second Phase: the "New" SMMA

In this section, we show that after intense political strife, the SMMA seemed to reach calmer waters but only on the surface. Although stakeholder clashes had not been on the same scale as during the 1997 crisis, the SMMA did not seem more deeply participatory than before. From 1998 to 2001, a lengthy institutional review took place to fix problems identified during the crisis – which led to the inception of a "new" SMMA, as it called itself. This move, however, much resembled "change for the same", as one interviewee put it.

4.1 A Revamped Framework?

Given the political conflagration it had caused in just a few years, a comprehensive review of the SMMA was carried out in November 1997, following a request from the TAC in July. Despite the failure of the first version of the SMMA that it had largely designed, CANARI was chosen again as the facilitator to spearhead the renewal of the SMMA. The ensuing institutional reworking took almost three years to be completed and approved by the government. This length of time is not proof of highly participatory consultation, but rather of a process of temporal sinking, much like the one that had led to the 1994 "deal". A set of stakeholder meetings may have taken place during these years (although we found no archival evidence of this), but the process did not, take the same conspicuous participatory form as the initial 1992 consultation. In any case, an observer during this time acknowledged that, essentially, "the new Agreement was negotiated among the members of the TAC" (Pierre-Nathaniel, 2003, p.35).

It was only in January 2001 that a new agreement to manage the SMMA was officially signed by the TAC members. What did this change? Instead of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a Board of Directors (BoD) was created and reduced from 13 to 11 members. Second-rank public agencies were ousted, leaving governmental authority in the hands of the four ministries already participating,[17] to which was added the National Conservation Authority, concerned with biodiversity protection. Meanwhile, the representative for the local tourism businesses was removed and substituted with a representative of the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association, which was lobbying for the tourism sector at the national level. Thus, there was no effort whatsoever to bring into the Board more representatives from the local context.

It is striking to note, moreover, that although it had been acknowledged during the review that fishers had not been properly represented on the TAC, no change was introduced to address this critical issue. Just as with the former TAC, fishers were to have just one representative on the Board, and the same one: the president of the Fishermen's Cooperative - an institution that is in fact little connected to most of Soufrière's fishers. Neither the TAC nor the Board has ever envisioned, for instance, working with a representative from Baron's Drive, the area of Soufrière where most of the poor fishers are concentrated. What is more, it turned out that this single representative of the fishers missed a number of Board meetings, leaving this community totally unrepresented on the Board.

[17] Namely the ministries of Planning, Tourism, Agriculture (Department of Fisheries) as well as the St. Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority.

This arrangement also left little opportunity for the local business community to be heard on the Board, since their representative was removed. Local owners of small hotels complained to the SMMA manager about it, notably during a formal meeting in May 2003. There were important issues at stake: tensions were surfacing between them and the cruise ships coming from the northern part of the island and disembarking large groups of sunbathers and snorkelers on adjacent beaches, in the vicinity of the large hotels, leading to congestion and overuse of the near-shore. However, this lack of representation on the Board was never corrected and no proposal was ever put forward to address the matter. Meanwhile, in 2006, the SMMA Board highlighted the fact that the yachting industry had become so important (most of the SMMA revenues was coming from incoming yachts) that it needed to be included on the Board, which was done by adding a representative for the Marine Industry Association of St. Lucia (MIASL).

While the directing mechanism of SMMA (the old TAC) was becoming smaller, this was to be offset by another provision in the new agreement, the creation of a Stakeholder Committee (SC) in the form of a broad-based advisory body with a large membership, in order to ensure representation of all parties. The SC was meant to provide an ongoing forum for everyone to express their needs, views and concerns. According to the new institutional arrangement:

All major proposals for management and development […] related to the SMMA, must be presented to the Stakeholder Committee for advice. Issues raised by the SC must be considered by the Board of Directors (SMMA, 2001, p.5).

This committee was meant to meet at least once *per quarter* but only met three times over the next eight years. In practice, thus, the Stakeholder Committee was non-existent. Moreover, an analysis of the archived agendas of these three meetings reveals that the agendas were extremely pre-framed and made up of contributions by the SMMA management or by external scientists, from various centers and universities, adamantly approving of the marine reserves.

A 2008 evaluation of the SMMA carried out by a specialised agency on behalf of the French GEF, the key French donor, did point out the irregular occurrence of the Stakeholder Committee meetings. Strangely enough, this was of little concern. In the eyes of the evaluators:

The cooperation among resource users, institutional collaboration, active and enlightened local participation and the equitable sharing of benefits and responsibilities among stakeholders is shown by the existence of the SMMA in itself (…). Even if the stakeholder committee has never been really set up, the Board of Directors is comprised of the main stakeholder groups in the area (FFEM, 2008, p.36).

It is naturally difficult to share this view. As was proved, the Board of Directors has not been in itself a sufficient mechanism for ensuring enlightened local participation, given its composition, formal functioning and the regular absence of the one and only fisher representative – who, in any case, barely represented his community.

Arguably, through the revamped SMMA, participation was not offered to the local community as was claimed, but to a larger interest group at the national level – of which traditional fishers were not a part. Even for the business community, the local entrepreneurs were not directly represented, but rather national professional associations of hotels, divers, etc. If one adds to this the strong presence and attendance of the national ministries on the Board, Soufrière's CP seemed much more like a way to re-nationalise local issues within a public/private co-management scheme, while claiming to work with the locals. What took place may have been co-management but not between the national authorities and the local community – rather it was between the authorities and economic interest groups that needed to "fix" Soufrière for the sake of the national interest.

Although this may not necessarily be illegitimate, it surely does not fit with the SMMA narrative of inclusive and intense community participation that is wide-ranging and results in a fair allocation of benefits. The co-management by powerful public and private domestic interests was also intertwined with the on-going influence of international donors, a range of conservationist scientists and organisations. The power structure that was consolidating through the SMMA seemed to include pretty much everybody — except for the local community.

4.2 Compensation of the Poorer Fishers

Following the political strife of Soufrière's fishers, the government of Saint Lucia and the SMMA embarked on a series of initiatives (with assistance from donor organisations, especially the French) some of which had been discussed for a long time but to no avail (Pierre, 2000; Sanderson and Koester, 2000; Pierre-Nathoniel, 2003). The central idea was to provide incentives for fishers to move away from the near-shore areas, in an effort to modernise the sector via deep-sea fishing. However, in the end, practice showed that these various schemes mostly benefited those who were already involved in deep-sea fishing instead of enticing traditional fishers into this activity. The initiatives did not provide adequate compensation for those most affected by the SMMA zoning.

First, some training was provided to help fishers interested in switching to deep-sea fishing, notably in the construction and operation of tuna long-lines. This training primarily targeted young fishers with the willingness and ability to engage in a different technique. Sample gear for this type of fishing was made available, and a short-term project was conducted over a few months; less-intense training ran for another year. However, the main constraint on fishers remained capital, since deep-sea fishing requires buying a new boat and nets, a stronger engine and regular fuel refills – things that most people cannot afford in this community.

To make capital available to fishers, it was decided to buy back the gillnets used in reef fishing, in the hope that funds from the sale would then be used to invest in deep-sea fishing equipment. A Board decision was made to prohibit the use of such gillnets starting August 1998, and to compensate fishers for the cost of their material. Nineteen gillnets were consequently purchased. Meanwhile, with financial assistance from France, an investment fund was established in 1999 to assist fishers in obtaining loans to engage in deep-sea fishing — or tourism activities. Under the project, fishers could qualify for a grant equal to 20% of the investment required, with the total amount of the grant not to exceed EC$6,0000.[18] A number of fishers submitted proposals, but the overall success of this program was much lower than anticipated. Very long delays in the receipt of funds contributed to a clear loss of interest.

Finally, to encourage near-shore fishers to divert their activity offshore, Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) were built and deployed off Soufrière's coast. FADs are designed to act as fixed shelters for migrating pelagic fish: small fish congregate around them in search of food and shelter and larger predatory fish are then attracted to the FADs, thus reducing the time and cost of hunting for fish offshore. These structures have been used in many places around the world to encourage traditional near-shore fishers to move offshore. The point was also to provide a viable fishing site during the second half of the year when the migratory pelagics are scarce and fishers tend to focus on near-shore areas. However, the initial deployment of FADs in Soufrière was unsuccessful since individuals from outside the community reportedly stole some of the material needed for the first device.

Since the capital barrier was never really lowered, the hope of moving the whole community towards deep-sea fishing proved elusive. Thus, the FAD devices proved useful for the wealthiest fishers, mostly members of the Cooperative who were already engaged in deep-sea fishing. The same can be said of additional projects financed by the French that mostly served the interests of the higher-end of the fishing community. This included the construction of a jetty completed in 1998 near a gasoline station in Soufrière, in order to facilitate direct fuelling prior to offshore fishing expeditions and also unloading.[19] In addition, an ice machine was provided to the Fishermen's Cooperative, to provide storage for especially large catches, thus avoiding unnecessary waste and loss of income due to a fish surplus.

[18] Approximately US$ 2,000.

[19] However, the jetty was destroyed by a storm in 1999.

4.3 SMMA Responses to Fishers’ Concerns

Archived Board minutes show that during 2001-2008, there were relatively few discussions within the Board regarding fishing issues. This is striking considering the central role this community had played in the early (rocky) life of the SMMA. However, this does not mean that things were going smoothly for the fishers, or that they were getting from the SMMA sufficient help in adapting to the zoning scheme. Our interpretation is rather that the fishers could no longer influence the Board agenda. The only issues the fishers managed briefly to bring to the Board were never taken up thoroughly.

The most notable issue was recurring concern over use of the Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), which were supposed to divert pressure away from near-shore resourses. Vandalism, strong currents and heavy boat traffic gave the FADs a relatively short lifespan. The Board held some discussions about helping the fishing community to replace the FADs, but a clear and sustainable financing mechanism has still to be put in place, so that at the time of our fieldwork (summer 2008), no FAD was actually functioning. The fact is that the SMMA never considered that its revenues from yachts and divers could systematically contribute toward replacing the FADs.

At a 2001 Board meeting, it was suggested that the SMMA set up a pension fund for Soufrière fishers, and that contact with the National Insurance Plan (St. Lucia’s Social Security) should be established to discuss the options and technicalities. But the issue was soon dropped and did not reappear on the Board agenda. All this tends to show that issues of concern to the fishers were not ever prioritised into the running of the SMMA.

Finally, a brief conflict in 2005 proved that the balance of power had definitely shifted away from the fishers and that “politicisation” was no longer a winning strategy for them, even regarding marine reserve issues. During the autumn of that year, a fisherman was reproved by SMMA rangers for setting more than three fish traps in the Grand Caille Marine Reserve – an area that had been reopened to pot fishing in 1997. The fisher alerted the District Representative who questioned the legality of restricting the number of fish traps being set in any one area. He noted that no such stipulations had been laid down in the 1997 Cabinet decision granting access to the Grand Caille reserve.

Despite this fact, the Board, and particularly the Department of Fisheries, insisted that the re-opening of the marine reserve for fishing was supposed to accommodate only “a selected group of fishers”, a specification that came out of the blue. The Board thus rejected the plea of the reprimanded pot fisher and of the District representative. It also decided that the Grand Caille Marine Reserve was to “stay virgin of pot fishing as far as possible”. This radical re-interpretation of the 1997 Agreement was obviously highly questionable. The notion of a “selected group of fishers” had been used before only in regard to the financial program for compensating older displaced fishers. Still, the Board got away with this new interpretation, and the Soufrière fishing community seemed to have lost its will to contest it.

5. The Containment of Specific Social Groups

In a formal presentation of his work in December 2008, an evaluator of the SMMA (who was commissioned by the French donor) jokingly stated that "the basic problem of the SMMA was to get the fishers out". When asked to comment on what he had just said, the man visibly felt uneasy. This "slip of the tongue" arguably provides a good insight into what the SMMA is essentially about: to clear the ground of fishers and accommodate more modern activities. This is not to say that such a move is necessarily illegitimate, from the environmental point of view for instance, but it is important to acknowledge the reality of the impact, even in its crudest form.

The primary impact of the SMMA has indeed been a change in the balance of social control affecting the various coastal-user groups, in terms of their access to, and interaction with, marine resources. The pattern that emerged is one of active *containment* of the poorer fishers and *selective oblivion* benefiting tourism-related actors. In a previous article (Charnoz, 2009*b*), we defined "containment" as *the management of CP so as to maintain control over […] certain target groups and avoid, block or minimise their disruption of other goals.*[20] As for "selective oblivion", we may define it, in mirror fashion, as *management of CP that lets certain groups out of the reach of regulatory practices and concerns*. Containment does not necessarily refer to the conscious will of given actors, but to the observable effects of mechanisms at work. The same can be said of selective oblivion. As we shall see, the challenges faced by the SMMA staff over the years have all manifested that this CP scheme has been effective in setting up local spaces and people for tourism development, but much less so when it comes to securing environmental commitments from tourism businesses, which seem to operate with a large sense of impunity.

Here, we first look at the practice of spatial zoning by the SMMA, to point out its imbalances and relentless efforts to bring fishers in line, while paying much less attention to other coastal users. Then we show that selective application of both the hard and social sciences over the years has led to the "epistemic exclusion" of the poorer fishers from legitimate discourses, regarding both the coast and the community, due to "expert discourses" that constantly de-legitimise the fishers' discontent and perceptions. This ongoing exercise of *anti-political productive power* has been carried out by both the SMMA staff and various international experts. Third and finally, we point out how other coastal users have been preserved *de facto* from having to change any of their behaviour, although their actions do impact the coral reefs negatively and powerfully. Some of them have also been able to operate even while not adhering to their formal financial obligations towards the SMMA.

5.1 Fishers and the Loss of Spatial Control

The containment of fishers has a strong *spatial dimension* linked to the use of *compulsory power* – or in other words, the use of material and ideational resources to produce incentives or constraints. From the start, the central tenet of the SMMA agreement was its zoning map, which defines which actors and activities may access what part of the coast (cf. Map 3). As Pugh (2005, p.315) has put it, this is a "way of visualising a field to be governed" — not only in

[20] This definition draws on Few (2003, p.23, p.32).

terms of what is to be considered normal or abnormal, but what is to be improved, monitored, surveyed, etc. It is about putting up barriers and control procedures, splitting up spaces administratively, legally, functionally, symbolically, bringing people into dedicated zones and making sure that "bodies", as Foucault would have it, are in their correct places. The SMMA is an obvious example of this. As Pugh also formulates, the zoning map "signifies and places bodies in particular positions, partitions, isolates and distributes them, whilst defining the instrumental modes of intervention that they are to be subjected to" (p.315).

The first and most visible expression of "containment" lies in the fact that the SMMA zoning has been very strictly and consistently enforced upon the fishers, through various material and procedural means, while it has been much less so on other actors. In its everyday functioning, the balance of control is tilted towards a greater freedom for the tourism industry – namely divers, yachts, snorkelers, hotels, construction companies, etc. There are several boat patrols each day whose main task is to check that fishers keep out of the marine reserves and respect the rules of the other zones. Meanwhile, the SMMA management plan contains no formal procedures for checking the number of divers in areas they are allowed access – notably in marine reserves (Pugh, 2005). There is also no procedure for controlling, much less acting, against hotel pollution – something that in any case cannot be addressed with marine patrols. In addition, no system of fines against water polluters has ever been envisioned, while fishers are routinely subjected to equipment confiscation and financial penalties. As for the yachts, patrols do collect entry fees from them for access to the SMMA zone, but continuing conflicts arise over their mooring locations, leading to widespread accusations of unfairness by the fishers.

This situation was amply confirmed by interviews with fishers, including the president of the Fishermen's Cooperative, an organisation that barely represents a small faction of the fishing community. When interviewed, he acknowledged this view "shared by fishers" that "yachts, divers and tourists are violating the law". For instance, tourist boats still station in fishing-priority areas while divers still tamper with the fishers' iron pots, letting the fish out. Another interviewee gave his thoughts on the functioning of the marine reserves:

The marine reserves? It's just against us [fishers]. Just to prevent me from doing what my parents did [fishing]. In the SMMA, there is always room for yachts and divers. They do what they want. Have you heard of a boat, a diver or a hotel that was fined? Have you heard of a tourist that could not go in the reserves? Me, no.

Beyond the marine zoning, the spatial dimension of the containment process is also observable in the 1998 construction of a fish market,[21] as part of the SMMA scheme. Although it may seem counterintuitive at first, this endeavour was not supported by the fishers. Traditionally, the latter sell their fish all around town in manually driven carts, on certain waterfront areas or near the roadside. For fishers, a static location means that competition with each other is much greater. It also means that people wishing to purchase have to go to a specific place, rather than being served at their convenience – which had been the traditional way in Soufrière. This imposed a process of spatial concentration that led to much resistance on the part of the fishers, but the market was built anyway. As an interviewee put it:

[The market] was not done with fishers, but against them. They did not want to see fishers wandering around selling fish. It does not look clean to them. They wanted to 'clean' the town. The deal was: we build a 'clean, healthy area', but you stay out there.

An enquiry into the definition of "they" showed that this refers, in the interviewee's mind, to a mix of:

Government and businesses [that] want to fix the town, to make it look like tourists want!

The spatial control of fishers seems indeed intimately linked with the effort to comply with hypothetical tourist expectations – and very concrete demands from local economic actors engaged in tourism, as well as central authorities.[22] In Soufrière, this type of agenda goes far beyond only the SMMA: it started before (arguably as early as 1987, with the creation of the SRDF, cf. section 2.1); and it extends to other initiatives. Recently, the government notably sold about eight hectares of the Malgré Tout beach (cf. Map 3) to a powerful international group, specialising in

[21] The fish market was destroyed by a hurricane in 1999, but it was rebuilt in 2003 with international aid from Japan.

[22] Interviews at the Ministry of Tourism, as well as Economic Planning confirmed governmental support.

the building and running of vast resorts. This deal involved a commitment to relocate Soufrière's traditional community retirement house in another town, 15 kilometres away (Vieux Fort, cf. Map 2). Not only was this public beach sold with hardly any local consultation, but as part of the project, the dismantling of the Baron's Drive area is being discussed. This poorer fishing district is thus to be "cleaned up", removed from the waterfront ("too valuable") and displaced to a "new development", north of Soufrière, "away from tourists' eyes".[23] The fishing community is extremely upset about this prospect. Beyond their attachment to this traditional area, people were questioning basic things, such as "where are we going to put our boats?" Just as with the fish market, the deal being pushed would result in "cleaner, safer facilities" in exchange for a "landscape cleaning", as one interviewee put it bluntly. At the time of our fieldwork, the presence of a foreign consultant in Soufrière to start working on this prospect was causing strong concern and negative emotion within the Baron's Drive community.

5.2 The Role of Scientific Expertise in Suppressing Dissent

"Epistemic exclusion" had been defined in a previous article (Charnoz, 2009*b*) as a mode of social control through which a certain group is excluded from the production of legitimate knowledge. As for "anti-politics", it refers to the suppression of legitimate options through recourse to expertise. In the SMMA process, a certain management of knowledge proved indeed an important mode of anti-political containment, drawing on both the hard social sciences and the de-legitimisation of claims by the poorer fishers. In these discourses, fishing was to be drastically reduced on social and scientific grounds, whereas tourism was not.

The use of "hard science"

As Trist (2003) explains, behind the disputes between the tourism and fishing interests were unresolved questions regarding the causes of degradation in the marine environment. Historical data on Soufrière's fisheries are limited, so that the relationships among ecological factors are still not well understood. At the time of the SMMA preparatory process, and even today, few fishers accepted that fishing practices accounted for declining catches, or that their traditional gear posed a serious threat to coral reefs. Many think that yacht anchors have done much more damage to the coral than fish-pots or gillnets ever did. Many fishers still consider pot fishing to be relatively benign because of its simple technology and intermittent use. Trist (2003, p.58) quotes a long-term observer of Soufrière's fishing industry, working for the Organisation of American States, who shares the fishers' view:

Pot fishing can't destroy a fishing bank, not the way [fishers] practice it […]. It has been done the same way for ages.

There is no shortage of scientific evidence pointing to the strong need to control the impact of coastal construction (as well as of divers and snorkelers) on the coral reefs (*e.g.* Barker & Roberts, 2004), but these findings have been much less publicised than those in favour of restricting fishing activities. Varying activities have not been treated equally when it comes to applying the scientific discourse. As Trist (2003) explains, the SMMA attracted considerable international scientific interest as an experiment in reef management, since its spatial zoning and limited size offered ideal testing conditions. An extensive scientific apparatus thus took hold of the SMMA, backed by several foreign universities and *a priori* geared towards the exclusion of fishers – an approach that neatly fit with the interests of the tourism industry.

Starting in 1995, two research groups studied the Soufrière zone in this context, one of them directed by an internationally recognised biologist.[24] From the start, this vocal supporter of marine protected areas wanted to focus on the impact of "over fishing" in Soufrière. *De facto,* this concern was compatible with the will of the tourism industry to remove fishers from the coast. His team claimed that the SMMA's system of marine reserves could also be expected to show benefits to the fishers themselves, within two to five years, if "illegal fishing" was kept to a minimum. This was to occur through the positive "spill-over effect" of the marine reserves on fish catches.

[23] Quotes in this paragraph refer to a range of interviews, with both fishers and small business owners.

[24] Pr. Callum Roberts, University of York.

These claims, however, were largely unconvincing to many fishers. Trist (2003), who was doing fieldwork at that time, recalls a fisher's response to a scientist essentially arguing that "the marine reserves make the fish". The fisher responded: "What is your nationality? You came all the way here to do a job? Do you have a job for everybody here?".[25] This type of response illustrates clearly the fishers' defiance of, and suspicions against, the "experts" flowing into Soufrière.

The scientific takeover of the SMMA was furthered in 2001 when a team led by Roberts found a "significant increase in reef catches" in the pot fishery of the Soufrière area (Roberts *et al.*, 2001). They based their analysis on a comparison between catches in 1995-1996, when the SMMA was just established, with catches from 2000-2001. This study was much publicised with pride by the SMMA staff. The article also contends that "interviews with local fishers showed that most felt better off with reserves than without". However, a careful look at their data (p.1922) shows that out of 71 interviewed fishers, only a third positively declared that "fisheries improved", while two-thirds did not. Moreover, it is interesting to note that neither the scientific article, nor the opinion piece published by the SMMA manager in a national newspaper,[26] quoted any fisher as actually being happy with the change. Although increases in fish catches between 1995 and 2001 may be a scientific fact, this could have been due to a variety of factors, especially since the reefs were recovering from previous hurricane damage and the yachts had stopped anchoring and damaging the coral. Again, it was not clear that the exclusion of fishers from marine areas was a critical element for conservation. Moreover, how could fishers explain the ongoing contradiction between the SMMA's repeated statements that marine reserves were created to regenerate the fishery with its parallel assertion that reef fishers should move into other occupations?

The use of "social sciences"

The "epistemic takeover" of the local commons by the SMMA can also be observed in the launch of a survey meant to gauge how the institution was perceived by the local community. This study, based on 186 interviews carried out in Soufrière in 2005, and funded by the United Nations Environment Programme, provides a favourable picture of how the SMMA was perceived by locals.

Although its stated objectives included the analysis of the "differences in stakeholder perceptions", little was done in fact to isolate and bring to the fore the view of the people most adversely affected by the SMMA. In fact, the picture drawn by the study averages out local perceptions through the massive input of opinions from people who are only remotely concerned with coastal resources. The way the survey was designed provided little information, and opportunity, for enabling a careful assessment of the socioeconomic impact of the SMMA on the poorer parts of the fishing population, whose voice was diluted and even made inaudible in the study. Out of 186 interviewees, only 37 were fishers. More importantly, there is no way from the raw data to find out if these were boat owners, deep-sea fishers or simple pot fishers. In other words, it is impossible to ascertain whom within the fishing community these interviewees actually represented. This is despite the fact that the dual nature of the fishing community had long been acknowledged by the SMMA[27] – although to no avail.

In fact, the archives we had access to show that the original survey questionnaire prepared by the SMMA had envisioned a full section with details on the fishers. However, for reasons unknown to us, these questions were not asked during survey implementation so that the collected data did not include this key information. Even if this was due to financial constraints, this gap still illustrates the low priority given to understanding the fishing community, evidently the most-affected by the SMMA. Consequently, the report on the *Socioeconomic Monitoring in the SMMA* provides little information on the fishing community (SMMA, 2007).[28]

Nevertheless, a look into the raw data (the untreated Excel file) reveals the deep gap that still existed in 2005 between the SMMA and the fishing community. Only 54% of fishers declared familiarity with the SMMA and almost none was able to state the basic functions of the Board, providing at best comments such as: "I heard about them but I don't know them or what they do". Further qualitative comments by fishers transcribed in the data include: "The SMMA should contribute more to the fishermen"; "they give the sea

[25] Quoted by Trist (2003, p.60).
[26] *The Voice*, 11 October 2001.
[27] Notably during the 1998-2001 revamping of the SMMA.
[28] Although interviews were carried out in 2005, the report was released in 2007.

to the tourists"; "the SMMA makes too much money and does not spend it in the community". As far as can be inferred from Board minutes, these findings were not discussed in Board meetings during the following years.

Even more disturbing is the direct contradiction between the survey's raw data with Robert's 2001 findings on the biological effectiveness of the SMMA marine reserves in improving fish stocks. Indeed, the data showed that fishers largely believed that the condition and health of the fish had sharply decreased over the previous 10-year period. On a scale of 3 (excellent) to 0 (poor), they evaluated the change as being from 2.5 to 0.9 (indicating a pure collapse, in other words). Several fishers even declared during the survey that "[they] have to come close to the marine reserves to catch something, because sometimes [they] don't catch any fish for a whole month". How can this perception by primary marine-resource users be reconciled with Robert's scientific findings? Regarding this question, no discussion took place by the Board at any subsequent meeting.

Finally, when it comes to identifying the primary threats to marine resources, the survey shows that fishers overwhelmingly believe that the primary causes are unregulated littering, untreated sewage and the impact of yachts' anchors. These results are the same throughout the whole survey sample, indicating that the general population does not consider over-fishing to be among the five most important threats to the coral reefs.

All of this shows the strong discrepancy between the "scientific discourse" (developed for, and by, the SMMA) and the perceptions of both the fishers and the larger Soufrière community. This should have raised questions about the relevance of making fishers the primary target of Soufrière's conservation strategy. Fishers we met during fieldwork in 2008 often talked against foreigners who "come with their knowledge" and "disregard the fishers' view". One even offered this strikingly philosophical proposition:

Knowledge cannot come from one side only.

The fisher who uttered this sentence was most likely illiterate. He used it as a critique of the way experts and discourses come to Soufrière to impose their views and frame "how we must think".

5.3 Financial and Environmental Impunity for Some

Various actors related to the tourism industry – notably hotel resorts, dive operators, boat tours and construction companies – have tended to avoid the financial and environmental obligations imposed by the creation of the SMMA, and often successfully. This has led to much frustration on the part of the SMMA staff, which feels duped by people who strongly benefited from its work. It is not easy, at first, to understand why actors largely benefiting from the SMMA would not be doing their part to support its finances and operations. But a deeper analysis suggests at least three types of reasons: (1) the will to reassert their long-standing influence over the Soufrière zone and the habit of having to deal with no local authority; (2) their business identity as profit makers with tough management practices; (3) the tactic of applying pressure and influence on the SMMA by taking advantage of its financial dependence. All of this, arguably, indicates a strong display of *structural power* (as defined in section 2.2.3), whereby long-lasting hierarchical *status quos* are reaffirmed.

Below, we first explore the SMMA's financial dependence on the tourism industry and show how this has been exemplified in some economic actors' irregular compliance with the agreed upon fees. Subsequently, we argue that despite its dedicated efforts, the SMMA staff has never had any impact on the behaviour of land-based polluters.

The financial impunity of tourism businesses

Since its inception in 1994, the SMMA has pursed an objective of financial self-sufficiency but has never firmly attained it. The revenue base of the institution is comprised of fees levied on yachts (through a "coral conservation fee" for the use of special moorings buoys) as well as divers (in the form of daily or yearly permits). Since 2001, permits for snorkelers have also been required. Thus, SMMA income greatly depends on the number of tourists in the SMMA zone – and more precisely, on tourism businesses (hotels, boat tours, etc.) complying with the compulsory purchase of the various permits for their clients.

So far, the SMMA has run a net operational deficit about

half the time, depending on the year.[29] This is despite the fact that the number of tourists has been rising. From 1997 to 2007, available data shows an average annual increase of 2% for yachts entering the SMMA, and 7% for divers. But these figures hide significant ups and downs, reflecting global trends in the tourism industry and increases in oil prices, which make St. Lucia a more expensive destination. Notably, after the September 11th attacks on the United States, a steep decline in yachting activities ensued. Moreover, SMMA expenditures have been rising fast, as new staffers were recruited and storm activity destroyed various equipment.[30] There have been intense discussions with public authorities (particularly the St. Lucia Air & Sea Ports Authority) about contributing to the SMMA's operating budget, but no agreement has ever been reached.

Financial concerns are still an ongoing focus at Board discussions, not only because the SMMA has had to live with the ups and down of the tourism industry, but also because it has encountered constant reluctance on the part of the large resorts and the diving and snorkelling operators to pay the agreed upon fees on time. The SMMA was supposed to implement a pre-paid fee system for hotels that provide all-inclusive service, as well as "permit books", provided up-front to dive operators, with payment collected at a later date. As it turned out, however, this system was never properly implemented.

First, there have been important delays in payment[31] from large hotel resorts, such as Sandals or Anse Chastanet. While a compensation arrangement was reached some years ago with Sandals, Anse Chastanet is showing little willingness to pay what it owes. Meetings with the resort owner have been regularly delayed or cancelled, despite numerous letters. As the SMMA accountant explains:

Some hotel resorts have huge sums of money overdue for a long time, with these type of excuses: 'call next week and the cheque will be ready'; 'oh, sorry, the accountant is not in today — call next week', etc. An important part of my job is to call these resorts and try to get them to pay. It's exhausting and not effective at all.

The situation has not been better with divers and snorkelers, arriving by day charters and boat tours from Castries. Marine rangers have been encountering tremendous problems with the collection of snorkelling fees. It appears that, in the absence of rangers checking boats, the required tickets are generally not issued. The same behaviour is observed among dive-tour operators, which tend to hold on to tickets when there are no rangers around, to re-use on future dives. Letters were sent to operators in Castries reminding them about the regulations, but these efforts have had only limited results so far.

Since the SMMA staffers work hard to ensure tourism is not disrupted in the zone, they feel this permanent financial stress is an "unfair humiliation". The SMMA manager has often reported this situation to the Board, stating that there is "very little support from the various recreational user groups" in implementing SMMA regulations. But this has never led to any change: no system of fines was ever adopted to increase pressure on hotels or dive operators. Moreover, in this power game, no help was ever provided through Board member re-organisation.

Several interviewees declared that this situation reflects a "long-standing feeling of impunity" shared by economic actors of national importance in St. Lucia – actors who "do not bother dealing with any form of local authority" – or even with national authorities, as one interviewee suggested. Other interpretations pointed out the culture of "saving every possible dollar" that characterises these strictly managed businesses. Finally, it was also argued that this financial manoeuvring is meant to exert influence on the SMMA whenever needed. Various interviewed fishers complained, for instance, that hotel demands are swiftly complied with, due to hotels' financial importance to the SMMA.

The environmental impunity of land-based polluters

Land-based pollution is an important issue in the Soufrière coastal area. Siltation into the sea is clearly visible after each downpour of rain, as tons of coloured sediments enter the bay. This sedimentation, which makes coral die, is caused by activities that increase natural erosion, such as the construction of hotels and private houses near the shore, sand-mining, as well as deforestation. Moreover,

[29] The net operational deficit was, for instance, EC$24,000 in fiscal year 2007, $67,000 in 2004, $87,000 in 2003 and $75,000 in 2002.

[30] It was also discovered in 2002 that an SMMA staff member, recruited on the recommendation of the Soufrière Fishermen's Cooperative, had been falsifying bank statements to steal money.

[31] These payments are related to diving and snorkelling permits.

agricultural pollutants and unmanaged liquid wastes coming from the town, hotels, yachts and a coconut factory, also result in ongoing water pollution and the development of algae that kills coral.

This situation had been acknowledged from the start of the SMMA participatory process. Early consultation had indeed led to the conclusion that "zoning was not the only [needed] management instrument, [therefore] much broader measures and solutions [were to be sought]" (Renard, 1996, p.5). Nevertheless, as we saw earlier, no serious procedure for controlling and acting against land-based pollution was ever designed – so that this responsibility stayed abstract, in the air, or more precisely remained with the central ministries, which proved to be about the same. Thus, zoning was really the sole SMMA instrument, but one that can do little in regard to land-based issues. An opportunity for impunity was thus built into the initial SMMA design.

Meanwhile, construction around Soufrière for hotel development has increased sharply over the years. For instance, the Anse Chastanet resort undertook new projects in the Trou Diable area (cf. Map 3) which has critical sedimentation problems that affect the coral reefs. Sediment traps and a drainage system were eventually put into place, but they appeared not to be adequate during heavy rainfall. Moreover, hills and slopes were being cleared in that area and soil erosion was becoming intense. Concerns also emerged about another large resort, the Jalousie Hilton, which started refurbishment after a hurricane: although strong rains were expected, the contractor did not consider the installation of siltation mitigation devices. In 2004 and 2005, there were also reports of a suspected discharge of sewage by the Jalousie resort into the adjacent bay.

Another environmental issue that emerged was that of "sand mining" at beaches and river areas. Rivers play an important role in supplying sand to beaches and the near-shore, so much so that the removal of sand from river mouths is not a sustainable practice. Sand mining also directly affected seine-net fishers, who consequently sent complaints to the SMMA. Photos were circulated showing mining activities at the mouth of the Soufrière river and the ravine at the northern Soufrière beach.

On all these issues, the SMMA has been largely left to its own devices. It never managed to mobilise effective support from central authorities, notably from the National Conservation Authority (NCA). The SMMA Soufrière extension officer had even granted various permits to mine sand from beaches and rivers in the area. Left on its own, the SMMA tried to negotiate directly with hotels or companies — but more pressing matters were constantly appearing, given the construction of private homes by foreigners, who are even more difficult to contact. The SMMA manager became actively and personally involved in monitoring construction projects around Soufrière, trying to raise awareness and commitment through recurring meetings and warning letters. Marine rangers were also asked to monitor construction projects as much as they could, including illegal deforestation on public land between the two Pitons, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Reflecting on the SMMA's powerlessness, many interviewees felt that this organisation just does not have enough political and administrative clout to prevail against significant economic actors. Several respondents also pointed to ongoing corruption issues at higher levels of the government, as well as "friendly connections" between politicians and businessmen. Interestingly, to denounce environmental scandals, the SMMA manager now often reverts to unofficial means of advocacy, such as the circulation of anonymous emails and revealing photos, rather than relying on means that are officially approved by the SMMA. Such covert action tells a lot about the political backlash the manager would face were he to openly denounce policy on certain sensitive issues.

In August 2006, however, after years of infringing the sewage regulations, the Jalousie resort installed two 20,000-gallon sewage-treatment tanks so that treated water could be used for irrigation purposes. However, interviews confirmed that this outcome was not due to pressure from the SMMA, but from growing demands from the international market for luxury holidays: Jalousie could no longer risk becoming a potential environmental scandal, especially in a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is core to its marketing strategy.

5.4 Conclusion

As we have seen, fishers' containment in Soufrière has taken many different forms. Table 1 summarises them, using the typology defined in a previous article (Charnoz, 2009*b*). The first form is *formalisation and institutionalisation* (cf. section 2.2), a dynamic through which key community issues and decisions are removed from the lay people and transferred to formal entities engaged in lengthy negotiation processes. The second is *encirclement*, which leads a target group to be overwhelmed within a participatory institution by the massive presence of counter-interest groups (cf. 3.1). The third is *misrepresentation*, whereby the fishers were "represented" by a person who only reflected the wealthier and older part of the community (cf. 3.1). The fourth is *enrolment*, especially of the president of the Fishermen's Cooperative, who was actively entrusted with the task of "selling the idea of the SMMA to the fishers" (cf. 3.1). Fifthly, various techniques involving *alliances* (cf. 2.1), *persuasion* (2.3) and *temporary compromise* (3.3) have been seen. Beyond all that, we have also seen further containment methods, notably *epistemic exclusion* and *biased implementation* of the zoning system.

Table 1. Methods of Containment in Soufrière
(Definitions of containment terms are provided in Charnoz, 2009b.)

Method	Examples
Institutionalisation and formalisation	The very creation of the SMMA was a way to institutionalise conflicts.
Encirclement	Analysis of the TAC and the Board has shown that fishers were indeed "encircled" by a variety of other interest groups related to the tourism industry and to economic development.
Misrepresentation	During 15 years of SMMA operations, the fishers have been represented on the TAC and the Board only by the president of the Soufrière Fishermen Association – to which at least 70% of the local fishers do not belong.
Persuasion	A huge effort was deployed to promote the view that the "marine reserve makes the fish".
Compromise	Several modifications of the fishing-priority areas and of the marine reserves show the capacity of the SMMA for compromise.
Alliance	National interest groups related to tourism have largely partnered with environmentalists in the establishment of the SMMA.
Epistemic exclusion	During the initial consultation, specific scientific views were promulgated. More pressure was placed on fishers than on land-based polluters, yachters and divers.
Biased implementation	The zoning system, as well as the monitoring and sanction mechanisms, preferentially worked against a target group while sparing others.

6. The Impact of Marketisation and Commodification

In this section we argue that containment takes place *because* of something – marketisation – and *to accommodate* something else – commodification. Both concepts were discussed in a previous article (Charnoz, 2009*b*). In the St. Lucian context, marketisation refers to the renewed dependence of the island upon global markets – a dependency that is rapidly shifting from the agricultural to the tourism sector. Containment is a response to this trend and has been fostering the commodification of local spaces and behaviours into tradable goods meeting certain norms and client expectations.

Here, we first review the tourism-based marketisation of St. Lucia, its neo-liberal and neo-colonial perceptions and the concomitant resentment felt by many locals in Soufrière towards this industry. We then review how the SMMA has contributed toward reframing and commodifying community spaces and behaviours to better suit the wishes of foreign clients. Finally, we consider "participatory initiatives" in Soufrière, other than the SMMA, and show how they also evolved in the same direction – a fact that gives further strength to the interpretation of the SMMA as a commodification apparatus.

In this study of marketisation and commodification, however, we do not intend to feature a discourse on "victimisation" that makes St. Lucia little more than a slave in the global economy: the tourism orientation of the St. Lucian economy reflects clear governmental choices and thus the political sovereignty of the island, although this also comes with local costs.

6.1 Tourism Dependency: A New Type of "Neo-Colonialism"

During its history, St. Lucia has been dependent on a series of mono-focused activities starting with sugarcane in Colonial times. After the collapse of sugar prices in the mid-1950s, the cultivation of bananas swiftly took hold of the entire island: bananas accounted for 85% of the value of the island's total exports in the mid-1960s, and this figure was still at 60% in the early 1990s (Reynolds, 2006, p.19). Since 1993, however, the banana sector has gone through sharp decline due to reduced preferential access to the EU markets[32] and rising competition from larger producers, notably in Latin America.[33] This cleared the field for another major economic twist, whereby tourism was to become the next "king of St. Lucia" (*ibid*. p.155). To date, this sector provides about 10,000 direct and indirect jobs (Renard, 2001; CTO, 2002) and a third of the island's GDP (FSF, 2009). To date, "development" in St. Lucia, as in many other Caribbean societies, has largely come to be equated with "tourism development".

Tourism started to slowly pick up at the end of the 1960s, with jet charter tours coming from the United States, Great Britain, as well as Canada and the rest of Western Europe. As Duval and Wilkinson (2004) explain, the government's strategy for promoting tourism has been a "hands-off approach" that has opened the island to all types of foreign investment, coupled with generous tax breaks. This policy was initiated as early as 1959, with the Hotel Aids Ordinance, and has been consistently implemented since then. It was strongly reaffirmed in 1991, with the Tourism

[32] Related to EU-ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) agreements.

[33] Banana exports fell from a peak of 132,000 tons in 1992 to only 30,000 tons in 2005.

Incentives Act, which offered 15 years of income-tax holidays on a range of new construction, 10 years for renovation-related work, as well as exemption from customs duties on building materials. In 1996, a new Act widened these benefits to any "approved tourism project", a definition that was further extended in 2002 to apply to more limited projects such as villas, time-share properties, restaurants, etc.

This dynamic, however, has resulted in widespread feelings of St. Lucia being an "island for sale", especially to foreigners. The tourism sector is indeed almost entirely controlled by non-domestic actors, notably those who own and operate large hotel resorts and the cruise boats that capture most of the tourism business. Most of the profit is channelled out of the island by pre-paid package tours and the domination of "all-inclusive" hotels, where even the food is largely imported. In fact, very little money leaks out into the local communities (World Bank, 1990).

Most foreign tourists have a very limited experience of the island, going directly from the airport to the hotel, where they have little incentive to venture outside the hotel grounds – including the uncomfortable feelings engendered by seeing scenes of poverty while living in luxury. The same holds true for cruise-ship passengers, whose number rose from 70,000 in the mid 1970s to over 600,000 in 2008: they live on floating palaces and consume imported goods. In fact, as Erisman (1983, p.342) points out, foreign companies providing specialised tourist services – including airlines, tour operators, hotel chains and cruise lines – have developed working relationships of formal or informal integration, "the goal being to structure one's trip so that most of the money spent ends up in [these companies'] pockets".

Despite some improvement, economic diversification has been hindered by powerful structural factors,[34] so that in many ways the St. Lucian economy is just as dependent on tourism as it used to be on bananas or sugar cane. What Venner (1989, p.81) argued 20 years ago, still holds: "The all around development of the economy has lagged as it is still structurally unbalanced and not capable of self-sustaining growth. To put in the jargon of the economist, it is open, vulnerable and dependent".

Since the 1970s, hostility against externally controlled tourism has been an important theme of Caribbean nationalism (Duval & Wilkinson, 2004, p.62). Influenced by dependency theorists, such as Cardoso (1972), Dos Santos (1972) or Frank (1982), nationalists see their islands subservient to the expansion of other economies, notably the United States. Although tourism comes with jobs and hard-currency earnings, thus easing the trade deficit, it has also been equated in many academic works with neo-colonialism (notably Perez, 1975), and more specifically with the "plantation model" (*e.g.* Hall, 1994; Weaver, 1988; Bianchi, 2002) – with certain popularised versions adding a comparison to "prostitution" or "whorism". Neo-colonialism, as Crick (1989, p.322) argues, has taken on a "hedonistic face". Beyond economic subservience, also lies a fear that the entire social fabric may be affected by the norms, ideas and the lifestyle that come with the tourists, leading some observers to talk about cultural dependency, well beyond a mere economic one (*e.g.* Erisman, 1983).

The fact that Soufrière is visibly one of the poorest communities, even though its local space is the jewel of the country's touristic experience, seems to harshly exemplify the dependency theory. The growth of tourism has certainly not been accompanied by a concomitant and visible enrichment of the lay locals. The blatant paradox of a tourist capital mired in poverty is often pointed out by St. Lucian intellectuals.[35] To the ordinary people of Soufrière, tourism thus carries a strong taste of neo-colonialism. Jobs are indeed provided by hotel resorts, but wages are low and none of the profit goes to the local community as a whole. Hotels pay their taxes, but these flow to the central government and nothing comes back to Soufrière.[36] Although some resorts punctually contribute to this or that event, they have no policy of contributing to the development of local infrastructure. As for the incoming flow of tourists, off their boat tours for a few hours in Soufrière,

[34] These factors include: small size of domestic markets; high cost of imported inputs; limited access to regional and international markets; limited pools of managerial and entrepreneurial skills; and credit constraints.

[35] See, for instance, Wulf, 2003, p.32-33.

[36] The only local authority, the Town Council, is fully appointed by Castries. As an interviewee put it, it is given "pocket money to play with" and cannot go to a bank to obtain a loan, since it has no revenue. The government gives EC$15,000 a year to the Soufrière Town Council, like to any other district, regardless of its population. This mainly goes into street cleaning.

their input to the local economy benefits two or three local businessmen, at most, who had the right contacts to sign contracts with tour companies. Indeed, most of the tourists are taken by bus straight to outlying restaurants and brought back to their boats, without having spent a penny in local shops.

For fishers, the sentiment is strong that they have been marginalised to accommodate "rich, white tourists" who, moreover, do not have a keen interest in the livelihood of the locals, as manifested by divers releasing the fish they find in underwater traps. As for people working in hotels, as well as their families, they often feel they are:

(…) subservient to foreign people and badly paid, exactly like in the colonial time, or in the plantation system.

Two focus groups held in Soufrière with people from varied walks of life[37] led to an outpouring of criticism against local hotels. Participants had a lot to say about how this industry does not provide decent salaries and "traps people into low-paying jobs". Several described the high turnover of the tourism employees, since people get fired under various "pretexts", especially "when they start complaining or wanting to unionise". One participant mentioned her mother who works as a cleaning lady in a big resort nearby and who regularly complains about how bad white people treat employees, "although things are getting a bit better now". Another insisted that these resorts "do not give locals the opportunity to prove and advance themselves by giving them a chance to hold a management position". As one person put it, "90% of interesting positions are held by white people from foreign countries". Another participant recalled his experience as a "steward" (kitchen cleaner) for six months in one of these resorts. While one needs around EC$1,000 per month in Soufrière to make a very basic living, he would be paid EC$250 per two weeks (for working eight hours a day, six days a week). He admitted that longer-term employees would probably earn more – with extra income based on performance – but they would still be lowly paid. The general feeling was expressed by a participant who insisted:

These people use Soufrière's poverty and turn it into gold for themselves. How smart!

Beyond these criticisms also lies the unpleasant feeling that the "island is for sale" and that foreign investors and clients are allowed to act as they please, often in collusion with "corrupted politicians". As one fisher put it during a focus group:

The SMMA and the government are taking the sea and selling it to foreigners!

Another one added:

This is a Chechen country! Everything is run by money. Politicians are bought off by foreigners.

In such conversations, a recent example was given of how a brand new, huge resort came to be built on the east coast, in a part of the island that was supposed to be maintained as a totally protected natural site. This turned out to be a big political controversy, but the resort was built nevertheless, under strong suspicions of corruption. As a young and articulate fisherman put it:

Here, people enter in politics poor; and they get out rich.

Whether it is based on some form of corruption or not, the fact is that the tourism industry has taken hold of the Soufrière environment to a large extent, through a process of commodification that we will now explore.

6.2 When Community Spaces and Behaviours Become Tradable Goods

Commodification in Soufrière takes the form of a push to upgrade local spaces and behaviours in order to attain certain standards that fulfil touristic desires. The upgrading is driven by actors – such as hotels and the government – that need to see the island become an ever more attractive product on the international markets.

When a tourist comes to St. Lucia, expectations are high. Caribbean tourism is indeed "vested in the branding and marketing of Paradise" (Sheller, 2004, p.24), "[conjuring] up the idea of 'heaven on earth' or 'a little bit of paradise' in the collective European imagination" (Pattullo, 1996, p.141). This notion goes way back. As Grove argues (1995, p.3),

[37] Two focus groups were held with seven and six participants, respectively. The sessions lasted for an hour-and-a-half, approximately. Participants included people such as an accountant, various employees from a local hotel resort, a shopkeeper, a taxi driver, a hairdresser sometimes working with tourists, as well as young and older unemployed people, often involved in reef fishing.

from the 17th century onwards, "the tropical environment was increasingly utilised as the symbolic location for the idealised landscapes and aspirations of the Western imagination". To deliver this touristic experience, and meet the ideal of the "Garden of Eden before the Fall" – comprised of empty, quiet and sunny beaches – a good number of local realities must be "fixed" or hidden.

The potential for more hotels being built in Soufrière is enormous, but the tourism industry thinks of the local population as a hindrance. Such was the concern of a foreign tourism consultant who declared:

> *There are currently 300 hotels rooms available here, but more than 1,000 could be operated […] A big drawback is the community: people here lack education and culture, and quite a few are lazy. They don't know how to interact with foreigners. Tourists often don't like coming to town and are sometimes annoyed on beaches or even on the sea.*

Local realities, thus, need to be refined, modified and in the end "commodified" to be attractive to tourists. This reshaping process involves various techniques, a basic one being the isolation of tourists from locals. It involves a spatial segregation deeply resented by the locals in Soufrière, as hotels often act as little fiefdoms and tourists "occupy" the most captivating natural spaces of the area, at the heart of the local identity. Moreover, since contacts with locals are in some instances unavoidable, commodification also involves a reshaping of the people themselves – trying to curb, for instance, the way they behave on public beaches and interact with tourists. The latter expect privacy and quietness - and friendliness in case of contact with a local. All of this puts into motion a type of "productive power" whereby spatial and human identities are reshaped by the pressure applied by an anonymous mass of tourism clients and the world market they are linked to. Many St. Lucians feel that the emphasis the government places on the tourist industry has led to the neglect of many domestic problems, turning many people into "second-class citizens" in their own country.

In Soufrière, the tourism market is mainly couples: honeymoons are a key industry and some resorts even provide a free wedding service. What is expected, thus, is a romantic deserted island. This fantasy is abundantly sold on websites with photos that show no trace of local populations, "building on the impression of nothing but sand, sea and sun" (Pattullo, 1996, p.145). Since the local reality is quite different, commodification steps in, and many locals feel that the SMMA plays a part in this process.

Having addressed the issue of fishers accessing spaces devoted to tourism, other issues have gained importance for the SMMA Board over the years: controlling access to beaches; making the area "safer for tourists"; and curbing the "harassment problem" – in other words, the widespread practice of hailing and following tourists to sell them small products or services. Here again, containment and the regulation process have been set in motion by several actors, including the SMMA, in pursuit of the overt goal of making both local spaces and people more attractive to overseas tourists.

First, the SMMA became involved in keeping the beaches clear of an "invasion of water taxis", as a hotel manager recalls. Operated by people who own or rent a boat, water taxis offer to transport tourists from one bay to another or to more distant parts of the island. Many water-taxi operators are former or part-time fishers, often young and from a very low socioeconomic background. Given the restrictions on fishing and the lack of job opportunities in town, many fishing families started reverting to this activity so that the number of water taxis started to grow rapidly after the inception of the zoning system. Competing with one another, water taxis came into the vicinity of two important local resorts. Complaints were thus received by the SMMA from the Jalousie and the Anse Chastanet hotels arguing that the situation was "not acceptable anymore" and that "strict measures" needed to be implemented "to regain order".

St. Lucia's laws stipulate that all beaches are public, and that free access must be guaranteed, so that hotels are not *legally* able to bar people from accessing "their" beaches. In response, the SMMA instituted a rotation system, whereby water taxis are assigned fixed and very limited locations on beaches with no right to walk along the dock to offer services – since "it disturbs tourist tranquillity". In 2002, formal licenses (in the form of a "Soufrière Water Craft Permit") were issued to water taxi operators for the transport of passengers. The whole process has worked rather efficiently, to the satisfaction of hotels.

Another important contribution of the SMMA to "beach

commodification" has been its passivity in enforcing St. Lucia's law requiring that all beaches be public and freely accessible. The SMMA has done little to ensure this right, proving rather submissive towards the large resorts that have almost privatised these spaces *de facto*. Hotels, restaurants and bars often complain about the behaviour of locals on beaches (found to be too "noisy" or "agitated"), which contradicts with the "peace" that is supposedly expected by foreigners. Various tactics are thus used to keep locals away. One is to make sure that there is no transportation available from the town to the beach, so that locals (who generally do not own cars) would need a lot of time to reach them on foot. Anse Chastanet, for instance, a large hotel resort on one of the most spectacular bays of the SMMA zone, has not refurbished its access road "because it would enable more cars to get there", as an employee acknowledged.

Another tactic is to make the space *look* like private property. To get to the beaches at both the Anse Chastanet and the Jalousie resorts, one has to go through a formal barrier patrolled by uniformed private security guards, walk along several administrative buildings and finally arrive at a coast that is dominated by various types of hotel construction and dense rows of fixed, large wooden sunshades. Most people would think this type of setting to be totally under private control, unless they were already aware that this area is public under the law. Even a white foreigner feels uncomfortable entering it (although it is made for foreigners) — so there is little chance that locals would feel at home on these beaches. Reportedly, several locals have complained over time to the SMMA that access is in practice quite difficult, but little has ever been done to improve the situation, beyond a few letters. An unwritten agreement seems to have been reached whereby locals can have access to hotel beaches but on specific and limited parts, the bulk of the nicest areas being reserved for tourists.

Thirdly, the SMMA has also engaged in improving safety, but selectively – namely tourist safety — without touching upon the larger safety issues affecting the local community, such as the stealing of fishing equipment. The sentiment thus emerged that the objective of the SMMA within its marine jurisdiction was the protection of tourists, not of the local people. Starting in 2000, concerns arose within the Board regarding yacht break-ins.[38] Lights were thus set up in the Rachette Point area and the dinghy jetty to discourage criminals. The SMMA contracted with a security company to provide intervention patrols and services. It also scheduled regular night patrols and offered the police use of its boats to do the same. Safety workshops and training for water taxis were carried out to raise awareness about police procedures. Finally, a strengthened identification system was instituted, with stickers for licensed boats and official T-shirts and ID cards for water taxis, requiring prior checking by the police of the applicant's criminal record. After 2005, the SMMA reverted to a new security company and tried to work more closely with the St. Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority. Although the tourist safety issue has not been totally resolved in practice, the fact is that the SMMA proved very responsive on this issue. Commenting on this fact, a bartender commented: "It is the yachts' money that makes the SMMA live".

Finally, the SMMA has also become engaged in fighting the "harassment problem". Harassment is a negative term used to describe certain recurrent behaviour, observed in town and on the sea, to "make a quick buck" by selling to tourists, in a pushy way, petty services or products. Such behaviour is evident in the Soufrière area, and in St. Lucia in general; it is perceived by the authorities as a major hindrance to the development of tourism. As a Castries official bluntly explained: "To sell the St. Lucian experience to the world, our people need to be educated into understanding certain things". The SMMA does not have many means to address this issue, but it nevertheless undertook various public information campaigns, including radio spots aired on the national media. One such message ran as follows:

There is a right and wrong way to promote your ware. Act responsibly. Provide a positive impression. Show pride in your country.

Through such campaigns, people in Soufrière and in the surrounding communities have been asked to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, to stop invading others' private space, and to bear in mind that the

[38] From the road, the culprits would observe the yachts, and when the occupants left the boat, they would swim out, climb onboard, break the hatches and steal valuables.

impression provided to visitors paints a picture not only of the individuals encountered, but of the island of Saint Lucia. In thus fighting "harassment", direct appeals to patriotism are made but little attention is paid to the root cause of the problem. Some observers have contended, for instance, that "harassment" is in fact a form of resistance against tourism-related development, which excludes (de facto) the lay people and local communities from benefiting from foreigners' money.

In a nutshell, foreigners come to St. Lucia to experience a quiet paradise where they can relax and feel protected. Accordingly, the SMMA has done all it can to make beaches a more tradable good, as "quiet, safe and clear" of unwanted interference from the local people. It has also worked to make locals less pushy when selling their wares. In this process, tourists have arguably exercised upon the local community strong forms of compulsory power (through their anticipated wishes) and productive power (modifying the identity of the local spaces and people).

6.3 The Other Community Participation Schemes in Soufrière

The SMMA is *not* the only project that has been implemented in Soufrière, based on a strong discourse of "community participation". Two others are especially notable: the Soufrière Regional Development Foundation (SRDF) and the Piton Management Area (PMA). Here, we argue that all three CP schemes are interlinked and have all been working to foster the commodification of the community in line with the requirements of international tourism. They also bear some similarities in their internal functioning: low levels of actual CP; an estrangement from the local people; the dominance of major economic interests with political connections – and the permanent possibility of a governmental takeover.

"Beautifying Soufrière": the SRDF

The SRDF, in the available documentation, is presented as a community organisation with strong local membership, born out of "the concerted efforts of a cross-section of community leaders in Soufrière" (Theodore, 1998, p.69). Fieldwork interviews, however, reveal that this "cross-section" actually boiled down to three prominent local business people, including the owner of an all-inclusive resort. These notables created in 1986 the Soufrière Development Programme (SDP), as a non-governmental organisation meant to promote tourism. Their personal links to the Prime Minister ensured that the SPD enjoyed a good relationship with the Ministry of Planning in line with its core objective: making Soufrière a better place for tourists. As a former president of the SMMA Board acknowledged regarding the SPD:

The founding idea was to help increase the attractiveness of Soufrière for tourists and the acceptability of tourism among the people here.

Tellingly, the founding blueprint of the SDP was a vast architectural plan for a complete revamping of the city's appearance, to make it eye-catching. Although this plan has never been implemented as such, it is still revered to date among Soufrière's local elite as an almost legendary vision of what Soufrière should be like. The SDP eventually engaged in more modest activities, including: the employment of six "tourist wardens" to "better manage the residents interaction with foreigners and minimise harassment"; the employment of "beach boys" to rid the water front of garbage; an aesthetic upgrade of the waterfront; and the construction of a jetty in the middle of Soufrière Bay to cater to tour boats (cf. section 1.2 and Photo 4). Later projects have also focused on beautifying the town (repairs to sidewalks and drains, garbage collection, public toilets, taxi stands, etc.), as well as sponsored events such as the Carnival and a jazz festival.

In 1993, the SPD officially became the Soufrière Regional Development Foundation (SRDF), with a governance structure mixing government, national interest groups and more local ones.[39] In practice, however, the SRDF has

[39] Five organisations were represented originally on the Board: the SDP (three representatives), the Soufrière Town Council (a rather hollow structure appointed by the central government), the Ministry of Planning (a powerful ministry), St. Lucia Tourist Board, the National Trust (concerned about conservation) and the Mother and Father League (a local NGO that stopped functioning a few years later). It is only in 1997 that more local representatives were included from the Fishermen's Cooperative, the Taxi Association, and the Fonds St. Jacques Development Committee (an initiative in a nearby rural community).

been - and still is - led by local businessmen, involved in tourism, with good political connections. Interviews and focus groups showed strong sentiment in the community that the "Foundation" – as it called locally – is not actually connected to locals. A shop owner declared, for instance:

This is not a community owned organisation. Most of the people on the Board are not from Soufrière. And the Foundation could do much more for the people here.

A young lady, working as an accountant, added:

I do not really know what the foundation does. It seems to concentrate on superficial things like lights for Christmas, carnival, the waterfront, etc. I do not see any project to alleviate poverty. I even asked to work there three days at one point, just to understand it, but it did not work out.

Other comments included:

It's just a bunch of connected people there (…). They are playing with our money, with Soufrière's money (…).

Since 1995, the SRDF has been entrusted with the management of the Sulphur Spring (a natural volcanic attraction in the area) and the use of that site's revenue for the benefit of the community. However, interviews revealed widespread discontent, along the following lines:

The foundation raises a lot of money but is not transparent or accountable (…). It is not clear to anybody how it is used.

In fact, the government takes 5% of the revenue from the Sulphur Spring and is given a yearly report on the use of the money. So, according to a former SRDF Board member:

There is total accountability on the use of money! The government approves of it!

However, there is no *de facto* accountability to the local community. The Foundation has no policy, for instance, of producing annual public reports, in any form, on its activities. During our fieldwork, the strongest feelings of defiance against SRDF management were found in Baron's Drive, the fishing area, as well as among typical business people (small- and medium-sized shopkeepers, bar tenders, etc.). Suspicions were expressed about self-interested management and overt conflicts of interest. Several interviewees recalled, for instance, that the jetty built by the SDP was insured by a company owned by one of the founding Board members – and when the insurance needed to be activated, after storm damage, the contract was not honoured. This quote from a fisher seems to reflect a widespread view:

The point for the people on the Board is to get more business connections. That is it.

A British woman, who had lived in Soufrière for 15 years and ran a large shop, also commented:

The foundation is managed in the private interest of these [Board] people […]. They are the ones who get the major contracts when the [Foundation] does some construction work or organises something - for instance the visit of Prince Charles and Camilla [in March 2008].

In the end, there is little doubt that locals do not feel that the SRDF is their "own thing", although it benefits from revenues that "should be entirely public". Even a member of the Taxi Association (represented on the SRDF Board), declared in regard to Board members:

They want to appear like they give power to the local people, but this is not happening. Who makes final decisions there? A few businessmen.

The local community and the Foundation were to grow even further apart, after a government takeover of the SRDF Board. In February 2007, the Prime Minister sent a letter appointing a whole new Board, a move that was contrary to the Foundation's articles of incorporation. Not only did he appoint people as individuals, not as representatives of any organisation, but he also appointed the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, so there could be no elections. The previous Board retreated – finding it difficult to defy a Prime Minister - but some members brought the matter to court. Eventually, the High Court ruled against the government but the latter still had its way: under political pressure, Board member committees approved the appointments that were made. The "new Board" has also amended the articles of incorporation so that the Prime Minister can now appoint and revoke members more easily. As a staff member of the Foundation commented rather bitterly: "In St. Lucia, the government can get away with such moves".

The PMA: safeguarding a World Heritage Site…selectively

The Piton Management Area is the third (and newest) significant "participatory" organisation based in Soufrière. It is responsible for the protection of a World Heritage Site nominated by UNESCO in 2004. The area comprises 3,000 volcanic hectares, including the Pitons, the world-famous mountains rising from the sea. Governmental efforts to convince UNESCO of the site's merits started in the early 1990s but were delayed by controversy over the

construction of a hotel resort – the Jalousie – right in the middle of the "most sacred site" of the island. Although protesters, such as Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott, were vocal against an endeavour comparable in their eyes with "the building of a casino in the Vatican", the government gave permission for the sake of jobs and foreign exchange - so that the Jalousie resort opened in 1992. From there, it took time to convince UNESCO that a World Heritage Site could nevertheless still be designated.

Once nominated, the Site had to comply with a key requirement: development of a strict land-management plan, notably to control construction activities, given that large parts of the area are under private ownership. In 2007, the government entrusted a foreign consulting company with designing such a plan, following a "large participatory process" within the community. Stakes were high for the local landowners, since half a hectare is worth more than US$1.5 million at 2008 market prices. The highly expected report was released in 2008 and suggested seven distinct policy areas, from "no-build" zones to zones where new construction would be allowed.

The proposal, however, sparked intense controversy in Soufrière. Small and medium-sized landowners from local families felt they were being sacrificed by the "no-build" policies, while large hotel resorts, notably the Jalousie, were granted the right to expand construction. Harsh criticisms were directed against the supposedly "participatory process" that was in fact conducted in haste and with rare public meetings. Several locals even discovered that their names were on the list of people interviewed by the consultants, something they denied.

While more than 1,800 families are affected by the zoning system, there is widespread feeling that the PMA "is a club of a few", as a woman from a historical local family put it. Focus groups held with a group of small and medium-sized landowners produced comments, such as:

The consultation was fake […] forged [or] flawed.

Those guys [the consultants] were very selective in carrying out their mandate.

In the end, it's all about foreigners helping foreigners.

Big businesses do not want us to develop alternative hotel options in the area. And they even want to hold the villa business.

Responding to critiques during the public presentation of the plan, the consultants claimed limited time to carry out the consultations. One participant reportedly had this counter-response, which won applause from the room:

These decisions will affect Soufrière's families for generations to come. And you tell us that time was a constraint in your work? What are we going to say to our children? That we cannot do anything with our land, because you had not the time?

At the time of fieldwork, the whole matter was still being debated in the town, but it was in the hands of the government, which was likely to approve the report but had not yet made its decision public.

The SMMA, the SRDF and the PMA are thus interlinked in their goals and function, as well as in the sentiments they fostered in various parts of the local community – from the poorer fishers to the small landowners. As we saw (section 2.1), the SRDF was at the origin of the SMMA, while the PMA has included both groups in its advisory committee (the PMAAC). Quite symbolically, there are now plans to create a single building to house all three organisations. All these linkages are well understood by the locals. Many fishers for instance, when complaining about the SMMA, refer also to the SRDF. In fact, all these CP organisations are thought of as a single entity and designated in fishers' language as "They" – meaning an institutional world that seems separated from the people.

Arguably, all three participatory organisations have provided channels through which the various interest groups linked to the large tourism industry could more effectively control the local situation. The double process of *containment for commodification* has been at work to "bring Soufrière in line", as one interviewee said, and "keep troublesome locals" in check.

7. How Social Capital Affects Community Participation

To understand how containment could occur so successfully in Soufrière, we think it is critical to consider the social capital of the community. We argue here that low levels of social capital in Soufrière have paved the way for key local stakeholders to be disempowered in a community participation process like that of the SMMA. Meanwhile, typical local methods of popular resistance have never allowed the less-advantaged social groups to engage with the SMMA, but rather to "exit" from it, actively (through confrontational politics) and now, to an increasing extent, passively (through psychological withdrawal, notably reflected in the growth of Rastafarianism).

This section makes the following points. First, *bridging social capital*[40] is low in the Soufrière community, which is deeply fragmented into various groups that communicate little with each other. Second, *bonding social capital* is equally low, even within rather homogenous social groups, such as the fishers or the business community. There is consequently little experience with, or capacity for, engaging in collective action and coordination. These two features — low levels of both bridging and bonding social capital — help explain why the local community has proved unable to institutionalise any collective-action mechanism or to take the lead in a "participatory initiative" like the SMMA, in fact largely led by non-local actors. Lastly, resistance to outside influences on the part of the Soufrière community has historically taken the form of an active rebellion or of a parallel culture of withdrawal — two modes of resistance that have both been re-activated by the SMMA experience.

7.1 The Road to Disempowerment: Not Enough "Bridging" and "Bonding"

Low levels of social capital (SC) in Soufrière have paved the way for various forms of power to be exercised upon the weaker stakeholders within the community. A low amount of bridging SC (trust and solidarity) among groups has hindered the emergence of collective action across groups, while a low level of bonding SC has prevented some groups from organising themselves so they can be effectively represented in the various community participation projects. Meanwhile, a strong amount of linking SC on the part of some individuals has enabled them in some instances to passively resist the SMMA, or even to actively shape its line of action.

Weak level of bridging SC

Field interviews provided a blunt account of how Soufrière is divided in the eyes of the locals. People often described a "three-tier society": 1) the "people who have a lot or who have already achieved something", usually because the family already had capital; 2) those who "want to make it and try hard"; and 3) those who have very little – some of whom "sit and do nothing", while others "work hard but cannot make a proper living". It is in this last category that the poorer fishers, as well as the people with petty jobs in the tourism industry, see themselves. These people are often not literate (although they had some schooling) and feel estranged from the rest of the society.

Levels of trust and solidarity among groups are extremely low. In interviews with the higher strata of the local community (businessmen, owners of large shops, hotel managers, etc.) most well-off people expressed a strong

[40] Various types of social capital have been identified in Section 4.2.7.

antipathy towards poorer groups — and very often towards their own employees, regarding whom there is often more suspicion than trust. There seems to be a widespread feeling among the well-off against the "laziness of most of Soufrière", as one shopkeeper put it. Meanwhile, people from poorer groups, such as fishers, waiters, hotel cleaners, modest tourist guides and down to beggars, express no less antipathy towards the higher social classes, describing them as "greedy", "interested only in their own belly", and with "little respect for the common people". In between these two social extremes, one can observe in Soufrière a slowly emerging middle class made up of people who have completed some schooling (often thanks to strong family support) and who are looking for decent-paying jobs as accountants, administrative assistants, legal secretaries, senior school teachers, etc. These people seem disconnected from both ends of society.

Although the town is extremely small and its centre could be conducive to informal rapprochements between groups, most interviewees confirmed that people do not tend to "hang out" with people from a different social class. A female accountant in her thirties, working in a local travel agency, was open about this reality, as well as about her ambitions. She explained that if one "wants to go up the ladder", one needs "to get acquainted with the right people". She expressed a strong feeling that "to achieve anything in Soufrière one has to build the right connections". This implies, as she herself acknowledged, actively ignoring certain parts of society and keeping a distance.

In Soufrière, there is no set place or time for communication between the various social groups. The culture of "patronage and paternalism" that is typical of many small communities worldwide does not seem to have developed here. The wealthy people in Soufrière do not appear to feel an obligation to help the poor through difficult times, or by the construction of public utilities, for instance. The older families who own large portions of Soufrière's land do practice a form of paternalism but only toward some of their long-standing employees: such effort does not extend to the larger community and is often discontinued by the younger generation of landowners.

Each tier group follows "its own life and deals with its own problems" pretty much alone, so much so that several interviewees insisted on the "rising individualism" that affects Soufrière. This evolution is especially felt at the lowest level of the local society, among beggars for instance. One interviewee, named John and aged 28, is essentially a street wanderer, taking up small construction or transport jobs whenever possible. He begs or opens doors for people entering supermarkets, trying to attract their benevolence. Talking about change in the community over time, the most noticeable thing to him is that space is becoming increasingly privatised:

People close off their properties more than before. It is more and more difficult to find shelter when my parents want me out.

In John's eyes, there is less and less solidarity in Soufrière's community:

In the old days windows were left open, people would stand around chatting and one could always ask for a little food at many different places. Nowadays, people are locking themselves in and they don't want to talk to you.

Social groups, also, do not have similar aspirations. The wealthiest aspire to the capital Castries, to which they are closely connected, sometimes living there full time and only coming to Soufrière to deal with certain business issues. The middle classes look up to the wealthy, while the poor strive to make a living and often seem to reject psychologically the social structure in which they are placed. Supposedly, the key annual display of social unity in Soufrière is the Carnival, which takes place in August. However, as interviews and direct observation have confirmed, the organisational efforts and the actual party itself provide more opportunities for social conflict than cohesion, notably among business people fighting for big and small market opportunities, as well as among various urban areas trying to capture Carnival revenues.

How does the SMMA fit into this social space? Its core staff is very much part of the second tier, the "formal, more modern society" of Soufrière, with decent education, good English, will to move up socially and sometimes part of significant local families. Some SMMA marine rangers do provide a link with the poorer sectors of society given their family backgrounds, but it is limited, and on the whole, fieldwork suggested a structural lack of communication between the SMMA staff and the poorer populations. This feeling is reinforced by the location of the SMMA, far from

the fishers' living area, and was also confirmed by direct observation during a community event prepared by the SMMA. The event in question was both the SMMA's anniversary and celebration of the International Year of the Coral Reefs, a half-day meeting to which the whole community was invited. As it turned out, however, beyond the SMMA staff, a few Board members and some officials from Castries, almost *no locals* came. Attendance at this event, gave a strong indication of the SMMA's estrangement from the locals.

Weak level of bonding SC

Soufrière is characterised not only by a low level of *bridging* social capital, but also a low level of *bonding* social capital – meaning that groups are within themselves fragmented. This has undermined, time and again, the emergence of collective action and self-sustaining endeavours. Meanwhile, the narrow, higher-end of the local economic elite enjoys a high level of *linking* social capital, providing them with open access to the highest political spheres of the country. This combination is the very compost enabling power phenomena to be manifested so prominently in community participation efforts, such as the SMMA.

To start with, the business community is fragmented between expatriates and locals. Expatriates are by definition not from Soufrière and are usually described by the local as "white people who own big things", such as large hotel resorts. Some of these people have been there for so long that they are part of the scene, although not identified as "locals" – and they often do not live in Soufrière. Turning to local business people, "there are no more than 10 important people"[41] and the most notable fact is that "there is a lot of competition among them" – especially for tourism-related business opportunities. For instance, who is going to attract the flow of tourists coming every day for lunch or visits? Most of the people from this group whom we interviewed acknowledged that "what is lacking is a sense of coming together to make the most of business opportunities". Such an effort was made in the form of the Soufrière Business Association, but there was too much dissent and it collapsed several times. Even two brothers managed to fight against each other when they were both nominated to head the Association.

Meanwhile, although one could say they are the very soul of the town, Soufrière's fishers also form a fragmented community, with deep feelings of competition, mistrust and conflict. Interviews with fishers revealed strong dividing lines and tense feelings among them: the young *vs.* the old; deep water *vs.* reef fishers, with the deepest socioeconomic divide being between people who own a boat vs. those who do not. Certainly, the Soufrière Fishermen's Cooperative seems like a true achievement for this community, being the town's longest-standing community organisation.

Registered in January 1977, the "Coop" has grown from 40 to over 100 members recently. The Cooperative extended its activities, from selling only fuel to providing a variety of fishing-related equipment, including bait, seine nets, fillets, thread, line, rope, cooking gas and ice. It is also responsible for distributing to fishers a small fuel subsidy from the government and can offer small temporary loans to its members. As we have seen (cf. 5.3.1), however, fewer than 30% of the Soufrière fishers are boat owners and even fewer are Cooperative members, with involvement by the younger fishers particularly low. Even within the existing membership of the Cooperative, capacity for simple coordination proves very low. Notably, many fights have taken place among fishers about the Fish Aggregating Devices, installed with the help of French financing[42] to support deep-sea fishing. Moreover, when it comes to renewing these critical devices, there has been no evidence of collective action. The president of the Co-operative has often explained to the SMMA Board that he has suggested that the fishers put aside some money to create new FADs, but no action has ever been taken.

The lack of capacity for collective action was also illustrated by the aborted effort to create a Water Taxi Association to regulate the increasing number of fishers offering transport services to tourists. The Water Taxi Association was supposed to be part of the SMMA Board from the start, but it never actually came into existence, due to disagreements about its membership. This subject was discussed numerous times by the SMMA Board, which was wary that

[41] They include: 1) The owner of the gas station "Cool Breeze", who lives in the Virgin Islands; 2) the owner of the Excelsior Plaza, the commercial centre in town; 3) the couple that owns the La Haut Plantation, a nice hotel on the hills; 4) the owner of Fonds Doux Estate and the downtown supermarket; 5) the historical family (Du Boulay) that owns the Estate Plantation and Du Boulay Supplies, a large construction materials supplier; 6) the owner of the Hummingbird Resort; 7) the owner of the Plantation Estate and the Stonefield Resort; 8) the historical Devaux family that owns the botanical gardens and much of the land around Soufrière; 9) the owner of the Beacon Hotel/ Restaurant and the Torry Waterfall.

[42] As mentioned (cf. 5.4.3), these devices were no longer working at the time of the fieldwork.

some people were trying to monopolise this business by making it difficult for new entrants to obtain a license. At one point, two associations existed, the Soufrière Water Craft Association and The Soufrière Water Taxi Association. To resolve the membership issue, meetings were held with both associations, but a merger proved impossible.

Soufrière's level of bonding social capital is extremely affected by the polarisation of the island's political life between its two main parties: the Saint Lucian Labour Party (SLP) and the United Workers' Party (UWP).[43] This divide runs through all strata of society and often causes high tensions at the inter-personal level, undermining still further Soufrière's poor capacity for collective endeavour. "Politicisation" or "partisan politics" results in mistrust between people based on political affiliations or supposed preference. It also leads to systematic criticism of whatever proposal is made by the other side. Although the entire island is characterised by this type of politics, Soufrière is particularly known for it. Numerous interviewees noted that "it is very black and white here" and "people would not even shake hands with people from the other party". Most interviewees are bitter about this situation:

What we usually find in our politics is that opposition parties criticise just to oppose, so nothing can be set up in a collaborative spirit.

Whenever a new administration arrives in Castries, it destroys all the previous work done, so everything always has to start from scratch. And in Soufrière, it is even worse.

When asked whether the St. Lucians have a culture of opposition, or of being rather docile in politics, an interviewee said:

Half of the people tend to be quiet, because when their party is in power, they do not dare criticise.

Partisan politics has plagued the functioning of the very few community organisations, since people on their Boards criticise new proposals solely on the basis of the political subtext. This is what happened, for instance, with the proposed Soufrière Business Association and still happens regularly at the SRDF.

7.2 From Active to Passive "Exit": Institutional and Psychological Withdrawal

Since 2001, the absence of visible political upheaval on the part of the poorer fishers of Soufrière has largely been interpreted as a sign of success by project evaluators (financed by donors), indicating that the SMMA has been an effective participatory mechanism. (*e.g.* French GEF, 2008). In our view, however, this kind of silence cannot be taken as proof of community participation - quite the opposite, in fact, in the St. Lucian context. Here, we make the four following points: 1) the social anger against the SMMA has not dissolved, although it has gone more "underground"; 2) the popular culture of resistance in St. Lucia has no history of engaging with institutions in a formal way (rather, its usual approach is one of violent resistance or of a psychological withdrawal and resignation); 3) a mix of violent talk combined with political passivity also characterises the Rasta culture, which is developing fast among the younger and poorer part of the Soufrière community; 4) all in all, these types of popular resistance to the SMMA do not appear to have contributed to the strengthening of Soufrière's social capital — much to the contrary.

The continued frustrations of the poorer fishers

No large-scale conflict has broken out between the SMMA and the fishers for a long time, especially when compared to the scale of the 1997 upheaval. Still, we needed to find out if this meant acceptance of the SMMA. To this end, we undertook in the fishing area called Baron's Drive a series of in-depth interviews and focus groups that clearly indicated the ongoing social anger within Soufrière against the SMMA.

[43] The island is an independent parliamentary democratic Commonwealth, with Queen Elizabeth II as its head of state. She is represented by a Governor General, who has mostly symbolic responsibilities. The Prime Minister is the leader of the majority party of the Parliament and has most of the actual power. The SLP won the first post-independence election in July 1979, taking 12 of the 17 seats in Parliament. But St. Lucia was soon to be dominated by the UWP, which governed the country from 1982 to 1997, with John Compton as Prime Minister, a man who had already run the country for 15 years before independence. In 1996, Compton announced his resignation as Prime Minister in favour of his chosen successor, Vaughan Lewis, former Director-General of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The SLP also had a change of leadership, with former CARICOM official Dr. Kenny Anthony succeeding businessman Julian Hunte. In elections held in May 1997, the SLP won all but one of the 17 seats in Parliament. It was re-elected in 2001, but in December 2006, the UWP, once again led by Sir John Compton, defeated the SLP. Compton died in September 2007 and was succeeded by Stephenson King as Prime Minister.

Baron's Drive is the town's poorest area, with no sanitation, festering smells all around and little girls carrying buckets of water to supply their families back home. The first time we walked around there, a man in his thirties started asking us inquisitive and relevant questions about our work and the SMMA, since we seemed to him to be "another white expert". This person did not want to give his real name and asked us to call him "Spencer". Several fishers of various generations joined the conversation, nodding in agreement and providing more comments. This experience was followed by similar ones in the ensuing days and weeks, involving many other people from the area. All indicated the same underlying sentiment: a deep dissatisfaction with the SMMA.

The central critique is that the fishers have been "pushed out from the good fishing spots" and their living conditions are made "much worse for the benefit of the rich white tourists". When faced with the fact that the SMMA Board does contain one representative for the fishers, interviewees made it clear that that person in no way represents them. As they put it, "such people are brainwashed", "sucked into the system" and "bought off to comply and to pretend we want to comply". Focus groups further revealed the feeling that the SMMA, when trying to speak to the fishers, "only turns to the old generation and not to the younger fishers" who generally "have no boat and a lot to say". People offered further comments such as "we are not happy", "we feel too much alone" or "we cannot take it any longer".

Another important sentiment is that "nothing is done to help [the fishers]" to upgrade their equipment or their skills. They mentioned the tragic case of a 38-year-old fisher who had been missing for almost 30 days and had probably drowned because of rusty equipment. There is also resentment against local commercial banks: they do not grant fishers credit, since they require collateral in the form of land, property, stable income, etc. No microfinance option is available locally and no loan guarantees from the government. In the fishers' experience, "nothing is done for them". This criticism of unfairness, of "being pushed into a corner with no option to make a living", is aimed directly at the SMMA, reinforced by the contrasting perceptions that this organisation "has a lot of money" yet it "does nobody knows what".

Resorting to violence instead of institutions: a culture of popular resistance

One of the most striking results of our interviews with the poorer social groups in Soufrière (fishers, beggars, seasonal construction workers, etc.) was the identification of the following fact: poorer social groups reject most formal institutions, which they spontaneously identify with the "rich and the powerful". Faced with problems, this type of popular resistance and discontent does not know how to become institutionalised, or to work with institutions. An interviewee explained this by saying that "poor fishers have no time to attend participatory workshops"; but in our understanding, it is not merely a question of time. It is a problem of deeply disconnected mental worlds: a "white/institutional/English-speaking/formal/literate/modern" framework, as opposed to a social world based on French patois, limited literacy, black culture and deeply ingrained feelings of being the "sons of slaves". The SMMA is very much understood by the lower social classes to be part of that "first world". This organisation bears little connection with the lower social world: it is therefore "not worth investing in", as a man in his thirties explained, since it has been "bought off like the rest". As an insightful civil servant explained in Castries:

Throughout the island, there is a kind of rejection of all institutions on the part of the lower classes. But there are also social demands and expectations, which are not met and which can translate into violence any time.

There is no need to go far back into the history of St. Lucia to see that this possibility is a real one; the quasi-insurrection by banana farmers in late 1993 is still very present in all memories. At that time, the issue was the programmed collapse of the banana sector following the revision of the ACP agreements with the European Union, which left the St. Lucian producers with far more restricted access to these markets and more competition due to cheaper bananas from Central and South America. The fear was intense and degenerated into active strikes and confrontations with the police (fires and barricades) that resulted in the death of some farmers and injured policemen.

This culture of fierce resistance runs deep in local history and self-identity, especially in Soufrière. Its clearest and

most celebrated example is the slave rebellion against British rule at the time of the French Revolution.[44] It took the form of an armed conflict between the British and the rebels, most of whom were hiding in the Soufrière area – something the community is still extremely proud of. Using guerrilla tactics, these "*nègres marrons*" (also know as "*brigands*") burned farms, attacked British strongholds and caused as much chaos as possible before fleeing to hide in the mountains; they managed to hold the island for a year, forcing many colonial plantation owners off the island.

There is indeed in the West Indies an "incredible culture of resistance", as a local university professor put it. People know how to rise up and contest the legitimacy of formal institutions. One may wonder if the current takeover of the island by the tourism industry can create violent reactions, too. The SMMA attempted to avoid and neutralise such a possibility in Soufrière, but several fishers from Baron's Drive interviewed in August 2008 made frequent reference to an upcoming "revolution" or "social struggle" that could ignite at any time, because "this is too much". They also implied violence, possibly towards hotel resorts or the SMMA manager, who is often depicted as "responsible for everything". We were also often told to "tell him that we [the fishers] don't like him". As two fishers put it:

One day, we will join and break the SMMA […]. If one is found guilty, then we are all guilty.

Withdrawal despite "talks of fire": the second facet of popular resistance

Despite such pumped-up speech, it is not easy to predict where the underground tension might lead in Soufrière. Not only has the SMMA been able to neutralise (rather than raise) the voices of these fishers, but the Caribbean's popular culture is also characterised by a tradition of "violent speeches followed by little action", as one university professor put it. Inflammatory speeches are sometimes called "talks of fire" by locals, who acknowledge at the same time that they don't lead to action. They thus seem to be a form of psychological withdrawal from real politics and institutions that are denounced as "part of the system".[45]

This type of psychological withdrawal is particularly apparent in the way the "Rasta culture" has been developing in Soufrière. Rastafarianism has indeed attracted an increasing number of young locals with little or no work, sometimes from fisher families. They let their hair grow, use marijuana, often squat in run-down buildings, etc. They have a bad reputation among the emerging middle class of Soufrière, which sees them as potential or actual criminals. Local people often seem to fear that their own kids might turn Rasta, because as one informant summarised, "when you are a Rasta, you don't get a job" – and Rastas are typically associated with people living in the streets, drinking, smoking drugs, etc. At the time of our fieldwork, one of the SMMA marine rangers had recently adopted a Rasta style, but he started to grow his hair only after being recruited. Some of his colleagues felt uneasy about it, one declaring during an interview that if his own son was "to do this", he would ask him to "leave the family home immediately".

Searching for the local meaning of being a Rasta in Soufrière, we conducted a range of interviews with people who consider themselves as such. Understanding the meaning of this movement is important for our case study because there are a lot of young and unemployed people in the Baron's Drive fishing area who have turned to Rastafarianism as a way of life. One such person we interviewed had a large marijuana leaf tattooed on his chest. He used to sell drugs in Soufrière but stopped, because of "too many problems with the police". Nevertheless, he insisted that Rastas are not criminals. As he explained: "a Rasta is always cool and the basic idea is to not worry". At the same time, however, as another interviewee added, a Rasta "cares deeply about "social justice". There is a social and political consciousness attached to it: "a Rasta fights for the people, for the poor", a fact that seems confirmed by the type of music these people continuously listen too – namely, Jamaican politically engaged music. So in the end, as one interviewee declared:

Being a Rasta means like 'you don't care but in fact you care'.

This strange statement seems to embody the spirit of

[44] The French Revolution put an end to slavery in 1794 in all the French colonies, including in St.Lucia. However, the island was soon under British rule. Since many of the freed slaves did not wish to return to the plantations, they started the uprising using tactics that had been successful in Jamaica against the British Empire, such as hiding in inhospitable parts of the island, like Soufrière. The situation became even more tense when slaves began arriving from nearby islands, joining their cohorts and also seeking their freedom. After many months of fighting, the "nègres marrons" eventually surrendered but refused to be returned to slavery. The British, who did not abolish slavery until much later, offered to "return" the rebels to Africa.

[45] This concept of "system" was often referred to by locals from the lower socioeconomic classes; it seems to reflect feelings of frustration and disempowerment.

discontent with no action that increasingly takes hold of the younger members of the local community. The analysis of several life stories seems to confirm that people turn to Rastafarianism following years of unemployment. This is what happened, for instance, to Selunya Charles, a well-known local figure, who now runs a professional training programme in Soufrière for children with little or no education, with the support of CARE, an international NGO. Selunya was especially illuminating when explaining that Rastas like to "burn fire" – or in other words to "talk against in a vehement way, with expressive anger and speak aggressively". They "like to speak out for equal rights, love and justice". In Selunya's view, Rastafarian culture was originally a rebellion "against cults that are not right, like baptism at a young age", everything that prevents freedom of choice. She also explained that Rastafarianism refers to the world as "Babylon" and as the "system", which represents society at large and the "modern corrupted world". This type of reaction, however, is essentially inward and does not lead to challenging the social order.

7.3 Conclusion

Soufrière's social capital and traditional forms of popular resistance manifest, and underscore, an inability on the part of the lower socioeconomic classes to get involved in institutional processes. These people feel, in fact, deeply uncomfortable with formal structures and are largely unable to engage with them. Their discontent thus moves from one extreme to the other: from violent and/or politicised action to strong psychological withdrawal, based on feelings of inevitability and paralysis. In any case, institutional involvement is never chosen as a "Voice" strategy. What is consistently followed is an "Exit" strategy that bypasses institutions in order to actively overtake them, or passively ignores them. This behavioural structure is *not* conducive, to say the least, to social learning and a reinforcement of the local social capital. The latter has arguably been rather stable throughout the SMMA experience, since no change in communication or trust has been observed among community groups.

So, are the fishers responsible for the failure of community participation efforts in Soufrière? Saying so would be a strange way of looking at things. After the disillusionment that followed their 1997 active "Exit" strategy, based on attacking the SMMA through political mobilisation, this community now increasingly reverts to a more passive "Exit" strategy – in the form of psychological withdrawal that closely parallels their continued misrepresentation and epistemic exclusion from the SMMA. In fact, it would be closer to reality to say that the formalisation and the institutionalisation of disagreements – through the functioning of the SMMA itself – has largely neutralised this community.

8. Wary Realism as the Way Forward

The SMMA experience has had great merits, notably that of reframing and stabilising the coastal use of Soufrière's marine resources, which would be disappearing at a much faster rate if the SMMA did not exist. It has also induced a modicum of local dialogue and social inclusion into environmental decision-making, far beyond anything that preceded its existence or what could be expected if market mechanisms and political power struggles were given free rein to play themselves out. Community participation is nevertheless a complex and subtle undertaking that is not easy to bring about and sustain over time, given the gap that naturally exists between formal institutions and populations that are little equipped to engage with them. Here, we summarise our findings and explore operational suggestions, which come with their own costs and limitations.

8.1 Summary of Findings

This article's analysis of the SMMA experience has led to the following conclusions. First, although efforts to promote inclusion via dialogue were real and sustained at the beginning, the "participatory" dimension of the SMMA has tended to fade over time, based on two concurrent phenomena: 1) the inability of the poorer end of the Soufrière community to engage with a formal institution; 2) the relative capture of the existing institution by private and public interest groups, both domestic and non-local.

Second, this "institutional participation" has made possible the "containment of locals", an objective process that has helped to commodify Soufrière's natural assets, so they can better fulfil the expectations of foreign tourists. Tourism is thus exercising a form of compulsory power on the local context through market pressures. In the meantime, other community participation efforts in Soufrière, in addition to the SMMA, all have pushed for the same commodification of people and spaces, towards "modernisation" that is consistent with the demands of the tourism industry.

Third, the inability to engage with institutions is a long-standing feature of St. Lucian social history, leaving the poorer parts of the community with few means but "political mobilisation" against an institution like the SMMA, or "psychological withdrawal", once the situation seems irremediably established. Both responses are types of "Exit" strategies, since no continuous institutional involvement is ever secured. Meanwhile, Soufrière's low levels of bonding and bridging social capital paved the way for the SMMA to be more easily taken over by certain interest groups. This low level of social capital among the poorer fishers, combined with an institutionalised CP process, rapidly drove the weakest and most fragile groups out of the decision-making process.

Fourth, the environmental effectiveness of the SMMA has been hampered by its focus on limiting the level of fishing activities. The organisation has not been able to correctly engage with the tourism industry, notably its construction activities, which carry important negative consequences for coastal resources. It has also failed to get high-level government institutions to do their job properly, since only they can bring about greater coherence on the domestic policy issues on which Soufrière's environment heavily depends.

8.2 Community Participation Despite the Risks

We are not in any way arguing that better results could be attained by not using CP methodologies — much to the contrary, in fact. Let us first recall that CP methods emerged after decades of trial and error in environmental management that heavily relied on top-down approaches. These past approaches most often led to non-sustainable situations, in which regulations were rejected by the local populations. To date, the alternatives to CP in biodiversity management would be either to fence people out (something usually unrealistic in practice); to enforce centralised regulations in countries where governance is often poor; or simply to leave local issues to be addressed by market mechanisms, disorganised collective action or power politics all at the local level.

Much of the strength of the CP methodology lies in the fact that the alternate paths (outlined above) are in practice far more risky for the environment than trying to engage in a dialogue with all stakeholders, even though this dialogue may not be easy or properly balanced. Implementing CP comes with the risk of creating unsatisfactory CP, but not taking this risk generally results in much higher risks. If the SMMA had not been put together, there is little doubt that escalating conflicts between tourism and traditional fishing would have further deteriorated local resources. Thus, working for empowerment and appropriation, even though it may be imperfect or biased, may still be better for environmental compliance.

It is true, however, that participatory management does affect local practices in ways that may not all be desirable, *in abstracto*. There should be no naivety on the part of donors in regard to the potential power and social control effects of CP. All human organisations and associations do result in certain types of control and alienation: certain groups do benefit more than others, certain behaviours are contained and frustrated more than others, certain practices change, some traditions are destroyed and new ones are created, etc. So CP should not be implemented with idealised expectations of pure social harmony. Conflicts can at most be managed, not resolved to the complete satisfaction of everyone. The often unavoidable conflicts inherent in CP issues could be acknowledged more openly, rather than wiped out through discourses legitimised by policy choices that are clearly made by a sovereign government. It may well be the case that denials and romantic visions of CP undermine, rather than reinforce, the credibility of this approach.

Moreover, not only does CP have its drawbacks and limitations, just as any other tool, but it can also be used more or less correctly, again just as any other tool. Any critical look at the effects of CP should emphasise the way it was actually implemented and the constraints that were weighting upon that implementation. Here, we are referring specifically to two concepts. A community, when engaging in a CP process – which we can think of as a powerful tool, like a hammer on a table – may well see its strongest members take a hold of the tool and use it for their primary benefit. Does this mean that hammers are bad tools, in and of themselves? Similarly, although CP may be a highly socially progressive and potentially environmentally effective management tool, donor organisations may not have the means required to undertake such a long-term process.

8.3 Toward More Effective CP: Policy Suggestions

Here we would like to reflect on the *pros* and *cons* of a few operational proposals that may be of interest to people involved in the design and running of community participation projects.

1. It is our contention that international donors active in environmental protection have adopted the principle of "community participation" without in fact allocating the appropriate timeframe and resources required to fully support such a process. This situation does not originate from a lack of understanding, competence or dedication on the part of project officers, environmental specialists and evaluators in the field. On the contrary, these professionals tend to be highly committed people with appropriate expert knowledge and work experience. Rather, mismatches

seem built into organisations themselves, due to the difficultly of bridging the gap between the complexities of any participatory process (in which the key variables are almost unobservable beforehand) and organisational pressures within the donor institutions – such as quantifiable and time objectives, as well as three- to five-year project cycles that are far too short for a full-scale CP endeavour, but are also difficult to avoid due to budgetary and accountability reasons, as well as limited resources in terms of staff and money.

"Participation" is thus often implemented as a type of "freedom with predefined results", whereby local autonomy and debates are promoted, but pre-defined results are expected to follow within a short timeframe. Although project designers perfectly understand this contradiction, they also know that their administrative or political higher-ups do not want to hear about these complications, so they have an organisational incentive to keep quiet about them. Such a contradiction causes donor organisations to officially place very disproportionate hopes and expectations on participatory schemes in the short term. It is not, in fact, possible to empower the locals with choice regarding the local rules and at the same time to anticipate specific results within the project's specific timeline. In that sense, donor projections tend to be overly optimistic about the potential results, since project proposals need to be approved by their Board on the basis of high expectations. Conversely, the difficulties that appear in attaining the expected results often lead donors to judge participatory schemes within too short a time span. The relationship between expectations and resources tends to produce excessive disappointment in the results, which could perhaps be presented in a more positive light, if a longer-term perspective were adopted, one that more fully allows for evolution in the social capital and in potential collective-learning processes.

Finding a solution is not easy. It may involve donors agreeing to invest even more time and money in CP projects, be more tolerant of their ups and down and not lose faith despite apparent failures. Essentially, it would imply that donors accept that CP projects are essentially bets that cannot be won each time, or whose benefits appear only over a very long period of time.

2. Second, donors may want to ensure that "participatory discourse" does not improperly focus attention on secondary or temporary threats to the environment. While traditional fishing practices may be harming coral reefs, threats due to a range of other practices and policies (or lack of policies) are arguably much greater, as we saw in the case of the SMMA. Watershed management at the regional and national level should be, to date, a much greater concern for the preservation of St. Lucia's coral reefs; still, no clear policy has emerged in St. Lucia, and international donors have given limited attention to this issue. In other words, the interest for CP should not lead to neglect of other types of policy tools, more capable of dealing with the most powerful community actors, or even non-community actors, that impact the environment. CP should be valued as part of a mix of instruments that includes market mechanisms, regulations, sanctions, accompanying social policies, etc., and its isolation from any policy mix is usually a mistake.

"Institutional participation" often leads the poorer and most fragile groups to exit the decision-making process, while allowing for the more powerful interest groups to dominate. It also provides the project with "local" legitimacy in the eyes of the government and international donors. This political economy is not necessarily detrimental from the point of view of donors, as long as the key blockages on the road to development or environmental sustainability are in fact the poorer groups. But it should be of great concern when the economic or environmental threats are not located in the practices of these most marginalised groups, but in the more economically and politically powerful groups that cannot be reached or forced to the negotiation table through the CP mechanism – a problem that has plagued, as we saw, the SMMA.

3. Donors may want to strengthen the socio-political dimension of their *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluation processes, as well as the *ongoing* monitoring of their methods and instruments. Involvement by international donors in participatory environmental-management projects should ideally be more "open-eyed" about what such projects do socially and politically to local societies, for both ethical and efficiency reasons. This is especially necessary for contexts in which the local social capital does not allow

for the community to effectively engage with, and gain ownership of, institutions that, one way or another, are largely externally designed. Donors can acknowledge more openly the unavoidable "alienation" resulting from the projects they finance and the transformational impact such projects have on local societies – on the traditional actors vs. the more "modern" ones, on the power distribution, etc. This way, donors may recognise that they cannot pursue CP as an end in itself, but at most as a means to achieve some other development or environmental objective. But even in a means-orientated approach, close monitoring of what is going on is needed, to identify power mechanisms that may decrease efficiency. However, it is clear that costs are an issue here. The quasi-unobservabality of many power relationships mean that it will be extremely expensive – if not impossible – to derive a realistic view of what is happening on the ground power-wise. How much money should be devoted to such an information process, as compared to the actual building of institutions? CP is already an expensive process compared to other approaches, and donors may be further demotivated if it is argued that CP should not take place without more extensive and detailed monitoring processes.

4. It would seem advisable that donors work harder at finding ways and means to better represent the interests of the least-prepared stakeholders. Effort should extend beyond the initial consultation phase, no matter how "appropriate" such consultation may seem. As we have seen, it is in the actual functioning of organisations that things change, and power structures reveal themselves over time. The challenge is to find appropriate ways to represent certain interest groups correctly, on an ongoing basis, beyond the sole practice (that often turns into a mere discourse) of making them *participate* directly in some meetings or some structure. The challenge is not so much whether these people physically participate, and not even if they are formally represented, but if their actual *interests*, *views* and *concerns* are actively voiced and heard at the right place at the right time. Representation, participation and actual influence are distinct notions. Ensuring a real and balanced influence by the lower stakeholders may take a variety of forms, including for instance, entrusting an outside expert to either represent them, or monitor the balance of power within the institutions to flag any problems.

Another key challenge is to monitor how the local environmental "rent" is divided among stakeholders, and according to what criteria of fairness. In doing so, however, economic analysis may be illuminating but not conclusive, because it cannot provide the criteria of fairness, per se; it does not take into account, moreover, feelings of disempowerment, desire for, or refusal of, social transformations, etc. However, the institutional situation, democratic legitimacy, the professional training of representatives from disadvantaged stakeholder groups, as well as of "independent third eyes" who could monitor the institutional balance, all raise complex issues that may prove not only costly to address but unsolvable. Academic experts may be well-trained to provide a "third eye" but their professional constraints and incentives do not facilitate long-term local involvement, since this work does not necessarily translate into publishable research. Private external auditors, working for private companies, may be better-suited for this work, but their training and work incentives would need to be closely checked to ensure project compatibility.

5. Finally, one may suggest that only more resources from the donors are required to address any socially adverse transformations born by the weakest stakeholders, but this approach has limitations even beyond the extra costs. Some populations prove, in fact, unable to evolve beyond their traditions, and there is no guarantee people will take advantage of newly offered resources, if this leads them away from their usual world. Moreover, many ideal components of a CP project cannot be professionally performed by the project itself. For instance, microfinance can be extremely useful for providing capital to affected people, but microfinance is a professional field that cannot be improvised or mimicked within a completely different intervention.

All of this indicates that while some areas of improvement can be identified, they will not lead automatically to gains. These improvements also come with their own costs and uncertainties. Therefore, it is hoped that the critical analysis of community participation will motivate the implementation of more CP efforts, as opposed to disavowing them.

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