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“MARTINIQUE IS OURS, NOT THEIRS!”
THE CONTESTED POST-COLONIAL
INTEGRATION OF MARTINIQUE INTO FRANCE

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Doctor of Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
2016
ABSTRACT:

This thesis undertakes a close analysis of the integration of the post-colonial Martinique into the French nation-state. In 2009, a social movement temporarily raised nationalist demands but also sought closer integration into the French state. This thesis examines how this integration has been thwarted by the specific colonial legacies of Martinique and by the politics of departmentalisation of the French state. The departmentalisation of Martinique, which occurred in 1946, sought to decolonise Martinique. This dissertation argues that it is impossible to achieve the integration of Martinique into France without addressing the economic and social legacies of colonialism. The reason for this is because such legacies make it impossible to create national unity. The departmentalisation of Martinique was a republican nationalist project which aimed to culturally assimilate and politically homogenise Martinique into the French state. However, despite departmentalisation, economic and social inequalities stemming from the colonial past remain, and still divide that society. Moreover, despite the legacy of colonial discourse, the Martiniquans stand firmly against political independence. The numerous nationalist and pro-independence parties that attempt to define and promote Martiniquan cultural identities fail to rally the population around the idea of independence. The very existence of these parties implies, on the other hand, that both cultural and republican nationalism failed to create and sustain a metadiscourse of community within the island.

However, the 2009 movement was a golden site for observing and instigating social change because the protesters demonstrated and voiced a strong sense of collective identity and solidarity. The protesters contested both the failure of departmentalisation and the resilience of colonial discourses. Throughout the movement, the protesters challenged both the legitimacy of the French government and the influence of the Martiniquan nationalist parties on the protests. I argue that the protests created a liminal space through which the protesters voiced their individual and distinct personal histories and narratives. Such protests created an open space which allowed the protesters to individually address the resilience of colonial discourses and to contest its impacts on their lives, and on the Martiniquan society. I also argue that this liminal space was an integrative space, and the ultimate “rhetorical glue” that unified the protesters. This liminal space was exceptional in this sense, since the existing nationalist discourses and projects which have been implemented in Martinique tend to emphasise social divisions in the island. Indeed, assimilation does not allow the expressions of such cultural distinctiveness outside the French republican ideals. In addition, local nationalist parties attempting to build national unity through cultural discourse struggle to define the ambivalence and the ever-changing characteristics of post-colonial/hybrid Martiniquan identity. The findings could be useful to the formulation of Martiniquan political identity, and to the configuration of French integrative policies. I conclude that such policies would be effective if they tackled the lasting impact of colonial discourse in both Martinique and France.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

First, my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Jan Penrose, for her constant encouragement, advice and gentle constructive criticism. I also wish to thank Dr. Fraser MacDonald for his help and valuable advice, as well as express my appreciation to Dr. David Howard, Dr. Christine Chivallon and Pr. Jane Jacobs for theirs.

The assistance of the Regional Council of Martinique was clearly instrumental in helping to fund my research. I am also very grateful to all the wonderful, inspiring and generous Martiniquan people I have met during my field work. I am very grateful to Raymonde, Maïka, Géraldine, Karim, and Mr Nella, along with my other collaborators, who have helped to bring my project into being, and who helped me to pursue my PhD.

I am also grateful to Catherine, Séverine, and wish to say a special thank you to Jimmy, Therese and Jarina for their beautiful friendship. Finally, I am particularly thankful for the powerful love and support of my family, especially my mother, my “potomitan”.
DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me (Céline Audrey Corinne Théodose), that the work is my own, and that it has been not submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Céline Audrey Corinne Théodose

January 2017
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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION
1.1- Background to the 2009 Social Movement

Martinique is a French island located in the Caribbean. The island is located between Dominica to the north, and Saint-Lucia to the south (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Maps of Martinique – credit: Region-Martinique
Martinique was a French colony until 1946, which is the date when Martinique officially became an integral and equal part of the French nation-state, a French department ruled by the French Constitution (Constant and Daniel, 1997: 11-12). This unique form of integration of Martinique was sealed by the “law of departmentalisation” also called “law of assimilation” (Britton, 2011: 62). Departmentalisation meant that the French republican values of liberty, equality and fraternity would expunge the centuries of French colonial hegemony over the island. Since that date, the new department has had to completely reform its colonial political structures to fully adopt the French republican political institutions that were applied in France. Through departmentalisation, Martinique was supposed to become the perfect image of France. Indeed, since the adoption of the law, Martinique not only became the 97th French department, the island began its transition process to becoming a mirror of French cultural identity. The inhabitants progressively learned and adopted the French language, culture, and way of life (Childers, 2006: 288-289).

For many post-colonial analysts, the departmentalisation of Martinique was a form of cultural “alienation” (e.g. Dash, 1995: 141; Thomas, 2004: 47). Yet, at the earlier stages of departmentalisation, this political transition was seen by the inhabitants, and by the local political leaders who publicised the law – such as Césaire – as the only
solutions to effectively tackle the country's deep long-standing issues of social and economic inequality stemming from its colonial past (Poddar et al., 2008: 147).

However, a few years after the adoption of the law, it became evident to Martiniquans that departmentalisation failed to erase the numerous social inequalities, mainly because it did not improve the Martiniquan economy. Over the years, the local economy began to struggle, and soon Martinique began to rely almost exclusively on French imports, and on public funds from France (Jalabert, 2006: 367). Some years after the adoption of the law, the local population repetitively expressed their disappointment through riots, and popular protests (Chivallon, 2009). During the period from 1959 to 1974, several violent general strikes occurred and marked the collective memories of the population (Jalabert, 2010). Since the law of departmentalisation came into effect, the social protests quickly became the preferred “mode of political expression”, used by the Martiniquans to question enduring social and economic inequities (Jalabert, 2010: 14). However, despite the numerous riots, and in spite of the actions of the local nationalist and pro-independence political parties, the population systematically rejected any form of political independence from France (Miles, 2006).

During the months of February and March 2009, Martinique witnessed the longest and largest wave of social protests in its history (Chivallon, 2009). More precisely, the strike began in Guadeloupe on January 20 and spread to its neighbouring island of Martinique on February 5, as a both protest against the the social inequalities and the high cost of living.

A brand new coalition of a dozen trade unions, along with different cultural organisations came together to protest against the high cost of living on the islands (Chivallon, 2009). Along with protesters, the social movement organisation Collectif du 5 Février (C5F) designed a list of over one hundred demands that covered complex social and economic issues. Those issues included the high unemployment rate, the low wages and welfare benefits, the high taxes, as well as numerous cultural, health and education issues. For two months, the protesters took to the streets and rallied around improvised statements and slogans focused on the high cost of living. The
general strike which began on the 5th of February and which began on the 5th February surprised everyone by its longevity, lasting 38 days (Lucrèce et al., 2011).

On the first day of protest, 15,000 protesters marched together in the streets of Fort-de-France – the capital of Martinique – and the number grew daily as the protest continued (Arnauld, 2011: 75; Bourgault, 2011: 10). For almost two months, thousands of Martiniquans joined the movement to protest against the high cost of living, and to question the ongoing colonial legacies which deeply divided Martiniquan society, and which were ultimately impeding the integration of the island into France (see Figures 2 - Street protest in the streets of Fort-de-France in February 2009). Such an event was unprecedented. Prior to the strike, the Martiniquan economy was already struggling, however, during the 38 days of protests, the entire economy was completely paralysed by the general strike (Perri, 2009: 49-50; Numa, 2009: 29-36).

Public transport was suspended, all the department stores and other businesses were forced to shut down, the schools were closed, and major routes and roads were obstructed by large barricades erected by the protesters throughout the island (Jean-Coulin, 2009; Sillon, 2009: 8; Ennin, 2009: 5). The distribution of gasoline was limited (Lamy, 2009: 5). While the protesters marched spontaneously in the streets, representatives of the social movement organisation, C5F, negotiated daily at the prefecture with the state representatives and the economic leaders of the island about several issues such as bringing the cost of living down and creating jobs.
Powerful and sometimes violent social conflicts are not uncommon in Martinique. Insurrections, popular uprisings, general strikes, along with other forms of social movement are recurring events on the island (Chivallon, 2009). However, the longevity and the magnitude of both strikes, which occurred in Martinique and Guadeloupe, surprised the strike organisers, and even the protesters themselves (Bourgault, 2011). Indeed, many respondents could not compare the 2009 movement to any prior protests. Raphaël, a male respondent remembered: “For me it was unique, I’ve never seen something like that before”. A female respondent named Lydia could not recall a similar protest when she said: “In my opinion, it’s incomparable. There was such a symbiosis, so much that everyone was in the streets, all social classes, everyone”. These two respondents were quite young, both in their twenties. But
similar replies also came from middle-aged respondents, such as Lucien, 47, who confirmed: “For me it was unique”. Michelle, who is in her late fifties, recalled: “[This protest] was unique [...] , there have been other protests, but it was not the same... In 2009, there were all kinds of people, from all kinds of political affiliations, from different social and economic status”. Indeed, the 2009 protest was unique in the sense that the general population actively participated in the movement: women, men, lawyers, students, civil servants, artists and retired people were actively present in the protests (Valérie, 2009: 3).

For almost two months the protesters monopolised the streets and they considerably altered Martiniquans’ daily life experiences. Indeed, February and March are the months that are usually devoted to carnival festivities, but instead of reporting on carnival festivities, and “vidés” (carnival parades), the local and national media broadcast relentlessly the activities of the protesters and of the population. Rather than going to work, and riding through the daily traffic jams, the Martiniquans found themselves trapped at home, talking, sharing and exchanging ideas and products with their close neighbours; they also engaged in different social relationships and activities with other residents (Chivallon, 2009). Martinique, which usually relies heavily on French imports, began to exchange instead with close neighbouring independent islands such as Dominica and Saint Lucia (e.g. Hopkin, 2009). The population suddenly turned away from large hypermarkets and superstores that were closed at the time, to buy from local farmers and fishermen (Marlin-Calvin, 2009: 8). The residents began to cultivate their own “jardins Créoles” (Créole gardens) and consumed local foods and products (Bonilla, 2010: 126). What began as an economic crisis when protesters sang slogans against the high cost of living, quickly shifted to reveal numerous social concerns when protesters rallied around the statement: “Martinique is ours, not theirs”.

According to Glissant, departmentalisation promoted “passive consumerism” (Dash, 1995: 141). Also, many theorists feel that Martiniquans had tried to impersonate and mimic one French identity (as French) by rejecting their own Martiniquan cultures and traditions (Burton and Reno, 1995: 3). However, the 2009 protest was a “hiatus” – in Bourdieu’s term – that is, a lag or a break, which momentary disrupts a form of
social habitus (Wacquant, 2006: 319). The social movement was a moment which exposed unique facets of Martiniquan political and cultural identities, which deserved to be explored. Indeed, in the dissertation I assert that during the 2009 protest, the protesters expressed themselves in favour of alternatives to the traditional nationalist political discourses and narratives that prevail in Martinique and in France. During the marches, the protesters openly voiced their strong support for the C5F, and questioned their colonial heritage, which had led to the ongoing economic and social inequities that prevail in Martinique. The protesters also showed their cultural distinctiveness, and voiced their quest for an innovative – and somehow idealistic – alternative relationship with France, which would be free from existing limitations and boundaries of post-colonial politics.

1.2- Post-colonial Identity in Martinique

This thesis undertakes a close analysis of the integration of the post-colonial society of Martinique into the French state and nation. In 2009, the social movement in the island temporarily raised nationalist claims but, paradoxically, also sought closer integration into the French state. This thesis examines how this integration has been thwarted by the specific colonial legacies of Martinique and by the politics of departmentalisation of the French state.

The departmentalisation of Martinique officialised the integration of the island to the French nation-state. Departmentalisation not only meant integrating Martinique into France; it also aimed to end about 300 years of French colonisation in the Caribbean. However, soon after the collective enthusiasm that followed the adoption of the law started to wane, Martiniquans began to voice their discontent and disappointment over the negative outcomes of departmentalisation. Successive social protests broke out (Jalabert, 2010). It became increasingly apparent that departmentalisation failed to ensure the effective application of the republican value of equality in the island; it also failed to erase the numerous forms of discrimination shaped by centuries of colonisation. Departmentalisation provides an interesting opportunity to raise questions about the limits of nationalism, and about the limits of the integration of
Martinique into France. It also raises questions about how such integration limits the building of national unity in post-colonial societies. Ultimately, it brings sharply into focus the fact that the way the colonial past is tackled and addressed, greatly influences the way in which former colonial societies build their post-colonial identities and unity.

The ways the French political and social institutions have addressed France’s colonial past in its colonies have been studied in diverse literature (Jolivet, 1987; Burton and Reno, 1995; Chivallon 2002; Mbembe, 2005; Vergès, 2006). According to the historian Ferro (2002; 2006: 133-135) France’s colonial past is an “inaudible story”, or a “taboo” in France. Braud (2007: 409) seems to share the same idea, as he argued that there is a sensitive “self-censorship” about France’s prior colonial enterprises in France, and, this “self-censorship” prevents the exposure of the time when France betrayed its own republican values. When talking about France’s collective memories of its colonial past, Vergès (2006: 70-73) referred to it as “amnesia”, “absence”, “forgotten space”, “silence”. Dorigny (2006: 47) prefers to use the words “oblivion”, or memories drowned in the more predominant French national discourse. This literature shows that France struggles to face, and to address its colonial legacies, even after departmentalisation (Burton and Reno, 1995: 3). Moreover, in collective memories of the colonial past, across French political and national lines, Martinique appears be to a place whose origins and presence are unintelligible, and difficult to fit into the French national narrative. Not surprisingly, there are constant “competing collective memories” between the dominant French national identity discourse and the collective identity discourse which is voiced in former colonies such as Martinique (Bertrand, 2006).1

It has already been argued that the colonial past of Martinique deeply segregated and divided Martiniquan society, and this past still deeply influences social divisions on the island (e.g. Chivallon, 1995). Thus, such fragmented and competing collective

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1 In February 2005, the law (n° 2005-158) was passed by the conservative majority - UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire – Union for Popular Movement Party). The the law (n° 2005-158) acknowledged the positive roles and impacts of France’s colonial entreprise in its former colonies such as Tunisia, Martinique, Algeria, Indochina etc. Article 4 of this law was particularly contentious. Article 4 encouraged high school teachers to also expose the “positive values” of colonialism (Thomas, 2005; Moura: 2008, 265).
memories make difficult any formulation of a Martiniquan collective identity. Indeed, collective memories – and oblivions – are fundamental to the construction of social and political lives, because they allow individuals to build their identities based on shared realities and historical evidence to reproduce norms and values (Ricoeur, 2001). However, Martinique seems to struggle to build its collective identities based on its collective memories. The Martiniquan writer Glissant (1981: 130-131) described Martiniquan collective memories as a “crossed out” memory, a “non-history”, or as an “obscured history”. Also, when referreing to Martiniquan historical past, Chivallon (2006: 8) talks about “undervalued”, “diffused”, or “diluted” memories in the dominant French national discourses. Chivallon (2008: 876-877) underscores this point when she argues that, while collective forgetting of the period of colonisation and slavery in mainland France built narratives of national cohesion and unity; the same process in former French colonies, like Martinique, has the opposite effect, of fragmenting any form of “consensual community narrative”. This means that any forms of collective identity in Martinique is divided, “fragmented”, or “scattered” (Chivallon, 2006: 12). Other studies also conclude that collective memory in Martinique is fragmented, and this fragmented memory which undermines any metadiscourse of solidarity and of community on the island (e.g. Affergan, 2006).

Yet, during the 2009 social movement, the population voiced for weeks the slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs”. During the two months of the strike, Martiniquans experienced a deep sense of solidarity and even of fraternity. During these two months, the protesters challenged social and political structures. In the course of the movement, the protesters not only attempted to reformulate their sense of unity and of “Martiniquanunity”, they also publically addressed the numerous colonial legacies that undermined the unity of Martiniquan society.

1.3- Main Theoretical Claims

Martinique offers an instance where imagining a unified nation has been a project filled with particular difficulties. Indeed, the history of Martinique has been marked by colonial hegemony, neo-colonial dependency, large waves of migration, ongoing
ecological issues, and a declining economy based on an “archaic” economic system (e.g. Giraud, 2004; 2009; Jégot, 2009; Numa, 2009). Its ongoing history of colonial subjection and of post-colonial economic and political dependency has made any project of national unity unconvincing, and hard even to imagine. Furthermore, this dissertation argues that it is impossible to achieve the integration of Martinique into France without addressing the economic and social legacy of colonialism. This is because such a legacy makes it impossible to create the unity that defines the French nation-state. This dissertation also shows that both republican and cultural nationalisms struggle to build a “nation” in Martinique, and neither of them necessarily provides the lasting tools to unify the Martiniquan society.

I show that French republican nationalism has long sought to be the way to integrate Martinique into France, and to build national unity between France and Martinique. The integration of Martinique into France – also called departmentalisation – was a nationalist enterprise that aimed to decolonise Martinique in order to build and expand French national unity on the island. However, despite the tremendous amount of investment that has been made to bring such a project to fruition, the unsuccessful economic achievements of departmentalisation, and the disappointing social outcomes of this policy triggered the rise of long, tense protests in Martinique (e.g. Jalabert, 2006; 2010). To some extent, French republican nationalism failed to pacify the tense relationship between Martinique and France, and also failed to erase the numerous forms of social and economic inequality that divides Martiniquan society. Finally, it failed to build republican national unity in Martinique. The poor results of departmentalisation might well challenge those modernist theorists who assert that nations are political constructs.

In point of fact, French republicanism is rooted in the philosophy of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and embraces universal values of “liberty”, “equality” and “fraternity” (Vimbert, 2003). Moreover, French republicanism builds the unity of the French nation and implies that the French nation is *une et indivisible*. This means that French republican universalism does not acknowledge potential claims of local individualism (Jennings, 2000: 583). However, as for all nationalist narratives, French republicanism follows ultimately a certain mechanism of exclusion. Thus, despite
France’s republican commitment, and despite a high level of cultural and ethnic diversity, France struggles to deal with such diversity and “has sought to become a monocultural society” (Walzer, 1997: 38). Accordingly, many French citizens – mainly immigrants or inhabitants from the “old colonies” – “consider themselves to be [French] citizens in name only” (Jennings, 2000: 575-580). Thus, one issue that is explored is the extent to which the republican concept of citizenship embodies commitment to the national identity as a whole, as opposed to the “particularist” articulation of national identity in Martinique.

Another area this dissertation explores is to what extent, colonial discourse still influences nationalist republican narratives in Martinique, and how they still influence economic and social divisions in the department. In response to those issues, I show that one of the main reasons why republican nationalism struggles to shape national unity in Martinique, is because it did not address the numerous colonial legacies that deeply divide Martiniquan society, such as the lasting impression of hegemonic identity which still shapes French nationalism.

However, despite the disappointing results of departmentalisation, the Martiniquan nationalist parties struggle to convince the local population to step towards political autonomy, or independence (Miles, 2006). Despite the underachievement of departmentalisation, the overwhelming majority of the Martiniquan population still wants to remain part of the French nation. Moreover, the Martiniquan separatist and nationalist parties struggle to unify and to persuade the population to take control of their own destiny, and identity. None of the nationalist separatist parties describe clearly the Martiniquan nation, but they certainly agree on the existence of a Martiniquan nation (e.g. Malsa, 2009). But, even though those parties agree on its existence, it is less sure for the population, who prefers generally to creolise the term “nation” as “pèp” (meaning people) in order to compromise their ambivalent cultural and political identities (Miles, 2006).

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2 “Old colonies” was the name given to the first French colonies such as Martinique and Guadeloupe.
It has already been argued that discourses of hybridity in Caribbean nationalism provide the “rhetorical glue” to unify Caribbean nations (e.g. Munasinghe, 2002; Puri, 2004: 49). In fact, Martiniquan nationalist parties refer systematically to the high levels of cultural and ethnic diversity of Martiniquan society to define the Martiniquan nation. Darsière (1974) – who is a member of the autonomist party PPM – defined the “Martiniquan nation” in terms of hybridity, stating: We [Martiniquans] are a blend of several cultures; we are each one of them. Different theoretical formulations such as “Antillanité”, defined by the nationalist author Glissant, and the latest designation of “Créolité” co-defined by Chamoiseau – who is also a pro-independent – have both sought to stress the ways hybridity had deeply shaped the Martiniquan people (Glissant, 1981; Berbabé et al., 1989). Even though the co-founders of Créolité insisted that they had “no intention of competing with politicians”, they all thought that their literature and their writings could ideally model a political poetry that would contribute to the creation of national consciousness in Martinique and in the Caribbean in general (Jean et al. 1989; Priam, 2013: 29-30).

However, I argue that the nationalist discourse of hybridity does not necessarily provide the long-term “rhetorical glue” that would consolidate national unity in Martinique. Hybridity is a polymorph term that loosely describes the historical, the cultural and the social constructions of post-colonial societies. Hybridity is a powerful concept that stresses the interdependences and the mutual constructions of identities in post-colonial societies (Ashcroft et al., 2000: 116-121). In addition, the theories of the hybrid nature of post-colonial societies stress the extremely fluid characteristics of collective resistance. However, I argue that because of the polymorph and ephemeral character of hybridity and because of the specific history of Martinique, it has had only short-term and limited impact on building national unity in Martinique. This means that the separatist nationalist parties which use nationalist discourse of cultural hybridity are equally unsuccessful at creating long-term national unity in the island. This also implies that such discourse is not powerful enough to provide long and lasting ties to bond that society, or even, to build a “nation”.

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3 PPM stands for Parti Progressiste Martiniquais (Martiniquan Progressive Party).
4 MODEMAS stands for Mouvement des Démocrates et des Ecologistes pour une Martinique Souveraine.
I argue that the concept of hybridity creates a space in which cultural meaning and identity always contains the traces of other meanings and identities. This means that hybridity still contains and maintains traces of a strong ambivalent identity. This dissertation also explores to what extent the theorisation of Martiniquan realities could have a societal resonance on the formation of national consciousness. Accordingly, I demonstrate that because of the protean character of hybrid discourses – such as Créolité – nationalist discourses of hybridity have limited impact in the building of national consciousness favourable to setting up political sovereignty. This implies that discourses – such as Créolité – which seek to describe the fluid meanings of Martiniquan distinctiveness have limited influence in the rise of national consciousness in such a space. The ways in which both republican and cultural nationalisms struggle to build a lasting national consciousness and national unity in Martinique, challenge the idea alleged by the ethno-symbolists who claim that nation precedes nationalism. It also challenges the idea defended by the modernists, who assert that nations are the political and historical constructs of nationalism.

Martiniquan nationalism is systematically studied either though the lenses of local nationalist parties, or of intellectuals, or of political theorists (E.g. Blérald, 1988). Martiniquan nationalism is also assessed by monitoring the results of the ballot boxes (e.g. Constant and Daniel, 1997). Yet, it is known that election results are a poor guide to Martiniquans’ real opinions with regards to their political independence and autonomy (e.g. Miles, 2006). This means that a vote for an autonomist or a pro-independence candidate is by no means inevitably a vote for autonomy or independence (Burton and Reno, 1995: 14).

This dissertation offers an alternative reading, as I explore how Martiniquan nationalism was primarily voiced by the people, and how it was demonstrated during the 2009 protest. The 2009 protest represented a golden opportunity, because, for almost two months, the government was challenged by the protesters. Moreover, the protesters also attempted to exclude any intervention from the local nationalist parties. Such nationalist expression was unprecedented in Martinique. I analyse how such an unexpected nationalist movement influenced the expression of collective
identity in Martinique. I show that the Martiniquan nationalist narratives that were voiced during the protest emerged out of the dialectical interplay between the two main nationalist narratives voiced in Martinique: The French republican narrative and the cultural nationalist narrative. Because of the hybrid and liminal characters of the social movement, the ideological tensions between both nationalist narratives were reduced by the protest. This means that during the protests both narratives were not mutually exclusive. Therefore, the 2009 protest was particularly significant, because it revealed both how the protesters demonstrated and experienced strong solidarity, as well as how they performed their nationalism.

Indeed, for several weeks, thousands of protesters contested the resonance of colonial discourse as they proclaimed their attachment to their land and their cultural history. I demonstrate that because of the hybrid character of the movement, the protesters showed and asserted their “Martiniquanity” at the same time as voicing their attachment to republican values. Yet, because of the hybrid nature of the protests, such solidarity failed to last. I conclude that theories on hybridity are useful to explain how Martiniquans can suddenly and strongly assert their collective identity and solidarity. However, nationalist discourse is seriously challenged by the noteable ambivalence of economic and social division, stemming from the colonial past.

Finally, a relatively small amount of literature has been published on the 2009 social movement that occurred in both Martinique and in Guadeloupe (e.g. Chivallon, 2009; Lucrèce et al. 2009; Bonilla, 2010). Except for Bonilla (2010), who focused her analysis on the island of Guadeloupe, the other studies focus their analysis on both islands, Martinique and Guadeloupe, but none of them centre their analysis on Martinique specifically. This dissertation addresses exclusively the case of Martinique. Therefore, in this dissertation, I hope to contribute to a broader discussion and debate of how the Francophone Caribbean might complicate the notion of hybridity within the discourse of nationalism in general.
1.4- Chapter Outlines

This dissertation is divided into seven parts. This present part introduces the main claims and arguments presented in the dissertation. The second chapter analyses the theoretical perspectives advanced in literature regarding post-colonial studies, theories of nationalism and theories of social movements. In that chapter, I outline one of the main theoretical gaps in post-colonial literature, which is the limitations of nationalism in creating national consciousness and strong unity in post-colonial societies, such as Martinique. The third chapter details the methods and the methodology that I have chosen to carry out the study. Discourse analysis and framing analysis have been used to analyse the hundred interviews – individual interviews and focus groups – and numerous documents that I gathered during my field work in Martinique.

In the fourth chapter, I demonstrate that the unsuccessful outcome of departmentalisation outlines the ambivalent position of Martinique within the French Republic. Martinique is a decolonised society, but one which failed to overcome its colonial legacy. Because of its status, the department is an integral part of the French state, yet the islanders feel discriminated against and believe themselves to be treated as second-class citizens. I also outline in this chapter that the 2009 social movement emerged within a post-colonial context which is still filled with strong social and economic divisions.

In the fifth chapter, I demonstrate that, despite the politics of assimilation, the protesters created an exclusively Martiniquan identity and community as part of their efforts to expose and to resist economic and social inequality. Both the exposure of social inequality and the ways in which protesters demonstrated their identities undermined French claims of national unity, uniformity and homogeneity. This argument contradicts theorists such as Hall (2003: 15-32), who asserts that nationalism is “about homogenisation”. It particularly challenges modernists such as Gellner (2006: 1), who claimed that nationalism is a “political doctrine which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent”.

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In the sixth chapter I analyse how the sudden national consciousness that was expressed during the strike, and which might have been favourable to setting up political sovereignty in Martinique failed to last. I explain particularly how the French government that voiced republican nationalism and the separatist local parties that promote cultural nationalism contributed to weakening the social movement. Thus, this chapter suggests that a discourse of hybridity does not necessarily provide the lasting “rhetorical glue” that contributes to the creation and strengthening of national unity in Martinique, and in post-colonial societies. I also show that the strong nationalist sentiments expressed during the strike did not influence the outcome of the referendum, because the Martiniquans were still reluctant to step towards their own political independence or autonomy. Moreover, competing forms of nationalism can contribute to divide a society. And this was the case in Martinique. In point of fact, despite the two months of protests, Martinique choose to stay part of France. This chapter leads to the seventh chapter, through which I conclude that it is impossible to achieve the integration of Martinique into France without addressing the economic and social legacy of colonialism. The strong echoes of colonial discourse on the island challenge any form of political or cultural discourse on unity in Martinique.

1.5- Conclusion

Since departmentalisation, Martinique seems to be at an impasse. On the one hand, departmentalisation has sought to decolonise the island, but failed to effectively integrate Martinique into France; on the other hand, despite the disappointing social and economic outcome of departmentalisation, the Martiniquans still want to be part of the French nation-state, and they still reject total independence. Fanon (1952: 163-164) already observed the strong attachment of Martinique to France when he stated: “The Martiniquan is a Frenchman, he wants to remain part of the French Union [...]. We refuse to be considered ‘outsiders’, we have a role in the French drama”. Yet, Fanon (1952) also observed how both Martiniquan and French societies struggle to overcome their colonial past, and their colonial identity. Departmentalisation has sought to decolonise the island, and to unify Martinique with the French nation. However, it is widely admitted that departmentalisation failed to eradicate the
numerous forms of social – including racial – and economic inequalities stemming from its colonial past (e.g. Britton, 2011). In addition, departmentalisation not only failed to improve the social cohesion in Martinique, it also failed to pacify the tense relationships between Martinique and its former coloniser.

Moreover, the persistence of social and economic inequality impedes social cohesion in Martinique, but it also strengthens the hegemonic position of France on the island (Verges, 2006). As a result, the failure of departmentalisation also triggered the rise of counter nationalist discourse against the “francisation”, meaning the erosion of Martiniquan culture (Días, 2007: 159). Numerous Martiniquan nationalist parties, including the MIM, the MODEMAS or the PPM, strongly support the autonomy or independence of Martinique. Yet, despite the rise of numerous counter discourses voiced by the nationalist parties against the hegemonic position of France in Martinique, the overwhelming majority of Martiniquans do not want to step towards independence, nor towards autonomy (Daniel, 2007; 2009). The case of Martinique tends to challenge the common idea that political hegemony triggers the emergence of nationalist movements. In fact, the overwhelming literature on nationalism and on social movements concludes that political and cultural hegemonies tend to galvanise or even to radicalise nationalist movements (e.g. Benot, 2001). Yet, the numerous nationalist parties, either pro-independence or autonomist, that exist in Martinique, fail to unite the population over the existence, or not, of a Martiniquan nation (e.g. Miles, 2005).

I claim first that republican nationalism failed to build national unity in Martinique, as it both struggles to fully integrate Martinique into France, as well as to effectively apply republican values within this island society. I also argue that the cultural nationalism as voiced by the local nationalist parties in Martinique struggles to unify the population, which overwhelmingly rejects the option of independence. Both nationalisms evolved in a place that has been collectively and intimately fashioned by colonial discourse.

This dissertation argues that neither form of nationalism addresses the economic and social legacy of colonialism which divides the Martiniquan population. Republican
nationalism merely ignored it, assuming that the application of republican principles would ideally solve such issues. Cultural nationalism, as voiced by the separatist political parties, does acknowledge the persistence of colonial discourse in Martinique, and stresses the social and economic impact of such a legacy in that society. However, in the case of Martinique, such nationalism is still fashioned within the divisive notion of colonial discourse, and evolved within the ambivalent and ambiguous context of collective identity. Ultimately, the post-colonial discourse of “fluidity” and “hybridity”, and its rejection of any unified subjective experiences, struggles to blend with the nationalist discourse and ideals which, alternatively, follow a dual mechanism which creates the dichotomy of both inclusion and exclusion.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE POSCOLONIAL CONTEXT OF MARTINIQUE
2.1- Introduction

This thesis argues that it is impossible to achieve the integration of Martinique into France without addressing the economic and social legacy of colonialism. This is because such a legacy makes it impossible to create the unity that defines the French nation-state. This dissertation overlaps three main fields of study, which are: post-colonial, nationalist and social movements. Martinique is a French department, part of the French nation-state, and it is also a post-colonial society. The issue of Martiniquan collective identity was fiercely debated during the 2009 social movement. It is also an issue that is strongly debated in the post-colonial literature that addresses the construction of identity and collective memory in the French Antilles (e.g. Giraud, 2009; Chivallon, 2011). The fact is that Martinique has been a French colony for over two centuries, while it has been part of the French nation only since 1946. Consequently, it has been said that the resilience of colonial discourse challenged the construction of a new metadiscourse of community in the island (Chivallon, 2002).

The Martiniquan nationalist and pro-independence parties are particularly vocal about the negative outcomes of departmentalisation (Yang-Ting, 2000). Many theories, such as negritude, creolité and antillanité have attempted to describe Martiniquan identity, yet the Martiniquans have systematically refused to become politically independent. The complexities of nationhood in Martinique led Miles (2006) to pose the question: “When is a nation ‘a nation’?”. Indeed, nationhood is generally viewed as a subjective state of being, which is framed by a “self-conscious group” sharing distinct values, cultural values, and collective identities, and who also share the same political goals (Miles, 2006: 631). Therefore, the different positions taken by the Martiniquans vis-à-vis their political independence and their attachment to the French nation-state, especially during the 2009 protests, necessarily called into question the post-colonial conditions of the place.

In this part of this chapter (Post-Colonialism and Post-Colonial Geography), I review the post-colonial theories which address the issue of collective identity. The theory of hybridity will also be addressed, as this theory will be particularly useful in order to
analyse the ways in which both the discourse of collective identity and that of collective resistance were framed during the 2009 protests. In the second part of this chapter (Nationalism and Post-Colonial Nationalism), I review the main theories of nationalism. More precisely, I present the two main theories supported by the modernists and by the ethno-symbolists. In this part I also present the literature that analyses the issues of national identity in Martinique. Finally, in the last part (Theories of Social Movements), I review the literature of social movements. In this part, I also link the main social movement theories to the post-colonial theories of hybridity and liminality. In this part I introduce the main literature that has attempted to analyse the 2009 social movement protests and its outcomes.

2.2- Post-colonialism and Post-colonial Geography

In this part I have endeavoured to provide a review of some of the key approaches and key issues that have shaped post-colonial geography. Martinique is a French department which had previously been colonised by France for over two centuries, so, post-colonial theories remain historical and cultural in focus (Blunt and McEwan, 2002: 2). Therefore, this part investigates the geography of post-colonialism. More particularly, I address the main theories that explore the issues of collective identity, and post-colonial memory in post-colonial contexts.

2.2.1 - Post-colonialism and Hybrid Identity

Both terms “post-colonialism”, and “post-coloniality” might refer to a form of rupture or ending from the colonial past. Yet, the prefix “post-” has long been the subject of lively debate amongst post-colonial critics (e.g. Bennington, 1990; Dirlik, 1994). The prefix has been deemed to be “inadequate”, to describe the historical and ongoing impact of colonial violence on societies (Nash 2002; Carby, 2007). Indeed, those terms were first used to study the “nation-states” that have gained independence (Ashcroft et al., 1995: 2-13; Sidaway, 2002: 13; Shohat: 1995: 101).
However, this approach fails to consider the cases when a colony has been integrated and/or fully assimilated into its former colonial power. The island of Martinique certainly exemplifies such a case: “The ambiguity of the term ‘post-colonial’ is compounded by the absence of a temporal marker which could divide their history into colonial and post-colonial period”; [consequently, Martinique is] “simultaneously colonial and post-colonial” (Royle, 2010: 203; Simek, 2011: 228). Indeed, the decolonisation of Martinique began in March 1946 (Aldrich and Connell, 1992: 65). From that date onwards, Martinique became a French department, as the island began its process of integration and assimilation into France (Burton and Reno, 1995: 3). Thus, the assimilation of a former colony into an ex-major colonial power inevitably raises questions about the post-coloniality of both places. Hence, both terms “post-colonialism” and “post-coloniality” deal with the ongoing impact of colonisation on cultures and on societies (Chomsky, 2000). This implies that post-colonialism also explores the ongoing economic and political disparities resulting from imperialism, and from the colonial past (Ashcroft et al., 1989: 185-188). From a geographical perspective, the influences of colonialism and the impacts of decolonisation vary extensively, according to the given contexts (Jacobs, 1996; Young, 2008).

Post-colonialism analyses from a broad range of critical perspectives the geographical construction of colonial practices and discourse (et al., 2000; Young, 2001). Post-colonialism also analyses the legacy of such practices and discourse in present-day/current societies (Ashcroft Blunt and McEwan, 2002; McLeod, 2007). Accordingly, there have been major academic and literary works exploring how knowledge, power and the process of representations (such as “othering”) are framed in colonial places (Said, 1978). They also analyse how such processes are maintained and reproduced by hegemonic discourse in post-colonial societies (e.g. Spivak, 1985; 1988). Such literature also explores the struggles through which post-colonised subjects attempt, for many critics, in vain, to redefine their cultural and national identity freed from hegemonic discourse (Césaire, 1939; Bhabha, 1990; Chatterjee, 1993, 1995). Additionally, post-colonialism explores the ways through which anti-

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5 The assimilation of Martinique was part of the French assimilationist model of integration, which necessitated heavy investments as well as important bureaucratic harmonisation (Aldrich and Connell, 1992: 41; Young, 2001: 33; Childers, 2006; Miles, 2006: 637).  

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colonial resistance is undertaken by the colonised and by the post-colonised subjects (Fanon, 1961; Bhabha, 1994). Accordingly, several Martiniquan authors have explored the post-colonial contexts of Martinique (e.g. Césaire, 1955; Fanon, 1952; Glissant, 1981). This literature will be discussed later in detail, but such literature tends simultaneously to explore and to assert the political and the cultural identity of the place. Thus, post-colonial studies not only draw upon a variety of ontological positions, but also upon different types of epistemological perspectives.

Another recurrent debate in post-colonial studies divides post-structuralists and materialists. However, I will be using elements of both post-structuralist and materialist formulations in my research. Even though post-structuralists do not deny the material impact of colonialism, they focus their analysis predominantly on subjective practices and discursive perspectives (Bhabha, 1987; Spivak, 1999; Morton, 2007). This implies that the collective identity of post-colonial subjects is mainly studied through narrative and discourse (Procter, 2007; Ward, 2007). The body also serves as key site of identity performance. Hence, the body (skin colour, hair shape etc.) has always played an important role in the construction of colonial discourse. As Bhabha (1983: 19) underlined: “The body is always [...] inscribed in the economy of discourse, domination and power”. Therefore, the body is a text through which power relations are encrypted (Boehmer, 1993; Katrak, 2006).

Thus, the body has been seen as a key site of representation and inscription of power for many Martiniquan post-colonial critics such as Césaire (1939) and Fanon (1952). Fanon (1952) explored the ways the body of both the colonised and of the colonial subjects have been key to the construction of identity in Martinique and France. Fanon focused his analysis on colonial identity and he argues that the body is the main focus of racialised identity. He also argued that the body is “sealed into his own peculiarity” in the post-colonial situation (1952: 31). Prior to Fanon’s writings, Césaire (1939) developed the concept of ‘negritude’ which is a counter-discourse to colonialism, and which asserts the existence of a common black and afro-descendant heritage. However, post-colonial critics such as Young (1995: 153) argue that learning about the “fantasmatics of colonial discourse” does not preclude us from researching in detail the historical conditions from which such hegemonic discourse was built.
Young continued to argue that post-structuralist perspectives too often “lack historical specificity”, although both approaches explore post-colonial conditions and experiences.

The materialists stress the “specific conditions in which colonialism emerged and functioned, and the role of de-colonisation as a specific narrative of liberation” (Gikandi, 2004: 97; Lazarus, 1999; Parry, 2004; Murphy, 2007: 181). Such a perspective is useful in this research. Indeed, in order to understand the post-colonial context of Martinique, it is essential to inquire in detail about the specific historical conditions through which a hegemonic identity discourse was framed on the island and in mainland France. This perspective also helps to explore how assimilation into the French nation-state triggered the build up of a counter-discourse in Martinique, and how such a discourse was expressed during the 2009 protest.

However, materialists are often accused of “oversimplifying determinism; of using political and economic factors ultimately to [...] determine the meaning of cultural text” (Murphy, 2007: 181). The various readings and interpretations of Fanon’s essays are a good illustration of this epistemological debate. Fanon was a Martiniquan psychiatrist and philosopher, whose body of work remains influential in the post-colonial field of studies. Indeed, one of the core divergences dividing post-structuralist and materialist schools is their respective reading of Fanon’s works (1952; 1961): Black Skin, White Masks, and The Wretched of the Earth. However, it is important to note that I only use Fanon’s work to illustrate the epistemological debate between post-colonial theorists, which will help me to present a theoretical gap that my research will introduce later.

In Black Skin, White Masks, Fanon (1952) analysed the ongoing effects of colonialism. He used a psychoanalytical perspective to theorise on the mutual forms of interdependence between the colonised and their colonisers. Black Skin, White Masks has been particularly influential amongst post-structuralists (Hawley, 2001: 163; Milne, 2003: 287; Murphy, 2007: 183). Indeed, Bhabha (1987; 1990) drew on Fanon’s essay to theorise on collective identity, and on “hybridity” and “in-between” spaces. Hybridity stresses the “the interdependence and the mutual construction of
subjectivities between the [coloniser/colonised]” (Ashcroft et al. 1998: 118). The theory of hybridity has been widely used in post-colonial studies, as it has been seen as a very helpful “conduit for post-structuralist understanding of [...] ambivalence and non-fixity” of collective identities (e.g. Mitchell, 1997: 260; Munasingue, 2002; Alonso, 2004). Even though hybridity emphasises the fluid character of collective identity, such an identity needs to be “located” within a situational context; they should be contextualised, rather than seen as “free-floating” entities (e.g. Anthias, 2001: 637; Anthias and Llyod, 2002: 39).

A large number of studies has tried to explore the construction of identity in social movements or in contentious politics (e.g. Snow and McAdam, 2000; Polletta and Jasper, 2001). However, very few studies have used hybridity theory to analyse the construction of collective identity during the unstable and sometimes violent contexts of protests and social movements (e.g. Yang, 2000; 2010), and much less has been done to explore identity construction during times of protest in Martinique. Indeed, the theory of hybridity has been extensively used to analyse Martiniquan identity outside social movements. Both concepts of ‘Creolité’ and of ‘Antillanité’ – which will later be introduced in detail in this chapter – are based on hybridity theory (Glissant, 1981, Jean et al. 1989). Both of those readings analyse the common, or ordinary, exercise of power, hegemony and resistance in order to define the ways Martiniquans simultaneously construct, question and reinvent specific identity discourse. Yet, social protests open new spaces where collective identities are constantly reinvented and exposed (Crossley, 2002). Thus, it could be argued that the theory of hybridity takes different turns during social movements and, especially, in post-colonial contexts. Indeed, because of the fluid character of hybrid identity and because of the unpredictable nature of social protests, Martiniquans build, show and even celebrate their identities differently. Protests and social movements are very frequent in Martinique (Chivallon, 2009). However, no published studies have tried yet to explore the ways Martiniquans attempt to demonstrate their identities in times of protest.

From a materialist perspective, one weakness of hybridity is that it presupposes the existence of distinct identity elements prior to hybridisation (Hutnyk, 2005). One of the early accounts of the materialist approach can be found in Fanon’s (1961) second
influential book: *The Wretched of the Earth*. In this work, Fanon assesses the material repercussions of colonialism, and he encouraged nationalist sentiments as a way to break free from colonial hegemony. According to Fanon (1961: 141), only anti-colonial struggles, mass protests and violence can annihilate colonial hegemony. Indeed, he goes on to clarify that only nationalism can build the essence of anti-colonial freedom. Thus, revolution, violence and sudden protests are *sine qua non* conditions to achieve independence, and to build and assert national consciousness. He (1961: 193) also argued that nationalist sentiments and nationalist consciousness must be sustained by coherent political structure and education: “If nationalism is not made explicit, if it is not enriched and deepened by a very rapid transformation into consciousness of social and political needs [...] it leads up a blind alley”. From his perspective nationalist sentiments should be constantly sustained by coherent and organised nationalist political organisations. In this book Fanon provided what seems to be the perfect formula to achieve a lasting and efficient anti-colonial freedom.

My interest in shedding light on both of Fanon’s essays is to show that it is helpful to use both approaches, since Fanon’s earlier accounts of post-colonial identity used both. Both approaches are complementary, as they ensure a broader coverage of the complexities of post-colonial concerns. Indeed, one of the main points of divergence between materialists and poststructuralists is that of conflicting understandings of the post-colonial text either as “a site of political resistance [for the former] or as a site of ambiguity of representations [for the latter]” (Murphy, 2007: 182). The 2009 social movement that occurred in Martinique lasted for about two months, due to the fact that it was a particularly tense moment in Martiniquan history (Chivallon, 2009; Lucrèce et al., 2011). During the two months of protests, the protesters cried the lead slogan: “Martinique is ours, not theirs”. Thus, considering the context of the 2009 social protests, it is useful to use both types of analysis in this research. In fact, despite the ongoing debate between post-structuralists and materialists, many theorists such as Chrisman (2003), or Jefferess, (2008: 7) consider that post-colonial analysis should deal with both materialist and post-structuralist approaches. Accordingly, recent research studies which use the theory of hybridity emphasise the connections between material practices and representations in the construction of post-colonial discourse (Ashcroft et al., 1989: 40; Canessa, 2000; Mawani, 2010).
2.2.2 – Post-colonial geography

Geographers have long explored the resonance of colonialism in post-colonial contexts (e.g. Dominy, 1995; Nash, 2002; Lambert, 2005). Indeed, colonialism required mapping the world into spatial and representative “binary oppositions”; so post-colonial critics understand the social, cultural and economic construction of space as part of the core process of imperialism (Ashcroft et al., 2001: 36; Jacobs, 2002: 158). In geographical terms, post-colonialism could be defined as a “geographically dispersed contestation of colonial and neo-imperial power and knowledge” (McEwan, 2003: 340). From this perspective, post-colonial geographers map colonial and post-colonial knowledge, and explore the “geographies of resistance and domination” in specific post-colonial contexts (Crush, 1994: 336; Ashcroft et al. 2001: 156; Hubbard et al., 2005: 69).

Post-colonial geography maps the organised spatial dichotomies between the “centre” and the “periphery” or between the metropolis (such as France) and the post-colonies (such as Martinique) (William and Chrisman, 1993: 3; Lomba, 1998: 6; Young, 2001: 16, 17; Nash, 2002: 221; Blunt, 2004: 179). This binary spatial distinction is clearly present in Said’s (1978) influential essay Orientalism, which explains the key role of the fictive representations of “otherness” in the mapping of imperial and colonial knowledge. From Said’s (1978: 202) own definition, orientalism is “a manner of regularised (or Orientalised) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient [the periphery]”. Said (2003) used Gramsci’s and Foucault’s theoretical approaches of hegemony and power to describe the ways post-colonial identities are interdependently constructed and the way they are framed through hegemonic discourses and “othering”.

Many post-structuralists have been inspired by Said’s work on “imaginative geography”, which explores how different hegemonic power relations are configured, reproduced and contested in different contexts (Bale, 1999; Ridanpaa, 2007; Preziuso, 2010; Ravi, 2010). My research takes some inspiration from Said’s, work as it has already been shown that colonial and post-colonial Martiniquan identities have been
produced through a strong differential-political ontological process of hegemonic demarcations (e.g. black/white differentiation etc) (Fanon, 1952; Burton and Reno, 1995).

Even though the concept of Orientalism will be valuable for this research, Said's geographical binary approach raised valuable criticism. For example, Chakrabarty (2000) challenged geographical antagonisms, and mapped the colonial and post-colonial enterprises in more global and flexible perspectives. Therefore, the same applies if we think of European history as a uniform sequence of events characterised only by violent conquests and invasions. In other words, European history should not be summarised and to the to the Age of Enlightenment, or to imperialism (Cooper, 2005: 407). Such approach would remove Europe from its own history, and promote another form of essentialism (Smouts, 2007). Colonialism generated geographical divisions and “contradictions”; yet, those divisions and contradictions do no longer simply exist between specific spaces such as east vs. west, or north vs. south. These divisions are constantly reframed differently, through, for example, “transnational capitals”, immigration etc. Thus post-colonial geographers emphasise research on the fluidity of space (Acemoglu, 2001; Cook and Harrison 2003; Pollard, J, 2003; Cypher and Dietz, 2004).

These critics rightly remind us that “‘mapping’ the ‘post-colonial’ is, in fact, a problematic or contradictory project” (Brun and Jazel, 2009: 100). In fact, post-colonialism deconstructs colonial mapping; yet, post-colonial geography uses the same mapping instruments to study the legacies of colonialism (Sidaway, 2002: 11; Nash, 2002). Thus, numerous academics stress the importance of the different scales and networks in order to better understand the post-coloniality of a place (e.g. Henry et al. 2002; McCormack, 2002; Nash, 2002: 222; Philips, 2002; Krishna, 2009).

2.2.3 – Colonial Memories and Post-colonial Identity in Martinique

Looking at the post-colonial conditions in Martinique necessarily involves looking at the ways post-colonial theories are introduced and debated in France, and the ways
post-colonial cultural productions have influenced French collective identity discourses. Post-colonial historical authenticity and the processes through which post-colonial knowledge is framed in France raises several questions: is there a cultural and social post-colonial experience specific to Martinique within French society? If so, what are these Martiniquan post-colonial specificities? And how are they (re)produced? These questions will be addressed to highlight how post-colonial experiences are understood and interpreted in France, and particularly in Martinique.

Numerous academics have argued that post-colonial studies are “largely ignored by the French institutions and by the wider field of intellectuals [in France]” (Berger, 2006; Chivallon, 2007, 2008; Moura, 2008: 263; Stora, 2007). Furthermore, several sceptical scholars believe that post-colonial studies do not have anything to contribute to social studies that other disciplines have not already assessed (Bertrand, 2006; Levi, 2006; Balandier, Bayard, 2007). To explain this lack of interest in post-colonial studies, Forsdick and Murphy (2003: 9) claimed that: “French scholars sometimes think that post-colonialism is just a vague, liberal, ‘politically correct’ movement that is uncritically in favour of multiculturalism”. This implies that a post-colonial theoretical framework is generally overlooked in France, because it questions the values of France’s social, cultural and political make up, and it questions the political strategies and philosophies that tend to fix their meanings (Stora, 2006: 71). Consequently, many critics fear the confusion between social sciences and ideological interests, and allege that post-colonial studies are a “risk” because they could undermine “[French] national cohesion”, or “exotic[ise] the French Republic”, or even “ethnicise social issues, and publicise the cultural engineering of political authority” (Balandier and Bayard, 2007: 269-271, Bancel et al. 2006; Leménager, 2006: 86; Smouts, 2007: 27). To some extent they share Berger’s claim (2006: 13) when she remarked that “a discipline does not only study its object, it creates [the object] at the same time - it acts on it”.

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6 French republican hendiadris motto Liberty, Equality and Fraternity is one of the funding concepts of the French republic, which means that France is before all “one and indivisible”. This also means that French national identity cannot be defined in terms of gender, race, religion, political affiliations etc. (Aldrich and Connell, 1992; Burton and Reno, 1995).
The roles of French political and social institutions in shaping collective memories of the colonial past have been widely reported (e.g. Jolivet, 1987; Burton and Reno, 1995; Cottias, 1997; Chivallon 2002; Mbembe, 2005; Bertrand, 2006; Vergès, 2006). This literature concludes that France’s colonial past is an “inaudible story”, or a “taboo”; and such a past is viewed today as a “betrayal” of French Republican values (Ferro: 2002; 2006: 133-135; Dorigny, 2006: 4; Vergès, 2006: 70-73). Consequently, there is a form of “self-censorship” of the colonial past in France (Braud, 2007: 409). This “self-censorship” was expressed by the former French president, Jacques Chirac, who claimed:

Strictly speaking, Haiti has never been a French Colony; however, we do have a long history in common and, we have a friendly relationship with Haiti, including the fact that we do speak the same language. France cooperated [with Haiti] and we will continue to do so. (Chirac, 2000 in Dorigny, 2007: 49)

However, Haiti was a French colony until 1802 (Arnold, 2009). Yet, the colonial past of Haiti and France was denied by the French president. This collective silencing of the colonial past has a particular role in the building of French national identity discourse and narratives. Collective amnesia – or denial – of the colonial past builds narratives of national cohesion in mainland France. In other words, France’s colonial history is rewritten to silence the time when France betrayed its republican values (Vergès, 2006). This collective silencing of the colonial past also occurs in French West Indian territories, such as Martinique and Guadeloupe, but, it is experienced differently (Glissant, 1981: 130-131; Jolivet, 1987; Price, 2006). Indeed, the same process in Martinique fragments or “scatters” any form of “consensual community narrative”, and “metadiscourse of community” (e.g. Elisabeth, 1980: 308, Achéen, 1983; Schmidt, 1999; Affergan, 2006; Chivallon, 1995; 2006: 12; 2008: 876-877; Thomas, 2004). Accordingly, such fragmented collective memories produce competing and conflicting identity narratives in the island (Chivallon, 2006, 2010; Price, 2006: 213). These competing social narratives and knowledge are mapped and located in specific places in Martinique. For example, flower-filled, “romanticised” slave plantations – mostly run by the descendants of slave owners who are called the
Békés – deeply contrast and compete with the lack of slavery memorial and museum infrastructures in the island (Chivallon, 2006) (See photo 3).

**Figure 3:** Clément Habitation and Leyritz Habitation – *Photo Credit Marie-Carmen Carbéty.*

![Clément Habitation and Leyritz Habitation](image)

From the early 1990s, a long series of historical commemorations and anniversaries took place, such as the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery. This succession of commemorations triggered intense debate – mostly led by nationalist parties – over Martiniquan historical memories of the colonial past (Giraud, 2004, 2005; McCusker, 2007). By then, several nationalist parties called for “duty of remembrance” of the colonial past of the island, as they attempted to reshape the Martiniquan landscape with various types of commemorations (Chivallon, 2006; 2010).

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7 The Béké (Blanc Créoles – White Creoles) are the descendants of slave owners in Martinique, who have settled on the island since the 1600s. The Békés have built an exclusive white community (Burton, 1995: 2; Aldrich, Connell, 1992: 7). Hardly any academic studies have studied this community, except for Edith Kovát Beaudoux (1969). The Békés have created a subculture which is specific to their community and families (Gurrey, Hopquin, 2009: 73). The wealthiest Béké families live in Capest (also known as: Béké Land), which is located in the northern part of Martinique (Beaudoux, 1969; Gurrey, Hopquin, 2009).

8 Amongst other major commemorations and anniversaries there were: the 500th anniversary of Columbus arrival in the Americas in (1992), the 50th anniversary of departmentalisation (1946), and the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery (1848) (McCusker, 2007: 1-2).
Numerous post-colonial geographers have studied the mapping of collective memories of the colonial past (Morin, 1999a, 1999b, 2002). For example, Chadha (2006), and Sarmento (2009) both looked at the constructions of colonial memories in the Calcuttan and Cape Verdean landscapes. They explored how such memories are simultaneously preserved and contested in specific places (e.g. cemetery). Indeed, collective memories about colonial times and, in particular, about colonial violence still permeate relationships in post-colonial societies, and between nation-states (Blunt, 1999). In fact, these collective memories weigh heavily on the political relations between former empires and former colonised countries, since both entities tend to have “conflicting” versions and visions of their colonial experiences (e.g. Cabecinhas and Feijo, 2010: 32-34; Licata and Clain, 2010).

In Martinique, fragmented collective memories of the colonial past create tense relationships between the different communities, especially between the Békés – the direct descendants of slave owners – and the other communities on the island, particularly slave descendants (Vergès, 2006; Chivallon, 2002). Consequently, the Martiniquan nationalist parties used collective memories of the colonial past to frame nationalist identity discourses (Chivallon, 2010). Numerous studies have explored the role of collective memories in the construction of national identities in post-colonial settings (e.g. McCormack, 2011; Sarmento, 2009). However, some scholars have urged more studies on the role of collective memories during social movements in non-western environments (e.g. Polletta and Jasper, 2001). In this thesis, I hope to contribute *inter alia* to filling that gap.

In fact, few in-depth studies explore such issues in post-colonial environments (e.g. Farthing and Kohl, 2013). Those studies have shown that the protesters framed the collective memories of their cultural and historical heritage to maintain a sense of unity between them, and to strengthen the movement (e.g. Gongaware, 2003; 2012). Numerous studies have explored the construction of collective memories in the setting of Martinique, and the role they play in the building of nationalist discourses (e.g. Giraud, 2005; Chivallon, 2009). However, very few have researched how collective memories influence social protests in Martinique. This research attempts to
explore the ways the protesters used their collective memories to build collective discourses of resistance during the 2009 protests.

2.3- Nationalism and Post-colonial Nationalism

There has been little agreement amongst scholars on the definition of ‘nation’. For Bhabha (1990: 1), nations are “narratives”. According to Renan (1990: 19), a nation is “a soul, a spiritual principle”. For Anderson (2006), a nation is an “imagined community”. Accordingly, many questions have also been raised about the significance of nationalism. For Chatterjee (1993: 7), nationalism is an “irrational, narrow, hateful, and destructive [ideology]”. Nairn (2003: 347) is more radical when he claimed that nationalism was “the pathology of modern developmental history”. But, Nairn stands in contrast to Fanon (1961: 192), who saw nationalism as the ultimate decolonising force, or as a “magnificent song that made the people rise against their oppressors”. Thus to Fanon, nationalism should be used to break free from colonial experiences. Despite their different readings, both Chatterjee and Fanon share the idea that nations are key elements that structure our political world; and that nationalism is a powerful tool which can remodel the organisation of the world (Harvey, 2007: 85).

In this research I use two main theoretical approaches which both attempt to define the origins of nation and nationhood. Those theoretical approaches are the modernist and the ethno-symbolist, which are used in this research to understand how the French government used nationalism, and particularly French Republican nationalism, to decolonise Martinique and to integrate Martinique into the French nation. Both theoretical perspectives are also useful to understand how nationalist narratives were produced, performed and contested during the 2009 strike in Martinique. Ultimately, my intention is to understand to what extent nationalism is able to build and to maintain unity between distinctive communities in post-colonial contexts.
2.3.1 - Modernism and Post-colonial Nationalism

Before introducing modernist interpretations of nationalism, it seems important first to explain the primordialist perspective, which stands in complete opposition to the modernist approach. In nationalism studies, the primordialists hold the view that nations, or any collective political identities, are naturally, socio-biologically and culturally given, and precede any kind of social interactions; and that these predispositions ultimately shape the behaviours of individuals and groups (Shils, 1957; Geertz, 1973; Hoben and Hefner, 1991; ÖzKirimli, 2000: 64). Van den Bergue (2005: 122) argues: “for me, the primordialism of ethnicity is rooted in the biology of nepotism. We have a biological predisposition to favour others”. The primordialists believe that inherited ethnic and cultural predispositions provide legitimate arguments for nations to self-govern (Penrose and Mole, 2007: 339). In post-colonial studies, a variance of this concept is that of negritude (Césaire, 1955), which presupposes the existence of a unique identity that is shared amongst Africans and those of African descents.

The term negritude was firstly introduced in Martinique by the post-colonial writer Césaire (1939, 1955). Negritude defends the existence of a common black identity. Negritude aims to symbolise “all the values of black civilisation” (Aldrich and Connell, 1992: 172). According to Césaire (1955: 84), negritude was a “revolt” against colonial discourses; and a way to reclaim a common cultural heritage shared by African communities and those of African descent. Negritude depicts an idealistic image of pre-colonial societies:

They were communal societies, never societies of the many of the few.
They were societies that were not only ante-capitalist, as has been said, but also anti-capitalist.

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9 Negritude was first introduced in 1930s, by Aimé Césaire (from Martinique), Léon Gontran Damas (from French Guyana) and by Léopold Sédar Senghor (from Senegal). They were students in Paris; and they later published two journals: Légitime Défense (Self Defence) and L'étudiant noir (Black Student) (Aldrich, Connell, 1992: 172 and Jules-Rosette, 2007: 267).
They were democratic societies, always.
They were co-operative societies, fraternal societies. (Césaire, 1955: 25).

Thus, negritude is an essentialist concept that excludes all forms of hybridity, and it was not able to avoid the trappings of reverse colonial discourses. Consequently, negritude has been vigorously challenged by a number of writers – including Fanon (1952) – and particularly by Adotevi (1972), who strongly criticised the essentialist and the ahistorical foundations of negritude.

Indeed, the primordialists have been highly criticised by other scholars who showed that nations are not natural or genetic phenomena, but they are, inter alia, the results of complex social, political and historical processes (e.g. Eller and Coughlan, 1993: 195; Smith, 1995; Brewer, 2001; Jenkins, 2004). From a post-colonial perspective, one of the key problems with the primordial perspective is that it fails to consider processes of social and cultural change; and it directly contradicts post-colonial concepts of “liminality”, “in-between space” and “hybridity”, which all attempt to frame these processes (Bhabha, 1994).

Modernism emerged as a reaction to primordialism. Contrary to the primordialists, the modernists stress the idea that nations are modern phenomena (e.g. Breuilly, 1993; Okirimli 2000: 85). The modernists stress the view that a nation is a historical construct and a political creation, and nationalism is a “theory of political legitimacy” and is a “political movement seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments” (Gellner, 1983: 1; Hobsbawn, 1990; Breuilly, 1993: 2). As Chrisman (2004: 186) argued: “nationalism is [...] the paradoxical expression of a historical and cultural rupture that must assert itself as a historical continuity”. Thus the modernists stress the idea that nation arises from state structure, and that nationalism precedes nations, and not the other way around (Hobsbawn 1972: 10; Breuilly, 1993: 228; Özkirimli, 2000: 105, 118; Anderson, 1986). I use modernist perspectives in this research to explore how French political structures framed French nationalist discourses in Martinique, and also how they restrained the rise of
Martiniquan nationalism. Finally, I use the modernists’ approach to understand how those structures influenced the emergence of the 2009 social movement.

The research studies that use the modernist perspectives, explore the ways the states’ political strategies fashion the constructions of modern nations (e.g. Kaldor, 2004; Goddard, 2006). Like the modernists, Fanon (1961), also believed in nationalist struggles to create nations. Breuilly (1993: 156), who adopted the modernist interpretations of nationalism, seemed to agree with this point when he claimed: “anti-colonialism is one of the main forms of nationalism. It has developed in a vast range of societies and its successes have transformed the political map of much of the world”. This means that Breuilly understood nationalism as a form of decolonisation process. Similarly, for Fanon, nationalism was the only and ultimate way to effectively achieve decolonisation. Fanon (1961: 221) claimed: “to fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation”. Thus, unlike primordialists such as Césaire, in Fanonian thought, national culture is not the product of a natural process; instead, it is formed from a nation’s struggles.

Fanon fought and died during the Algerian war, and it was during this time of war that he wrote down his strong nationalist views in “The Wretched of the Earth”. Yet, despite the long nationalist struggles of the war, and despite the independence of Algeria from France, both countries still find it challenging, even fifty years later, to tackle the persistent effects of colonisation on their cultures and societies (e.g. Naylor, 2000). Naylor (2000) concludes that the Algerian nationalist war of independence against French colonial rule lead to the liberation of Algeria, but it failed to effectively achieve the decolonisation of the country. What Naylor meant is that decolonisation cannot necessarily be conflated with political independence. Thus, what seems to be their main point of divergence is the meaning of the word “decolonisation”. According to Ashcroft, decolonisation is “the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms” (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 63). Yet, the experiences, and the understanding, of decolonisation vary from one place to another.

Unlike other empires such as the British Empire, which attempted to decolonise via political independence, from 1946 France chose to decolonise via political
assimilation and departmentalisation (e.g. Widler, 2001; Torent, 2012). Departmentalisation was the total form of integration of the former colonies – such as Martinique and Guadeloupe – into the French nation-state. Therefore, each department should repeat the nation; [because it] exists only as a reflection (or projection and reduction) of the French macrocosm (Vialla, 2014: 67). Departmentalisation also means the assimilation of former colonised societies into French culture and values (Burton and Reno 1995). This assimilation policy was closely linked to the “mission civilisatrice” (civilising mission), which aimed to convert, or to remake, the former colonised individual in the image of the Frenchman (Widler, 2001). The assimilation policy also follows the French republican principle which guarantees the homogeneity and the indivisibility of the French nation-state (Widler, 2001).

Despite this, from the 1960’s the political debates in Martinique focused on the inability of the French state to ensure genuine social and particularly economic equalities on the island (Hintjens and Newitt, 1992: 55). The integration of Martinique into France aimed to assimilate the Martiniquans into French culture, values and their way of life (Burton and Reno, 1995). Thus, the cultural integration of Martinique into French culture also had a strong impact on Martiniquan culture. Several studies have described the ambivalent relationships that the Martiniquans maintain with their own culture since departmentalisation (Chivallon, 1995; Price, Price 1997).

Burton and Reno (1993: 8) noted: “[Martiniquans are] as much a spectators of [their] ‘own’ culture as the average tourist: ‘culture’, like everything else in Martinique today, is [...] something to be consumed rather than actively produced”. The impact of assimilation on Martiniquan culture has been strongly criticised by the local elites such as Glissant who claimed that the process of assimilation was a: “a cultural genocide by substitution” (Glissant, 1981: 173). To some extent, Césaire implies that republican nationalism based on universalist ideals should not necessarily be understood as a form of decolonisation. This point was also stressed by Dirlik (2002: 428), who claimed that “nationalism itself [...] is a version of colonialism in the

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suppression and appropriation of local identities for a national identity”. However, Dirlik’s point of view is certainly not shared by Nesbitt (2007: 39-40-42), who asserted that departmentalisation is a form of decolonisation, claiming:

Departmentalisation, no matter what its failures and incomplete processes, was an act of decolonisation if, and only if, it brought the societies of the “vieilles colonies” demonstrably and material further within the purview of a universal (as opposed to ethnically or racially particular) human right-based law. Departmentalisation was a process of decolonisation if it instituted a rule of law oriented, in other words, to the cultivation (as opposed to the inherently antiquarian [...] reactionary protectionism of any Créolité) of human social singularity. [...] In its essence, departmentalisation was an attempt to structure society better, so as to affirm the constituent power and rights of its subjects, such that all human subjects would retain their self-moving constituent power (Natura naturans). Whether they were to be called “French” or “Martiniquan” could only be a point of demagogy within the context of a politics of constituent power. [Departmentalisation] constituted [...] a concrete step towards a decolonisation à venir, properly understood as the universal process of the democratisation of political power.

Nesbitt assumed that republican nationalism and universalism are intrinsically opposed to colonialism, as he directly linked particularism – “racially particular” – to colonialism. From Nesbitt’s perspective, only Martinique needed to be decolonised. This meant that the transition of France from a colonial state to a genuine welfare state was not an issue that needs to be explored further. The particularity of universalism is that it presents a hegemonic view of the world by which the knowledge, practices and values of a dominant culture are held to be the truth for all civilisations (Ashcroft, et al., 2000: 235). Thus, from Nesbitt’s point of view, the failure of departmentalisation is atypical and was not expected. Yet, as Fanon (1952) previously explained, one of the ambivalences of colonial discourse was that it included both universality and particularity. Yet, Nesbitt does not seem to recognise the ways in which contradictions and ambivalences between particularity and universality were intrinsic to colonial discourse and experiences, and the ways in which such ambivalences are also intrinsic to nationalism.
In common with other ideologies, nationalism involves opposing themes and ideas, notably the main themes of universalism and particularism, which provides a rich resource for debates (Billig et al., 1988). Despite the questionable outcomes of departmentalisation, Nesbitt (2002) considers that it is still possible to frame a culturally homogenous society in Martinique. Nesbitt (2002) goes further, as he connects together national unity, national homogeneity and decolonisation. However, Nesbitt stands in complete opposition to what has been argued about the homogeneity of nations. Indeed, Conversi (2007: 372) argued that: “homogenisation should be distinguished from unification”; and that the idea of a homogeneous nation is “utopian” or an “ideological construct”, and such a conception might be the nationalist’s ultimate ambition or dream (Chatterjee, 2003: 35; Conversi, 2007: 372). However, it is a dream that has real and material consequences, and, several studies have shown that “national homogeneity, in the sense of a complete congruence between national and political units, has always been a pipe-dream” (Özkirimli: 2005: 1).

It is worth noting that the tension between universalism and particularism can also be seen in Chatterjee’s argument (2003: 33-58) which claims that universalism is often used to conceal the continuation of inequalities between distinctive ethnic or cultural groups, and particularly in the context of a post-colonial world. In the case of Martinique, Chivallon (2011: 320-322) also shows that universalist principles were used to disengage the French state from an “ancient colonial system henceforth abolished”. Yet, despite these observations, and these arguments against the supposed homogeneity of nations, the French republican ideal of unity is still built based on the need for national homogenisation.

Such a position is reminiscent of Gellner’s position (1983: 1, 46), and particularly his definition of nationalism, when he claimed that: “nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unity should be congruent. [Therefore], it is not the case that nationalism imposes homogeneity […]; it is the objective need for homogeneity which is reflected in nationalism”. Thus, according to Gellner, nationalism is about homogenisation. In the light of Gellner’s idea, this dissertation, not only addresses the ways French republican nationalism attempts to
build homogeneity in Martinique, it also addresses the reasons why a need for such national homogenisation is constantly pursued.

I argue that French republicanism failed to solve the numerous disparities that divide Martinique society, and such disparities are particularly visible at the economic level in Martinique. Once again, I quote Nesbitt (2002: 37) who asserted that departmentalisation “strove to weaken the economic domination of the Békés [...] by subjecting the arbitrariness of their actions to a more objective egalitarian rule of law”. However, contrary to Nesbitt, several studies contest the positive impact that departmentalisation had on the Martiniquan economy. A number of studies stress the numerous economic inequalities that continue to weaken the local economy since the integration of the island (Crusol, 1986; Chivallon, 2009; Delbergue, 2010: 51; Desse, 2010). This thesis also addresses the economic and social inequities from the colonial past.

Nairn (1977: 340; 2003) asserted that nationalism can be understood in economic terms, and that deep economic issues, such as “uneven economic development”, trigger the rise of nationalism. Nairn’s view introduces another argument held by the modernists, who outline the significant role of material and economic issues in the rise of nationalism (Greenfeld, 2001; Dirlik, 2002). Indeed, another theory introduced by the modernists to consider is that of “uneven development”, which explores how the uneven or unequal redistribution of wealth triggers the rise of nationalism, including post-colonial nationalisms (Orridge, 1981: 3). For example, one direct consequence of uneven development is immigration.

Numerous in-depth analyse highlight the ways that waves of immigration from former French colonies – or the “otherness within” – radically alter the construction of French national identity discourses (Boubeker, 2006; Gèze; 2006; Simon, 2006; Lapeyronnie, 2006; Guénif-Souilamas, 2007). This large literature shows that the subject of migration deeply questions the building of French national identities (e.g. Giraud, 2009). However, in this research, my focus is also to analyse the ways in which economic structure may have shaped nationalist ideologies or discourses. Indeed, this research focuses on the 2009 social protests, which were initially against the high cost
of living on the island. However, what began as an economic crisis, with protesters chanting diverse slogans against the high cost of living, somehow shifted to expose deep social concerns when protesters rallied around the statement “Martinique is ours, not theirs”.

The 2009 social movement began as a general strike against the high cost of living; it did not begin as a nationalist movement, but in some ways seemed to embrace some characteristics of nationalist/independence movements. Thus, this research attempts to assess the influence of regional and social inequalities as well as uneven economic development on the building of nationalist narratives. Thus, my interest is to understand how these nationalist discourses and narratives were found to be the major drivers behind the social movement. With this in mind, I intend to assess the extent to which the economic model challenged the French nationalist republican ideal of equality and fraternity.

Previous research studies exploring nationalism and nationalist ideologies in Martinique have been mainly descriptive in nature, as they tend to explore the structure, the actions and the strategies of the nationalist parties and of their leaders in Martinique (e.g. Yang-Ting, 2000). Martinique counts no less than seven distinct nationalist pro-independence parties.11

Some analysts suggest that it is because the ties between France and Martinique are so deep that the local nationalist movements tend to take different shapes and forms, in order to broaden their influence (Aldrich and Connell, 1994: 10). Other scholars have carried out in-depth analysis of voting choices and behaviours in referenda, to better understand the expression of nationalism in Martinique (e.g. Daniel, 2007; Miles, 2006). These studies provide very interesting outcomes, stressing the limited influence political parties have in Martinique. Daniel (2007) outlines the very high

11 The major nationalist and pro-independence parties in Martinique are: MIM (Martiniquan Independence Movement), and MODEMAS (Democrat and Ecologist Movement for a Self-governing Martinique). Smaller secessionist parties include: GRS (Socialist Group Revolution); CNCP (National Council of Popular Committees), PALIMA (Liberation Party of the Liberation of Martinique), MPRM (Popular Movement for the Martiniquan resistance), and PKLS (Communist party for Independence and Socialism) (Yang-Ting, 2000; Le Cornec: 2005: 545)
abstention rates during both national elections and local elections.\textsuperscript{12} Other studies explain that the high abstention rates during elections are due to the electors’ sharp lack of confidence in local politicians, who are often deemed to be completely incompetent, and responsible for the decline of the local economy (e.g. Burton, 1995; Larcher, 2009). The electors’ distrust is reminiscent of the position of Fanon (1961: 148-153), who was also very suspicious, and virulently attacked the local ruling classes who used the struggle for liberation to take over national resources to serve their own interests, in the name of nationalism.\textsuperscript{13}

However, I suggest that the nationalist parties are not the only vehicle of nationalism on the island. In addition, one of the weaknesses of the modernist approach is that it does not explain the passions and the strong nationalist sentiments generated by nationalism (Özkirimli, 2000: 140). This implies that such an approach does not explain the reasons why the population may support nationalist ideologies; nor does the modernist approach explain the strong nationalist sentiments that are experienced and shared in the course of social movements, or in the course of nationalist protests.

\subsection*{2.3.2 - Ethno-symbolism and post-colonial Nationalism}

The ethno-symbolist approach to the study of nationalism is another one that I consider in this research. Amongst the ethno-symbolist scholars, both Anthony D. Smith (1986; 1991) and John Hutchinson (1994; 2007; 2008) are the main, and well-read, proponents of this approach. The ethno-symbolists’ understanding of nationalism is seen as an alternative to the modernist approach, or rather as an “internal critique and expansion of modernism” (Smith 1998: 45). Smith (2001a: 119) later added that “no analysis that ignores ethno-symbolist components will enable us to grasp the present self-understandings of nations”. However, other scholars such as Özkirimli (2003: 341), would rather claim that “modernism is the raison d’être of ethno-symbolism”. From an ethno-symbolist perspective, one of the weakness of the

\textsuperscript{12} Average abstention rate between 1983 and 2001.

\textsuperscript{13} See also Kwame Nkrumah’s (1965): Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism.
modernist approach is that struggle to explain the continuing relevance of “pre-modern ethnic attachments” (Özkirimli, 2000: 80). Ethno-symbolism aims to cover this theoretical gap.

According to Smith (1998: 224; 1999: 48) the ethno-symbolists seek to “uncover the symbolic legacy of ethnic identities [...] and interpret the symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions of their ethno-histories, as they face the problems of modernity”. Smith (2001b: 13) described a nation as “a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and ancestry, shared history, a common public culture, a simple economy and common rights and duties for all members”. Ethno-symbolists share the modernists’ idea that nationalism is a “modern quest for collective identity” (Smith, 2001b: 13). However, they theorise on the ways pre-modern ethnic groups progressively participate in the creation of modern nations. In fact, the ethno-symbolists argue that traditional social structures have been “eroded by the revolutions of modernity”, but they also outline the idea that such revolutions have been more striking in certain places than others, and have been deeper in some layers of the population than others (Özkirimli, 2000: 122). For example, Pettinicchio (2012) showed how ethnic nationalism favoured Francophone migrations and increased the economic position of the Francophone population, but had the opposite effect on the Anglophone migrations in Quebec. Thus, the ethno-symbolists stress the importance of pre-modern ethno-symbolic elements in the formation of modern nations (e.g. Billig, 1995; Haymes, 1997; Bell, 2003; Kemmelmeier and Winter, 2008).

Accordingly, geographers analyse the ways geographical notions of space and place, such as the collective sense of belonging, interfere in the processes of nation-building (e.g. Gooder and Jacobs, 2002; Johnson, 2003; Culcasi, 2011). From this perspective, they outline the role of ethno-symbolic elements – such as coinages, flags, anthems, or myths – in the formations of the nation-states (e.g. MacDonald, 1998; Penrose, 2011; Penrose and Cumming, 2011). From this perspective, such ethno-symbolic components are vital to build and to maintain a common sense of national community and of national belonging within the nation-state borders (Rajah, 2002).
Post-colonial critics often used ethno-symbolic elements to analyse the processes of nation-building in post-colonial contexts (e.g. Puri, 2004). However, to post-colonial scholars, nations and nationalism are primarily understood as being constructed through narratives and discourses (Bhabha, 1994). Cultural nationalism has been the most dominant form of nationalism in post-colonial societies, thus, post-colonial nationalism studies explore the ways both colonial and post-colonial discourses influence the formation of nation-states (e.g. Puri, 2004; Toor, 2005).

Further studies explore the values given to national culture in post-colonial nationalist discourses, and the connections between national belonging and national culture in the making of post-colonial national identities (Fosse, 1993; Harney, 2006). In such cases, national culture is a field of struggle for political hegemony and social dominance between classes (Toor, 2005). Thus, the construction of nations in post-colonial contexts is a potent site of control and hegemony between distinctive ethnic and cultural groups (e.g. Bornman, 2006). Gramsci (1971) demonstrated that hegemony is achieved by the subjugation of the colonised subject by imperial and colonial discourse so that “Eurocentric values, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes are accepted as a matter of course as the most natural and as the most valuable” (Ashcroft et al., 2000: 117). Thus, ethno-symbolist perspectives seem appropriate to underline the different aspects of cultural resistance in nationalism.

Another important point used by the ethno-symbolists is the word ethnie. Smith (2001b: 13) describes an ethnie as “a named human connected to a homeland, processing common myths of ancestry, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites”. Smith (2001b: 13) made a clear distinction between ethnies and nations, as he argued that nations inhabit their homeland, whereas “ethnic communities may be only linked – symbolically – to theirs”. He (2001b: 14) also allocates specific attributes to both ethnies and “nations”: whereas ethnies have simply “some common cultural element”, such as a language, customs, and a common memory; ‘nations’ have a public culture and a common history. However, the creation of national unity in post-colonial societies that have been deeply influenced by dividing and hegemonic colonial discourse is a particularly challenging exercise (e.g. Akuupa and Kornes, 2013). In particular, given the ethnic heterogeneity of Martiniquan society and culture, and
considering the colonial past of the island, the main challenge is to define a unique, distinct Martiniquan identity. According to Puri (2004: 49), discourses of hybridity are “rhetorical glue”, which contribute to creating and strengthening national unity in post-colonial societies: “Far from threatening the nation-state, discourses of hybridity can also provide the rhetorical glue to a nation-state that threatens to fall apart”. Several Martiniquan intellectuals have attempted to define Martiniquan collective identities based on the theory of hybridity, such as antillanité and créolité.

The term antillanité was first coined by the Martiniquan novelist Glissant (1981). The concept of antillanité (or Caribbean-ness) is both a counter-discourse to colonial discourses and also a counter-argument to negritude (Hitchcock, 1996). Indeed, for many post-colonial writers, negritude is an extreme form of categorisation that somehow contradicts post-colonial understandings, as well as any other “post” theoretical movements, which rejects any fixed deep-rooted attribute to collective identities. On the contrary, antillanité explores the permeability, the instability and the unpredictability of collective identities in such contexts (Hall, 1992; Bhabha, 1994; Gilroy, 2000). Indeed, antillanité is a very malleable concept, as it praises the solidarity and cultural hybridity of the Caribbean region (Britton, 1999: 2; Glissant, 1981). Antillanité argues that Caribbean societies are the synthesis of all of the cultural and ethnical elements shaping it (Amselle, 2011: 349). Thus, antillanité encompasses the different cultural identities that shape the region into one single concept. However, this concept does not define the cultural specificities and divergences of each of the different regions of the Caribbean, such as Martinique.

The concept of créolité was introduced by the Martiniquan writers Confiant, Chamoiseau and Bernabé (1989: 13) who claimed: “neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles”. Créolité describes Martiniquan identities in term of language, which is Creole. To be Martiniquan, is to speak Creole and vice versa (Burton, Reno, 1995: 141). Contrary to the French language, which has been used in Martinique as a sign of “power” and closely linked to French national prestige, Creole has long been viewed as a minor language (Burton, 1993: 6; Moura, 2008).
Armstrong (1982: 282) analysed the impact of language on the construction of collective identities in pre-nationalist times, and he claimed that “the significance of language for ethnic identity is highly contingent” in pre-modern eras. However, he also noted that the importance of language in nationalism and in identity-formation strongly depends on the different religious and political forces that either protect it or demean it in the long term. Other studies confirm Armstrong’s conclusions, as they highlight the way languages such as Creole are used in nationalist ideology and by nationalist parties in the island of Guadeloupe, as a symbol of national resistance or as a form of anti-colonial resistance (Burton, 1993; Schnepel, 2004; Braflan-Trobo, 2007).

Créolité counters essentialist discourse. It is the use of language as a distinctive and exclusive cultural trait that is recurrent in nationalist ideologies (Burton, 1993: 57). While the creolists do not use the word nationalism, they imply it: “The claims of Creoleness are not just aesthetic. [...] They have important ramifications, and especially the most fundamental ones: politics and economics. Créolité claims a full and entire sovereignty of our peoples without, however, identifying with the different ideologies which have supported this claim to date” (Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, 1989: 55).14 Thus, contrary to creolisation which is a “process of intermixing and cultural change that produced a creole society”, créolité restricted its own geographical limits and realities to Martinique (Ashcroft et al., 2000: 58; Amselle, 2011: 351). This is one of the paradoxes of créolité, which simultaneously praises and limits the potential of cultural hybridity.

The various definitions of Martiniquan identities such as négritude, antillanité and créolité were shaped by Martiniquan intellectuals and writers who are part of the cultural elite of the island. Many nationalist critics such as Fanon (1961), argued that the roles played by the elites are critical in the processes of national consciousness and nation-building. Smith (1998: 57) shares Fanon’s idea, claiming that intellectuals have a crucial role to play in the construction of nationalism:

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14 Creolist is the name given to writers who adopt the concept of créolité.
“For a new nation to achieve lasting popular success and maintain itself in a world of competing nations, intellectuals and professionals have an important perhaps crucial role to play. [...] Only they know how to present the nationalist ideal and auto-emancipation through citizenship so that all classes will, in principle, come to understand the benefits of solidarity and participation. Only they can provide the social and cultural links with other strata which are necessary for the ideal of the nation to be translated into a practical programme with popular following”.

Thus, the ethno-symbolists, such as Smith, seem to agree that the elites play a critical role in the construction and in the consolidation of nations. From a post-colonial perspective, Césaire (1970: 153-161) also stressed the critical role of elites and intellectuals in enlightening the masses around the process of “good decolonisation”:

Our duty as men of culture, our noble duty is this: to hasten decolonisation and, in the very heart of the present, to make ready for good decolonisation and decolonisation without after-effects. [...] in whatever way possible we must hasten the maturation of popular awareness. [National] sentiment must be fashioned into a consciousness, that is, a radiant sun. No one is in a better position to do this than the man of culture.

Césaire adopts the same position as that taken by the ethno-symbolists, in seeming to agree that the elites play a critical role in the formation of a nation. Moreover, Césaire’s description of the roles and duty of a “man of culture”, might recall the description of a hero. As Bhabha (1990: 19) stated: “a heroic past, great men [and women], glory [...] this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea”. Ethno-symbolists such as Smith (2001a, 77) claim that the nationalists need “to select from pre-existing repertoires of ethnic symbols, heroic figures, myths and memories if they are to mobilise ‘the people’”.

The ethno-symbolists particularly stress the significance of symbols in nation-building, as well as the role of hero figures in the shaping of nationalist ideology. This also implies that the sources of national identity are to be sought in culture (Smith, 2001a: 97). For example, both Goodman (2006) and Callahan (2006) demonstrated how specific cultural performances were used to build national identity discourses and narratives in South Africa and in China.
In French West Indian literature, the hero is often pictured as a maroon – a runaway slave – who symbolises strength, revolt, freedom; and such a figure provides to Martiniquans a counter discourse to colonial memories and histories (Arnold, 1994: 8-9). The maroons take their freedom, however, their fate is that, in a small land bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, they cannot flee too far from the habitation, or the plantation. Thus, as long as the maroons do not get caught, they are condemned to run in circles around the plantations, or hide in-between other plantations.

Thus, in French West Indian literature, maroons move and navigate between different realities; they move between spiritual spaces and material spaces, therefore maroons arouse curiosity, sometimes desire, but always frighten (see Chamoiseau, 1992). French West Indian writers habitually depict l’en-ville (the town/city) as a new form of plantation; the city is a place that represents both the colonial and the capitalist system (O’Regan, 2006: 260). Therefore, the maroons navigate in-between spaces, in between captivity and freedom, they live in liminality or in “interstitial perspectives” Bhabha (1995: 3). 15 Thus, because collective resistance is an integral part of ‘marooning’, what needs to be explored is the ways the protesters of 2009 – who marched in the streets of Fort-de-France for almost two months – created a new space of resistance.

Thus, in this dissertation, I analyse the ways they performed and ritualised their “marooning”. 16 However, the maroon is exclusively pictured as a man (Arnold, 1994). Although all three discourses – négritude, antillanité and créolité – attempt to define and to empower Caribbean and Martiniquan identities from different perspectives, they also tend to silence women’s voices (Lans, 2008). They confirmed McClintock’s idea (1991: 105) when he claimed that nationalism is necessarily “gendered”. Yet,

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15 Turner (1977: 95) described liminality as “betwixt and between”. Turner mainly explored liminality through cultural practices and rituals. Bhabha (1995) defined liminality as “interstitial perspectives”. Bhabha (1995: 2) argues that liminality is an essential part of nation building: “It is in the emergence of the interstices [...] that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community internets and cultural value are negotiated”.

16 Fort-de-France is the main city of Martinique.
decolonising gender is also an important issue in post-colonial nationalism (Massad, 1995). Hence the need to investigate the ways colonial and post-colonial experiences shape and/or destabilise gender identities and national identities in the course of collective resistance. Several studies have already argued that the constructions of masculine identities in Martinique, and in the Caribbean in general, are framed through hegemonic and colonial discourses which undermine women's/female experiences (e.g. Price and Price, 1994; Thomas, 2004). With regard to social movements, most scholars agree that the struggle for women's rights initially emerges alongside nationalist movements as a form of anticolonial resistance, but they later tend to silence their cause, voluntarily or not, to fully support national liberation ideals (West, 1992; Gluck, 1997; Chadya, 2003). In other words, nationalisms symbolise “masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope” (Enloe, 2000: 44).

A substantial amount of literature has been published on the correlation between nationalisms and genders in post-colonial contexts (Chatterjee, 1989; Parker, 1992; Ahmed, 1996; Yuval-Davis, 1997; 1999). Such studies are generally inspired by the primary work of Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989), and theorise on how the divisions of assigned roles between women (fertility/reproduction) and men (strength/heroic figures) are key symbolic factors in the definitions and in the building of post-colonial nations (e.g. Eisenstein, 2000: 35; Doane 1991; Arnold, 1994; Chrisman, 2004).

The ethno-symbolist approach faces numerous critics. For example, Özrikimli (2003: 340) argued that “ethno-symbolism is more an attempt to resuscitate nationalism than to explain it, and that ethno-symbolists are latter-day Romantics who suffer a deep sense of nostalgia”. However, with such an approach my intention in this research is to look at the conditions under which different ethno-symbolic elements, including collective myths, collective memories and values, were used or suppressed by the departmentalisation of Martinique. In addition, my intention is also to understand how such ethno-symbolic elements were reinvented during the 2009 social movement.
According to Smith (2001b: 6), the three basic goals of nationalism are to achieve “national autonomy” and “national unity” and to fashion a distinctive “national identity”. Therefore, I seek to define the main ethno-symbolic elements which influence the construction of national identities and discourses in Martinique. I also intend to analyse their level of influence on the building of national unity during the protests. Martinique is part of the French nation-state, and departmentalisation was a nationalist project that integrated Martinique into France in 1946 (Burton, and Reno, 1995). Therefore, the modernist approach, which evaluates the influences of political institutions in the building of a nation should also be taken into consideration.

Despite their differences, each theoretical school stresses the critical role of discourses and narration in the course of nation building (Bell, 2003: 67). Both schools outline the significance of historical interpretation and representations in the construction of nations.

2.4- Theories of Social Movements

According to Goodwin and Jasper (2009: 3) “social movements are conscious, concerted, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspects of their society by using extra-institutional means”. Touraine (2002: 89) defined a social movement as: “an answer either to a threat or a hope that is directly linked to the control that a social group has over its capacity to make decisions, to control changes and so on”. Both of those previous definitions outline the idea that social protests are a means to achieve or to restrain social changes. Fanon (1961) might have shared Touraine’s idea, since he had already argued that anti-colonial and nationalist struggles should take revolutionary forms, considering nationalist views as the ultimate way to achieve decolonisation.

With these definitions in mind, I introduce the two main social movement theories which attempt to define the reasons why social movements occur. Those theories are the “political opportunity network theory” and the “network theory”. The second part readdresses both the concepts of ‘liminality’ and communitas that were introduced by
Turner (1977), and later adapted by Bhabha (1994) in the contexts of post-colonial societies. Both theories are also particularly useful when they are applied in the context of social movement. Finally, the last part reviews the main literature which addresses the main social movements that have occurred in Martinique since its integration into France.

2.4.1 - Theories on the Emergence and the development of Protests.

Social movements almost always emerge unexpectedly, yet, one of the main questions in social movement studies is why people engage in collective actions of resistance when they do (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 11). Contrary to previous social movement theorists who viewed protests as “mistakes” or issues that needed to be solved, recent studies view protests as a form of social expression (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 9). The two main theories which attempt to comprehend the construction and development of social protests are the ‘political process network theory’ and ‘network theory’.

“Political process” or “political opportunity” is a recent, major social movement theory which helps to define the shaping of social movements (Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). Firstly, the political opportunity theory implies that a social movement occurs when a significant economic and/or political “shift” destabilises the current political structure, and this shift opens up a space and an opportunity for protests (Snow and al. 2006: 24; Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 10; Miller: 2000: 24). Secondly, the scholars who adopt this theory consider that movements are primarily “political, making demands of the state […] and asking for a change in laws and policies, they see changes in the state as the most important opportunity a movement needs” (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 10). Therefore, political process theory assesses the macro level conditions leading to social protests and to mass mobilisation. Some studies assess the roles of the social movement organisations in the origins and in the making of social protests (e.g. Nicholls, 2003). Other studies evaluate the economic and financial factors leading to social protests (e.g. Castells, 2009). Accordingly, Geographers greatly contribute to social movement theories, as they assess the key factors contributing to the differentiated geographies of social protests such as the “uneven
nature of capitalist development”, or social migration (e.g. Miller: 2000: 64; Viterna, 2009). However, it has been repeatedly stressed that in order to understand commitment to social movement, we also need to understand the “culture and psychology” of the place (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 103). Tarrow (1998: 112) claimed:

The culture of collective action is built on frames and emotions, orientated toward mobilizing people out of their compliance and into collective action in a conflicting setting. Symbols are taken selectively by movement leaders from a cultural reservoir and combined with action-oriented beliefs in order to navigate strategically. [...] Most importantly, they are given an emotional valence aiming at converting passivity into action.

Other studies argue for a similar recognition of the influence of feelings and emotions in the making of social movements (e.g. Collins, 2011; Young, 2011). Moreover, emotions are “aspects of culture” that illustrate the ways social relations and social actions are framed in a particular place (Goodwin et al. 2001: 9). Conclusively, an increasing number of studies also focus on both the protesters (identities, motivations), and on their environments to theorise on social protests (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 5). Indeed, several scholars have highlighted the influence of specific characteristics of local cultures, such as shared memories in the formation of social movements (Staggenborg, 2007; Zhao, 2011). Therefore, scholars emphasise the influence of a number of factors to explain the origins of social movements.

However, while macro-level studies might help to answer relevant questions as to why and how a specific social movement occurred, they do not explain why other individuals who are embedded in those similar “political-historical contexts do not, in fact, revolt” (Viterna, 2009: 84). For example, Brumley and Shefner (2014) showed that it is not a political opportunity that creates a space for protests; it is rather the “interpretation of a national and local opportunity structure” which might trigger the emergence of a social movement.

“Network theory” is another social movement theory that is increasingly used to explain social protests, and it is particularly used by geographers (Diani, 2002;
Social movement scholars have stressed the importance of scales in the set of power relations in contentious politics. Contrary to political process theory, network addresses the meso-level factors that facilitate or restrain the emergence of social movements. The core idea of this theory is that social networks facilitate the protesters’ mobilisation and participation during social movements (e.g. Diani, 2002; 2004; Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). Thus, the stronger the ties between the protesters, the stronger the network, and the stronger the social movement is (Della Porta, and Diani, 2006: 94). For example, network theory is used to assess the correlation between the actions of the protesters and the sense of belonging, or the cohesion the protesters have with a specific social network (e.g. Gould, 1995). Accordingly, many studies demonstrate that social networks play a key role in building a sense of belonging and identity (Ackland and O’Neil, 2011: 178). However, Di Gregorio (2012: 1) nuances this point, showing that the activists do not necessarily develop strong bonds together; instead, Di Gregorio argues that shared goals and interests temporarily provide the principal incentive for collective action. Moreover, this theory presupposes the idea that an organisational network already structures the movement.

Considering the particularity and the complexities of social movements, research studies address social protests through complementary perspectives (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 11). Thus, the combination of both the political process and network theories is useful to understand social movements; however, social movements are complex social events that occur in a specific environment. Therefore, in the case of the 2009 social movement, both theories shall be applied in a specific colonial context.

2.4.2 - Social Movements and Post-colonial Theories

Considering the impressive amount of research exploring collective identity, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the construction of collective identities in social movement studies (e.g. Gamson, 1995; Bernstein, 1997; Kozinets, 2004; Holland et al., 1998; Whittier, 2009). In fact, material concerns are not only the main focus of social protests, but “new social movements” broaden the debate to a large range of issues, which may include environmentalism, animal rights, etc. (Crossley,
New social movement scholars explore post-industrial social protests, and they stress the idea that the protesters involved in new social movements do not simply focus on class issues, instead, they seek the “recognition for a new identity and lifestyles” (Touraine et al., 1984; 1993; Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 284).

However, considering the small amount of literature written about the 2009 social protests, it could be said that this social movement included ambiguous and contradictory dynamics. These protests do not simply fall into the “new social movement” category. Indeed, during the social movement the protesters questioned the high cost of living on the island, and were thus fighting for material interests, but they also voiced their “dissatisfaction” with departmentalisation, and they contested the “deconstruction” of their cultural heritage (Breleur, et al. 2009; Chivallon, 2009). Thus, protecting the collective interests of Martiniquan society in preserving its distinctive traditions and cultures, thereby contesting the downside of consumerism, was very much the focus of the protesters. Paradoxically, the mobilisation was initially against the high cost of living in Martinique; therefore, collective interests were also clearly material (Chivallon, 2009). Hence, the series of protests which occurred in Martinique in 2009 cannot only be defined as a “new social movement” because they included ambiguous and contradictory dynamics, and should be analysed through broader concepts that allow us to consider those dynamics. This is one reason why this dissertation considers both the concepts of “liminality and communitas introduced by Turner.

Turner (1977: 96) argues that liminality is a phase or a moment of transition which occurs when a “society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated comitatus [meaning ‘similar’] community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders”. This implies that liminality includes both spatial and temporal dimensions. Therefore, communitas, or comitatus, is a social construct, and it emerges from liminality (Turner: 1977). In such cases, the individuals who evolve within communitas temporarily develop a strong sense of solidarity and equality (Turner, 1977: 96-97). Accordingly, the individuals who form a communitas, and who evolve in such a liminal phase, tend
to reject previous and traditional social structures (Turner: 1977). Although Turner explored both concepts of liminality and *communitas* during the social processes of rituals and pilgrimages, it could also be argued that all social movements and protests have “ritual dimensions” attached to them (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 110), such as marching in the streets, the making of banners, or slogans (St Jones, 2008). Such protest activities indicate that new rules, new roles, new social codes are played and performed during such events (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 110).

In post-colonial studies, liminality refers to a moment of transition and instability. It is a “region in which there is a continual process of movement and interchange between different states” (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998: 130-131). According to Bhabha (1994: 4) liminality – or “interstitial space” – and hybridity are interdependent: “interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up to the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy”. In fact, both Bhabha’s (1994) concepts of liminality and hybridity could be assimilated into both of Turner’s (1977) notions of liminality and *communitas*.

Social movement is a moment of transition. One of the objectives of social movement theories is to explore the different mechanisms that influence the making of a social protest (Crossley, 2002: 30). As previously argued, the concept of liminality is a recurrent concept in post-colonial studies; however, this concept is not usually explored during the course of social movements. Thus, this dissertation attempts to determine the role of liminality in the course of protest in Martinique. There has, in fact, been very little theoretical discussion about the correlation between social movements and the concept of liminality. The few studies which use the concept of liminality in social movements analyse how the protesters reshape their collective identities, and the ways they create new values (e.g. Yang, 2000; 2010).

Both the concepts of liminality and hybridity are correlated. Indeed, the interest in the liminal, for post-colonial theorists, is specifically its usefulness for explaining the “in-between” space in which hybrid identities are shaped (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000: 130). Incurrent academic debates, there seems to be no scepticism towards using hybridity theory in various geo-historical contexts. For example, Tziovas (2003) applied
hybridity theory in his study to explore the correlation between the Balkan and Greek cultural identities. The theory of hybridity has also been applied to various fields of study focusing on legal institutions (Grabham; 2006), institutional management (Frenkel and Shenhav; 2006), on global development (Harris, 2005) and even on the media – such as newspapers, journals etc. (Kraidy, 2002; Shim, 2006). However, hybridity theory has not been widely used in social movement studies.

In this field, “hybrid organisational identities” refers to social movement organisations which have identities rooted in more than one social movement and who deal with social, economic and political issues (Heaney and Rojas, 2014). One of the main questions that creates division amongst scholars is whether hybrid organisational identities contribute to reinforcing or, on the contrary, weakening, the impact of social protests (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 192). Moreover, Gamson (1990) found that the social movement organisations that do not have a well-defined identity and a clear-cut organisational structure may lack credibility. He (1990) argued that social protests led by more bureaucratic social movement organisations are more effective, and more successful. Conversely, other studies have shown that the organisations which have hybrid identities weaken the potentiality of the protests, because they limit the protesters’ involvement in collective action (e.g. Piven and Cloward, 1979; Heaney and Rojas, 2014). The debate is still ongoing, in what Jasper (2014:36) called “the organisation dilemma”.

The metadiscourses of Martiniquan identities have been intellectually – and often poetically – defined through various neologisms that underline the fluid character of Martiniquan identities such as négritude, antillanité, and the later Créolité. Therefore, considering the hybridised character of post-colonial societies such as Martinique, it seems difficult to define how hybrid organisational structures influence mass protests. Indeed, no study other has explored this subject in a post-colonial context. The 2009 protests created a privileged site of exploration, as the organisation that led the protests – C5F – was a conglomerate of several organisations which all have distinct and competing identities.
2.4.3 – Current Literature on the 2009 Social Protests in Martinique

Social movements have played a central role in shaping Martiniquan contemporary history (Chivallon, 2009). Since the departmentalisation of Martinique in 1946, the island has experienced numerous violent, and sometimes deadly, social protests (Jalabert, 2010). This dissertation focuses on the general strike that occurred in the French department of Martinique from February to March 2009, and which led to most economic activities on the island coming to a standstill for two months.

Martiniquans are no strangers to social protests. Since departmentalisation in 1946, there has been in Martinique – as well as in Guadeloupe – a long series of popular uprisings and strikes, and even violent protests, at least up until the end of the 1970’s (Jalabert, 2010, Chivallon, 2009). Network theory and network analysis are recurrently used to understand the origins of social movements in the French Antilles; in addition, they are used to analyse the goals and strategies of social movement organisations leading the protests. For example, a study carried out by Braflan-Trobo (2007) explores the origins and the influence of social movements in Guadeloupe. She examines the organisations, the structures, and the goals of the main social, cultural and historical factors, in order to explain why the local trade unions play such a prominent role in the creation of protests on the island.

Regarding the 2009 protests, several studies analysed the structures and the strategies of the social movement organisation that led the protest in Guadeloupe (LKP) (e.g. Alvarez, 2012; Obertan, 2012). However, no research study has been done regarding the social movement organisation (C5F) which led the protests in Martinique. This social movement was a protest against the high cost of living. Therefore, other research studies use the political process theory to analyse the events and the economic environment of the islands which might have led to the emergence of the social protests (e.g. Perri, 2009). Various expressions such as “assisted economy”, “artificial economy”, or “economic dependency” are used to characterise the poor and unproductive local economies, which according to many writers, led to the uprisings (e.g. Chivallon, 2009; Perri, 2009).
However, although a fair number of books and articles have analysed this specific 2009 social movement, none of them single out Martinique as a focus for analysis (e.g. Chivallon, 2009; Constant, 2009; Durpaire et al. 2009; Larcher, 2009; Lucrèce et al. 2009; Sméralda, 2009; Tanic et al. 2009; Simont et al., 2011). Indeed, the general strike took place in Guadeloupe, French Guyana and Martinique. However, a review of the current literature on this social protest shows that Guadeloupe – where the movement was particularly strong – is used as a reference to what occurred in other places such as Martinique (e.g. Alvarez, 2012; Bonilla, 2012). However, Martinique, Reunion, French Guyana, and Guadeloupe have their own cultural singularities. This also means that even though Martinique and Guadeloupe experienced the same colonial history, and even though both islands were involved in this large scale movement of protests, the Martiniquans shaped the movement according to their own cultural specificities. This implies that, paradoxically, this literature tends to groups the different protests and the different events under the same model of analysis. However, they also acknowledge the fact that each place has its own cultural and historical specificities (William, 2012: 11). A protest is not a platform where deterministic notions of collective identities are exposed. As Polletta (2006: 21) claimed:

Social movements are not merely the sum of protest events on certain issues, or even of specific campaigns. On the contrary, a social movement process is in place only when collective identities develop which go beyond specific events and initiatives. Collective identity is strongly associated with recognition and the creation of connectedness.

Therefore, social movements are particular events where new forms and new collective identity discourses and narratives are shaped.

To many scholars, the 2009 uprising was exceptional, described by some commentators as “historic”, “unprecedented” (Melyon-Reinette, 2009; Lucrèce et al. 2009; Tanic et al. 2009). Based on this literature, the protests symbolised a form of revival of Martiniquan collective awareness. This literature often uses specific expressions such as a “rebirth”, a “revolution” to attest to the exceptional character of the protests (Melyon-Reinette and Durpaire, 2009; Romana, 2009; Bonilla, 2010: 127).
This literature put the emphasis on Martiniquan collective identity (e.g. Nabajoth, 2012). According to Chivallon (2009: 106), the social movement was an opportunity to “experiment with new forms of collective authority” which “indicates [...] the ability of Caribbean cultures to challenge the basis of social equality in a context shaped by the close, even intimate, experience of mechanisms of domination”. Her comment does not simply address the case of Martinique, but also attests to the singularity of the protests.

The literature which addresses the construction and the performances of collective identity that occurred during the strike, shows that this topic is both emotionally textured and, very often, historically charged (e.g. Romana, 2009). Some analysts were actually also part of the movement, as they marched in the streets with the protesters (e.g. Birotta et al., 2011). The colonial past of Martinique, and the previous violent protests that occurred after the departmentalisation of the island in 1946, are often used as the main references to explain the reasons why the 2009 protests arose. They also present the protests, as the outcome of previous riots that occurred in Guadeloupe and in Martinique respectively in 1961 and in 1974, after the departmentalisation of both islands (e.g. Jalabert, 2010; Chivallon, 2009). Therefore, the literature presents the social movement as a unique event, yet almost identical to earlier struggles. Hence, the protests are seen as part of a continuum of earlier social struggles. Even though I acknowledge that the fact that the social protests which took place in those places share similar dynamics, there is a danger with such an approach that it risks essentialising the protests.

Consequently, the actions of the protesters and the outcome of the strike are seen as a form of paradox. Both words “paradox” and “contradictions” are recurrent, and even overused across the literature. Indeed, at the end of the strike, Martiniquans were asked via referendum to vote for the political autonomy of the island. The results of the vote show that Martiniquans strongly rejected this option (Mérion, 2012). Mrugdovic (2012: 114) claimed that the final choice made by the voters reflects “one of the most striking Caribbean contradictions”. She struggles to see how the protesters, who challenged the French government for about two months, and who expressed strong nationalist sentiments during the movement, ultimately did not
support their own political autonomy. However, as Giraud, (2009) rightly noted, the social movement was a collective struggle against the high cost of living; it was not a protest for political independence. However, he seems to admit that French citizenship is simultaneously questioned and embraced by the same people who might have fervently cried the slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” during the protests (Giraud, 2009; 2011).

Accordingly, the French government is simultaneously seen as a problem and as a solution. It is a solution because it can provide the necessary capital to feed the local economy (Jalabert, 2010). It is seen as a problem because the vestiges of French colonial hegemony still exist in Martinique (Chivallon, 2011). William (2012) pointed out another “paradox” as he claimed that the protesters wanted to assert and to protect their historic and cultural legacies against the prism of capitalism and consumerism; yet they simultaneously asked for more capital, more economic advantages. Thus, the protesters ultimately were embracing the same capitalist values that they were contesting. This “paradox” has previously been underlined by (De Angelis: 2007: 6) who claimed that: “On one side, a social force, called capital pursues endless growth and monetary values. […] On the other side, other social forces strive to rearrange the web of life on their own terms, but often enchanted, or overwhelmed by the parables of the opposing camps whispering that, actually, there is no alternative”. De Angelis (2007) identifies he ways alternative values, or “other” values are created in the course of social protests. He also explored how protesters embrace and contest capitalist values during social movements. Therefore, the demands of the protesters might have not been in contradiction, the protesters might have attempted to create other values during the protests.

Miles (2003) previously used the word “contradiction” to describe Martiniquan expressions of nationhood. He finally claimed (2006: 647) in another article: “Martiniquan politics would not be true to itself without a healthy dose of paradox”. However, he systematically used vote analysis to understand Martiniquan nationalism. In contradiction to Miles, I argue that vote results do not necessarily provide an accurate reading of Martiniquan nationalism. That is to say, as regards the strike, contrary to the outcome of the vote does not necessarily represent “one of the
most striking Caribbean contradictions”, as Mrugdovic (2012) suggests. Instead, I argue that the nationalist ideologies supported by the nationalist parties do not necessarily provide an accurate reading of Martiniquan popular nationalism. It follows from this that the social movement organisation (CSF) which organised the protests in Martinique, did not necessarily frame the nationalist sentiment expressed by the people in the streets. In fact, the common point missing in both Miles’ research studies and the other research studies that attempted to understand the 2009 movement is the voice of the population. Thus, this research attempts to fill this gap.

2.5- Conclusion

Social movements are very eclectic in theoretical terms (Della-Porta, 2014: 3). Indeed, social protests take their form from specific places with their own memories, histories and political tensions. Conclusively, in order to understand the emergence and development of specific protests, it seems important to review the main social, economic and political dynamics which lead to social protests. Moreover, the combinations of various theoretical inputs from different disciplines have considerably enriched the field from the point of view of both theoretical and methodological understandings (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). Martinique is a post-colonial society which has experienced hundreds of years of colonisation and a few decades of democracy. Since the integration of Martinique that occurred in 1946, Martinique is French. Therefore, this thesis also explores the transition of France from being a colonial state to a welfare state. According to Mishra (1999:12), “the idea of maintaining and consolidating the national community – economically, politically and socially – was the ideological underpinning *par excellence* of the welfare state”. Therefore, departmentalisation not only aimed to decolonise Martinique, it also aimed to build and to consolidate in Martinique a form of French national unity.

However, the 2009 social movement seemed to have challenged the idea of French national unity on the island. The analysis of this social movement serves as a context for exploring the building of collective identity in Martinique. Indeed, what began as an economic crisis, when protesters sang slogans against the high cost of living, quickly shifted to reveal numerous social issues when protesters rallied around the
statement: “Martinique is ours, not theirs”. Studies of nationalism not only analyse the different forms of nationalism, but look at it as a field of study that explores the conditions under which nations emerge. This field also poses the question as to why nationalist ideologies have proven so appealing (Özrikimli: 2003). Indeed, nationalist ideologies support the idea that nations are not merely the key forms of political entity which structure and organise the world, but they also create passions; sometimes in extreme forms. However, based on the literature exploring the events and the outcomes, the protests encompass many paradoxes. However, I would argue that the protesters created a distinct form of unity that could only be framed during the movement. Even though nationalism encompasses a large range of meanings and understandings, it is as much a nation-building process that it is embedded in modern conditions (e.g. Gellner, 1983) as it is a sense of attachment and belonging to that nation (e.g. Smith, 2001).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY
3.1- Introduction

My research seeks to address three distinctive questions related to the building of collective identities in Martinique during the lengthy 2009 protests. My objectives are first to explain how the shared experiences of resistance were created, and I also seek to analyse the ways in which collective identities were negotiated, framed and manifested during the protests. Secondly, I expose the dynamics of solidarities and divisions that were created, sustained and challenged in the course of the events. Finally, I analyse the impacts of the mobilisation on the political and social structures on the island. Each of these objectives is cross-examined by the means of different qualitative methodological approaches. Studies in social movement studies usually combine several approaches, since each approach provides different types of “evidence and theoretical insights” (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002: XV; Della-Porta and Diani, 2006.

This chapter has been divided into five parts, through which I explain the different epistemological stances that I used. The first part exposes the methodological analysis used in this research. Indeed, I selected discourse, and framing analysis. The second part provides further detail of the field sites I selected to extract the data for my analysis. The third part discusses the data collection and my sampling strategy while I was in the field, from March to October 2011. In the fourth part (Data Collection), I explain how I made use of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation to have access to that data. Finally, the fifth part discusses the issues of positionalities in the field, before concluding.

3.2- Discourse Analysis and Framing Analysis

This first part is an overview of discourse, framing and network analysis, in order to develop the correlations between these approaches and social movements and social practices. My discourse analysis combines Foucault’s work (1966, 1978), to explore the ways cultural and political dynamics influence the course and the impacts of social protests. I use framing analysis, to describe the construction of beliefs and shared
values, and their effects on collective action throughout the development of the protests (e.g. Snow and Benford, 1992). Finally, this thesis uses triangulation analysis to combine both of those approaches to address the complexity of the social movement phenomenon, and particularly the case of the February/March 2009 protests.

3.2.1 - Discourse Analysis

Foucault’s approach (1966, 1969) on discourse emphasises the correlations between power, knowledge and discourses. Foucault wrote comprehensively about the historical (re)configurations of knowledge (e.g. 1966; 1978). He had extensively written about the epistemic environments within which the bodies of knowledge become authoritative, and understood as “truths”. It is mainly in this sense that Foucault (1978) used the term “power/knowledge”.

Foucault’s work has been very influential in post-colonial studies. Some major studies have extensively used discourse analysis to explain the ways in which social practices and discourses are mutually shaped (e.g. Bhabha, 1990; 1995). Other academic use discourse analysis to assess the influences of cultural representations in laying the foundations for the continuing colonial and imperial hegemony in post-colonial societies (Said, 1978). Foucault also had major influence in other established disciplines; therefore, various methodological applications of discourse analysis are applied, and each offers a distinct understanding of the social and historical creations of texts (Mills, 1997; Gee, 2011). The literature that addresses the issues related to collective identities in social movements usually uses discourse to analyse movement into broader social and cultural contexts (Jenson, 1993; Cherry, 2006). Moreover, like Foucault, they particularly highlight the way social movements are distinct discursive fields within which power/knowledge is simultaneously reproduced and contested (Stolle-McAllister, 2007, Hobson, 2004).

Colonial discourses built Martiniquan identities and landscape for centuries. I use discourse analysis firstly to expose the ways hegemonic identity discourses are reproduced in Martinique, and how they still contribute to shaping the structures of
its political and economic institutions. I also use discourse analysis to show how the protesters contested hegemonic knowledge, and how they attempted to assert their their Martiniquanity identities in the course of the protests. My approach shows how all the social interactions that occurred during the protests were framed to either contest or to reproduce those hegemonic discourses. Therefore, this analysis aims to highlight the parallels between colonial discourses and protest performances.

The units of analysis that I selected on which to carry out this study are specific media texts that were produced and used during the protests. The data I collected during my field work includes newspaper articles, and particularly the Last Masters of Martinique documentary, which was broadcast at the early stage of the strike etc. Amongst the data, I also selected documents that were produced and circulated by the social movement organisation – Collectif du 5 Février – and by the protesters, such as the list of demands, the placards, the photos and the tracts. Finally, I organised several focus groups to comment on some of the materials.

3.2.2 - Framing analysis

Despite their specificity, framing analysis and discourse analysis are often used interchangeably in social movement studies (Johnston, 2002). Indeed, framing analysis was, and still is, widely used in social movement studies (e.g. Goffman, 1974. Marek and Ernesto-Zirakzadeh, 2006; Rohlinger and Quadagno, 2009; Ryan and Gamson, 2009). Frames are particular readings of specific events, that decode collective and individual experiences and actions; they help to “render events or occurrences meaningful, and thereby function to organize experience and guide action” (Snow, Benford, 2000: 614). Framing analysis is used to analyse how ideas, ideologies and values are used to build “ideative patterns” though which the world is understood in a given context (Lindekilde, 2014: 199).

A great deal of literature in social movements has been recently published on the relations between framing processes, and individual and shared identities during protests (e.g. Stryker et al., 2000; Block, 2008; Petray, 2010). Indeed, “identity constructions are an inherent feature of the framing process” throughout the course
of a social protest (Evans, 1997: 454). Thus, recent studies use framing analysis to explore the interconnections between the constructions(expressions of collective identity, and movement participation and mobilisation (e.g. Snow and Benford, 2000: 631-632; Snow and McAdam, 2000; Wall, 2007; Horton, 2010). One of the most recurrent questions in social movement studies is how people engage in collective actions when they do (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). Therefore, researchers attempt to use “collective action frames” to define sets of shared beliefs that are shaped to encourage and legitimise collective actions (e.g. Sveinung, 2006; Apinall, 2007; Vindhya, 2012). Frames and collective action frames are unique in a sense that each frame represents an idea of the world. Therefore, social researchers do not list the different action frames resulting from protests; they discuss instead the ways collective framings are shaped, their features, and how those framings affect the cohesion and interactions between protesters (Snow and Benford, 2000).

Several key points of analysis are important to consider when using framing analysis, in order to explore the construction of collective identities during social protests. These key points usually are: the time and place of the protests, the “set of social actors” and social groups/organisations involved in the protests; their actions and how these are manifested; and, finally, the nature and the structure of the relationships between them (Hunt and Benford; 1994; to Hunt et al., 1994). Thus, the social movement research studies that use such an approach track the correlated dynamics between those key points. For example, some geographers have pointed out the connections between shared identities, spaces and collective actions while using framing analysis (Martin, 2003; Hayes-Conroy and Martin, 2009). Other studies have looked at the ways cultural values and cultural identities influence the protesters’ actions, their engagement in the social movement and their disengagement with the protests (e.g. Adair, 1996; Reese and Newcombe, 2003; Steinberg, 2004). Finally, a few other studies focused on the strategic roles of the social movement organisations leading the protests and the ways they engage with their audiences (e.g. Dowse, 2001; Boström, 2004). Accordingly, my research also uses framing analysis to explore those different linkages.
Each of the above method has its merits and addresses in different ways my research questions. Indeed, many studies actually use several methods to study the complexity of social movements (Sveinung, 2006; Cherry, 2006). Combining these methods helped me to methodically juggle with different levels of analysis. Now, I will address in the following part the different field sites, and the unit of analysis that I used for this research.

3.3- Sampling Methods

The recruitment process of informants can either “break or make” any social studies (McLean and Campbell, 2003). In this research, four distinct sites were studied: the first site included protesters. For the second site I interviewed the strike organisers, who were the main leaders of the C5F. For the third main site I interviewed the local politicians. Finally, for the third main site I interviewed the counter-protesters (See Appendix: A). At this point, it seems important to stress again that even though, the protest began in Guadeloupe and spread to neighbouring Martinique few days later, my research specifically focuses on the protest that occurred in Martinique. Indeed, both territories have their specificities, thus, the protests have been experienced in distinctive ways on each island. The broadcasting of the Last Masters of Martinique documentary, along with the presence and influence of the Béké community in Martinique are some of the important reasons as to why the protest might have spread so quickly to Martinique. Thus I also explore the causes that might have helped the “spreading” of the protest to Martinique.

Flexible approaches are important in qualitative research (Blaikie, 2007; 2010). I chose to select and to interview the protesters who were publically active during the protest: sit-ins, street protests, petitions (including online petitions), group discussions, theatrical actions, etc. Most of these actions were carried out in the streets. Indeed, Chamoiseau (2011: 163) explained that the protests were “fundamentally urban”, in the sense that they mainly took place in larger cities, such as in the city of Fort-de-France, or in the city of Lamentin. The mobilisations were not as important in more remote areas, such as in cities located in the north of the island.
This point underscores the importance of geography in social movements and in contentious politics. Thus, I should analyse how space was occupied by objects (cars, flags, banners, etc.), but also by individual/group performance activities (sits-in, demonstrations etc.). So, the city of Fort-de-France played a centralising role during the protests. Thus, the social protests that occurred in the capital were not simply used a place to protest, but as particular spaces of resistance in their own right. Accordingly, my approach looks at the construction of spaces of resistance only from this perspective.

With such an approach, my sample was not strictly defined at the beginning of my fieldwork. Sampling this population was, rather, an ongoing process that lasted from the start until the end of my fieldwork. For this reason, I selected the participants by the means of the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling, or “respondent pyramiding”, refers to the method through which the researcher develops the research sample through a growing network of contacts that lead from one informant to another (Malthaner, 2014: 181-182). With this technique, an initial set of respondents – or “group of nodes” – leads to another set of respondents, and so on (Diani, 2002: 177). Snowball sampling is increasingly used in social movement research studies (e.g. Parks, 2008; Lomicky and Hogg, 2010). For example, Skey (2010) used snowball sampling techniques to build his sample, in order to explore how “banal nationalism” – that is, everyday representations of nationhood – were perceived, experienced and challenged by the “ethnic majority in England”.

In other literature, this method is used in order to have a larger picture of the groups involved in the protests, as it helps to distinguish the different social patterns and social interactions that contribute to configuring a specific social movement (e.g. Cress and Snow, 1996).

I also used the snowball sampling technique to reach the counter-protesters who were involved in individual or organised actions against the protests (See Appendix A). Thus, some of those interviewees negotiated against the C5F at the prefecture.

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17 Snowball sampling is also known as “onion-snowball sampling”, “network sampling”, “chain referral sampling” or “reputational sampling”, “link-tracing sampling”, “respondent-driven sampling” or “purposing sampling” (Heckathorn, 1997; Blaikie, 2010; Noy, 2006).
(town hall), while other respondents participated in a counter-march that occurred on the 6th of March 2009 in Fort-de-France. Finally, I also interviewed the respondents who wrote some of the articles who condemned the protests, or criticised certain aspects of it. Therefore, amongst the counter-protesters, not all were people who participated in the mass counter-protest *per se*. The physical confrontations that exploded between the people involved in this counter-march and the supporters of the strike were so violent that no other counter-marches took place throughout the social movement. It was not easy to sample the people who voiced their disapproval against the general strike. Indeed, the magnitude and the strength of the 2009 social protests, tended to limit the public expression of counter-discourses.

Snowball sampling has other interesting advantages, such as it is often being used when it seems difficult for the researcher to clearly identify or to directly contact the population being studied (Heckathorn, 1997; Blaikie, 2010: 179). Thus, the snowball sampling method facilitates contacts between the researchers and a specific population that is otherwise challenging to enter into contact with. In addition, this method helps the researcher to gain trust with the potential respondents (Valentine, 2005). I particularly used the snowball sampling technique in my research to have access to the *Béké* community. Indeed, interviewing the *Békés* is not an easy task (Kováts-Beaudoux, 1969; Gurrey and Hopquin, 2010: 72-73). Therefore, it was easier to access this population by means of snowball sampling. However, it is worth noting that snowball sampling has cons as well as pros. In my case, snowball samplings took time, and I used several intermediaries to gain trust. With time and persuasion, I secured three interviews with three members of that community. Two interviews occurred in Martinique and the third one took place in Paris.

Even though I extensively used the snowball sampling technique in my research, some respondents, such as members of the C5F, were easier to reach, using diverse documents such as journal articles to find out who were, and where were, the main leaders of this social movement organisation. I went to the trades union headquarters to initiate my contact with the leaders. The C5F still exists, however, there have been changes in the leadership teams since the protests. Therefore, I exclusively
interviewed the leaders who actually organised the protests at the time, and those who supervised the negotiation meetings which took place at the prefecture.

The C5F included trade unions and diverse cultural associations. Thus, by the end of my fieldwork, I had interviewed five C5F trade union leaders. The C5F not only consisted of trade unions. Indeed, a few other cultural associations were part of the organisation, therefore, I used the same process to interview three main cultural associations which worked with the C5F and that were part of the organisation at the time of the protests (See Appendix A).

3.4- Data Collection

I combine individual interviews and focus groups. In contrast to the individual interviews, focus groups “allow the researcher to observe the group interactions that underlie the construction of collective identity, collective action frames, and the emotional dynamics involved in the creation of oppositional values” (Blee and Taylor 2002: 109). Therefore, I organised 42 individual interviews with the protesters, and I led four different focus groups in Martinique. I also interviewed 8 key members of the C5F, as well as 5 politicians and, finally, 12 counter-protesters (See appendix A). In this part, I explain how I interviewed the participants, along with the different methods used to select the texts and documents.

3.4.1 - Semi-structured Interviews

Qualitative analysis provides detailed pictures of the diverse social and cultural dynamics that shape social movements, and which are also shaped during protests (e.g. Monforte, 2009; Stoddart and Tindall, 2010; Powell, 2011). In-depth interviews, such as semi-structured interviews, are particularly useful as they provide an acute reading of those dynamics (Bosi, 2007; Auyero, 2009; Luker, 2009; Vindhya, 2012). For example, Martyn (2005) used extensive interviews to explore Indonesian women’s rights activism in post-colonial Indonesia. One advantage of semi-structured interviews is that it often exposes other aspects of the protests which other texts
would not necessarily present (Blee and Taylor, 2002; Blee, 2013). Collective memories represent a site of social conflict, just as efforts at suppressing or galvanising collective memories of shared history can give rise to social movements (Guenther, 2012: 159). As Foucault (1975: 25) argued: “Memory is actually a very important factor in struggle [...] if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism”. For example, Gill (2012) used in-depth interviews to understand how older white individuals, who witnessed the major civil rights movement events in Alabama, “renarrativised” their personal memories to forget some parts of their collective memories that link them with the ideology of segregation.

Accordingly, such interviews contribute to mapping the diverse sites of the protests (Andrew and Maddison, 2010; Harlow, 2012); to analysing the cultural, historical and social specificity of the movement (Taylor et al., 2009; O'Hearn, 2009); to evaluating the counter forces and counter discourses to the movement (Walby, 2011) and to evaluating the social and political impacts of protest on a society (Delano and Crosset, 2008). Finally, through semi-structured interviews researchers outline the nature and structure of social networks, as well as the different strategies of resistance and mobilisation applied by activists during protests (Bramble and Minns, 2005; Gumrukcu, 2010).

With regards to my research, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were used to collect information from protesters, as well as from key members of the C5F, counter-protesters and local politicians. I conducted such interviews with 41 protesters, including 8 with key members of the C5F; 12 counter-protesters consented to participate in the research; finally, 5 politicians also agreed to answer my questions (See appendix A). It has been suggested that the optimum length for a qualitative research interview is around 90 minutes (Schuman, 1982; Seidman, 1998; Hermanowicz, 2002). However, I rapidly realised that respondents were extremely keen to talk. They indeed talked lengthily and extensively about their experiences, their thoughts and their memories of the protests. They seemed pleased that I was interested in the subject, and some of them came back to me to give more information and/or more documents. Therefore, my individual interviews usually lasted between one and a half to two and a half hours. Interviews were conducted either in French
or/and in Creole. Interview settings can influence the quality of the data collected (Valentine, 2005), so, I systematically let the interviewees decide on the place of the interview. Most of these interviews took place at the respondent’s home or at their workplace, otherwise, they took place at my home.

The interview was structured around seven broad themes (See appendix B). In the first part of the interview the respondent talked about her/his understanding of the February/March 2009 events, as well as her/his participation in the protests. The second group of questions focuses on leadership and, particularly, on the social movement organisations which led the strike, that is, the C5F. The third theme focuses on the collective demands and slogans that were vocalised in the streets during the marches. The fourth theme discusses the role of the media, and particularly their influence on the evolvement of the protests. In the fifth part, the respondents address the roles played by local politicians the government during the movement. In the sixth part, the respondents discuss the counter discourses. Finally, the last part focuses on the aftermath of the strike. Even though the list of questions was structured, I quickly understood that I would have to somehow be more flexible in the way I shaped the interview. This was communicated to me in one of my first interviews, when the respondent named Patrice said: “I don’t want to answer to your list of questions [...] I’m here to speak with you, I prefer it that way”. Therefore, it was valuable to let the respondents talk more freely about their experiences because it allowed me to also observe the ways they introduced their experiences and their logic. For example, some respondents started to talk about the Békés or the media; other interviewees preferred to start the interview by expressing their disappointment with regard to the aftermath of the strike. However, this was not systematically the case, as some interviewees preferred to be methodically questioned.

After the usual formalities, and prior to the interview session, I systematically reintroduced and explained the aims and the objective of the research to the respondents. Then I described the structure of the interview. I particularly stressed during the meeting the value and the importance of their participation in the research. In fact, the majority of the respondents were keen to talk, so, this was simply extra
encouragement for them to do so. However, the Béké respondents were more hesitant at the beginning of the interview, and they had to be constantly reassured.

At this stage, all participants in my research were asked to fill in two interview guides which outline the aim of my research, the ethical conditions of my research, which guarantees anonymity of the participants, and my contact details. I signed and kept one copy of this form, and the participant signed and kept the other copy. This introductory phase usually lasted for about 10 minutes. During the next stage of the meeting, the participant answered my questions. During the last phase of the interview, the respondents were asked to fill in a questionnaire which included demographic questions, their involvement in the strike and their political affiliation (See Appendix C). I preferred to provide the questionnaire at the end of the interview, because it is often preferable to ask demographic questions at the end of the meeting (Blee and Taylor, 2002).

3.4.2 - Participant Observation

In social movement studies, semi-structured interviews are particularly helpful when combined with other methods of research, such as questionnaires, surveys, individual interviews, focus groups or participant observation (e.g. Ray, 1999; Bates, 2000; Bosi, 2008; Freeman, 2009, Toscano, 2012). Participant observation has not yet been a common method in social movement studies, however, it is particularly useful to “grasp the meanings and symbolic dimensions of the protests and protest-related events” (Balsiger and Lambelet, 2014: 144, 147).

The participant observation method has been used to study the roles emotions play in protests (Åsa, 2009). It has also been particularly valuable to study how individuals interact with each other and shape their collective identities (Heath, 2003), their behaviours and protest performances (Drury, Reicher, 2000). It is also valuable to capture the ways protesters orient the strategy aspect of the protest (Lichterman, 2002; Collins, 2012).
On the 14th of October 2011 the social movement organisation C5F organised a meeting in Sainte-Marie. Sainte-Marie is a city located in the north of Martinique. Consequently, on Friday afternoon, the 14th of October 2011, my research activities involved participant observation during the two-hour meeting. I was informed about this event by one of the leaders of the C5F, called Laurent during his interview. I was invited by Laurent during his interview to attend the reunion, and I gladly accepted his invitation. The meeting was organised and led by the key leaders of the C5F, who also invited the local inhabitants of the town to attend the reunion. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the 2009 protests and its outcomes.

At the beginning of the meeting I sat at the back of the room in order to have a wide-ranging view of the room and of the participants. During the reunion, I quietly observed what was taking place while I was taking notes of each comment made by the different speakers. I did not intervene during the meeting. When the reunion was over, I spoke with some of the participants, and I noted other significant details, such as the ways they interacted with each other. Indeed, one of the participants showed some his paintings, representing his interpretations of the strike. At the end of the meeting, the C5F also organised the distribution of a large amount of free foods (fruits and vegetables). This type of distribution also took place during the strike.

3.4.3 - Focus Groups

Gaskell (2000: 92) noted that “the real purpose of qualitative research is not counting opinions of people, but rather exploring the range of opinions, the different representations of the issue”. In my case, however, focus groups were used to observe the ways the protesters interacted, talked and remembered the protests. Indeed, protestors (as well as social movement organisations) are “signifying agents” actively engaged in the construction and “maintenance of meanings” (Snow, Benford, 2000: 613). Therefore, along with other studies that explored the production of collective identities in social movements, my intention is not only to highlight the way shared identities strengthened collective actions, but to underline the ways in which the construction of shared identities happens to be, at least in specific circumstances, an end in itself (Gamson, 1992; Munday, 2006). Surprisingly, contrary to group
interviews, focus groups have not been widely used in social movement studies until recently (Johnston, 2002; Munday, 2006). However, both are becoming particularly helpful to examine issues related to protests and social movements (Touraine, 1981; North, 1998; Mika, 2006; Hutchinson and Wexler, 2007). For example, focus groups have proven useful to highlight the cultural context of protests (Oriola, 2012). This method is also used to explore questions regarding the construction of collective identities in social movements (Melucci, 1989, 1996; Munday, 2006). In my research, focus group were used to explore the ways in which respondents drew on shared knowledge and experiences to make sense of the protests, therefore to explore how they defined themselves in relation to the events. One advantage of a focus group is that it shifts the unit of analysis from the individual to a wider social group related to the topic and theme studied (Blee and Taylor, 2002).

From June to September 2011, I conducted four focus groups with protesters in Martinique (See appendix: A). In the first three focus group sessions, six participants showed up. However, in the last focus group only four people participated in the discussions. Even though such numbers of participants are not usually used in research, “mini focus groups” which include 4 to 6 interviewees are increasingly used in social research (Kruger and Cassey, 2000) and can be used in social movement studies (Touraine, 1981; Melucci, 1989; 1996; North, 1998; Munday, 2006). Finally, I adapted the focus group methods according to my research questions. Because I was not only interested in the respondent’s experience, but in the process of interactions, I managed small focus groups and I interviewed people who already knew each other, and/or who were part of particular networks. Not all, but at least two, members already knew each other, since snowball sampling was used to select participants. Pre-existing groups facilitate the discussions, limit conflict and favour dialogue (Bloor, et al., 2002; Munday, 2006). As Kitzinger (1994: 105 in Bloor et al., 2002: 22) commented “pre-existing groups [...] provide one of the social contexts within which ideas are formed and decisions made”. Consequently, despite their small size, each focus group yielded valuable data that was not obtained through one-to-one interview, or participant observation.
Each meeting was organised as follows: I introduced myself, I outlined the aims, objectives and ethical responsibilities of my research, and then I invited each participant to introduce themselves. The interviewees were asked to fill in the interview guides. When this stage was over, I then posed the focus group questions. After the introductory phase, participants were asked to discuss the background of the strike and the motives of and reasons for the strike. The discussions included the collective demands, slogans, and the role of the media and politics (See appendix B). At the end of the meeting, each participant was invited to complete the questionnaire (See Appendix C). I systematically decided on the location of these meetings. The first focus group was organised in a hotel conference room. Two other interviews took place at a friend’s home, and one interview took place at my home. Each focus group has been audio recorded. The meeting dates were negotiated and set according to the availability of the participants.

The confidentiality of my research was guaranteed for every single interview participant. Accordingly, the real names of the respondents have been replaced by pseudonyms. All of the interviews and focus groups were taped with the agreement of the respondents. Except for the participants of the focus groups, I proposed to each one of the one-to-one interviewees that they could have a copy of the interview tape. Only four respondents wished to, and did, receive a non-edited copy of the interview.

3.4.4 – Researching and Selecting Texts

My research is also structured from the review and analysis of texts and other data from diverse primary and secondary sources. During my field work, I gathered several valuable documents such as the 10,000 pictures, and 24 hours of videos, which include television news archives broadcast by Télévision Otonom Mawon and by other local television channels. I collected all articles produced by the local newspaper France-Antilles each day of the events. Newspapers are “staples” in social movement studies (Clemens, Hughes, 2002). I also collected tracts, poems and other articles, either published by the protesters or by the counter-protesters.
It is my understanding that the texts which were produced during this period reflect the environment from which the protests arose. Moreover, through the analysis of those texts, it is possible to read the different dynamics that were created during the events, and which influenced the movement. Thus, I exclusively selected the documents which were produced in Martinique, even though the strike was on a larger scale, as it also occurred in Guadeloupe and French Guyana. In addition, other demonstrations of protest took place in Paris. Yet, considering the large amount of texts and documents that were created during the events, I selected the textual material that falls into two main categories: the texts created by the social movement organisation (C5F) and the texts produced by the groups or individuals who publically participated in the protests. Some of those texts were presented during the focus groups, for participants to comment on (See appendix B).

An exception was made for a particular documentary called *The Last Masters of Martinique*. The documentary was filmed and edited prior to the 2009 social protests, but it was broadcasted during the protests. Indeed, the strike began on the 5th of February 2009, and the documentary was broadcasted in Martinique on the 6th of February 2009. The documentary was particularly important because it had several considerable and valuable impacts on the protests.

The C5F first organised and led the social movement. They created a variety of texts in support of the strike, that I collected for further analysis. For example, I also selected the long list of demands produced and shared by the C5F (See appendix D). This document includes the demands formulated by the C5F and by the protesters themselves. Indeed, this is a long document that was constantly amended by the leaders of the organisation throughout the protests. However, I could only have the last updated version of the list, which was created in March 2009. This means that this updated version states the majority of the demands formulated by the protesters and listed by the social movement organisation. I presented this document to each of the participants of the focus group, and I gave them the opportunity to read the document and to comment on it. The objective of this activity was to have an insight into their demands, since it was important to understand the dynamics between the protesters’ demands voiced in the streets and the list.
The texts produced by the supporters of the strike included diverse documents such as leaflets, poems, paintings, songs, petitions and also photos. The individuals who took the pictures were professional and amateur photographers who are both passionate about photography. I finally gathered from them over 10,000 different photos. I was particularly careful with the framing of those pictures. Indeed, as one of the respondents called Dominique, who knew and marched with some of the photographers, noted: “photographers tend to shoot scenes or objects that are rare, [...] or unusual”. Therefore, the positionality and reflexivity of the photographers have to be taken into consideration. For example, they extensively photographed the nationalist and pro-independence flags during the marches, yet, the protesters explained during the meeting that this flag was not overwhelmingly present during the marches. On the contrary, the people waving the nationalist flags were hardly ever seen during the marches.

The focus groups were particularly fruitful for understanding the dynamics of the protests. For example, during each of the focus group meetings I showed to each of the participants five different photos that were taken by some protesters (See appendix B). The faces of the people were cropped or blurred for each of the pictures. When using quantitative analysis, the aim is for the sample to represent the population. This is not the case when using qualitative methods, which aim instead to cover cases that are theoretically relevant (Della-Porta, 2014: 6). Therefore, each picture shows a specific placard that address a subject related to the issues of identity, or hegemony, or of colonial representation.

3.5- Positionality and Reflexivity of the Researcher

Many researchers have argued that interviews, along with other forms of data collection, greatly depend on the interviewer’s understanding of their own position in relation to the position of participants in the social movement (Blee and Taylor, 2002). In such a case, the researcher actively shapes or influences the research contexts (Hall and Hall, 1996).
From the early stage of my fieldwork, I realised that being Martiniquan was a valuable asset to put me in touch with the interviewees, and to discuss the strike with them. An awareness of the place one occupies in the field greatly helps the researcher to better and more quickly understand the logic and the subtleties of the groups or individuals who were involved in the protests (Balsiger and Lambelet, 2014: 146). This also means that social and cultural similarities could be used productively in research. I could navigate freely between both languages and understand the different cultural meanings associated with them. Even though my informants usually spoke in French, some respondents mixed both French and Creole languages. I could also switch from one language to another during the interviews. Some respondents, such as Eddy, used Créole to recall humorous anecdotes. Other interviewees, such as Gabin, Claude and Laurent, tested or checked my ability to speak Creole. All three respondents are fervent nationalist and pro-independence supporters. Language is a particularly important unifying factor in nationalism (e.g. Smith, 1991). They seemed pleased that I replied in Créole, thus, it could be said that it was a way for them to create some sort of complicity between them and me during the interview. Thus, research is an interactive process, which strongly relies on important dynamic communicative partnerships between the researcher and the subjects of the study (Della-Porta, 2014). And those dynamics have far-reaching and profound methodological implications.

It has already been argued that human geographers should recognise their “own positionality” (Jackson, 2011). Critical reflexivity is an important part of research processes. Indeed, it has often been noted that social movement scholars have tended to study the social protests to which they are themselves supportive (Della-Porta, 2014: 3). For example, the research studies carried out by Alain Touraine (e.g. 1981), and the suggestions that his studies included, often reflected Touraine’s political engagement towards left wing ideologies. Accordingly, Klandermans claimed: “to a much greater degree than in related areas, like voting or interest-group behaviour, social movement scholars knew and shared the concerns of those they studied” (Klandermans et al. 2002: 318). However, it should be noted that political engagements are also part of interactive processes. Here also, Alvesson and Skoldberg
(2000) rightfully claimed that “there is no one-way street between the researcher and the object of study: rather, the two affect each other mutually and continually in the course of the research process”.

Indeed, in the course of my fieldwork, I could read the reactions of the respondents, and observe the ways they remembered and talked about the protests. None of the respondents were indifferent or unmoved by their memories of the protests. Some interviewees discussed particular events of the strike with anger and disappointment, while others remembered the marches with great pleasure, and even with nostalgia. However, the respondents often gave me the strong impression that they expected me to spread the word and to support their voices and their struggles. They not only talked in detail about their experiences, they wanted to include me in their experiences, as if the social movement was still continuing. Therefore, I became somehow part of their general discourse of protests. “Some empathy is unavoidable in qualitative research” (Della Porta, 2014: 7). In addition, since knowledge is socially constructed, individual interviews and focus groups constitute a dialectical process between the researcher and the respondents (Della-Porta, 2014). So, we can understand why the interviews became an occasion for the informants to reconstruct and to share their notions and understandings of the strike.

Positionalities include characteristics of social identity, such as race or social class (Hopkins, 2007: 391). However, Peach (2002: 252) noted that “ethnicity and race are dangerous topics to discuss in geography. Use them and you are in danger of denunciation by cultural geographers”. However, race is a very important identity marker in Martinique, therefore ethnicity and race are topics that cannot be avoided in this context. During my field work I interviewed few members of the Béké community, which is a reclusive and exclusive white community that I am not part of. Some of the Béké interviewees, such as Louis were particularly aggressive at the beginning of the interview. I am aware that we were both conscious about our positionalities during the meeting; however, after struggling for weeks to secure an interview with each one of them, one of my objectives was to limit any form of reflexive “self-obsession”, so as to not lose the focus of the meeting, and to have access to other members from my first contact with Louis.
3.6- Conclusion

Having introduced the methodology and methods used in this research, with regards to the research question posed at the beginning of this study, discourse, framing and network analysis are used to investigate the issues related to the 2009 social movement. From March to October 2011 I conducted different individual interviews and focus groups, as well as collecting valuable numbers of documents, including videos, pictures, articles and other texts that were produced during the protests. Finally, as I gradually familiarised myself with the site, I progressively approached the sites of investigation, and I gradually defined the size of my sample. Now that literature review and the methodology have been addressed, the next three sections are dedicated to analysis, with the next section particularly focusing on the colonial history of Martinique.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTESTED INTEGRATION OF MARTINIQUE INTO FRANCE
4.1- Introduction

Today Martinique is a French department, just as it has been since 1946. Prior to this time, Martinique was a French colony, and before becoming a French colony in 1936, Martinique was inhabited by the Arawaks and the Caribs, who had all been killed by the beginning of the eighteenth century. The colonisation of Martinique created deep social, racial and economic inequalities that still continue to this day on the island. Such enduring social inequalities stem from its colonial past, and impede the integration of Martinique into the French nation-state. However, those colonial legacies have been continually contested in the course of different riots, including during the 2009 protest. The aims of this chapter are twofold. The first is to explore the social, economic and political constructions of France's hegemony in Martinique during its colonisation, up until its political integration into the French nation-state. The second aim is to explore how these hegemonic discourses have been reproduced and contested in Martinique since departmentalisation, up to, and including, the 2009 social movement.

This chapter argues that departmentalisation, which aimed to extend French republican ideals to Martinique, failed to create national unity on the island. More precisely, that departmentalisation failed to integrate Martinique into the French nation-state precisely because it did not address the colonial legacies which still deeply divide Martiniquan society today. In addition, departmentalisation strengthened France’s hegemonic position in Martinique, which, while no longer a colony, is not fully part of the French nation-state. Departmentalisation institutionalised a system of political control that keeps Martinique firmly dependent, economically and politically, on France, which ultimately weakens nationalist claims in Martinique. We can see that during the 2009 social movement, the protesters challenged the economic and political agencies to address the deep social, cultural and economic inequalities stemming from its colonial past, which departmentalisation had failed to address. Departmentalisation provides an opportunity to raise questions about the limits of integration of an ex-colony into a former empire. In this chapter I raise questions about the ways departmentalisation simultaneously impedes the
integration of a former colony, and limits the expressions and/or the rise of nationalist and separatist discourses in the ex-colony.

The first section of this chapter outlines the first stages of the colonisation of Martinique, and explains how the colonisation of the island created deep economic and social divisions which deeply influenced the social, cultural and economic structures of the island. This is followed by a discussion of why and how departmentalisation failed to solve the economic and social inequities on the island. In this part, I also examine how the failure of departmentalisation encouraged the emergence of nationalist discourses, and also how, perhaps surprisingly, these discourses failed to rally the population to support an independent Martinique.

The second section analyses how the 2009 social movement came into being, and how it challenged the colonial legacy, as well as France’s policy of integration. I start to analyse the social and economic background of Martinique prior to the 2009 social movement, explaining how departmentalisation failed to address the economic and social inequalities that exist in Martinique, and how such inequalities created deep social tensions that still divide that society. Subsequently, the third section demonstrates how, during the 2009 social movement, the protesters, along with the social movement organisation C5F, challenged the economic and political agencies, in order to address the deep social, cultural and economic issues which impede the unity of Martiniquan society.

4.2- The Hegemonic System of Governance in Martinique

An introduction to the political and social structures, or “historic blocs” in Gramscian terms (Martin, 2002: 363), which were built throughout the colonisation of Martinique, allows me to draw a better picture of the actual social and economic contexts of the island, so we will look first at the effects of colonisation in 1936, then at its political departmentalisation in 1946.
4.2.1 - The History and Colonisation of Martinique up until Departmentalisation in 1946

Historic records of Martinique began from 1000 BC onwards. Indeed, from 1000 BC until 700 AD, two main waves of immigrants, the Arawaks and the Caribs (or Kaliganos), moved from the north-east of the South American continent to the island of Martinique (Nicolas, 1996). These two populations lived in relative peace, even though some conflicts occasionally broke out between them (Aldrich and Connell, 1992). Both peoples formed an “egalitarian society”, wherein the property of each individual belonged to the community (Nicolas, 1996: 17).

The brief cohabitation between the Caribs and the Arawaks ceased at the beginning of the sixteenth century. On 15th June 1502, Christopher Columbus landed in Martinique. The first contact with the Caribs were not hostile (Nicolas, 1996: 17, 45; Stamatel et al. 2010). As rivals to Spain, France and the United Kingdom became increasingly interested in the island. Indeed, the geographical location of Martinique, along with other islands situated nearby, would give both empires significant strategic military, political and economic advantages, including larger world trade capacities and exclusive use of large commercial and communication routes (Nicolas, 1996; Aldrich, 1992: 8, 9). Consequently, Martinique successively became the possession of both empires, until the island became a French territory in 1635 (Stamatel et al. 2010). As a colony, Martinique was under the supervision of the leaders of a French chartered company called Companie des Iles d’Amérique (The American Islands Company) (Stamatel et al. 2010).18

The beginning of colonisation also marked the beginning of the end of the Arawak and Carib civilisations in Martinique. Their decline was caused by deadly conflicts with the Europeans and by the spread of infectious diseases (Aldrich and Connell, 1992). The native Indians were gradually exterminated by the end of the seventeenth century. On 21st May 1701, a French abbot named Pinson noted: “We do not see any

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18 A “chartered company” is an association organised and led by investors/shareholders which aims to trade, explore and colonise. The Companie was firstly named the “La Compagnie des Seigneurs de Saint-Christophe” but was later renamed: “La Companie des Iles d’Amérique” (Aubert, 2010). The Companies also have interests in other islands such as Guadeloupe or Saint Barthélemy (Nicolas, 1996).
more natives over here” (Nicolas, 1996: 17). The absence of the native Indians allowed the chartered company to take full advantage of every parcel of land. The rapid decline of the natives did not stop the creation, nor the running, of the economic and social colonial institutions that would operate in Martinique for about 300 years. The contacts between the native Indians and the Europeans in Martinique were violent, but brief. Consequently, only very few traces and archives of these populations can be studied today; and only a few research studies undertake anthropological explorations of these populations in Martinique (e.g. Roget, 2005; Keegan, 2006).

The contacts between the native Indians and the slaves in Martinique were also brief because the French settlers had already begun to import African slaves to the island in the 1660s (Aldrich and Connell, 1992: 21). At that time, the native Indians sheltered the runaway slaves, or “maroons”; but except for the craft of basketry, and the names of very few animals and plants, the heritage left by the natives in Martiniquan culture is “relatively limited” (Nicolas, 1996: 84; 187). The clear absence of studies of Martiniquan collective memories regarding the natives is a good illustration of the limited lasting impact these populations had on social and economic colonial structures. In Chivallon’s (2012) comprehensive research on collective memories of slavery in Martinique, the native Indians are completely absent in her findings. Moreover, the words “Arawak”, and “Carib” are not cited once in the book. Therefore, the question of how the African slaves interacted with the natives in Martinique could be explored, but the limits of such a study are already outlined by the fact that the native population seems to be relatively absent in Martiniquan collective memories today.

From these perspectives, it could be argued that collective memories of Martinique began with the violence and coercion of the colonial era. It is certainly possible to calculate the numbers of Africans who were sold in the slave trade. Among the 11.3

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19 In the Caribbean region as a whole, small groups of native Indians survived in other islands, but in Martinique as well as in Guadeloupe, the Caribs and the Arawaks – along with other native Indians such as the Tainos – completely vanished from their lands (Aldrich and Connell, 1992).

20 The main sources of income from Martinique were the production and trading such as sugar canes, molasses, rums, coffee, cacao and indigo (Kelly, 2008; François et al. 2005).
million Africans who were deported through about 54,200 expeditions: 36.5% were sent to the Caribbean (excluding Cuba), 35% to Brazil; 22% to the Spanish empire (including Cuba), and 4.4% to the United States (Thomas, 1997: 804). Unlike the United States, where the plantation system developed the reproduction (breeding) among slaves, the death rate of slaves in the Caribbean was incredibly high (Chivallon, 2011: 27). With regards to Martinique, the places of origin of the slaves varied greatly throughout the African west coast, from Congo to Senegal (Nicolas, 1996: 188–190).

Considering the high number of individuals who transited through the slave trade, and the lack of archives concerning their precise origins, it could be argued that colonisation has deeply influenced Martiniquan identities and collective memories today. Except for the slave owners and their descendants – the Békés – it is extremely difficult to trace the country and/or the tribe of origin of the Martiniquans who had slave ancestors.\(^{21}\) Therefore the process of colonisation in Martinique involved the use of the coercive force that still influences Martinique’s collective memories – and the choice to forget – today.

There are still, however, archives that portray the social and economic supervisions of the island by the settlers. The “lord” of the Compagnie designated three or four directors to supervised Martinique; and a general prosecutor, along with a governor, were in charge of the legal system (Nicolas, 1996: 64). The criminal justice system was organised around the slave trade, and particularly around the Code Noir (Stametal et al. 2010: 216).\(^{22}\) The Code Noir was a decree that controlled and regulated the social and work environments between the slaves and the landowners (marriages between slaves, working conditions, slave-ownership, corporal punishments etc.) (Rochmann, 2000). Article 28 and Article 44 of the Code Noir stipulated that a slave is “a personal property”, and s/he “cannot have any property” (Nicolas, 1996: 174; Régent, 2004: 26–31). Such records shed light on how colonial institutions dehumanised and objectified the individuals, and how it fashioned

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\(^{21}\) The origin of the term Béké is still up for discussion, but regardless of this debate, the Békés are the direct descendants of the white slaveholders who settled in the island since the beginning of the seventeenth century (Burton, 1995: 2; Aldrich, Connell, 1992: 7; Gautheret and Wieder, 2010: 17).

\(^{22}\) The Code Noir was passed by Louis IV in 1685 and it was partly written by Jean-Baptiste Colbert who was under the rule of Louis VI.
specific racial, social and economic dynamics of interdependences between individuals. On the one hand, the slaves’ freedom and status depended on the slave owners. On the other hand, the rights and status of the slave owners depended on slave ownership. This means that the slave and the landowner depended on each other for status. This also implies that the colonial system dehumanised the slaves, as well as every individual who evolved within these colonial institutions.

The social structure of colonial society was strictly divided according to three criteria: “skin colour” (which automatically placed any white individuals at the highest level of the society), “size of the plantation” (which mainly defined the class hierarchy between the landowners); and the “degree of freedom” between slaves (Pluchon, 1991: 392). Each landowner, named the grand blanc, along with the petit blancs, managed a plantation, which, in Martinique, is called the “habitation”. It was also within the habitation that Creole society took shape (Benoist, 1968: 137).23 The Békés represent about 1% of the population, and still own over 60% of the agricultural lands in Martinique today (Chivallon, 2011: 471). Therefore, the continuity in the organisation of land space inspired by the habitation system still obstructs the construction of a collective sense of belonging and community in Martinique today (Chivallon, 1995: 870).

The plantation (whatever its size) was the main unit of division of the island (Burac and Bégot, 2011: 109). Martiniquan colonial societies closely evolved within the restricted spaces of the plantations. Therefore, the slaves and the slave owners, who lived in close proximity, also influenced colonial legislation.24 This period marked the beginning of the apparent earlier forms of hybridity in Martiniquan society. De Feuquières, who was a governor based in Martinique wrote: "If we did not [...] limit the number of freed slaves, there would have been many more of them. There are substantial forms of familiarities [...] between the slave owners and the female slaves who are very well shaped: this is why there are so many mixed-race people over here;

23 Unlike the landowner, called the "grands blancs" (great whites), the "petits blancs" (little whites) did not own slaves, but they also supervised the plantations (Nicolas, 1996: 172). Today the term "grand Béké" (great Béké) refers to the direct descendants of landowners and slave owners who are particularly influential in the Martiniquan economy (Beaudoux, 2002: 86).

24 The Code Noir was regularly amended – especially with regards to the conditions required to emancipate the slaves, and regarding the statuses of the mulatto children (Nicolas, 1996: 179–184).
this is because the common reward for [women slaves’] complaisance is a prospect of freedom” (Nicolas, 1996: 184). De Feuquières’ comment suggests the extent to which colonial discourses were saturated with dominant masculine overtones. This is also what Young (1995: 181–182) called “colonial desire”, which means that beyond economic exploitation, the habitation mapped the violent “antagonistic power relations” which produced discourses that present the colonised as sexualised curiosities.

I would also stress that “colonial desire” shows how colonial discourses crafted and reproduced sexual, economic, symbolic interdependences between the different subjects. The colonisers used the sexual exploitation of women slaves to assert their dominance, both over these women, and over the other males in the habitation. The women slaves relied on the interdependence in the hope of becoming enfranchised. This point shows the flexibility of colonial discourses, and how complex such discourses and dynamics are to break. The implication of this today is that post-colonial theories on Martiniquan identities such as negritude, antillianité and creolité create sharply gendered identities, which silence women to expose masculine or “masculinist” hegemonic narratives (e.g. Arnold, 1994: 5; Price and Price, 1997). The strong masculine overtones of the habitation are still present in Martiniquan literature, in which the maroon (the runaway slave), is the hero and is pictured as pronominally a man who counteracts colonial power relations, outside the habitation. However, the slave women also built concrete actions of resistance, and they were often responsible for mass poisonings of masters and “frequent marronage” (Nicolas, 1996: 186–192; Price, 1997: 20). Yet these recurring acts of collective and individual resistance did not severely challenge the strong hold that the colonial structure had over Martiniquan society.

The 1789 French Revolution, however, significantly influenced the destinies of the French colonies.25 On 4th February 1794, the national convention abolished slavery in all French colonies. This decision only took effect in Guadeloupe; it failed to be applied in Martinique (Rochmann, 2000; Wieviorka; 2006: 118). The majority of

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25 The 1789 French Revolution significantly influenced the destinies, especially of Haiti, which began its own revolution in 1791 that eventually led to its independence (Arnold, 2009).
planters in Guadeloupe who were opposed to the revolution were guillotined, and the ones who avoided the guillotine fled to Martinique to be under the protection of the British army (Adélaïde-Merlande, 1986; Chivallon, 2011: 15). In Martinique, an agreement was signed in February 1794 between planters and the British, whereby the settlers paid for their protection (Pluchon, 1991: 946–954; Abénon et al. 1989; Arnold, 2009), so, from 1794 to 1802, slavery continued throughout this period of British occupation in Martinique (Rochmann, 1998; Niort et al. 2007: 245, 246).

Consequently, there are no direct descendants of slave owners in Guadeloupe today (Spécial Investigation, 2009), in contrast to Martinique, where the Béké community is still present. The Békés continued to preserve their colonial legacies: the family name, skin colour and their wealth have been carefully guarded within the community up to and including the present day (Spécial Investigation, 2009). In 1802, Napoléon Bonaparte re-established slavery in the French colonies (Arnold, 2009; Reihnardt, 2008). Slavery was abolished once again in 1848, under the influence of the French abolitionist Victor Schœlcher; however, Martinique remained a colony until departmentalisation in 1946 (Rochmann, 2000).

It is usually argued that perhaps the 1789 revolution’s most concrete legacy was to have enabled the emergence of the democratic and republican ideals of “liberty”, “equality” and “fraternity” that are still fervently preserved in France (Bancel and Lemaire, 2003: 30). Following the fall of the monarchy, this republican paradigm was seen as the ultimate model upon which to build and expand the French nation. The decades that followed the 1789 revolution – especially during the reign of Napoleon 1st – were marked by successive events of wars and conquests, which were intended for the “extension of the French nation-state” beyond France’s continental frontiers (Wilder, 2001: 199). Napoleon’s reign marked the beginning of a colonial project that aimed to consolidate France’s political and economic worldwide influences, and to

26Therefore, unlike that of Martinique today, the economy in Guadeloupe is dominated by some Pied-Noir families and the descendants of a second wave of settlers who came after the revolution (Mrgudovic, 2012). The Pieds-Noirs are the French and other European settler families who inhabited North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia etc.).

27The influence of Napoleon’s wife, Joséphine de Beauharnais – who was part of a family planter in Martinique – in his decision to re-establish slavery, is still very present in the collective memories in Martinique, as she is seen today as a symbol of slavery and of colonisation (Reihnardt, 2008).
extend further French cultural and republican models to overseas territories (Wieviorka, 2006: 117–119). The French republican model was seen as “unique”, “universal”, and “superior”, and it was precisely because “France postulated equality of men, that the country felt, more than any others, that it had the right to colonise the world” (Bancel and Blanchard, 2006: 37). The republican national narrative that was used to justify French colonial interests and legitimacy was particularly evident in a comment made by a prominent French political leader Jean Jaurès, who claimed in 1884:

> When we take possession of a country, we must bring with us the glory of France, and I can assure you that will be welcomed, because it is as pure as it is great, and it is filled with goodwill. We can tell the [colonised] people, without lying, that we never hurt their people on purpose: we were the first to extend the freedom of the white people to the people of colour, we abolished slavery […] Where France is established, people love it; where France is only passing by, people regret it” (Bancel and Blanchard, 2006: 41).

Jaurès framed a heroic French national narrative. It portrays the French nation as a benefactor, or as the deliverer of progress and civilisation to other nations and cultures. The colonies are seen as separate entities, yet they are the “extension” of France because the republic projects its rights and its freedom onto them. Such a narrative can only reinforce the hegemonic position of France in its territories. Despite this passionate formulation, Jaurès struggled to hide the strong ambivalence between colonial enterprises and humanist ideals. Jaurès’ comment illustrates what Wilder (2001: 215) called the “liberal colonial apologist’s” argument, which is critical of colonial exploitation and “abuses”, yet supports imperial conquests behind humanist ideals. Subsequently, the long-lasting and harmful consequences of colonisation were removed, while reinforcing the French republican utopia in the interests of the progressive legatees of the revolution. The French colonial enterprises carried out in the name of universal values and human rights allowed the country to strengthen the republican regime – and thus the power of the state – while also allowing the state to reinforce the national sentiment in the metropolis (wilder, 2001: 200; Blanchard et al. 2008: 279). Consequently, from 1895, the “civilising mission”
(mission civilisatrice) became the official ideology of the French Republic, to build upon “la plus grande France” (Greater France) (Vergès, 2003: 194).

To reinforce the authority of the Republic, the government materialised in tangible form its republican and nationalist discourses with the construction and inauguration of state monuments in the metropolis, such as the Arc de Triomphe (Ben-Amos, 1993: 60). As Özkirimli stated (2005: 185, 186): “remembering is key to a nation’s identity”. Thus, to ensure the temporal continuity of the French nation, the state commemorated a series of well-known figures such as Victor Hugo, Emile Zola and other notables, because they were seen as the successors of the revolution, and as the fervent supporters of republican values (Ben-Amos, 1993: 70, Brown, 2002: 95).

In Martinique, the abolitionist Victor Schœlcher became one of those republican symbols, commemorated in the name of republican ideals (Brown, 2002: 95–96). The statue of Schœlcher is still standing in Fort-de-France, at the entrance of the local courthouse (see Figure 4 - Statue of Victor Schœlcher situated in Fort-de-France – Martinique, June 2014. Photo credit: Céline Théodose). The statue portrays Schœlcher as a hero, as he is leaning towards a child slave. He is protecting the child with his right hand, and he is symbolically “extending his freedom” – as Jaurès put it – with his left hand to the thankful child slave. The representation of the slave as a child, and as an unnamed child, reinforced the submissive position of the colonised, who are seen to be unable to take part in the construction of their own destiny and identity. As noted by Beaune (1985: 344): “the representations of power are themselves powerful”, to viewers from both sides: the colonisers were able to reassert their dominant positions; and the colonised were constantly reminded that their freedom, or their rights, were gratefully given, and, could well be taken away again. The statue of Schœlcher is the perfect illustration of this point. The fact that Schœlcher poses with his hand around the shoulders of the child signifies that because the colonised (the child) are not capable of fully understanding and valuing their freedom, the Republic (Schœlcher) must guide them accordingly. Thus, the French republican national narrative silenced the voices of the slaves who also fought for freedom (Nicolas, 1996: 186–192).
The statue epitomises how republican nationalist discourses were entangled with colonial discourses in Martinique. This nationalist discourse asserts its power as it objectifies the colonised as subjective entities who have no credible collective histories, no common purpose or achievements, but who only exist through the “glance” of the other – as Fanon put it (1952: 90). This form of re-narration is what Césaire (1955: 42) called “chosification” (thingification), and which also impelled Fanon (1961: 99) to introduce his famous quote: “Europe is literally the creation of the Third World”. Fanon's comment might be seen as extreme – (characteristic of Fanon’s writing) – but it illustrates the coexistence and the interdependences between the colonised and the colonisers. The submissive position of the colonised, which contributed significantly to the creation of French national metanarratives. The statue of Victor Schœlcher is a perfect illustration of this complex relationship.

The statue illustrates this point further as it also shows how the French republican national metanarratives were framed according to the submissive positions of the colonised. The identities of the colonised and the coloniser were built interdependently. Consequently, the French construction of national metanarratives relied on such interdependency.

Figure 4 - Statue of Victor Schœlcher situated in Fort-de-France – Martinique, June 2014. Photo credit: Céline Théodore
However, the state still had to manage the ambivalences produced by the extension of the nation beyond its metropolitan frontiers. To understand the ways in which the state managed these contradictions, it is worth mentioning Arendt (1951: 126), who theorised on democratic nation-states that overlook their own political ideals to assist colonial enterprises:

Of all forms of government and organisation of people, the nation-state is least suited for unlimited growth because the genuine consent at its base cannot be stretched indefinitely, and is only rarely, and with difficulty won from conquered peoples, since such conscience comes only from the conviction of the conquering nation that it is imposing a superior law upon barbarians.

Arendt seems to adopt a Gramscian understanding of power and hegemony, examining how a subordinated community must “consent” and believe in the superiority of the political, ethical and cultural values of the dominant community (Gramsci; 1971: 12). According to Arendt, the interdependent positions between the “conquered” and the coloniser are built on joint “consent” or on mutual agreement. Thus, the incorporation of overseas territories into French republican national metanarratives implied the mutual consent of submission from the colonised. The statue of Schœlcher portraying the child slave looking at Schœlcher for approval illustrates Arendt’s argument. This idea was also framed by Fanon (1952), who analysed how colonisers believe in the natural order of their authority, and how the colonised reproduce the social schemata to which they are subjected. But, as Gramsci (1971) showed, hegemony is never complete; there are spaces for contestation with counter-hegemonic discourses and practices. Like Gramsci, Arendt (1951: 126) also claimed that hegemony is not permanent, because the “genuine consent at its base cannot be stretched indefinitely”.

France also had to face the contradictions between extending its own version of “humanism”, and restricting human rights in its colonies (Benot, 2001: 146–160). But France’s republican consensus to protect its own colonial and paternalistic legitimacy was increasingly disputed in its colonies, particularly in the Ivory Coast, Tunisia, and
Morocco (Benot, 2001: 146–160). The concept of negritude co-defined by the Martiniquan Césaire was part of a counter-hegemonic discourse that sought to challenge the French republican paradox (Césaire, 1939: 84). According to Césaire, negritude was a “riposte” that stood against racial and colonial oppression (Aldrich, Connell, 1992: 172; Bennetta, 2007: 266–267). According to Senghor, who co-defined negritude, it captures “all the values of Black civilisation” (Aldrich, Connell, 1992: 172). Negritude claims that every African and African descendant shares immutable essential features, and in this respect it makes claims for a collective Black and African cultural distinctiveness. However, negritude draws its logic closely from essentialist discourses of racial divisions. Therefore, it eventually fails to efficiently deconstruct colonial discourses. Moreover, I would argue that because such counter-discourse is based on essentialist paradigms, it cannot create national unity in a Caribbean island like Martinique, which has experienced numerous migrations throughout its history.

However, I would also argue that Césaire understood that the process of decolonisation also means to reframe or to re-tell the history of the colonised people from their perspectives. Negritude attempts to voice the story of the unnamed child depicted in Schéelcher’s statue. Furthermore, as I argued previously, French republican and colonial discourses tended to reframe the collective histories of the colonised. But as Spivak (1988) stressed, the voices of the “subalterns” cannot be completely erased even when they are caught within essentialist discourses. The process of “re-narration” will also be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, since, during the events of 2009, the protesters were engaged in the same process. What should be stressed here is that even though negritude was an essentialist discourse, it also deploys “strategic essentialist” discourses to reformulate, to re-tell, the identities of the “subalterns” to bring social, historical, cultural and political recognition (Spivak, 1988; Nielsen, 2011). It was a negation of the “genuine consent” encouraged by republican narratives.

As I have argued, the expected submissive positions of the colonised contributed to shaping French nationalist discourses. However, the growing resistance from the colonial subjects progressively challenged these discourses (e.g. Talbott, 1980). In fact, the outstanding level of violence that occurred during the Algerian war meant that the
counter-colonial discourse of resistance jeopardised the foundations of the French national identity discourse. For example, the French government preferred to rename the Algerian war “operations of maintenance of order” for years (Smith: 2006: 142). This political renaming emphasised how French republicanism oversaw the patent realities of colonial violence. This last point leads to one of the main ideas of this thesis, which argues that postcolonial theories must take into account the history and experience of colonialism and imperialism as a whole. In the case of France and Martinique, such theories must take into account the history of the French empire itself – the colonised and the coloniser – as its object and origins. These colonial experiences created interdependencies between the parties involved. Thus, the post-colonial theories that consider the decolonisation and integration processes of a former colony into the French nation-state must take into account the ways colonial legacies are addressed simultaneously in both territories.

4.2.2 - The Departmentalisation of Martinique in 1946

Unlike Algeria, Martinique did not fight or ask for its independence. Quite the contrary, over the years the large majority of Martiniquans chose to support full integration into the French nation-state (Miles, 2006: 632). In 1946, Martinique began its transition from being a colony to a French department (Miles, 2006: 632). The integration of Martinique into the French republic, also called “departmentalisation”, was voted in in March 1946 (Britton, 2011: 62). Césaire was one of the main advocates of departmentalisation as a member of the Communist Party (Jos, 2012: 12). Prior to the vote, Césaire claimed:

If [Martiniquans] want the assimilation, it is because they want to exit the political and administrative chaos in which they are immersed. Moreover, they need to find a solution against the social chaos that is soon to be expected. We can all agree to say that the social problems that Martinique [...] is facing threaten seriously its social peace ... This is a place where the wages are abnormally low, while the cost of living is significantly closer to the one in France [...]. Here is one fact which should be emphasised: [...] It is a place where the most [...] shocking social injustice reigns’ (Jos, 2012: 38).
Césaire’s intervention epitomises the hope that departmentalisation was expected to bring in Martinique, which was in a state of disarray. For Césaire – and for the large majority of the population – departmentalisation would inevitably put an end to social inequalities; furthermore, it would bring equal social and material benefits that Martiniquans did not have access to, or had limited access to, such as health care or education (Constant and Daniel, 1997: 11–12). Departmentalisation meant that the French state had to reposition itself from being a colonial state to a welfare state. For the overwhelming part of the Martiniquan population, departmentalisation meant the death of the social, racial and economic autocracy led by the “white planter class”, represented by the Béké community (Aldrich and Connel, 1992: 75). Such a drastic transformation might well be seen as a challenging and laborious process, especially considering the long colonial history of Martinique. Yet departmentalisation was seen by the population as a form of decolonisation, or as a way to effectively experience the republican promises of “liberty”, “equality” and “fraternity” (Aldrich and Connel, 1992: 75).

The overwhelming majority of the population was in favour of departmentalisation, but the project was essentially opposed by the Békés who feared losing their considerable influence on both local politics and in economic spheres (Burton and Reno; 1995: 3). Yet, despite their counter arguments, Article 73 of the constitution enshrined the departmentalisation law, and, therefore, Martinique became a French Department d’Outre-Mer also called DOM (French Overseas Department) (Miles; 2003a: 223). According to the French constitution, the legal organisation in the DOM “is the same as that of metropolitan departments”, but it also stipulates that “the legislative structure and the administrative organisation of the DOM may be modified by measures necessitated by their particular situations” (Aldrich and Connel, 1992: 76–77). This implies that, depending on the specificities of the territory, the administrative organisation of the overseas departments could be adapted locally.

Since departmentalisation, Martinique has had the same political institutions as those in mainland France, so the highest state representative is the prefect.28 The prefect is

28 From 1946, the island was to be administrated by a “prefect”, instead of a “Governor” under the colonial regime (Childers, 2009: 183).
the sole person empowered to act on behalf of the government in the region (see Appendix E). The prefect is appointed and acts under the supervision of the minister of the interior; s/he is in charge of the full application of the French law, and ensures the administrative supervision of the region’s local authorities, as well as being in charge of security in Martinique (Aldrich and Connel, 1992: 76). However, in the case of Martinique, the prefect holds powers other than her/his other metropolitan counterparts (Aldrich and Connel, 1992: 76). For instance, unlike the other prefects, the prefect of Martinique determines the fuel prices in the territory (Jégo, 2009: 88). Such power is significant, as the fuel prices have a direct impact on the cost of living on the island (Jégo, 2009: 88–90). Therefore, all the administrative subdivisions are completely dependent on the decisions made by the government.

The second largest administrative subdivision is the “region”. The region is an aggregate of smaller administrative subdivisions called departments. The regional council supervises the region, and it is responsible for a wide variety of functions including long-term spatial planning for local development, and provision of local infrastructure (Region-Martinique, 2014; Aldrich and Connell, 1992: 78). The third main local administration is the general council, which supervises each department. The general council has competencies in health and social services, roads, cost of some schools, including colleges etc. (Conseil Général Martinique, 2014). However, because of the insularity of Martinique, the island is both a department and a region. As in mainland France, the region is supervised by the regional council of Martinique, while the department is supervised by the general council of Martinique. However, the numerous entanglements of power between both councils in Martinique often lead to many conflicts on the implementation of public policies; and this is particularly the case when the political leanings of the two councils are opposed (Rano, 2009).

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29 In 2009 the Minister of Interior of France was Michèle Alliot-Marie also called “MAM”. She is part of the right-wing party UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire – Union for a popular movement). From the same year Ange Mancini fulfilled the function of prefect of Martinique until 2011.
30 Claude Lise was president of the general council in 2009. Claude Lise is a member of the Socialiste Party (PS). The regional council was chaired by Alfred Marie-Jeanne, who is also the president of the secessionist Party MIM.
31 A region is an administrative subdivision of the territory of France. A region is subdivided into several departments. In France there are 27 regions and 96 different departments. Guadeloupe and French Guyana are also simultaneously “region” and “department”.

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Departmentalisation was also called “loi d’assimilation” (assimilation law) (Britton, 2011: 62). Indeed, the integration of Martinique into the French nation-state also required Martiniquans to be fully assimilated into France’s cultural heritage, its system of values and language (Childers, 2006: 288). Despite centuries of colonisation, Martiniquans still wished to be part of a culture that had dominated their own for centuries. The assimilation was seen as a protection against ongoing social and racial discrimination (Childers, 2006: 289). To reinforce the assimilation process, numerous French “white administrators”, and “emissaries” were sent to Martinique (Childers, 2009: 184). In addition, many Martiniquans were also encouraged to migrate and to live in mainland France (also called the metropolis), and this intensive form of migration was institutionalised by the BUMIDOM, whereby 85,000 Antilleans migrated to the metropolis (Condon, 2000: 170; Childers, 2009: 187).

From this perspective, it could already be argued that assimilation does not address the deep resonance of the colonial discourses that organised Martiniquan society for centuries. I would also argue that assimilation is a continuation of French national-imperial discourse as it consolidates France’s social and cultural hegemonic position towards Martinique. Indeed, as I explained previously, during the later stage of the colonisation, France’s republican nationalist discourses were built on strong contradictions between universal ideals and imperial ideals. France’s long colonial history deeply influenced the construction of both French national narratives and Martiniquan identity narratives. Moreover, French citizenship strictly distinguished the coloniser from the colonised in terms of identity and rights. However, departmentalisation – meaning assimilation – blurred the demarcations between French people from the metropolis for new-born French citizens from the former colony. Because it did not readdress how the colonial history of Martinique shaped French national narratives, departmentalisation mapped Martinique onto national territories, but not onto the French national narrative. Therefore, departmentalisation assimilated Martinique only from the perspective of the hegemonic French national narrative.

However, departmentalisation slowly influenced the French national narrative over the years. Prior to departmentalisation, French republicanism framed France’s
colonial history and ongoing colonial enterprises into universalist ideals; however, since departmentalisation, France’s imperial and colonial history progressively but clearly faded away from the French national narrative (Wilder, 2001: 198; Chivallon, 2012). Even though the French nationalist narrative silenced the colonial past, such oblivion did not erase Martiniquans’ experiences and collective memories of colonisation (Cottias, 1997: 294). Under such circumstances, departmentalisation could only fail to bring to term the French republican ideal of unity in Martinique. Under such circumstances, the decolonisation of Martinique could only fail to occur effectively. Indeed, departmentalisation maintains France’s hegemonic position, but it simultaneously waives republican principles of equality within a context that is deeply socially and economically imbalanced. Moreover, it has already been argued that France struggles to address its colonial past, so that its colonial history is an “inaudible story” (Ferro: 2002; 2006: 133–135). Thus, France stands as if its colonial history does not influence its present politics in Martinique, and it failed to address the way colonial discourses inspired the formation of French national identities. This last point is explored in more detail in the sixth chapter, but it could already be argued that the hegemonic position of Martinique might well challenge France’s genuine ambition for social, economic and political change in Martinique. Conclusively, studies on post-colonial identities, and on the integration of post-colonial territories into the French national narrative, should explore simultaneously the ways colonial legacies are addressed, and how national identity discourses are framed in both France and in Martinique.

4.2.3 - Impact of Departmentalisation on the Local Economy

Numerous studies have shown that departmentalisation destabilised the economy of Martinique (e.g. Marseille, 1984; Numa, 2009). A few years after the adoption of the law, the unemployment rate began to rise drastically on the island, and Martinique began to progressively drop its exports, and essentially came to rely on French imports (clothes, foods, or furniture etc.) (Burton and Reno 1995: 164). Martinique – along with the other DOM – became a quasi “exclusive market”, and the island eventually became massively dependent on financial aid from the French state (Marseille, 1984: 35; 63; Numa, 2009: 29–30). The massive and continuous import
flow competed with the local economy, thus the economic self-sufficiency of the island progressively declined (Burton and Reno, 1995: 4–5). Subsequently, the Martiniquan economy slowly became a “consumer economy”, over which the Martiniquans progressively lost control (Burton and Reno 1995: 4).

Yet, despite the economic failures of departmentalisation, Martiniquans are reluctant to cut their ties with France (e.g. Constant and Daniel, 1997 Chivallon, 2009). To explain the reluctance of Martiniquans to step forward into independence, Miles (2006: 631) proposed the theory on how “formerly colonised people – [or rather their descendants] – may materially benefit disproportionate from ongoing institutional relationships with its former colonial power”. Unfortunately, Miles does not give any statistics or figures to confirm that Martinique is indeed taking "disproportionate material benefits" from France. I would instead argue that the economic situation of Martinique is more complex, and it is important to look at the economic forms of interdependence that France and Martinique built up during departmentalisation. Likewise, it is important to value how the “material benefits” or economic exchanges operate on different scales, to understand the ways in which departmentalisation positions Martinique in economic dependence that is also profitable to France. Therefore, I argue that Martinique and France created questionable and original forms of economic dependence, which is part of their colonial legacy. This interdependence is questionable because it impedes the integration of Martinique, considerably weakening the Martiniquan economy, and it reinforces France's hegemony over the department. To demonstrate this idea, I will refer to dependency theory.

In post-colonial studies, dependency theory stresses the material impacts of colonisation on the former colonies (Colin, 1996). This theory offers an explanation for the persistent impoverishment of former colonies, and how global capitalism prevents their economies from achieving independent developments by “establishing them as producers of raw materials [...] for the industrialised metropolitan centres” (Ashcroft et al. 2001: 67–68). Therefore, it theorises on the impacts of the ongoing colonial legacies on a particular economy (e.g. Tomlinson, 2003: 316). I would argue that dependency theory could also apply in the case of Martinique, as it is an economy
that painfully relies on tourism and on the production of raw material exports such as sugar cane and bananas. However, contrary to the other studies, such as Tomlinson (2003), that have applied such a theory, they do not consider the case when a former colony is also dependent on financial subsidies from a former colonial state. In addition, the case of Martinique is particular, because it is not an independent state; it is part of the French nation-state.

Almost sixty years after departmentalisation, the Martiniquan economy is still struggling. The economy is in a state of “mal développement”, which is an economy that is heavily dependent on French imports, as well as on French financial subsidies (Jalabert, 2006: 367). In 2004, the island imported around £1,673 billion of goods but exported only £266 million (Contact-Entreprises, 2011; Mureau, 2012). Four years later, in 2008, the import rate had increased steadily by 36%, while the export rate was unevenly raised by 13% (see Appendix F) (Contact-Entreprises, 2011; Mureau, 2012). From 2003 to 2007 French imports represented about 60% of overall imports (see Appendix F) (contact-enterprise, 2011). Sixty per cent is a very high rate considering the several millions of pounds of goods that are imported every year. The Martinique population represents almost half a million people, which means a potential half-million exclusive customers. In addition, such a high level of imports competes with the local economy (Daniel, 2009: 2). Therefore, from a financial perspective, it could be argued that Martinique is also a profitable market for France. This point was outlined by one respondent named Vincent. Vincent is a trader and an importer. At the beginning of our interview he presented me with his new product, a brand of sugar beet made in France. During our meeting, he claimed: “What does Martinique mean to France? Well, just an economically exclusive zone of just over 1,000km². No more, no less. Martinique is just that. Do you know a place that loves another place more than itself?“.

According to Vincent, Martinique is only an “exclusive” market for France. That means it is a market over which France can exercise some forms of economic monopoly. However, contrary to what Vincent implied, Martinique does not import exclusively from France. The island imports a relatively small number of goods from other places, such as South America or Asia (see Appendix F). However, Martiniquan companies
face some serious challenges when they want to import from other places. During my fieldwork, I also interviewed José. José is head of trading for a well-known chain of supermarkets based in Martinique. I asked him why he seems to exclusively buy from France, and why he does not trade with other suppliers. He replied: “Well, we’ve already tried that. Many times. For example, I bought some chicken from Brazil a few months ago. But because of the European Regulations, we could not sell them. They were perfectly fine, but they did not fit the regulations. We lost money.”

From José’s experience in trading, he faces serious challenges in buying. Therefore, contrary to what Miles (2006) claimed, Martinique does not simply take advantage of disproportionate “material benefits” from France. The Martiniquan economy is not limited to French and/or European subsidies. Martinique is located in the Caribbean and could well trade with emerging powers such as Brazil, or the island could develop economic relations with Cuba, or even with the United States, but other economic regulations and policies should be taken into account to draw a better picture of the economic opportunities and limits of a place. Indeed, it was only in 2012 – therefore, after the 2009 strike – that Martinique was allowed by the French government to be part of the Caribbean economic organisation CARICOM (Caribbean Community) and CEPALC (Economic Commission for Latin America) (Politiqes-Publiques, 2012).

Despite French subventions, the Martiniquan economy does not rise. At the end of 2008, the unemployment rate fluctuated around 21%, while in mainland France, the rate was three times less (Chivallon, 2009: 104). Martiniquan social and economic failure was particularly sharp in the youth stratum. Fifty per cent of Martiniquans aged less than 25 years old were unemployed, and this rate was the highest in Europe (Chivallon, 2009: 104) (see Appendix G and H). Therefore, it could easily be argued that such an economy cannot be viable in the long term. This gloomy economy stimulates local youth migrations, and such large waves of migration have a strong impact on the age structure of the island. Indeed, the Martiniquan population is drastically aging. By 2040, this population could become the second oldest French region, as Martiniquans will have an average age bracket of 48 years old (INSEE1, 2011). Without drastic measures, such an economy is bound to deteriorate even further. In addition, the state budget in Martinique was also in deficit by over 1 million
pounds in 2008 (see Appendix G). Prior to the 2009 strike, many factors acted against the economic growth potential of Martinique: a declining tourism sector; a high unemployment rate; a negative balance of trade in an undiversified economy; a powerful oligarchy that monopolises the local industry, which cannibalises any form of competition or newcomers (Perri, 2009: 49–69).

This unproductive economy is somewhat hidden by the GDP per capita of the island. Martinique has a GDP per capita of £15,760, compared with mainland France which has a GDP of £24,750 (Le Monde, 2011). Between 1950 and 1980 Martinique’s GDP was multiplied by 7, which contributed to making Martinique one of the richest Caribbean islands – along with the other French Department of Guadeloupe (Chivallon, 2009: 115). However, these GDP figures can be explained by the high number of civil servants working on the island. The civil servants represent 26% of the workforce in Martinique, compared to mainland France, which is about 21% (Chivallon, 2009: 115). Due to the high number of civil servants, Martinique is labelled a “civil servants’ paradise”, and such a high number contributes to boost inflation in the department (Riols: 2006; Numa, 2009: 40, 41), as did the indemnité d’éloignement bonus, which was initially used as a financial compensation for working far from their home base. Consequently, civil servants’ wages are 40% higher in Martinique (as well as in the other French overseas departments) than in mainland France.\(^{32}\) However, the 40% extra salary does only apply to civil servants; this is not the case for people working in the private sector. The average wage in the public sector is about 80% higher than in the private sector, and the wages of those working in the private sector are usually lower than those in mainland France (Chivallon, 2009: 115; Riols: 2006).

Additionally, over sixty years after departmentalisation, Martiniquan society still experiences deep racial and economic inequalities inherited from its colonial past, which create deep social tensions among the various communities (Daniel, 2009: 2, 6). Departmentalisation did not revolutionise the organisation of the economy in Martinique. Dependency theory outlines the role of the local “bourgeoisie” who

\(^{32}\) The indemnité d’éloignement, which was called prime colonial, was firstly introduced to assist civil servants migrating from mainland France to settle in the old colonies (Aldrich and Connell, 1992: 77; Gyldén, 2013). This “indemnity” is still in effect to this day.
contribute to maintaining the economy in such a state of dependency (Tomlinson, 2003: 316). Fanon (1961) also stressed the role of local oligarchy or “bourgeoisie”, in maintaining the uneven power relations between the former colonies and the former colonisers. During a late interview I had with a local politician, named Léon, he bluntly detailed Martiniquan social and economic structures as follows: “You have the Békés on top, then you have the mulattos, the metropolitans who come here just to make a lot of money, and they leave, then there is the rest.” Léon’s explanation might not exactly describe the Martiniquan structural economy; however, he drew the outlines of a reality, which is that Martiniquan society, and its economy, are also organised racially (e.g. Kováts-Beaudoux, 1969; Burton, 1995; Chivallon, 2012). The Békés built a reclusive and exclusively white community, which accounts for 1% of the population of Martinique; however, their members still exercised enormous economic influence on the island for generations (Burton and Reno, 1995: 2; Aldrich and Connell, 1992: 7; Chivallon, 2009; Gurrey, Hopquin, 2010). The Békés are not the only ones who led the Martiniquan economy, but their oligarchy, and their monopoly over it, are direct outcomes of colonisation, which departmentalisation failed to solve. Léon was not the only respondent who claimed that the Béké community leads the Martiniquan economy. José also argued that the community has a firm hand over the local economy. Except for the Béké respondents whom I interviewed, such as Jean-Philippe, these two respondents were among the many other interviewees who recognised, and even condemned, the strong influence this exclusively white community exercises over the Martiniquan economy.

The colonial past of Martinique has deeply influenced the current economic and social structure of the island (Wong and Gomes, 2012). Numerous aspects of the economic and social inequalities that exist in Martinique are the legacies of its colonial history. Departmentalisation created various forms of economic interdependence that did not solve local economic inequalities; on the contrary, it reinforced social tensions in the department. It could be seen prior to the strike that the Martiniquan economy was clearly struggling, and this reflects the ambivalent situation of Martinique, which is neither a colony, nor totally integrated into France. Departmentalisation also reflects the ambivalent position of the French government with regards to Martinique, aiming, on the one hand, to ensure the republican values of “equality” and “fraternity” among
citizens, while, on the other, maintaining a form of economic hegemony; to the extent that it makes one wonder what are the real ambitions of France, keeping Martinique in such a state of economic dependency.

Colonisation evolved not only through colonial discourses but also through several forms of interdependence. Departmentalisation did not erase this interdependence. Indeed, Martinique's political status created other forms of economic and social dependence, which impede the effective integration of Martinique. I also argue that this current interdependence shows that the decolonisation of Martinique and France has not yet been completed. This point outlines the idea that I point to throughout the thesis, which is that post-colonial studies that focus on decolonisation and on integration should not only analyse the impact of colonial discourses on a given society, nor simply explore how these colonial discourses are reproduced: they should also analyse the social, economic and political relations which have evolved between the former coloniser and colonised peoples, and how they can mutually address these colonial legacies.

4.2.4 – Departmentalisation and Social Protests in Martinique

In social movement studies, political process theory looks at the political and institutional environments in which social movements emerge (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 16). Depending on the context, this theory outlines different factors that trigger or prevent the creation of social protests (e.g. Tarrow, 1998). Departmentalisation aimed to convert the French state from a colonial state to a welfare state, and was a way to ensure equality among its citizens. Therefore, it was also towards the state that Martiniquans systematically turned to ask for the longed-for equality policies guaranteed by the assimilation. However, when those policies failed to be applied in Martinique, the state became the main focus of complaint. In this part I show that departmentalisation created an economic and social context that enabled the rise of social protests in Martinique, while also showing that in this tense context, the French government has been able to maintain its authority in the territory while keeping the nationalist parties at bay.
Soon after departmentalisation, the emigration rate increased significantly (Burton and Reno 1995: 164). Thousands of Martiniquans, including hundreds of students, travelled to mainland France; but the republican ideals of equality and fraternity failed to materialise in the numerous experiences of discrimination that the new French islander citizens experienced in France (Daily, 2014: 331). The experiences of those Martiniquans – including Fanon – directly contradict the somewhat idealistic and optimistic view of Smith (2001a: 128) when he argued that “many Western states have come to operate with a more civic, territorial version of nationalism, through which immigrants and refugees find a legitimate place in the host nation as citizens”. Indeed, Fanon was among those Martiniquans who migrated to France. Based on his personal experiences in mainland France, Fanon redefined himself through the “glance of the other” (Fanon 1952: 90). He theorised on the strong resilience of racial and colonial discourses, and how they impaired the construction of individual and collective identities. In the case of Martinique, even if the social inequalities that existed during colonisation were slightly weakened after departmentalisation, the economic and racial inequalities remained strong on the island (Melyon-Reinette and Durpaire, 2009: 13–14). The Békés, who primarily stood against departmentalisation, still continued to exercise enormous economic and social influence in the society (Burton and Reno; 1995: 2). Soon after departmentalisation, Martiniquans quickly began to show their frustration regarding the lack of positive economic outcomes of departmentalisation.

Both cultural and political praxes of social movements require analysis of the key historical dimensions of the place of the protests (Eyerman, 1996). One of the main questions to explore is how, and under which conditions, these historical dimensions are used for collective resistance (Featherstone and Lash, 1999). Social movements and long or frequent strikes are not uncommon in Martinique (Chivallon, 2009); in fact, Martinique has long been called the “strike island” (Chivallon, 2009: 106, 113; Burton, 1995). Moreover, since departmentalisation, Martinique had also experienced violent social protests such as those that occurred in 1959 and 1974 (Mauduech, 2008). The first violent altercations began only two years after departmentalisation, and other protests continued to take place in later years (Mauduech, 2008). Such protests were usually the subject of vivid tension between
the population, the key economic leaders of the island – mainly the Békés – and the state (De Lepine, 1980; Chivallon, 2009; 2012). However, the independence of Martinique has never been at the heart of any of those protests. On the contrary, the protesters demanded further economic policies, and better economic regulations to prevent social inequalities in the department (Dumont, 2010).

In the course of the major social protests, the state was systematically seen by the protesters as the stronger interlocutor – and often the exclusive negotiator – to address the social and economic issues they fought against (Jalabert, 2010). Thus, it could be argued that the isolation and the exclusion of local politicians from the protests illustrate their limited influence on their electors. This also illustrates the extent to which local politicians have been unsuccessful at asserting their influence on the government. The nationalist parties have also been shown conclusively to have limited influence. Thus, in the triangle of protest which saw the state, the population and the economic leaders (including the Békés) in opposition, local politicians are systematically put aside. Therefore, in such a context, the power of the state was reinforced while the influence of local politicians shrank.

Since the 1970s, the state progressively stopped “fulfilling its role as regulator” and became a financial provider in exchange for “social peace” (Constant and Daniel, 1997: 17; Jégo: 2009: 87). Throughout this period, the government prioritised “economic assistance” and implemented successive policies through financial transfers, which subsequently created “virtual economic growth” in Martinique (Chivallon, 2012: 497). The island slowly became an artificial economy. The local entrepreneurs, and the economic leaders, usually take direct financial advantage of government policies (tax exemption, exempt employer’s contribution, production financial aids, etc.) (Jalabert, 2010). In such a context, the state is alternately held responsible for the economic fiasco of departmentalisation; but is also seen as a safeguard that trades “social peace” for financial aid, until the next social protest unfolds.

The unsuccessful outcomes of departmentalisation outline the post-colonial ambivalence of Martinique’s position within the French nation-state. Being a department, Martinique is an integral part of the French state, yet throughout the
successive social movements and riots that have exploded since 1946, the population repeatedly questioned the material and social outcomes of its integration. While Martinique is part of the French nation, it is curiously absent from French national narratives (Chivallon, 2009). The colonial history of Martinique is extremely present within the island, and it conditions that society; while in France, the imperial past of the country is discrete, and almost “taboo” (Chivallon, 2011: 28; Ferro, 2002). Throughout the different protests that have occurred since departmentalisation, the state was accused of being responsible for the lack of economic and social equality that weakens the department; yet it is towards the state that the protesters systematically turned when they sought social and economic equality.

Consequently, this form of exclusive dialogue that seems to occur between the protesters – and by extension their society – and the government ostracises the local politicians, and it shrinks their potential influence on the French government, as well as on their electors. Social movements and general strikes are common in Martinique, as they achieve a relatively significant level of participation; in contrast, the local and national elections generally fail to mobilise the Martiniquan population as much. The abstention rates are around 54.47% during presidential elections and 47.10% during local regional elections.33 Those high abstention rates show that the population expresses its voice outside the ballot box. Those numbers also suggest that Martiniquan nationalism is not necessarily expressed by the means of votes during elections, and this means that to understand Martiniquan nationalism it is imperative to study it outside the ballot box. Over the years, social movements became a form of expression, whereby the protesters directly address their concerns to the government. Indeed, the French state proclaimed Martinique an integral part of France in 1946, yet the application of the social and economic policies granted by departmentalisation sometimes took decades to be effective in Martinique (Daniel, 2009: 2). Such slow progress questions the genuine determination of the state to address its own colonial legacies, and to eventually integrate Martinique into France. This point demonstrates the paradox that even a form of decolonisation can be tinged with imperialism.

33 Average abstention rate between 1981 and 2002.
4.2.5 - Nationalist Discourses Since Departmentalisation

Since Martinique acquired its new political status in 1946, the department has struggled to complete its process of integration into the French nation-state, and remains in an ambivalent position. The disappointing, and perhaps not totally unexpected, outcomes of departmentalisation triggered the frustrations of the population. Throughout the years, this frustration not only triggered the emergence of social protests, but also of various competing nationalist discourses in Martinique. I show in this section that these nationalist discourses have limited impacts on that society, not only because departmentalisation weakened their influence, but also because nationalist parties tend to recycle colonial discourses that ultimately divide the society. Here also, Martiniquans are caught in their ambivalent identities. Consequently, any nationalist discourse that seeks to impose one definition of Martiniquan identity is systematically contested by the population.

Since departmentalisation, Martinique is not only part of the French state, but it is also part of the French nation. The first Article of the French Constitution states: “France is an indivisible republic, a secular state, democratic and social” (France, 2014). This statement theoretically stresses the unity, but also the homogeneity of the French nation. Under the constitution, the French nation is defined as “one indivisible”, as it cannot be defined in terms of race, religion, or political affiliation. To integrate Martiniquan society, which has been racially divided for centuries, the “solution” was to assimilate the Martiniquans into the French nation (Miles, 2006: 636–637). The supporters of departmentalisation, the “departmentalists”, or the “assimilationists”, strongly defend this principle, which means that only one nation exists in Martinique – that is the French nation – so they categorically refuse any change in status (William, 2007: 144). The political parties that defend this idea in Martinique are the FSM (Martiniquan Socialist Federation) and the FDM (Martiniquan Departmental Federation) (Yang-Ting, 2000: 41).

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34 “La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale”.
35 FSM stands for “Fédération Socialiste Martiniquaise”. FDM stands for “Fédération Départementale de Martinique”.
The “autonomists” acknowledge the political and cultural ties that bind Martinique to France. But they also emphasise the existence of distinctive Martiniquan identities that are different from – but not detached from – French cultural and national identities. The Martiniquan political party that supports this idea is the PPM (Martiniquan Progressive Party) which was founded and led by Aimé Césaire (Yang-Ting, 2000: 40–41). Césaire’s shift from departmentalisation to political autonomy had been triggered by his deception with regards to the outcomes of departmentalisation (Britton, 2011: 65). Soon after departmentalisation, Césaire strongly voiced autonomist views, and he published a pamphlet called “Discourse on Colonialism” in which he vividly criticised the resilience of colonialism in France and in its overseas territories (Césaire, 1956). In 1956, he clarified his position with regards assimilation and claimed:

Assimilation is a word I hate. It is the perfect symbol of alienation, it is colonialism. [...] I stand between departmentalisation and independence. Autonomy is the only solution, [it] is a formula that would allow us to be true to ourselves, and it would allow us self-governance, although we will stay within a larger environment, [that is] an environment that our history brought us into. [...] It is a modern formula; it will certainly be the solution to many of our problems. (in Leiner, 2003: 65–57)

As Césaire said, he was not a separatist; he constantly recognised the political and cultural attachments of Martinique to France, but his comment emphasises the existence of Martiniquan identities (Britton, 2011). When Césaire (1932) co-founded with Senghor the negritude movement, he first laid the foundation of the formulations of Martiniquan self-consciousness. However, the concept of negritude was not used by his party to define Martiniquan identities. Camille Darsièrè (1974), who was also a fervent PPM activist, published a book entitled The Origins of the Martiniquan Nation, in which he wrote:

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The Martiniquan people form a nation ... To a certain extent, our luck [...] is not to exclusively come from a European culture, or from an African culture, or from an Indian culture. We are a blend of several cultures; we are each one of them [...]. We are new beings; we are Martiniquans. [...] Whether the French state conceives it or not, we evolved within a French multi-national ensemble. [...] It is out of question to ask for the independence of our country. In such case we will succumb without any protection to neo-colonialism. [...] We want a Martiniquan nation which will be able to freely develop itself within a federated multinational France.

Darsière does not specifically frame Martiniquan collective identities. Martiniquans are alternatively "new beings", or a blend of cultures. But cultures are already difficult to define. The African continent by itself is exceptionally rich in histories and cultures. Darsière does not describe the ways this “blend” of cultures is organised, or how it evolved. He simply states that Martiniquan identities exist because they are distinct. But such statement already confronts the principle of indivisibility of the French nation. Moreover, as Darsière stated, the ambition of the autonomists is to induce the creation of a “federated French state”, which is a goal that also challenges the indivisibility of the French nation-state. However, the extent to which cultural autonomy can meaningfully co-exist with a lack of political independence has been much disputed in Martinique (Britton, 2011: 64). For example, according to the author Glissant (1981: 17) – who attempted to define Martiniquan identity in term of “Antillanité” – the independence of Martinique is the sine qua non condition to ensure the survival and the expression of the Martiniquan culture.

The main political parties that advance independentist ideas are: the MIM (Martiniquan Independence Movement), and the MODEMAS (Democrat and Ecologist Movement for a Self-governing Martinique).\(^{38}\) The smaller secessionist parties include the GRS (Socialist Group Revolution); the CNCP (National Council of Popular Committees), the PALIMA (Liberation Party of the liberation of Martinique), MPRM (Popular Movement for the Martiniquan resistance), and finally the PKLS (Communist

\(^{38}\) MIM stands for “Mouvement Indépendentiste Martiniquais”. MODEMAS stands for “Mouvement Démocrate et Ecologiste pour une Martinique Souveraine".
party for Independence and Socialism) (Yang-Ting, 2000; Le Cornec: 2005: 545). The separatist discourses tend to agree on four main points: first, they all recognise the failure of assimilation; they militate for the recognition of a Martiniquan nation; they define France as a colonial/neo-colonial power; finally, they advocate the preservation of Martiniquan culture, history and landscape (Masla, 2008; 2009; Yang-Ting, 2000).

The high number of nationalist parties shows that Martiniquan nationalism is deeply divided. It has already been argued that high divisions between nationalist parties tend to weaken, or even to jeopardise greatly, the nationalist movements (See Smith, 1981; 1998; Pinar and Hamilton, 1984). Therefore, I would also conclude that high number of nationalist parties might explain in part the limited impact such parties have in Martinique. All of those parties recognise Martinique as a nation, but none of them specifically define it. They either rely heavily on the cultural hybridity of Martinique to define the nation, or they recycle colonial discourses to define the Martiniquan nation. For example, Yang-Ting (2000: 97–101), who studied the political impacts, as well as the political strategies, of the MIM, attempted to analyse the ways the political party describes the Martiniquan nation. She claims that the MIM protests against the annihilation of Martiniquan culture, yet the party does not define the Martiniquan nation or culture (Yang-Ting, 2000: 97). Instead, according to its members, the Martiniquan nation “refers to [...] people of colour [...] and descendants of slaves” (Yang-Ting, 2000: 97–99). The party excludes elusively the Béké community, yet it tends to recycle racial criteria that were constructed during the colonial era. In addition, the Martiniquan society has experienced several waves of migrations, including Indians and Syrians. Therefore, such definitions tend to overlook the social complexities of the society. The same analysis could also be made for the MODEMAS party. For instance, Malsa (2009: 46), the president of the MODEMAS party, asserted that the “Martiniquan culture” was crumbling; and that it needed to “recover its African roots”. However, Malsa does not describe the

39 GRS stands for “Groupe Révolution Socialiste. CNCP stands for “Conseil National des Comités Populaires”. PALIMA stands for “Parti de la libération de la Martinique”. MPRM stands for “Mouvement Populaire pour la Résistance Martiniquaise”. PKLS stands for “Parti Kominis pou Lendépendans ek Sosialism”.
characteristics of the “African roots” he referred to. Throughout his book, the politician struggles to define the Martiniquan nation. He (2009: 47) argued:

When Martinique will be free, it won’t be a country that will copy the former supporters of slavery and colonial power, because the Martiniquan people have never been and will never be a copy of the French culture. It is the Martiniquan culture! Martinique should be a country which will be able to find its core in the near future. Martinique will be aware of its strengths and values; but we will have to stay open to the diversity of the world and to the major ecological issues.

Malsa recognises the strong hold that departmentalisation has in Martinique. He claimed to be “open[s] to the diversity of the world”, yet he simultaneously excludes the French culture from the construction of the Martiniquan nation. Such contradiction leads to the idea that the Martiniquan secessionist parties – including the MODEMAS – did not only emerge after departmentalisation; they were one of the by-products of departmentalisation. Indeed, from his perspective, departmentalisation undermines the expression of Martiniquanity. The “country” will be able to find its “core”, or the Martiniquans will be able to elevate their self-consciousness, once the island becomes independent, or “free” from the French state. Here also, the description of the Martiniquan nation as voiced by Malsa strongly referred to exclusive racial attributes. Both parties use the same attributes that divided the society during the times of colonisation; thus, such discourses could only fail to rally the Martiniquan population today. This is an example of how a nationalist discourse that aims to bond a community, on the contrary, divides it.

All those parties define a Martiniquan in ambiguous terms. Such ambiguity might explain the existence of such a high number of nationalist parties in Martinique. Indeed, each party positions itself differently in order to achieve its goals for independence. The GRS and the PKLS, along with the CNCP, voiced communist discourses; while the MODEMAS is a green party (Malsa, 2008; 2009; Yang-Ting, 2000: 40–41). The MIM was the first secessionist party and was created in 1978 by a charismatic leader, Alfred Marie-Jeanne, a defendant of socialist ideas (William, 2007: 135).
Despite the high number of nationalist parties in Martinique, the population strongly refuses to step towards independence (Yang-Ting, 2000: 61; Miles, 2006: 648–649). Even the slightest change in political status is contested in the department. In 2003, a referendum was organised to ask the Martiniquans if they wanted to merge the general and the regional councils into one unique council called “Assemblée Unique” (Unique Assembly). However, 50.5% of the voters declined the proposition (Miles, 2006). Those results show that despite the high number of nationalist parties, nationalist sentiments might be expressed by the population outside the ballot box. This means that referendums and votes might not necessarily be the most accurate tools to define Martiniquan nationalism.

The departmentalisation of Martinique provides an interesting opportunity to raise questions about the limits of integration of a former colony into its former empire. It eventually raises questions about the ways in which the local histories and the environments of a place trigger nationalist sentiments, and how national paradigms are shaped in an ex-colony. Departmentalisation aimed to decolonise Martinique. However, it failed to address the deep social and economic tensions within its society. Consequently, such tensions impede the effective integration of Martinique. Indeed, departmentalisation was a product of the French nationalist formulation that is a combination of “civic” and “ethnic” nationalisms (Smith, 2001b: 41). Unlike the ethnic nationalism that defines nationhood in terms of ethnicity, culture, language, religion and common history, civic nationalism emphasises the nation as a political entity whose core is not ethnicity, but a “shared commitment to the public institutions of the state and civil society” (Özkirimli, 2005: 23). However, the resilience of colonial discourses in Martinique alters the definition of French nationalism articulated by

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40 In December 2000, the French parliament authorised the application of a body of new economic legislation for the overseas departments called “LOOM” (Loi pour le développement économique des Outre-mer) (Miles, 2006: 638). Article 62 of LOOM recognised a general right to limited self-determination for the DOM (Daniel, 2007: 48, 49). At the Congress, held in Martinique in February–March 2002, one of the main recommendations to transform Martinique into a “new territorial collectivity” was passed without difficulty: 62 yes-votes against 20 no-votes (with only one abstention) (Miles, 2006: 638). In 2003 the referendum was organised. The question posed was : “Approuvez vous le projet de création en Martinique d’une collectivité territoriale demeurant régie par l’article 73 de la Constitution, et donc par le principe de l’identité législative avec possibilités d’adaptations, et se substituant au département et à la région dans les conditions prévues par cet article?” (Do you approve the project of the creation in Martinique of a territorial collectivity ruled by Article 73?) (Daniel, 2011: 113).
Smith (2001b: 41). This means that the social, economic and racial bias stemming from the colonisation of Martinique favour the materialisation of ethnic nationalism in the island. This implies that theories on nationalism should also include the ways a form of nationalism from a specific territory – like France – is applied, interpreted and experienced in another environment – such as Martinique. Consequently, the ways the French state applies its nationalistic ideals in Martinique, in Saint-Barthelemy, in Corsica and now in Mayotte are always altered.41 Thus, it could be argued that, in the case of France, there is no single form of nationalism: nationalism is plural. Indeed, departmentalisation was seen as a way to free Martinique and France from their colonial linkages. Yet departmentalisation repositioned the hegemonic position of France on the island, that is, within and outside the French nation-state. The ultra-economic dependence of Martinique upon France shows one aspect of this hegemony: that Martinique is decolonised, yet it is French but not really French. Finally, these ambivalences question the possibility, or, the feasibility, of effectively integrating a former colony into its former coloniser.

4.3- The Protest challenged the Political and Economic Institutions.

The thesis argues that it is impossible to achieve the integration of Martinique into France without addressing the economic and social legacies of colonialism simultaneously in Martinique and in France. This is because such legacies make it impossible to create the unity that defines the French nation-state. I also demonstrate that departmentalisation failed to integrate Martinique as it did not address specific colonial legacies – such as the economic and social inequities, which, ultimately, obstructs any integrationist agenda. I also show that departmentalisation weakened the authority of the local political agencies, including the nationalist parties.

41 Mayotte became a French Department on the 31st March 2011 (Hopquin and Canavate, 2011).
This dissertation focuses on the 2009 social movement that began on 5th February 2009 and lasted for two months. In this part, I first analyse the disastrous economic situation of Martinique prior to the protest. Indeed the protest originally emerged as a movement against the high cost of living in Martinique. In this part, I demonstrate that the economy of the island does not only rely on French subventions; it is an economy that creates economic and social inequalities. Such inequalities obstruct the cohesion of the society. I later explore how the 2009 protests opened a space of contest where the population massively mobilised to address all sorts of economic and social concerns. Therefore, the magnitude of the movement challenged even further the local politicians, including the nationalist parties who lost their authority over the population. The way the strike was structured allowed the protesters to strengthen the mobilisation outside the existing political structures.

4.3.1 - The Background of the 2009 Social Movement

In this part, I explain how the 2009 social movement came into being. I show that the structure of the social movement organisation that organised the strike – called C5F – had a very flexible structure. I show that such flexibility contributed to broadening and strengthening the participation and the mobilisation. These results show that, contrary to what has been argued, “hybrid organisational identities” can strengthen and broaden the level of mobilisation in a social movement. Secondly, because of this massive mobilisation of the population, the C5F rapidly gained in legitimacy, and in authority to act on behalf of the protesters, and to challenge the political authorities.

Despite the worrying economic and social situation of Martinique, the 2009 social movement did not start in Martinique. Indeed, during the months of November and December 2008 a social protest occurred in French Guiana. The population protested against the high cost of fuel (Gurrey, 2009: 58; Lucrèce et al., 2009: 92, 93).\footnote{To unravel the social crisis in French Guiana, an agreement was then signed on 10th December 2008 between the general and the regional council of French Guiana, a number of trade unions and some petrol companies’ subsidiaries to lower the price of the fuel (Domota, 2011). A few months later, several official reports that investigated the fuel crisis in the French overseas departments cast doubt on the integrity and the ethics of the whole system of distribution and pricing of fuels in French Guiana as well as in the other French departments (Gurrey, 2009: 58).} Several Guadeloupean trade unions, organised under the name of LKP (Lyannaj Kont
Protection (Coalition Against the Systems of Abuses)), were following very closely what was occurring in French Guiana, since they also wanted to understand the fuel price structure in Guadeloupe (Chivallon, 2009: 108–109; Domota, 2011: 41–46). The LKP was led by the secretary-general of the UGTG trade union, Elie Domota, and the organisation included 49 trade unions and diverse professional and cultural associations (see Appendix I). After several aborted meetings with the prefect, the LKP organised their own protests. On 20th January 2009 a general strike started in Guadeloupe (Chivallon, 2009; Lefèbvre, 2010: 3; Gurrey, 2010: 58). Thousands of Guadeloupians joined the protest to contest the numerous economic and social issues of the island (Bonilla, 2010). On 24th January around 25,000 protesters marched in the Guadeloupe capital, Point-à-Pitre (Domota, 2011: 51). The protests continued to grow, and up to 100,000 protesters joined the marches in Point-à-Pitre in the following weeks (Bonilla, 2010: 126).

The main Martiniquan newspaper France-Antilles regularly reported the progression of the strike that was occurring in Guadeloupe (e.g. Vaugirard, 2009: 6). However, the journalists could not forecast whether a protest of such magnitude could also occur in Martinique (France-Antilles, 2009; Bellance, 2009). On 4th February, all the 12 Martiniquan trade unions called for the Martiniquan population to go on strike for one day and to march in the streets of Fort-de-France to protest against the high cost of living on the island, in order to “protest against the purchasing power that is constantly shrinking” in Martinique (France-Antilles, 2009: 4). They also distributed thousands of leaflets stating: “Against the high cost of living! – A decent work and wages for everyone – workers and retired – everyone on strike – Thursday 5th of February 2009 – Trade Union Headquarters” (see Appendix J). On the leaflet

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43 UGTG stands for “Union Générale des Travailleurs de Guadeloupe”.
44 Nicolas Desforges was the prefect of Guadeloupe from 2008 to 2009.
45 The trade union that composed the inter-trade unions were: CDMT (Centrale Démocratique Martiniquaise des Travailleurs), CFDT (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail), CFE-CGC (Confédération Française de l’Encadrement Confédération Générale des Cadres), CFTC (Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens), CGTM (Confédération Générale du Travail de la Martinique), CGTM-FSM (Confédération Générale Du Travail de la Martinique Fédération Syndicale Mondiale), CSTM (Centrale Syndicale des Travailleurs Martiniquais), FSU (Fédération Syndicale Unitaire), SMBEF (Syndicat Martiniquais des Banques et Établissements Financiers), SUD-PTT (Solidaires Unitaires Démocratiques Postes, Télégraphes et téléphones), SE UNSA (Syndicat des Enseignants Union nationale des syndicats Autonomes) and UGTM (Union Générale des Travailleurs de Martinique) (CollectifSfevrier, 2010).
there is no mention of independence or autonomy. The message was very broad, and the word “everyone”, mentioned twice, conveys a message of mobilisation and unity against the high cost of living. Such a broad message might in part explain the very large adhesion of the population to the strike the following day. On 5th February, the general strike started in Martinique. The same day, over 15,000 Martiniquans marched in the streets of Fort-de-France (Arnauld, 2011: 75; Bourgault, 2011: 10). The high number of protesters in Martinique contrasted with the first assumptions made by the newspaper France-Antilles, which anticipated the day before that only a couple of hundred protesters would join the march in Fort-de-France (Tinaugus, 2009).

The high number of protesters also surprised the members of the trade unions, who originally called the population to protest for a day. One respondent named Jocelyn insisted: “[the trade unions] did not know the population would follow them”. Alvin, a journalist, recalled: “No one expected that, I did not see this coming, […] but neither did the trade unions.” Finally, Jean also admitted that he “did not think” the movement would be so important and that it would last for two months. Indeed the strike was originally planned to last for one day, but it was renewed, and it continued for 38 days in Martinique. Jocelyn and Alvin are both well-known individuals working in the local media industry; Jean is a mayor and a French deputy. Thus, because of their professional activities they regularly observe, analyse and probe the population. However, none of them expected such a large level of support from the population. Their comments stress one important aspect of the strike, which was not only its magnitude, but also its spontaneity. The same comment was relayed by Eric. Eric is the secretary-general of a trade union, and he admitted that he was also surprised and “excited like everyone else” to see so many people in the streets that day, emphasising the spontaneity of the mobilisation. Following the successful support of the population, on the night of 5th February, all the trade unions met at the trade union headquarters, in Fort-de-France, to formally structure the social movement organisation. Here too, the fact that the social movement organisation was built and structured alongside the protest demonstrates the spontaneity of the mobilisation.

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46 In Martinique, the social movement ended on 16th March 2009. The social movement lasted for 44 days in Guadeloupe.
The social movement organisation progressively took the shape of the movement, and not the other way around.

Their first step was to name the organisation “Collectif du 5 Février” (C5F), which was later creolised as “K5F”.\(^{47}\) The organisation included 12 trade unions and was led by a now-retired teacher named Michel Monrose (see Appendix J). The 12 trade unions constituted the base of the C5F. It was the inter-trade union that initially called for the strike, and it was the secretary-general of the trade unions who negotiated at the prefecture their list of demands. Indeed, the trade unions had worked and cooperated together prior to the strike as an inter-trade union from 2007. Every six months one secretary-general of a trade union led the inter-trade union for another six months. In February 2009 Michel Monrose was already in charge of the inter-trade union, thus he was the one who led the C5F during the 2009 strike. One leader of the C5F, Lucette, explained: “Actually, at first our name was not ‘Collectif du 5 Février’ [...]. We existed since 2007. Our name back then was the Inter syndicale Contre la vie Chère et pour l’Emploi.”\(^{48}\) She later added: “We used to organise meetings at the trade union headquarters but ... No one was really coming, it was always the same people who were coming in. [...] You know... the unionists [...] We even had a list of demands, it was not long, it was called the ‘Plateforme Revendicative des Organisations de l’Intersyndicale de la Martinique’. But ... In 2009 everything changed.” From what Lucette said, the protest influenced the structure of the social movement organisation. It might be said that the structure of the LKP was used as a “model” to organise the C5F (Lucrèce et al., 2009: 92, 93); however, it was only from 5th February that diverse social and cultural associations were integrated into the C5F.\(^{49}\) The C5F was very unique in the sense that the coalition determined its goals through the interactions it had with the protesters, which means that the structure of the organisation, its activities, and even its performances were strongly influenced by the environmental factors of the strike. This implies that the social movement was also very flexible and spontaneous, as was the C5F, and this had significant repercussions in my research.

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\(^{47}\) K5F stands for “Kollectif 5 Févryé”. Therefore, K5F is the creole version of C5F.

\(^{48}\) Intersyndicale Contre la vie Chère et pour l’Emploi” means Inter-trade Unions Against the High Cost of Living and for Employment.

\(^{49}\) I obtained a clear structure of the LKP from one respondent named Lionel (see Appendix I). Nineteen trade unions and 30 different cultural associations and consumer organisations made up the LKP.
Indeed, except for the trade unions, I had great difficulty obtaining an exact list of associations that composed the C5F. I finally obtained an original copy from Lucette that listed a few names partially erased and various phone numbers along with the names of diverse associations. When she gave me the document, she told me that she was not “sure” if the list was up to date (see Appendix K). This is the only document I have been able to obtain that records the associations that composed the C5F. Based on this document, I could say that the variety of associations that composed the C5F reflects the flexibility of the organisation. Among these associations was the feminist association called UFM (Union des Femmes de la Martinique); there was also an association called Equinoxe, which supports individuals with mental illness – especially schizophrenia; and a consumer organisation called Collectif Diesel that supports consumers’ rights regarding fuel and diesel was another member of the C5F. The association called MIR (Mouvement International de la Réparation de l’Esclavage) was also a member of the C5F.

Lucette was right to believe that the list was not exactly up to date. During an interview I had with a male member of the Collectif Diesel named Anthony he told me that his association withdrew from the C5F during the strike, as he felt that the members of the inter-trade union that led the C5F were not adequate to tackle the negotiations that were taking place at the prefecture with the state representatives. It seems incredible that a social movement organisation that was able to gather several thousands of people in the streets for about two months could not even provide an accurate list of its members two years later. However, I shall argue that this was precisely the strength of the organisation. One of its strengths was its flexibility, by which I mean its ability to rapidly make necessary internal changes, and to respond effectively to the rapid changing environment of the protest. The organisation’s survival depended on its flexibility, including its ability to add the various demands coming from the population and from the associations that composed the C5F.

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50 MIR is an association that militates for the financial reparation of centuries of slavery.
Indeed, the associations joined the C5F with their own specific demands. For example, Cécile, an active member of Equinoxe, said that the association joined the C5F on 9th February with a specific list of demands (see Appendix L). The list she gave me first includes several demands regarding a re-evaluation of the social protection systems for people with physical and mental disabilities (better accommodation, supplementary disability pensions, etc.). However, the list is not limited to individuals with physical and mental disabilities. The association also proposed to increase other pensions, and to improve the economic measures and policies in order to favour a fair level of employment in Martinique. The list of demands of Equinoxe reflects the strategy of the C5F, which was to progressively include the demands of the individuals and associations who wanted to address their concerns to the C5F. Lucette explained:

Day after day, the people realised that we were able to lift their voice. That’s why more and more people joined the protests, and that’s why more and more associations joined the C5F. People came to us and asked: “What about us? You forgot about us! We have demands too! We want to say things too!” In the end we were completely overwhelmed; we did not know how to describe us. There were so many demands. […] Even some lawyers wanted to help us, and the big question was about the juridical status of the C5F. We thought a lot about that. We did not know, and we still don’t know. […] That’s why I want you to say that it was a social movement. It was above all social. It was not only the trade unions. All the layers of the population were more and more involved; and this is why there was a crescendo in the protests. It’s not only a strike; we were talking about social and economic issues.

Lucette testimony shows that she felt – along with the other members of the C5F – a growing experience of power, and of authority. The inter-trade union evolved from a clear organised structure, into a coalition – the C5F – which became unstable, and difficult to define legally. Yet I would argue that the impression of power, or of authority that the C5F had, did not simply emerge from the coalition. The point made here is that the C5F hybridised structure was able to absorb and to reorganise the discontent of the population. However, Lucette’s experience also emphasises that leadership in protests is not limited to the ways in which a social movement organisation is structured, or how the organisation directs and guides the mass. Her testimony also highlights the idea that our understanding of leadership in protests
should also comprise the myriad degree of leadership and roles of the participants. Therefore, the ways in which the connections between the C5F and the protesters evolved challenge the network theorist approach that mainly studies the structural conditions within the population of those who might be mobilised into the movement. Network theorists assert that those with “dense” ties, or pre-existing formal organisations, will find it “easier to mobilise supporters” and shape the protest (Goodwin and Jasper, 1999: 12). The C5F demonstrated the contrary. The “ties” were in the making throughout the protest. This theoretically also implies that these ties were changing in intensity in the course the strike.

Consequently, the list of demands the C5F built up was impressively long, particularly broad and not specific (see Appendix D). The organisation advanced over a hundred demands, including the right to “live and to work in the country”. They also asked for a reduction in monthly electricity and water bills. They ask for TVA exemptions for some cultural organisations, etc. The core aim of the C5F was to negotiate the cost of living and one of its first actions was to demand a €200 increase for all workers earning minimum wage for an indeterminate period of time. In addition, CF5’s list included all kinds of economic, healthcare, social and cultural issues to negotiate at the prefecture with the state representatives and the economic leaders of the island.

The negotiations began on 6th February at the prefecture in Fort-de-France. The key figures at the negotiating table included the president of the regional council, Alfred Marie-Jeanne; the president of the general council, Claude Lise; the leaders of the C5F being the secretary-general of each trade union including the president of the C5F Michel Monrose; the Secretary of State for Overseas, Jégo; the prefect Mancini as well as the business leaders.51 Among the business leaders, the president of the MEDEF (Mouvement des entreprises de France), Patrick Lecurieux-Durival, was also part of

51 Among the key leaders of organisations in Martiniquan industry that were involved in the negotiations were (in alphabetical order): AMPI (Association Martiniquaise pour la Promotion de l’Industrie); CAPED (Confédération de l’Artisanat et des petites Entreprises du bâtiment); CGPME (Confédération Générale des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises de la Martinique); FDSEA (Fédération Départementale des Syndicats d’Exploitants Agricoles); MEDEF (Mouvement des entreprises de France); SEBTPAM (Syndicat des Entrepreneurs de bâtiment et des Travaux Publics de la Martinique); SDGA (Syndicat de la Distribution et des Grossistes Alimentaires); ZILEA (Club professionnel du Séjour en Martinique).
the negotiations. The MEDEF is the largest union of employers in Martinique and includes large, medium and small businesses. However, depending of the area under discussion, the presidents or the secretary-generals of a collective organisation of manufacturers or retailers were at the negotiating table. For example, the president of the SDGA (Syndicat de la Distribution et des Grossistes Alimentaires), Alain Coridon, was part of the negotiations at the beginning of the protests, but not at the end. The SDGA looks after the interests of the import and retail businesses in Martinique.\textsuperscript{52} He played a key role during the strike, since one of the main demands of the C5F was to drop the prices of 100 staple products (such as rice, milk, sugar, flour, vegetable oil etc.). However, when the direction of negotiations drew in other sectors such as education, or health care, the economic leaders were not party to the negotiations.

During the two months of protests, the C5F continuously negotiated with the state representatives about the concerns the protesters raised. This means that the organisation stood up to the legitimate power that is theoretically supposed to look after the interests of the population. But, during the strike, the C5F held this legitimacy. It was seen by the protesters as the new legitimate body looking after the population’s best interests.

Thus, these fluid exchanges of power between the C5F and the population helped to broaden and to legitimise their demands. Indeed, the requests from protesters went so far that one of the secretary-generals of the C5F, Gilles, recalled even cases of “crazy demands” – as he put it: “we even had a case when a man came to us for help to solve a sordid family inheritance issue.” Other respondents from the inter-trade union recalled similar examples when people sought all kinds of advice and support from the new coalition. Here too, the C5F became the legitimate body that was perceived as able to tackle all kinds of cultural, social and economic matters. The 2009 protests were unique, because, unlike other social movements, where exclusive dialogue typically occurs between the protesters and the government, this time, the protesters refused to engage in this dialogue. A protester named Patrice simply said: “I did not expect anything from the government. The government was not saying anything

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\textsuperscript{52} SDGA was created by a member of the Despointes Béké family named Gérard Despointes along with Robert Parfait.
special.” Like Patrice, many other respondents affirmed that they did not wait for a reaction from the government. Additionally, in the strike several figures from the government, such as President Sarkozy, Prime Minister Fillon, Michelle Aliot-Marie the Minister of Interior of France, and Jégo the Secretary of State for Overseas, were repeatedly mocked in streets with posters and slogans during the marches. It could be said, as Shultziner (2013) argued, that humiliation might also serve as a stimulus to participation in social movement. However, I would clearly state, contrary to Malsa (2009: 84) and Reno (2012: 352–358), who argued that the protesters once again positioned the government as the absolute rescuer, that the protesters challenged the government, ridiculing it in order to redistribute the balance of power between the centre (mainland France) and the periphery (Martinique). The protests cannot be limited to the list of demands; it is as important to examine how the protesters presented their demands to the government and to local politicians. The comment made by Serge was quite telling; he compared local politicians to “petits blancs”, because he strongly believed that local politicians were simply “administrators of plantations”. As Serge said, the protesters contested a whole system that included local politicians, economic agencies and the government. In the next chapter, I explain how the protesters admitted to helping to run this “republican habitation”; however, it could be said that the character of the protest was unique in the ways in which the protesters positioned themselves in relation to the local authorities.

To conclude, the large variety of associations that composed the C5F demonstrates that the organisation was not the focus of specific associations. Instead, the C5F comprised a large umbrella of associations. The fact that such diverse associations joined the C5F shows the spontaneity of the movement and that the movement was not previously planned. More importantly, this flexibility provided the C5F with the legitimacy to act and to negotiate on behalf of the protesters. Consequently, throughout the protests, the C5F reinforced their legitimacy to the protesters. Indeed, the sudden and growing legitimacy of the C5F to represent the population was illustrated by the ways in which the protesters addressed their demands to the

53 As remembered by Lydia, Yves Jégo quickly became the theme of awkward slogans such as ”Jégo gigot”. In French a “gigot” is a piece of meat. It implies that someone is either not intellectually very bright or that s/he is not physically attractive.
organisation. This implied that the population was building its resistance outside the existing political structures.

4.3.2 - The C5F Challenged the Main Economic and Political Agencies

In the previous part I explained how the 2009 movement was simultaneously shaped by the C5F and by the protesters. Their co-influence was their key asset during the protest. In this part, I explain how the discourses of resistance voiced by the C5F and by the protesters strengthened and broadened the protest. I also explain how they delegitimised the economic and political agencies.

The C5F repeatedly voiced four discourses of resistance, which were unity, mobilisation, heroism and victory during the protests, and this was particularly evident in their logo. During my interview with Patrice, an artist, he told me that the C5F asked him, along with another artist, to design the logo of the C5F, at the earlier stage of the protests. He told me that his colleague finally did it. She quickly brought her suggestion to the C5F, who agreed to use it (see picture 5 – Logo of the Collectif du 5 Février 2009). The logo represents the map of Martinique falling, while six anonymous people try to raise it together. The background is painted in red, and the words “Collectif du 5 Février 2009” are written at the bottom of the logo.

Figure 5 – Logo of the Collectif du 5 Février 2009 – Photo credit: Collectif du 5 Février

![Logo of the Collectif du 5 Février 2009](image)
The fact that the map of Martinique is falling illustrates the idea that the Martiniquan society is rapidly declining. The map portrays Martinique as a whole, and this means that the society as a whole, such as its culture and its economy, is deteriorating. In addition, the fact that several people are seen holding up the island together shows that Martinique is in a state of emergency, hence the need to be mobilised, and to act in unity to resist the worrying situation of the declining society. Therefore, both discourses of mobilisation and unity through resistance are expressed by the actions of the six individuals. In addition, both discourses of heroism and victory are also suggested symbolically in the image. Indeed, the use of six people to physically support such a large territory refers to the shared sense of success and of heroism. The discourse of success is important in the sense that it gives hope, as the viewer might anticipate that the map will be realigned.

The words “Collectif du 5 Février 2009” written at the bottom could be seen as a way to convey the idea that the C5F is also supporting the society, and the six people realigning or repositioning the island. The logo of the C5F provides an example of how the C5F positioned itself as the one, or the only one, who could guarantee success in addressing the social and economic situation of Martinique. The work of the artist also outlines the co-influence between the activists and the C5F that occurred during the protests. Patrice informed me that the idea behind the logo was to convey a belief of a common purpose:

What you need to understand is that the idea behind the fight was not to ask things for each person individually. The idea was not to ask something for this one, or for that one. [...] The idea was not to say things like: ‘I want to give milk for my son’, ‘I want this thing for my car’ [...]. The idea was to say that it is important that everyone should eat well, it is important that everyone can live decently, [...] and that it is important that everyone fights for it. It was beyond Martinique. It was a larger project. So, that was the idea behind the logo.

Patrice’s testimony stresses how he interprets the design of the logo, and shows how he felt mobilised. He wanted to be part of a collective project, which means a project that was designed to mobilise and to unify for the good of the larger community. When Patrice said, “the idea was not to ask something for this one, or for that one”, he
suggests that Martiniquans are not usually mobilised or unified to act collectively for the wellbeing of their society. When Patrice repeatedly said “it is important”, he stressed the legitimacy of the mobilisation. However, despite the fact that Martinique was the only place, or island, mapped in the image, the logo represents a larger concept of equality and human rights. His comment supports the argument that the protest was not simply tainted with nationalist sentiments; it also went beyond the limits of nationhood and territorial space. The bonds that linked people were not limited to nationhood; they attempted to create unusual kinds of bonds.

Throughout the social movement, the protesters strongly supported the C5F. During the marches, the protesters echoed the discourses of victory with a song entitled *Rouge pour la Victoire* (Red for Victory). The colour red strongly recalls the colour of the logo. Many protesters brought several shirts and other items bearing the logo of the C5F, which were sold at the trade union headquarters (see Figure 6 – Examples of two protesters wearing red shirts sold by the C5F). One interviewee named Christelle offered me one of her spare T-shirts as a gift at the end of our interview. I did not take it, but it might be argued that the gift was a way for her to share with me, to include me in the struggles as if they were still in the making. The selling of the C5F branded T-shirts not only allowed the protesters to show their support for the strike, but it also allowed the organisation to fund their activities. The profits generated by the sale of their branded items generated about €50,000 of income for the organisation during the strike (*France-Antilles*, 2009: 11). Both the white and red colours were prominent during the marches. When people did not wear the red branded T-shirt they were wearing red and white outfits, and this had the effect of emphasising a strong discourse of victory (the red colour) and of unity (the mass of people wearing it).
The second picture represents two hands trying to tear apart the bars of a giant barcode. The bars from the barcode can be compared to prison bars. The connection between the capitalist and slavery systems can be made because of the symbolic associations between the “Code Noir” and the barcode. This symbol outlined a common experience of objectification, which also emphasises the idea that colonial discourses are still present in that society. The protesters paralleled their objectified conditions as subjects of capitalism with the objectified conditions of the colonised. The symbolism captures the idea that the system that objectified them in the past stands firmly today as a legacy of colonialism. However, the protesters occupied public spaces, and marched for days to voice their demands for economic empowerment. They fought against capitalism while embracing consumerist values. This contradiction not only shows the spontaneity of the protest, but also that the protesters organised the social movement as it was unfolding.

Therefore, the C5F gave voice to several discourses of resistance, which were carried out by the protesters. Indeed, during the strike, Martinique stopped all its commercial activities. All major shopping centres, supermarkets, restaurants, pharmacies and other businesses were shut down. The schools and the university were closed. The taxis and any other public transport facilities were unavailable (Chivallon, 2009). As
a result of the spontaneity of the movement, the C5F was able to lead such activities on its own. The C5F also created a website through which they provided updates on the strike; but it was also a website where everyone could voice their opinions, offer help, pose questions, or ask for help in all kind of matters.54 Some protesters, such as Hugo, organised various spontaneous “barrages” to block the circulation and the traffic, or force shops and other businesses to close. The movement rapidly grew in magnitude and in scale (see Figure 7).

Figure 7– Map of the mobilisation during the 2009 protest in Martinique

This map has been designed from the daily reports made by the leading newspaper France-Antilles from 5th February to 14th March 2009. The map depicts in red and

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54 Link of the website: collectif5fevrier.blogspot.co.uk
pink the cities where various protest activities occurred. Issues of scale are “inherent” in the strategies of protest (Miller, 2000: 18). The protests that began in Fort-de-France rapidly grew in intensity. This means that the protests that first took place in Fort-de-France were replicated in all the major urban cities in which hundreds or thousands of protesters mobilised at different moments during the two months of protests. There are 34 cities in Martinique, and 23 cities were involved in the protests (See Figure 7, and see Appendix M).

While the protests grew in intensity, the influence and the authority of the elected officials shrank. For instance, Jean, the mayor of a leading city located in the north of the island, admitted: “We [politicians] were powerless during the strike.” Again, many of the respondents deemed local politicians to be “fully responsible” for the present disastrous economic and social situation of Martinique. Jean tried to open the city council of his town during strike, but he was forced to close it by several protesters; so he lost his authority as a legal and legitimate representative of the population.

Fort-de-France (in red) is the main city of Martinique, and it was the place where the main protest activities occurred daily from 5th February to 14th March (marches, negotiations, etc). Fort-de-France is also the place where both the prefecture and the C5F’s headquarters are located. Each morning, the protesters gathered at the trades union headquarters. Afterwards, the protesters walked with the negotiators of the C5F to the prefecture. Once the negotiations began, the protesters marched around the streets of Fort-de-France until the end of the negotiations. This symbolic walk could be seen as a way for the protesters to encourage the C5F in its negotiations, that sometimes until very late into the night. Lucien, an active protester, remembers:

Sometimes, after a day of negotiations, the C5F was tired. These guys were tired, discouraged, we could see that ... But, it was incredible, because we were telling them: “Go back to work!” We were telling them: “You must return to the negotiating table” ... In fact the C5F was mandated by us.
With the support of the protesters, the C5F was granted authority. They carried the voice of the protesters to the negotiations table. This new position of the C5F challenged the legitimacy of the state officials. The cities in white (such as Bellefontaine and Macouba) are the places where no protest activities have been recorded. Bellefontaine is a very small residential city, along with Fond-Saint-Denis, therefore it is understandable why no protest activities were recorded there. It is possible that some form of protest occurred in those places, but that is was not reported by the newspaper because of unknown editorial priorities.

However, the case of Rivière-Pilote – a city located on the south of the island – seems very peculiar. The mayor of Rivière-Pilote, Marie-Jeanne, is a deputy and also the founder and president of the secessionist party MIM. In 2009, he was also the president of the regional council. He is often described as a very charismatic leader, but one who is not a very “freedom friendly” individual (Miles, 2006: 642; William, 2007: 136). Surprisingly, Marie-Jeanne repeatedly called for an end to the strike (Lucrèce, 2009). During my second focus group, a male participant named Georges was very disappointed and surprised by Marie-Jeanne’s position, and he interpreted the reaction of the nationalist leader as form of jealousy: “Normally [the nationalist parties] want to be leader of popular discontent, but this time, they did not pull the trigger.” Georges is a fervent pro-independence supporter and he was amongst the protesters. Somehow, Georges understood that the way nationalist parties assert their power also relies on how they reorganise and mobilise the population’s discontent. During the interview I had with Justin, was one of the leaders of the MIM party, he took great care to insist that he was not a “strike breaker”. He claimed: “People think that I was against them, I was not against what they were saying. I was against the method!” Justin’s passionate reactions, along with Georges’ comment, outline the idea that the C5F not only outshone political parties, but that they also undermined the nationalist parties that were already deeply divided. Indeed, the president of the secessionist party MODEMAS, Garcin Masla, was actively taking part in the protests (Lucrèce et al., 2009). Garcin Masla is also the mayor of Sainte-Anne. Both leaders Masla and Marie-Jeanne, took two opposing stands with regards to the strike, and the movement highlighted their divergences even further. One of the main leaders of the MODEMAS, named Claude, declared during his interview:
It’s like [Marie-Jeanne] wanted to break the dynamic of the movement. [His decision] was an error, it was a horror. I was very harsh against him [...]. At that moment, the population was in effervescence, we needed to understand what was going on. [...] But politicians were afraid of it here.

According to Claude the local politicians were “afraid”; as they felt threatened by the power of the strike. They not only lost their authority, but they were also divided on how to tackle the uprising. They might have also been threatened by the changes the protest would potentially bring. Instead of analysing the movement, they quickly distanced themselves from it. Their positions confirmed the limited influence they had in Martinique, because the protests emerged outside the established political structures. The politicians were unable to see the protest outside the paradigms of nation, state and/or political status.

It should be said that nationalist individuals were not just absent in the movement. Masla is the leader of the MIR, which was part of the C5F. Even had he not been part of the negotiations he might have influenced the leaders. But, even though some of the C5F’s leaders were known to be advocates of independence, they refused to divert the protests towards a pro-independence agenda. Neither did they welcome political parties into the structure of the C5F, because their involvement would undermine the unity and the size of the movement. Indeed, one member of the trades union coalition, Eric, explained that, in contrast to the trades union FO, which openly voiced leftist ideas, other trades unions such as UGTM and CSTM supported pro-independence ideas.

Unlike the nationalist parties that had struggled for decades to rally the population to their cause, the C5F managed in a few days to impose its authority and to challenge the political agencies. In the next chapter I outline how the protesters performed their identities, and how they voiced collective identity discourses. However, it can already be said that the ways the protests were structured showed that the construction and the affirmation of identity discourses emerged outside the existing political structures.
4.4- Conclusion

The departmentalisation of Martinique provides an interesting opportunity to analyse the limits of integrating an ex-colony into a former empire. It eventually questions the feasibility of decolonising an ex-colony by the process of assimilation. I also raise questions about the ways departmentalisation simultaneously impedes the integration of Martinique and limits the expressions and/or the rise of nationalist and separatist discourses. Furthermore, Martinique is located in the Caribbean, yet it is a full member of the European Union. According to Vergès (2006: 60–69) the appellation “overseas” – from French overseas departments – had replaced the word “colonial” in the French national narratives. Such a statement might be seen as quite extreme, but it outlines the ambivalent position that Martinique occupies within the French nation-state. It also demonstrates the resilience of the colonial discourses that still influence the Martiniquan society and the economy, with the further implication that departmentalisation failed to address the social and economic legacies of colonisation. Several social uprisings challenged departmentalisation. Yet, despite the disastrous outcomes of departmentalisation, Martiniquans seem reluctant to step towards their own independence or autonomy. During the 2009 protest; the population protested against all kinds of economic and social inequalities. The structure of the C5F was very flexible, and this helped to encourage the participation of protesters within the movement, while also helping the organisation to strengthen and to broaden their actions from different angles. However, the 2009 protests also shed light on the strong divisions that separate the main nationalist parties, and on the limited influence they have in Martinique. This means that this movement exposed both the limits of departmentalisation models, as well as the limits of the secessionist discourses – and political parties – in Martinique. Neither of those forms of nationalism has unified Martinique. More importantly, they both contribute to further dividing a society which is already deeply divided. The social movement created alternative bonds which unified the protesters.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOLIDARITIES BETWEEN PROTESTERS DURING THE 2009 PROTEST
5.1 - Introduction

The thesis argues that it is impossible to achieve the integration of Martinique into France without addressing the economic and social legacies of colonialism in both the territories of France and Martinique. Such legacies weaken social unity in the island. The dissertation also explores how this integration has been thwarted by the politics of departmentalisation driven by the French state. In the previous chapter (Chapter 4 – The Contested Integration of Martinique into France), I explained that French republican nationalism failed to fully integrate Martinique into France. Indeed, it shall be the role and the function of the Republic to address and remove the economic and social inequalities that impede the building of national unity, thereby challenging the effective participation of Martiniquans in the political and economic life of the island. However, the numerous economic and social inequalities that persist in Martinique not only impede any integrationist agendas, but they also trigger the rise of drawn-out social protests, such as the 2009 protest.

The argument developed in this chapter is that despite the politics of assimilation, the protesters were able to voice exclusive identity narratives as part of their efforts to expose and resist economic and social inequalities. In this chapter, national identity is studied mainly as a performance, and the protest is the context in which this performance took place. This chapter also challenges previous research studies, which assert that there are no metadiscourses of community in Martinique (e.g. Chivallon, 2002). Instead, I argue that liminal moments form the basis for the building of unity in Martinique. I argue that because of the liminal character of the social movement, the protesters voiced and performed their strong sense of unity, which prior nationalist discourses failed to emulate. Firstly, this chapter explores how collective identities were voiced and performed during the social movement. Secondly, this chapter discusses the ways the protesters contested the resilience of colonial discourses.

The 2009 protest was unique in the sense that the protesters powerfully voiced their "Martiniquanunity". Several studies have theorised upon whether the colonial history of Martinique still threatens any form of lasting social cohesion in the island (e.g. Cottias,
These studies conclude that metadiscourses of community in Martinique are fragile and easily broken. However, I demonstrate that the 2009 protests challenged in part these findings. The protesters rallied around the same chants and slogans; they marched daily in the streets Fort-de-France. Thus, during the 38 days of protests, the protesters publicly built strong collective identity narratives. The protesters publicly asserted their Martiniquanity, yet they did not let the local nationalist parties monopolise or dominate the protest. Therefore, the 2009 protests showed that nationalism may not necessarily be the ultimate tool for constructing unity in Martinique.

In order to build these arguments, the first part of this chapter draws on my empirical research to analyse the reasons why metadiscourses of unity and solidarity in Martinique are very fragile. In this first section, I also show that the resonance of the colonial past of Martinique weakens social cohesion.

However, in the second section, I examine how the liminal character of the 2009 protests allowed the Martiniquan protesters to assert their Martiniquanity. I show that the movement was exceptional because it was during the marches that the protesters voiced heroic narratives of unity and fraternity, which strengthened the strike. In this part, I analyse the influential role played by the broadcasting of a documentary entitled *The Last Masters of Martinique* in the construction of those narratives. In contrast to what happened in Guadeloupe, the social movement organisation C5F did not lead the strike in Martinique. Instead, the protesters led the protest in Martinique. In this section, I also argue that the protesters challenged the resonance of colonial discourses in Martinique, and this collective struggle bonded them together.

The third section analyses how protesters performed their solidarities. I show that the 2009 protest was a liminal space that allowed protesters to assert their collective identities. The protesters created a liminal space through which they could express and perform their collective identities in a very distinctive way called “communitas”.
However, in the fourth section, I highlight the weaknesses of “communitas”. I explain how the strong solidarity that the protesters performed during the marches slowly crumbled towards the end of the protest.

In the previous parts, I argue that the exposure of colonial discourses strongly influenced the construction of solidarity between protesters. However, in this part I argued that as soon as such discourses were silenced, this exceptional solidarity began to fade away. This means that the protesters created social unity; they also performed their shared identities to essentially contest the ongoing colonial discourses and legacies that still exist in the islands. In addition, these findings suggest firstly the idea that the protest was not a pro-independence protest, nor was it a protest for the autonomy of Martinique. The 2009 social movement was instead a movement in which protesters challenged the deep resonance of colonial discourses and practices in Martiniquan society.

5.2 – Fragmented Collective Memories and Identities

Previous publications about the 2009 social movement have been consistent in comparing the protests to a “revolution”, a “rebirth”; it was an “historic” or an “unprecedented” event (Durpaire et al., 2009; Melyion-Reinette and Durpaire, 2009; Romana, 2009; Bonilla, 2010: 127). All of these publications stress the very unique character of the protest because it opened an opportunity to “experiment with new forms of solidarity and authority” (e.g. Chivallon, 2009: 106). These studies struggle to explain the reasons why such strong solidarity suddenly arose during the protest. However, I argue that the resonance of the colonial discourses favoured the emergence and the development of various strong forms of solidarity between protesters. In this section, I analyse the ways collective solidarity is constantly challenged in Martinique, and how such lack of solidarity challenges the formulation of collective identity narratives.
5.2.1 - Fragmented Social Space and Fragile Social Cohesion

The blatant lack of solidarity between Martiniquans was a recurrent subject of discussion among the interviewees. The respondents systematically complained about the lack of cohesion, and the lack of unity that persists within the Martiniquan society. A female respondent named Lydie admitted: “Martiniquans eat each other. If one [Martiniquan] fights for something, or for a cause, another [Martiniquan] will take advantage of the situation just for himself.” Lydie, among other respondents, very often used harsh words to portray what they see as the “typical Martiniquan”. The interviewees were resentful; indeed, they were certainly not hesitant to use those words; on the contrary, they were uncompromising. For example, Eddy claimed that Martiniquans are “in essence acquisitive”; Lydia and Myriam believed that Martiniquans are “selfish” individuals, who are “only concerned about their own little comfort [and] nothing else”. Here also, the respondents used rather hostile words and sometimes demeaning terms to define their own society.

Numerous interviewees recalled various experiences of social divisions, and they openly shared their bitterness towards this lack of social cohesion. Hence, it is of prime importance to analyse how the interviewees framed and understood the foundations of these social divisions. Indeed, the way they described the lack of social cohesion also assists our understanding of how the discourses of resistance and solidarity were suddenly framed during the strike. Firstly, what emerged from the interviews is that Martiniquan society is spatially divided. Even though Martinique is a very small island of 1,128 km, the impact of the increasing process of urbanisation, which is called in Martinique “bétonisation”, was seen as a clear agent of social divisions. Bétonisation has been described by Burton and Reno (1995: 140) as “the remorseless spread of concrete in the form of hypermarkets and housing developments [...] motorways and service roads, hotels and marinas across the countryside and beaches”. It refers to the “concreting over” nature and landscape in Martinique (Campbell and Somerville, 2007: 102). This process has often been criticised for being one of the main causes behind the erosion of the Martiniquan culture and way of life (Gallagher, 2003: 95).
Secondly, the colonial history of Martinique and the process of assimilation challenge the formation of narratives of social cohesion. But more importantly, what emerged from the interviews is that Martiniquans challenge the colonial discourses, but still define themselves according to those same discourses. In other words, Martiniquan identities remain deeply divided and conflictual.

My interviewees were not the only ones to comment on the issue of lack of solidarity in Martinique. In the literature, collective identities in Martinique have often been defined as “ambiguous”, “vulnerable”, “fragile” or “instable” (e.g. Thomas, 2004: 47; Britton, 2011; Ozier-Lafontaine, 1999). The social space in Martinique is also described as “non-possessed”, and the absence of a real process of taking control of space has often served as an argument to explain the weakness of this collective identity narrative (e.g. Chivallon, 1994). The social space in Martinique has been deemed to be a replica of the plantation structure, which the inhabitants simultaneously dispute and reproduce (e.g. Burton and Reno, 1995). Despite this prior analysis, what does not appear in the literature is the deep feeling of nostalgia that emerged from my different interviews. For example, one protester named Lise explained what she wanted to say during the marches: “We tried to explain our mal'être [malaise]. We tried to explain that nothing belongs to us really. Martinique is like a big box in which things can easily be moved”. The same idea of “non-possessed” space was clearly expressed by Lise, but she replied with a voice of sadness. Along with other respondents, Lise considered Martinique a place that she almost has to endure. Martinique’s social space is segregated and this divides the society even more. Beyond the lack of solidarity, there is a “social malaise” in the community that the respondents see progressively growing and taking over. As another female protester named Marie recalled:

People don’t go to the local markets anymore. They go [...] to the supermarkets, to the superstores. Not so long ago, we used to buy directly from the local farmers, and it was cheaper. During the strike we rediscovered all of that. We could buy yams, tomatoes from small local farmers. The supermarkets don’t sell this type of food any more; they’ve killed our local economy.
What Marie explained is one outcome of the process of “bétonisation”. “Bétonisation” is a neologism that can be translated as “Concrete-isation” or “cementification” (Gerst, 2003: 298; Paravisini-Gerbert, 2010: 117). Many Creolist writers condemn the process of bétonisation, because it weakens the social interactions, and it destroys the natural landscape of the island (Dash, 1995: 93; Hess, 2011: 54).55 Another protester named Lionel added:

Not so long ago, there were no fences. You could go to your neighbour’s house just like that. Today everything incites us to consume constantly; and this affects our relationships with each other. [...] A few years ago, our home was a privileged place; it was a place where we could come together, now it has lost all its meanings.

Lionel regrets the scrambles or the “loss” of social cohesions. Likewise, what emerged from other interviews is that most Martiniquans are progressively losing their sense of place. Martinique is a society that has also forgotten the values of its past, and which is increasingly becoming individualistic. Accordingly, it is a society my interviewees did not recognise any longer. This is also what Burton and Reno (1995: 3) explained when they noted that since departmentalisation Martiniquans had to renounce their distinctiveness in order to become French: “one became French to the precise extent that one abjured West Indian-ness [...], the identification with the Other (France) required a prior negation of the (West Indian) self”. Jocelyn, a local television producer who played a critical role during the strike, also explained:

We produced a TV programme called La Kou Zanmi, you know? Well, they cancelled it!56,57 It’s over. So people don’t have space to talk. There is no forum. We don’t speak to each other. There is no village any more; there is no street light any more. Not so long ago, people used to speak in the streets ... They used to

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55 The “Créolists” are the writers who embrace the literary movement of Créolité, such as Patrick Chamoiseau and Edouard Glissant. This movement does not explore and define Caribbean identities in terms of origins but in terms of hybridity such as the Creole language (See Chapter II - Literature Review).

56 La kou Zanmi was a television programme broadcast on the local television channel Martinique Première. This programme was based on focus groups. Several respondents debated local economic and/or social issues. At the end of each focus group an academic was invited onto the set to analyse and to explain the outcomes of the debate. According to other respondents (Adèle and Jocelyn), this programme was inspired by open forums usually organised by the Martiniquan writer Monchoachi.

57 The personal pronoun “they” refers to the executive producers of the television programme.
speak under street lamps at night. But, have you recently seen four people talking to each other around noon? No. They are all using their cellphones. They always find all kinds of excuses not to talk to each other. You have to invite them on TV for them to talk ... People don't argue any more. We used to argue ... Perhaps we argued over stupid things, but at least we were communicating!”.

Jocelyn tried to understand why people are progressively forgetting their sense of place. According to him, “social place” and “geographical place” no longer coincide, which means that in order to build particular social interactions, one has to go to certain places. To some extent, Jocelyn described how the environment and the social structures greatly influence social interactions in the island. What Lionel or Jocelyn also underlined is that individual and collective identities are discursive, and that Martiniquans may have developed a poor a sense of attachment to their place. According to Low (1993:165): “Place attachment [...] provides the basis for the individual’s and group’s understanding of an emotional and cognitive experience, and includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place.” Despite the fact Lionel and Jocelyn do not share the same socio-economic backgrounds, they have something in common: they both think that they do not fully own the place they inhabit. They described a fragmented Martiniquan society that lacks social cohesion. They described how the organisation of public and social spaces divide and isolate them from each other. Finally, also relevant from the interviews are the ways the respondents voiced their experiences. They usually showed strong emotions of anger and deep pessimism. Jocelyn regretted the lack of spontaneity and engagement in social interactions, which he considered to be the signs of a society that is gradually exploding.

In contrast, a few respondents, such as Lydia, compared the 2009 strike to an implosion. Lucien, who was very active during the protest, compared the Martiniquan society to the volcano called Mont-Pelée. The same reply came from another interviewee named Jean-Claude who compared the 2009 uprising to the eruption of Mont-Pelée. When asked to explain why the 2009 protest emerged, Jean-Claude replied: “The volcano was erupting. [You can’t] turn it off like that ... We had to wait for the lava to pass.” His reply leads me to recall what Martiniquan society seemed to
be for Césaire (1939: 82): a “pélean” population that suddenly and sporadically explodes and forcefully exhibits its collective identities when no one expects it. It also reminds me of the crowd of people marching throughout the streets of Fort-de-France all dressed in red, like the lava (see Figure 8).

The legacies of artificial boundaries, such as racial boundaries, and the resultant lack of social cohesion, presented major issues with regard to building social and economic equalities in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Widespread spatial development projects compounded the issue, with persistent trends towards social divisions and segregations. The projects include the emergence of socially divisive neighbourhoods such as social housing estates, shopping centres, business districts (Mouillet, Saffache and Transler, 2007). However, during the protest, the main cities of Martinique, including Fort-de-France and Trinité, which had been fragmented by commercial buildings and modern infrastructures, became the cities of struggles against prejudice and domination. Jean-Claude outlined the idea that departmentalisation and assimilation failed to fully silence Martiniquans with regards to cultural individuality. The protesters had found a way to expose the taboos and to expose themselves in the streets. At this point, Martiniquans could still assert their distinctiveness within the Republic, and they could simultaneously question the homogeneity of the French nation.

Figures 8 – Street Protests in Fort-de-France – 26th February - Photos credit Denis Bouton.
5.2.2 – Colonial Discourse and the Lack of Social Cohesion in Martinique

As outlined above, the division of space was seen and experienced by the interviewees, such as Lionel, as one reason for the absence of a common discourse of solidarity in Martinique. Here, I argue that the strong resonance of the colonial past of Martinique is one of the main reasons for the lack of social cohesion in Martinique. However, I also suggest that even though colonial discourses generate divisions, the protesters attempted to counter those divisions.

The main slogan of the strike was “Martinique is ours, not theirs”. The plural first-person pronouns in slogans are powerful discursive tools because they influence the construction of solidarity narratives (Fulton, 2003: 1106). Every single respondent remembered this slogan, and some of them chanted it during our meetings. However, even though the interviewees systematically associated the pronoun “ours” with the word “Martiniquans”, it was difficult for them to define the word. Very often, the interviewees clearly struggled to define the word Martiniquan. For some respondents such as Alban and Maya, a Martiniquan is anyone who simply “loves Martinique”, and who develops social and economic opportunities for the island. For others interviewees, such as Myriam or Nicolas, a Martiniquan is anyone who “feels” this way; however, they could not exactly explain how to “feel” Martiniquan. A few other respondents, such as Andréa, thought that a Martiniquan does not adhere to any strict and clear definitions. According to her, anyone could be part of that community when she claimed: “Anyone can become like us.” Very few interviewees, such as Raphaël, were not able to answer this question; but in general, what it means to be Martiniquan might have been the most challenging question that I asked them.

However, it is important to analyse which fragments of the past the interviewees framed to make sense of the term “Martiniquan”, and how they attempted to overcome their struggles to give meaning to the term. The main reason behind such struggles is that the very ways in which most respondents attempted to define the term “Martiniquan” underscore the resonance of the colonial discourses in Martinique, especially the resonance of the discourses of race.
Indeed, the concept of race is definitely a strong identity marker in Martinique, as was the case for my respondents. Collective and personal identity narratives are deeply saturated with racial components and connotations. It is very common on the island to call or to recall someone by the shade of his or her skin colour. A light-skinned person is called “chabin”. For example, Alfred Marie-Jeanne, the leader of the nationalist party MIM, was not usually called by his name by the interviewees, but by his skin colour: “chabin”. However, the use of racial characteristics is not confined to a single social group. When I interviewed two members of the Béké communities, Louis and Jacques, they did not hesitate to refer to some people as “negros”, and others as “maroons” (runaway slaves) as is common on the island. Moreover, in Martinique, it being a mixed society, the racial categorisations are very fluid and ambiguous, because they also depend on each individual’s stance and definition. This point was best illustrated by Eddy, who described a Martiniquan as “someone who was born in Martinique, who is black ... Hmm ... Not too white ... Someone who has a certain skin colour ... well, you see what I mean ...”

Eddy’s answer reinforces and simultaneously challenges the point made by Anderson (2006), who defined nations as “imagined communities”. Anderson (2006: 49) stressed the view that a nation is an imagined community that is socially and historically constructed, from which each individual of the community “lives”, experiences and reproduces “the image of their communion”. In the case of Martinique, skin colour is a strong identity marker that assigns values and ideologies – such as “negritude” – and which strictly postulates on individuals’ identities and belonging. However, skin colour has also been a powerful segregating tool in Martinique (e.g. Chivallon, 2002; Affergan, 2006; Price, 2006). Paradoxically,

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58 A “chabin” is a sheep-goat hybrid. In Martinique, a chabin is a person who might have dark-skinned parents, but who has very light skin colour. A clear distinction is made between “chabins” and “mulâtre” (mulattos), which can be made by the hair texture. Personality traits are also given to the chabins, who are seen in Martinique as very hot-tempered people, especially women (Burton and Reno, 1995). A very dark-skinned person is called “Caprês” (Fish, 2002). A white person from mainland France is called “zoreille” (“ears” in creole) which refers to the reddish colours of the ears in high temperatures (Burton and Reno, 1995). A white person born in Martinique is not called “zoreille” but “vié blanc” (old white). The term “Coolis” designates the people of Indian origins, and the term “Syrien” designates the people coming from the Middle East, because of a large wave of migration from Syria in the 1950s etc. (Tripathi, 2008).
individuals reproduce “the image” of their divisions to find a way to bond through them. Martinique is a creolised place; it is a deeply mixed and hybridised society in terms of origins and cultures (Tripathi, 2008). Despite the various waves of migrations – such as migrations from Africa, China, Europe, Lebanon, or from India and Syria – Martiniquans still paradoxically identify themselves with divisive racial narratives.

Therefore, Eddy's hesitation shows that it is as challenging for post-colonial theorists as it is for the Martiniquan people to conjecture about any form of homogeneity in this diasporic society. Eddy's stance might also challenge the position taken by some theorists on nationalism who assert that nationalism is mainly about homogenisation (e.g. Hall, 2003: 15–32). This theoretical stance reminds us of Gellner’s definition of nationalism as a “political doctrine which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent” (1983: 1). This position indirectly assumes that Martinique cannot possibly develop a form of nationalism. However, Eddy’s response recalled what Verges (2003: 184) called “bricolage” (do-it-yourself). The word “bricolage” refers to the process of framing bits and pieces of available knowledge to customise or to fix new meanings. Verges (2003: 184) explained: “Creolization is about *bricolage* drawing freely upon what is available, recreating with new content and in new forms of distinctive culture, a creation in a situation of domination and conflict”. Therefore, like Eddy who defined Martinique by means of racial codes, any attempt to theorise Martinique identities through essentialist and racial discourses weakens the social cohesion even further. Therefore, the roles of both Martiniquan colonial history and collective memories contribute to fashion the identity discourses. Eddy's views seem to stand in direct contraction to what Martinique is: a deeply mixed society. At this point, Eddy seems to silence the constant "creolisation" of the Martiniquan society, as he selected racial references.

In the light of my respondents' answers I would argue that any metadiscourse of unity is weak in Martinique because the links that bond the people together have been historically reproduced and carefully crafted through social, economic and racial segregations. Indeed, social knowledge and power relations in Martinique have been shaped through resilient colonial discourses and narratives which still design strong
identity layers in Martinique. Indeed, the Béké community represents a layer, along with the other racial layers that the population design and reproduce to define individuals’ and groups’ identities and belonging. This point also shows that such discourses potentially challenge the unity of the society that the assimilation aimed to produce. However, I would argue that the process of assimilation superimposed another identity layer, but it did not soften or erase resilient colonial discourses. Therefore, Martiniquans are caught in these ambivalent identities. By the term “ambivalence”, I refer to the “continual fluctuation” or to “the simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion” towards an object or a situation (Ashcroft et al., 2000: 12). In post-colonial studies, this term refers to the idea that individuals simultaneously reproduce and challenge their post-colonial conditions. Martiniquans juggle with different identity layers, which give them various ways to shape new forms of identities. Thus individuals are able to easily shift from one identity discourse to another. This point was particularly apparent during an interview I had with Julienne. Julienne is a member of the MODEMAS party; she is a fervent nationalist and an independentist. From the beginning of our discussion, it became really clear that she feels strong resentment, and even rancour towards the Békés; then she made the following statement:

Julienne: “We are a people who should never have existed. Neither you nor I should ever have existed. A part of you would have been in Europe; a part of you would have been in Africa; another part of you in Asia. Another part of you would have been here with the Amerindians. But we should never have existed. We should never have existed. I always say that. I always say that to my sister. We should never have existed. But because we are here now, we have no other choice but to deal with it”.

Interviewer: [Silence ...]

Julienne: “But you know, not only the Békés say that. They say that we should never have existed. But on top of that they deny us as a people. They say that the people of Martinique don’t exist! They say that we are French!
The interesting point with Julienne’s comment is that she embraced and contested her own existence in an ambiguous and ambivalent way. Indeed, she repeatedly claimed that “Martiniquans should never have existed”, but in the conversation, she quickly asserted that the Békés are the ones behind such statement. Then she rejected her former assertion. She shifted from one statement to another. She shifted from one position to another. Her testimony shows that the multiplicities and the diversities of origins of Martiniquans are conflictual and are – like in her case – simultaneously defined through self-rejection and acceptance. As for the other respondents, Julienne seems to adopt and to oppose colonial discourse simultaneously. Like Julienne, other interviewees framed essentialist discourses to state common attributes within the Martiniquan society, but they simultaneously contested those same attributes. This was also the case of another respondent named Laurent who replied to my question “who is a Martiniquan?” with the following:

This brings us back to the Béké issues. The Békés think that they are Martiniquans. But do they always behave like Martiniquans? I take one example: during the strike, many Békés left our country. Let’s say one day there is another protest; I don’t know if they will stay, I don’t know if they will stay to work for the country. So, you see it’s purely economic. They are here just to make profits.

Laurent’s response to an extent shows his attempt of “bricolage”. Even though my original question was about the Martiniquan identity, his reaction was first to posit the Béké in his “bricolage”. Like Julienne and Laurent, many respondents systematically attempted to define a “Martiniquan” in relation to the Békés. The Béké community epitomises the resonance of the past, because the members created their identities, inter alia, in terms of race and family name from the earlier stage of colonisation (Beaudoux, 2002). The existence of the Béké community epitomises the strong resonance of the past which – in the eyes of the respondents – conflicts with the formation of solidarity in the island. For the respondents, the Békés constitute an “issue” – as Laurent put it – in the definition of Martiniquan identities. However, I argue that the Békés are not simply the reason why the Martiniquan society is divided; it is rather the constant recycling of colonial discourses in Martinique which challenges any sense of cohesion. For example during my interview with Léon, a local
politician, he categorised the Martiniquan social classes as follows: “You have the Békés on top, then you have the mulattos, then the metropolitans who come here just to make a lot of money before moving back to France, then, there is the rest.”59 Léon’s racial and economic classifications show the strong resonances and legacies of colonial discourses in Martinique; furthermore, they also show the strong social divisions that these legacies generate. In addition, the fact that Julienne positioned her history and identities according to the Béké community demonstrates that the negotiations she engages to define her identities, and her own existence, are constructed through tense ambivalences.

Sartre (2001: 19) once claimed that: “the only good thing about colonialism is that, in order to last, it must show itself to be intransigent, and that, by its intransigence, it prepares its ruin”. However, I would argue that it is the flexibility and the adaptability of the colonial discourse that made it last. In his research of colonialism in Nigeria, Ochonu (2014: 6) shows that the “flexible and improvised colonial practices” were very common; he added: “the flexibility over time geography was the most abiding logic of colonial rule”. Ochonu’s claim leads to the idea that the colonial discourses are also flexible according to the places and contexts to which they are applied. Therefore, even if colonial discourses or neo-colonial discourses and practices rely on divisions – either racial or ethnic divisions for example – these divisions are also flexible according to the contexts and the places to which they are applied and reproduced. These flexible and ambiguous divisions – which are also recycled or reproduced today in Martinique – allow the different identity layers to overlap, and to construct and deconstruct these ambivalent identities. This means that the individuals rely on ambiguous and liminal narratives to challenge those divisions. For example, the ambiguity appeared in Eddy’s comment when he attempted to define Martiniquan identity in racial terms and said: “Not too white ... Someone who has a certain skin colour ... well, you see what I mean …”. Eddy softened the racial ambivalences with ambiguous terms such as “Not too” and “a certain”. The ambiguity is also suggested in his hesitation, or when he left it up to me to decide: “well, you see what I mean ...”. Because of these successive ambiguities, Eddy created simultaneously a form of

59 The word “metropolitan” has a particular definition in Martinique. By metropolitans, Léon refers to the white French people coming from mainland France.
mutual understanding or a sort of bond between himself and me. Indeed, I did not reply to his question, but my silence was also implicit and ambiguous, as I tried to picture which type of individual he was trying to refer to. Even if the picture I drew might not have matched Eddy’s definition, I acted as if I understood, because at that moment, I thought that I understood what he meant. Consequently, this ambiguity is necessarily discursive. Therefore, I argue that faced with the ambivalences of colonial discourses, Martiniquans rely on the ambiguity of these discourses to construct their selves, and the “other” ambiguously. These ambiguities create the semblance of a mutual bond between individuals, and later in the chapter I will demonstrate that this ambiguity was also present during the strike and reinforced the solidarity.

In this section, I have attempted to present the ways in which Martiniquan society is divided. The organisation of space and the deep resonance of colonial discourses in the society challenge any form of metadiscourses of community. Still, during February/March 2009, protesters felt a strong sense of solidarity. The slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” somehow voiced the strong sense of cohesion the protesters felt and performed during the protests. The 2009 social movement is a rich site of exploration, as it displayed how the protesters performed and asserted their solidarities and identities once these ambiguous identities – which seem to play an important role in the process of identity negotiations in Martinique – are overtly contested. In the next section I demonstrate that in the course of the social movement, the protesters contested colonial discourses. They created a liminal space in order to reassert their ambiguous collective identities. Protesters challenged the legacy of colonial discourses and this temporarily created a strong sense of cohesion between the protesters.

5.3 – Collective Identity and Discourse of Resistance

In this section, I analyse how the Martiniquan society is fragmented. In this part, I also demonstrate how the 2009 protests created a strong sense of solidarity between Martiniquans. I explain that the social movement was a general protest against “pwofitation”. “Pwofitation” (or “profitation” in French) is a Creole neologism that can
be translated as "outrageous exploitation" (Moussaoui, 2009). In the context of the strike, *pwofitation* was framed by the protesters to denounce the colonial legacies. In other words, the general protest was a struggle against all forms of hegemonic and neo-colonial discourses that still shape Martiniquan society. In this section I demonstrate that the documentary entitled *The Last Masters of Martinique* was imbued with neo-colonial discourses and its broadcasting at the beginning of the movement strengthened the sense of solidarity between protesters.

5.3.1 - The 2009 Protest was a struggle against “Pwofitation”

As I explained in the previous chapter, a general strike, led by the social movement organisation LKP (Lyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon), began in Guadeloupe on 20th February 2009, two weeks prior to Martinique. The economic situation of Guadeloupe is no different from that of Martinique. The local economy is collapsing and the employment rate is astonishingly high, with an employment rate for young people of over 50% in 2009 (Chivallon, 2009: 120). “Pwofitasyon” was the watchword the activists used during the protests in Guadeloupe. This watchword was also used widely in Martinique. The word *pwofitation* is a Creole neologism that refers to a systematic use of all forms of exploitation and abuse by a given system or an individual (Faustman, 2004; Chivallon, 2009: 94). One protester named Christelle explained her participation to the protests as follows:

Christelle: “I wanted to protest against ‘pwofitation’. I really love this word. The products are way too expensive here. Beside, everybody knows that there is a certain category of persons who have almost all the big box stores here, and these people have the monopoly on everything. So, they do whatever they want. But we have no other choice but to buy from them.”

Interviewer: A “certain category of persons?”

Christelle: “Well, you know ... the Békés.”

Christelle connected Békés to the term *pwofitation*. However, she hesitated to say the word “Béké”; she implied it at first, until I asked her to be more explicit. She was not
the only respondent to hesitate before referring to the Békés. Many respondents almost systematically hesitated to even pronounce the word, as if it was difficult to talk openly about this community. However, throughout the interviews, it became clear that for many respondents, the Békés were seen a category of "profiteers"; they were seen as the leaders and the heirs of pwofitation. During my interview with Lydie, who disapproved of the protest, she interpreted the protest as follows:

    Lydie: “[the protesters] wanted to break something ...”

    Interviewer: “What did they want to break?”

    Lydie: “Well ... I don’t know ... It has always existed, but we did not talk about it .... Between the Békés, and you know ... the Blacks etc. There was a documentary, an interview with a Béké ... and it has to explode anyway. It had to explode. They have the money; they have the power.

As for Christelle, Lydie hesitated to join two ambivalent identities: the ”Békés”, and the “Blacks”. She used ambiguous terms to soften the ambivalences. The ambiguity is suggested in her pauses, including when she retracted and said: “I don’t know”, or when she used the pronoun “it” to vaguely refer to these ambivalences. She does not connect the “Békés” to the “profiteers”, but she reveals strong power disparities between these different communities, and she seems to admit that such disparities struggle to cohabit today. However, during the protests the word “Béké” was shouted in the streets during the marches. One version of the lead slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” originally voiced by Julienne was: “Martinique is ours, not theirs, bunch of Béké thieves we will throw them out!”. Burton and Reno (1995: 11) once claimed that: “the Békés are quasi-mythical beings, more talked about than seen”. But this was not the case during the strike. Indeed, the Békés were not present in the marches at the time of the protests, but their names were shouted everywhere in the streets of Martinique during the marches. Their names were painted on the walls (see Figure 10); they were represented in designed puppets (see Figure 10). For many respondents, the existence of the Békés and the social and economic influence of this exclusive community in Martinique echo the colonial past of the island. The Békés are seen as the ones, and the exclusive ones who profit from the past. Yves Jégo, then the
Secretary of State For Overseas France, declared during an interview: “We need to change the business model in the French Antilles [...] The government might not have been able to play its role of transparency for the last 30 years. This crisis is not a mere social crisis. Their economic system is completely archaic. It is a legacy of the colonial trading. The conflict between the colonists and the slaves is hitting us in the face” (Martin, 2009).

**Figures 9** – Representations of the *Békés* during the protest – Photo credit: Denis Bouton

In both pictures the Békés are directly mentioned, blamed and ridiculed. In the second picture (on the right), the giant marionette represents a Béké with large genitals with an arrow stating: "Une des pointes". The connotation of "Une des pointes" is the same as the Béké family name: Hugues-Despointes. The Hugues-Despointes family is a well-known and very wealthy Béké family in Martinique. One of the patriarchs of the family – Alain Hugues-Despointes – played a decisive role in the strike; which will be discussed later. From this second picture, it could be argued that the sexual dominance of a well-known slave owner is associated with the capacity of his descendants to reproduce from one generation to another an alternative system of
economic exploitation which includes: pwofitation, “imports”, “exports” and state “subventions”.

However, the word pwofitation was certainly not limited to the Béké community. Even though, for many respondents the word pwofitation frames the everlasting social and economic inequalities between the Békés and the other Martiniquan communities, this word does not simply designate one specific community or a social group. Vincent, who is also a trader, claimed:

Do you remember the slogan: “Martinique is ours, not theirs!” Bunch of Béké thieves we’ll throw them out!” Yes? Fine. But me, I say, it’s not only the Békés! The Békés are just the spine of the system, but around the spine there are the ribs. The ribs are all the people who take advantage of the system! But everyone takes advantage of the system! Everyone profits.

Therefore, pwofitation captures countless forms of hegemonies and abuses. It also emanates from a complex social system that everyone takes advantage of. For other respondents, such as Claude, a local politician and a firm independentist, pwofitation symbolises the dichotomies between the French and the Martiniquans. Furthermore, during the protests, the protesters genuinely questioned the place of Martinique within the French Republic. “Is Martinique a French department?” This question was asked during the marches (see Figure 10).
The image above (Figure 10) was presented to the respondents during the focus groups. The image pictures a protester waving the placard stating “Department in theory?! Or Colony in Reality?!” The respondents noted the irony in the message and particularly in both question marks. They recalled several economic or social forms of discrimination or *pwofitation* in the department, and they concluded that Martinique is not a department in the sense that it is not treated or viewed as equal compared to other French departments such as “Gironde” by the French government.

In general terms, the word *pwofitation* allows a wide range of meanings, and interpretations. This word takes many forms, and these forms were diversely expressed by the protesters during the movement. The ambiguity of the word might explain its popularity during the strike. But despite the respondents’ divergences about what it means to be “Martiniquan”, the word *pwofitation* reunited the protesters, because it captures the systematic use of colonial discourse and abuse of power stemming from the colonial past. One protester, Aimée, claimed: “There is still no fair distribution of wealth over here”. A counter-protester, Benoît, attempted to explain *pwofitation*: “I hate to say this but Martinique is still a colonial society, for example, the metro [...] are all very well paid here.⁶⁰ They come here with all their

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⁶⁰ A “metro”: is a white French citizen coming from mainland France.
arrogance ... The Békés have everything”. As for other respondents, Benoît understood *pwofitation* as the historical continuity of social and economic dominance. Departmentalisation failed to consider the specificity of Martinique, and this explains why the interviewees repeatedly pointed out the resilience of several forms of imperial dominance that successfully operate in their realities and dispossess them. Therefore, the independence of Martinique was not the purpose of the strike. The “issue of independence was never raised during the strike” (Chivallon, 2009; Lucrèce et *al*. 2009). A female respondent named Maya confirmed: “We were definitely not talking about independence. Really, we did not. It could have been the case by the way, but it was not about that. We wanted the situation to change”. Therefore, the purpose of the 2009 social movement was not to dispute the legitimacy and the authority of France over the department. The focus of the social movement was not to claim the self-determination of Martinique either. The protesters denounced the resilience of colonial discourses that create divisions in the society.

5.3.2 - The impact of *The Last Masters of Martinique* Documentary

In the previous section, I demonstrated that people engaged in the social movement in order to protest against what they called *pwofitation*. However, this chapter aims not only to investigate people’s engagement during the protests, but also to analyse the processes through which protesters framed their individual experiences of resistance into collective actions. In this section, I explore the catalysts that encouraged individuals to get involved in the social movement, and I also define the bonds that tied protesters together during the two months of protests.

The main slogan of the strike, which began as “Martinique is ours, not theirs”, turned into “Martinique is ours, not theirs! Bunch of Béké thieves we will throw them out!” I argue that what triggered the protesters to rally around the second slogan was the broadcasting of a documentary entitled *The Last Masters of Martinique*. The strike began on 5th February, but this film was broadcast on 6th February 2009. The role of the documentary was crucial during the protests, because it strengthened the protesters’ solidarity throughout the protests. The protesters who marched in the streets of Fort-de-France were not only singing about the high cost of living in the
island; they were also singing about what they strongly believed to be the real causes of the high cost of living in Martinique. At this moment, the word *pwofitation*, which encompasses various meanings, came to symbolise the Békés. Therefore, the social movement that was a protest against *pwofitation* was also – but not exclusively – a protest against what symbolised it best at the time: the Békés, their wealth and also their past. The economic wealth of the Béké community was described in the film, and the French journalist who created the documentary – Romain Bolzinger – pointed out the close relationship between the wealth of this community and their colonial past that they carefully preserve.

During my individual interviews and the focus groups, several questions were asked to the participants, and some of the questions focused on the documentary *The Last Masters of Martinique*. Except for one respondent, all of the interviewees remembered this documentary very well. They pointed out specific scenes they recalled in great detail. The broadcasting of the film was a major event during the movement, so much so that the respondents talked about the documentary even before I addressed the subject.

My interviewees remembered particularly two scenes that occurred at 17:46 and 19:13 minutes of the documentary. Both scenes are part of the same sequence, but they do not follow one another. The first scene lasts for 24 seconds, while the second lasts for 30 seconds. In both scenes, the well-known Béké Alain Hughes-Despointes presents his private property and introduces the French journalist, Romain Bolzinger, to his family tree (see Figure 11). During the first scene Hughes-Despointes says the following:

> [Historians] always talk about the wrong sides of slavery, but there were also good sides [...] Some masters were nice with their slaves, some of them even gave them their freedom, others gave them the opportunity to have a job, and other things...

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61 Except for one of the leaders of the C5F named Gilles, who told me that he never watched the documentary, all the respondents remembered it.

62 The documentary lasts for 53 minutes.
Along with this first scene, the interviewees recalled another scene (see Figure 12). During this second scene, the interviewee, Alain Hughes-Despointes, is sitting on a white bench while he made the following comments:

When I see mixed families, white and black children. Children are born with different colours. There’s no harmony. Some are born with hair texture like mine, and others with kinky hair, all of that in the same family, and with different skin colours ... I think that’s not right ... We wanted to preserve the race.
My respondents remembered and described both of those scenes very well. They instantly talked about the family tree that was shown in the first scene; however, they often referred to it with antipathy. For example, Jean-Claude compared the family tree to a “family cartography”, while Corinne compared it to a “pure blood” certificate. None of them mentioned Hughes-Despointes’ comment about the “good sides” of slavery which was stated during this first scene. Instead, the respondents simultaneously recalled his comments vis-à-vis “mixed families” during the second scene. Usually, deep emotions of anger and frustration were aroused at this point of the meetings. However, their reactions to this documentary and particularly to these two scenes might seem at odds with the common knowledge of the Béké community in the island. The Békés formed a very well-known community in Martinique. Yet I argue that what troubled the viewers was the exposure, the readings, the re-writings and the representations of the Martiniquan history by the Béké interviewees.

Indeed, since the French Third Republic, the French nationalist discourse took a drastic new turn. Universalism was then taken to be a central trait of the French Republic, or rather, its most enduring principle, one of its most valuable assets (e.g. Jennings, 2000). This implies that the French nationalist discourses rewrote the past by implying that France did not only establish slavery, it abolished it; France did not colonise the island, but “extended [its] freedom” to the colonised (e.g. Bancel and Blanchard, 2006: 41; Chivallon, 2011). From departmentalisation onward, the colonial past of France was reframed to build a national discourse of unity and forgiveness (e.g. Cottias, 1997; Chivallon, 2002; 2006; 2011). However, such discourses fail to consider the complexity and the deep impact centuries of colonialism had on Martinique. Indeed, it has been repeatedly shown that both “collective memories” and collective identities are fragmented in Martinique (Jolivet, 1987). This point was epitomised by Chivallon (2008: 873) who noted “[what] seems evident is the absence of a meta-discourse of community which would make a narrative of the collective trajectory available”. This analysis contradicts Smith’s (1998: 40-41) argument in which he claimed:

In fact, in liberal and democratic states, the aim of the national mass education system has been not so much to homogenise the population as to unify them around certain values, symbol,
myths and memories [...] allowing minorities amongst them to retain their own symbols and memories, allowing minorities amongst them to retain their own symbols, memories, myths, and values and seeking to accommodate or incorporate them within a broad public culture and its national mythology.

From this quote, it seems that Smith overrides the influences and the impacts of the different kinds of cultural and political hegemonies in the construction of Western modern nations. This point was also outlined differently by Chivallon who argued that: “the slaves’ social life and that of their descendants is only seen through the prism of ‘dispossession’ and the impossibility of mastering their constituents of identity” (Chivallon, 2008: 872).

When this perspective is applied to the film, the relevance of both scenes is that they have been linked precisely together by the respondents. The linkage between both scenes meant that, unlike for the slave descendants, in such a community, as within the Béké community, the traces of the past have been archived, and carefully preserved. This means that contrary to the slave descendants but within the Béké community the traces of the past have been preserved in such ways that their archives could be read and re-read by them and by others, and this reinforces their identities as Békés, or as descendants of slave owners. Finally, unlike for the slave descendants, the family tree symbolised their solidarities from and through “Jean Assier”, the Béké positioned at the centre of the genealogy. In this reading, Martinique history was read through the prism of the Békés, through the prism of “dispossession”, since all traces of interconnections, or interrelationships, between the Békés and the other communities on the island were erased or silenced. Accordingly, the fact that my respondents merged two different scenes of the documentary suggests that this past still resonates today in Martinique. Therefore, because the documentary was broadcast at the very beginning of the protests, I argue that the strike opened a space of collective testimonies. This means that during the strike in Martinique the word “dispossession” was creolised and reframed as “pwofitation”.

Conclusively, the main slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” was expressed as a form of resistance to the common sense of dispossession. The strike created a space where “crossed out” memories could be exposed. Indeed, even though collective memories
in Martinique are scattered, or as Glissant said (1981) “crossed out”, in the context of the protests, it was also collective memories that brought protesters together. The collective memories of the colonial past did not only create a space, or a channel that connected and united protesters all together; but it was also a bridge via which individuals could relate, in order to build, to expose and re-appropriate a new collective narrative, or in order to rewrite their very own history, that could not be forgotten. In the previous chapter, I outlined how the concept of negritude, defined by Césaire, followed a process of re-telling or of re-narration of the colonised history. After the broadcasting of the documentary, the protesters followed the same process. This means that, as form of resistance to the hegemonic narrative voiced by Hugues-Despointes in which the Martiniquans have been objectified, the protesters re-narrated or re-told their own history during the protests.

This point was well framed by one respondent, Christianne, who said that the documentary reminded her of: “a circle into which you cannot enter”. The circle she referred to might well be Hugues-Despointes’ family tree. However, the “circle” in question was not only the family tree; it also represented her interpretations of the history of Martinique that runs in circles, a history that repeats itself; a historical continuum, a history which she could not be part of, and a history she still cannot be part of. Her interpretations were also shared by the majority of my interviewees. In this sense, Martinique was either framed for example by Julienne and Maya as a “colony”, or it was run as such (e.g. Christian; Lucien). According to Laurent and Claude, France was still the coloniser; or, according to Constant and Gabin, France was still a metropolis. Finally, the Békés were the elite who still lead the island and perpetuate a neo-colonial system. This last idea was for example voiced by numerous respondents such as Joël, Dimitri, Edith and Hugo.

The film had influenced and offended my respondents, but it had another impact on me. I remember watching the documentary on social media, prior to its broadcast. I also recall the strong anxiety I felt when I read the title, and the comments made by those who had shared it. The comments mattered to me more than the documentary. The first shots of the film showed people surfing, and this sequence was already quite telling for me. Indeed, except for the tourists, no one really surfs in Martinique. Then,
I recognised John Williams’ famous song *Schindler’s Workforce* playing in the background, which led me to question the seriousness of the documentary. Finally, the voice-over introduced Martinique as follows: “The Caribbean as we imagine it: with turquoise blue water at 30°C; stunning natural landscapes, and massive villas surrounded by water.” The first shots of the documentary had already indicated to me “which” kind of story was about to be told. In fact, I saw the film as the recurrent nostalgic curiosity, which includes an exotic delectation of a past that has been well preserved. I felt and observed this delectation in the thousand eyes attached to an old empire which struggles to avow its own nostalgia.

As a Martiniquan women travelling abroad, I am used to this gaze; and it has always astonished me to observe the various ways this gaze had often wanted to play the role of “saviour”. In fact, I did not learn anything from the documentary that I hadn’t already known. However, I felt that the authoritative gaze of this media narrative, claiming to expose a secret historic reality with relative dramatisation, would ignite shame and guilt. The role played by the French state was not questioned once, the Republic was untouched, and the journalist played well the role of the liberator in front of the French audience. I was more nervous to see the exposure of such narrative in the midst of an already tense social environment. The protest was a moment, where people had chosen to expose themselves. The documentary had exposed them in such a way that they did not have much choice but to open themselves up on their own terms. I had chosen to replicate those moments by letting my respondents talk throughout my fieldwork. Consequently, I started this thesis to tell the story of a protest from the perspective of a few Martiniquans, to finally realise that my story was being told by them. Said (1979: 162) had been particularly critical of how “narrative order” is manipulated by the writer. So, I knew that my own story was intrinsically linked to the narratives of my respondents. However, leaving Martinique not only turns me into an outsider abroad; I also became an outsider at home. Yet I was so careful to let my respondents lead the exchanges, that I found it was particularly challenging to value the impact of my own voice on my research process,

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63 *Schindler’s Workforce* is a song composed by John Williams for the historical drama: *The Schindler’s List*. The movie is based on the life of Oskar Schindler, a German entrepreneur, and member of the Nazi Party, who saved the lives of thousands Jews during the Holocaust/ Shoah by hiring them in his factories (Spielberg, 1993).
as well as on my respondents’ narratives and experiences of the protest. It has become obvious that research does not end with analysing data. Because researchers may become authors, the question is how the research process and its results should be presented in order to have an impact.

Shortly after the broadcasting of the film, the original slogan of the strike, “Martinique is ours, not theirs, we won’t let them do whatever they want in our country”, quickly changed to: “Martinique is ours, not theirs, a band of profiteers thieves, we won’t let them do whatever they want in our country”; and finally turned into “Martinique is ours, not theirs, a band of Béké thieves, we will throw them out!” All my interviewees remembered these slogans. Much less is known about how the slogan was created. Except for the first version of the slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs”, which was first composed in Guadeloupe, the two other versions of the slogan emerged in the streets of Fort-de-France. 64 Julienne, who was very active during the protests, and who marched under the flag of the nationalist party MODEMAS, explained how the slogans were shaped at the beginning of the protest. She recalled:

The slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” was adopted right away. That is to say that I started the march in front of the trade union headquarters, and we were told that the slogan was [in Creole] “Martinique is ours, not theirs, we won’t let them do whatever they want in our country”. That was it. Then we began to march, and when we came close to the market, which means that when we walked less than 20 metres, I started to say “Martinique is ours not theirs, band of vagabonds, thieves we should throw them out”. A friend of mine, who was carrying the MODEMAS flag, overheard what I was saying and asked the people who were around us to repeat what I was saying. So we did not walk for more than 20 metres.

After 50 metres all the people who were around us, around fifty people, were saying: [Respondent is singing] “band of vagabonds, thieves we should throw them out”. Then each time people were saying “vagabonds”, [my friend and I] shouted “Békés!”. [Respondent is laughing]. Then instead of saying “vagabonds” we were saying: “a band of Békés, thieves we should throw them out!” Then when we walked by Croix

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64 The original slogan was “Guadeloupe is ours not theirs, we won’t let them do whatever they want in our country”.

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Mission, the slogan which was “Martinique is ours, not theirs we won’t let them do whatever they want in our country” turned into “Martinique is ours, not theirs, a band of Béké thieves, we will throw them out!”\textsuperscript{65} In fact in less than 100 metres the slogan was created.\textsuperscript{[She repeats the same story with excitement]} In fact, we never sang for too long the first version. [...] What surprised me, what really surprised me is that people were saying it with so much passion! That means that people agreed with the fact that the Békés are thieves, this is what surprised me. After the march I went on the internet, people were saying it. It’s at this moment that I realised that a tiny core, me, became a small group of 3, 4, 5, 10 etc. Because we didn’t lead the march. When I protest, I am never at the front; I am always at the back. So, the front did not lead for the back to echo. This time the back sang and it rebounded to the front, and everyone was singing it. When we began to protest it was about 9am, at about 9:45am everyone was saying “band of Béké thieves”.

Contrary to what Julienne said, not everyone sang the last slogan. Some of my respondents, like Eddy and Jocelyn, refused to chant the third version, but chanted instead “Martinique is ours, not theirs, a band of profiteers thieves, we will throw them out!” Other respondents such as Alain claimed that they fiercely chanted the second slogan. Yet all three versions outline a form of hegemony, and they emphasise a shared experience of “dispossession”. The title of the documentary The Last Masters of Martinique is quite telling. Throughout the documentary Romain Bolzinger explains how the Békés lead the local economy. He also explains how the community carefully preserved and still preserves the economic and social privileges they inherited.

The high cost of living on the island was not the only focus of the film. A significant part of the documentary highlights the ecological impacts of the chlordecone (also known as kepone) in Martinique. The chlordecone is a pesticide used in the banana plantations to eradicate a particular parasite called the weevil (Spécial Investigation, 2009). Particularly efficient as a pesticide, the chlordecone is also a strong pollutant and is possibly carcinogenic (Bocquene and Franco, 2005: 617, Landau-Ossondo et al. 2009: 389; Spécial Investigation, 2009). Although the French government prohibited the use of chlordecone on mainland France in 1990, it was widely and extensively

\textsuperscript{65} Croix Mission is a cemetery that is situated in Fort-de-France.
used in Martinique and in Guadeloupe until 1993 through successive derogations granted by the French government to the planters (Bocquene and Franco, 2005: 612; Spécial Investigation, 2009). The intense use of this pesticide for years has led to extensive contaminations of rivers and streams, and has led to intensive pollution of half of the agricultural land for decades (Bocquene and Franco, 2005: 613; Spécial Investigation, 2009).

The documentary exhibits the correlation between the soil that has been contaminated by the chlordecone and the high rates of prostate and breast cancers in Martinique (Spécial Investigation, 2009). Indeed, the rate of prostate cancers in Martinique is the highest worldwide, and the standardised incidence rate of prostate cancer in the department reaches a value twice that of metropolitan France (Landau-Ossondo et al. 2009: 384; Spécial Investigation, 2009). The question of whether or not the chlordecone generates cancer is still under debate, but recent studies on the matter tend to show strong correlations between the two (Multigen 2010; Bocquene and Franco, 2005). The kepone issue was included in the documentary because the majority of the agricultural lands were kept mainly by the Békés, and because of the successive derogations they requested to keep using the pesticide for the mass production of bananas (Spécial Investigation: 2009, Burton and Reno, 1994: 9). During the marches, the chlordecone issue was regularly brought into the streets (see Figure 13). In Figure 14 a woman is holding placard stating “February 74 – February 09: High cost of living – No future for the youth – chlordecone – It is clearly them”. Even though she directly looks at the camera, the target of the accusation is just implied with the pronoun “them”. However, the ways she linked the different dates of two major protests, “February 74” and “February 2009”, with the chlordecone, and with the second part of the slogan “Sé yo mèm” (it’s them), shows again a sense of dispossession, and that the targets of the message could well be those who are seen to be responsible for a system of exploitation, or of pwofitation.

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66 75.3 per hundred thousand for metropolitan France vs 152.7 hundred thousand for Martinique in 2002 (Landau-Ossondo et al. 2009: 384; Spécial Investigation, 2009).
Although the economic power of the Béké community has been known in Martinique for centuries, the broadcasting of the documentary during the strike contributed to further labelling them as the profiteers. Because the documentary was televised on a French leading television channel, the way of life of the Békés was displayed on a much larger scale than Martinique. Numerous counter-protesters regretted this large-scale diffusion, including Christian: “The problem is that people could not only see the film in Martinique, it was broadcasted on Canal+. This means that everyone could see it! Because of that everything exploded, they should have forbidden its broadcast.” According to Christian, the exposure of the Békés was what seemed to have triggered the people to protest. The motivations of the protesters to join the movement were more complex, but the sudden visibility of the Béké community, their wealth and their pride regarding their history and colonial heritage exposed the social movement outside Martinique. Indeed, even though the general strike had important local media coverage, it took some time for the national media to react (Chivallon, 2009: 105). Prior to the film, major newspapers – such as *Le Parisien, Le Figaro or Libération* – published short articles about the protests in Guadeloupe. In contrast, the

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67 The first article published by *Le Nouvel Observateur* was published on the 10/02/2009 entitled “Blocage Total Dans le Conflit aux Antilles”. The first article published by *Le Monde* was published online on the 22/02/2009 entitled “Trois Jours de Grève Générale et des Barricades en Guadeloupe” and the first printed article was on the 25/02/2009 and entitled “Grève Générale en Guadeloupe contre ‘La vie chère’”. 
broadcasting of the film triggered the publications of a much larger wave of articles.\textsuperscript{68} Several of those articles reported the social tensions between the Békés and the other communities in Martinique; they also described in much detail the histories of the Békés and particularly their way of life. One could read such titles as: “The French Antilles Today as Yesterday” published by \textit{Le Figaro} (Thréard, 2009); or “Social Crisis and Racial controversies” (\textit{Le Parisiens}, 2009).

Martinique is usually absent from national media coverage (Chivallon, 2009). Yet, since the broadcasting of the documentary, the department was suddenly mentioned daily. Martinique was pinned in world maps on television to recall to the French audience where this French territory was located. But Martinique was only mentioned through the prism of the Békés’ history and their economic influence. Martinique was presented as a society failing in its transition to modern times, and the wealth and the social codes of the Béké were intensively reported. Paradoxically, such media coverage silenced the voice of the protesters. The presence of the Békés covered the real issues of the protests. This sudden media curiosity and fascination at the Békés might well be seen as a form of nostalgia for France’s colonial past. Two spokesmen of the Béké community, Roger de Jaham and Eric de Lucy de Fossarieu, repeatedly attempted to minimise the role and the influence of the Békés in the Martiniquan economy (e.g. Dromard, 2009; Rivaud, 2009; \textit{Le Parisien}, 2009). Yet, despite their attempts to dissociate themselves from Alain Hugues-Despointes’ comments, the impact of the documentary was such that it opened a space where the past was already deeply contested.

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Le Monde}: Un reportage sur les békés enflamme la Martinique : 13/02/2009. 
\textit{Le Figaro}: A point-à-Pitre les grévistes s’en prennent au «profiteurs » : 13/02/2009. 
\textit{Le Parisien}: Blocage Total dans le conflit aux Antilles : 10/02/2009. 
To conclude, the 2009 strike was not a movement against the French Republic. The general strike against pwofitation which occurred in Guadeloupe two weeks prior to Martinique opened a space of expression and of struggle. *The Last Masters of Martinique* documentary showed the deep influences of neo-colonial discourses in Martinique and emphasised the role of the Béké community and the French state in the persistence of such discourses. The film contributed to the labelling of the Békés as the “profiteers”, and it greatly reinforced the solidarity between protesters. The strike did not exclusively target the Béké caste; nevertheless, for numerous protesters, the strike created a space for the protesters to openly and collectively challenge any form of neo-colonial discourses. The social movement also created an opportunity for the protesters to experience and to perform new forms of solidarity during the marches. The next part of the chapter demonstrates how the protesters performed this sudden solidarity.

5.4 – Performances of Collective Identity and Resistance

In this section I analyse how the protesters performed their solidarity during the protest. I argue that the protest was a short-lived liminal space, through which the protesters voiced and performed distinctive forms of collective identities. I also argue that throughout the movement, the protesters developed a distinctive and a strong sense of solidarity and kinship called “communitas”. “Communitas” are fluid and unstructured communities in which people become equal, and in which they develop a sense of strong community (Bilu, 1988: 302). The 2009 protest was a moment when the protesters performed distinctive identity discourses that challenged the assimilation process.

5.4.1 – Hybridity and Liminality during Social protests.

In the literature review, I introduced the concept of “liminality”. In post-colonial studies liminality refers to the “in between” space or “third space” much described by Bhabha (e.g. Bhabha, 1994). The concepts of liminality (or “third space”) and hybridity are closely linked. Bhabha (1990: 211) stated:
The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges; rather hybridity [...] is the “third space” which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority.

In the literature review I also outlined the main divergences between materialist and postmodernist approaches in post-colonial studies. According to Parry (2004: 75):

The effect of [post-colonial] scholars’ one-sided concern with the constitution of “otherness”/alterity/difference, or with the production of silenced subject positions, has been to cause matters of discourse undeniably to take precedence over the material and social conditions prevailing during colonialism and in the post-independence era.

In this section, I build on Parry’s critique to show that the liminality had material consequences, and that the protesters created liminal spaces to reformulate a strong sense of kinship. The whole protest was a liminal moment through which people freely reorganised social bonds and formed a unified community. Concepts of liminality and communitas have both been used to theorise social movements (e.g. Darby, 2000; Yang, 2000). Turner (1977: 96) argued that liminality is a phase of transition, it is a phase where the individual becomes equal, and creates a communitas. Thus, communitas are specific communities that are created within liminal spaces (Turner, 1977). In such cases individuals (re)develop ephemeral but strong social bonds (Turner, 1977). Communitas tend to temporarily reframe social boundaries and social structures (Turner, 1977).

5.4.2 – How the Protesters Created a Liminal Space.

Theoretically, social movements include various ranges of cultural practices and rituals through which meanings are constructed and reshaped throughout the course of the movement. Art is among such practices (e.g. Adams, 2000; Allen, 2009). Several respondents, like Lucien and Benjamin, referred to the works of several artists and musicians who used their arts and instruments as tools to protest.
During my fieldwork, I interviewed several professional artists, including a painter (Patrice), a musician (Laurent), and a poet (Lionel). I also conversed with amateur artists, such as Serge or Jerôme who played traditional music during the protests. Generally, at the end of the interview these interviewees invited me, or an audience, to look at some of the pieces they created during or after the strike.\textsuperscript{69} Christelle noted that the protest was unique in the sense that it was the first time the traditional groupe-à-pied or percussionist street bands gave rhythms to the marches. A groupe-à-pied is a percussionist band that performs daily in the streets during the carnival season. One carnival street band, “Tambou Bo Kannal”, protested every day with the protesters and led the marches\textsuperscript{70}.\textsuperscript{71} Christelle explained that during the carnival season, the street bands compete with one another; however, during the protest, some groupes-à-pieds merged with other street orchestras to play in unison.\textsuperscript{72} It was Christelle who particularly recalled the role played by the groupes-à-pieds during the marches: “I just decided with other friends from Moove to take our instruments and to play. Just play. Just like that. Nothing was planned, it’s very spontaneous.” The word “spontaneous” was regularly mentioned during interviews. Some interviewees “spontaneously” engaged in the protests, such as Eddy; and others still “spontaneously” created discussion groups, such as Adèle; other respondents such as Serge and Flora “spontaneously” went into the streets with little regard for professional and personal obligations. I suggest that all these forms of “spontaneity” created a liminal space, and as I demonstrate below, they also shaped and reinforced all kind of solidarities between the protesters. The different versions of the lead slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” were spontaneously framed by one of the

\textsuperscript{69} On Friday 14th October 2011, there was a two-hour meeting organised by the C5F, held in a northern town of Martinique called Sainte-Marie. An artist exposed a frame inspired from the strike and invited the audience to look at it.

\textsuperscript{70} The respondent (NGM269), who is also member of Tambou Bo Kannal, recalled: “Tambou Bo Kannal entered the movement after me. I am a teacher, so, I was already marching with my trade union. So I started to march from the very beginning. Then Tambou Bo Kannal marched three or four days later. Actually, we started here [the respondent showed the place of our interview]. Besides, it was a Sunday. We gathered all the members of the group to discuss the importance of the movement and the role Tambou Bo Kannal should play in all this. On the following Monday we began to integrate the movement”.

\textsuperscript{71} In Guadeloupe, the groupe-à-pied called “Akyo” was amongst the marchers.

\textsuperscript{72} For example, Christelle was part of a groupe-à-pied called “Moove” – which comprised exclusively women – which merged with other street orchestras such as “Guanaval”, and “Alliance 97.2” during the marches.
protesters, because the protesters evolved together in a liminal space during the marches.

Turner (1973: 216) claimed that within communitas emerged “a spontaneously generated relationship between levelled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes”. The differences, the disparities and even the social divergences that usually existed among the protesters were not erased but momentarily overlooked and restructured. The spontaneous dimensions of the protests encouraged the protesters to create all kinds of materials. For example, at the beginning of the strike, Lionel wrote a poem entitled “Reveil” (wake up) which he distributed, with the help of other friends, to marchers in the streets. In his poem he compared the protests to a “revolution of consciousness”. At times during the march, he read his article with a speaker in the streets. He also used “Reveil” to create – with the help of other friends and acquaintances – an association called: “Collectif de la Martinique-A-Venir” (Collective of Martinique-to-Come), which anyone could join to discuss and debate diverse social issues related to Martinique. Other associations were created during these two months. An association “jèn Pou Jèn” (Young People for Young People) was created by Joël during the protests. Another one called “Campus Dobout” (Campus Standing) was also created, which included students from the university such as Adèle. Joël and Adèle recalled that their associations along with other associations organised a meeting called “Ansanm An Tjè” (Together in the Heart) in which everyone could also debate and freely discuss diverse economic and social issues in “open mic”. Patrice also explained that these organised spaces of dialogue were reformulated differently by another group of protesters that included artists, intellectuals and academics under the name “Gran Sanblé” (Large Get-Together).

The main distinctiveness of these associations is that they did not have clear claims or any specific demands. François-Xavier explained that they rather allowed free discussions and free interventions during the meetings instead. A female protester, Lydia, recalled that “people were listening, people were very open, and accessible at

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73 This meeting was also called “An Nou Sanblé An Matinik An Tjè” (Let's Get Together In the Heart of Martinique).

74 The members of the Gran Sanblé or Gran Sanblé Matinik created a blog, available at the following address: http://gransanblematinik.wordpress.com/.
this time”. One last respondent, Lionel, remembered: “everyone was an economist; everyone was a specialist in something; everyone had something to say”. Improvised places of dialogue were spontaneously organised in the streets, or in front of the trade union headquarters, or in front of the prefecture.

The singularity of carnival is that it “opens up an alternative social space of freedom [and] brings the body back to public space” (Ainger et al., 2003: 175). I do not suggest that the strike was a “vidé” – or a carnival – but it has much of its transgressive and liminal characters (see Figures 2 - Street protest in the streets of Fort-de-France in February 2009). During the marches the protesters created a liminal space where they could dress alike, look alike, think alike, and sing and cry the same words. This experience of unity was expressed by Laurent, one of the leaders of the groupe-à-pied “Tambou Bo Kannal”, and who created one of the main songs of the marches called “Tchè Nou Blindé”. During our meeting he remembered extensively how the song shaped the movement, how it united protesters and how the song influenced the mood of the marches. He also described the structure of the song. Indeed, the drums composed the main percussion of the song. Historically, drums were played in the habitations by the slaves on different occasions. From an historical perspective, the drums played an important role during slavery, because they were a means of communication between the slaves, and also between slaves and runaway slaves (the maroons) (Giraud, 2011: 306). Therefore, drumming progressively became for the colonised a practice of resistance built on an obstinate pursuit of freedom (Johnson, 2012: 228–229; Munro, 2010: 35). Laurent also explained the title of the song. Indeed, the title of the song is quite telling, “Tchè Nou Blindé” (Our Heart is Sealed), because the beats of the drums recalled heartbeats that put the rhythm in the marches. In his testimony Laurent occupies a leading role in the creation of the songs, as much as he occupies a leading role in the creation of this social narrative. During our meeting he explained:

“Tchè Nou Blindé” appeared when Martiniquans felt Martiniquans. [...] So from that moment on, we felt Martiniquan. [...] This is my analysis. “Tchè Nou Blindé” became a national anthem. So the Martiniquan people became one at this moment. We needed a national anthem at this moment.
Laurent’s testimony leads to Ricœur’s (2001: 3) idea on self-identities and memories when he said: “to remember something is at the same time to remember oneself”. Laurent occupies a key role, a heroic role in the social narrative he fought for and believed in. Indeed, because he composed the song, and because he led the march and the groupe- à-pied, he led the rhythm of the marches. Along with the drums, the protesters were listening to him singing and repeated his lyrics. The common point between Laurent’s testimony and others’ is that each respondent recalled and extensively described a heroic role that they played during the protests. They also stressed the leading role that others played during the protests. Raphaël remembered that there were people who were in charge of storing cars safely during the protests. Adèle created an association with other protesters. Joël created a large petition to raise awareness for the youth of Martinique. Jocelyn created a television channel from scratch to give voice to the protesters. Aimée was in charge of distributing tracks and leaflets. Serge was playing music to hearten protesters and to support the CF5 during negotiations. Their roles empowered the movement, and their narratives strengthened the construction of a larger social narrative.

In their struggle for self-empowerment, the protesters collectively replayed common past experiences of anti-colonial resistance. The 2009 social movement was not a marronage in the historical sense of the term; but it was a modern and urban form of marronage. Like the maroon – the runaway slave – who runs around in circles, and in between the habitations, the protesters marched around the city of Fort-de France to contest the resilience of the colonial discourses in their society. They marched together through and around a place where real and symbolic hegemonic power is the most visible. In the French Caribbean literature, the city and typically the capital city, usually embrace the structures of the habitation. This means that the rigorous and rigid organisation of space is often depicted as the historic extension of the stratified structures of the plantation, and as a place where all the forms of neo-imperialism are materialised (Chamoiseau, 1992). Because of the ways marchers protested and performed in concert in the capital, they shaped a liminal space which drastically contrasted and competed with the rigidity of the architecture of the city. The “carnivalesque”, or the free structures of the marches, stood in opposition to the formal environment of the negotiations. One counter-protester named José who was
part of the negotiations at the prefecture recalled that when the negotiations were reaching an impasse, the members of the C5F trod their feet heavily and noisily on the floor to encourage the people outside to play louder: “each time they did it, the people outside were instantly singing louder and louder, they were so loud, sometimes we could not even hear each other in the room!” They constantly attempted to distort the formal structure of their environment.

In the course of the interviews, it became clear that the C5F did not have much control over the protests, or over the protesters. Lucette, one leader of the C5F, admitted: “We were at the negotiating table every day ... Sometimes, we were negotiating very late at night, sometimes until 1am or 2am the next day ... I was not really aware of what was going on in the streets.” The members of the C5F organised the general strike, but they did not lead it. Flora confirmed: “Let’s be clear, the C5F could not manage the whole situation, the population was managing the whole thing. The C5F created the movement, then the population took over”.

Even though the C5F launched and originally planned the protest, many respondents barely remembered the name of the leader of the organisation, Michel Montrose. Conversely, everyone respondents remembered the name of the leader and spokesperson of LKP in Guadeloupe: Eli Domota. As I previously mentioned, Domota was a very charismatic leader. He soon became the main narrator of the main protagonist of the strike in Guadeloupe (Bonilla, 2009). He examined the situation of Guadeloupe as followed:

> When we closely examine history, Guadeloupe [is a] volatile place simply because, I believe, old scores remain to be settled. The term scores should be between quotation marks; there are no scores to settle but the scores have not been settle. Guadeloupian society rests on the same foundations of the habitation of four hundred years ago: on class and race dynamics. (Couti, 2016: 2)

From his perspective, the protest was not only a collective act of resistance against colonial legacies, but also a way to purge colonial elements from the society of the new Guadeloupe. Moreover, it was not only vital to purge Guadeloupe from its colonial
legacies but also to settle “old scores” between Guadeloupe and the French state. From numerous accounts, Domota emerged as the one who was able to settle the old scores in Guadeloupe (e.g. William, Reno and Alvarez, 2011). Consequently, the televised negotiations sessions became a “public trial” (Bonilla, 2015: 220). Eli Domota delivered powerful pleadings, directly confronting the French state for their complicity in overlooking racial and class divisions, emphasising the lack of influence of local elected officials, who were unable to prevent unethical, and even corrupt commercial practices (Bonilla, 2015). Therefore, he embraced the figure of the maroon who dismantled the representations of the Guadeloupian as a passive subject who tend to abide by the rules rather than fight for his own ideals.

This symbolic trial may recall the “Columbus trial” which not as mediatised and which took place in Martinique. According to Vialla (2004: 175-176) exposed the desire “to demand justice and historical repair” that departmentalisation failed to provide. I would also argue that such public and organised settings differ strikingly, and in many respects, from our usually very fragmented experiences of resistance. Indeed, I remember julienne saying: “That means that people agreed with the fact that the Békés are thieves, this is what surprised me. After the march I went on the internet, people were saying it”. Julienne realised that there were other people who were thinking like her and who wanted to sing like her. However, julienne has realised all this by herself. For a very short period of time, she became a leader.

Domota caught the attention of the public, because he was confident, and also because he could adapt his speeches, or accusatory pleadings according to the audience. Then the televised negotiations sessions became known as the feuilleton Guadeloupe (Guadeloupe soap opera) (Bonilla, 2015). Guadeloupe as well as Martinique are fragmented societies, but Domota was able to rally the Guadeloupian protesters not only around the protest, but also around him. Therefore, even though Martiniquans and Guadeloupians were on strike, each strike had its own specificities. Because the negotiations sessions were not broadcast on television in Martinique. The Martiniquan protesters had to be in streets in order to know the evolution of the negotiations.
Walking has long constituted an important element of collective action in contentious politics in Martinique and in Guadeloupe (e.g. Bonilla, 2011). But, because of the spontaneous shape of the protests, several respondents, like Eddy, compared the protests with a long carnival or with a long “vidé”. 75 Like a “vidé”, people were dressed alike, in red; they were dancing behind the street orchestras and they were chanting the same songs together. In addition, the protests occurred at the same time as the carnival season, which begins at the end of February each year and lasts for four days. 76 “It was for us a way to express ourselves. Because there is no other way for us to express ourselves,” said Jean-Claude. However, all my participants stressed that any comparisons between the carnival and the protests stopped there. Andréa explained: “[The protests] had the form of carnival but they did not have the same meanings”. According to Andréa, the “form” of the protest reminded her of carnival. The particularity of carnival is that it provides “a demystifying instrument for everything in the social formation that renders collectivity impossible: class hierarchy, sexual repression, patriarchy [and] dogmatism” (Stam, 1988: 135). Therefore, carnival is an in-between space where the individuals are free to become new beings; they are no longer defined by existing identity markers such as social class or social orientation. However, other identity markers (e.g. dress, song, etc.) build the community. However, as Andréa stated, the protest was not a carnival, but it had the same loose structure.

I earlier argued that the social movement created a liminal space through which protesters freely engaged in the marches. There is already a large volume of studies that simultaneously investigate protesters’ moral, ethical and emotional commitments to a social movement (e.g. Whittier, 2009; Larzilliere, 2012). Such studies outline the diverse strategies used by the protesters and by the social movement organisations to sustain their involvement and to increase the level of mobilisation. These studies are useful in understanding protesters’ participation, but

75 A “vidé” is a carnival activity. It is a march that occurs during carnival season, where people sing and dance in the streets behind a street orchestra leading the march. They march like this through and around a city behind the groupe-à-pied. During “Mardi Gras” or Shrove Tuesday of the Martiniquan carnival, festival-goers dress themselves in red for the day and in white and black for the next day, Mercredi des Cendres (Ash Wednesday).

76 In Martinique the carnival season starts on a Sunday and it ends on Mercredi des Cendres (Ash Wednesday).
they tend to assume that protesters evolve within a pragmatic environment; or that protesters progress within a rational and critical environment. In the case of the 2009 social movement, because of the liminal character of the movement, I also suggest that protesters were engaged in a form of collective “utopia” that reinforced their solidarity throughout the movement.

Indeed, as I showed previously, the C5F created over a hundred demands to negotiate with the state representatives and the main economic leaders. One of these demand was a raise of 200 euros on minimum wages. Myriam, a protester, recalled: “At the time I was not working, so I could not ask for a pay rise, but the demands were utopian. A pay rise of 200 euros per month is utopian. A manager would never, ever suddenly give 200 euros per month. Never. It’s impossible. S/he can give you a bonus of 400 euros. [...] But 200 euros per month is impossible.” Myriam’s comment might recall the notion of “heterotopias” defined by Foucault during his 1967 lecture entitled “Of Other Spaces” (Shantz, 2010). “Heterotopia refers to the counter-site or to an alternative space, something of an actually existing utopia” (Shantz, 2010: 23). The heterotopia is a space through which individuals are space or differences, through which the individuals challenge and subvert their present reality. Thus, from a theoretical perspective, the liminal spaces and hybrid spaces the protesters built during the protests were similar “heterotopias”.

Indeed, another similar and surprising comment also came from Eddy, who claimed: “I was there because I wanted to show my solidarity; but it was all a joke. It was completely unreal ... You cannot possibly cut down prices by 15% or 20% just like that, no way!” Another similar comment came from Joël, who said: “well ... it was a bit utopian, but we thought the movement would open the doors for certain social classes ... We hoped there would be more serious price controls ... We hoped the small local producers would have some help. Not the Békés, I mean not the ones who already have power, I mean the small producers.” The relevance of these comments is that the massive mobilisation the protests had was also based on collective utopian beliefs. On the one hand, my interviews pointed out the unrealistic dimensions of their demands; on the other hand, during the protests they all joined forces to reach an end that they knew was completely unrealistic or, as they stated, “utopian”. They were
perfectly aware that the strike would hardly achieve a small percentage of their goals, but at the time, they shared this collective belief that it was possible, and most of all that it was reasonable to voice these demands.

How the protesters strived to believe in the legitimacy of their demands might also help us to understand the construction of solidarity during protests. One male protester, Patrice, once explained that the lead slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” “was not rehearsed but chanted”; he added “it was chanted like a prayer”. Many respondents, especially Raphaël and Michelle, concede that this slogan was also directed towards themselves, as if they wanted to convince themselves or as if they wanted to believe that Martinique was really theirs. This also means that the protesters were also engaged in a subtle mechanism of self-persuasion. When the protesters repeatedly chanted “Martinique is ours, not theirs”, this was undoubtedly part of a complex process of self and collective persuasion. I argue that the liminal space the protesters created helped to shape the “utopian” dimensions of their demands. One protester, François-Xavier, recalled: “there was no consensus regarding the methods; […] we did not even know what we wanted to do; but we all agreed that we must do something. This was more or less the kind of atmosphere there was in the streets.” François-Xavier drew attention to people’s solidarity and their will to play a part in the social changes. They could not precisely point out what they wanted to collectively achieve, yet they strongly believed in their duty to act together. At this moment, the protesters wanted to become responsible and accountable for a social change they believed in.

Therefore, the liminal character of the protest allowed such processes to occur. Within this liminal space, the protesters could voice heroic narratives, they could believe in their individual and collective influence on the system they challenged, and it was within this liminal space that they performed their identities.

5.4.3 – The Construction of “Communitas” During the Protest.

In this part I show that because of the liminal character of the movement, the protesters performed a strong sense of solidarity and they created a strong
community called “communitas”. All of the respondents who were involved in the protests stressed the strong solidarity they experienced during the movement. Adèle explained: “For me it was unique … I’ve never felt that before, this feeling of unity, I felt power.” Myriam added: “There was strong fervour, people were united, we were talking,” Christianne confirmed: “I saw solidarity […]. I talked to people who I thought I would never speak with.” During the interview with Myriam, I asked: “What were the main differences between the protesters?” She replied: “there were no differences between us. We were motivated. We wanted to show that there was solidarity between us […] some social classes were discussing with other social classes.” According to Myriam the protesters were constantly building a sense of solidarity.

Numerous interviewees recalled strong moments of solidarity and community. During the first focus group, one male respondent explained: “Everything was shut down, there was nothing left! My neighbour and I exchanged everything: foods, drinks, […] we were sharing our cars…” This comment is just an example of the different narratives of solidarity that emerged from the interviews. People did not have access to the large trading stores; instead, people shared, gave away, swapped with one another.

The streets became a place where everyone could defy traditional authorities and become equal. During my meeting with Flora, she intensely claimed: “I did not care about what my husband would think, I was in the street, every day.” What Flora said, and the way she said it, suggests that she felt independent during the strike, and that she could voice her opinions, and acted accordingly. The way she told me this demonstrated that she felt empowered during the strike. The impression of empowerment was experienced differently by Adèle, who claimed:

What I felt […] was a strong feeling of power; I’ve never felt that before. I felt that when we are together, united we are powerful […]. I had the impression that we, as a people, we were intelligent, we were not idle, all of a sudden there were very interesting things going on, people were open, and everyone was saying very intelligent things in fact. It was as if everyone had already analysed the situation in Martinique and was sharing their thoughts.
According to Adèle, the strong unity she experienced during the protests was empowering. Such experience was unique in a sense that she did not experience it prior to the strike. Her experience of empowerment was also evident when she said that she had the “impression” that Martiniquans “were intelligent”, but this also shows a clear lack of confidence. The strike created a moment of liminality, where members could build a new form of new community named “communitas”. “The characteristics of the liminal situation [...] provide the conditions for personal change” (Yang, 2000: 384). This “personal change” as stated by Yang could be seen in Flora's comment when she said that she could go to the streets unconstrained. It could also be seen in Adèle's statement when she said that “all of sudden” she witnessed that people were part of reflective and inventive processes. The protesters progressively shaped new forms of relationships and political participation, and they were “becoming a people” (Fè pèp) as some respondents such as Laurent and Lise underlined. The Creole expression “Fè pèp” is a performative utterance, which means that the protesters were constantly in the process of “becoming” a new community. The 2009 protests were built through performances and rituals, and these rituals framed a liminal space, where people could feel connected and equal. The songs, the marches, the slogans, or the red dress code were examples of those rituals the protesters repeatedly performed for weeks.

5.4.4 – The “Space of Appearance” during Social Protests.

According to Blumen and Haveli (2009: 977–978), protests and contentious experience in public space involves two essential characteristics: the first is the “place symbolism”, and the second characteristic is the “centrality” of the place. The “place symbolism” refers to the places where the power of the state symbolically establishes and spatially regulates its authority, such as within the “capital city” (Blumen & Haveli, 2009: 977). On the other hand, in the context of the social movements, the term “centrality” defines a place of struggle as a complex nexus that directly connects and networks individuals, groups or institutions (e.g. Salmenkari, 2009). According to Michel and Staeheli (2005: 798): “among its many other functions, public space is where dissent becomes visible”. In this statement, the centrality of a public place, such as the capital city, influences the visibility of the protest. However, this idea may be articulated differently: what if, on the contrary, it is the visibility of the protests that
causes the spaces of struggles to become central? Or what if, on the contrary, it is the disruption of usual or everyday mobility that causes the protesters to become visible then central?

Indeed, the places of conflicts indicate territorial identities, and in the course of these struggles, private memories are promoted on behalf of the community “to mark its ownership of space” (Reid, 2008: 490). In the early days of the protest a nationalist party called MODEMAS went to the Cap-Est area, where an important part of the wealthiest Béké families live, to protest under the slogan “Bétché pa ni tè, tè ta la cé ta Matnik” (The Békés do not own land, this land is the land of Martinique).77 Julienne, a fervent nationalist, was among them. They played drums, and they sang diverse nationalist slogans outside the area, but they were playing loud enough to be heard from a long distance. Blumen and Haveli (2009: 977) noted that “Where a demonstration takes place bears a significant communicative value, derived mostly from the quality of places to entwine political and cultural histories and disseminate a message through a long-standing built symbolism”. The place where these protesters chose to protest was significant since they directly challenged symbolic, historic, racial and spatial forms of segregation. Serge – who is not member of the MODEMAS party – also gathered with other friends outside Béké-land to play drums to contest the colonial symbolism of the place (see Figure 14: Map of Martinique (Fort-de-France and Cap-Est). By doing this the Cap-Est area became central to the protest, so that for several days the policemen were posted at the entrance of Cap-Est to prevent any kind of disturbance (Lucrèce et al. 2009).

77 However, this slogan was not specifically created for this purpose; indeed, the MODEMAS party regularly voiced this slogan in the course of previous demonstrations (e.g. Zander, 2007).
On 23rd February about 600 protesters marched in the main streets of the city of François – the city where the Cap-Est neighbourhood is located (Nella, 2009: 3). The protesters sang various slogans including another version of the lead slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs”, which became that day: “François is ours, not theirs” (Nella, 2009: 3). The slogan dismissed the others cities. François became the place of the struggles. On that day, François became central to the protesters. It is often argued that the “street is the classic cry of urban revolution, for the streets are where the people become the public and where their power resides” (Solnit, 2000: 176). In my view, the power of protesters resides in their ability to disrupt, to corrupt and to re-appropriate the structures of the public sphere. This was the case when Julienne along with other protesters went to Cap-Est, and attempted to contest the symbolism of the place (see Figure 14 - Map of Martinique - Fort-de-France and Cap-Est). The highly selective neighbourhood Cap-Est became to an extent accessible and reachable for the protesters. This is also what the 600 protesters did when they attempted to re-
appropriate the rich city of François. Consequently, the power of the protesters resided in their capacity to also reconfigure the social interactions of the places.

During the protests, the streets of Fort-de-France were occupied daily by several thousands of marchers. The streets were places where collective narratives of resistance could be experienced, performed, uncovered, and looked at. The protesters’ power did not simply take on form in the streets; the protesters’ power resided in their visibility. One interviewee named Ginette remembered:

Ginette: “I stopped going to Fort-de-France, I was forced to stay in front of the television.”

Interviewer: Why?

Ginette: “Going to Fort-de-France? Never, never, never! People were chanting “Martinique is ours, not theirs” with so much resentment ... They were all dressed in red and white. Until now, I refuse to wear those colours. They were not singing like on any other day. They were singing with so much faith, you see.”

Indeed, the protesters imposed their visibility, and then they became central, not the other way around. They became the main protagonists, the heroes of a new social and historical narrative. Throughout those two months of protests they redefined, in the streets, new collective identity discourses. Ginette was a fierce assimilationist, and she had an imposing character. I interviewed Ginette at her house. The first thing I noticed was a gigantic poster of Nicolas Sarkozy attached to the wall. The official poster showed the former president standing close to the French flag. It is very uncommon for people to expose the picture of a politician at home in Martinique, yet Ginette supports strongly the former president to this day and Sarkozy was smiling at us throughout the interview. However, during the protests, the protests invaded Ginette’s personal space. She later added during the interview that she watched the marches on the television that, as she said, she was “forced to stay in front of the TV screen.”
The protesters rearticulated new collective narratives. Their collective and personal histories, which had always placed them in subordinate positions, turned into a new story where they played the leading roles. It could be said that this visibility was in fact an act of freedom. This confirms the previous idea that the 2009 protest was part of a process of self-reflection, which integrated various dynamics of self-persuasion and of self-creation. Therefore, the lead slogan, along with all the other forms of collective exposures (e.g. dancing, singing), was part of a complex process of self-invention. This point confirms the idea that collective identities are not exclusively held by claimers, but are subjected to constant negotiation within interactions between protagonists and viewers in public spaces.

This collective experience of visibility recalls Arendt’s notions (1958: 198) of “space of appearance”. The space, she claimed (1958: 198, 199) is “where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but to make their appearance explicitly”. The “space of appearance” comes into being between individuals, and is constantly recreated when people act and speak publicly at once and together. “Space of appearance” is powerful and empowering because it is flexible. However, such liminal spaces vanish when the collective performances end (Arendt, 1958).\(^78\) Butler (2011) reframed the concept of “space of appearance” in social movements.\(^79\) She acknowledges the importance of the diverse forms of “materiality” or – “material support” as she puts it – in the formulations of this free space. Butler (2011) also explores the role of the bodies and “material support” during public demonstrations. The “material support” is the diverse material and objects that compose a place, including, the “streets” and the “squares” (Butler, 2011). Butler (2011) claimed: “the square and the street are not only the material supports for action, but they themselves are part of any theory of publican corporeal action”. This means that the diverse objects and places are used in accordance with the body to create the protests. From these perspectives, the 2009 protests can also

\(^78\) Arendt (1958: 199) explained: “Unlike the spaces which are the work of our hands, it does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being, but disappears not only with the dispersal of men – as in the case of great catastrophes when the body politic of a people is destroyed – but with the disappearance of arrest of the activities themselves. Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever.”

\(^79\) Butler (2011) studied the concept of space of appearance to analyse the Arab Spring in 2011.
be analysed according to the material support that were used to create these forms of visibility. The streets of Fort-de-France were one of these supports. Other material supports were seized by the activists such as buildings, theatres, conference rooms, cars etc. (See Figure 14 - Map of Martinique - Fort-de-France and Cap-Est). These materials were used by the protesters in order to either block authority's headquarters, the roads, the supermarkets, or city halls or to simply share their thoughts.

Figure 15 – Support of Resistance Used by the Protesters.\textsuperscript{80} Photo credit: Denis bouton

\textbf{A nationalist flag raised on top of the cultural centre L’Atrium during the 2009 protests. Photo credit Micha}

\textbf{“Write what you think”. Backboards were raised in the city in which protesters could write on.}

\textsuperscript{80} Translation of the text: WRITE WHAT YOU THINK - We need to create a money box for those who don’t have money - Fathers, look after your children…. Please - We are not responsible for the crime of slavery (said the Béké). Yeah but you still count all that money made from slavery (said the Negro) - Our solidarity we help to win this fight! - I am 11 years old, and I am for the strike, my name is Esta.
Protesters used diverse material to block the roads in the town of Lamentin during the 2009 protests.

During the marches a few protesters such as Dominique waved the independentist flag. Julienne, who was marching with the nationalist party MODEMAS, admitted that the majority of the protesters did not want to march near them, or near to their giant flag. She later admitted: “people are afraid of it”. However, while I was interviewing another protester, Lydia, at her home I noticed on top of her wall a small red/green/black flag. I asked: “Are you an independentist?” She replied: “No! I am not!” Then, I pointed with my finger the small flag, and she replied. “Oh I see! I took it during the protests, Malsa was giving out little flags like this one, and I thought it was nice, so I kept it and I put it there, but I am not an independentist.”\textsuperscript{81} From my experience, nationalist narratives have always been patriarchal and exclusionary. Being “pro-Martiniquan” meant to be in favour of the independence of Martinique. I have often experienced the tension between the two. I have never been attached to the flag, but I understood the broader attachement she may have had with this symbol of resistance.

Then, she showed me how she designed her home-made red outfit especially for the marches. The fundamental difference between both respondents’ reactions is the way they re-appropriate the flag, how they related it to their own convictions, and to their experience of resistance. Even though Lydia was reluctant to relate the flag to a desire

\textsuperscript{81} Garcin Malsa is the president of the nationalist and independentist party called MODEMAS (Mouvement Démocrate et Ecologiste pour une Martinique Souveraine).
for independence, all three respondents, Lucien, Lydia and Julienne, used the flag in
different ways to enhance their own visibility, their own space of appearance within
a flexible collective narrative of resistance.

It may well be argued that what is important is not simply the buildings, the streets
and the material supports as such, but the ways these supports were used to create
transgressive meanings and to build new kinds of interconnections between
protesters. The way protesters used all the materials not only enhanced their visibility
but also created an audience which positioned them at the centre. This point was
outlined by an independentist politician named Claude. Claude remembered with
excitement their sudden visibility in the media: “We were everywhere! Everyone was
there, TF1 was there, even Al Jazeera was there!” The magnitude of the movement
inspired some journalists to create a new television channel called “Télé Otonom
Mawon” (Pulvar, 2012). The television channel was watched by numerous protesters
including Dimitri and Benjamin, who were among the other respondents from the
focus groups. To do this, Jocelyn, with some of his colleagues, took possession, without
authorisation, of a theatre situated in Fort-de-France called “Téyat Otonom Mawon”
(TOM). In one day the channel was up and running. Jocelyn explained that over the
following days they refused to leave and continued to broadcast their programmes
with the help of a local nationalist television channel KMT. One of the protagonists
of the project, Alvin, explained: “We wanted to give a voice to those people.” The
majority of my interviewees watched these programmes with great interest, even
Ginette and Julien who both firmly stood against the strike. Clearly, the material these
producers used to broadcast the protests made the events visible, and they were
taking part in the formulation of the public narratives.

Cottle (2006: 411) argued that: “mediatised rituals [...] open up productive spaces for
social reflexivity and critique, and can be politically disruptive or even transformative
in their reverberation within civil and society.” Indeed, one main aspect of reflexivity
is that it enhances the capacity to “see” ourselves from different perspectives (Jenkins,
2009). To connect Cottle (2006) and Jenkins, (2009) with the concept of space of

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82 “TF1” is one of the leading national television channels in France.
83 KMT stands for Kanal Martinique Télévision.
appearance, I would also add that, for anything to be visible a *distance* has to be made. During the 2009 protests all the shops were closed or forced to close. The significance of this closure has been expressed by another protester, Lionel, who explained:

[The C5F blocked the distribution of gasoline] because it was a way to crack the system [...] Today everything encourages us to consume all the time; and this affects our relationships with each other. I think one of the outcomes of the strike was to stimulate people to realise that [the capitalist] model is not a model to go forwards. Because our homes, which were a privileged place, a place where we could come together, have lost all their meaning.

During the strike the economic activities of the island were on standby; the population could either stay indoors or protest. Therefore, the strike encouraged people to look from a distance at the way they participated in the construction of their society. This point was outlined by Lise:

It was very interesting to see this kind of paradox. At the beginning they were all saying: “they stop us”. [It is] always because of some “other” people. It’s because of because of “them”, [...] But very quickly I could hear people stating things they were doing without any obstacles, and which work very well here. For that we were a people.

Lise’s comment could well be correlated with the data that I gathered during the interviews. During both the focus groups and the individual interviews, the respondents recounted various personal experiences of prejudices, or of *pwofitation* for everyone to share. They systematically blamed an “other”, which could be the Békés, the politicians, the French government, or anyone they blamed as part of the system of *pwofitation*. This implies that they did not primarily talk about what unified them; they primarily talked about what divided them. To some extent, this observation contradicts the statement made by Lise, who noticed that the protesters openly debated their own complicity in the system of *pwofitation* they denounced. Indeed, during the interviews, the respondents did not address their involvement in the system they denounced. They mainly positioned themselves as victims. This point highlights the particularity of the protest when people could openly address in depth all the economic and social issues they wanted to tackle.
Therefore, during the focus groups, as well as during the days of protests, marchers began to point to the pronoun of the slogan, “theirs”, or their antagonists, but as the protests went on, a new dynamic of unity was created among them. However, this dynamic could not be observed at any point during the focus groups. In the course of the strike the protesters created different narratives and they formed a complex web of beliefs that bound them together, and that tied them to the movement. Unlike the focus groups, this collective self-awareness was also made possible because protesters could distance themselves from their day-to-day life experiences.

5.5 Conclusion

The literature shows that the strong resurgence of the colonial discourse in Martinique powerfully challenged any form of metadiscourses of community in the society. However, as I have argued, the 2009 social movement strengthened the bonds between the protesters. Throughout the two months of protests, the protesters experienced a strong sense of community. One of the main questions in social movement studies is how social protests come into being, and this is also relevant to the 2009 protests that emerged in Martinique. To answer this question, this chapter has explored the ways in which social actors framed and experienced the protests as a form of resistance to previous or recurrent conflicts. I particularly stressed the role of narration in the construction of collective identities and collective memories on the island.

In the literature review I stressed the influence of collective oblivion of the colonial past on collective identifies in Martinique and in mainland France. Collective oblivion not only creates an illusion of collective forgetting in both places, but it directly weakens social bonds between social actors. In this chapter I demonstrated that the collective narratives of oblivion that are usually performed on the island were challenged by the broadcasting of the documentary *The Last Masters of Martinique*. It was the exposure of collective memories that reinforced the bond between protesters. Marchers and protesters voiced their collective experiences to expose and re-
appropriate a new collective narrative, or in order to rewrite their very own history, which could not be forgotten.

I also demonstrated that “carnivalised” dimensions of the protests helped to shape a liminal space. This space allowed the protesters to expose their personal narratives. Within this liminal, or this “in-between space”, protesters also reinvented their collective identities and shaped a new community, a “communitas” they wanted to believe in. During the movement “material support” – as Butler (2011) puts it – was used as a platform for protesters to reinforce their visibility.

I particularly emphasised the fact that this space of appearance was also made possible because of the detachment, or disengagement, individuals created with their day-to-day life. This detachment favours a collective critical self-awareness that protesters reflect on themselves and on the viewers. Clearly, the protests allowed the activists and the non-activists to perform a strong solidarity because the social space was completely reorganised by the influence of the strike.
CHAPTER SIX

THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACTS OF THE STRIKE IN MARTINIQUE
6.1- Introduction

In the previous chapters I have explained how thousands of protesters had challenged the colonial legacies that still shape Martinique, even sixty years after departmentalisation. The protesters created exclusive identity narratives as part of their efforts to oppose both local and national political institutions. However, it is important to stress that despite the failure of departmentalisation, the protest was about neither the self-governance nor the autonomy of Martinique. I had already made clear that the protest was not a pro-independence social movement. This social movement focused mainly upon the high cost of living, as well as the social and economic inequalities. Yet in response to the strike the French government gave the Martiniquans no other choice but to take part in the 2010 referendums. They were given two options. They were asked to choose between the autonomy of Martinique, and the modification of the status of the island within the French Republic. The Martiniquans voted for the latter. They agreed to merge both regional and general councils into one institutional body called: “l’assemblée unique” or “collectivité territoriale unique”. In this chapter I explain the meanings and the consequences of those votes for Martiniquans.

Thus, the first aim of this chapter is to show the limits of republican nationalism in Martinique. In this chapter I show that the referendums were part of a large-scale programme of decentralisation that the French government – led by Nicolas Sarkozy – which was already being planned. I show that the referendums failed to provide a solution to the protest; instead they reinforced the status quo between France and Martinique. I demonstrate that the referendums were proposed to fit into a territorial reform programme, whereas the protesters were asking for better application of departmentalisation. During my fieldwork I have realised that the taste of hope that the protest had brought had turned into bitterness and defeatism. The local economy is still struggling as the social inequalities remain.

The second aim of this chapter is to show the limits of cultural nationalism in post-colonial Martinique. Indeed, I explained in the previous chapters that the slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” was imbued with a strong desire to create unity and
fraternity amongst Martiniquans. Moreover, this slogan was an appeal to re-establish connections with the island, with its soil and culture. Indeed, the protesters evolved within a liminal space. They contested an essentialist discourse of identity within this liminal space. Hence, I agree with Pieterse (2001: 226), who said that a discourse of hybridity becomes more salient when it challenges essentialist discourse. Indeed, during the protest – or liminal space – the protesters challenged an essentialist discourse of identities. They celebrated their differences, as they built distinct alternative identity narratives. However, the end of the protest also meant the end of the liminal space. This strong sentiment of belonging lasted until the protest ended. Thus, Martiniquans could have voted for their autonomy. Instead, they made another choice. In fact, this “choice” had already been made by the government.

Therefore, I will also show that the social movement, as well as its outcomes, weakened the Martiniquan pro-independence parties. More specifically, I will show the limits of cultural nationalism in societies that underwent deep political and cultural assimilation. The 2009 social movement and its outcomes illustrate those limits. To some extent, this chapter contradicts Fanon (1961), as it shows the limits of cultural nationalism in post-colonial societies such as Martinique. According to Fanon (1961), the strategic use of cultural tool triggers the process of decolonisation, because it can help to resolve and solve what the state cannot. However, I believe that cultural forms are not fundamentally “political”. I think the protest created an alternative culture. It was a cultural form and practice within a culture. It was an alternative culture of fighting and resistance. It was rather a powerful narrative, which described how post-colonial integration works to dismiss or prevent alternatives. The protest succeeded somewhat in making it possible to live and inhabit alternatives in the encounter with those prohibitions, it gave permission for an imagining of what there remained to live for.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part – “The Impacts of the Protest on the Status of Martinique” – I explain the political outcomes of the strike and analyse the impacts of the protest on the local political arena. In this part I also explain how the government used the referendums to reinforce the status quo, and to reassert its hegemony. In the second part of this chapter, I define the social and economic
impacts of the protest on the society. Thus, despite the magnitude of the movement, people tend to forget the two months of struggles. Thus, the identity narratives they voiced during the marches are progressively forgotten.

6.2- The Impacts of the Protest on the Status of Martinique

Many analysts have compared the 2009 social movement to a “revolution” (e.g. Durpaire et al. 2009). The protesters had framed a liminal space, where they voiced a sense of unity as a way to preserve their historic and cultural legacies against the prism of pwofitation. They also occupied public spaces (e.g. the streets, state buildings), to support their claims for economic empowerment. For many protesters the strike aimed to engage Martinique towards a new social and economic route. This hope for new beginnings lasted for two months, and the final agreement was signed on 16th March 2009 by the C5F, the government and the local state representatives.

As a response to the strike, the government asked Martiniquans to reconsider the political status of the island within the French Republic. The government planned two referendums, which took effect in 2010. Accordingly, in January 2010, Martiniquan voters were asked to vote for the application of Article 74, which would grant the autonomy of Martinique. Considering the importance of the referendum, one would have expected a high participation rate. However, the rate was very low, as only 55.32% of the voters expressed their opinions (Mrgudovic, 2012). The level of participation contrasted with the level of dedication and commitment the pro-independence parties showed to encourage the population to embrace their autonomy. Indeed, this referendum was heavily supported by the pro-independence parties, which had already considered the possibility of a referendum prior to the strike. The second referendum, which also took place in 2010, was heavily supported by the government and by the autonomist parties. This time Martiniquan voters were asked to vote for the application of Article 73, which would allow the creation of a single political entity called “assemblée unique”, the fusion of both regional and general councils.
However, it is important to note that Martiniquan voters had already been asked the very same question in 2003. Indeed, they had already refused to apply Article 73 during the 2003 referendum (Miles, 2006). Despite their prior rejection, Martiniquan voters were asked to confirm their decision once again in 2010. This second attempt shows the dedication of the government to trigger the adoption of this Article.

As a result, the majority of the Martiniquan population rejected Article 74, but agreed to implement Article 73. The outcome of the referendum disappointed the pro-independence parties, which expected to see Martinique moving towards its independence, especially after such a long protest. The rejection of Article 74 also surprised many political analysts, such as Mrgudovic (2012: 114) who claimed that such result reflects “one of the most striking Caribbean contradictions”. Contrary to Mrgudovic, I would not call the result as “the most striking Caribbean contradiction”. Instead, it shows the vulnerability of nationalist discourse in Martinique.

Conversely, the outcome of the second referendum satisfied the government and the autonomist parties such as the PPM. However, the subsequent proposition to re-vote Article 73, just a few months after the strike, exemplifies Ahmad’s comment (1992: 102): “[W]hether or not a nationalism will produce a progressive cultural practice depends, to put it in Gramscian terms, upon the political character of the power bloc which takes hold of it and utilises it, as a material force in the process of constituting its own hegemony.” Undeniably, the proposition to re-vote Article 73 was already part of the government’s strategy to reorganise the administration of the French territories, including its overseas territories. The second referendum was already part of the government’s agenda to carry on the restructuring of all French departments and regions. Later in the chapter, I show that Martinique was simply the first department to carry out this plan. This implies that the proposition to re-vote Article 73 did not address the core issues of the protest. In other words, the result is not a “contradiction”; instead it emphasised France’s hegemony in Martinique.
6.2.1 – The Rejection of Article 74 of the French Constitution.

In 2003, the large majority of Martiniquan voters rejected by referendum the adoption of Article 73 (Miles, 2006). Despite the results of the vote, Alfred Marie-Jeanne – who chaired both the nationalist party MIM, and the regional council – organised in December 2008 a congress to push forward Article 74 and to project another referendum on Martinique autonomy (Giraud, 2009). Indeed, Article 74 of the French Constitution does not only grant de facto autonomy, but it is also a “status directed towards a future independence” (Paleyret, 2003: 229). The member of the congress – which was represented by a majority of pro-independent/separatist officials – agreed to organise the referendum on a later date (Réno, 2012).

Therefore, it should not come as a surprise as to why Martiniquan voters were asked to vote for Article 74, in January 2010. Nonetheless, 79.3% of the voters refused the adoption of the Article. Those results seem to support the idea that Martiniquans may be apprehensive of independence, or of any move towards a change in status. The result of this referendum was somewhat predicted by the journalist Christophe Barbier, who said during a television programme in June 2009:

“Everyone knows well that [Martiniquans] have a deep fear of independence. Césaire used to say that Martinique is a “failed paradise”; […] but if Martiniquans really want their independence, then, Martinique won’t be a failed paradise, but an ensured hell […] It’ll either become a tourist factory for Americans, or it’ll fall under the control of local mafias [and] money laundering mafia, or it’ll be a new Haiti. Independence is not possible without economic prosperity! If Martinique becomes independent, the country would immediately experience a worse form of dependence than its actual dependence from the French Republic” (C Dans l’Air, 2009).

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84 The question asked was: “Approuvez-vous la transformation de la Martinique en une collectivité d’Outre-mer régie par l’article 74 de la constitution dotée d’une organisation particulière tenant compte de ses propres intérêts propres au sein de la République ?” (Daniel, 2011: 80).

85 The same referendum was organised in French Guyana as a result, 70.2% of the population also refused the adoption of the article 74 (Reno, 2012).

86 Christophe Barbier is the editor of popular French weekly news magazine L’Express. Barbier paraphrased Césaire (1991) who claimed that Martinique was “an absurdly failed version of paradise” (un paradis absurdement raté).
His comment reflects the tension between dystopia – “failed” – and utopia – “paradise” – is a recurrent theme in post-colonial art and literature (e.g. Ali, 2006). Moreover, his comments reflect the view of numerous Martiniquans who associate “autonomy” and “independence” with “penury” and poverty (Mrgudovic, 2012). The protest surprised everyone by its magnitude. For two months everyone could also see a surge of nationalist sentiments amongst the protesters. However, the results of the vote show the limits of nationalism in Martinique.

Contrary to Barbier, numerous political analysts and critics struggled to understand the choice made by Martiniquans. Marie-Jeanne and other pro-independence activists made harsh comments which were filled with bitterness and animosity. The Martiniquan writer and nationalist Raphaël Confiant – who is also one of the founders of Créolité – fiercely criticised Martiniquans for their “cowardice” (Mrgudovic, 2012). Mrgudovic (2012: 114) also remarked that: “[Confiant] may have been quite ruthless and biased, but his comments reflected one of the most striking Caribbean contradictions”. Confiant’s and Mrgudovic’s misunderstandings had already been shared by Miles (2006: 634; 647–649) who claimed that Martiniquans’ stance regarding nationhood were inconsistent, hence they were “contradictory”, full of “paradoxes”, or “willy-nilly by virtue”.

However, Miles (2006: 640) seems to contradict himself, as he also argued that theories on nationalism, and particularly on “nationhood”, must explore the local “cultural” and especially the “linguistic” understandings of the word “nation” in order to define the national status of a given “minority”. This means that even though Miles (2006: 631; 647–649) had stressed in the very same article the “need for theoreticians of nationalism to take into account politically and culturally specific understanding of the very concept of ‘nation’”, he still adopted a structural approach... Hence, this binary thinking which seems to mostly juxtapose political independence with departmentalisation does not efficiently explore how nationalism is understood by the population. The protesters may have challenged the implementation of republican principles and values in Martinique, but this does not necessarily mean that they challenged the foundations of those values. Even though the protesters marched
against the disappointing outcomes of departmentalisation, this does not necessarily mean that they fought for the independence of Martinique. I have also demonstrated that the protesters’ main focus was to contest the lasting influence of colonial discourse in Martinique.

The protest leaves open the question as to why certain narratives predominate in such circumstances. The question of responsiveness or receptiveness towards certain narratives remains, in my opinion, essential. It had already been well argued that serious crisis may increase receptiveness towards narratives that praise the reconstruction and healing of identity, recounting the trauma, then reassigning the blame for self-worth (Bartov, 2000). The slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs”, epitomises this point. In this context, a narrative that calls for a collective mobilisation in order to deal with the crisis (“pwofîtè” meaning profiteers) is more likely to be supported by a broken community (Bartov, 2000). So, in this specific context, the protesters may have sung nationalist slogans, but the feelings of frustration and anger they openly disclosed did not necessarily give rise to call for independence, nor to lasting nationalist sentiments.

For post-colonial analysts, I suggest, the process of adjustment towards a new future would involve becoming clearer about the idea that nationalist discourses appear to be exclusive and limited to the pro-independence leaders. Yet both Mrugudovic and Miles seem to think that any and every given nationalist call is de facto a call for independence. Contrary to Mrugudovic, I think that the 2009 mass strike was a potential site of resistance for fostering and prefiguring a multitude of social alternatives. The result of the referendum should not be seen as a “contradiction”. My point is, because of the liminal/fluid character of the protest, all the elements that could have been used to lay the foundation of Martiniquan national consciousness could not endure. Turner (1974) had also argued that liminal space is short-lived, because it only lasts for the time of the performance. It has already been argued that liminal space is a place where subjects freely reshape the contours of their identity to create alternative identity narratives (e.g. Hetherington, 1998: 115). The outcomes of the referendum illustrate that this moment of liminality did not persist.
Contrary to Martinique, the voices of the Guadeloupian protesters were wholly embodied by the LKP, and particularly by the leader of the social movement organisation Eli Domota. This means that in contrast to Martinique, the LKP was able to show leadership once it built and led the protest. This also means that, unlike Martinique, the Guadeloupian protesters had also acknowledged this leadership; they accepted being led by the organisation. The LKP leaders were listened to, and followed, by the masses.

However, this was not the case in Martinique. Martiniquan protesters confronted all kinds of traditional authorities, which implies that even though Martinique and Guadeloupe were involved in the same struggles, there were noticeable differences. This point was better illustrated by Flora, who claimed: “Let’s be clear, the C5F could not manage the whole situation, the population was managing the whole thing. The C5F created the movement, then the population took over.” She also added: “I did not care about what my husband would think, I was in the streets everyday.” Thus, interestingly enough, the social fragmentation that usually prevents the building of a metadiscourse of unity in Martinique was somewhat present; but it did not prevent the masses protesting. It did not prevent the protesters singing their very own understanding of “Martiniquanity”. Therefore, contrary to the Guadeloupian militants, the Martiniquan protesters were able to create distinct narratives of resistance, and alternative identity narratives within the different realms of struggles that each protester had shaped. Each protester was the leader of her/his own narrative, yet each was part of one general narrative. They included and celebrated all those narratives together, as if by pointillism; they agreed to act accordingly once they marched in the streets. After all, it was also one general performative discourse and narrative that defined them all. However, I would stress that their actions and collective performances made their shared resistance into one general narrative.

Therefore, to assert that distinct and alternative narratives were each simultaneously disconnected from and related to a general discourse is to make an important claim about the construction, and the context of construction, of identity narratives in Martinique. The strike mobilised alternative stories that were once told in the streets. By collectively constructing their stories, the protesters made sense of their past, they
coped with their present and dreamed of a potential future. With narratives and storytelling everything becomes possible.

This was not the case in Guadeloupe as the protest was led and directed by the LKP. The LKP rhythmmed the march, it led the demands, it led the negotiations, and it led the whole protest. This point was well apparent in Bonilla’s article (2010), which explored how the strike of 2009 served as a moment of political culture in Guadeloupe. As a matter of fact, the majority of her article focuses on the strategy and the narratives used by the LKP, as if the organisation perfectly covered the voices, the wishes and the needs of Guadeloupians. Her research study not only shows that the social movement was led by the organisation, but that it had clear nationalist, and even pro-independence intents. For Bonilla (2010:134–135), “The [Guadeloupian] social movement emerged out of a desire for new political projects and formulas. [It was a] strategic utopian quest for economic and political self-determination.” This implies that each protester let the other add her/his own heroic narrative in their collective struggle. Each discourse was framed outside the nationalist claims ran by the usual pro-independence parties.

This point was also particularly evident when several Martiniquan intellectuals attempted, without much success, to (re)direct the movement. Several well-known Martiniquan intellectuals, including Patrick Chamoiseau and the late writer Edouard Glissant, published on 16th February 2009 in the lead newspaper Le Monde an article called le “Manifeste Pour les Produits de Haute Nécessité” (“Manifesto for products of high necessity”) (Bréleur et al. 2009). The authors of the manifesto supported the protest, they also criticised departmentalisation, and they urged the population to divert new social and economic models away from consumerism and capitalism (Bréleur et al., 2009). The manifesto also had clear nationalist undertones, as the writers suggested: “At the heart of this protest, there is our desire to build a nation” (Bréleur et al., 2009: 3).

Yet, despite the publication of the article, the manifesto did not have much impact on the protest. None of my respondents remembered the article, nor the intervention of those prominent writers. The silence and indifference of my respondents were quite
telling. They did not seem interested in talking about the manifesto during the focus groups sessions. The manifesto was seen as an abstract call for protest, which was aimed simply at attempting to galvanise the authors themselves. My respondents admitted that they did not rely on the national newspapers – such as: *Le Monde, Le Figaro, or L’Express* – to access more information about the protest. According to them, the only two media outlets they relied on were the television channel *Télé Otonom Mawon*, and the local newspaper *France-Antilles*. They were the only two media that had actual access to the events and so they were trusted. One could argue that the strike may have prevented those newspapers being sold at the time. Indeed, as Gabin explained, the protesters had made large-scale supermarkets, shops and department stores inaccessible. Moreover, the imported and exported goods were all blocked at the port of Fort-de-France. But all of those leading newspapers, such as *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro*, also published their articles on their websites. Hence, their articles were accessible on the internet.

In addition, the interviewees generally expressed strong distrust towards major French news media outlets. They often ridiculed the media, which would glamorise and exoticise Martiniquan history, politics, culture and even geography. As a Martiniquan, I implicitly understood their distrust and cynicism about such commonplace Martiniquan exotic reports that essentialise Caribbean cultures into one tale of white sands, calypso and coconut trees; or of drugs and idleness. I also knew that one single mistake on the subject would make me lose all credibility. Benjamin was particularly vocal about the issue, and he accused those outlets of “sensational reporting” since they only broadcast the moments of tension. As a result, he had to constantly reassure his family who lived in mainland France. They begged him not to take part in the marches “because of what they had watched on television”. Despite the fact that *France-Antilles* commented on the manifesto – exclusively on its website – none of my respondents mentioned it (*France-Antilles*, 2009). My protesters could have commented on the article on social media sites, but they did not. Benjamin also remembered how frequently he had used social media to share information with other militants. He was not the only one. Numerous respondents used social media to share all type of content related to the strike. The manifesto could have been easily shared through social media, but the respondents did not spread it.
Thus, the limited influence those intellectuals had had over the protesters is quite telling. According to Smith (1998: 57), they may have missed the opportunity to be the “brains” of the protests. Smith (1998: 57) argued:

For a new nation to achieve lasting popular success and maintain itself in a world of competing nations, intellectuals and professionals have an important perhaps crucial role to play. [...] Only they know how to present the nationalist ideal and auto-emancipation through citizenship so that all classes will, in principle, come to understand the benefits of solidarity and participation. Only they can provide the social and cultural links with other strata which are necessary for the ideal of the nation to be translated into a practical programme with popular following.

Fanon had already agreed with this position. Indeed, Fanon (1961) strongly believed that intellectuals in post-colonial societies ought to bar the way to national consciousness. Thus, for both Smith and Fanon, the actions of intellectuals are central, as they are the ones who are better able to lay the foundations for national emancipation. Thus, the authors of the manifesto may have missed the opportunity to arm the protest with revolutionary principles geared towards pursuing Martiniquan national interests.

However, even though Glissant and the other co-authors of the manifesto strongly criticised consumerist societies, it is important to recall that the protesters were also fighting for more economic opportunities and for better wages, hence to buy and consume more. I would also argue that the voices of those leading intellectuals were concealed by the numerous narratives the protesters expressed in the streets of Fort-de-France.

Indeed, until the mass strike, everyone had a story to tell about Martinique. The documentary — The Last Masters of Martinique — was one story amongst others. The intellectuals, such as Chamoiseau and Glissant, were the masters of storytelling on Martiniquan culture. The nationalist parties had their own stories about Martiniquan national identity and emancipation. However, the strike opened a space where
alternative stories could be told. The liminal space the protest had built altered the status and the influence of traditional authorities. Thus, it had also altered the influence of the nationalist writers. Thus, the voices and the ideas of those intellectuals were also relegated by the protesters. The nationalist parties and the intellectuals did not attempt to find a way to tie those stories together. Instead, they added their own stories into the mix. Their lack of influence – along with the lack of influence of the pro-independence parties – shows that they failed to bend their highly regarded positions as “rightful” storytellers. It is somewhat ironic to see that the founders of Creolité and Antillanité, could not (or did not want to) effectively participate in the praxis of a form Creolité.

The short or the limited impact of the founders of Creolité and Antillanité also illustrates the fluid character of the social movement. The flexible nature of the protest did not allow them to be heard, and to lay the foundation of a long-lasting affirmation of national identity amongst Martiniquans. Even though the protesters asserted their “Martiniquanity” during the marches, they did not seem to appeal to the co-authors’ nationalist ideas. There is another irony in the situation, because the founders of Creolité and Antillanité were somehow silenced because of the extreme flexibility of the strike. They were caught in this liminal space. The limited influence of the co-authors recalls Bhabha (1995: 2), who once illustrated this irony when he posed: “How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable?”. From a theoretical perspective, I consider that both theories of Creolité and Antillanité explain very well the construction of identities in Martinique, as they also counter the essentialist and the colonial discourses that still shape the society. The strike created a liminal space. Indeed, this liminal space was also a hybrid site that witnessed the productions and the reflections of cultural meanings. But the liminal space is by definition constantly moving. This means that the production and the reflections of cultural meanings were challenged by the fragility of the site.
6.2.2 – Reassertion of France’s political hegemony in Martinique.

The discretion of the government during the mass strike sharply contrasted with the very much publicised interventions of the French president when he came to Martinique, on the 25th June 2009. Just prior to travelling to Martinique, Sarkozy pledged, during the Congress held in Versailles, that the “Republic will keep its promise of equality” in the French Overseas Departments (Figaro, 2009). Once he arrived in Martinique, Sarkozy constantly vowed to continue fighting for the legitimacy and for the authority of the republican values in the island. Nevertheless, in this part, I show that the former president sought Martinique’s compliance with the government’s original plan to restructure the administrative organisations of the French territories. Thus, the strike gave him the opportunity to apply his political convictions.

Indeed, the former head of state had never hidden his intention to reform the French political institutions, as by to the government’s project of decentralisation (SENAT, 2014). Decentralisation is a project that envisaged the transfer of the exercise of significant public power to newly created institutions, and to administrative local entities (France, 2013; Smith, 1985: 1). Sarkozy stated in clear-cut terms that his ambition was to “break with the past”, and to adopt a “politique de rupture” (political rupture) (Pédeau, 2012; Raymond, 2013: 94). However, it would not have been an easy task. As many analysts had already argued, institutional reforms are always very difficult to implement in France as the government usually faces systematic – if not systemic – social and political confrontations (e.g. Angresano, 2011: 209–211).

One of his key propositions of reform – originally designed by the former French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur – was envisaged to merge both regional and regional councils (Pédeau, 2012). On the 27th November 2008, Sarkozy claimed:

I am not trying to draw a new map of France. I am trying to find a solution regarding a problem that we have been dealing with for too long [...] I’m asking you: Why should the French territories still be organised as the way they are now? I don’t agree with this! [...] Couldn’t we imagine the slight possibility
to remove both Departments and Regions? [...] You see, there are countless of possibilities. [...] I totally agree with Balladure’s commission. [...] Let us meet [...] around spring 2009. By then, we will see if we can find a consensus. And then, we will think about what could be done about a new French territorial organisation (Pédeau, 2012).

Hence, Sarkozy’s ambitions were already clear in 2008. His aim was to reform the administrative organisations of the French territories. The majority of the French population had a favourable view of the institutional reform. For example, in 2014, the newspaper *Ouest-France* published the results of a large survey on the matter.\(^87\) The survey showed that 60% of the French population agreed with the restructuring (*Ouest-France*, 2014). Therefore, in April 2013, the inhabitants of Alsace were asked by referendum to approve or reject the reform; however, the majority of the voters rejected the reform (*Le Monde*, 2013). In order to explain such surprising results, the newspaper *Le Monde* (2013) concluded that even though Alsatians mostly agreed with the reform, they refused to be the first locality to try it. As *Le Monde* (2013) put it, the Alsatian population feared being used as “experimental subjects”. This referendum shows that the results of a referendum do not necessarily reflect the wishes and aspirations of a population. In fact, the Alsatian voters were not deemed “contradictory” nor “willy-nilly by virtue”; they simply had a made a clear and sensitive decision, which displayed their mistrust towards the government.

As for Alsace, the government had already proposed that Martiniquans merge both of its councils. However, the numerous tangles of power between both the Martiniquan general and regional councils had often put on hold the implementation of public policies in the island (Rano, 2009). This is particularly the case when the political leanings of the two councils are opposed. For several years, and especially during Mitterrand’s presidency, the French government had projected to merge both councils into a single entity called “assemblée unique” – regulated by Article 73 of the Constitution – in Martinique (Miles, 1992). But this proposition was systematically rejected by the local right-wing elected officials who feared the reform would somewhat strengthen pro-independence claims (Miles, 1992).

\(^87\) IFOP organised the survey for newspaper *Ouest-France*. IFOP: Institut Français de Sondage Publique. IFOP is an international polling and market research firm based in France (IFOP, 2014).
A referendum was finally organised in 2003, and only 50.5\% of voters rejected the proposition (Miles, 2006). Even though the referendum was about the restructuring of the councils, the question of independence seemed to have always been in the voters’ mind. According to Daniel (2007), the population’s strong fear of autonomy was the main reason why the voters rejected this reform in 2003. For Miles (2006) most voters rejected the reform because they had feared major economic losses. But, according to Mrugudovic (2012), most Martiniquans thought that the government’s real intention was to change the political status of Martinique. In any case, it is clear that despite the decision made by Martiniquans, the government was still determined to push through the reform. Sarkozy also tried to convince the French overseas territories to agree with the restructuring, as he declared in 2008: “The overseas French departments, as well as the rest of France, must be reformed, because the world is also changing” (Réno, 2012: 324).

The president took advantage of the popular willingness to break with the past to reassert the position of the state as claimed: “France without Martinique would not be France [...] Martinique is French and will remain so” (Legifrance, 2009). Sarkozy also urged Martiniquans to reconsider their status within the French Republic. However, he also insisted that the reform was not meant to push Martinique towards independence, as he then claimed during the inauguration of the new local airport:

This is not a debate on independence [...] it is about a right degree of autonomy [...] My dear friends, Aimé Césaire’s programme could be summed up in this sentence: “The past repaired; the future prepared”. Once the past is repaired, it is about the recognition of the singularity of Martinique, the singularity of the Caribbean and the singularity of the French overseas territories (Legifrance, 2009).

The president began a long tribute speech to Césaire as he claimed: “Aimé Césaire was one of the great poets and writers of the French language. [...] For Césaire, freedom

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88 The question asked was: “Approuvez-vous le projet de création en Martinique d’une collectivité territoriale demeurant régie par l’article 73 de la Constitution, et donc par le principe de l’identité législative avec possibilités d’adaptations, et se substituant au département et à la région dans les conditions prévues par cet article?” (Daniel, 2011: 113).
and equality were not complete without “fraternity” (Legifrance, 2009). He added: “I always said during my presidential campaign, that I was open for restructuring state institutions. That is not a priority, but I won’t contradict myself today. I launched [...] a great project that is the deep renovation of our institutions and [...] territories” (Legifrance, 2009). Place names are part of the ideological processes that are crucial in the process of nation-building (Kearns and Berns, 2002: 283–284). Indeed, several studies have explored the toponymy of place, and more particularly the cultural, social and political struggles over spatial re(naming) and inscriptions (e.g. Alderman and Inwood, 2013; Rose-Redwood et al., 2010). Those studies analyse how public place (re)naming, “opens space in which the symbolic struggles over remembrance and erasure are anchored” (Rose-Redwood, 2008: 446). Therefore, Césaire’s symbolic posture of resistance was often used as an argument by the president to prove the necessity of the reform. Therefore, the inauguration of the new local airport – “Aimé Césaire Airport” – was the occasion for the president to relate Césaire’s autonomist convictions to his own convictions, and to the reform. He used Césaire's legacy to reassert his ambition to reorganise the French territories. By doing so, Sarkozy strengthened his position as well as the position of the government. Sarkozy referred to the mass strike only once. He claimed that the “social crisis” demonstrated that Martiniquans longed for a more “efficient” state. The president did not mention the CSF during his speech. By doing so, Sarkozy re-established the authority of the local state representatives. He reintroduced them as the exclusive legitimate local mediators able to intercede between the population and the government.

The president’s speech had been preceded by several strategic decisions. Indeed, on 24th June 2009 – so on the eve of the president’s visit to Martinique – Marie-Luce Penchard was named Secretary of State for Overseas Territories following a cabinet reshuffle organised by the Fillon government in June 2009 (France3, 2009).89 The nomination of a Guadeloupin political figure as a Secretary of State for Overseas Territories was a symbolic political step, as she became the first Antillean to occupy

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89 Nicolas Sarkozy agreed with the prime minister’s proposal, and appointed eight new ministers on 23rd June 2009. Eight ministers left the government. The new government consisted of two state ministers, sixteen ministers, nineteen secretaries of states (including Marie-Luce Penchard), and a high commissioner (France3, 2009).
such position. Her nomination was also significant because Guadeloupe was the place where the strike was more intense (Bourgault, 2011).

Therefore, the strike, which was initially met with silence by the government, was still not mentioned by the president. At this point, the mass strike was in the process of being forgotten or “crossed out”. While the president used a fragment of Martinique's past to assert his position, he did not stop there. In a symbolic gesture to acknowledge the contribution Martiniquans have made in French history, Sarkozy then proceeded to honour Martiniquan resistance during the Second World War.

Sarkozy acknowledged the “duty of memory” the French nation has towards the Martiniquan ressorts – also named the “dissidents” – during the Second World War. According to Ricœur (2001: 108), “duty of memory [is] to do justice, through memories, to another than the self”. Hence, Sarkozy might have had Ricœur in mind when he claimed:

> Today, we honour a moment that has been unfairly forgotten in our national history. Today, we honour a great moment of bravery that had fallen into oblivion. But today [...] we make up for this injustice. [...] I want to say to Martiniquans [...] that the history of the dissidents is a model to all the French people, [...] I want to say to all those woman and men, that France does not forget what we owe them (Constant, 2011).

Sarkozy had frequently praised French resistance to emphasise his rhetoric of French national identity (Raymond, 2013). Thus, it is not surprising that he had used the same approach as a way to build a national consensus of unity. The “dissidents” have long been ignored in Martiniquan history, especially in the larger spectrum of the French national history (Palcy, 2005). However, Martinique was still a colony during the war; the dissidents were not protecting or fighting for the “mère patrie”; instead, they were fighting for an ideal of freedom (Palcy, 2005). Nonetheless, during their

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90 The dissidents fled Martinique, and the Vichy regime – administrated by the admiral Robert in Martinique – to Saint Lucia or to Dominica, and then to the United States to fight the Nazi German army during the Second World War. Hundreds of Martiniquans fled the island to be part of the French resistance (Cantier and Jennings, 2004; Palcy, 2005).
commemoration in 2010, the histories and the memories of the dissidents became a political instrument to build national unity and to emphasise the French republican value of Liberty.

Altogether, the tensions that divided the autonomist and pro-independent wings made it possible for the president and the government to assume those strategic political positions. The Article 73 referendum did not only occur in Martinique; it also occurred in French Guyana.\footnote{The general strike lasted 44 days in Guadeloupe, 38 days in Martinique, 15 days in French Guyana and 8 days in Réunion (Mrgudovic, 2012: 95).} The Martiniquan political representatives were still paralysed by the shock of the mass strike, and they appeared unable to counteract the president’s political agenda. This was not the case in Guadeloupe, which quickly refused any possibility of referendum. Despite Sarkozy’s strong support of the referendum, the Guadeloupians and the Reunionese political leaders refused to validate it. They argued that the vote did not tackle any local social and economic issues (Equy, 2010). This referendum was particularly criticised by the members of the LKP who argued that they were not interested in administrating the current political system, but in radically transforming it (Bonilla, 2010: 134; Domota, 2011; Mérion, 2012: 309–311). Consequently, except for Martinique and French Guyana, no other French territories organised the referendum. (See appendix N – Map of the 2009 Protests and of the Referendums.

Thus, contrary to the other French territories – such as Guadeloupe – Martinique and French Guyana were experimenting with a new institutional organisation that had already been planned by the government. Thus, one of Sarkozy’s triumphs lies in the ways he had succeeded in applying Gramsci’s idea, in particular Gramsci’s theoretical approach for achieving power by establishing political and cultural “hegemony”. After all, Sarkozy had said it himself: “I have made Gramsci’s analysis mine: power is won by ideas” (Figaro, 2008). However, the main issue, or the irony, is the consistency of Nicolas Sarkozy as political tactician and strategist. Even though the former president had fervently promoted his strategy of “rupture” during his presidential campaign, his actions were different. During his visit to Martinique he displayed obvious hegemonic continuity with those of the previous governments.
Hence, Sarkozy’s efforts to push forward the referendum and Article 73 were successful. The second referendum was held in Martinique and French Guyana in January 2010. Even though the voter turnout was not significant – the election saw a total of 35.81% of eligible voters cast their ballots in Martinique – all this posturing paid off generously (SENAT₂, 2012). On 24th January 2010, 78.9% of Martiniquan voters agreed to apply Article 73, and to merge both regional and general councils into one unique assembly (Joss, 2011; SENAT₂, 2012). Nonetheless, such low voter turnout suggests that the population was not convinced that Martinique’s interests were at stake (or perhaps even relevant to the government). The population was not convinced that the government was genuinely looking for effective solutions; or for any solution at all. It was clear that the administrative restructuring reform was not consistent with Martiniquan needs. Hence, the voters may certainly have agreed on which alternative was the least bad option.

During and after the strike, the history and the collective memories of Martinique were reframed and contested from different angles. Both settings and the outcomes of the referendums underlined the idea that several nationalist framing narratives were at play, and competing with one another. On the one hand, the former president played a singular, yet effective, integrative role to re-establish republican nationalism, geared to promoting stability and institutional loyalty in order to invoke La France Éternelle, hence the legacy of the Third Republic, rather than the legacy of the French revolution. On the other hand, the republican nationalism supported by the government – and by Sarkozy – was competing with the cultural nationalism usually galvanised by the pro-independence parties. Indeed, the protests left room for the expressions of a cultural nationalism, which is usually used by the pro-independent and the pro-autonomy parties. However, as explained in the previous chapters the nationalist parties were tolerated but there were not particularly wanted during the marches. The protests exposed the deep tensions that exist not only between the local political parties, but also between the nationalist parties. The outcomes of the referendums highlight further the limited influence of the local nationalist parties in Martinique. The population had already refused to merge both general and regional councils into one assembly (assemblée unique) in 2003. However, the way the
government reintroduced the Article 73 referendum shows that it was not the
government’s intention to directly and to effectively address the protesters’ demands.
The reality of the strike was more nuanced. Republican nationalism seems inadequate
to cover all the different historical confusion in which France has deployed its idea of
nation. Nevertheless, it was Sarkozy’s intention to reorganise French overseas
territories and he used the 2009 protests to push forward his political ambition. Yet
the poor rate of participation in the referendums sharply contrasts with the high level
of involvement of the protesters during the strike. This means that even though the
government asserted its hegemony, it failed to address post-colonial issues in
Martinique.

6.3- The Impacts of the Strike on Martiniquan Nationalism

The mass strike had exposed the deep tensions that not only divide the pro-
independence parties, but also their leaders. Alfred Marie-Jeanne – the president of
the MIM – had taken a controversial position vis-à-vis the movement, when he called
for an end to the strike. Because of his position, he had faced many harsh criticisms
not only from the protesters, but also from the members of his party, and from other
nationalist parties, and particularly from the MODEMAS, which was very active during
the protest. One of the leaders of the MODEMAS, Claude, declared during our meetings:
“It was as if [Marie-Jeanne] wanted to break the dynamics of the protest. [His decision]
was an error. Because, at that moment, the population was in effervescence, so we
needed to understand what was going on. [...] But, the politicians were afraid of it.”
According to the leaders of the MODEMAS, such as Claude, the nationalist sentiments
that were so fiercely expressed could have been better used by the nationalist party
as a great resource to persuade the population – or more precisely the voters – to
extend their voice in the ballot box, to direct Martinique towards more political
economy.

However, the results of both referendums illustrated the limits of cultural nationalism.
In other words, cultural nationalism does not necessarily lead to separatism,
especially in its most extreme form of outright independence. Fanon argued that anti-
colonial struggles can be best fought at the level of culture. According to him (1952: 233), “national culture” can possibly emerge as anti-colonial struggles. In this way the struggle over the neo-colonial rules must be seen as the achievement of the people and not simply of the intelligentsia, a struggle that would trigger the rise of nationalism (Fanon, 1952). However, the nationalist sentiments that have partially driven the protesters aimed to challenge some aspects of the process of assimilation. In other words, cultural nationalism was used as a tool of contestation and as a quest for recognition. The results of the first referendum – the one that asked for the adoption of Article 74 – show the limit of this nationalism. The population rejected the positions adopted by the secessionist parties – such as the MIM and the MODEMAS.

Despite the disappointing outcomes of departmentalisation, the results of the referendums showed the strong impacts, and the powerful hold, the politics of assimilation had, and still have, on Martiniquan society.

In this respect, Bhumitra (2010) noted that assimilation is also “a process of [cultural] marginalisation”. This means that the individuals who are assimilated are forced to shed their original culture to be accepted by the hegemonic/dominant society. Consequently, any process of assimilation necessarily involved cultural exclusion. However, to paraphrase Foucault (1978: 95) “where there is power, there is resistance”, which means that resistance is performed whenever power is exercised. Both theories of hybridity of créolité and antillanité illustrate this point. The assimilation did not prevent the development of distinct and exclusive kinships in Martinique.

The protesters challenged the republican values by not asking for independence, but asking for more equality within the Republic. The actions of the protesters show that cultural nationalism was not simply used to raise national consciousness, because it did not have international dimensions. It was used as a tool to legitimise their anti-(neo-)colonial struggle; it was used as a tool to reposition Martinique within the Republic. Therefore, the protesters were contesting their acculturation, to assert their legitimacy to be French and Martiniquan. They were challenging assimilation, but they were not challenging the whole process of integration. The referendums opened a space where nationalist tensions and alliances were played out. At this point, the
tensions between the pro-autonomy parties and the pro-independence parties underwent a major shift. Yet Letchimy – who was the leader of the PPM party, which actively supports autonomist views – refused to vote for the application of Article 74. Instead, he supported the application of Article 73, and his position was also supported by the members of the PPM party (Gallion, 2014). Indeed, it has been suggested that since Césaire’s death in 2008, Letchimy has changed his position in line with the former leader, in order to support a much subtler form of autonomy instead (France-Antilles, 2009). Letchimy’s stand with regards to Article 73 shows the strong discord and the power struggles between the pro-autonomy and the pro-independents in the local political spheres. Both parties believe in the existence of the Martiniquan nation; moreover, they capitalise on this very notion to legitimise their actions and to maintain their position in power (Williams, 2007). But, contrary to the secessionists, the pro-autonomy activists promote less radical forms of self-governance. The position taken by the PPM towards the referendum, and their refusal to support the application of Article 74, illustrates this last point.

In March 2010, the writer Raphaël Confiant – who is one the founders of the créolité movement, and who is also an active member of the MODEMAS party – wrote an article in which he criticised the C5F, which he called the “far left assimilationists”. Confiant (2010) entitled his article: “How the 2009 strike executed the Martiniquan nationalist movement”.92 In his article, he argued that the C5F “discredited” the local politicians, “Alfred Marie-Jeanne in particular”. Confiant concluded his article by saying: “Martinique is now French in perpetuity. Thank you to the assimilationists from the Right, Left and Far Left wings”.93

Confiant’s analysis might be somewhat extreme, but the results of the following municipal elections corroborated the idea that the pro-independents were still losing ground in the local political scene. Marie-Jeanne lost the regional election in 2010. His vivid criticisms regarding the strike may well have dissuaded the protesters to elect

92 “Comment la grève de février 2009 a assassiné le mouvement nationaliste Martiniquais” (Confiant, 2010).
93 “La Martinique est désormais Française à perpétuité. Merci messieurs les assimilationnistes de Droite, de Gauche et d’extrême-gauche” (Martinique is French for life now, thanks to the assimilationist coming from all sides : left, and right) (Confiant, 2010).
him once again as president of the council in favour of the PPM rival Letchimy. Indeed, as Alain suggested, in contrast to Marie-Jeanne, the heroic posture Letchimy took during the strike, as the defender of the people – especially during the 6th March altercation – might have played in his favour for his election.

Furthermore, the MIM and the MODEMAS parties that firmly led two main towns for several decades – Rivière-Pilote and Saint-Anne – lost the municipal elections in March 2014. The local media heavily commented on these surprising turns, which illustrate the progressive loss of influence that the pro-independent parties have on the political scene. The television channel, Martinique Première, commented on the defeat of Garcin Masla with an editorial entitled “The End of an Era for Malsa” (Martinique 1ère, 2014). The same television channel commented on the defeat of the MIM in Rivière-Pilote with another editorial entitled: “Raymond Théodose ridiculed the MIM party” (Martinique 1ère, 2014).

Thus, the revolution the people expected to see from the 2009 strike has taken a different turn, and at the expense of the pro-independent parties. This implies that the strong nationalist sentiments that were expressed during the social protests were not transmuted in the same way to the ballot boxes. Thus, in contrast to Mrguduvic (2012), the results of the elections and the outcomes of the referendums show the importance of not analysing nationalism in Martinique only through the ballot boxes.

6.3.1 – Collective Memories of the 2009 Social Protests.

“Historic” is a popular term that is found across the several studies that have attempted to describe the protest (e.g. Chivallon, 2009; Lucrèce et al. 2009). It was a defining moment that could have paved the way for “nouveaux commencements” (new beginnings) (e.g. Tanic et al. 2009). In contrast, I remember how Louis recalled

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94 Garcin Malsa, the president of the MODEMAS and the mayor of the town since 1989, lost the municipal election to Jean-Michel Gémieux who had no official attachment to any official political party (Martinique 1ère, 2014).

95 A strong and mediatised fratricide conflict opposed two candidates including a former candidate of the MIM for the municipal election in Rivière-Pilote. Raymond Théodose, a former member of the MIM political party, created a new local movement called: “Dynamique Pilotine” and he won the municipal election in March 2014 against a MIM candidate, Lucien Veillieur (Martinique 1ère, 2014).
this historical moment: “[It was a] historic mistake, a historic horror!” he cried. Louis is a Béké entrepreneur whom I interviewed at his place of work at the city of Lamentin. As for a few other respondents, they remembered the strike and the daily marches with a strong sense of repulsion, even of revulsion. However, the large majority of my respondents remembered the protest with nostalgia, and sometimes with a tone of melancholy.

The respondents who were actively involved in the strike remembered the event with pleasure and nostalgia. They talked in length about their authentic experiences of solidarity. At the end of the interviews, I was drained and particularly concerned about the amount of analysis I had left to do from all those collections. On the other hand, my respondents seemed to have enjoyed the interview; they talked in length about the marches and about what they had done. A respondent named Flora told me:

“It was as if I was reliving [the strike]”. Another interviewee, named Claudia, sent me the next day of our meeting a long email, in which she detailed few points she omitted to say during our focus group session. She wrote: “Just to tell you that the moment we passed yesterday was very intense! [...] So many moments now resurface [...] It’s a shame but all those memories rebuild us, sometimes overnight... all the things that were somewhat silenced”.

At the end of the email, she added: “Sé pou la viktwa...” (Towards victory...). This sentence was part of the slogan “Sé pou la viktwa nou ka allé” (we are going towards victory). Yet she did not finish her sentence, as if the struggle she had been part of was still not over. She was the only respondent who subtly seemed to carry on hoping; my impression was that most of my interviewees left without the comfort of a future they had once envisioned. But, as for the other respondent, she wished to remember and she was nostalgic about the strike. For many of them the nature of their nostalgia was due to their disappointing present, as if they wished to return to a more comforting past. Therefore, their found memories of the 2009 events seemed to easily “resurface” when I simply encouraged them to do so.

The national and the local media do not recall the strike any more, and the Télé Otonm Mawon – the television channel that was launched during the protest – stopped
broadcasting once the strike ended. Since then, the memories of the 2009 social movement started to fade along with the collective solidarity they had experienced. This collective forgetting did not happen overnight; it slowly started to fade from the end of the strike. Lucien explained: “[just a few days following the end of the strike, […] there were still people who were gathering in front of the trade union headquarters. I talked to some of them. They were still wandering there. [It was] as if they had the heartbreak, there were still looking for this effervescence.” Guadeloupians also shared their disillusionment with the protest. Bonilla (2009: 136) who had been particularly optimistic about the outcomes of the strike, claimed: “the strike in Guadeloupe encourages us to explore the new futures […] that become possible at the very moment in which they are prefigured”. But, she (2015: 208) later called the protest a “disenchantment”. Walsh (2013: 5) seemed to share her view and just asked: “in the end, what did the strike achieved?”.

When I began my fieldwork two years later, the memories of the strike were still present, but the interviewees admitted that their memories of the protest started to fade into oblivion. Collective memories must be understood as reflective identity narratives, which means that “to remember something is at the same time to remember oneself” (Ricoeur, 2001:3). Accordingly, people not only forgot about the events, but they also forgot about the narratives of solidarity they had once expressed and performed during the marches. Contrary to other respondents, Joël was visibly pessimistic and upset by this collective oblivion:

People forget… People had already forgotten the strike, they had forgotten what happened. It’s typical of our society… There is no solidarity. Martiniquan people… They are… well you know… That’s why I recently went to Africa, and I really liked it! I liked it because I was looking for this kind of fraternity, this kind of solidarity. I went to Senegal. I relived my old life. I found this solidarity. […] I lived with them. They don’t have much means, but they are proud of theirselves, of their beauties, of their elegance you see…? I relived this life. In Martinique we are too acquisitive, and that’s too bad, but we have to admit it. We’ve all experienced this historical moment together… But things are just like before… People forget once again … It was a great moment, but then, it was all over.
Joël had not only attempted to relive the strike, but he had also tried to mourn it or to grieve for it in his own way. Indeed, he tried to mourn or to grieve the social movement once again because he not only wished to remember it, but also to relive it. His attempt to remember and to somehow relive the protest showed that he thought of it as an event that could not happen again, as if it was completely gone. His desperate attempt to remember the protest was a bitter-sweet experience because he felt he was alone going through it. As a result, he was resentful of the fact that most of the other protesters seemed not to mind about the past any more. Thus, it was not only what people forgot, but also how people forgot that upset him. Joël regretted that people “forgot” this missed opportunity. He also regretted that people “forgot” about their own struggles, even though their struggles were still present.

Many other respondents, such as Lucie, have reached the same conclusion shared by Joël. They even often used the same sentences, such as: “nothing has changed” or “everything is still the same”. The informal and often intimate environments, under which the respondents were invited to recall their actions, might have encouraged them to share freely their experiences with me. However, even though they had enjoyed talking about the protest, the collective memories of the strike were still fading. What is also interesting in Joël’s experience is that he tried to remember the protest and to grieve for it outside Martinique with other communities in Senegal. What is interesting about Flora’s last sentence is that she did not finish it, but mostly that she tried to revive the protest with me. Both of them were disjointedly trying to engage in a follow-up to the protest. Hence, despite the magnitude of the strike, Martinique has remained fragmented. Both Flora and Joël have already fragmented experiences of the strike. Both respondents were engaged in the process of fragmentation.

It has been claimed that narratives are a way to communicate the subjective and symbolic meanings of resilience (Goldstein et al., 2015). Therefore, paying attention to the narrative framing of the 2009 social movement is therefore of the utmost importance not only with regard to the way in which the protest will be remembered and inscribed into Martiniquans’ collective memory, but also with regard to how Martiniquans will reposition themselves in the world, and in their future. It is also
important with regard to how the community will engage with the “other” – “yo” in the slogan – that has threatened or challenged their existence.

In the course of my fieldwork, I also used the participant observation method during a two-hour meeting that had been organised in October 2011 by the C5F. The meeting took place in the northern city of Sainte-Marie. Five key members of the C5F participated in the reunion, along with about thirty inhabitants of the town. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the 2009 protests and its outcomes.

At the beginning of the meeting the members of the C5F introduced themselves, then they explained to the audience the purpose of the meeting. They wanted to collect feedback, criticism and advice from any individuals who played a part in the movement. The key members of the C5F – mainly the leaders of the trade unions – who were present at the meeting constantly reminded the audience that the “fight was not over”, and that another protest was still possible, and that it could explode at any time. Surprisingly, when the C5F gave the opportunity for participation, the audience remained silent. The leaders of the organisations repeatedly encouraged, almost begged, the audience to talk. But no one from the audience intervened. To break this silence, some members of the C5F insisted on the importance of such meetings. Finally, a woman talked to simply complain about the organisation of the reunion: “it would have been better if we had been informed about this meeting earlier,” she said. The members of the C5F took note, apologised and continued their quasi monologue. When the C5F finally finished talking, they decided to organise smaller discussion groups.

The reaction of this audience drastically contrasted with the focus groups I organised. Indeed, the participants were very talkative during the focus groups. Perhaps the relaxed atmosphere I wanted to create during the meetings contributed to enhance their participation. In any case, it was clear during the meeting the C5F organised that the inspiration the organisation brought during the strike had already vanished. Moreover, this point stresses once again the idea that there was no particular leader during the strike; this explains the C5F’s lack of influence even after the social movement. They were simply the social body which “archived” the protesters’ stories.
In the previous chapters I showed that the LKP had a strong hold over the protest that occurred in Guadeloupe. That was not the case for the C5F in Martinique. The C5F did not have much control over the protesters during the strike; they did not seem to have gained much during the meeting. Moreover, as Lucien had underlined, the C5F was mandated by the population (ref. Chapter 4). But, at the time of the meeting their “mandate” was over. Even though most of my respondents had complete trust and confidence in the C5F in the first stages of the strike, they seemed to have lost all faith in the organisation by the time our interview took place. Furthermore, they perceived the members of the C5F as underachievers. The very few encouraging results following two long months of negotiations, marches and sacrifices have triggered much resentment amongst the protesters. With no exception, the respondents had bitter feelings towards the C5F. This was especially the case for the politicians who did not miss this opportunity to blame the organisation further, and to reclaim their authority during our interviews. This point was particularly relevant during my meeting with Léon.

Léon is an autonomist but he had believed in communist ideals. He was a political figure in Martinique who has been active for about fifty years in local politics. He had been one of Césaire’s closest collaborators when they were both part of the Communist Party. Léon’s physical appearance does not say much in politics, but it is everything in Martinique. Léon is “mulâtre” (Mulatto). This means that he has mixed physical features: strong white undertones with blue eyes, fair skin and straight hair. This last point implies that he can easily “travel” from one social layer to another, in order to have access to different social knowledge otherwise sealed-off. Léon was a very complex and fascinating individual. Before being known as very “friendly” with the Békés, Léon had been a fervent communist supporter.

I first met Léon at the end of a very long bumpy road. Léon’s villa faced a private beach located in the northern town of Martinique he had ruled for over 30 years. Once I arrived, he led me to his desk crammed with cigarettes, books and various journals. Léon is also a well-known historian in Martinique, and a living archive who was not easy to interview. Indeed, Léon was the hardest interviewee I encountered, not simply
because he was a very assertive individual, but mainly because he was always acting, constantly shifting positions with me, hence he was particularly difficult to read. I constantly felt questioned, and scrutinised throughout the interview. In any case, he seemed to be amused by my presence. Once we began the interview, he asked me: “I guess you already know my relationships with the Békés...?”. I was surprised by the suddenness of the question, yet he has been a very experienced local politician, who may have seen a lot, or who did not have much time left on his side. I posed: “...Which type of relationship exactly? It’s been quite a while since I left Martinique you see ...”. He did not seem to pay attention to my reply and asked: “Are you interested in politics?”. I answered: “I've to admit ... Only recently ...”. Then, he claimed: “You’re wrong! People say about me that I’m the ‘friend of the Békés’”. He continued to look at me as he simply concluded: “... And, that’s all true”.

Léon did what other respondents have done; he first stressed his position – and mine on that matter – as a way of prefacing his story. Usually, respondents have tried to draw my origins and family according to my family name: Théodose. Léon chose another way. The matrix of his story was not the strike, but his relationship vis-à-vis the Békés. Later in the interview he added: “At first I hated them (the Békés); I hated them when I was little. [...] They disrespected my father [...] but now that’s not the case, they are all very nice people, [...] but people don't know them.” Very often my interviewees shared very intimate details and events of their life. Léon did it in a very abrupt way. As a Martiniquan, I saw him as a man still holding the ultimate power. He has been able to openly succeed for so long because of his adaptability in switching from one social and political layer to another. He has been a pro-independence activist, communist, revolutionary, Césaire’s most fervent collaborator, historian and now pro-autonomist and the “friend of the Békés”. He could play all the key roles he wanted in Martinique, and he did play them.

The way I interacted with my respondents meant that our individual stories were intertwined, thus each interview was intrinsically participatory, not simply interactive. I related to my respondents, who implicitly encouraged me to nod, as if they wanted me to join in their narratives. Once I listened to them, I opened the gate for their stories to be told. At this moment, each respondent was the teller of his/her
own story, but I was part of it too. Their stories were all non-linear, participatory and especially immersive. Léon framed our discussion from the very beginning of the interview. Therefore, it is not necessarily the case that the subjectivities of my respondents were not subjected in and by the colonial matrix (or discourse) of power. So, I knew my story would be used as a link to continue their very own narrative. As for the other respondents, Léon sought to get me involved in his story; he not only carved a role for himself: in addition, I had to make it my own. The way Léon did it was more abrupt and perhaps freer than other respondents.

The irony is that we, as Martiniquans, have excelled in the fine art of pretending. It seems easier to pretend to be French, rather than to face our own inhibitions. I grew up in Martinique. I learnt French history at school, but our teachers never taught us the history of Martinique. I learnt most of it in Scotland, while writing my thesis. Thus, we – as Martiniquans – have learnt how to listen and digest others’ stories to make them our own. Léon had also excelled in the fine art of pretending. Despite breaking all the ties with the communist parties, Léon still idealises Castro, El Ché, as well as the Cuban Revolution. During our meeting he suddenly recited in a perfect Cuban accent the second declaration of Havana in 1962 and he ended by shouting with his index finger pointing in the air: “El deber de todo revolucionario es hacer la revolución!” (The duty of all revolutionary is to make the revolution). He paused for a moment, then he finally added:

I’m not saying that [the 2009 protest] was a revolution, there is no comparison [...] but it had the appearance. I was looking in vain for a revolutionary programme, for something consistent. But there was nothing. The members of the C5F were worthless. All due respect of course, sincerely, I’ve such a profound respect for them.

Léon was challenged by the protesters and by the C5F during the strike. All his life he has been able to trade places. He has been able to voice, and to identify himself with, all kinds of narratives. But his voice was drowned out by those of the protesters. Yet he was still hoping to see a radical change in Martiniquan society. Léon, as well as other respondents, expressed his disappointment towards the C5F. Before being part of the PPM party, Léon was a fervent Communist activist. Although Léon left the Party, it seems that he still longs to see a social revolution.
But, considering the influence the local politicians have on Martiniquan society, he seems to be an active part of a political system that goes around in circles. Yet his reaction and resentment against the C5F seem to have been his way of absolving him of personal and political responsibility for being part of a system that limits the development of Martiniquan economy.

The C5F that had inspired such strong hope amongst the protesters has now become the main target of criticism and of disappointment. The C5F was also the target of deep criticisms from the people who condemned the protests publicly or privately. This was certainly the case for Louis, a Béké entrepreneur. Contrary to other Béké respondents, Louis was particularly intense, almost theatrical. He was passionate and defiant throughout our meeting. I knew from Léon that Louis had long aspired to have a career in politics. However, unlike Léon his name was a solid handicap to playing any role in local politics. Because of his family name, his career aspirations turned into dust before they began.

I had already chosen to interview my respondents in their “natural environment”, which means in an environment in which they were at ease talking to me. With the Békés, however, I did not have much choice. I had to go where I had never been. I met Louis at his workplace in the town of Lamentin. There were only white men in the building. I am familiar with those types of workplaces, but in Martinique such “sudden” and complete lack of homogeneity means something else: it was an exclusive community. I could easily distinguish the Békés amongst them. I recognise their accent and I have learnt how to distinguished their faces. Once I arrived on the first floor, I met a female receptionist who looked like me. She was sure to greet me with an uncommon, very cold, yet professional welcome. She also made sure not to create any contact with me. I knew why. As a Black woman visiting this highly masculine work environment, I knew I was expected not to disturb the existing gendered and racial settings; but I also knew that my presence was already subverting the place. It was not before I met Louis. At the beginning, he was leaning back in his chair, but at one point he leant towards me and said:
In my opinion, this social movement was [...] a historic mistake, a historic horror, a historic catastrophe [...] I can’t find other words to describe this protest, except for the fact that it was a great moment of cowardice. It was about the cowardice of the mayors who closed their city councils. It was about the cowardice of the state, which had done nothing to allow the citizens to work and to enforce the laws. It was a giant carnival! Never before, the state went down on its knees in front a small of group of trade unionists.

The extreme dislike Louis had towards the C5F, or towards the members of the organisation, was shared with other respondents who did not approve of the strike. He did not once acknowledge the demands of the protesters; instead he acknowledged the authority of the government. Even though both Louis and Léon seem to share the same opinion towards the strike and the social movement organisation. Louis could not help but impose his view; he could only embrace one narrative – a republican narrative – whereas Léon has always been flexible towards alternative narratives. Consequently, Léon has been able to embrace all kinds of narratives, whether he believed in them or not.

Louis’ reaction was particularly salient amongst the Béké interviewees. Indeed, one of the main protagonists of the social movement was certainly the Béké community. Yet during the protests, the Békés were very discreet, even absent, especially in the streets of Fort-de-France. Except for the events that occurred on 6th March, they were nowhere to be seen. The ones who agreed to be interviewed told me that they knew about the lead slogan – “Martinique is ours, not theirs, band of Béké thieves, we will throw them out”. In addition, they were also aware of the disastrous impact the documentary had in Martinique. Surely they did not want to expose themselves any further.

Interviewing the members of the Béké community was not an easy task. The snowball sampling had been helpful; however, it was still not easy to reach them, or to meet them. Moreover, as a Black female, it was even harder to persuade them to be interviewed. Still, I was determined to hear their voice.
Indeed, the ones who agreed to meet me were very assertive; however, this was not the case with Jean-Philippe, whom I met at his workplace. Throughout our meeting, Jean-Philippe constantly pointed out how challenging it was for him to voice his opinions publicly during the protest. He was stoical and very observant at first. He was difficult to read, but like Louis, he was keen to speak. The impact of the “Last of Masters of Martinique” documentary was such that it was difficult for the members of his community to voice their opinions about the strike in the media, and even less in the streets during the marches.

The counter-protest, which occurred on 6th March, was the first and the only time some Békés publicly stood against the strike in the streets of Fort-de-France. Various Martiniquans, including several local entrepreneurs such as Hervé, were involved in the march. However, most counter-protesters were local farmers such as Constant and Julien. Hervé, Constant and Julien wanted to protest against the excessive deadweight losses the long weeks of strike were generating. Julien insisted that he understood the protesters’ demands, because he had always been waiting for Martinique to change, and he also wished to see the local economy improve. However, he was against the method and the tools used to improve the economy. Hence he was utterly against the general strike. He was not allowed to sell, nor to export; his employees were not working, thus he was losing significant amounts of money every day. Both Constant and Julien explained that the huge economic losses the strike generated were heavier for the farmers because they could not export their perishable and fragile goods (particularly bananas), which were subject to decay and spoilage.

Along with Hervé, Constant and Julien, a few other Béké farmers and landowners joined the counter-protest. Even though the majority of the counter-protesters were not Békés, many of my respondents called this march the “protest of the Békés”.

The Béké community has always been subject to tales and rumours; subsequently, numerous rumours emerged as to why local farmers such as Constant and Julien joined the counter-protest with them. Alain said: “You know, the Békés had offered them brand new tractors. So, [the farmers] came to Fort-de-France with their brand
new tractors. [The Békés] gave them all kind of things in return [for their participation]”. Joël was the most virulent: “They were sell-outs. The Békés gave them money to be there”. Others respondents reported the same rumours during the interview. Despite this, I remain sceptical about those assertions; I could not verify such statements either. The veracity of those rumours may not have been as important as the role they played in the popular conceptions of the protest. It has been argued that rumours often dismantle trust and interrelations during protests (Benson, 2004). On the contrary, those rumours reinforced the solidarity between the protesters. Indeed, numerous respondents claimed that the level of participation in the marches were stronger the day after the counter-protest. Indeed, Adèle noticed that people’s involvement in the protests was progressively getting weaker towards the beginning of March. But Adèle also observed – amongst other respondents – a boost in participation the day after the counter-protest.

In the previous chapters I argued that the movement was a form of marronnage. The involvement of the Martiniquan famers in the counter-protest stood against the narratives of marronnage, which were voiced by the protesters during the marches. The rumours support such popular narratives. The protesters did not let the counter-narratives infiltrate the exclusive space of solidarity that the protests created in the streets of Fort-de-France. “I am telling you, we would never let [the counter-protesters] enter into Fort-de-France! They did not enter!” claimed Dimitri. The confrontations that occurred on 6th March also had symbolic meaning in the popular narratives of the protests: the urban space of Fort-de-France, occupied by the protesters, confronted the rural space symbolised by the Békés on that day. Two sites of production of identity narratives were opposed. The confrontation epitomised the relations between two conflicting discourses of identity and of territoriality: The (neo)colonial vs the post-colonial identity narratives; the continuity of the past vs the rupture from the colonial past; the landowners vs. the dispossessed. Even though neither narrative can simply be dichotomised, they were seen as such in the popular narratives. Therefore, in between this binary construction of reality, the involvement of the Martiniquan farmers in the counter-protest represented an unthinkable site, or a region of taboo in the social experiences of the protests. They were seen as traitors
– or as “sell-outs” as Joël put it – not even defectors. Here also, the rumours of financial transactions maintain the constancy of the popular narratives of the protests.

In this emerging public liminal sphere of protest, being heard and seen were empowering for the protesters. Nonetheless, it was equally dangerous for those who openly contested it in Fort-de-France. Thus, the violence of the altercations that occurred between the protesters and the counter-protesters display the strong apprehension and revulsion the protesters might had felt towards these Békés, and towards any other counter-protesters.

For many protesters, such as Albin, the strike meant unity and “synchronisation”. For other respondents such as Jean-Philippe, Ginette and Julien, the movement was a long and traumatising experience. The strong difference in experiences was explained by Inès, a local politician who had tried to understand the movement. Inès was one of the very few politicians who publicly condemned the strike. She understood the protests as follows: ‘During the protests there were what I would call ‘historical folds’. What I mean is that, what [the protesters] were doing was to place specific discourses of the past into our present time… So there were ‘logical breaks’ and ‘logical gaps’. The discourses they were having were not directed to their current interlocutors.” What Inès meant by “historical folds” was the layering of past events, and particularly the layering of past events of resistance that occurred in Martinique and which were narrated during the strike. These “historical folds” brought remote and distinct historical events of resistance into direct proximity during the protests. Inès struggled to see the connections between the different layers. She defined the connections as “logical breaks” or “logical gaps”. However, such “logical breaks” reflect the deep fragmentation of Martiniquan society, which challenges any kind of metadiscourse of unity.

The comment made by Inès recalls ones of the recurrent debates in post-colonial studies, which is the accuracy of the prefix “post” from the term post-colonial. The prefix “post” has regularly been the subject of vigorous debates amongst academics for its “inadequacy” and for its “anachronism” (Bennington, 1990; Dirlik, 1994; Nash 2002; Carby, 2007). Subsequently, other questions – also fiercely debated – have been
posed with regards to the significance of the term. For example, Shohat (1995: 103) asked: “when exactly, then, does the ‘post-colonial’ begin? Which region is privileged in such beginning?”. Hall (1996) also posed: “when was the post-colonial?”. Both questions stress the difficulty of mapping and theorising on the nexus of collective memories, cultural identities and places. Both questions lead me to think of the prefix post as a lapsus, which often discloses unconscious desires. The prefix in the context of Martinique suggests that it is impossible to break free from the lasting resonance of the colonial past in such post-colonial societies.

The altercation of 6th March also shows that any form of counter-discourse that was openly expressed was fiercely challenged by the protesters during the marches and throughout the two months of protests. This point was particularly visible during the interview I had with Eddy. Eddy was not a fervent protester and he was not in the streets on 6th March. He participated in the marches, but as he pointed out, he was not “dedicated” to the movement. Yet, when I asked him what the counter-discourses were, he paused, and then he replied with astonishment: “What? People who were against the strike? ...Well they weren’t in the streets. Maybe they were in front of their TV.” Thus, Fort-de-France had been completely shielded by the protesters. This point was confirmed by Jean-Philippe, who leads an advertising agency in Martinique. He took the initiative to create a billboard stating the importance of tolerance, and the importance of the businesses in Martinique. (See Figure 16).

**Figure 16** – *Billboard “Restons ouverts... Les uns envers les autres” – 2009 – Photo Credit Vauto.*
The billboard was placed at the entrance of Fort-de-France at the end of February. The billboard was entitled “Restons ouverts ...les uns envers les autres” (Let’s remain open ... towards each other). Over 300 different names along with different brands and local businesses were listed on the poster, and all of them formed the main body of the text. The sentence “Businesses are the heart of this country” was placed at the bottom of the text. The last sentence was written in red and in Creole.

However, none of my respondents mentioned this billboard during the meetings. Indeed, Jean-Philippe’s actions were not particularly welcomed by the few protesters who happened to see the poster. In one of the videos and recordings Jocelyn had given me, there was various footage of protesters, wearing red outfits, tearing the billboard apart. Indeed, the next day some protesters were already destroying the poster. The protesters’ reactions show that any form of counter-discourse that openly challenged the movement – even slightly – was most likely to be silenced by them, especially in Fort-de-France. I asked Jean-Philippe to talk further about the billboard. He explained:

In Martinique and even in the metropolis, the media broadcasted merely the voice of the demagogic discourse. I didn’t have access to the media; I didn’t have access to the microphone... [...] I really felt that there was a monopolisation of the public speech. We’ve tried to find solutions to be heard, to re-equilibrate the situation.

[...] My employees and I have tried to find a solution. Hmm ... And I brutally became a Béké, even though I grew up without being aware of this status ... I don’t know if I can speak about this ... But this movement was a slap for me as a Béké. Being a Béké was not something that was driving my life, you know. Béké or not, we are what we are. But all over sudden I was only a Béké. I was only that. It was unbearable. I was reduced to something that I did not recognise myself as. I was the subject of caricatures; I was the subject of insults ... [The respondent is banging his fist on the table] So much that when my son was reading on the walls things like “Béké racists” ... He was ten. I remember well, it was ... I remember he was asking “Daddy what’s a Béké?” ... “Daddy what’s a Béké?” ... But he perfectly knew what it is ... Anyway, the media was giving a single perspective... [The respondent is banging his fist on the table] The media legitimised the movement. Many Békés felt that they were reduced to a status that they've moved past a long time
Interestingly, Jean-Philippe also created another “logical break” (such as Inès would have said) when he said: “Being a Béké was not something that was driving my life, you know. Béké or not, we are what we are.” Yet numerous aspects of his life, such as his racial, economic, social, or cultural aspects, have all been shaped by the traces of his pasts. He is not simply who he is because of random circumstances. He is who he is because of the ways in which society has been historically fashioned. Thus, the ways society has been shaped have political and social as well as racial implications. His family name defines his social status, and his social positions are the result of this past, which has been carefully crafted and well preserved for centuries. Therefore, the protesters were more likely to see him through the lenses of the “historical folds” they were building throughout the protests. These “historical folds” allowed them to create alternative identity narratives.

As a Black female Martiniquan, I have to admit that I was completely astonished when he stated that “many Békés felt that they were reduced to a status that they’ve moved past a long time ago … How to say this … The society re-compartmentalised itself in its past, in its casts”. To some extent, Jean-Philippe could not – or did not want to – ponder the ongoing influence of colonial discourses on his life, nor on Martiniquan society. This also means that he did not want to question his own influence on the reproduction of colonial discourses that compartmentalised not only him, but us all.

Glissant (1981) compared Martiniquan history to “crossed out memories”. I would say instead that each respondent – protesters and counter-protesters alike – used Martiniquan history like a palimpsest, which can be scraped or crossed out, so that it can be used again to rewrite new narratives. As Judith Butler (2004) reminds us, while a collective narrative framing of important past events is crucial to our experience and understanding of memory, there is nothing innocent about it. Narrative frame helps us to understand “in a forceful way, what we can hear, whether a view will be taken as an explanation or as exoneration, whether we can hear the difference and abide by it” (Butler, 2004: 4–5). During the strike the streets of Fort-de-France, became a site of productions and of reflections of alternative identity narratives and
of cultural meanings. The streets, along with the crowds and the buildings, became the site of productions that were used to narrate new narratives of equality and fraternity. After the strike, the official and political discourses of unity – such as the one relayed by Sarkozy – overlay the real disparities that still exist within the society.

Hutchison (1994: 109) claimed that “figures in the past [become] instruments of the national identity or obstacles in its path”. History cannot be changed, the past cannot be modified; yet the past can be rewritten, and reinterpreted. The question that could be posed is which figures or which fragment of the past can be used to create such national unity in Martinique. Social movement theorists generally emphasise the role played by social movement organisations to encourage protesters’ involvement (e.g. Freeman, 2009). However, in the previous chapter I showed that even though the C5F played an important role during the negotiations, the protesters were free to act as they wished. They were not reliant on the organisation to act. Social movement theorists often stress the importance of networks in mobilisation. They especially emphasise the role of networks – even through other protests – as the main catalyst for individuals’ engagement in protests (e.g. Diani and McAdam, 2003). Indeed, I explained in Chapter 5, that the structure of the C5F was strikingly similar to the LKP. However, even though the C5F might have been influenced by the protest that was occurring in Guadeloupe, the Martiniquan protesters framed their own forms of solidarity and their own kind of leadership throughout the protest. Resource mobilisation theories emphasise the role of resources in mobilisation (e.g. Hisschemöller and Sioziou, 2013). This theory argues that the success of a protest depends on the available resources (e.g. human, material or financial resources etc.). In the case of the 2009 protesters, the collective memory of the past events of resistance was a social capital mobilisation; it was used as an efficient resource to mobilise. I suggest that the collective memory constitutes a form of knowledge that could be used as a resource to mobilise. Accordingly, collective memories of the 2009 strike can well be used as capital for future mobilisations. Both LKP (Guadeloupe) and C5F (Martinique) were mobilising agents.

Thus, the constant re-writings of the past that occurred throughout the protest and during the interviews (hence two years later) show that the reading of the palimpsest
is deeply confrontational. The society as a whole does not seem to be able to move forward from its past. Thus, Martiniquan history is written like a palimpsest where a fragment silences the historical legitimacy of the other. The collective memories of the 2009 protests seem to be forgotten but its memories will certainly emerge in the course of another protest.

Indeed, what seems to be clear from the aftermath of the 2009 protests is that Martinique is still deeply fragmented. It is a society that still lacks social cohesion. The collective memories of the past are fragmented as much as the communities. The failure of departmentalisation shows that a historical wrong cannot possibly be righted by imposing the same forces that produced those wrongs. The relationships between France and Martinique had changed under the Republic, yet France still firmly holds its political and economic hegemony over the region. The local elite class, and particularly the Békés, do not want to address their colonial heritage; and they do not see the need to ponder the impact of this heritage on Martinique. Even after the strike, their position remains unaffected, and they still firmly hold their privileges in this neo-colonial environment. The protest did not revolutionise the social and economic structures of the island, because the matrix of hegemonic power prevails.

Finally, the protesters who were so vocal in the streets of Fort-de-France did not even talk about the movement when the C5F asked them to do so. The protest is slowly being brushed away and forgotten.

6.3.2 – The Limited Influence of the Strike on the Local Economy

The two months of strikes had a disastrous impact on the economic activity of Martinique. However, it is safe to say that the economy of Martinique was not in its best shape prior to the strike. At the outset the strike brought hope amongst the protesters. A long list of hundreds of demands was written by the C5F and by the population and were negotiated daily at the prefecture. Each demand addressed diverse cultural and economic issues. The slogan “Martinique is ours, not theirs” was one of the main slogans of the strike, and this slogan disputes, inter alia, a common experience of dispossession. The Creole neologism pwofitation was also an important term that also underlined a common sense of “dispossession”, and particularly
economic dispossession. This word denounced a systemic economic exploitation by the “owning class”, which operates at every economic level within Martiniquan society (Bonilla, 2009: 131; Jégo, 2009: 87–98). Finally, pwofitation denounced the complicity or the lack of intervention of the French state to effectively build equality and to annihilate the system of discrimination. Paradoxically, what the protesters deemed as “excessive abuse” during the strike was expressed differently a few years after the protests. The word did not generate outcry any longer; it was as if the word was almost forgotten and the signs of abandonment and resignation were everywhere. Despite the magnitude of the strike, it did not destabilise the very foundations of the hegemonic economic system.

Four main counter-arguments to the strike were repeatedly used by its opponents during our interviews. The first argument pondered the negative impacts the 2008 financial crisis had on the global economy prior to the protest. For many respondents Martinique’s state of affairs could not only be reduced to a local matter; it was also part of a much more global financial disaster.

The second argument stressed the negative impacts of the strike on the Martiniquan economy. Thus, according to some respondents, the strike was not a solution; it made the economic situation even worse. Even though the C5F succeeded in raising the lowest wages by 200 euros, a report provided by the local institute for statistics – IEDOM – explained the disastrous impact the two-month strike had on the local economy. The most damaging financial blows were on tourism, and on the building and construction industry, which together dropped by over 40% in 2009 (IEDOM, 2009). It was not easy for the most fervent protesters, such as Joël, to admit the economic backfire the strike caused: “This strike had broken down our economy ... That’s true ... Yes, people say that ... It had torn apart the businesses which were already having financial difficulties. Yes, that’s true ... We have to admit that”.

Thus the respondents, who profusely spoke about their involvement and participation to the strike, were at this point embarrassed to talk about the economic

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96 IEDOM: Institut d’Emission des Départements d’Outre-Mer.
outcomes of the protest. The C5F, which had been the subject of great hope, became the target of blame and disappointment. Justin took great care to insist that he was not a “strike breaker”. Justin was one of the most fervent pro-independence individuals I ever met. He was also the mayor of a southern city. I have always heard of Justin as he has been in politics since my childhood; his charisma has never failed to impress me. He never concealed his contempt for intellectuals that he believes are “speech markers”: “there is a difference between writing and fighting for it,” he claimed. He had publicly disapproved of the social movement, and he received heavy criticism from the population, even from other nationalist parties in return, but now it was his turn to talk: “People thought I was against them. I was not against what they were saying. I was against the method! The C5F was wrong, I was right. What did they achieve at the end?! Strictly nothing!”. 

Like other respondents had done, Justin supported the idea that the strike was not the right method or approach to tackle so many deep economic issues. For example, Louis told me that his marketing business was amongst the 7% of local businesses that were forced to file for bankruptcy after the strike (Pôle-Emploi, 2010). He also insisted on saying that, unlike small businesses, large groups and companies already had the financial resources and back-up to easily absorb 38 days of strike:

Do you really think the strike affected the big fishes?! You know what I've done? Well, I took my boat and I went to Saint-Lucia. I bought 800kg of goods, and I bought fuel for my car over there. Quite frankly, I didn't know what was going on in Fort-de-France. All the ones who were not poor were in Saint-Lucia, living in luxury hotels. Parfait was in the United States. 97 Seriously, do you really think Bernard Hayot or Parfait really cared about the strike? 98 They don’t care and on top of that their businesses were not affected.

The Békés who were talked about in the streets, in various songs and slogans, on television and on the internet were travelling peacefully around the globe. His statement not only shows the deep divisions between classes, the different

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97 Robert Parfait is wealthy entrepreneur in Martinique and featured in the last Master of Martinique documentary.  
98 Hayot and Despointes are Béké families.
subcultures between those classes and their resilience to change the power and social structures of the island. After Louis’ long tirade against the movement, the C5F and its members, he concluded by saying: “the proof is that all the city councils have filed for bankruptcy”. Contrary to what Louis’ said, not all the city councils are bankrupt, but indeed, most of them are. Jean, a mayor of a northern city, explained:

There are 34 communes in Martinique. You must know that we were already in financial troubles prior to the strike ... The 2008 financial crisis did not help us either. 99 [But] 20 communes have now major ongoing deficits. 20 communes! [...] My commune has ongoing deficits. On top of that: 5 more communes have major ongoing deficits. [...] I'm not going to tell you which ones, but these are the outcomes of the strike. [...] I agreed with protesters. I understood them, but they forced all the city councils to close. I was the only one telling the other mayors not to close their council. I agreed with the movement but not with the strike. We shut down for 38 days! I had tried to open my council [...] But, the general atmosphere was getting way too tense for me, I was on my own, so I left.

Both respondents – Louis and Jean – agreed that the strike was not the right way to solve the economic issues Martinique that still faces to this day. This argument led to the fourth argument which outlined the inability or the incapacity of the C5F – and of the protesters – to address or to even comprehend large and complex economic implications. Jean-Philippe explained:

In the streets there were only civil servants, there were pensioners […]. There were people who are completely disconnected from the business world. So, those people got together to break, to revile the whole private business system. That’s why I’m telling you that it was not a social movement, it wasn’t a strike.

I interviewed diverse protesters, coming from diverse social classes and backgrounds such as teachers, researchers, businessmen, artists, students and farmers etc. Obviously, I could not proceed to a complete census of the 2009 protesters, but 72% of my respondents were either civil servants, or working for the local public

99 A commune is a territorial and administrative subdivision in France. The city of Fort-de-France is a commune. A commune is led by a mayor who is elected every six years by the population of the city.
administration. Thus this argument tends to minimise the scale of the protest. This argument trivialises also the relevance of the protesters’ demands: “Life is expensive everywhere! In Brazil, in Europe [...] not only in Martinique” (José). The same argument was framed in a slightly different way by Christian, who claimed with derision: “[The protesters] were not fighting for ideals ... They were in the streets to buy more, to have more, to consume more ... To drink more champagne ... Well, you see what I mean.” As the interview went on, he became bitter, and he added:

Only in Martinique you can see a strike that could last for so long. Only in Martinique, seriously ... You will never, I mean never see in Saint Lucia, which is independent by the way, the population going on strike for two months! Never! [...] The strike was just a caprice.

In the light of those four arguments, the unproductive configuration of the local economy was never called into question. The lasting influence of the colonial past of Martinique in the local economy was not questioned. Everything seemed to matter more than the social and economic inequalities and the reasons why the social movement even took place. None of those respondents wanted to talk about the core of the issue, which is the same issue that will last once the strike is forgotten, which is our reading and our continuing engagement with (neo)colonial discourses.

Many respondents pointed out numbers and statistics to demonstrate that the protest has sunk the local economy even further. Nonetheless, it is safe to say that such an unproductive economy is already deemed to sink. Martinique has an utterly uncompetitive economy which attempts to survive through dubious taxes and financial transactions from the state. Thus, those counter-arguments fail to question the hegemonic powers that monopolise and lead the economy in the long run. This means that the positions and the roles of the Béké community in the Martiniquan economy were not questioned – especially by the respondents who were part of this community.

This number includes the respondents who participated in the focus groups and the ones whom I have met individually.
According to Jacques, who is a Béké entrepreneur, the time when his community had the economic monopoly on the island “had long been gone”. Furthermore, the Békés “occupy a perfectly normal position within the economy” nowadays. In addition, all the power, wealth and assets of the Béké community displayed in *The Last Masters of Martinique* documentary made up a “caricature”. For him, the documentary was broadcast in Martinique especially at a moment when the social tension was already high. Thus, for him *The Last Masters of Martinique* documentary was almost a form of propaganda. It was, he implied, a conspiracy implemented to take advantage of the Békés.

Ironically, it has been easier for me to reach the Békés than it was for the journalist who directed the documentary. At this point, it is important to say that I have tried many times to contact Romain Bolzinger, the French journalist who directed the film. I left several messages and contacted his workplace, but he relentlessly stayed silent.

Even though Jacques condemned the documentary, he did not seem too bothered by it. “What do you mean by caricature?” I asked. He replied: “… Well … There is some truth in it … but it’s a caricature. It’s the truth but there was some exaggeration.” Unlike Jacques, who was at ease, Louis was by far the most vocal against the film, which he called a “set-up” and a “pure manipulation”, made up to generate a huge audience. More than the content of the documentary, Louis was outraged about what he felt was betrayal from the journalist who they had welcomed into their home. The difference between the reactions of Jacques and Louis confirmed to me who was the most influential between the two: unlike Louis, Jacques was unshaken.

Moreover, Jean and Louis strongly condemned the racial and even the racist tones of the protest, which were triggered by the documentary. According to them, Martinique is a French department that should follow the republican principles which ensure that its laws do not discriminate. Yet I could not stop thinking about the irony of seeing a Béké complaining about racial bias. However, Benjamin and Dominique – who were both white respondents – stressed that they never felt ostracised because of their skin colour during the protests. This means that Jean and Louis built their counter-
arguments with the limited knowledge of what was really happening during the marches, because they had limited access to the streets.

During my fieldwork, I went several times to the trade union’s headquarters at Fort-de-France. I went to the same place that the C5F regularly improvised meetings with the protesters. However, once I passed the main door of the building, the offices were empty; many of them were closed. The events of the 2009 movement have slowly slipped into oblivion. The C5F still exists. Laurent confirmed that the members of the organisation still have regular meetings, but one trade union, FO (Force Ouvrière), had already left the organisation. There were still some leaflets pinned on the walls stating “we are going towards victory!” But they are under the name of specific trade unions, and there is no crowd to read them. The protests do not gather people any more. Even though my respondents seemed happy to talk about the events, they admitted that people do not talk about the movement any more. The strong appeal the C5F had during the strike has already faded away.

The fading memories that I have seen in the trade union headquarters sharply contrasted with my interview with Jacques. Jacques is a Béké. He is an affluent one. He is a well-known entrepreneur who featured in The Last Masters of Martinique documentary. As I explained earlier, he regretted having been involved in the film when he simply said, “I was being duped.” Unlike other Békés, he did not seem to be concerned by it; at least he never showed it. The documentary might have been a bump in his road. It was as if he had played the wrong card. The documentary did not shake his confidence.

It was not easy to meet Jacques, as he kept changing his mind. After several aborted meetings, I finally met him in Paris, at his home, in the 16th arrondissement. The 16th arrondissement is the most luxurious residential place in Paris, where numerous famous artists and wealthy entrepreneurs reside. I still remember the meeting. In the corridor there is a long colonial console. A very wide range of old flintlock pistols lay all across the table, and I looked at them while I walked towards the living room. They were pointing towards the visitors. They were perfectly aligned. The furniture was entirely made of solid wood. Those were rare pieces that dated from the colonial
period. I recognised them. I remember thinking: “So, this is where the past is. It’s not lost; they’ve brought all of our memories over here. That’s what they’ve done.” Like Louis, jacques was quite hostile at the beginning of the interview: “You really wanted to see me ... So here I am. I really don’t know what you want from me, everything had already been said about that.” He was defiant. But at the end of the interview he could not stop talking. The more I asked questions, the more he talked. This time, it was his turn to voice a heroic narrative, and to reclaim his identity as Martiniquan: “Yes, I lobby for our bananas; I just came back from Brussels. I lobby for Martinique. I always say that I am a Martiniquan. When I introduce myself I never say that I’m French. How about you? What do you say? I am Martiniquan and I’m proud to be one.”

Unexpectedly, two weeks later he called me back, telling me that I should also look at the strike in Guadeloupe.

Jacques reminded me of Léon, who has been able to frame and adapt his political posture according to whatever happened to best fit his interests. Jacques, also, could easily reframe and adapt his identity according to his environment. Unlike me, no one could question his French identity in Paris, in Brussels or anywhere else because he could reframe it as he wished. His position as an exceptionally wealthy white male has been his pass that still allows him to “fit in” anywhere. As for his Martiniquan identity, no one could question his Martiniquan identity in mainland France.

The Eiffel Tower was just standing in front of us through the gigantic bay window of the living room. This powerful French symbol contrasted with the colonial interior design, but not so much. At the beginning of the interview she was all grey, but by the end she was shining bright. We were in February, but she still had her Christmas lights up. When I left the building it was dark. Jacques had talked a lot. I was still surprised to have seen him, in his intimacy. It was something that was completely new to me. He had travelled with his past everywhere, whereas I was looking for my own.

I grew up surrounded by stories about the Békés, their family names, their tales which always break into everyone’s silence and privacy. However, their stories have always

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101 By “Brussels” he meant the European Parliament.
been told to me by people who either had no access or limited access to them. Yet I have also experienced, with some of them, some intriguing and short moments – or “third space” – of closeness where the boundaries were more elusive. However, at some point, everyone always knew, and still knows where to stand, especially, what to expect from each other. This had always been somewhat reassuring to me, because this had allowed me to anticipate, and even to preset any type of connection with them. For example, I knew that I could not introduce the subject of my research to any Béké women I had known from school. Yet I tried; but our fragile connections have been reformatted ever since. So, I know that breaking the silence would create confrontation. This vigilant gaze is the dialogue we have had for generations.

Post-colonial gaze has long been a central focus of post-colonial theories (e.g. Fanon, 1952). According to Lacan (1964) the effect of mimicry is “camouflage”; likewise, for Bhabha the post-colonial gaze confirms the pervasive power of colonial discourse (Bhabha, 1984). In any case mimicry needs a referent, because the role of appropriation of power is key to understanding the resonance of colonial discourse in post-colonial society. More recent studies still consider mimicry as a matter of the subaltern’s choice, not as a matter of the colonial authority (e.g. Thomson and Jones, 2016). However, my point is that mimicry may well be reversed.

At this point, perhaps, the end of the meeting I had with Louis may also deserve further attention here. Indeed, a couple of years have now past since I ended my fieldwork in Martinique. I had to listen once more to certain recordings, and I still find some of them draining to listen to. The meeting I had with Louis (one of the Béké interviewees) was one of them. My meeting with him was tense, up to the very end. The strike and particularly the documentary have visibly upset him, but what matters here is the interaction we had towards the end of the interview. By the end of the interview, he began to complete my questionnaire, and I thanked him for his time. We exchanged a few more words about the events of the strike. Even though he was irritated and exasperated, he was still talking. According to him, the documentary had wrongly portrayed the Békés: “You know I have been talking to all kinds of people, Blacks, Whites, Indians ...”. Then, he quickly added: “I will show you, because you don’t look convinced.” While he was reaching for his agenda, he continued: ”You know what?
There are all kinds of people amongst the Békés, we are all different. I will be completely open with you, because you know what? I don’t care, I really don’t! [...] People think that, because I’m Béké I don’t talk to Black people ... In fact, who says that?! I have plenty of Black friends!” He started turning the pages of the agenda, and proceeded to point out different names written on it: “Look, his name is [...] he is Black ... that one too ... You see? Look ... That one is Black too! I have a meeting with him next week, and I know him very well ...” While I was awkwardly staring at the agenda, I was thinking of a way to regain control of the conversation: “You said that I was not convinced; do you really feel that I’m not convinced?” But, the pages were still turning: “This one ... That one ... It’s filled with Black people in it!”. 

I let my frustration show when I interrupted him the second time. Our exchange became much tenser at this point.

Yet my objective was clear: I did not want to jeopardise all the work I had done to secure this interview, and I added in a much softer voice: “You don’t have to convince me, all I want really, is to listen to you ... That’s all I want, you are the one who matters here.” I may have misinterpreted, or I may have chosen to misinterpret the situation. He had talked to me (the Martiniquan); not to me (the student, or the observer). I felt that I had lost the distance I had managed to build from the interview. Or perhaps I never had it. He had also been a reader and the observer during our interaction; but I had chosen to overlook such power dynamics, hoping that his stare would fade away.

He continued: “…Look, I talk to people from all races, I have built friendship with them. Look, last time I was talking to [...], we talked all afternoon ... We talked about all kind of things ... about life [...] but, it’s always the same thing ... It’s like nothing had happened ... What do you want me to tell you ...?” He had said it with a softer voice, but the non-conformity of the situation was uncanny, at least to me. I was utterly uncomfortable. I remember how difficult it was for me to use the word “Béké” in front of him: “Well, it’s difficult to reach people like you ...” I pointed at his agenda to divert his stare, “... But, if you have some contacts, if you can put me in contact with other Békés for example, I’ll be glad to meet to them ...” He asked: “… Have you not interviewed other Békés already?” I replied: “Well, all I’ve right now is you, but, if you
are willing to put me in contact with others, I would love to interview them.” He gave me the phone numbers of several Békés, including Jacques and Jean-Philippe. He also gave me the numbers of a few other well-known Békés who declined my request, including Alain Hugues-Despointes (who featured in the documentary). Finally, he also gave me the number of the journalist Bolzinger: “You must interview him!” he claimed; however, he was unreachable.

I left the building with mixed feelings. On the one hand, I had finally met Louis, and he had opened a door that would have taken me months to unlock. My notes were filled with phone numbers and email addresses. On the other hand, I was still upset. The situation had been uncanny and a troublesome one for discussing matters of racial issues. Louis decided to merely address this social apartheid from a racial standpoint. I was also troubled by the mimicry of the “we”. Indeed, from my personal experience the Békés have always been part of a particular identity narrative that goes beyond mere racial narratives. I had always thought of the Békés as one unbreakable unit, very distinct from other communities. For example, my mother had tried to teach me the distinctions between the Békés and the Whites: The Whites work for the Békés, not the other way around; the Whites are visible, not the Békés, the Whites may leave Martinique, not the Békés. I had learnt how to build and to reproduce this exclusive narrative, and I reproduced it during the interview. Yet Louis chose to address the issue from a mere racial and a discriminatory standpoint. In fact, Louis and Jean-Philippe introduced themselves as the victims of a system that has oppressed them as much as me. They were the centrepieces of a social structure that values the past, and which devalues them. They were the centrepieces of a social structure that values the past, and which devalues them. From their perspective, they had become the scapegoat of a socio-historical setting that subjuges each one of us. Because the system is the same for everyone, they were wrongfully chosen to be the scapegoat. This means that at this point we were supposed to be similar.

Glissant had said that (2005: 229) “the world is creolising”. This means that it is not becoming Creole per se; “it is becoming the inextricable and unpredictable phenomenon that any creolisation process has been linked to, and which is neither supported, nor legitimated by any model.” Accordingly, I would add that the Békés are “creolising”. In the course of my fieldwork I decided to build a distance from
interviewees to filter my understanding of Martinique. I sought to intellectualise my experience in order to seal this place in a theory, in a clear model of thought which would help me to understand it better, to predict it better.

The way people construct their identities in Martinique is very conflictual, as every community attempts to claim the ownership of the place, without really assuming or agreeing with all the facets of its histories. Indeed, according to Jacques, the Békés “have a perfectly normal position in the economy”, meaning that they “have no particular economic power” compared to other communities in Martinique; nonetheless they greatly contribute to making Martinique more competitive in the Caribbean market. In Jacques opinion, the local business leaders produce capital, so they create employment opportunities; thus, they also contribute to improve people's quality of life. The Béké entrepreneurs were not the only ones to support this argument. Indeed, other respondents such as Hervé (who is also an entrepreneur), Benoît and Linette (who are both farmers) also had framed the same argument. However, such argument dismisses the lasting impact of the colonial past on the local economy.

Jacques downplays the Békés’ hegemonic position, yet he admitted their dominance over the economy when he referred to the Békés as “business leaders”. It is clear that Jacques considers the dominant position they occupy in the economy as perfectly normal. The passive acquiescence to domination refers to the process Gramsci called hegemony, which is “the power of a ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interest of all” (Ashcroft, 1989: 115; Williams, 1973: 6). Indeed, Jacques stressed the naturalness or the normality of his economic and social privilege as “business leader” and as a Béké. Yet the capital his “name” or family accumulated over the centuries is nothing “natural”, or nothing out of the ordinary. My interview with Jacques showed me more than ever how hegemony is diffused, and how it is constantly reinforced through “read-through” and subtle agreements. Even though Jacques remained suspicious throughout the interview, I could see he was constantly trying to assert his dominance. Benoît and Linette were also part of the same process of dominace. From my interview with Jacques it seems that none of the respondents, including him, want to detach themselves from their past and particularly from their
colonial past. It is a fragmented and conflictual past that everyone uses as a tool to assert their identities.

6.4- CONCLUSION

In Ricœur's book (2001), entitled *History, Memory and Oblivion*, the author theorised on the roles of memories and oblivion to achieve forgiveness. According to the author, forgiveness introduces new beginnings. However, forgiveness is not on the agenda in the case of Martinique. The 2009 social movement that people expected to be “historic”, and to mark people's lives, has slowly slipped into oblivion. As I previously mentioned, the tension between dystopia and utopia is a major theme in post-colonial art and literature (e.g Ali, 2006). The strike reflects complex relationship between utopian and dystopian representations of decolonisation in former French colonies. Both strikes (in Guadeloupe and in Martinique) had their own specificity, however, they seem to share the same ending. As global social and economic inequalities are becoming ever more entrenched is it still conceivable to create utopian representations of independence? I always had the impression that my respondents left our meeting without the comfort of a future they once imagined and believed in, but they were unable to visualise any future at all. The “new beginnings” the protesters had expected to live recalled an old and odd tale which runs in circles. Indeed, the case of Martinique demonstrates the limits of two main theories of nationalism in post-colonial societies. On the one hand the modernists define nation as a political construct (e.g. Gellner, 1983). France epitomises this construction since it “was a state before it was a nation” (McCrone and Kiely; 2000: 27). However, France’s strong quest for cultural unity and cultural homogeneity does not leave much room for alternatives; hence, as McCrone and Kiely (2000:27, 31) put it, “there is only one way to be French”. Departmentalisation, which aimed to assimilate the former colony of Martinique into France, failed to suppress the rise of nationalist and separatist sentiments in the island. It has failed to integrate Martinique. The 2009 protest had revealed that Martiniquans can build a metadiscourse of unity; they can unify their ideas and resources to visualise a common identity and a shared future. The process of assimilation failed to erase the emergence of such exclusive kinship.
Therefore, I would conclude, like Hutchinson (1994: 7) and Smith (1991), that state-
building cannot be assimilated into nation-building, and that the rise of the nation
needs to be contextualised within a more complex phenomenon of ethnicity that
forms it. Like Hutchinson, the ethno-symbolists reject the idea that nations are
politically invented. They support their arguments with the assertion that nations are
shaped from specific ethnic and symbolic origins (e.g. Smith, 1994; 1998). However,
despite the strong nationalist sentiments that were expressed during the protest, the
deep influence of assimilation on Martiniquan society cannot be dismissed either.
Thus, I would suggest that the process of assimilation cannot be seen as a firm barrier
to the expression of cultural nationalism; however, I would also suggest that it has
contributed to the fragmentation of Martiniquan society.

Indeed, during the referendums the nationalist parties attempted to mobilise the
population to vote for Article 74, which would have led Martinique towards its
autonomy. However, the population dismissed the proposition; the outcomes of this
referendum show the limit of such nationalism in mobilising the population. Even the
C5F struggled to rally the population in support of a new system. The social movement
slowly slips into oblivion, the C5F headquarters are empty, everybody is gone and
there is no reason to sing.

Thus, departmentalisation did not only fail to decolonise Martinique; it also
emphasised France’s hegemony over the region. The ways the former president
reintroduced Article 73 as a way to push the government agenda shows that it is not
yet the intention of the government to reassess its dominant relationship with
Martinique – as well as with the other French Overseas Departments such as
Guadeloupe. The successive French governments have not intended to address
France’s own post-coloniality. Subsequently, France’s colonial past is an “inaudible
story”, or a “taboo” in France (e.g. Ferro, 2002, 2006). Assimilation that attempted to
create national unity in Martinique fractured the fragile bonds that may have existed
prior to the departmentalisation. It is difficult for Martiniquan people to identity with
a nation that ignores and denies their very own existence. The outcomes of the strike
show how departmentalisation and assimilation failed to break free from imperialist
impulses.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION:
Throughout the dissertation I have explained that it is impossible to integrate Martinique into France without addressing the economic and social legacies of colonialism. This is because such legacies make it difficult – even impossible – to build the unity that defines the French nation-state.

I addressed the role and the impacts of the 2009 social movement that occurred in Martinique. Protests, riots, and other forms of social movements have long played a key role in shaping Martiniquan history and collective memories. Yet, the 2009 social movement was exceptional because of its length – the strike lasted for 38 days – and because of its magnitude. After the departmentalisation of Martinique (March 1946), social movements became central to the challenge to the ongoing colonial legacies in Martinique. Indeed, departmentalisation was supposed to pave the way for decolonisation, and to fully integrate Martinique into France. However, this ambitious project never really uprooted the rampant social perversions and economic corruptions stemming from the colonial past, and which still breed social and economic inequalities. Thus, in the last two decades there has been a resurgence of self-questioning and debate about the damage caused by such legacies (Chivallon, 2011). These debates, which had usually been addressed by the intellectuals, artists and academics, were also explored by the population during the 2009 strike. The strike opened a space of reflection and self-reflection with respect to the resonance of colonial discourses and the outcomes of departmentalisation.

The departmentalisation of Martinique and the assimilation of the society to the French culture created what Ricœur (2009: 82) would have called “blocked memories” or “repressed” memories (Ricœur, 2001: 165). The assimilation that aimed to erase the traces of the French colonial past fragmented the collective memories, and the collective identities of the place. Hence, colonial discourse still challenges the constructions of metadiscourses of unity in Martinique. The successive French governments have not been able to address the post-coloniality of the country. Furthermore, this situation is not going to change. For example, the former prime minister François Fillon claimed in 2016: “No, France is not guilty to have shared its culture with the peoples of Africa, Asia and North America” (L’Express, 2016). Fillon – who will run for president in 2017 – argued that colonisation was a cultural project,
which meant sharing language, customs and traditions. At the end of his speech Fillon was greeted with emphatic cheering and applause from the public. It has already been argued that France’s colonial past is an “inaudible story”, or a “taboo” in France (e.g. Ferro, 2002, 2006). However, French Caribbean identities are intertwined with the waves of immigration that country is facing as a whole. For example, the former president Sarkozy – who will also run for president in 2017 – claimed: “If you want to become French, you speak French, you live like the French. We will require assimilation ... Once you become French, your ancestors are the Gauls”. As McCrone and Kiely put it (2000: 31): “strong civic republicanism often carries an implicit multiculturalism which is intolerant of alternatives”.

Hence, the negative outcomes of departmentalisation opened a new space for counter-discourses and protests and rallies. This space of protest is generally occupied by the numerous nationalist and pro-independent parties – such as MIM or MODEMAS – which not only contest departmentalisation, but also French nationalism. those parties are the advocates of cultural nationalism – as they are engaged in disputing the existence of a distinct Martiniquan nation and identity – which would coincide with the cultural specificities of the place. Cultural nationalism has long been the dominant form of nationalism in Martinique (Césaire, 1932). Fanon (1961), who was also a leading advocate of anti-colonial nationalism, outlined the instrumental and even pragmatic use of cultural nationalism for “national liberation”. He believed that cultural nationalism can only be used to shape collective awareness in order to guide the masses.

However, contrary to what Fanon might have projected, the protest was unique in the sense that those nationalist parties were almost voiceless. They may have expressed their opinion, but the population did not listen to them; they were ignored, or at best tolerated. Indeed, even though the protest was saturated with nationalist and anti-colonial narratives – the main one being: “Martinique is ours, not theirs” – the Martiniquan nationalist parties did not lead the protests. The C5F did not lead the protest either. The protesters or the masses shaped and led the marches and the protest as a whole.
There have been strong academic debates and divisions over the influence of social movement organisations on protests. At one end of the spectrum of the debate, some academics such as Gamson (1990) claim that successful social movement organisations are the ones that have built a well-defined and clear-cut organisational structure. At the other end of the spectrum, there are academics who have shown that less structured social movement organisations are more reactive because they are more flexible, hence they have considerable impact on protests (e.g. Heaney and Rojas, 2014). Jasper (2014: 81) shared a mixed point of view, when he said:

“Protesters face many choices about how much to formalise their operations through rules, fundraising, paid staff, and offices. Formalities like these help to sustain activities over time, but they can also change those activities. The goal of sustaining and protecting the organisation appears alongside its original mission, and more time is devoted to raising funds and expanding staffs”.

This means that well-structured organisations tend to better organise collective actions; however, such structures require further time management and administrative resources, which may slow their principal activities of protest (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). The C5F did not have a clear-cut organised structure; the organisation was very flexible. The format of the organisation was such that the protesters used it to legitimise their actions and to somehow own the protest. Indeed, the C5F allowed the voice of each protester to be heard and those voices undeniably formatted the movement. The protesters used the organisation to be heard, but the C5F did not have a firm hold on the protesters. It was the other way around. The protests did not only open a space for the people to engage in resisting practices; it also opened a space for debate, dialogue and expression. It was a liminal space from which people collectively and individually addressed the post-colonial issues they had experienced in their lives. They attempted to expose, and more importantly to rewrite, the colonial history and memories of the place.

Most of my interviewers wanted to talk about what they had done during the protest. The protesters, the counter-protesters and the Békés genuinely talked at length about what they had experienced at the time. On the one hand, the protesters recalled the
gatherings, the marches and the songs with a deep sense of nostalgia. The slogan “Martinique is ours” meant that they were once the leaders of Martinique, and that they once led their future. On the other hand, the Békés recalled the protest as a time of tensions and of divisions. The Békés reproduced instead what I would call a narrative of colonial nostalgia. Both aspects of the spectrum expressed a competing language of identity, which means that they both voiced a competing language of nation and of leadership. The eruption of the 2009 protest exposed a blatant leadership failure in post-colonial Martinique. The usually vocal nationalist parties were surprisingly shy and introvert during the strike, as were the other political so-called leaders who all seemed to wait for the storm to pass. Indeed, the numerous hero narratives voiced by the protesters contrasted with the embarrassing lack of leadership from the intellectuals, as well as from the nationalist parties, and even from the government, which remained silent. Departmentalisation carefully preserved the predatory economic system stemming from the colonial past, which people called pwofitation. This system of pwofitation has contaminated every stratum of the Martiniquan society, and the strike did not end the perversity of such pervasive system.

What remains is the question of the future of Martinique. Despite the 2009 social movement, Martinique seems to be in an impasse. Indeed, both cultural and republican nationalisms have failed to create a sense of community amongst Martiniquans. The future of Martinique is uncertain. Yet, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that another massive social movement may erupt and shake Martinique once again in the future. One of the reasons is that the French government did not provide adequate financial solutions; and, more importantly, the fading memory of this so-called "historic" uprising shows that this social movement did not create a lasting sense of unity amongst Martiniquans. This means that the protest did not create a lasting rift with the haunting colonial past of the place.

This also means that Martinique is still unsure about the sense of its post-coloniality, and this point demonstrates that the fading memory of the strike shows that the future of Martinique is conjugated in the past, as any following uprising may be just another common historical occurrence too relative in Martiniquan history. All in all,
Martiniquan history repeats and reproduces itself. However, its unproductive economy will not be able to mask any further the decline of its social situation.

Moreover, the strike has not changed the formulations of nationalist narratives. I defined Martiniquan nationalism as a political ideology based on the politicising of cultural memories for socio-political goals, in the pursuit of establishing political independence and cultural hegemony on the territory. Hence, this ideology is exclusive, as it rejects differing views or interpretations, primarily those French republican discourses and outlooks that resist the integration of post-colonial issues within French institutions and into its cultural traditions. Thus, one cannot underestimate the role of republican ideology in shaping nationalist discourse in Martinique. And as we move into the next stages of erasing of the 2009 movement, the Martiniquan nationalist discourses seem to be placing their imprints upon local politics but not so much amongst the Martiniquans who use them as leverage during the next social movement. The different forms of nationalism that stand in competition on the island have not been and will not be the glue to create a common sense of unity amongst the islanders. Despite the fading memory of the strike, the uprising showed that Martiniquan identity will continue to be manufactured in between – meaning the hybrid space – those nationalist narratives. In other words, Martiniquan identity will still be built through the tensions that exist between both cultural and republican nationalist discourses. This is because both nationalist ideologies are exclusive.

The analysis of the strike contributed to a redefining of my view on nationalism in the academic debate that opposes postmodernists and ethno-symbolist schools. Indeed, nationalism is an ideology that places the nation at the centre of its interests. From the perspectives of the modernists, nationalism builds nation, not the other way around. The modernist school explores the influences of economic and political factors in the formation of nations. This implies that nationalism is “determined by certain features of the world political economy” (Nairn, 1981: 332). The ethno-symbolists stand in between the primordialists and the modernists. Contrary to modernist thought, ethno-symbolists stress the idea that nations are built from pre-existing communities that had their own myths, values and symbols. More precisely, they reject the idea that nations are “ipso facto invented” (Özkirimli, 2000: 168). They
hold the view that modernism cannot explain the continuing “relevance of pre-modern ethnic attachments” in nation building (Özkirimli, 2000: 122). Ethnosymbolists like Smith (1998: 168; 2001a: 97) argue that in order to understand the processes of nation-building we first need to “uncover the symbolic legacy of pre-modern ethnic identities for today’s nation”. Thus, from this perspective, the origins of national identities should be explored within popular cultures and traditions.

However, I would argue that a nation is a particular type of social construction. This means that a nation is not the ultimate social and political construction that may last. What I mean is that nationalist calls and strategies cannot anticipate or compel people’s full adhesion to nationalist ideologies and philosophy. I believe that nation is a social and a political construct that is based on certain similarities amongst members, and such similarities may count as the foundation of national unity. Thus, nationalism stresses the naturalness of these similarities, and it emphasises the raison d’être of nations.

Based on the findings of this study, I also disagree with many aspects of the ethnosymbolist and modernist approaches. I certainly do not define nation from a perennialist perspective. I believe that the processes of nation-building are neither natural nor given. Instead they are actively (re)produced. But this implies that nations are not the final/ultimate form of collective identities that modern societies can build. Indeed, if both modernists and ethno-symbolists agree that nations are modern constructs, thus, it could also be assumed that alternative forms of social constructions can be shaped in the future.

At this point I prefer to use once again Berger’s quote (2006: 13) when she claimed that “a discipline does not only study its object, it creates [the object] at the same time – it acts on it”. My main issue with both schools of thought is that they often try to anticipate the construction of a nation. However, nation-building is not a compulsory process of social/political development. It depends – amongst numerous social and historical factors – on people’s willpower to be part of such process. In my opinion, the outcomes of the referendum that followed the 2009 strike showed the limits of nationalism.
This means that, contrary to modernist thought, I argue that just because social and political identities are built and instrumentalised by the mean nationalist ideologies and policies, they will not necessarily find salience amongst people who are the subjects of such instrumentalisation. Departmentalisation was a nationalist project that failed to build national unity in Martinique. It did not build Martiniquan unity within Martiniquans, nor between Martinique and France.

Indeed, departmentalisation might have been a nationalist project, but it was also imbued with hegemonic beliefs that came from France's colonial past. As noted by Gellner (1983: 57): “nationalism has its own amnesia” and as Rousso (1990: 12) and Ricoeur (2001: 582) rightfully stated: “memory is a structuring of forgetfulness”. I use those quotes to highlight my view that departmentalisation was an attempt to institutionalise the oblivion of the colonial past by the means of assimilation. Thus, French republican nationalism was not unbiased regarding colonial ideology. Thus, departmentalisation did not decolonise Martinique; French nationalism did not address the legacies of the colonial past in France, and departmentalisation did not create unity in Martinique. Instead, it reframed France's hegemonic discourses on identities.

Therefore, this point leads to the connection between departmentalisation and decolonisation. I would say that decolonisation and departmentalisation are two different and distinct processes that do not have the same meanings, nor the same purposes. Departmentalisation was a nationalist project that aimed to homogenise the Martiniquan society to the French way of life, but in this thesis I have argued that this homogenisation did not address the numerous economic and social disparities resulting from centuries of colonisation. Accordingly, departmentalisation did not succeed at building national unity on the island.

Hall (2003) has stressed that nationalism and national unity are defined by means of homogenisation. However, in the case of Martinique homogenisation does not necessarily mean national unity, or national solidarity. Thus, in post-colonial contexts, the building of a nation cannot just be defined in terms of homogenisation. For
example, the large subventions made by the French government to counter those inequalities create an artificial economy, or a “mal-development” economy in Martinique (Birotta et al., 2011).\textsuperscript{102} Despite the subventions made by the government, the numerous economic equalities have not been erased. Thus, I strongly disagree with Nesbitt (2007: 38-40-41) when he argued that:

Departmentalisation must be understood not in opposition to decolonisation [...]. Departmentalisation was an attempt to structure society better so as to affirm the constituent power and rights of its subjects [...]. The process of departmentalisation, as a pure initiative of political decolonisation proposed that the rule of law can only occur in a society in which sovereignty has become universally distributed, such that all, universally, can give the law unto themselves.

Contrary to Nesbitt, the findings of this study show that French republican nationalism – at least in the case of Martinique – does not decolonise. Martinique is a Creole society that still continues its process of creolisation.\textsuperscript{103} Yet, despite the different social changes that Martinique is going through, the social and economic barriers divide the society. The 2009 social protests exposed the resilience of the colonial discourses. They also exposed the outcomes of departmentalisation. As I have shown in the previous chapters, the general strike was a protest against \textit{profitation}. Thus, during the marches the protesters contested the resonance of colonial discourses. During the movement the protesters created an open space that allowed them to voice counter-narratives and counter-discourses to colonial discourses by means of the lead slogan: “Martinique is ours, not theirs”. Throughout the protests, the protesters had the opportunity and the space to influence the course of the movement. Thus, the ways in which the protesters voiced and performed their solidarity show that the social movement was a liminal space where the protesters freely voiced their own identity and “hero” narratives.

\textsuperscript{102} See also Samir Amin’s (2011) book entitled: \textit{Mal-development: Anatomy of a Global Failure.}
\textsuperscript{103} I use the term “Creolisation” to define, like Ashcroft (2000: 58), “the process of intermixing and cultural changes that produces creole society”.
Such performances stand in complete opposition to the assimilation process that did not allow Martiniquans to integrate their voices into the national narrative. It was a project that did not allow them to reshape the French national identity narratives. However, in the course of the strike, the protesters built a common experience of resistance. They – regardless of their social class or gender – owned and lived their culture. For example, the Creole language was privileged over French, they ate local food rather than imported or exotic goods.

This point contradicts the points of view supported by ethno-symbolists, and particularly Smith (2008: 30, 41), who argued that: “the key concept for an understanding of the origins of nation is [...] the ethnic community, or ethnie. [...] It is not actual but felt history that is crucial for a sense of group identity, and so what matters is the belief in common ancestry, however counterfactual”. Thus, a question that could be posed in reference to Smith’s claim is: which ethnic origin, or which “common ancestry” Martiniquans could choose to build a “sense of group”? Considering the multiple origins and claimed origins Martiniquans have, such question cannot be posed, nor debated. Martinique is a Creole society that still continues its creolisation. It is a society that has multiple ethnic origins. This means that the Africans, Europeans, Haitians, Dominicans, Syrians, or Asians as others, continue to “creolise” the island in unpredicted ways. In conclusion, ethnic origin (felt or not) is not the “rhetorical glue” to effectively unify this society.

Puri (2004) had another idea. According to her (2004: 49), discourses of hybridity are the “rhetorical glue” that creates and strengthens national unity in post-colonial societies. Other authors have tried to theorise on this idea. Indeed, both concepts of “creolité” and “antillanité” attempt to highlight the hybrid character of Martiniquan societies. Both concepts were framed by Martiniquans intellectuals (and fervent nationalists) Chamoiseau (Bernabé et al. 1998) and Glissant (1981). Yet, despite their influence on Martiniquan culture and literature, their voices were not listened to by the protesters during the strike. The social and intellectual authority those intellectuals had shaped was disregarded during the strike. Indeed, the liminal space the protesters shaped was a space of sameness of equality. As one respondent called
Aimée said, everyone was “equal”. Everyone had the same authority, the same strength. Thus everyone was able to create her/his own heroic narrative.

This last point contradicts once again the idea sustained by the ethno-symbolists such as Smith (1998: 56), who also said that “Most nationalisms are led by intellectuals and/or professionals. Intellectuals furnish the basic definitions and characterisations of the nation, professionals are the main disseminators of the idea and ideals of the nation, and the intelligentsia are the most avid purveyors and consumers of nationalism myths.” However, the “intelligentsia”, and the “intellectuals” alike were not listened to throughout the protests, as they failed to integrate the movement.

Finally, one of the main objectives of my research is to examine the processes through which protesters translated their individual experiences of resistance into collective actions during protests. The idea of “space of appearance” was previously introduced by Arendt (1958) and later by Buttler (2011). MacDonald (2002: 109) also addressed this matter and suggested that the “process of action and identity within contemporary social movements must shift from ‘solidarity’ to one of ‘fluidarity’ and from collective identity to one of public experience of the self”.

Given the ethnic heterogeneity of the Martiniquan society and culture, and considering the colonial past of the island, my main challenge is to define a unique, distinct Martiniquan identity that is constantly moving. Creole societies, such as Martinique, are in constant mutation. Paradoxically, discourses of hybridity – Chamoiseau (Bernabé et al. 1998) and Glissant (1981) – somehow tend to fix this hybridity. I believe that any definition of creole societies slips away from realities. This is why such discourse cannot serve as a “rhetorical glue” to build national unity in Martinique. The protest demonstrated this. The protest was constantly moving, yet everyone was part of it. Indeed, the liminal space that the protesters created allowed them to voice different – and sometimes contradictory – collective identity narratives. Therefore, it was not the discourses of cultural hybridity that bound them together. The liminal space allowed the protesters to address the legacies of colonialism from different perspectives. They questioned or challenged the “essentialised” identity discourses. Therefore, I tend to agree with Giddens (1991: 54), who argued that:
The existential question of self-identity is bound up with the fragile nature of the biography which the individual “supplies” about herself. A person's identity is [...] to be found in [...] the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day to day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing "story" about the self (Giddens, 1991: 54).

From Giddens's account, any personal identities are discursive. The protesters created their own collective identities. The space of resistance – or liminal space – they created allowed them to tell their own history, and their histories of struggle. For a moment in time they framed a form of national narrative. Yet this national discourse did not last. It has been forgotten today, because this narrative did not fit into the nationalist narratives usually expressed by the government or by the nationalist parties. Those findings might help to understand why Miles (2003) previously used the word “contradiction” to describe Martiniquan understandings and expressions of nationhood. Indeed, do not think that Martiniquans' understandings and expressions of national identities are made of “paradoxes”. Departmentalisation did not decolonise French republican nationalist discourses. The traces of the colonial past still mark our French national identity discourse. In addition, the odd sense of colonial nostalgia that still exists in France contributes to mark this discourse. I assert that it is important to adopt a more fluid approach to understand how Martiniquans build a safe place in order to formulate their national identities. Indeed, a clear-cut structural approach provides contradictory results, leading to “paradoxes”. Martiniquans continue to look and to (re)search their liminal space. For some, Miles (2003) provides a perfect example of lack of reflection and of reflexivity, as he saw Martiniquans as existing realities, despite their constructed natures that originate in the various choices and decisions they have undertaken, along with him (Miles) during the processes of researching.
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### Appendix A/ List of Interviewees

Protesters (Individual interviews)

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<th>Names</th>
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<td>Andréa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 12/09/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Aimée</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 06/09/2011</td>
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<td>Adèle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 29/10/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Christelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 29/09/2011</td>
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<td>Germaine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 25/10/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Lise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 20/10/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Dominique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 25/07/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Christianne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 01/08/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Lydie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 30/09/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 25/08/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Flora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 19/08/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 24/09/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Marie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 17/10/2011</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Lucie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 04/10/2011</td>
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<td>17 15/08/2011</td>
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<td>Myriam</td>
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<td>Jerôme</td>
</tr>
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<td>3 16/07/2011</td>
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<td>Patrice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 16/08/2011</td>
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<td>Joël</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 24/06/2011</td>
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<td>Benjamin</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 03/06/2011</td>
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<td>Eddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 11/09/2011</td>
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<td>Alain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 22/08/2011</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Jocelyn</td>
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**TOTAL** | **42 respondents**
Protesters (Focus groups)

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Local Politicians (Individual interviews)

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<table>
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**TOTAL** 5 respondents

Counter-Protesters (Individual interviews)
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<td>27/09/2011</td>
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**TOTAL** 12 Respondents

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**Leader of the C5F (Individual interviews)**

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<tr>
<td>1 President of the C5F</td>
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<td>Gilles</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Syndicats des Enseignants/Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes SE/UNSA Education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Centrale Démocratique Martiniquaise des Travailleurs - CDMT</td>
<td>29/08/11</td>
<td>Laurent</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Union Générale des Travailleurs Martiniquais - UGTM</td>
<td>13/10/11</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Confédération Générale du Travail de la Martinique - CGTM</td>
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<td>Eric</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associations (C5F)</th>
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<tr>
<td>6 Union des Femmes de la Martinique - UFM</td>
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<td>Yolanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Association Collectif Diesel</td>
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<td>Anthony</td>
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<td>8 Association Equinox</td>
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<td>Cécile</td>
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**TOTAL** 8 Respondents
Appendix B/ Interview Questions

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PROTESTERS)

I- PROTESTERS’ GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROTEST AND PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN IT

a. Understanding of the Protests
Q1. In your opinion, what were the 2009 protests all about?
Q2. When and where do you think this protest began? And why do you think that the protest occurred when it did?
Q3. Would you compare this event to any other event that occurred in Martinique? (If so which one? And why?)

b. Involvement of the Participant in the Protests
Q1. Can you tell me a little bit about your involvement in the protest?

c. Collective Actions and Shared Experiences
Q1. How would you describe the kind of people who were involved in the events that you took part in?
Q2. What did protesters do during the events?
Q3. Do you think that the protests were bringing Martiniquans together and/or dividing them? If so, how?
Q4. Can you please define for me what is a Martiniquan?

II- THE PROTESTS AND THE LEADER

a. Evolution of the Protests
Q1. What do you think were the key events in the protests as a whole?
Q2. Do you think that the character of the protests changed over time? If so how?

b. Leadership and Organisation
Q1. What is your opinion on how the protest was organised, and on the people or organisation that organised it?
Q2. What do you think about the forms the protests took?
III- Collective Claims and Slogans

a. Key collective demands of the protesters
Q1. Do you remember what the key collective claims that were advanced throughout the protest?
Q2. Did you agree with these claims? Why?
Q3. How important do you think that issues surrounding collective claims were to the strike as a whole?
Q4. Do you think that these claims changed as the protest went on? If so how?

b. Keys Slogans During the Marches
Q1. What were the main slogans that you heard during the various events related to the protests? And can you please tell me a little bit more about them?
Q2. Do you think that these chants of slogans relate to the collective claims?

IV- The Influence of the Media During the Protests

a. Role and Perception of the Media
Q1. What you think of media coverage of the protests?
Q2. Do you think that the media played any role in how the protests developed over time?
Q3. What forms of media did you rely on most for information about the protests? Why?

b. The Documentary: The Last Masters of Martinique
Q1. Did you see the LMOM documentary? If yes, can you tell me a little bit about the circumstances in which you saw this film and about your reaction to it?
Q2. What did you think about the representation of the Béké community and of Martinique in this film?
Q3. Do you think that the broadcasting of LMOM had any impact on the nature of the protest? If so, how?
Q4. Do you think that questions related to the Békés had any influence on the protests? Why?
V- Government and Local Politicians' Responses

Q1. What was your memory of how local politicians or parties reacted to the protests? What role did they have?

Q2. What was your memory of how the government reacted to the protests? What role did it have?

Q3. Did nationalist's parties or nationalists politicians react throughout the protest? If so how? Did you agree with them?

VI- Counter-Discourse and Counter-Protests

Q1. Were you aware of any resistance to the protests? And can you please tell me a little bit more about them?

VII- Aftermath of the Protests

Q1. Could you tell me a little bit about how you felt during the protests?

Q2. Do you feel any differently about the protests now?

Q3. Do you think that the protests were successful and/or unsuccessful?

Q4. Do you think that the protests had any impact on Martinique's unity and/or division? If so, how?

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

I- Protesters' General Perceptions of the Protest and Personal Involvement in it

Q1. In your opinion what were the protests that took place in February/March 2009 all about?

Q2. What do you think were the key events in the protests as a whole? And why?

Q3. How would you describe the kind of people who were involved in the events that you took part in?

II- Collective Claims

Q1. What do you think were the key collective claims advanced through the strike? Why?

Q2. To what extent did you share the CF5's objectives or purpose?
III- Key Slogans

Q1. What were the main slogans that you heard during the various events related to the protests?

Q2. Do you think that these chants of slogans relate to collective claims?

Q3. Here are some pictures (A, B, C and D) that I would like you to have a look at. I would you like you to explain to me what do you think people meant by these placards.

Picture A: Placard – “Department in theory?! Or Colony in reality?!”

Placard stating in French: “Département en théorie?! Ou colonie en réalité?!”
Picture B: Placard – “Sé pa la Charité nou ka mandé”

Placard stating in Creole: “We are not asking for charity. You should show us respect, You must show us respect. Honour and respect”

Picture C: Placard - “We give up our dignity for the sake of material convenience”

Placard stating in French: “We give up our dignity for the sake of material convenience. No to the self- alienation of identity”
Picture D: Placard – February ‘74 – February 2009

Placard stating in French and in Creole: “February 74 – February 2009: High cost of living - No future for the youth – chlordecone – It is clearly them”.

Q4. At the time of the event, do you think that the protest had an impact on how the people of Martinique viewed themselves? If so, how?

IV- THE MEDIA

Q1. What do you think of media coverage of the protest events?

Q2. Where did you get most of your information from?

Q3. Here are some pictures that I would like you to have a look at. I would like you to explain to me what you think people meant by these placards. Could you please explain what the protesters wanted to say in Picture E?
Placard stating in French and in Creole: “Béké: Slavery is over. The people are in the streets! What are you going to tell us?”

V - THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICIANS IN THE PROTESTS
Q1. What do you think of the reactions of the local politicians? To what?
Q2. What do you think of the reactions of the government? To what?

VI- THE RANGE OF RESPONSES TO THE PROTESTS
Q1. Could you tell me the range of responses you heard about the events?
Q2. What were the forms of resistance to the protests? And what do you think of these?

VII- AFTERMATH OF THE EVENTS
Q1. Two years after the protest, what do you think of these events now?
Q2. Do you think that the protest had an impact on how the people of Martinique view themselves now? If so, how?
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (MEMBERS OF THE C5F)

I- PROTESTERS’ GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROTEST AND PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN IT

a. Understanding of the Protests

Q1. In your opinion what were the protests that took place in February/March 2009 all about?

Q2. When and where do you think that this protest began?

Q3. Why do you think that the protest occurred when it did?

Q4. Would you compare this event to any other event that occurred in Martinique? If so, which one and why? If not, would you say this event was unique; if so, why?

b. Structure of the Social Movement Organisation: C5F

Q1. Could you please tell me a bit more about the structure of the C5F?

Q2. How did the C5F become involved in the protest?

Q3. What was the role of the C5F during the protests? And why?

Q4. What did the C5F want to claim at the time of the protest? Why?

Q5. What did you hope the protest would accomplish and why?

c. Actions of the Social Movement Organisation: C5F

Q1. What do you think were the key events in the protests as a whole?

Q2. Can you tell me a little bit about the roles of the C5F in the protest?

Q3. Do you think that the character of the protest changed over time?

Q4. If so, how did it change and why do you think this happened?

d. Actions of the Social Movement Organisation: C5F

Q1. What do you think the had in common/did not have in common with the C5F organisation? And why?

Q2. Could you please tell me why you think that people joined the protests?

e. Leadership and Organisation
Q1. What is your general opinion of how the protest was organised?
Q2. What do you think about the form that protest took?
Q3. Who led the protest events? What do you think people thought of the CF5? On what evidence do you base these views?
Q4. To what extent do you think protesters shared the CF5’s objectives or purpose?

II- COLLECTIVE CLAIMS

a. Key Collective Claims
Q1. How important do you think that issues surrounding collective claims were to the strike as a whole?
Q2. Could you please tell me how did you structured the 100 demands for the negotiation?
Q3. What do you think were the key collective claims advanced through the strike? Why?
Q4. Do you think that these claims changed as the protest went on?

b. Key Collective Claims On Martiniquan Identity
Q1. Do you think that the protest had an impact on how the people of Martinique viewed themselves? If so, how?
Q2. Do you think that the protest united the people of Martinique? If so, how?
Q3. Do you think that the protest divided the people of Martinique? If so, how?

c. Key Slogans
Q1. What were the main slogans that you heard during the various events related to the protest?
Q2. What were the key slogans created by the organisation?
Q3. Did you ever hear the slogan, “Martinique is ours and not theirs” in the course of the strike? Can you talk about it?
Q4. Did you ever hear the slogan, “let us go towards victory” in the course of the strike? Can you talk about it?
Q5. Did you ever hear the word, “Pwofitation” in the course of the strike? Can you talk about it?
Q6. Do you think that these chants of slogans relate to collective claims?
d. The documentary: *The Last Masters of Martinique*

Q1. Did you see the LMOM documentary?
Q2. Did anything in the film strike you as inaccurate or surprising?
Q3. What did you think about the representation of the Béké community in this film?
Q4. Do you think that the broadcasting of this film had any impact on the nature of the protest?
Q5. Do you think that issues related to the Békés had any influence on the protests?


Q1. What is your memory of how local politicians or parties reacted to the protests? And what role did they have in the protest?
Q2. What is your memory of how the government reacted to the protests? And what role did they have?
Q3. Did nationalist parties or nationalist politicians react throughout the protest?

IV- THE RANGE OF RESPONSES TO THE PROTEST

Q1. Were you aware of any resistance to the protests?
Q2. Did you respond to them in any way? And why?
Q3. How did you feel towards them?
Q4. What do you think they had in common with you? And why?
Q5. What do you think they had in common with each other? And why?

V- AFTERMATH OF THE EVENTS

Q1. Could you tell me a little bit about how you felt during the protests?
Q2. Do you feel any differently about the protests now?
Q3. Do you think that the protests were successful?

**INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (COUNTER-PROTESTERS)**

I- PROTESTERS’ GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROTEST AND PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN IT

a. Understanding of the Protests
Q1. In your opinion, what were the protests that took place in February/March 2009 all about?
Q2. When and where do you think that this protest began? And why do you think that the protest occurred when it did?
Q3. Would you compare this event to any other event that occurred in Martinique? If so, which one? Why?
Q3. Do you think that the protests were bringing Martiniquans together and/or dividing them? If so, how?
Q4. Can you please define for me what is a Martiniquan?

b. Involvement of the Participant

Q1. Can you tell me a little bit about the way you raised your voice during the event?
Q2. How would you describe the kind of people who were involved in the events or group that you took part in?

II- The Protests and The Leader

a. Evolution of the Protests

Q1. What do you think were the key events in the protests as a whole?
Q2. Do you think that the character of the protests changed over time? If so how?

b. Leadership and Organisation

Q1. What is your opinion on how the protest was organised, and on the people or organisation that organised it?
Q2. What do you think about the forms the protests took?

III- Collective Claims and Slogans

a. Key collective claims

Q1. Do you remember what the key collective claims were advanced through the strike?
Q2. Did you agree with these claims? Why?
Q3. How important do you think that issues surrounding collective claims were to the strike as a whole?
Q4. Do you think that these claims changed as the protest went on? If so how?
b. **Key Slogans**

Q1. What were the main slogans that you heard during the various events related to the protests? And can you please tell me a little bit more about them?

Q2. Do you think that these chants of slogans relate to the collective claims?

IV- **The Influence of the Media During the Protests**

a. **The Media (role and perception)**

Q1. What do you think of media coverage of the protests?

Q2. Do you think that the media played any role in how the protests developed over time?

Q3. What forms of media did you rely on most for information about the protests? Why?

b. **The Last Masters of Martinique Documentary (LMOM)**

Q1. Did you see the LMOM documentary? If yes, can you tell me a little bit about the circumstances in which you saw this film and about your reaction to it?

Q2. What did you think about the representation of the Béké community and of Martinique in this film?

Q3. Do you think that the broadcasting of LMOM had any impact on the nature of the protest? If so, how?

Q4. Do you think that questions related to the Békés had any influence on the protests? Why?

V- **Government and Local Politicians’ Responses**

Q1. What was your memory of how local politicians or parties reacted to the protests? What role did they have?

Q2. What was your memory of how the government reacted to the protests? What role did it have?

Q3. Did nationalist parties or nationalists politicians react throughout the protest? If so, how? Did you agree with them?
VI- Aftermath of the Protests

Q1. Could you tell me a little bit about how you felt during the protests?
Q2. Do you feel any differently about the protests now?
Q3. Do you think that the protests were successful and/or unsuccessful?
Q4. Do you think that the protests had any impact on Martinique’s unity and/or division? If so, how?

**INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (POLITICIANS)**

I- Protesters’ General Perceptions of the Protest and Personal Involvement in It

a. Reading of the Protests

Q1. In your opinion, what were the 2009 protests all about?
Q2. When and where do you think that this protest began? And why do you think that the protest occurred when it did?
Q3. Would you compare this event to any other event that occurred in Martinique? If so, which one? Why?
Q4. Do you think that the protests were bringing Martiniquans together and/or dividing them? If so, how?
Q5. Can you please define for me what is a Martiniquan?

II- Government and Local Politicians’ Responses

Q1. What was your memory of how local politicians or parties reacted to the protests? What role did you have?
Q2. What was your memory of how the government reacted to the protests? What role did it have?
Q3. Did nationalist parties or nationalists politicians react throughout the protest? If so how? Did you agree with them?

III- The Protests and the Leaders

a. Evolution of the Protests

Q1. What do you think were the key events in the protest as a whole?
Q2. Do you think that the character of the protests changed over time? If so, how?

b. Leadership and Organisation

Q1. What is your opinion on how the protest was organised, and on the people or organisation that organised it?
Q2. What do you think about the forms the protests took?

IV- Collective Claims and Slogans

a. Key Collective Claims

Q1. Do you remember what the key collective claims that were advanced through the strike?
Q3. How important do you think that issues surrounding collective claims were to the strike as a whole?
Q4. Do you think that these claims changed as the protest went on? If so, how?

b. Key Slogans

Q1. What were the main slogans that you heard during the various events related to the protests? And can you please tell me a little bit more about them?
Q2. Do you think that these chants of slogans relate to the collective claims?

V- The Influence of the Media During the Protests

a. The Media (role and perception)

Q1. What do you think of media coverage of the protests?
Q2. Do you think that the media played any role in how the protests developed over time?
Q3. What forms of media did you rely on most for information about the protests? Why?

b. The Last Masters of Martinique Documentary

Q1. Did you see The Last Masters of Martinique documentary? If yes, can you tell me a little bit about the circumstances in which you saw this film and about your reaction to it?
Q2. What did you think about the representation of the Béké community and of Martinique in this film?

Q3. Do you think that the broadcasting of The Last Masters of Martinique had any impact on the nature of the protest? If so, how?

Q4. Do you think that questions related to the Békés had any influence on the protests? Why?

VI- Counter-discourse and Counter-Protests

Q1. Were you aware of any resistance to the protests? And can you please tell me a little bit more about them?

VII- Aftermath of the Protests

Q1. Could you tell me a little bit about how you felt during the protests?

Q2. Do you feel any differently about the protest now?

Q3. Do you think that the protests were successful and/or unsuccessful?

Q4. Do you think that the protests had any impact on Martinique’s unity and/or division? If so, how?
## Appendix C/ Preliminary Questions

### APPENDIX III - PREMILINARY QUESTIONS

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Appendix D/ The List of Demands of the C5F (2009 Social Protest)

LA PLATE-FORME DE REVENDICATIONS
DU COLLECTIF DU 5 FEVRIER
A LA REUNION LUNDI 2 MARS 2009 - 03/03/2009 - 09:27AM

PRINCIPAUX AXES DE LA PLATE FORME REVENDICATIVE
DU COLLECTIF DU 5 FEVRIER 2009
CONTRE LA VIE CHERE ET POUR L'EMPLOI

1. BAISSE DES PRIX DE PREMIERE NECESSITE.

- Baisse des prix sur 100 familles de produits de première nécessité.
- Suppression de la TVA sur tous les produits alimentaires.
- Double affichage des prix par rapport à la production locale.

2. BAISSE DES PRIX DES SERVICES.

Eau, gaz, électricité, loyer, alignement APL national, téléphonie, internet, véhicules et pièces détachées, service postaux, matériaux de construction, etc.

- Matériel informatique et consommables.
- Baisse des frais bancaires.
- Baisse des marges sur les produits locaux.
- Baisse des prix du transport de marchandises.
- Transport de passagers (terrestre, aérien et maritime).
- Transport à tarif préférentiel pour les jeunes, étudiants et retraités.
- Baisse du prix du carburant, détaxe du carburant à usage professionnel.

3. CONTROLE DE LA FORMATION DES PRIX.

- Mise en place d’un observatoire des prix.
- Renforcement du service de répression des fraudes.
- Le double affichage des prix des produits issus de la production locale.

4. SALAIRES ET REVENUS.

- Augmentation des salaires et des minima sociaux.
- Augmentation des bas revenus de 354 € net pour :
  - Les salariés du Privé et du Public.
  - Les retraités.
  - Les bénéficiaires des minima sociaux
• Intégration de la prime de vie chère et de toutes les primes pour le calcul de la retraite.
• Versement, aux agriculteurs concernés, de la totalité des aides ICHN (Indemnités Compensatoires de Handicap Naturel) et MAE (Mesure Agro-environnementale) dues au titre des années 2007 et 2008.
• Mise en place de la retraite complémentaire pour les ouvriers agricoles.

5. ACTIONS POUR L’AMELIORATION DU POUVOIR D’ACHAT DES PARENTS ET LE RENFORCEMENT DE LA CULTURE DES JEUNES MARTINIQUAIS.

• Mise à disposition dans les établissements de livres et fournitures scolaires pour tous les élèves.
• Prix plafond du repas scolaire.
• Gratuite des musées pour les élèves et étudiants.
• Carte de réductions pour les étudiants, notamment dans les librairies et autres lieux de culture.

6. ÉDUCATION.

• Mise en place immédiate d’un moratoire de 5 ans sur le nouveau mode de recrutement. Les candidats devront justifier d’intérêts moraux et matériels ou de 5 années consécutives sur le territoire.
• Mise en place d’un plan pluriannuel de recrutement dans chaque discipline d’enseignement, dans chaque secteur, (éducation et culture)
• Accompagnements financiers par l’Etat de l’Université des Antilles-Guyane pour une mise en place satisfaisante de la réforme de la formation des « enseignants ».
• Création d’une unité de formation et de recherche des Sciences et Techniques des activités physiques et sportives (UFR STAPS) à l’UAG Martinique.
• Mise en place d’un véritable plan de titularisation de 5 ans pour les enseignants et les non enseignants, y compris ceux de l’UAG, dès la rentrée 2009 afin qu’ils intègrent la fonction publique.
• Transformation des emplois de non titulaires (enseignants et non-enseignants) en emplois stables durables et statutaires par un concours interne déconcentré pour les personnels précaires originaires et les diplômés martiniquais.
• Mise en place d’un véritable plan d’aide à la préparation aux concours (formation et bourses).
• Arrêt des nominations des titulaires non originaires en surnombre dans le secondaire et le primaire dès la rentrée 2009. Réemplacement des non titulaires originaires.
• Blocage des postes vacants et priorité d’embauche aux non titulaires originaires.
• Mise en place d’un groupe de travail et de recherche sur les contenus et sur l’adaptation des programmes scolaires à la Martinique.
• Mise en place d’équipes de Direction complète.
• Création d’un Conservatoire des arts notamment pour les arts traditionnels.
• Mise en place d'un plan d'action financé par l'Etat pour la promotion de la langue et culture créole et généralisation de l'enseignement de la langue et culture créole à tous les niveaux d'enseignement dès la rentrée 2009.

• Mise en place d'épreuves obligatoires de la LCR aux épreuves d'admissibilité aux concours de recrutement des enseignants notamment dans le premier degré.
• Reconnaissance et équivalence des diplômes des pays de la Caraïbe.
• Financement supplémentaire par l'État d'un plan de rénovation et de construction des établissements scolaires.
• Arrêt des suppressions de postes à la rentrée 2009 : à l'UAG, dans l'enseignement public et dans l'enseignement privé sous contrat.
• Arrêt de la sédentarisation des Réseaux d'Aide Spécialisée aux Enfants en Difficulté. (RASED)
• Élaboration d'un Programme d'ambition culturelle et programmation financière en partenariat avec les collectivités locales.

7. Culture.

• Égalité de traitement à compétence égale pour les artistes et techniciens en équipe mixte.
• Révision des quotas horaires permettant l'ouverture des droits aux intermittents du spectacle
• Exonération de la TVA et de l’octroi de mer pour les productions de professionnels vivant et travaillant en Martinique depuis 5 ans.
• Exonération de la TVA et de l’octroi de mer sur les produits culturels créés, réalisés et distribués en Martinique.
• Réduction des coûts de transport des professionnels des métiers des Arts et de la Culture et de leurs matériels.
• Création de lieux de préparation et de diffusion artistique et culturelle.

8. Santé Social.

• Mise aux normes sismiques des établissements – Reconstruction des plateaux techniques-hôpitaux - Rattrapage des équipements à réaliser.
• Modernisation et adaptations des structures d’accueil pour les personnes âgées et la petite enfance.
• Baisse des coûts prohibitifs des fournitures et services hospitaliers.
• Exonération de la TVA et de l’Octroi de mer sur les produits et matériels pharmaceutiques.

- Effectifs
  ’ Rattrapage.
  ’ Titularisation des contractuels.
  ’ Programme universitaire complet, localement.

- Démographie
Mise en place de contrat Etat/Région pour des études en faveur des étudiants pour les professions paramédicales.

Augmentation des quotas des écoles formant des infirmières et aides-soignants ouverture des écoles pour des cadres orthophonistes des IDE en psychiatrie.

Financement Etat/Région pour le développement des Maisons de Santé et structures médico-sociales.

Adaptation d’une réglementation pour les médecins étrangers.

- **Handicaps et minima sociaux**

  Relèvement du taux de l’AAH, des autres minima sociaux et développement des moyens d’accompagnement pour les familles concernées.

  Aides au financement du fonctionnement des associations porteuses de projets.

  Toxicomanie et errance.

  Financement du fonctionnement de la Maison Départementale des Personnes Handicapées.

  Prise en charge du public frappé d’addiction, d’errance et développement de la recherche.

  Prise en charge du public frappé d’addiction, d’errance et ouverture de centres d’accueil appropriés.

  Développement de la recherche.

- **Accès aux soins pour tous.**

  Suppression des mesures financières qui pénalisent les patients : forfait, consultation, acte supérieur à 91 euros, dépassement d’honoraires.

  Sanctions réglementaires contre les praticiens médicaux faisant obstruction à la CMU.

- **Santé publique.**

  Enquête épidémiologique sur les conséquences des pesticides, de l’amiante et autres produits dangereux.

  Arrêt de l’épandage aérien des pesticides.

  Loi HPST : introduction de la déclinaison Hôpital Santé Outre-mer et le dispositif permettant de mettre en œuvre un plan de santé adapté à chaque DOM. Respect de la représentation des organisations syndicales.

  Annulation du projet de la Loi BACHELOT.

9. **Formation professionnelle.**

- Programmes de formation en vue d’occuper les emplois vacants et émergents.

- Mise en place :
  - D’un dispositif d’accompagnement et de formation pour tous les chômeurs (financements publics)
  - De formations adaptées aux publics

- Augmentation des dotations allouées à la formation professionnelle.

- Création d’un observatoire du travail et de la formation professionnelle.


- Renforcement des moyens consacrés à l’apprentissage.
• Mise en place d'une aide significative pour la prise en charge du transport, de la restauration et de l'hébergement des stagiaires
• Application de la législation en matière de plan de formation en particulier pour les entreprises de moins de 10 salariés.
• Création d’une structure d’accompagnement pour l’insertion des stagiaires formés.
• Assises régionales de la formation professionnelle et mise en place d’un Comité de Suivi des recommandations pourvu des moyens financiers adéquats.

10. EMPLOI.

• Vivre et travailler au pays.
• Promotion et priorité martiniquaise à l’embauche.
• Interdiction des licenciements économiques dans les entreprises qui font des profits et/ou bénéficiant des fonds publics.
• Développement de la production et de l’activité économique martiniquaise y compris par l’initiative publique (collectivités...).
• Application effective de la clause sociale dans les marchés publics.
• Mesures et aides à l’emploi :
  - Remplacement de chaque départ en retraite.
  - Arrêt de l’abus des mesures qui favorisent l’emploi précaire.
  - CDD de 6 mois renouvelable 1 fois puis embauche en CDI.
• Insertion, Emploi et précarité
  - Respect du quota des Travailleurs Handicapés (TH) en entreprise et dans les Fonctions Publiques.
  - Interdiction du contrôle qui a pour seul but la suppression des droits des demandeurs d’emploi.
  - Maintien d’un service public de l’emploi de proximité ; remplacement des plates formes téléphoniques (39-49) par du personnel d’accueil.
  - Plan de résorption de la précarité.
  - Adaptation de la nouvelle convention UNEDIC aux particularités locales.
  - Accès libre pour l’internet pour les demandeurs d’emplois.
  - Transformation des Emplois Contrat Aidés en emplois durables avec maintien des personnes qui les occupent.

11. DIALOGUE SOCIAL.

• Mise en place d’un échelon martiniquais de mesures de la représentativité syndicale.
• Agrément de toutes les organisations syndicales martiniquaises de salariés pour la formation économique, sociale et syndicale des salariés, prévu dans le Code du Travail.
• Droit pour l’inspection du Travail de reconnaître, sous contrôle judiciaire, l’existence des Unités Économiques et Sociale (UES).
• Réouverture des négociations de branches.
• Création des branches professionnelles et/ou des commissions paritaires.
• Conditions de travail.
  - Création d’une grille d’analyse des conditions de travail Mise en place d’un observatoire des conditions de travail.
  - Tableau de bord des conditions de travail : santé, hygiène, harcèlement.
  - Instances Représentatives du Personnel :
Élections de délégués du personnel dans les entreprises à partir de 5 salariés

Création comité Hygiène et Sécurité, conditions de travail dans les entreprises à partir de 5 salariés.

Élection dans les entreprises à partir d’un seuil de 5 salariés.

Rétablissement de l'Autorisation administrative de licenciement.

12. Agriculture et pêche.

- Reconnaissance des métiers de l'agriculture et de la pêche à la Martinique comme étant d’utilité publique.
- Priorité aux produits locaux de première nécessité nécessaire aux produits de l’agro alimentaire.
- Application de la clause de sauvegarde à l'agriculture, l’aquaculture et à la pêche.
- Création d’un contrat d'objectif sur 5 ans des Agriculteurs, Aquaculteurs et pêcheurs en diversification.
- Exonération par l'Etat des taxes foncières sur le bâti et le non-bâti des terres agricoles ainsi que sur les concessions, pour les petits exploitants.
- Diminution du coût des intrants.
- Plan de protection des installations agricoles, aquacoles et de la pêche.
- Plan de désendettement total des petits agriculteurs, aquaculteurs et pêcheurs.
- Fonds d’avance aux petits agriculteurs, aquaculteurs et pêcheurs.
- Appui de l’Etat pour la mise en place d’une organisation de producteurs des produits de la pêche.
- Engagement de L’Etat pour qu’un revenu minimum soit appliqué aux agriculteurs, aquaculteurs et marins pêcheurs.
- Application du « minimum vieillesse » pour les retraités de l’agriculture, l’aquaculture et de la pêche. Réquisition des terres agricoles en friches afin de les consacrer à la production agricole.


- Mise en place de mécanismes économiques, financiers et législatifs avec pour objectif la sauvegarde des TPE –ETI–, structure de services à la personne et petite enfance et leurs emplois.
- Représentation légale de tous les syndicats et organisations professionnelles dans toutes les branches, les organismes paritaires au niveau local, national et international.
- Règlementer la concurrence et le monopole de fait en Martinique et veiller à l’équilibre des Grands et Petits Commerces et Services pour stopper la désertification des centre villes.
Appendix E – Administrative Divisions in Martinique

**ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS**

- Martinique
  - Combination of several departments (Martinique=1)
    - Combination of several arrondissements (Martinique=1)
      - Smallest administrative division (Martinique=34)

**POLITICAL BODIES**

- GOVERNEMENT
  - Prefecture (a)
    - French State representative appointed by the government
    - Elected by the population
  - Regional council (b)
    - Spatial planning (Provision of local infrastructure including water, roads, sewerage, public transports etc.)
    - Economic development (managing economic development aid given by the government etc.)
    - Environment: managing rivers, floods etc.
  - General council (b)
    - In charge of museums and monuments, promoting and protecting local cultural heritage.
    - Running costs of schools.
    - Health and social services etc.
  - City Council (b)
    - Ensures the conservation and management of the commune’s natural environment (Building permits etc.)
    - Public securities (Policies and practices to ensure security etc.)

**DUTIES**

- Prefecture (a)
  - S/he supervises the local state institutions and services, and their contact with the government (based in Paris).
  - S/he ensures the administrative supervision of the local authorities.
  - S/he coordinates security issues.
- Regional council (b)
- General council (b)
- City Council (b)
Appendix F— Martiniquan Economy: Import vs. Export

The economy of Martinique is heavily dependent on imports (see Table 4a and figure 4b). In 2004, Martinique imported around £1,673 billion but only exported £266 million. Therefore, the balance of trade is negative (-£1,407 billion). From 2004 to 2008, the import rate increased by 36%.

However, in 2009, the imports dropped by 35% (year on year), and the import rate also dropped by 29% (year on year). The 2009 social movement This incredible plunge shows that the 2009 general strike was very intensive and importers and traders suffered great losses during that year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Martinique Imports vs. exports in values (Million £)</th>
<th>FROM 2004 TO 2011 (TABLE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imports</strong></td>
<td><strong>2004</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exports</strong></td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References:  (Contact-Entreprises, 2011; Mureau, 2012)
MARTINIQUE IMPORTS VS. EXPORTS IN VALUES (MILLION £)
FROM 2004 TO 2011 (GRAPH)

References: (Contact-Entreprises, 2011; Mureau, 2012)

ORIGIN OF IMPORTS IN MARTINIQUE IN PERCENTAGE (%)
FROM 2003 TO 2007 (TABLE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.U (excluding France)</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References: (Contact-Entreprises, 2011)
FROM 2003 TO 2007 (GRAPH)

References: (Contact-Entreprises, 2011)

Appendix G/– Unemployment rate in Martinique and across France

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN MARTINIQUE FROM 2001 TO 2008

(TABLE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>22.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>21.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>20.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>21.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>21.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>22.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(GRAPH)


**Unemployment rate comparison among French territories in 2007 (table)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment Rate 2008</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan France</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Pierre and Miquelon</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>11.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallis and Futuna</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Guiana</td>
<td>21.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadeloupe</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Martinique</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.60%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>24.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayotte</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix H/– Evolution of the State Budget in Martinique (from 2003 to 2009)

The state budget of Martinique is also in deficit (see Table 3c and figure 3d). From 2003 to 2009, the deficit gap is gradually increasing. The total revenues raised by 44% while the total expenses raised by 125% in only 6 years.

**STATE BUDGET OF MARTINIQUE (MILLION £)**
**FROM 2003 TO 2009 (TABLE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues</strong></td>
<td>815</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>1,472</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>1,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td>1,076</td>
<td>1,127</td>
<td>1,597</td>
<td>2,067</td>
<td>2,178</td>
<td>2,316</td>
<td>2,428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References:  (Contact-Entreprises, 2011; IEDOM, 2011)
EMPLOYMENT RATE COMPARISON AMONG FRENCH TERRITORIES IN 2007 (GRAPH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayotte</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>24.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martinique</td>
<td>22.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadeloupe</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Guiana</td>
<td>21.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallis and Futuna</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>11.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Pierre and Miquelon</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan France</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Appendix  I/-- Logo and Structure of LKP: Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon

Logo of the LKP: Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon
## Structure of LKP: Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon (Trade Union)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siglum</th>
<th>ACRONYM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFTC</td>
<td>Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGTG</td>
<td>Confédération Générale du Travail de la Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNL</td>
<td>Confédération Nationale du Logement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSFG</td>
<td>Confédération Syndicale des Familles de la Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTU</td>
<td>Centrale des Travailleurs Unis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Force Ouvrière</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>Fédération Syndicale Unitaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGEP/SNEC</td>
<td>Syndicat Guadeloupéen de l'Enseignement Privé/ Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Catholique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNUIPP</td>
<td>Syndicat National Unifié des Instituteurs et Professeurs des Ecoles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEG</td>
<td>Syndicat des Personnels de l'Enseignement privé en Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUD PTT GWA</td>
<td>SUD PTT GWA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNICAG</td>
<td>Syndicat Unitaire du Crédit Agricole de Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYMPA CFDT</td>
<td>Syndicat Maritime des Pêcheurs Artisans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIR CFTDT</td>
<td>Union Interprofessionnelle Régionale Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA</td>
<td>Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGTG</td>
<td>Union Générale des Travailleurs de Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPG</td>
<td>Union des Producteurs Agricoles de Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMPG</td>
<td>Union des Marins Pêcheurs de la Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAEN SNCL</td>
<td>Fédération Autonome de l'Education Nationale Syndicat National des Collèges et Lycées</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Structure of LKP: Liyannaj Kont Pwofityasyn (Associations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siglum</th>
<th>ACRONYM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADEIC</td>
<td>Association de consommateurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADIM</td>
<td>Association de défense des intérêts et du patrimoine des mutualistes de la Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFOC</td>
<td>Association Force Ouvrière Consommateurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGPIHM</td>
<td>Association Guadeloupéenne des personnes invalides et handicapés moteurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKIYO</td>
<td>Mouvman Kiltirèl AKIYO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN BOUT AY</td>
<td>Mouvman Kiltirèl AN BOUT AY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANG</td>
<td>Alliance Nationale Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANKA</td>
<td>Association d’organisation &amp; promotion d’un esprit de solidarité</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSE</td>
<td>Agriculture Société Santé Environnement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANBT</td>
<td>Association des agriculteurs du Nord Basse - Terre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEJ</td>
<td>Association Liberté Égalité Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat Ouvrier</td>
<td>Combat Ouvrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comité de l’Eau</td>
<td>Comité de Défense et Protection de l’Eau de la Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGN</td>
<td>Convention Pour une Guadeloupe Nouvelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPAGUA</td>
<td>Comité des Patriotes Guadeloupéens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espérance Environnement</td>
<td>Espérance Environnement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIE SBT</td>
<td>Groupement d’Intérêt économique du Sud Basse - Terre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMODJAKA</td>
<td>Mouvman Kiltirèl KAMODJAKA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAP GWADLOUP</td>
<td>Koudmen pour une agriculture Paysanne en Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LES VERTS</td>
<td>LES VERTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MADICE</td>
<td>Mouvement Associatif Développement Insertion Culture Environnement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mas Ka Klé</td>
<td>Mouvman Kiltirèl MAS KA KLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouvman NONM</td>
<td>Mouvman NONM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCG</td>
<td>Parti Communiste Guadeloupéen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS/BTE</td>
<td>SOS B/Terre ENVIRONNEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travayè é Péyizan</td>
<td>Travayè é Péyizan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDCLCV</td>
<td>Union Départementale Consommation Logement et Cadre de Vie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPLG</td>
<td>Union pour la Libération de la Guadeloupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voukoum</td>
<td>Mouvman Kiltirèl VOUKOUM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J/– Leaflet from the trade union (Intersyndicale) calling for strike on the 5th of February 2009

The leaflet states: “A decent work and wages for everyone - Workers and retired workers - Everyone on strike - Thursday 5th of February 2009 - Trade Union Headquarter - Trade union.”
Appendix K – List of the Members of the *Collectif du 5 Février*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siglum</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDMT</td>
<td>Centrale Démocratique Martiniquaise des Travailleurs</td>
<td>Martinique only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFDT</td>
<td>Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFE-CGC**</td>
<td>Confédération Française de l’Encadrement Confédération Générale des Cadres</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFTC</td>
<td>Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGTM</td>
<td>Confédération Générale du Travail de la Martinique</td>
<td>Martinique only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGTM-FSM</td>
<td>Confédération Générale Du Travail de la Martinique Fédération Syndicale Mondiale</td>
<td>Martinique only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTM</td>
<td>Centrale Syndicale des Travailleurs Martiniquais</td>
<td>Martinique only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>Fédération Syndicale Unitaire</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMBEF</td>
<td>Syndicat Martiniquais des Banques et Établissements Financiers</td>
<td>Martinique only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUD-PTT</td>
<td>Solidaires Unitaires Démocratiques Postes, Télégraphes et téléphones</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE UNSA</td>
<td>Syndicat des Enseignants Union nationale des syndicats Autonomes</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGTM</td>
<td>Union Générale des Travailleurs de Martinique</td>
<td>Martinique only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The trade unions are listed aphabetically in the table.

** Commonly called CGC
List of the members of the Collectif du 5 Février (written list) - Page 1

Liste des associés du Collectif du 5 Février

1. NAH - NFIH
2. Association française de Solidarité
3. Collectif des associations
4. Collectif des jeunes

Rassemblement des associations

Rassemblement des organisations

Rassemblement des associations

1. Assemblée générale
2. Important
3. ADIUTA
4. IMPORTANT
5. CDF - Centre de Documentation Française
6. Conférence Historique
7. Syndicaliste
8. DRHM - Direction Régionale des Histoires et des Mémorial
9. CODE - Centre d'Études et de Documentation
10. Histoire et Mémorial
11. Collectif du 5 Février
12. Assemblée générale
13. Important
Members of the Collectif du 5 Février (written list) - Page 2
Appendix L/– List of demands of the Equinoxe association

Association EQUINOXE
E-mail : volene.dev@wanadoo.fr
GSM : 0696 23 52 49

Le 09 Février 2009

EQUINOXE REJOINT le COLLECTIF du 05 FEVRIER 2009

Face à la mobilisation du peuple Martiniquais pour exiger plus de justice sociale, l’Association EQUINOXE qui regroupe les familles et usagers en santé mentale, partie intégrante de ce peuple, se déclare solidaire des revendications du Collectif du 05 Février, notamment leurs exigences sur le pouvoir d’achat, le relevement des minima sociaux et l’emploi.

Nous affirmons notre détermination à lutter pour notre dignité de martiniquais en exigeant :

1° - une politique de santé mentale ambitieuse et novatrice qui tienne compte du retard considérable dans le secteur de la psychiatrie à la Martinique
   • en matière de prise en charge médicale (y compris les Urgences Médicales) et médico-soociale
   • en matière d’accompagnement et d’intégration sociale
   • en matière de logement et de structures d’hébergement
   • en matière d’accès à l’emploi
   • en matière de prise en compte de l’environnement culturel

Les personnes souffrant de troubles psychiques

2° - le pouvoir d’achat et le relevement des minima sociaux

Aujourd’hui nos enfants et nos proches font partie de ceux qui vivent en dessous du seuil de pauvreté et survivent avec le RMI ou l’AAH, un revenu qui ne peut leur permettre de vivre décemment. Nous demandons une réévaluation du RMI et de l’AAH (allocation adulte handicapé) dans les DOM compte-tenu de la vie chère.

3° - l’accès à l’emploi.

22% de la population active au chômage, plus de 30% chez les moins de 30 ans. Quasiment 100% de personnes souffrant de troubles psychiques actuellement sans emploi. Nous exigeons le respect de la loi sur l’embauche des personnes en situation de handicap y compris de handicap psychique (en France 4,5%, en Martinique moins de 2% au lieu des 6% légaux).

Mais au-delà de ces exigences de survie, nous posons la seule question fondamentale :

Quel choix de société pour nous et nos enfants ?

- une société dominée par une minorité de ménins et où les pauvres sont les « laisses-pour-compte » ?
- une société où la couleur de la peau peut être encore un handicap ?
- une société qui viole ses femmes, enchaîne ses jeunes, ses SDF, ses toxicomanes… ?
- une société qui stigmatisse ses « dés-fous » et les veut « hors frontières » ?
- une société qui n’a aucun respect pour son environnement naturel ?

Ce modèle nous le rejetons et nous estimons qu’il est temps de jeter les fondements d’une société basée sur le respect de la personne humaine, une société plus juste, plus égalitaire, plus solidaire, une société soucieuse de protéger les plus fragiles d’entre elle, une société où « être différent » est effectivement un droit. En un mot une société où TOUS les êtres humains ont leur place, non une société basée sur l’argent et le profit, sur les inégalités sociales, la discrimination raciale, la stigmatisation et l’exclusion.

Voilà pourquoi aujourd’hui nous sommes de ceux qui veulent un autre ordre social, de ceux qui veulent que cela change… Que s’ouvre sur la place publique le forum des « sans voix » … enfin !

YES WE CAN ! OUI NOU PE FEYE !
**Appendix M/– Chronology of the 2009 Protest (From 5/02/09 to 14/03/09)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>COLLECTIVE ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05-Feb-09</td>
<td>- First day of protest. Street protest in Fort-de-France (15,000 protesters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-Feb-09</td>
<td>- &quot;Opération molokoy&quot; in the city of Fort-de-France (Go-slow protest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- &quot;Opération coup de poing&quot; à Fort-de-France (Form of protest: Protesters forced shop owners to close their shops)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- First day of negotiation (Prefecture - Fort-de-France).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-Feb-09</td>
<td>- Street protest (Fort-de-France).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- &quot;Opération coup de poing&quot; at Fort-de-France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- &quot;Opération coup de poing&quot; (the industrial park of Lamentin).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-Feb-09</td>
<td>- Street protest in Fort-de-France (Between 11 000-20 000 protesters).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Protesters block off roads: No public transport in Gros-Morne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Protesters block off roads: No public transport in Gros-Morne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- &quot;Opération molokoy&quot; northern cities (Marigot, Lorrain, Basse-Pointe).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- &quot;Opération coup de poing&quot; (Robert, Rivière Salée and Sainte-Marie).</td>
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<td>- Several protesters block the access to a petroleum company (SARA) (Société Anonyme de la Raffinerie des Antilles). The protesters blocked the export and the distribution of fuel.</td>
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<td>10-Feb-09</td>
<td>- Thousand of students join the protest in (Fort-de-France).</td>
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<td>- In reaction to the documentary &quot;The last Master of Martinique&quot; an improvised sit-in protest is organised in Capest. Several members of the MODEMAS party joined the sit-in.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- A small street protest is organised in the city of Saint-Pierre and Marin.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- &quot;Opération molokoy&quot; around Morne-Rouge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Events</td>
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</table>
| 11-Feb-09 | - Several artists create a voluntary association called “Moun la Kilti” (People of culture) and join several street protests.  
- Several university students create a voluntary association called Martinique à Venir to adress the economic and social difficulties of the Martiniquan youth.  
- Several improvised roadblocks are placed around the cities of Lorrain and Basse-Pointes.  
- The negotiations at the prefecture continue. |
| 12-Feb-09 | - A sit-in is organised at the city concil of Sainte-Luce. The employees of the city concil close the city council.  
- Street protest in Fort-de-France (about 3 000 protesters - Fireman, Lawyers, pharmacist joined the protest in their working uniform). |
| 13-Feb-09 | - March in Fort-de-France (about 5000 protesters).  
- The traffic is completely blocked in the city of Lamentin.  
- A street protest (Anse-D’Arlet).  
- The employees of the city council close the city council.  
- "Opération coup de poing" in the city of Saint-Luce.  
- Demonstration in front of the city council of François.  
- A small march is organised in the city of Diamant. |
| 16-Feb-09 | - Street protest (city of Fort-de-France - between 9000 and 15000 protesters).  
- The university (UAG) is closed for two days.  
- Several hundred of people protest in Paris (France) in support of the strike in Martinique and Guadeloupe.  
- "Opération coup de poing" at Case-Pilote (Form of protest where protesters forced businesses and other shops to close).  
- The cities of Trois îlets and Anse d'Arlet are completely blocked.  
- Several large posters and placards are exposed in the city of Marin in support of the protest.  
- A street march is organised in the city of Trinité |
| 17-Feb-09 | - The university of Martinique (UAG) is closed for two days in support of the social movement.  
- Several hundred of people protested in Paris (France) in support of the strike in Martinique and Guadeloupe.  
- "Opération coup de poing" at Case-Pilote (Form of protest where protesters forced businesses and shop to close).  
- The city of Trois-îlets is completely blocked by protesters (no traffic, shops, businesses and schools are closed)  
- Several large posters and placards are exposed in the city of Marin in support of the protest.  
- Several Haitians immigrant joined the march of protest in Fort-de-France waving the Haitian flag.  
- A street protest is organised in Carbet and Saint Pierre. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-Feb-09</td>
<td>Street protest in Fort-de-France - Several protesters come from the city of François in order to join the street protest (Several thousand of people in Fort-de-France).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 19-Feb-09  | Street protest in Fort-de-France (between 2000 and 5000 protesters joined the march). People are dressed in white to pay homage to a trade unionist named Jacques Bino, who was killed in Guadeloupe.  
- The association *Moun la Kilti* organised a meeting in the city of Lamentin "to strengthen the protest" (Martiniquan dance, poetry/slam and music).  
- Street protest in the city of Sainte-Marie (About 1000 protesters). |
| 20-Feb-09  | Street protest (Fort-de-France - Over 5 000 protesters). |
| 21-Feb-09  | March of protest in the city of François (Over 600 protesters).  
- Several artists organise a concert in the city of Lamentin, Other artists (painters, plastic artists etc joined the event). |
| 23-Feb-09  | 40,000 free bananas are given to the population.  
- A march of protest in Fort-de-France (Over 4 000 protesters).  
- Street protest of protest in François (Over 600 protesters).  
- Street protest in Paris organised by Antilleans diaspora to support the social movement (Between 10 000 and 30 000 protesters).  
- Other marches are organised by Antillean diaspora in Nantes, Marseille, Toulouse, Lyon, Lille, Rennes, Limoges and Strasbourg. |
| 24-Feb-09  | Street protest in Fort-de-France.  
- "Opération coup de poing" at Fort-de-France  
- Hundred of people organise a street protest in the city of François.  
- Street protest in the city of Saint-Anne (leaflet distributions etc.). |
| 25-Feb-09  | Street protest (Fort-de-France).  
- The negotiations at the prefecture continue |
| 26-Feb-09  | Street protest in Fort-de-France (About 3,000 protesters). |
| 27-Feb-09  | Street protest in Fort-de-France.  
- Several improvised roadblocks are placed in Gros-Morne and Street protest in the city of Gros-Morne. |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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</table>
| 02-Mar-09 | - Street protest (Fort-de-France).  
- "Opération coup de poing" is organised at the industrial park of Lamentin.         |
| 03-Mar-09 | - Street protest (Fort-de-France - 3 000 protesters).  
- A is improvised in the city of Ducos (Champigny).                                  |
| 04-Mar-09 | - Street protest (Fort-de-France).  
- A street protest is organised by a new student association called "Ansanm an Tjè" (meetings between the members of the association) |
| 05-Mar-09 | - Street protest (Fort-de-France).  
- An improvised roadblock is organised around the industrial park of Lamentin.  
- *The island of Reunion starts its first day of protest. Between 15 000 and 15 000 and protesters joined the street protest in Saint-Denis and Saint-Pierre.* |
| 06-Mar-09 | - Street protest (Fort-de-France - 5 000 protesters).  
- An altercation occurred in Fort-de-France between the protesters and several counter-protesters (including few Békés, some entrepreneurs and farmers). |
| 08-Mar-09 | - The association UFM (Union des Femmes de la Martinique) organised its own street protest in Fort-de-France for International Women Day. |
| 09-Mar-09 | - March in the streets of Fort-de-France (Less than thousand protesters).  
- The city concil of case pilote is still blocked by few protesters. |
| 10-Mar-09 | - Street protest (Fort-de-France - Less than thousand protesters).  
- *(A small march is organised in New caledonia (Hundreds of protesters))*  
- The C5F announced that the protest will end on the 14th of March 2009. |
| 11-Mar-09 | - Street protest (Fort-de-France- Less than thousand protesters). |
| 12-Mar-09 | - Street protest (Fort-de-France- Less than thousand protesters). |
| 14-Mar-09 | - Last day of negotiation at the Prefecture.  
- Street protest (Fort-de-France - between 10 000 and 20 000 protesters).  
- A free concert is organised at Fort-de-France for and by the protesters. |
Appendix N/-  Map of the 2009 Protest and of the Referendums

GUADELOUPE (44 DAYS OF STRIKE)

(No referendum) 2009
Population: 400 800 Inhabitants
Area: 1 628km²
President of the Regional council: Victorien Lurel
President of the General council: Jacques Gillot
Parliamentary representation: 4 Members & 3 Senators

REUNION (8 DAYS OF GENERAL STRIKE)

(No referendum) 2009
Population: 802 000 Inhabitants
Area: 2 512km²
President of the Regional council: Paul Vergès
President of the General council: Nassimah Dindar
Parliamentary representation: 5 Members & 3 Senators

FRENCH GUIANA (15 DAYS OF GENERAL STRIKE)

--- Before Referendum 2009 ---
Population: 220 000 Inhabitants
Area: 86 504km²
President of the Regional council: Antoine Karam
President of the General council: Claude Lise (Alain Tien-Liong)
Parliamentary representation: 2 Members & 2 Senators

--- After Referendum January 2010 ---
Article 74 Referendum Results (participation rate: 55.32%): (79.3% : NO - 20.7%: YES)/ Rejected
Article 73 Referendum Results (participation rate: 35.81%): (20.2%: NO 78.9% : YES)/ Adopted
(Assemblée Unique) Unique Assembly

--- After Referendum January 2010 ---
Article 74 Referendum Results (participation rate: 48.16%): (70.2% : NO - 29.8% YES)/Rejected
Referendum Results (participation rate: 27.42%: Article 73 (70.22%)/ Adopted
(Assemblée Unique) Unique Assembly

MARTINIQUE (38 DAYS OF GENERAL STRIKE)

--- Before Referendum 2009 ---
Population: 398 000 Inhabitants
Area: 1 128km²
President of the Regional council: Alfred Marie Jeanne (MIM)
President of the General council: Claude Lise (RDM)
Parliamentary representation: 4 Members & 2 Senators

--- After Referendum January 2010 ---
Article 74 Referendum Results (participation rate: 55.32%): (79.3% : NO - 20.7%: YES)/ Rejected
Article 73 Referendum Results (participation rate: 35.81%): (20.2%: NO 78.9% : YES)/ Adopted
(Assemblée Unique) Unique Assembly