Matters of Identity. Post-colonial Martinique and the European Union.

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Introduction

“In this perspective, we declare our opposition to the current process of integration carried out by the European Union, without a popular consultation of the peoples of the French departments of the American continent” (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R., 1999, p.120) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

In March 2019, I was invited to take part to an EU-funded project on Responsible Tourism, that foresaw an exchange week on the island of Martinique (EnTOURée - http://www.community4tourism.net/en/). When hearing the name Martinique, the word resounded in my head and went back to the topics of colonization, decolonization and post-coloniality. I remembered Martinique to be the homeland to important post-colonial thinkers such as Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire. My plane ticket actually showed that I would be landing at Aeroport International Martinique – Aimé Césaire. Yet, I could fly to Martinique by using just my Italian, EU approved, identity card, because Martinique is part of France, and, therefore, the European Union. The question of why this land was not independent, and especially what was the general opinion among Martinicans, sparked my interest for the case. By better looking into it – and as I shall better explain in the first chapter – I figured out that the people of the island do not actually fight for independence from France, neither do they wish to exit the European Union. So, the quest I develop within this elaborate is, indeed, to try and understand how the people of Martinique position their identification, considering that they have strong African heritage, they are legally French, and they belong to the European Union, but they are also American, and more specifically Caribbean. More specifically, in this work I explore what are the relations between Martinique and the EU, focussing on the discourses produced in both

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1 “In this perspective, nous affirmons notre opposition au processus actual d’intégration sans consultation populaire des peuples desdits départements français d’Amérique au sein de la Communauté Européenne” (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R., 1999, p.120) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
regarding their citizens’ identity, and analysing the possible linkages. Considering the actual lack of identity affiliation to the EU on the side of Martinique, I sustain that the identity discourses produced in the island should receive better attention from the institution and its citizens, in order to effectively include the former among the latter. This objective would, indeed, reflect the motto of the European Union, which recites “United in Diversity”, and thus communicates its will to welcome all of its citizens equally. I believe that the discourses produced in Martinique on identity can enrich those elaborated in the European Union, and foster a better exploration of its colonial past. After all, the Shuman declaration did recite as part of the objectives of the soon to be born economic unity of the old continent: “With increased resources Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks, namely, the development of the African continent”\(^2\) (Shuman Declaration, 1950).

The present work is carried out within the theoretical framework of critical studies, and especially those focusing on post-coloniality and Cultural Studies. The initial quest was developed during a short period of stay in Martinique, in March 2019 first, and between October and November of the same year. During this time, I had the chance to entertain informal conversations on the topic, with some brilliant people from the island, France, Italy, and other Caribbean islands, who helped me to give a direction to my work. These ‘informal chats’ led me through a journey that went beyond colonial and post-colonial thought, and brought me closer to the present, to the current self-identification of the people of the island. Furthermore, it made me discover realities of the island that I could not imagine, such us the gender stereotypes

\(^2\)Source: [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en)
present in the Caribbean, and the very interesting counter-narratives that dismantle them. Throughout the elaborate, I do mention these conversations, and connect to them literary proof. As it can be imagined, different voices gave different perspectives on many aspects of the Martinican identity and its relation to the EU – which is, generally, seen as an economic and political entity beyond France. My choice was to report the elements that recurred quite regularly in my conversations, leaving out other lines of analysis that would have requested more research time, and better literature availability. Finally, from my conversations two interesting themes for in-depth analysis raised: the contraposition between formal education and informal parallel education; feminist discourses. I chose to dedicate part of my conclusive chapter to the second theme, which presented more material and allowed for better comparison with analogous discourses produced in the EU. Unfortunately, even though the first topic would have allowed an interesting exploration of the Martinican culture, it would also have requested better research abilities and possibilities.

View from the house where I lived between October and November 2019. The apartment was located on a hillside of Fort-de-France, main city of the island. Along the shore below, it is possible to see the downtown part of Fort-de-France.

Throughout my work, the lack of access to some interesting literature constituted, at times, an issue. In most cases, not the libraries in Martinique, even less those in Italy, had availability for the manuals I was looking for, and many books I resolved ordering online were delayed due to the strikes that we see nowadays in metropolitan France. Despite all of these, I managed to find enough to inform my quest, and to give me interesting insights on the main topics of my analysis.
The work develops by, first of all, shortly tracing the pathway of self-definition of the *Identité Martiniquaise*, beginning with authors of the first half of the XX century and arriving to the present day, also taking into account the experience of colonization and slavery of the previous centuries, that populates the works of such authors. The first chapter is dedicated to this operation, which is carried out by taking into consideration the discourses of the most influential authors from Martinique, who gave their contribution to post-colonial thought, as well as to the identity discourses on the island. Initially, the idea was to give only a brief attention to authors such as Frantz Fanon ad Aimé Césaire. Nevertheless, throughout my conversations it became clear that these authors are still taken into relevant account for self-definition of the Martinican identity. Even though Fanon and Césaire have different statutes on the island⁴, their analyses and writings are so valued and still effective today, that it would be impossible to quest identity in Martinique without explaining their main theories. These will be contextualized into nowadays narratives, and they will be presented as the basic work from which later writers and philosophers developed their own thought. Indeed, this exploration will end by placing Martinique within the Caribbean context, and connecting the identity of the people that were born in it as Creole.

In the second chapter of the elaborate, I proceed to briefly present the main aspects of the identity of EU citizens, and to understand how the self-definition of Martinicans can become part of such identity: can the peculiar Martinican people really belong to EU citizenship, in a matter of identity definition? My analysis will therefore focus on the colonial past of the European Union, in order to highlight what role Martinique played in its birth, and what position it takes in nowadays administrative setting. Concluding the chapter, I highlight what such position means in term of identity definition and identity building.

In the third and final chapter of the work, I expose my final answer to the initial quest, and give an operational example of the opinion I put forward. This is done by comparing feminist discourses produced in Martinique, with those produced in the EU: I

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⁴ As we will explain in Chapter One.
highlight the main topics treated by each one, and find affinities and differences on the ones produced by both. I finally explain how each one can be beneficial for the other, and how EU feminist movements should better acknowledge the ones in Martinique.

At the top of this Introduction, I reported a quote from the Creolité Manifesto, a document that conveys the most recent definition of the identity of Martinicans⁵. In this affirmation, the authors declare their refusal of being part of the European Union, stating that the people from the departments have not been duly consulted. I took this statement as a challenge, and as the guide for my analysis: indeed, it is my objective to demonstrate how important it is to better acknowledge the presence of these ultra-peripheral lands and peoples, among the discourses produced within the European Union.

All the pictures included in this work have been taken during my time on the island, and are all my personal property. The pictures have been included with the objective to share pills of some aspects of the Martinican culture, as well as to show its

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⁵ See Chapter One, paragraph 4.
beautiful landscapes. The flowers at the beginning of each chapter serve a decorative purpose, and reconnect to the meaning of the creole name of the island: Matnik, the *island of flowers*. 
1 Chapter 1 – Looking for the *Identité Martiniquaise*

C'est une manière de vivre l'histoire dans l'histoire- l'histoire d'une communauté dont l'expérience apparaît, à vrai dire, singulière avec ses déportations de populations, ses transferts d'hommes d'un continent à l'autre, les souvenirs de croyances lointaines, ses débris de cultures assassinées.

Comment ne pas croire que tout cela qui a sa cohérence constitue un patrimoine? En faut-il davantage pour fonder une identité?

Aimé Césaire, Discours sur la Négritude, 1987

If you ask a person from Martinique to define the identity of the people born on this *Department d'outre-mer*, the reaction you are most likely to get is a frown saying “well, that’s complicated!”. Martinique is an overseas department of France (DOM), located in the *Petit Antilles*, in the Caribbean Sea. The people of Martinique are sons and daughters of the enslaved people deported from Africa, that became labour force in the plantations that compose the landscape of the island; they are descendants of the European colonial *maîtres*; they carry Asian genes from India and China; they inhabit a land without autochthonous people⁸; they are French citizens, and citizens of the European Union. How can a Martinican person really identify him/herself? What is Martinique’s place within the current global arrangements? Does an *Identité Martiniquaise* really exist? In order to try and

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⁶ “It is a way of living history within history- the history of a community where experience comes into being, / to be honest, in a singular way, with its deportations of populations, its transfer of people from one continent to another, the / souvenirs of far-away believes, its remains of murdered cultures. / How is it possible not to believe that all of this, that has its consistency, constitutes a heritage? / Isn’t all this enough to fund an identity?” (English translation by Laura Truffarelli)

⁷ Part of a speech pronounced by Aimé Césaire at the Hemispheric Conference of Black People of the Diaspora in Florida, on February 26⁶ 1987.

⁸ By autochthonous it is meant the original inhabitants of the Caribbean islands, that were heavily exterminated in the first couple of centuries following Christopher Columbus’s arrival.
give an answer to these queries, we need to begin by giving a brief explanation on the use that we make of the notion of Identity.

1.1 – Identity, a very personal matter

1.1.1 – Defining identity

“Identity is very personal!” This was the first answer that one of my interlocutors from the island gave me when I asked him to define the Martinican identity. In the introduction to the book *La Société Martiniquaise entre Ethnicité et Citoyenneté*, Caribbean sociologist and researcher Juliette Sméralda points out that the process of construction of one’s identity, and especially when such identity is strongly connected to a certain cultural heritage, is a *discipline tout personelle* (Sméralda J. 2008, p.9). Nevertheless, the construction of one’s identity – continues Sméralda – is socially determined, and when this identity is built in an environment that comprehends a multiplicity of ethnicities and cultures, a person’s origins and the image that the people around him/her have of his/her ethnicity has a strong influence (Sméralda J. 2008, p.8-13). Sméralda explains that the person tends, on the one side, to conform to social norms while, on the other, to build his/her own identity by opposing to the others. Recalling the theory of social differentiation, the sociologist states that each subculture is in search for its own identity by highlighting its differences from the mainstream culture or the other subcultures of its environment, which applies very effectively to the case of the pluralist society of Martinique (Sméralda J. 2008, p.58). Indeed, as we outlined before and as we are going to explain further, those descending from African enslaved people had to build their own identity in contraposition to the one of the white colonizer. Furthermore, after slavery was

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9 This work consists of a research on how the community descending from Indian migrants of Martinique finds its identity in such a complex context. Even though the results of the research itself does not belong to our field of interest, her work points out many aspects of the construction of identity in the difficult environment of Martinique.

10 A discipline that is entirely personal (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

11 According to the social differentiation theory, the symbolic activity of understanding oneself or the group of belonging goes through a first phase of social conformity and, when this is satisfied, it passes over to distinguishing oneself from what is the different, the other (Sméralda J. 2008, p.58).
abolished, migration waves led people from Africa, Northern Africa and Asia to the island, making its social composition even more complex.

To further understand the concept of identity, we want to report British Professor Peter Preston’s words. In his 1997 publication *Political/Cultural Identity: Citizens and Nations in a Global Era*, he states that “we can begin to understand identity only if we grasp its specificity, complexity and contingency” (Preston P. 1997, p.43). According to the Professor, identity can be understood as the crossing and overlapping of three notions: the notion of *locale*, the one of *network* and the one of *memory*. By locale, Preston means the immediate environment where a person begins to structure his/her identity, connecting it to a specific place and community. From this, stems the concept of network, that entails the contacts that a person has with the people around him. The first contacts are determined by the other inhabitants of his local dimension, but they then widen to all the exchanges that a person will entertain with the others throughout his/her life, and these will have a stronger or softer influence of his/her understanding of his/her own identity. Finally, memory is the continually re-worked sphere where both the locale and the network are brought together (Preston P. 1997, p.43-53).

In a previous chapter of his book, Preston affirms that analysing the identity in the context of complex change entails, on the one hand, its unstable nature in the modern world and, on the other, the ambiguous nature of the system within which it is constructed (Preston P. 1997, p.31). The purpose of Preston’s work is, indeed, to analyse the construction of identity in the modern era. Even though this objective abstracts from the purposes of the present work, it is nevertheless important to bear in mind that the *Identité Martiniquaise* is fully inscribed in the modern era, and it experienced (or is it more proper to write *underwent*) the nationalist phase of the 18th and 19th centuries (mainly the latter) as much as the rest of the Western world. The British Professor explains that the space of a person is composed by many levels of social nucleuses, that progressively widen in order to comprehend a wider group of people. If we now introduce the concept of *imagined communities* elaborated by sociologist Benedict Anderson, we can affirm that one of the most determinant social nucleus is the Nation. In his world-known work
*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, when attempting to define the concept of Nation, Anderson writes: “[...]it is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson B. 2006, p.6). We see here that the sociologist introduces here the capacity to imagine something. Anderson refers to the ability of a community of people to perceive and create its nationhood, before the birth of the Nation itself12. To better explain what this process entails, let’s have a look at the definition of *imaginaire* given by French historian and researcher Serge Gruzinski: “[it] is the ability to represent the real to oneself, to perceive it intuitively and affectively, and to interpret it intellectually by generating what each culture considers to be ‘the’ reality, although it is only ‘its’ reality. This faculty, the schemata that organize it and the representations that flow from it make up the *imaginaire*13” (Gruzinski S. 2007, p.301). Even though the theories of Nation-building described by Anderson do not apply to Martinique, it is interesting to reconnect the ability just described of communities to create their identity by imagining themselves as a union, due to their communal features, the most important of which are history, culture, language and territory. This notion will come in handy when theorizing the existence of a Caribbean community, that does not coincide with a specific Nation, but that shares many common features. Furthermore, the concept of *imaginaire* is useful also to better understand and interpret the argument that will be outlined in the following paragraphs.

The notion of identity described until now stems from a strong sociological background, entailing also culture, history and, in the smallest portion, politics. Nevertheless, sociology is not the discipline that we are adopting to conduct our work. The notions and theories described by the authors recalled above are, however, foundational for the philosophical and ideological framework that constitutes the basis for

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12 What is interesting, is that Anderson argues that the first nationalist movements were born in the Americas (more specifically in North America), thanks to the adoption of the ideals of the French idealism of the XVIII and XIX centuries (Anderson B., 2006). As we will explain in a later paragraph, the ideals that worked so well in North America, became functional for subjugating even more effectively the people of Martinique and their identity-building process, after World War II.

13 Emphasis in the original.
the present elaborate. In the lines below, we enter into detail on this framework, introducing the thought of two authors that will guide us through our analyses: Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall. Before proceeding, though, we want to highlight that identity also has a strong connection with the psychology of a person. Recalling Marisa Zavalloni’s theory, Sméralda explains that social identity consists of two dimensions: an objective biological/ genetic one, that is connected to, for example, a person’s ethnic belonging; and a subjective one, that is connected to a combination of judgments on oneself, on the other and on society. We will see how the psychological perception of a person’s identity can be influenced by its environment in paragraph 3 of this chapter.

French philosopher, sociologist, historian and academic Michel Foucault was a prominent figure of the philosophical-anthropological current of thought known as post-structuralism. As the word itself entails, post-structuralism develops from the current of structuralism, of Marxist matrix, that conducts a critical analysis of the relations between the basic structures that are shared by all of humanity, and the superstructures that is typical of one group, and differentiate it or assimilates it to the others. Post-structuralism is different from structuralism as it adopts a new form of criticism, that is more oriented towards the investigation of identity in the light of the political and, most importantly, the cognitive forces that determine it (Cusset F., 2012). In this framework, the concept introduced by Michel Foucault that interests us the most is the one of discourse. In the 1970 short essay *L’ordre du discours*, the author explains that the discourse is a system of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically constructs and determines the subjects of which it speaks about (Foucault F. in Young R., 1981). Foucault believes that a society produces its own discourses, and that the power and the determining capacity of these depends on the power of the group/institution that produces them (Foucault F. in Young R., 1981). The most determining discourses can be considered as dominant, while counter-discourses that create an opposition to the former can be also created. Recalling the concept of power struggle

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14This can also be easily evicted from the lines that open the paragraph, where we highlight that identity is a very personal matter, and each person elaborates it according to his/ her own perceptive system.
between dominant and dominated of Marxist origin, Foucault writes: “[…] discourse is not simply that which struggles or systems of domination, but the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized” (Foucault F. in Young R. 1981, p. 52-53). So, what we evict from Foucault’s statement is that reality, and the way we interpret it, highly depends on what kind of discourses influence our understanding the most. This idea constitutes the basis of the analysis that we conduct in this elaborate: we will see what kind of discourses historically determined the *Identité Martiniquaise*, and what kind of counter-narratives were elaborated as a response.

A current of studies that developed in parallel, yet in an intertwined way, to poststructuralism is the School of Cultural Studies. Even though the genealogy of these studies dates back to the early 1950s, we take into account the current that developed in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of the university of Birmingham, U.K., that was funded in 1964 by Jamaican sociologist Stuart Hall (Ianniciello C., Quadraro M., 2015). The Cultural Studies belong to, mainly, the field of sociological analysis, where critical thought is applied. It critically explores societies in its cultural forms, by employing a perspective that combines sociological theories with analysis of literature. Most interestingly, this approach explores the multiple and counter-hegemonic point of view that produce culture. This *production of culture* is fully assimilable with the concept of *discourse* introduced by Foucault, as it is through discourses and counter-discourses that culture is determined, influenced, produced and re-produced. The concept of hegemony introduced by Cultural Studies also presents many analogies with Foucault’s *dominant discourse*. Hegemony is, indeed, defined as “the complexity of operations that allow to obtain the consent, to force the conflict between opposite social interests so that the interests of those that are in power can be perceived as the interests of the community” (Leghissa G. in Hall S. 2006, p.40). Despite the presence of so many similarities, the main difference

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15 Translated from Italian by Laura Truffarelli: “[…] egemonia […] quel complesso di operazioni che permettono di ottenere il consenso, di forzare il conflitto tra interessi sociali contrapposti in modo tale che gli interessi di chi detiene il potere possano venire percepiti come gli interessi della collettività” (Leghissa G. in Hall S. 2006, p.40).
between Foucault’s thought and the Cultural Studies and – more precisely – the thought of sociologist Stuart Hall, is that while Foucault’s focus is on the critical reconstruction of the formation and functioning of the hegemonic discourses, Hall’s work aims at highlighting the counter-response that societies give to such discourses (Leghissa G. in Hall S., 2006). Sméralda, explaining the social complexity of Martinique, writes about the originalité sociale, which consists of identity strategies developed by disadvantaged social groups, in order to legitimate themselves (Sméralda J. 2008, p.72). As we will explain in the second paragraph of this chapter, Cultural Studies set the basic ground for Colonial and Post-colonial studies, that aim to give back a voice to those who became subjugated to the dominant/ hegemonic discourses of the power of the colonizers. This, in turn, will be the framework for analysing the discourses produced by the people of Martinique on their identity.

To conclude this first paragraph, we would like to point out two interesting aspects. Both Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall, even though coming from different contexts, have a “personal” relationship with Martinique. Michel Foucault is French, just like the people of Martinique: it is interesting how the structuralist and post-structuralist current of thought developed in a country that, as we will see in the pages to come, has quite hegemonic identitarian tendencies. Stuart Hall, on the other hand, comes from Jamaica, which is an island in the Caribbeans, just like Martinique. As we will see, Caribbean islands have a lot to share: the history of European domination, slavery, culture, the genesis of the language, to name a few. Even though the authors have been chosen based on the fundamental contribution that they gave to the discipline of critical and post-colonial studies, the affinities just mentioned cannot be ignored, and our hope is that their thought will give a more vivid and realistic touch to the arguments expressed.

1.1.2 – Search for identity in the origins

As stated above through the words of Professor Preston, memory, and its collective dimension, is a fundamental aspect of a people’s identity. Yet, in the case of Martinique,
memory is tightly connected to the trade triangle, deportation and slavery. Furthermore, the population composition in Martinique is more variegated than only descendants from the slavery time, and comprehends descendants of migrants coming from other colonized lands. Indeed, two migration waves invested the island after the abolition of slavery in 1848: the first one from several African countries, India and China in the XIX century, and the second form Northern Africa and Indochina in the XX century. This complex social tissue is followed by a tendency to look for an identitarian memory that formed before slavery and before migration, and that comes from various cultures and places around the planet. As Raphaël Confiant points out in the preface of the book *Tradition Orale et Imaginaire Créole*: “[…] si le monde créole ne possède pas, au départ, de discours de création du monde, tous les efforts des peuples qu’il comporte ont toujours convergé, de manière à la fois passionnée et pathétique, vers un seul et unique but: celui de fonder justement une origine, une généalogie et une légitimité” (Confiant R. in Relouzat R. 1998, p.11). The connection between the researched memory and the different cultures, that it is associated with, is basically genetic. As Sméralda writes: “[…] l’appartenance culturelle renvoie à ‘une représentation quasi génétique de l’identité, qui sert de support à des idéologies de l’enracinement’ […] Cette définition […] de l’identité culturelle associe des caractères phénytopiques et psychologiques stables, qui sont censés relever du ‘génie’ propre du peuple quel l’individu se rattache” (Sméralda J. 2008, p.11). Therefore, in many cases the genetic search ends up opening the road for the people of Martinique to find their roots and identitarian origins in a different land, which corresponds to, mainly, the portion of Africa colonized by the French Empire. On November 5th, 2019, a conference-debate took place at the Cultural House of Trinité, Martinique, by the title *Liens*

16 “[…] if the Creole world does not possess, initially, a discourse on the creation of the world, all of the efforts of the peoples that it determines have always converged, sometimes in a passionate and pathetic way, towards one unique end: founding an origin, a genealogy and a legitimacy” (Confiant R. in Relouzat R. 1998, p.11) (Translation by Laura Truffarelli).

17 Italics in the original.

18 “The cultural belonging refers to ‘a representation almost genetic of the identity, that supports the ideologies of rooting’ […] This definition […] of the cultural identity, associates stable phenotypical and psychological traits, that should have found a ‘gene’ typical of the people to which the single person binds him/herself” (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
Ancestraux et Construction Identitaire. In this occasion, historian Annick Francois-Haugrin ties the investigation of the Martinican ancestry to the genealogical search.

After explaining the five demographic phases of Martinique, which include two phases in the pre-Colombian times, one regarding the arrival of the Europeans and the triangular trade, and two that comprehend the above-mentioned migration waves, she proceeded showing what typology of antique documents served to register the population (and, unfortunately, the enslaved people) of the island, as well as the connections that exist between the surnames present on the land and the origins of the family. Francois-Haugrin ended her presentation by showing the websites that, nowadays, collected the information reported in the antique documents, and that allow to rebuild a Martinican person’s genealogical origins. Francois-Haugrin concluded her presentation asserting: “De notre côté, à l’aide des sources de l’état civil, de la mémoire des familles et des différents récits, nous serons en mesure de dire à nos enfants qui nous somme vraiment ! On pourrait alors de demander si cette pluralité de nos populations explique la singularité de notre identité” (Power Point presentation by Francois-Haugrin, November 5th 2019).

Overall, then, what the historian shows is that despite the strong connections with the continent of Africa, the genealogical heritage of Martinique shows a complex plurality of components, and, as we will see later in this chapter, this aspect has been highly appreciated by the late and current authors that investigate the Identité Martiniquaise.

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19 The conference has been recorded and it was supplemented by Power Point Slides. The information reported in this paragraph are a summary of the presentation made by Historian Francois-Haugrin at the beginning of the conference.

20 “From our side, thanks to the resources of the civil state, of the family memories and of the different accounts, we will be able to tell to our children who we really are! We will then question if the plurality of populations explains the specificity of our identity”.
In the forthcoming paragraphs, we will show many aspects that compose the definition of the Martinican identity, and they derive from a critical analysis of the phenomena of colonialism, slavery, and of being a French department in the Caribbean region. Nevertheless, this very brief presentation of the general tendency that exists in Martinique (and France) to determine a person’s identity on the basis of its genealogical heritage serves, on the one hand, to give a pragmatic dimension to the analyses that will follow and, on the other, to corroborate the theory of the Creolité.

1.2 – Martinique, the French department: Post-colonial thought and Aimé Césaire’s Négritude

As highlighted before, Martinique is not an independent state, but a DOM – Département d’outre-mer. Then how are its best-known philosophers and thinkers (e.g.
Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and Edouard Glissant) contributors to the post-colonial discourse?

1.2.1 – Post-Colonial Studies

To begin with, let’s see what are the main characteristics of the post-colonial theory. In the previous paragraph we introduced the School of Cultural Studies, which focuses on the relationships between discourse and structures of power, transposing them into a framework that takes into account both gender and post-colonial perspective (Baratta G. in Leghissa G., 2006). This school of thought aims to give voice to the *subalterns*, those who didn’t take part to the formation of the hegemonic discourse. The phenomenon of colonization exercised by Europe and imposed upon the rest of the world constitutes a form of hegemony, that manifests itself on the physical level as much as on the cultural and psychological one. Colonization produced hegemonic discourses that defined the imaginaries of the subjugated, taking away not only their personality, but also their right to speak, erasing them from the narrations of history. Indo-American scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak states: “The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other” (Spivak G. C., 1999). Spivak thus explains that what is not European is the Other, the different from the European, which in turn represents the only paradigm to which this *Other* can compare itself with. The Other is the subaltern: “To be subaltern is a condition of the dominated that finds himself subjugated to a form of alienation squared, to an objectification that is not only social but also cognitive, meaning a gap of knowledge of oneself …” (Cusset, 2012, p. 178-179)\(^21\). Post-colonial theory is thus rooted in the Cultural Studies, also known as Subaltern Studies\(^22\), by conferring the attribution of *subaltern* to the colonized, and the one of *hegemonic discourse* to the discourses of colonialism.

\(^{21}\) English translation from Italian by Laura Truffarelli: “Subalternità […] è la condizione del dominato che si ritrova sottomesso a una forma di alienazione al quadrato, a una oggettivizzazione non soltanto sociale ma cognitiva, nel senso di una lacuna nella conoscenza di sé e del proprio ruolo reale nella lotta politica”

Therefore, by giving back a voice to the colonized, Post-colonial philosophy conveyed the subalterns’ history, culture, language and, possibly, identity into a counter-discourse that confronted the hegemonic one. Nevertheless, it is important to also underline that post-colonialism regards the discourses produced by the colonized, as much as it regards those produced by the colonizers. As Stuart Hall points out, this is because the process of colonization brought consequences on global scale, and not only among the lands subjugated by the European powers (Hall S., 1996). In the text *When was “the post-colonial”? Thinking at the limit*, Hall writes: “post-colonial […] produces a decentred, diasporic or ‘global’ rewriting of earlier, nation-centred imperial grand narratives” (Hall S., 1996), and this can be done by both those who suffered colonization, and those who inflicted it, and matured a counter-perspective of the phenomenon. In the same article, Stuart Hall responds to several critiques moved against the current of post-colonialism. One of these critiques, expressed by American-Israeli academic Ella Shohat, denounced post-colonialism for its “dizzying multiplicity of personalities” (Hall S., 1996). To respond, Stuart Hall begins by pointing out that colonization forced a wide number of cultures and peoples to be subjugated to one unique narrative – the one of the colonizers. For this reason, “‘post-colonial’ is conceptually distinctive” (Hall S., 1996), and is a current of thought that allows all voices from the colonized to come to the fore and denounce the consequences of subjugation. Post-colonial is, thus, a theory that regards the discourses elaborated by both the colonized and the colonizers, as long as these critic the effects of colonization, and regard these peoples that did not become independent as well, such as the case for Martinique. Furthermore, post-colonial cannot be restricted to a specific temporality. By quoting Peter Hulme, Stuart Hall points out that the ‘post’ in ‘post-colonial’ has a double dimension: a temporal one, and a critical one. The latter allows post-colonial theory to come into existence through the critique of a specific body of theory (Hall S., 1996), and that is, for example, the case of Frantz Fanon’s critique to the embodiment of the white people’s opinion by the black colonized and/or (ex-)enslaved23.

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23 We will deepen this notion in paragraph 3 of this chapter.
To conclude this brief introduction to post-colonialism, it is important to state that the concept is complex, and it has been criticized in numerous forms. This is due also to the interdisciplinary nature of the theory, and its wide fields of application (anthropology, psychology, history, sociology, etc.) (Ianniciello C., Quadraro M., 2015). Yet, in our analysis we will adopt the vision that has just been described.

1.2.2 – Aimé Césaire’s thought and the Négritude

Aimé Césaire is, as mentioned above, an important contributor to post-colonial thought. Born in Martinique in 1913, he was a literate and politician, and is now considered a hero in the Martinican imaginary. As pointed out in the book *Tradition Orale et Imaginaire Créole* by anthropologist Raymond Relouzat: “Un homme comme Césaire appartient déjà à la mythologie: c’est un ‘Héros Fondateur’ (refondateur, devrait-on dire); et c’est pourquoi toutes les tentatives qui ont été les siennes de faire comprendre qui il est vraiment (un professeur? un poète?) n’intéressent personne. Peu importe, en fait qui il est: c’est ce que la Mythologie Créole a besoin qu’il soit, qu’il est véritablement” 24 (Relouzat R. 1998, p.27). What we understand from this passage is that Césaire covers a fundamental role in the definition of the identity of the people of Martinique, as his deeds as a politician were very well appreciated among the population of the island. The figure of Aimé Césaire is the first one that a traveller comes in contact with, as the airport of the island is named after the politician and poet. Furthermore, many of the main buildings of Fort-de-France are named after him, and it is impossible not to notice the huge picture of the politician decorating the biggest theatre of the city, built on one of the main streets.

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24 “A man like Césaire belongs already to mythology: he is a ‘Founding Hero’ (more appropriately, re-founding); and it is because all of his attempts to make people understand who he really was (a professor? A poet?) do not interest anyone. It is not important who he is: he is what the Creole Mythology needs him to be, that became his truth” (Relouzat R. 1998, p.27) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
In my conversation with a historian from the island, I asked them why Césaire is so beloved among their co-islanders. They explained to me that he had been one of the most important promoters of the departmentalization of the territory, which was a quite contested point at the time. As Political Science Professor Justin Daniel points out in his paper *Social Conflicts and Identity-Building in Martinique*, the perception of departmentalization that a wide part of the society of the island had was ambivalent, as the French State was seen as the violent colonizer and, at the same time, guarantor of republican equality. As Daniel himself writes, “This ambivalence had two different effects: on the one hand, the workers deliberately construed their battles as part of the struggle for fuller integration into the French system as a whole, and accordingly put forward claims

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25 The agreements with the central government for the departmentalization of Martinique were signed in 1946, initiating the passage from being a colony to being an integral part of France, benefitting from several forms of autonomy.

26 Daniel’s work focuses mainly on working protestors, defining social conflict as “[…] a social movement which perceives itself as rooted in labour, but whose implications are of concern to the whole of society, whether in terms of the way it unfolds, of the many different arenas it brings into play, of the links it has with related forms of collective mobilisation, or of the policies, strategies and political objectives which shape its course” (Daniel J. in Bernabé J., Bonniol J., Confiant R., L’Etang G. 2000, p.3 of English version published by the author).
that were modelled on universal principles and rights [...] On the other hand, in the course of their protests, the workers were quick to call up deeply entrenched memories of State violence [...]” (Daniel J. in Bernabé J., Bonniol J., Confiand R., L’Etang G. 2000, p.9 of English version of the chapter published by the author). Therefore, Césaire’s ability was to highlight the positive sides of remaining still under French governance, while abandoning the old colonial institution. As Jack Corzani explains in his article *Guadalupe et Martinique: la Difficile Voie de la Négritude et de l’Antillanité*, departmentalization was promoted by Césaire as well as by the political elites of the island, as a “[...] moyen d’échapper au pacte colonial et la possibilité d’établir des liens nouveaux avec leurs voisins”27 (Corzani J. 1970, p.28). Furthermore, in the years following the process of departmentalization, it also became clear, as Corzani points out, that being part of France brought relevant social advantages, and that its newly independent neighbouring countries showed the economic and social impoverishment that independence would have otherwise meant. Scholar Arvin W. Murch pointed out in 1968 how the case of the French Antilles was a peculiar one, considering the independentist movements that surrounded it. He shows how the process of departmentalization is actually a form of modern nationalism, connected with the “betterment of the human condition, and the extension of basic human rights” (Murch A.W. 1968, p.545) that France transmitted. Even though this is not the place to define human rights, neither to analyse the nationalist movements of the post-colonial era, Murch’s opinion corroborates the theory that becoming a French department brought many social advantages to Martinique, and that the positive perception of Césaire’s political work increased year after year.

Despite Césaire’s notoriety as a politician, what we want to really report in this paragraph is his work as an essayist, framing him within the post-colonial current of thought. First thing first, what is interesting to point out is that his writings on colonialism and identity-building never became as recognized, by the people of Martinique, as his political operations. As Corzani points out: “Le Césaire communiste et politicien prendra

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27 “[...] way to escape the colonial pact, and the possibility to establish new connections with their neighbors” (Corzani J. 1970, p.28) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
le pas aux Antilles, au moins au début, sure le Césaire promoteur de la Négritude et le relègera un peu au second plan. [...] il faut avoir la franchise de reconnaître que la Négritude n’a jamais intéressé vraiment les Antilles [...][28][29] (Corzani J. 1970, p.26). Furthermore, “Aux Antilles, tout se passe comme si les deux courants complémentaires du politique et du culturel étaient, sinon divergentes, du moins cloisonnés” (Corzani J. 1970, p.30). Corzani’s statements explains, therefore, how Césaire’s intellectual work was obscured by his political action. Nevertheless, to the ends of this work we need to give a brief description of Césaire’s definition of colonialism, and of his notion of Négritude, as they constitute the fundamental basis of the developments of the critical definition of the Identité Martiniquaise underwent throughout the second half of the XX century to the present day.

One of Césaire’s best-known contribution to post-colonial thought is the long essay Discours sur le Colonialisme, published in 1950. In this short essay, the author fiercely reports all the negative outcomes that colonization brings upon the colonized society. He begins by denouncing how colonization justifies his exercise of power over the colonized people under the false objective of improving the living conditions (religious, economic, social etc.) of the subjugated: “La malediction la plus commune en cette matière est d’être la dupe de bonne foi d’une hypocrisie collective, habile à mal poser les problèmes pour mieux légitimer les odieuses solutions qu’on leur apporte”[31] (Césaire A. 2004, p.8). Just from this introduction we understand that Aimé Césaire denounces colonialism for the way it presents reality in an unrealistic way, distorting the facts to justify its actions, if not

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[28] “Césaire the communist and the politician in the Caribbean will overstep, at list at the beginning, Césaire the promoter of Négritude and will force him to occupy a second position. [...] it is necessary to be franc and recognize that Négritude never really interested the Caribbean [...]” (Corzani J. 1970, p.26) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

[29] Corzari ends this statement by adding that, despite the lack of awareness of Césaire’s concept of Négritude, there is an expection “[... ] d’une minorité de jeunes étudiants généralement d’ailleurs initiés à Césaire par leur séjour dans une faculté métropolitaine” (Corzari J. 1970, p.26) (“[...] of a minority of young students that have been introduced to Césaire thanks to their studies in a faculty of the Metropolis” translation by Laura Truffarelli).

[30] “In the Caribbean, everything happens as the two complementary currents of politics and culture were, if not divergent, at least divided” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

[31] “The most common malediction in this context is the deceit of good will of a collective hypocrisy, very skilled in presenting the problems incorrectly to better legitimate the odious solutions that it gives to them” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
its own objectives. Césaire goes on to show how all these lies, all this violence exercised by the European colonizing countries, contribute to the progressive de-civilization of the old continent (Césaire A. 2004, p.12-28). He explains how these false representations given to the colonized contribute to representing among the (western) worlds’ perception as elements useful only to the functioning of the central machine, and compares colonization to reification (“colonisation=chosification”32, p.23). He denounces the discursive process put in action by European literates, historians, sociologists and psychologists, that deprives the colonized of their value as thinkers and individuals (Césaire A. 2004, p.38-54). Therefore, Césaire denounces the colonization of knowledge (colonialité du savoir) which interrogates the epistemic and cultural dimension of colonialism, and which puts the basis for the further criticisms developed by the prestigious and influential Martinican authors Fanon and Glissant (Mencé-Caster C. in L’Étang G., Mencé-Caster C. 2016, p.19), whom we will present later in this chapter.

Throughout the essay, Césaire inscribes the dialectic between the colonizer and the colonized in the Marxist notion that opposes the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, finally accusing the European bourgeoisie of being the real architect of the colonial violence, and denouncing it for its inhumanity33. It is important to point out the connection between the Marxist philosophy and Aimé Césaire’s thought, because, just like Marx, Césaire presents as the only solution to colonialism the advent of the Revolution (Césaire A. 2004, p.74). Césaire, despite his natal origins, carried out most of his studies in metropolitan France throughout the late ’20s and early ’30s, when France was still the colonial empire that had under his control a large portion of Africa. In the Metropole, young Aimé Césaire met with other colonised youth coming from the African continent (most notably Léopold Sédar Senghor, that later became the first political leader of de-colonized Senegal), and, by deepening the knowledge of the Marxist theory and Marxist critique, this group of youth developed the ideology that stood behind the fight for independence of the colonies against the French empire34. This very brief biographical annotation serves to understand

32 “colonization=reification” (italics in the original).
34 https://biografieonline.it/biografia-aime-cesaire
why Césaire, who, in his Martinique, worked to obtain departmentalization, was, ideologically, a strong supporter of the fight against the colonial power. It is fundamental to understand that Césaire critiques French colonialism for its ideological subjugation, while, as explained above, on the political side his view was different. This said, we want to conclude this paragraph on Césaire by presenting his ideological response to the colonial subjugation, bearing in mind that the movement that was born from such ideology did not belong to Martinique alone, but it was developed alongside African thinkers as well (again the name of Senghor stands out).

The response that Aimé Césaire gave to colonialism was to free the colonized man, the Black humiliated man, from the ideological violence exercised by the European domination. This operation is symbolized by the concept of Négritude. In a speech pronounced on February 26th, 1987, during the Hemispheric Conference organised by the International University of Miami, Florida, Césaire gives a detailed description of the notion of Négritude, and of its power. We report here an extract from the speech:

“C'est dire que la Négritude au premier degré peut se définir d'abord comme prise de conscience de la différence, comme mémoire, comme fidélité et comme solidarité. […] La Négritude résulte d'une attitude active et offensive de l'esprit. Elle est sursaut, et sursaut de dignité.
Elle est refus, je veux dire refus de l'oppression.
Elle est combat, c'est-à-dire combat contre l'inégalité.
Elle est aussi révolte. Mais alors, me direz-vous révolte contre quoi? […] historiquement, la Négritude a été une forme de révolte d'abord contre le système mondial de la culture tel qu'il s'était constitué pendant les derniers siècles et qui se caractérise par un certain nombre de préjugés, de pré-supposés qui aboutissent à une
Négritude has been, then, a way, for the Black subjugated, to look for their own identity, against the one dictated by the Europeans, from whom they affirm their difference, and, at the same time, their intellectual and political parity (Césaire A. 2004, p.79-92).

Nevertheless, as stated above, the concept of Négritude was never really adopted by the people of Martinique to define itself, especially at the time of its birth and development. This doesn’t mean, however, that the overcoming of the European intellectual violence did not progressively grow on the island. As we will show in the next paragraphs, achieving freedom from the colonizers’ narration by the colonized is the fundamental process that characterizes the recent and current identity discourse in Martinique.

1.3 – Martinique, slavery and being Black: the embodiment of sufferance within a people’s identity

Throughout all my conversations on the island about the identity of Martinican people, the theme of slavery surfaced every time, and was connected to many aspects of the land’s society and, more deeply, to its psychology. During the closing conference of an

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35 “It means that Négritude can be defined, in the first place, as the acknowledgment of the difference, as memory, as loyalty and as solidarity. [...] Négritude is the result of an active attitude of the mind on the offense. It is a summersault, a summersault of dignity. It is a refusal, and I mean a refusal of oppression. It is a struggle, that is to say, a struggle against inequality. It is also a revolt. But a revolt against what? [...] historically, Négritude has been a form of revolt, mainly against the global cultural system as it had been constituted during the last several centuries, a system characterized by a certain number of prejudices, of assumptions which generate a very strict hierarchy. In other words, Négritude has been a revolt against what I shall call European reductionism.” (Césaire A. 2004, p.83-84) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

36 The concept of embodiment is conceived in the present elaborate as defined by Bourdieu: “an immediate understanding of the familiar world, which depends from the fact that the cognitive structures used are the product of the embodiment of the structures of the world where the person acts [...]” (Bourdieu in U. Fabietti 2010, p. 152) (translation by Laura Truffarelli)
EU-funded mobility to Martinique\textsuperscript{37}, an administrative figure of L’Espace Sud\textsuperscript{38} pointed out how insecure the youth of Martinique can be when showed the possibility to take part to an EVS (European Voluntary Service), or other forms of mobility in a European country. They explained that these youth feel like they are not suited \textit{enough} for this kind of experience. And this sort of feeling is still widespread among all Martinicans.

In the previous paragraph, we illustrated Césaire’s idea of Négritude and its unrelation with Martinique’s political status. In this third paragraph, we want to illustrate the negative side of being black, the one that needed a counter representation such as Négritude to give back dignity to those who suffered, and still suffer today, the consequences of slavery, colonialism, de-historicisation and, deeper, de-humanization.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{picture13.png}
\caption{Decorations representing a man and a woman cutting sugarcane crop in the plantation (on the left), and a man with a chariot transporting rum (on the right). The decorations are exposed in the Depaz rum distillery, under the Mount Pelé and near the antique main city of Martinique, Saint Pierre.}
\end{figure}

\subsection{1.3.1 – Embodiment of slavery among the people of Martinique}

When we speak about slavery, and especially slavery in the colonized Caribbeans, we have to place it in the context of plantations (mainly sugarcane and banana on Martinique). Plantations collected the enslaved people\textsuperscript{39} that suffered the triangular trade

\textsuperscript{37} The conference took place on November 4th 2019 in L’Espace Sud offices in Saint-Luce, Martinique. The mobility in question is part of the Erasmus+ project “The Youngsters’ Trail”: https://www.facebook.com/events/446130112686297/

\textsuperscript{38} The administrative entity of southern Martinique.

\textsuperscript{39} In this text, we always adopt the expression \textit{enslaved people} instead of \textit{slaves}, as it is a widely adopted form that gives back their humanity to those who suffered slavery.
that started in Europe, landed in Africa, and deported African prisoners to the European conquered lands of the Americas. Here, the enslaved Africans were forced to work the land and were subjugated to the orders and wills of their white maître. In a 1981 article, scholar Riva Berleant-Schiller illustrates George McBride’s description of the plantation, and its connections with colonialism: “The plantation is characterized by [...] exploitative labor practices, large-scale mono crop production for an export market, and tropical location. It is intimately associated with colonialism and industrial expansion within the colonizing country. The colonial society develops in accordance with the plantation: it is stratified, it alters or destroys native cultures, it prevents the development of a local middle class, and it is ruled by an oligarchy dominated by foreign interest” (Berleant-Schiller R. in T. M. Fiehrer and M. W. Lodwick, 1982, p.393-394). From this description, we can extrapolate a first glimpse of the social repercussions that plantation enslavement brought later among the Caribbean post-colonial and independent societies. Once reached independence, the Caribbean islands’ societies inherited the market and social systems created during colonization and enslavement (Casimir, 1992). Even though the picture we just gave may convey an idea of plantation and colonialism that left no space for the development of an original society, in his 1992 study, Jean Casimir explains how the life on plantation actually gave space for the development of parallel cultures and commonalities, associating the experience of plantation to the Caribbean settings. “The plantation was conceived from the start on the assumption of an enslaved labour force [...]” – Casimir writes – “Since the Caribbean was the cradle of the slave plantation, one is inclined to conceive of this institution and of the moral and other persons associated with it as indigenous and locally based, which creates considerable confusion. A number of questions and answers concerning the formulation of a project for a Caribbean society are essential here. How can one separate this view of the Caribbean -a physical space where phenomena and relationships of all types occurred- from a view centred around the realization of local potential and its own internal dynamism? To what end could any initiatives taken by the inhabitants of the Caribbean lead? What has been projected, organized and governed according to Caribbean laws to serve Caribbean needs? With
regard to these concerns, the existence of a counter-plantation system might explain the past and the future of the region” (Casimir, 1992, p. 75-76). Casimir’s study focuses on explaining the connections between the inheritances of the plantation system that influence today’s independent Caribbean states. Even though this is not the case for Martinique, which is not independent and its economic system is connected to France⁴⁰, Casimir’s explanation of the development of the Creole culture will be taken into account and better described in paragraph four.

The collection of essays L’esclavage: quel impact sur la psychologie des populations? was elaborated following a 2016 international convention by the same name, that gathered historians, writers, psychiatrists, geneticists, sociologists, political analysts, psychologists and anthropologists, to respond to the quest of the psychological consequences of slavery upon the descendants of enslaved people. An important point that is made throughout the

⁴⁰ It is important to point out that the economic system of Martinique, as well as of the other DOMs, have some peculiarities, that will be better seen in Chapter Two.
collection of essays is that slavery is an historical fact that cannot be silenced. In the introductive article of the book, Professor Aimé Charles-Nicolas explains how exploring and taking consciousness of slavery and its functioning on a person’s psychology is the way to actually free oneself from this historical wound. In a different chapter of the same collection, academic Aly Moussa Iye states: “[…] l’occultation de faits fondateurs des sociétés modernes tels que l’esclavage a constitué un véritable obstacle à la justice sociale, à l’apaisement des mémoires, à la réconciliation nationale et la cohésion […] sans l’étude des séquelles psychologiques de cette tragédie, nous ne pourrons pas saisir les rapports qui structurent les sociétés issues de l’esclavage” 41 (A. M. Iye in A. Charles-Nicolas and B. Bowser, 2018, p. 498-499). Therefore, the collection is dedicated to keeping the memory of slavery alive, and to dig deeper into its connections with the psychology of present day post-colonial peoples.

In order to understand the effects that slavery had and still has on the identity of the people of Martinique, let’s now see two relevant concepts highlighted in the book L’esclavage: quel impact sur la psychologie des populations? The first one is elaborated by Charles-Nicolas, who introduces, in the first article of the collection, the notion of racialisation de la pensée42. The author describes this concept as the result of the primordial humiliation experienced by the enslaved person, a de-humanization process that begins with the withdrawal from the Home (the African continent), the displacement and the tortures and mistreatments experienced in the plantations. It is a consequence of the way the colonizers, the enslavers, the White men perceive the colonized, the enslaved, the Black people. This way of thinking leads also to the creation of a skin-color hierarchy in the mind of the enslaved and, consequently, among the post-slavery societies, that ranks whiteness at the top, and blackness at the bottom: the whiter, the most important. The second concept that we want to highlight is introduced by Professor Pr François Sauvagnant. The heirs of those who were subjugated to enslavement, suffer of a sentiment

41 […] the occultation of facts that are founding of modern societies such as slavery has constituted a real obstacle to social justice, to pacification of memory, to national reconciliation and to cohesion […] without the study of the psychological consequences of this tragedy, we will not be able to understand the relations thus structure the societies that derive from slavery” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

42 “racialization of thought” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
of alienation. More specifically, this experience concerns the African descendants that were subdued to a catholic European power, where segregation was less strong and the mix-up of “races” was allowed (P. F. Sauvagnant in A. Charles-Nicolas and B. Bowser, 2018, p.135). In the case of Martinique, for example, slavery was abolished in 1848 but unpaid mandatory work remained mandatory until the departmentalization of the land. At the same time, though, the 1945 French Constitution, that followed the tragic and shameful events of World War II, recognized racial discrimination as a crime, and public mention of the concept of the ethnic origins of a person became a taboo. For the people of Martinique, this meant not being able to connect or relate their identity to an ethnicity or a culture. The people of Martinique became French, without really being French.

![Picture 1.4. Schoelscher library, Fort-de-France. The building is named after Victor Schoelscher, a French journalist that fought for the abolishment of slavery in Martinique, and whose memory is still vivid among the people of Martinique. His name has also been given to a smaller town in the outskirts of Fort-de-France, where the Université des Antilles is located.](image-url)
Alienation and the relation with the French belonging was brilliantly explained by Martinican Doctor Frantz Fanon in his 1952 masterpiece *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*. Fanon was not a poet, nor a politician, but his analysis of the psychological consequences of being colonized and subjugated by the White man is still highly valued among the people of Martinique – and not only – today. Having taken part to the fight for Algerian independence (the connection to the cause was so strong that, after his death, his body was flown and buried in Algerian land), his contributions to anti-colonialism and to post-colonial theory are widely recognized still today, and the collection of essays that we described above undoubtedly stems from his thoughts and reflections. Explaining the alienation experienced by the people of Martinique, that were not only colonized, but also enslaved, Fanon writes: “Le bouleversement a atteint le Noir de l’extérieur. Le Noir a été agi. Des valeurs qui n’ont pas pris naissance de son action, des valeurs qui ne résultent pas de la montée systolique de son sang, sont venues danser leur ronde colorée autour de lui. Le bouleversement n’a pas différencié le nègre. Il est passé d’un mode de vie à un autre, mais pas d’une vie à une autre” (F. Fanon 1952, p.198).

This passage clearly explains how the Black man, subjugated and deprived of his roots and culture by the White man first, and made part of the Whites’ value system then, was forced to adopt norms that were not part of his blood – intended as original identity – making him an alien.

Fanon’s work introduces one more concept that is very significant among Martinicans, and that we briefly presented in the introduction to this paragraph. The psychiatrist explains the inferiority complex that afflicts people of black skin, and how this condition originates from the violent embodiment of the White man’s values and visions of the Black person. In *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* he states: “Le problème est d’importance. Nous ne tendons à rien de moins qu’à libérer l’homme de couleur de lui-même” (F. Fanon 1952, p.26), and continues: “S’il y a complexe d’infériorité, c’est à la
suite d’un double processus: économique d’abord; par intérieurisation ou, mieux, épidermisation de cette infériorité, ensuite⁴⁶” (F. Fanon 1952, p.28). Therefore, the black person’s perception of him/herself is the consequence of a process of internalization of the vision that the White man casts upon him/her. Fanon’s analysis stems from seven years of studying cases of inferiority complex among people with dark complexion, and the conclusion that he comes to is that this condition leads to a form of psychosis among the black community living under White men’s administration. After examining a dream that a patient of his revealed to him, he extrapolates two conclusions: his patient suffered from an inferiority complex that is not yet manifest; his desire to be white was the consequence of living in a society that decided value norms, and determined what was right and what was wrong, or what was associated to good and what was associated to bad. The Black person, therefore, is placed in front of a dilemma: becoming white or disappearing. How can he exist otherwise? (F. Fanon 1952, p.100-101). In this way, the Black person is determined by the representation⁴⁷ that the White gives of him/her, and this vision is negative, full of hate. In a dramatic passage, Fanon writes: “C’était de la haine; j’étais haï […] par toute une race. J’étais en butte à quelque chose d’irraisonné. Les psychanalystes disent que pour le jeune enfant il n’y a rien de plus traumatisant que le contact du rationnel. Je dirai personnellement que, pour un homme qui n’a comme arme que la raison, il n’y a rien de plus névrotique que le contact de l’irrationnel⁴⁸” (F. Fanon 1952, p.115). Hate is irrational, and being hated just for belonging to a discriminated category of humanity is, for the person with black skin, the cause of a psychotic disorder. This psychological inheritance is still felt very strong among the people of Martinique, and it shows mainly in the ways of self-definition, and of relating with the Other.

Truffarelli).

⁴⁶ “If there is an inferiority complex, it is because of a double process: economic first; and of internalization, or, better yet, epidermization of that inferiority”.

⁴⁷ Representation is here intended as a figurative mechanism of knowledge and perception of an object or a subject, that is undergoing or not a process of change (J. Smeralda, 2008).

⁴⁸ “It has been hate. I have been hated […] by an entire race. I have been mounted by something unreasonable. Psychiatrists say that there is nothing more traumatizing for the young child of the contact with the reasonable. I personally say that, for a man that has the only weapon of reason, there is nothing more neurotic than the contact with the irrational”.

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We conclude this subparagraph by introducing one last concept, elaborated by Barbadian author Kamau Brathwaite, that characterises the identity of the peoples of the Caribbean. In his 1980 speech at Brema University, Germany, Brathwaite describes the culture of the Caribbean as fragmented. Fragmentation takes multiple forms: geophysical, demographic, communicational, social, national, perceptive, of ideation and cultural. The fragmentation is the result of all the contradictions that determined the people of the Caribbean islands throughout time: being African, not being African anymore, being black in a white-dominated context, living on a land that is not theirs, surviving the subjugation of a power, that in some cases became their administrator (such as the case for Martinique), “fragmentation in race and anger and colour” 49 (K. Brathwaite in A. Gazzoni 2016, p.54). This brief explanation of Brathwaite’s concept, even if not specific about Martinique, serves to make more vivid the confusion that characterises the identity of the people of this island, and this confusion has its origins in the triangular trade and slavery system.

1.3.2 – The wound of slavery in the Identité Martiniquaise

In the previous paragraph we described the psychological consequences that the experience of slavery brings upon the enslaved and the peoples suffering from this wound. In this paragraph we will highlight a few elements that emerged during my conversations on the island, and were presented as a consequence of slavery that became characteristic of the Identité Martiniquaise.

In his essay Les vecteurs de la continuité en Guadelupe et en Martinique, Guadeloupian professor Jean-Pierre Sainton, frames the inheritance of the slavery system into a sociological asset, explaining that a culture sociale de l’esclavage50 is present on both French islands of Guadalupe and Martinique. He explains that this culture reiterates the slavery relationship that was established throughout the colonial time, that was based first and

49 Translation from the Italian: “frammentazione in razza e rabbia e colore” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
50 “social culture of slavery” (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
foremost on the opposition White/Black, but also on the oppositions between all the complexion nuances that resulted from inter-racial mixes and that were—and still are—impregnated with a different significance and associated to a hierarchy of power (J. Sainton in A. Charles-Nicolas and B. Bowser, 2018, p.206-207). Sainton goes on by pointing out that, even if the abolition of slavery in Martinique in 1848 gave to the then free enslaved people the statute of French citizens, “libre et égal” (J. Sainton in A. Charles-Nicolas and B. Bowser, 2018, p.210), yet their factual conditions were different, and the social power relations remained similar for long after the symbolic year. This resulted into the racialization and ethnicization of the social relations, where each person has a socially established role according to his/her color, origin and lineage. This social hierarchy, which we briefly mentioned above, has been called by one of my interlocutors from Martinique colorism. This term is more proper to the post-slavery and social studies of the United States, but the concept appears in many articles and essays produced about the and in the Caribbean, as well as, most importantly, Martinique. In the already-mentioned work of J. Casimir, the author gives a first explanation of the origin of the phenomenon. Casimir begins by explaining the progressive appearance of the freedman, enslaved people that “came into being as a result of local initiatives in order to play given roles within the system, and these roles, in addition to the status that they conferred, finally became institutionalized” (J. Casimir 1992, p.39). These freedmen were represented mainly by mulattoes, so the sons and daughters of métissage, the mix-up of a Black person and a White one. The author goes on to explain how the social status that was progressively attributed to the freedmen corresponds to colonizer-like attitudes: “The enslaved person who broke away from his peers and won his freedom had a certain familiarity, however limited, with the dominant system. Because his new status was useful to the administration of the slave system, he managed to obtain some material goods as well as some rights and privileges which permitted him to attempt to organize his private life along lines that increasingly reflected those established by the dominant institutions. […] An individual who, for one reason or another, was granted or purchased his freedom

51 We will analyse the importance of this concept in the last paragraph of this chapter.
within the framework of the slave system could only survive if he observed the rules and regulations in force. The acculturation or assimilation of the freedman was inevitable because he had to refrain from any display of ethnic or cultural difference in exchange for the chance of a better life. The freedman was the first local social category to have access to employment and wages. He therefore developed some interest in the products of the plantation and its related economic institutions. [...] in the best of cases the freedman became a planter and bought his own slaves. In the framework of official institutions, the system tended to perpetuate itself. [...] The emancipated were the final product of the creolization process, and the mulatto was the most typical of that group. Their privileged status, which was linked to the plantation system and to the Creole culture, set them apart from the Creole or creolized enslaved persons, who had no particular interest in defending that system and that culture” (J. Casimir 1992, p.41-42). What we deduct from Casimir’s words is that, because of the internalization of White discourses and representations operated by the Black community, the association between being whiter, therefore behaving like the White colonizer, and social prestige and respect developed automatically.

The conclusions we came to in the lines above lead us to one more notion that is characteristic of the Identité Martiniquaise. We introduced the concept of the alienation experienced by the people of Martinique, and we illustrated the social admiration that being French brings upon a person from Martinique. The theme of the relation between France and Martinique emerged during my conversation with a university professor from Guadeloupe, who spent many years, and still lives, in Martinique. What he highlighted to be the most apparent difference between Guadeloupians and Martinicans is, indeed, their consideration for the Metropole and the culture that it conveys. This affirmation can be somewhat traced back to the different economic and cultural relations that were historically established between the two islands and France. Indeed, Napoleon Bonaparte’s wife belonged to the white élite of Martinique, and throughout history this island became more prestigious in the colonial French imaginary, having thus
consequences also on the imaginary that the people of Martinique cast on the *hexagone* (J. Bernabé in G. L’Étang and C. Mencé-Caster, 2016). This also caused a different psychological and ideological pressure on the two peoples: Guadeloupians suffered a much softer negative influence than the enslaved people and their heirs in Martinique. This difference is still visible today, in the relations that Guadeloupians and Martinicans entertain with the white élites of the islands. Indeed, among the society of Martinique, and likewise in the one of Guadalupe, white élites still exist: they are the heirs of the colonizers and land owners (thus slavery maîtres) of the ancient times, and they still play a political and, most importantly, economic role on the island. The society of Martinique is, therefore, composed by the heirs of enslaved deported Africans as much as it comprehends the heirs of the enslavers, and the relationship between these two communities are much different than the one on Guadeloupe, where the *béké* community is much less powerful.

This information about the *béké* of Martinique makes us understand in a deeper way how powerfully the Martinicans’ identity has been shaped by the comparison with the White, and, at the same time, how France has always been very much present in their imaginaries. Now: it is important to point out that enslaved people’s heirs are as much French as the enslavers’ heirs, also because all of the France dominated territories apply the French school system, which conveys French-developed knowledge, ideas and imaginary, and does not conform to the context of the island. But what is the Martinican’s experience when they finally go to the Metropole? During another of my conversations, this time with the already-mentioned historian, a Martinican woman who moved to France to study when only 18, this practice of moving to France to carry out higher level studies is very common in the Overseas

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52 *Hexagone* is one way to name France, recalling its hexagonal shape.
53 *Béké* is indeed the French-Creole term that defines the white community descending from the French enslavers.
55 This practice of moving to France to carry out higher level studies is very common in the Overseas
abroad for many years, she shared with me her experience in the *hexagone*, and the one of her friends. She explained how the people of Martinique do not realize how culturally and physically non-French they are, until they visit the mainland and face a brutal discrimination. Frantz Fanon explained this phenomenon with great ability in *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*:

“Aux Antilles, le jeune Noir, qui à l’école ne cesse de répéter « nos pères, les Gaulois », s’identifie à l’explorateur, au civilisateur, au Blanc qui apporte la vérité aux sauvages, une vérité toute blanche. Il y a identification, c’est-à-dire que le jeune Noir adopte subjectivement une attitude de Blanc. […] Peu à peu, on voit se former et cristalliser chez le jeune Antillais une attitude, une habitude de penser et de voir, qui sont essentiellement blanches. Quand, à l’école, il lui arrive de lire des histoires de sauvages, dans des ouvrages blancs, il pense toujours aux Sénégalais. Etant écolier, nous avons pu discuter pendant des heures entières sur les prétendues coutumes des sauvages sénégalais. Il y avait dans nos propos une inconscience pour le moins paradoxale. Mais c’est que l’Antillais ne se pense pas Noir ; il se pense Antillais. Le nègre vit en Afrique. Subjectivement, intellectuellement, l’Antillais se comporte comme un Blanc. Or, c’est un nègre. Cela, il s’en apercevra une fois en Europe, et quand on parlera de nègres il saura qu’il s’agit de lui aussi bien que du Sénégalais. Sur ce point, que pouvons-nous conclure ? […] Le Noir, dans la mesure où il reste chez lui, réalise à peu de choses près le destin du petit Blanc. Mais qu’il aille en Europe, il aura à repenser son sort. Car le nègre en France, dans son pays, se sentira différent des autres. On a vite dit : le nègre s’inférieurise. La vérité est qu’on l’inférieurise. Le jeune Antillais est un Français appelé à tout instant à vivre avec des compatriotes blancs. Or la famille antillaise n’entretient pratiquement

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56 *Petite Blanc* is the term used to define the white people that didn’t own plantations, that can be considered *poor white people*, so belonging to a different social group then the White plantation owners.
aucun rapport avec la structure nationale, c’est-à-dire française, européenne. L’Antillais doit alors choisir entre sa famille et la société européenne ; autrement dit, l’individu qui monte vers la société — la Blanche, la civilisée — tend à rejeter la famille — la Noire, la sauvage — sur le plan de l’imaginaire […]”57 (F. Fanon 1952, p.140-141)

This sentiment of rejection from the French White society creates confusion and disorientation in the identity of the person from Martinique, who is not White, nor properly French or European. We will see in the next paragraph how this sentiment co-exists with a different one, that developed later in the XX century and which is becoming stronger and stronger among Martinicans, as well as among the rest of the Caribbean community.

We want to conclude this paragraph by highlighting two last features of the Identité Martiniquaise inherited from slavery. In the previous subparagraph, we explained the psychological and behavioural effects that being enslaved caused upon the people of Martinique. As Casimir explains, inside the plantation there is a hierarchy of control, and an enslaved person can become the direct executor of the enslavers’ orders or, worse yet, the one that makes sure that the norms of the enslavers are followed by his fellow

57 “In the Antilles, the Black young boy, who, when in school, repeats constantly “our fathers, the Gauls”, identifies himself with the explorer, with the civilizer, with the White man who brings truth to the savages, a truth that is entirely white. There is an identification, meaning that the Black youth subjectively adopts the behavior of the White man. […] Slowly, we will see the formation and crystallization among the youth from the Antilles of an attitude, a habitus to think and to see that are essentially white. In school, when it is time to read histories about the savages reported in white-issued books, they think about the Senegalese. As students, we used to discuss for hours about the costumes of the savages of Senegal. At the basis of our conceptions there was a paradoxical unconsciousness. That’s because the person form the Antilles does not think Black; he thinks Caribbean. The negro lives in Africa. Subjectively, intellectually the person from the Antilles behaves like a White. Yet, he is a negro. He will realize this once in Europe, and when it will be talked about the negroes, he will know that this term refers to him as much as to the Senegalese. What can we therefore conclude on this point? […] The Black, as long as he stays in his home, realizes the things near to the destiny of the petite Blanc. But when he goes to Europe, he will have to re-think his fate. Because the negro in France, in his own country, will feel different from the others. We said earlier: the negro places himself into an inferior position. The truth is that he is put in an inferior position. The youth form the Antilles has, therefore, to choose between his family and the European society; said differently, the person that enters society - the White, the civilized one - tends to reject his family - the Black, savage one - on the level of the imaginary […]” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
enslaved people. Furthermore, the freedman can become himself the owner of a plantation, and purchase enslaved people to work for him. Above-mentioned professor Sainton describes the socio-psychological consequences of this phenomenon: “[…] l’auto-victimisation du nègre a ceci de particulier qu’elle se vit pas seulement par rapport au bourreau présumé, en occurrence le blanc, mais également inclut le congénère nègre, perçu lui aussi comme un bourreau éventuel, en une sorte de reconduction tragique de l’expérience vécu de la Traite et de la structure hiérarchique de l’habitation esclavagiste, d’où une relation sociale marquée par la défiance. Ainsi se crée au plan de l’imaginaire collectif des descendants d’esclaves, une condition nègre, représentation mentale, puisant sa justification dans la réalité de la structuration socio-raciale58" (Sainton in A. Charles-Nicolas and B. Bowser, 2018, p.219). This lack of trust for one another reproduces, on the one hand, the racial hierarchical relations that construct the imaginary of the Identité Martiniquaise, that we defined as colourism, and, on the other, a sentiment that has been transposed also in gender relations. Gender relations are also connected to family and the family home. Sainton defines the family home, the habitation, as the first space where social and cultural relations are built (Sainton in A. Charles-Nicolas and B. Bowser, 2018, p.199-222). As professor Charles-Nicolas explains: “Chez les personnes mises en esclavage, l’état d’esclave modifie l’affectivité. Et selon le mode de vie imposé sur telle ou telle Habitation (interdiction de marriages d’esclaves par example…) certaines attitudes se trouvent plus ou moins marquées […] De surcroît, pour expliquer une absence de stabilité conjugale et de fiabilité paternelle […], on a incriminé la rôle d’étalon attribué à l’homme sur l’Habitation59” (A. Charles-Nicolas in A. Charles-Nicolas and B. Bowser, 2018, p.51). This

58 “[…] the auto-victimization of the negro has the peculiarity that he does not only live by the relation with the alleged executioner, occasionally the white, but equally by his black congéners, that can eventually be perceived as an executioner as well, in a tragic reiteration of the experience of the Trade and of the hierarchic structure of the slavery homing, from which stems the social relation that is marked by mistrust. Therefore, in the collective imaginary of the heirs of the enslaved people, a condition nègre has been created, which is the mental representation that takes its justification in the socio-racial structuration” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

59 “Among the enslaved people, the statute of slave modified their affectivity. And because of the life-style imposed on this or that Home (e.g. the interdiction of marriages between slaves), certain attitudes can still be found in a more or less pronounced manner […] Moreover, to explain the absence of conjugal stability and paternal reliability […], what has been incriminated is the role of stallion given to the man of the Home” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
lack of basic family structure can be considered to be one more element that stands at the basis of the concept of fragmentation introduced in the subparagraph above: as already said at the beginning of the chapter, identity is strongly connected to the network of the person, and family is the basic component of such network (Preston P., 1997). Without it, the formation of identity is strongly compromised. Indeed, this broken structure of the family Home, and the embodiment of gender mistrust among the current society of Martinique and, more widely, of the Caribbeans, will be examined in the last chapter of the elaborate. Nevertheless, it was important to include them here, in order to place them within the historical and social framework from which they originated.

1.4 – Martinique: a Caribbean island

During one of my conversations on the island, one important answer that was given to the question “How would you define the Martinican identity?”, was that the pathway of definition evolved during time. As we explained earlier, the critical questioning of such identity begun with Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon. Therefore, the first stage of identity definition consisted in the above described notion of Négritude. The critique to the consequences of slavery upon identity-building, that we just explained, is a constant norm with which each Martinican has to confront him/herself daily, it is a very deep feature and is a pivotal point that is still critiqued today. Even though it does not constitute a phase of the Martinican identity-building process, it will serve now for explaining the phases that followed the one of Négritude. Indeed, as my interlocutors explained, Négritude was followed by Edouard Glissant’s Antillanité and the present current of thought of Creolité.

As De Souza and Murdoch explain in the introduction to the 4th Volume of the Journal of Caribbean Literatures dedicated to Migrations & Métissage (published in the Fall of 2006), Antillanité “[...] first broached by Edouard Glissant in Le discours antillais in 1981, takes a geopolitical as well as a discursive approach to contesting the ongoing pattern of island dependence and metropolitan domination engendered in the French Caribbean by the practice of overseas departmentalism. By taking cognizance of the
“multi-relation” that undergirds the region, Glissant writes, a new creative and cultural context for Caribbean identity can be effectively forged. Créolité, on the other hand, was first elaborated in the *Éloge de la créolité* by Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphael Confiant in 1989 […] As an artistic framework that draws on linguistic, cultural, and historical patterns of pluralism within the region to express the totality of the Caribbean experience, Créolité […] is essentially a strategic defence of the ideal of diversity in a world threatened by the disappearance of cultural difference […]” (De Souza P., Murdoch H.A. 2006, p. vii).

Therefore, these new paradigms place Martinicans in the Caribbean, and highlight the historical resilience capacity that its people, as the peoples of the neighbouring islands, demonstrated through colonialism and slavery, to develop their own culture, language, costumes and, overall, forms of identification. At the same time, though, they do not forget the complex origins of these peoples, and accentuate their multicultural and multiracial origins. In the already cited short manifesto *Éloge de la Creolité*, contemporary authors Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant define Creolité as “le ciment de notre culture […] l’agrégat interactionnel ou transactionnelle, des éléments culturels caraïbes, européens, africains, asiatiques, et levantins, que le joug de l’Histoire a réunis sur le même sol” (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.48). In this way, the authors give to the concept of Creolité a wider meaning, opening up the Caribbean area to the rest of the world. As De Souza and Murdoch write: “creolization must be understood […] as a critical principle of local geopolitics in which particular patterns of pluralism are transformed through social and historical forces into the constantly shifting strategies of the creole” (De Souza P., Murdoch H.A. 2006, p. viii). This statement, therefore, condensates the three dimensions of Creolité: its intrinsic plurality, its being a paradigm of endurance and resilience, and its belonging to the Caribbean region.

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60 Italics in the original.
61 “The cement of our culture […] the interactional or transactional aggregate, of the cultural elements of the Caribbeans, of Europe, of Africa, of Asia and of the Near East, the yoke of History reunites on the same ground” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
This paragraph aims at explaining how Creolité formed throughout time, and, by analysing such development, at understanding why it is such a distinctive character of the present day Martinican identity. Before we proceed, though, one more clarification is necessary: we will often mention créole (or better, French créole) as the language spoken in Martinique. As we will see, this language is a form of hybridity between XVII-XVIII century French and several African dialects, and it is considered, by many authors, a preponderant feature of the Martinican identity. The notion of Creolité, nevertheless, was elaborated much later than the formation of the créole language. As we will see in the following lines, the statute and the acceptance and use of the créole language changed throughout time, and the paradigm of Creolité implies an acceptance of such language, that is progressively being codified and accepted among the population of Martinique.

1.4.1 – The “genealogical” origins of Creolité

In the introduction to his book *Tradition orale et imaginaire créole*, anthropologists Relouzat defines the créole as “[…] celui, homme, animal ou plante, qui, dans le Nouveau Monde, est passé de l’état originel de nature (qui pouvait être le produit d’une autre culture) à celui de culture dans son nouvel environnement, et ce par l’acclimatation, mais aussi par l’industrie et l’intelligence qui ont su discerner, utiliser et développer ses aptitudes naturelles au changement et à l’adaptation”62 (Relouzat R. 1998, p.15-16). From such a definition of créole, we understand that this notion is strictly connected to the adaptation of the new context of the Caribbean. In line with this definition, in *Éloge de la Creolité*, Bernabé et al. highlight how the process of creolization pertains to the abrupt contact among many different peoples, forced to co-habit the same land. For this reason, these populations had to “[…] inventer des nouveaux schèmes culturels permettent d’établir une

62 “[…] the one, man, animal or plant, that, once in the New World, transitioned from the original status of nature (that could have been the product of a different culture) to the one that shows the culture of its new environment, deriving from acclimation, but also from its industriousness and cleverness, and that was able to select, use and develop its natural skills for change and adaptation” (Relouzat R. 1998, p.15-16) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
relative cohabitation entre elles\textsuperscript{63}\textsuperscript{64} (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.58). So being créole is adapting to new environmental and living conditions, as well as to sharing this novelty with people coming from different places and with a different cultural background. Furthermore, what we sustain here is that créole, in its linguistic form as much as in its cultural one, is not only a form of adaptation but, seen the context of displacement and slavery described above, is a form of resistance. In the book \textit{Domination and the Arts of Resistance}, author James C. Scott explains that within structures of domination, the ones that are subjected to it still have the possibility to socialize and entertain personal relations among them, out of the control of the dominant master. It is in these spaces that forms of resistance can be born, in various forms (Scott J.C. 2006, p.9-10).

For the specific case of the Caribbean, Jean Casimir introduces the context that allowed the development of the créole by describing it as “A new world developed parallel to that of the colonial society. It may be regarded as a counter-plantation system. Its emergence was not painless. It was the result, both necessary and unexpected, of colonialism. The seeds of new and specific nationalities and cultures took root there. Relationships and particularities developed that were capable of defying the policies of the metropolis, wherever the conditions for doing so were present” (Casimir J. 1992, p.22). What it is born, therefore, are new forms of hybridity. As already stated in different forms, hybridity – both cultural and genealogical – is a preponderant feature of Creolité and, in the context of the Caribbean, it results from cultural crossings and ethnic intersections brought about by colonialism (De Souza P., Murdoch H. A. 2006).

Genealogical hybridity can be recognized in the concept of Métissage, which signifies, in general terms, the crossing of people belonging to different “races\textsuperscript{65}”. More precisely, the phenomenon of métissage begun in the plantations and it was the result of sexual intercourse between the maître (usually the man) and the enslaved women. One of

\textsuperscript{63} Italics in the original.

\textsuperscript{64} “[…] invent new cultural schemes that allowed to establish a relative form of cohabitation” (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.58) (translation by Laura Truffarelli)

\textsuperscript{65} The term race to define human categorization is far from being appreciated by the author of this essay, as it is quite antique and implies an organization of humanity that adopts very generic parameters. Nevertheless, it is impossible to treat the thematic of Métissage and of the Martinican identity without using a term that represents a notion that is still very strong today.
my interlocutors on the island said “what we know for sure in Martinique, is that one of our ancestors was black, and one of our ancestors was white”. What it is interesting is that métissage can be analysed in terms of subversion. As De Souza and Mardoch point out, in a time – the XIX century – when scientific racism was developing and influencing people’s understating of the Other, métissage denied “the dominant notions of ethnic and cultural separation” (De Souza P., Murdoch H. A. 2006, p. viii-ix). They continue “[…] the colonial network of hierarchical oppositions is thus made to confront the return of its own repressed Other; the unnameable sterile monster of the infertile hybrid now marks the site of strategic multiplicity, engendering a third term…” (De Souza P., Murdoch H. A. 2006, p. ix). The children born from such crossings had a different statute out of the rest of the enslaved people, because they were more similar to the maître. The social position of these new group of people varied according to time and place, but they progressively acquired more and more recognition, and were those who were the first to become free from the subjugation of slavery (Casimir J., 1992).

Nevertheless, subversion to the slavery system, as well as to the colonial power, took many other forms, which, as pointed out before, were born thanks to the individuals that were subjugated to the dominant power, and the personal relations that they were able to build. As Gilbert Pago summarizes in his article (part of the collective book L’escalvage: quel impact sur la psychologie des populations?), resistance could take the violent form of open rebellions (such as the ones Carbet and Ans Spoutourne in 1822 and 1831), fires to the crops or plantation buildings, or marronage66. Resistance could also take less violent forms, as in the case of the associations serviles. These consisted of groups of enslaved and freed people, that would form in the occasion of religious and non-religious celebrations, that allowed for the enslaved and non-enslaved to be next to each other. These organizations presented a hierarchy of few chosen ones that managed them and

66 Marronage refers to the fled from the plantation of an enslaved person, that runs away and tries to build a new life for him/ herself as a free individual. As Glissant points out, the phenomenon of marronage has not been as widespread as it is imagined to be, and on Martinique was limited as the territory is insular, therefore restricted. For this reason, we will not give much importance to this phenomenon (Glissant E. 1997, p.116).
took decisions, their encounters where secret and this feature increased the fear that the maîtres started to feel about them over time (Pago G. in Charles-Nicolas A. and Bowser B. 2018, p.430-441). Beyond the planning of possible conspiracies that these groups may have allowed, their actual relevance is highlighted by James Scott, who explains that such entities were able to revert the dominant ideologies on an imaginary level, and allowed the enslaved and non-enslaved to speak freely of the white colonizer, taking him down from its dominant place. They represented the seeds of the free development of an ideology, that would belong to the people of the Caribbean entirely. It is no surprise, therefore, how sometimes this groups became political advocate entities after slavery became illegal (Pago G. in Charles-Nicolas A. and Bowser B. 2018, p.441).

There is one last, very important dimension of resistance that we should discuss. Alongside métissage, it is the one that characterizes the Martinican identity the most, and it was born as a form of adaptation and, probably, resistance itself. We are talking about the créole language. Barbadian author Kamau Brathwaite calls syignifyin’ a form of dual discourse, that produces numerous and contradictory meanings, that can only be understood by the discursive community to which they belong (Gazzoni A. 2016, p.71). In explaining Brathwaite’s concept, Gazzoni links it to the daily resistance practices that the enslaved black had to develop in order to clandestinely communicate behind the maîtres’ backs (Gazzoni A. 2016, p.71). This vision is supported also by Guadeloupian linguist Dany Bebel-Gisler, that in her book La Langue Crèole Force Jugulée, describes such a language as impossible to classify according to the regular schemes of linguistics, just like métissage. It is, indeed, a mixture of so many languages coming from many different linguistic backgrounds, that it is impossible to define if it is classifiable as descending from the Indo-European group, the African group or something different (Bebel-Gisler D., 1976). Going beyond the experience of slavery and colonialism, and diving into the post-colonial time, Bebel-Gisler’s argument is that the problem of the créole language is not its classification, but its political significance within the French system. Indeed, Edouard Glissant (who we will analyse better in the next sub-paragraph) gives an eminent role to language and discourse, and he attributes to the créole language the capacity to build
counter-discourses against the dominant one – the French one, in the case of Martinique. This is because créole represents a multiplicity of discourses, against the monolithic one of France. Celia M. Britton, analysing Glissant’s vision of the creole language, reports the temporal stages that the author attributed to the development of créole. First and foremost, it is born from a sense of lack – lack of a form of communication among the Martinicans. Its birth derives, therefore, from the will to develop a language to express the world vision of Martinicans. The second stage sees the development of language as a form of counter-poetic to the French cultural dominance, a sort of guerrilla. The third and last stage changes the sense of language as a form of subversion and identity, and becomes a more abstract call for the recognition of the multiplicity and ambiguity of discourses, that do not characterise any identity, but still oppose to the idea of a monolithic discourse\textsuperscript{67}. In this final stage, the trap of language as a counter-discourse is highlighted: indeed, proposing a language and the culture it conveys in opposition to the dominant one can end up by defining such language and culture as monolithic as well, and become a stigma for the people that practice it that does not foresee plurality and change. For this reason, in this third phase Glissant abandons the linkage between language and identity, in order to avoid this risk and to allow counter-discourses to be plural and not fixed.

Despite this last stage of Glissant’s thought, that, as we will see, will be transformed by the thinkers that came after him, it is important to end this discussion by stating that créole has played a fundamental role in resisting slavery and colonial domination, it is a strong characteristic of the Martinican identity today, and it represents, as we will see below, the starting discourse from which Martinicans put themselves in relation to the rest of the world.

\textsuperscript{67} This third stage embraced by Glissant may seem quite difficult to grasp. Simplifying the issue, we can point out that Glissant’s work aims to define the identity of the Caribbean – and of Martinique – in the context of growing globalization (before the term became common, but while the world was becoming more and more connected). For this reason, what Glissant means by multiplicity and ambiguity is that the dominant discourse is not opposed by a second, unique counter discourse, but that the counter-discourses are many, from many parts of the world and that give voice to many different ideologies and identities, and does not stem only from the Caribbean (Glissant E., 1997).
1.4.2 – Glissant and the *Antillanité*

In introducing this last paragraph of the first chapter, we stated that the self-definition of Martinican identity underwent three phases, which begun with an identification with Aimé Césaire’s notion of Négritude, and continued with Edouard Glissant’s *Antillanité*. This second concept is, indeed, the search for an identity that is not towards a different continent, Africa, but that is fully rooted on the Caribbean territory. As Edouard Glissant himself writes in the introduction to the massive volume *Le Discours Antillais*, “L’idée de l’unité antillaise est une reconquête culturelle. Elle nous réinstate dans la vérité de notre être, elle milite pour notre émancipation” (Glissant E. 1997, p.26). Because of its extensiveness and complexity of themes, the book *Discours Antillais*, published in 1981 as a revision of the author’s doctoral thesis, is treated here as the main opera elaborated by Glissant about the Martinican identity. It is nevertheless fundamental to point out that all of the author’s works embrace such concept in a different form, and Britton’s reconstruction of Glissant’s poetic will support our search for the most preponderant elements that characterize the identity of the people of Martinique.

First of all, Glissant’s definition of the complex traits of the identity of Martinique is inscribed within the relation with the Other. In Glissant, therefore, we can find a strong influence from Fanon’s analyses of the psychological developments of the people of the Caribbean, compared to the White and to the Western world. This relation pertains to the struggle to find a self-definition that belongs entirely to the Caribbean, and the biggest threat to this is the historical fragmentation of the archipelago, inheritance of the Colonial time (Glissant E. 1997, p.729). As Britton points out, Glissant’s ideology can be fully

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68 “The idea of a Caribbean unity is a cultural recapture. It re-locates us in the truth of our being, it fights for our emancipation” (Glissant E. 1997, p.26) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

69 “Le Discours Antillais is in some ways his most ambitious achievement [...] in its determination to grasp the whole of the complex, multiply interrelated and overdetermined cultural reality of Martinique in its relation to France and to the rest of the Caribbean. Bringing together linguistic, psychological, literary, economic, and historical analysis, it is also the most politically combative of his theoretical works: the politics of cultural struggles against alienating occultation of social reality that départementalisation has imposed on the Martinicans necessitate not only programs of action but thorough analysis” (Britton C. 1999, p.8-9).
included within the post-colonial thought: “all of his essays are informed by a view of postcolonial reality that is both a political analysis of colonialism and a phenomenological exploration of the concept of the Other” (Britton C. 1999, p.8). In Glissant the forms of resistance that we described above become more ideologically grounded, and it becomes a search for an intellectual independence (Bonfiglio F. 2014, p.21), a full racial and cultural awareness (Corzani J. 1970, p.27) connected to the Caribbean territory. Glissant defines it la pensée archipelique, where the archipelago becomes the land of belonging and a starting point for the relation with the other at the same time, opposing the continental ideology, which represents the dominant system (Glissant E. in Bonfiglio F., 2014).

At the centre of Glissant’s definition of Antillanité there is the concept of Détour (deviation). This originates from the sense of displacement that people experience when they inhabit a place, without feeling it their home, and without having an historical connection with the territory. In Glissant’s novels and essays, the detour is a form of madness developed from this sense of “unhomeliness”, a way to mentally escape this feeling. As Glissant writes, the solution to the Détour is the Retour: “[…] non pas retour su rêve d’origine […] mais retour au point d’intrication, dont on s’était détourné par force…”70 (Glissant A. 1997, p.56-57). The Détour becomes, therefore, a mean to find one’s own identity, by giving up the territorial origins (differently from what Négritude promoted), and accepting the violent past. In these terms, Glissant criticizes the imposition of History, that for too long has been accepted in its “official” (Western) version in an a-critical manner, consequence of the colonization. As a result, there is a morbid disjunction between the Martinican social setting and History, provoking ambiguous outcomes on the identity of the individual. Attributing a plurality of voices to history is, therefore, the way to contrast this identitarian effects, giving the people of Martinique the chance to build their own history (Glissant E. 1997, p.274-176). This kind of opposition exists not only on the historical plan, but also on the cultural one. Glissant is, indeed, quite determined in denouncing the cultural de-appropriation carried out by the French government upon the

70 “[…] not a return to the dream of the origins […] but a return to the point of intersection, where we have been deviated by force…” (Glissant A. 1997, p.56-57) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
people of Martinique. The author declares this tendency as a political manoeuvre, to keep control over the island (Glissant E. 1997, p.289-290). This is another pin point on which the Caribbean overseas department of French should begin to redefine their own culture and identity.

Towards the end of *Le Discours Antillais*, Glissant lists, in the form of a poem the *results* of the quest of the identity of Martinique (Glissant E. 1997, p.752-754). We propose such summary here:

“La traite comme arrachement à la matrice
(la mère inaccessible)

L’esclavage comme combat sans témoin
(le mot chuchoté dans les cases)

La perte de la mémoire collective
(le vertige du temps)

L’évidence de l’autre
(la transparence de l’universel)

La piège folklorique
(le non-project intellectuel)

La piège de l’état civil
(la hantise du nom)

La piège linguistique
(la dominance)
La non-responsabilité technique
   (l’outil, étrange)

L’immédiateté
(le retentissement directs des pressions)

La suspension politique
(la peur du rapport au monde)

La consommation passive
(l’import exacerbé)

La néantisation
(ni faire ni créer)

Le système de la change
(la Martinique, terre de passage)

La ruse du détour
(la sagesse populaire)

La survie par la subsistance
(la vie à côté des imites)

L’ouverture multilingue
(au bout de la diglossie)

L’ouverture caraïbe
(l’orée de l’espace-temps)
Le passé reconnu
(les manques dépassés)

La nation qui lancine
(la résolution autonome des conflits de classes)

L’oral - l’écrit
(le déblocage des inhibitions)

Un peuple qui s’exprime
(le pays qui s’assemble)

Un peuple politique
(le pays qui agit)\textsuperscript{71}

As we can read, most of the elements here presented (about history, language and forms of expression, power relations) have been covered in various forms. The only element we left out is the power struggle inscribed into class and production relations, which abstracts from the purposes of this elaborate. The poem ends with a political call to action of the people of Martinique, for their self-definition against the already described forms of historical and cultural power exercised by the French state. As we will see in the

\textsuperscript{71} “The trade as the rip at the origin / (the inaccessible mother) / Slavery as the battle without witness / (the whispered words in the houses) / The loss of the collective memory / (the vertigo of time) / The evidence of the other / (the transparency of the universal) / The folkloric trap / (the intellectual non-project) / The trap of the civic statute / (the infestation of the name) / The linguistic trap / (the dominance) / The non-responsibility technique / (the useful, strange) / The immediacy / (the direct repercussion of pressures) / The political suspension / (the fear of the relation with the world) / The passive consume / (exacerbated importation) / The notification / (not doing nor making) / The system of change / (Martinique, land of passage) / The ruse of detour / (the popular wisdom) / The survival for subsistence / (the way next to the limits) / The multilingual opening / (at the end of diglossia) / The Caribbean opening / (the space-time pinnacle) / The recognized past / (the overcome shortages) / The nation that torments / (the autonomous resolution of class conflicts) / The oral - the written / (the unblock of inhibitions) / A people that expresses itself / (the country that pieces together) / A political people / (the country that takes action)” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
conclusions to the chapter, this political call transformed over time, and the post-colonial discourse is still quite present on the island.

1.4.3 – Éloge de la Creolité

Éloge de la Creolité, published in 1989 by three contemporary Martinican authors (Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphael Confiant), introduces this new way of defining the identity of the people of Martinique, and more largely of the Caribbean, making one step ahead the definition already given by Glissant. Indeed, after a brief critique to the work of Césaire, when discussing the work of Glissant, the authors of the Creolité manifesto recognise the fundamental contribution that the author gave to the exploration of the Caribbean self and its opposition to the external paradigms of definition. Nevertheless, they point out that the operation made by Glissant is to locate the Martinican identity in the Caribbean, therefore in the Americas. What the authors of the essay aim to do is to make the concept of Creolité valid worldwide, generalising it to all those populations that were under the domination of a foreign power, and that were defined by a discourse that was produced externally, so that they had to develop their own culture and their own identity in order to define themselves (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.38-46, p.60).

We have already defined Creolité as the outcome of a process of culture and identity creation under specific conditions, and deriving from the merge of different ethnicities, languages, and backgrounds. What the authors of Éloge de la Creolité add is that the notion entails a double process:

“- d’adaptation des Européens, des Africains et des Asianques au Nouveau Monde;
- de confrontation culturelle entre ces peuples au sein d’un même espace, aboutissant à la création d’une culture syncrétique dite créole”72 (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.60).

72 “- of adaptation of the Europeans, Africans and Asians to the New World;
- of cultural confrontation among these peoples within the same space, leading to the creation of a syncretic culture called créole” (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.60) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
In their manifesto, Bernabé et al. believe that language is the most fertile territory to accept and express Creolité, and art and literature should accept the créole language and become its means of expression. More precisely, the objectives of Bernabé et al.’s manifesto can be summarized as follows:

- In line with Glissant’s vision, to denounce the west-produced historical discourses, and to accept and give relevance to the local histories of each territory, against what the authors define *fausse mémoire*;73
- Be able to use the créole language to name the places of their territory, in order to feel it as their home;
- Develop créole art and literature, which accept and adopt the créole vision of the world, welcoming popular beliefs, fantastic realism and rituals into their narrative;
- Start putting aside the official colonizing language (e.g. French in the case of Martinique), and give more importance to the créole language and the world vision it conveys (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.72-74, p.80-88, p.102).

These objectives, of course, are valid for all the creolized people of the planet. Indeed, as the authors of the manifesto affirm, the creoles of the Caribbean show a double solidarity: a geopolitical one (analogue to Antillanité), towards all the island of the Antilles, despite all the cultural differences that exist; and a creole one, towards all the peoples of Africa, Mauritius, Asia and Polynesia, that present affinities with them, a shared history (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.62).

In line with Glissant’s belief in multiplicity and ambiguity, the authors of the manifesto of Creolité underline the importance of accepting the complexity of the créole identity, going beyond the usual racial categorization. At the end of the manifesto, Bernabé et al. criticise the historical tendency of the dominated people to want to be universal and like the dominant groups. The authors underline that Diversity survived in small people, in small languages, in small cultures, despite the progressive standardization of the Western discourses. They reckon that modernity – which can

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73 “false memory” (translation by Laura Truffarelli)
nowadays be identified as globalization (Gazzoni A., 2016) – will progressively lead the creolization of humanity in its entirety, deriving from the tendency of cultures to fuse and diffuse as subcultures, and to generate new cultural aggregates (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.106-116).

We want to end this chapter with the same words with which Bernabé et al. end Éloge de la Creolité:


(Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.116).

Conclusions to Chapter One

In this first chapter, we reconstructed the identity-building process that the people of Martinique, forewent since the critique to the Marxist theory gave birth to structuralism and, most importantly, post-structuralism, giving way for Post-colonial thought to be born.

We saw the initial tendency of the people of Martinique to identify themselves as Black, and to reconnect to their mother land of Africa. We analysed what it meant for them to be enslaved, colonized and determined by White discourse, which progressively became the Western discourse. We analysed Glissant’s complex thought, from which emerged also a strong critique to the French system, that is still quite strong nowadays. Indeed, the scholastic system of France does not allow much space for teachers to dedicate to local history and culture, and the French government does not recognize any other language but the French of Paris as official ones. Even though this work does not aim to critique the French administration system, these themes recurred in each one of the

74 Italics in the original.
75 “[Creolité] leads back to the nature of the world, out the Identical and of the One, and [...] it opposes to Universality, the opportunity of a diffracted yet reconstructed world, the conscientious harmonization of the preserved diversities: the DIVERSALITY” (Bernabé J., Chamoiseau P., Confiant R. 1999, p.116) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
conversations I had on the island, which convinced me to look back at authors such as Fanon, Césaire and Glissant, whose narrative belongs to the past, but whose critiques are still very present among the people of Martinique. This means that the people of Martinique recognize a double identity: on the one side, which we can call the “official” one, they feel French; yet, on the other, the parallel culture that inevitably developed throughout time is considered the local identity of Martinique, and it is thanks to the authors that we have been describing, that this aspect is more and more explored and appreciated nowadays.

To end our reconstruction, we saw how the people of Martinique progressively reconquered their territory and determined their own identity, creating a model that can be valid for those who shared their history, as well as for the new upcoming subaltern cultures that are progressively developing in the globalized world. As Gazzoni states in the opening of his book about the Caribbean Thought: “This [current of] though, born where the elements of the majority of the world bumped into each other, met each other, mixed with each other, extinguished and transformed in a limited and fragmented space, a pedagogy was born [...] So, by thinking and creating and learning, the people of the Caribbean became one with the archipelago that did not belong to their ancestors, and at the same time they experienced geography, history and memory in a way to find themselves part of a world already on the way of globalization, where it was not only possible but also necessary to think themselves in relation with the movements of the world itself”\(^\text{(Gazzoni A. 2016, p.10).}\)

To conclude, it is important to bear in mind that identity-building is a constantly on-going process: as one of my interlocutors said during our conversation, the way she describes her identity is very different from the way the new Martinican generation describe theirs. Influences from the Black movements in the United States, and from the

\(^{76}\) Translated from Italian by Laura Truffarelli: “Questo pensiero, nato dove elementi da gran parte del pianeta si sono urtati, incontrati, mischiati, estinti e trasformati entro uno spazio ristretto e frammentato, si è formato come una pedagogia [...] Così pensando e creando e imparando, i caraibici sono diventati tutt’uno con l’arcipelago che non era dei loro antenati, e allo stesso tempo hanno fatto esperienza di geografia, storia e memoria in modo tale da ritrovarsi parte di un mondo già in via di globalizzazione, dove era non solo possibile ma necessario pensarsi in relazione con i movimenti stessi del mondo” (Gazzoni A. 2016, p.10).
culture of the US and Canada, are becoming stronger and stronger, a pole of attraction, as it emerged during another one of my conversations. The people of Martinique cannot foresee to what this change may lead, but we may be able to see what its relation may be with the European Union.
2 Chapter 2 – *Identité Martiniquaise* and the European Union

“Le ciel fuligineux du Post-au-Noir, son atmosphère pesante ne sont pas seulement le signe manifeste de la ligne équatoriale. Ils résument le climat sous lequel deux mondes se sont affrontés. Ces morne élément qui les sépare, cette bonasse où les forces malfaisantes semblent seulement se réparer, sont la dernière barrière mystique entre ce qui constituait, hier, encore, deux planètes opposées par des conditions si différentes que les premiers témoins ne purent croire qu’elles fussent également humaine”  

*from Tristes Tropiques, by Claude Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p.78-79*

As its title implies, the objective of this work is to put in relation the identity of the people of Martinique with the one of European Union citizenship. Indeed, and as mentioned several times, Martinicans are EU citizens, but their status is quite peculiar: territorially speaking, they belong to a completely different region of the planet, their language and their culture is quite distant from the European ones, and their administrative statute – determined mainly by article 73 of the French constitution, which has been written taking into account EU legislative provisions on the matter  

77 “The charcoal skies and louring atmosphere of the doldrums summarize the state of mind in which the Old World first came upon the new one. This lugubrious frontier-area, this lull before the storm in which the forces of evil alone seem to flourish, is the last barrier between what were once quite recently two planets so different from one another that our first explorers could not believe that they were inhabited by members of the same race” (translation by John Russel, on readingtheperiphery.org).

78 The relations and statute of the ultra-peripheral territories of the EU is currently legislated by the Council Decision 2013/755/EU of November 25th 2013 on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Union (‘Overseas Association Decision’).
same as the one of other EU territories. Then, what is the importance of finding an identitarian relation between Martinique and the EU?

On the one side, Martinique’s view of Europe is still strongly connected to colonialism: Europeans equal the colonizers. We extensively described above the implications that being colonized brings upon a society, and we can easily understand the ambivalent feeling that can exist towards the people that caused such suffering for a very long time. Nevertheless, Martinicans vote for Euro-parliamentarians like the rest of the EU citizens, thus having the political power to influence EU policies. These policies can, consequently, affect their everyday life both positively and negatively. For this reason, enhancing the identification process that Martinicans invest towards the EU can have many constructing outcomes on their livelihoods.

On the other side, the EU motto is “united in diversity”. Indeed, the regional organization aims to bind different countries, therefore different peoples, within its objectives and purposes (it being a supra-regional institution). This aim is rather interesting for our analysis, as it resonates, somehow, the objectives declared by the theorists of Creolité. In his introduction to the collection Pensiero Caraibico, author Gazzoni explains why Europeans – and in particular Mediterraneans (being this collection one of the few produced in Italian language concerning such topic) should take into consideration literary and theoretical productions of this far area of the world. His argument is, indeed, that the voices of the Caribbeans promote a vision that is alternative to the Euro-centric one, and that is, in its genesis, pluralist (Gazzoni A. 2016, p.11-15). In this chapter, we describe the intrinsic identity of the European Union as being, indeed, pluralist, but, at the same time, we explain how Martinique remained, actually, quite left

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79 It is not in the objectives of this analysis to take into account the different administrative system that exists between the EU and Martinique, as our work only refers to discourses and processes of identity-building. Nevertheless, Martinique’s exclusion from the Schengen area regarding the free movement of goods will surface, due the influence it has on the vision of the institution that Martinicans elaborate. Furthermore, as emerged also during my conversations on the island, the validity of the Schengen pact regarding the free movement of people plays an important role in improving the vision that Martinicans cast on the EU.

80 See Borchardt K. D., 2010 “The EU is […] neither an international organisation in the usual sense nor an association of states, but rather an autonomous entity somewhere in between the two. In legal circles, the term ‘supranational organisation’ is now used”

81 “Caribbean thought” (English translation by Laura Truffarelli)
out of such plurality. As we will see, then, in the concluding chapter of this work, Gazzoni’s theory reveals to be precious for our argumentation that a better acknowledgement of ultra-peripheral citizens, such those of Martinique, would enrich and widen the true identity of the Union citizens, and the Union itself.

2.1 – Overview of the main identity features of European Union citizens

The publications and researches on the definition of the identity of the people of the European Union are numerous, and take into account many aspects. First off, defining an *EU identity* can concern two dimensions: the identity of the institution itself, or the sense of identification that EU citizens show towards the organization. Concerning the first dimension, the publications on the matter are growing in number due to the present-day pressures that the Union is experiencing, following 2008 global economic crisis and 2016 UK vote, that resulted in the initiation of the Brexit process. Furthermore, the emergence of extreme right anti-European movements and parties in each EU member state, and their progressive increase in power, represent a wake-up call for the supra-national institution. In this elaboration, on the other hand, we will focus on the second dimension of EU identity, the one concerning its citizens. Nevertheless, the historical identity-building process of the institution will still be taken into account, because of the implications that the regional integration policies have upon the identity of each individual citizen.

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82 See, for example, the recent publication by the ISPI research centre *EUROPE IN IDENTITY CRISIS*, published in December 2019.


84 Indeed, “The legal system and the law as an institution can be regarded as formal mechanisms for expressing and enforcing with sanctions a society’s values. The workings of the legal system and the interpretation of laws and regulations that take place at both the judicial level and at the level of enforcement can be seen as ways in which a society’s values are confirmed in practice” (European Commission, 2012, p.16)
2.1.1 – Models and factors to define identity of European Union citizens

In 2012, the European Commission elaborated a Policy Review that collected the findings of 20 research projects on the issue of identity among EU citizens, taken into consideration from several aspects\(^85\). The review was carried out with the aim to “look […] into this research for answers on how different processes of identification with the European Union and its integration project take shape and evolve over time, and on how to reinforce solidarity among Europeans” (European Commission, 2012). Some of the results of the analyses presented by the review are of great interest for our work, also thanks to their recent date of elaboration, which makes them quite up-to-date and pertinent with our study.

The first aspect that the review highlights, is that two models exist in order to analyse the process of identity-building among EU citizens: “(i) a ‘Culturalist’ model in which an orientation to Europe derives fundamentally from core, established European values and their expression in public practices, most notably in governance and the operation of the legal system. This viewpoint emphasizes the essentialism of Europe and posits mechanisms in which identification with Europe takes place ‘top down’ or in which identity is internalised and comes about through the exposure to influential discourses and symbols; (ii) a ‘Structuralist’ model in which an orientation to Europe derives fundamentally from association with other Europeans. Identity arises from interacting with others and coming to the realisation that one has much in common with them. Hence, the Structuralist model posits mechanisms in which identification with Europe takes place ‘from the bottom up’” (European Commission 2012, p. v). Therefore, while the Culturalist model highlights how the integration policies and discourses carried out by the European Union can influence its citizen’s identification with the institution, the Structuralist model takes into consideration the relations and communications that take place within the EU. In the case of Martinique, the second model is more difficult to be

\(^85\) Such aspects were: Multiple social identities and biographical identity; Transnational intimate relationships; Collective action; Standardization and regulation; Cultural production; Intercultural translation; Inclusion/Exclusion; Structural conditions and opportunity structures; The public sphere and state-regulated institutions
verified: indeed, the inhabitants of the island have contact mainly with French citizens, due to strong touristic affluences that invest the land all year round. An analysis based on the *Structuralist* model would have more sense if we were taking into consideration the process of integration with the Caribbean region, instead of the European one. Therefore, our analysis will focus on if and how the discourses produced by the EU are adopted and incorporated by Martinicans, and their influence on the Martinicans’ understanding of the institution.

As we saw at the beginning of the first chapter, the notion of identity entails many factors. In the case of EU citizens, many levels of identification come to the fore. More specifically, the point of view from which to take into consideration a person’s identification with the EU are various and much complex. In the above-mentioned review, the conclusions drawn is that the identity of an EU citizen does not consist of a stratification or overlapping of different aspects, but as a “mosaic of situation-specific identity rather than identities being nested one within another” (European Commission 2012, p. i). Indeed, the definition of an EU citizen’s identity has to take into account the following main facets: biographical, geographical, historical, cultural, of values. Indeed, as we saw in the first chapter, the biographical experience and the relations that a person entertains with its surroundings, strongly determines the individual process of identity building. The geographical parameter is of great interest: as all regional organizations, the EU’s origins are, apparently, connected with the objective of preserving the European region from the explosion of new wars, by binding its states through economic ties (Hansen P., Jonsson S., 2014). Nevertheless, the geographical nucleus of the European Union, and its sphere of influence, are much wider. Furthermore, its objectives progressively extended beyond economic integration, and the states that become part of the organization have to comply with a wider set of norms, that involve the respect of democracy, human rights and environmental obligations (Reid E., 2015). The historical aspect is also very important: even though each member state of the Union has its own historical background, a collective memory of Europe can be outlined since ancient times. In the present elaborate, this specific dimension is of great value, since the historical
phenomenon of colonization, which is very specific of several European Union states, has already been highlighted in relation to Martinique, and will be further explored in the paragraphs to come. Concerning the cultural facet, the European Union adopts the above-mentioned motto of “united in diversity”. It is important to point out that the concept of culture entails many dimensions that interact in different ways with one another, that not only entail already analysed geographical and historical backgrounds, but also language, religion, education and values. For this reason, even though the EU foresees the coexistence of many different languages, religions and educational systems, the set of values that characterise the states of the Union – and recognised by its policies as well – constitute a strong aggregation factor. Such common declared values are, therefore: “the respect of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect of Human Rights. These values are shared by the Member States in a society typified by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women (TEU, Article 2)” (The Robert Schuman Foundation, 2018. Link to the article: https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0466-europe-and-the-identity-challenge-who-are-we).

Let’s now take a brief look at two features (duality and plurality) of the European Union, that characterise the identity/ies of the EU citizens, and that are at the origins of the multifaceted character of the mosaic identity notion.

2.1.2 – EU citizens: between duality and plurality

As it can be evicted from the previous paragraph, the identity of an EU citizen responds to two dimensions: the national one, and the European one. Therefore, at the core of the European Union identity there is a duality “between the existence of a common culture and the political fragmentation that goes with it” (The Robert Schuman Foundation, 2018. Link to the article: https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0466-europe-and-the-identity-challenge-who-are-we).

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86 Even though the EU foresees the coexistence of different religions, most states recognize Christianism as the official religion, in its various doctrines, and different religious nucleuses are normally represented by minorities. In this elaborate we exclude the issue of religion, also because France is the only member state to have officially included secularism in its constitution (The Robert Schuman Foundation, 2018. Link to the article: https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0466-europe-and-the-identity-challenge-who-are-we).
Foundation, 2018). Therefore, this duality derives from the tension that exists between a “common culture” of European Union, deriving from the shared characteristics which we described above, and the existence of nation-sates. It is important here to recall sociologist Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined communities. In the already mentioned book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, the author explains that the birth of nations developed from the capacity of communities to imagine themselves as a nucleus sharing the same features and values (Anderson B., 2006). This, of course, means that nations – which in the case of the European Union are politically organized as states – are born as a political response to a shared identity among a community. Potentially, an individual’s identification with a nation-state – culturally, politically and geographically – can come into contraposition with being a citizen of the European Union, which is an entity that looks beyond state differences and puts its citizens all on the same level (Borchardt K, 2010). Nevertheless, as we mentioned before, this tension between the two poles can be overcome if we apply the *mosaic identity* that we recalled above: “rather than to think of geographically-based identity as a set of categories nested within each other like a Russian doll, it is more accurate to conceive of geographically-based identity as a ‘mosaic’, where different levels of geographical orientation become relevant depending upon context” (European Commission 2012, p. 8).

According to this reasoning, a French person will consider him/herself as French in certain occasions – e.g. when explaining his/her origins to a foreigner – and European in different ones – e.g. when leading advocacy activities to request the respect of an EU disposition to the French state.

In the introduction to the 2005 collection of essays *Les minorités ethniques dans l’Union européenne*, scholar Lionel Arnaud, recalling Stuart Hall, defines the identity of EU citizens as a *nouvelle identité*, which is a product of the tension between local influences and global ones (Arnaud L. 2005, p.16). This concept is very important in the case of the

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87 See chapter 1
88 It is not in the purposes of this work to reason on the concept of nation-state, but it would be superficial of us not to mention that we are aware of the contrasting opinions that exist regarding the heterogeneity that characterizes a state’s population, that geographical borders do not strictly respect the differentiation of two peoples, and that the matters that may arise when speaking of a nation-state are many and complex.
European Union, as well as the one of Martinique: giving such transnationality to the notion of identity makes it possible for an EU citizen to be influenced, in his/her identity-building process, by local as much as global discourses, and feeling French/ German/ Italian etc., and European at the same time. As we have already analysed in the first chapter, and as we will further develop later in this second one, the same transnationality of identity strongly applies to the case of Martinicans, because of their mixed origins and of their double belonging to the European continent as well as to the American one (if we leave out a third belonging to the continent of Africa).

In light of these two conceptions of the notion of identity – namely, identity as a mosaic and nouvelle identité – we can overcome the intrinsic duality that characterises EU citizens, and highlight its plurality. Indeed, the motto of the European Union is “united in diversity”, and plurality is its intrinsic character. In the introduction the book Calendario Civile Europeo, scholar Guido Crainz quotes Italian literate Carlo Ossola, to state that the European “plurality […] does not stop to question itself on its own limits. It does not show a nature but a twine of histories to be interpreted, to be knotted” (Crainz G. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G. 2019, p. xv). What we can evict from Ossola’s statement is that each nation-state – or member state – part of the European Union underwent an historical course, that led to its national identity, that cannot be considered as isolated. Indeed, each nation’s history is tightly connected and intersected with the history of its neighbour, and of the other members of the institution. Highlighting this intersection of identity building-processes helps to better understand why the European Union is able to enclose within itself a plurality of identities, while setting the common features that we listed in the previous paragraph. Calendario Civile Europeo is a 2019 collection of essays, edited by already mentioned Guido Crainz and his colleague Angelo Bolaffi, that traces the pathway that the European Union underwent to land on its nowadays identity, and tries to understand the

89 “European Civic Calendar” (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
90 Translated from Italian by Laura Truffarelli: “pluralità […] non cessa di interrogarsi sui propri limiti. Non esibisce una natura ma un intreccio di storie da interpretare, riannodare” (Crainz G. 2019, p. xv).
91 Italics in the original.
crisis that characterizes the institution today. In one of the essays that compose the collection, scholar Giuliano Amato highlights how the Union does not aim to threaten the national identities of each member state, but its objective is to harmonize them and “compose them instead of counterpose them”\(^92\) (Amato G. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G. 2019, p.243). This composition of identity recalls again the idea of a mosaic, of a patchwork of identities, that combine and activate according to the context. Furthermore, Amato brings to light one of the main goals that the European Union aims to achieve through its policies: the differences that characterise its nation and their identities become a resource to slowly build up an ever better comprehensive identity, while still respecting the particularity of each context.

Plurality is, therefore, one of the European Union’s main strengths\(^93\). As Amato writes: “‘the European States and behind them the European Nations’ confront the will to unite of the same Europeans; a constant potential antinomy, that the motto of our Union – ‘united in diversity’ – tries to use for the best, catching, in our national diversities, a distinctive trait of our European identity, that does not damage it, but enriches it, thanks to the lively and creative strength of their encounter”\(^94\) (Amato G. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G. 2019, p.243).

2.2 – EU Integration, Colonialism and néocolonialisme

On may 9\(^{th}\), the citizens of the European Union celebrate Europe Day, which commemorates the presentation of the Shuman Declaration of 1950, where French Foreign

\(^{92}\) Translation from Italian by Laura Truffarelli: “farle comporre anziché contrapporle” (Amato G. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G. 2019, p.243)

\(^{93}\) Of course, plurality can also be a big challenge: Amato speaks of solidarity among EU nations and EU citizens, and explains how this solidarity is a goal that has to be achieved each day through hard work and negotiation, and that the European Union addresses every day through its policies in the field of economic cooperation, as well as juridical and civic one (Amato G. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G. 2019).

Minister Robert Shuman proposed the formation of the European Coal and Steel community, the precursor to present day European Union. The Shuman declaration, that can be found on one of the main pages of the Union’s website (https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en), gives a strong economic framework to the institution, which was born in order to keep peace on the continent by binding together its countries into economic agreements, which would result in common disadvantages for all parties in case of war (Bolaffi A., Crainz G., 2019). Nevertheless, as also seen in the previous paragraph, the EU also conveys certain values, and is also connected to determined cultural settings. This connection exists because, throughout the years, the member states underwent an integration process that involved not only economic and productive policies, but also policies in the governmental, social, environmental, etc. fields, that progressively shaped the identity-building process of the citizens of the Union.

As already noted above, in the case of the EU, the territorial proximity and the shared history, alongside analogous cultures and administrative and political settings (i.e. the nation-state), fostered the original formation of the cooperation system (Bolaffi A., Crainz G., 2019). As we shall see in this paragraph, the same drive can be found also in the Caribbean, thus opposing a Caribbean regional integration to a European one. In order to discuss these tendencies, we have to firstly understand an untold history that lies behind the foundation of the ECSC first, and of the CEE then. Indeed, we have to understand the actual plan that the founders of the precursors of the EU had in mind when creating the entity, and what influences these had and still have on Martinique. This will serve to explain why Martinicans, who are already included in the European regional organization, wish to be part of a different regional entity, and how this influences the image that the people of the island project on the institution.

95 The ECSC was created in 1952, to then be substituted by the EEC – European Economic Community – in 1957, which created a multilevel governmental system that administrated the relations among the Member States (EU website - https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history_en & Amato G. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G., 2019 p.245).
2.2.1 – Colonial legacy in the integration process of the European Union

Among the essays collected by Bolaffi and Crainz in the above mentioned 2019 work, one in particular is dedicated to the end of the colonial era, with Algeria’s independence in 1962, that followed a war to which Martinican Franz Fanon not only took part, but also became a strenuous international advocate. Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci, author of the essay, explains that the Algerian war had become a very important matter of international affairs in Europe, and that many social movements, as well as political pressures, existed that denounced France for denying independence to the North African state (Matard-Bonucci M. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G. 2019, p.259-273). Even though the author criticises the tendency with which such war, as well as, more generally, the end of colonialism, are considered separate from the foundation of the EEC, she ends her essay by stating that the institution, after the end of its control over the overseas territories, begun an integration pathway that ignored what was on the other side of the Mediterranean (Matard-Bonucci M. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G. 2019, p.273).

In 2014, Swedish professors Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson published a book by the title *Eurafrica*, which aims to explore the forgotten history that lay behind the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community, and, consequently its development into the European Economic Community. There is a statement in the Shuman declaration, that is too often ignored. The sentence goes: “With increased resources Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks, namely, the development of the African continent” (Shuman Declaration, 1950. Source: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en ). This statement pictures the development of the African continent as a priority of the alliance that would be created among the six founder countries: France, Germany (West Germany at the time), Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Luxembourg. Let out the tiny – but powerful – Luxembourg, all of these states had, or had had, colonial possessions. Hansen and Jonsson’s analysis highlights that the conception of a united Europe is not exclusively connected to the maintenance of peace on the continent through economic ties, but that it stems from the wider plan of building a Eurafrican economic union – so among the
colonial powers and their possessions. Furthermore, this plan actually preceded World War II, and, as the professors illustrate, begun already after World War I, including also the United Kingdom. The big absent from the foundation of the EEC in 1957 was, indeed, originally part of this economic development project, but later opted for a different approach (namely, the Commonwealth). As Hansen and Jonsson write, already after WW I “[i]n their view⁹⁶, Africa was seen as a natural and necessary part of Europe’s geopolitical sphere, a part that needed to be more strongly connected to Europe, and to be exploited by united European forces in order to turn its resources to full advantage” (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p.48). The exploitation plan foresaw an improvement of the infrastructures of the continent, in order to transform it into a “factory” of goods that would be merchandised in Europe. After WW II, the economic plan widened, and one more objective was added to the creation of Eurafrica: to build a geopolitical sphere that could oppose – or at least compete – against the two blocs that had formed after the epilogue of the war, the USA and the URSS. In 1948 Hauge Congress, that discussed the formation of the union, the “participant groupings […] adhered to the Eurafrican tenet concerning the necessity of developing African colonies for the collective benefit of a war-torn Western Europe striving to emerge as a ‘third force’ in world politics” (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p.125).

Therefore, the colonial possessions in Africa of the European countries would serve for the development and strengthening of the old continent, so it would not disappear within the two emerging forces. Africa was not only to offer resources and to become the land of production, it was also to welcome European migrants – especially from Italy – in order to absorb the excess of labour force that remained unemployed after the war, and was also to become a market to further sustain European economic growth. As Hansen and Jonsson write: “Under the Schuman plan the latent riches of the African continent would be intensively exploited. American companies with dollar capital would buy in Europe part of the equivalent needed in Africa. Thereby, Europe could earn enough to close the dollar gap […]. Marshall aid would become superfluous. Expanding markets

⁹⁶ Meaning the view of the colonial states of Europe.
created in Africa could absorb the growing exportable surplus of Europe. This would keep Europe fully employed. In Africa, production of low-cost food raw materials purchasable in non-dollar currencies would become available to cover needs in Europe. Africa is close to Europe. She would become the goal of home-seekers from overcrowded Europe as America was before World War I” (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p.140-141). Figure 2.1 is the map of the six founders of the EEC and their overseas territories in 1961. Moreover, the plan outlined for Eurafrica did not only regard the infrastructural and economic development of the two regions, but had also the objective to work on cultural and social matters. Indeed, in 1958 was set up in Bruxelles the DG VIII – Directorate General for the overseas territories, that organized the activities for Eurafrica in four fields: “research and programme activities; cultural and social questions; trade matters; and financing of development through the investment fund” (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p.276). This gives an idea of the vastness of the Eurafrican project. Also, it has to be reminded that this plan was conceived by the European powers only, which means that the peoples living in Eurafrica south of the Mediterranean had no saying in their destiny, and even less in their social and cultural determination.
Despite the plans outlined until now, the creation of Eurafrica took a different direction\textsuperscript{97}, and the new economic community resolved to find different ways to maintain

\textsuperscript{97} The reasons behind the end of European colonialism – which formally ended later, with the restitution of Hong Kong to China by the U.K. (Betts R.F., 2015) – are many and very complex. Probably, the most relevant to name here is the principle of self-determination (Matard-Bonucci M. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G., 2019), that the UN 1945 UN Charter transformed into \textit{jus cogens} of International law, even though the principle already
its relations with the African continent. Contrary to what Matard-Bonucci affirms at the end of her essay, the EEC, and the institutions into which it developed in the years, have always been well aware of the countries that exist on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea. Indeed, in the concluding chapter of their work, Hansen and Jonsson write: “Through its Eurafrican arrangement, the EEC exercised a profound influence on the decolonization process and its terminus in the various arrangements of dependence, clientelism and in the perpetuation of Africa’s function as a raw materials reservoir” (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p. 278). Indeed, in 1963 the Youndé Convention took place between the six EEC states and eighteen independent African new born countries, which institutionalised the new relationships – of mainly economic nature – between the two parts. As denounced by Hansen and Jonsson, the decolonization process, and these international agreements – which evolved through time and are still present today in the form of the Cotonou agreements – on the one hand institutionalised African statehood, influencing the formation of these new national entities and their political settings98; and, on the other, served to maintain a form of control over these territories. As Hansen and Jonsson write: “[...] the ‘spirit’ of the EEC negotiations was imbued by old colonial paradigms and structures of reference. Also, what resulted was not a partnership of equality, but a licensed patronage in which the superior partner would continue overseeing and developing the inferior one” (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p.284).

The two authors also highlight how the project of Eurafrica is not recognized and analysed in the current discourses and literature regarding the formation of the EEC, or the current issues of the European Union. Indeed, the agreements that were developed between the EU and African States – which evolved into ACP countries with the progressive change of settings both in the EU and of the de-colonial developments – meant the erasure of the Eurafrican project, and mostly the interests that lay behind it, from the EU consciousness. This lack of awareness has the consequence that average EU citizens are not properly informed of the historical dynamics that made the African

98 This aspect has been criticized by many post-colonial thinkers. To have a panoramic idea of the main critiques moved, see Carbone G., L’Africa, il Mulino, 2012.
continent the problematic geographical entity that it is today, and a better consciousness of our past would foster a different perspective of many current phenomena that invest the two continents (i.e. migration), and that put in crisis the affiliation to the institution, that is more and more brought into question\(^9\). This issue constitutes the basis for the conclusions that we will draw in the last chapter, and that are in line with Hansen and Jonsson’s analysis and critique of the current production on the European Union “real” identity.

2.2.2 – *Néocolonialisme in Martinique*

In the previous subparagraph, we spoke extensively about the Eurafrica project, without taking into account Martinique. First off, the critique with which we concluded the section can be fully applied to the case of the current ultra-peripheral possessions of EU countries: these are not part of the discourses produced by the European Union. Throughout my research, not once have I found literature on the European Union, that actually took into account these faraway lands and borders. Also, the literature produced in Martinique – on which I mostly rely, alongside some literature produced in Guadeloupe – on the relation between the region and the European Union is rather poor. Furthermore, the Cotonou Agreement, the latest evolution of above mentioned Youndé Agreement, is a treaty that defines the relations between the EU and the ACP countries, where the acronym stands for African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. This is because, as we described in the first chapter, the Caribbean possessions of European colonial countries used these lands in the same way as Africa was used. We recall here the already analysed work of researcher Jean Casimir, who writes: “Europe seized a region and implanted a population there which it controlled to serve European interests. Since these populations could not duplicate a European world, because they lacked European concepts for planning the trajectory of their own development, the idea took hold to deny them the

\(^9\) For the matters regarding the crisis that the European Union is living today we suggest again the ISPI 2019 report *Europe in Identity Crisis*, and the conclusive chapters of Bolaffi A. and Crainz G., *Calendario Civile Europeo*, Progetto Donzelli, 2019. For a critique to the international agreements that provide African states with economic support aimed at the development of the region, see Moyo D., *La carità che Uccide*, BUR Rizzoli, 2018 (original title: *Dead Aid*).
prerogatives and privileges which enabled Europeans themselves to organize and control their environment” (Casimir J. 1992, p.10). In this passage Casimir highlights the fact that the Caribbean islands were considered as a plantation that could furnish the main continent with exotic goods, and the people of the land (that, differently from the black continent, were not autochthonous of the place) were never seen as a society, but just as labour force, which had strong influences on the later social structure that developed after the abolition of slavery (as we have already analysed extensively). In this paragraph, we want to take a closer look to a critique that was moved against a new form of colonialism: néocolonialisme in French.

During my month in Martinique, searching for literature that would ground and enrich the statements and theories presented in this elaborate, one book struck my attention: Discours sur le Néocolonialisme, by Professor Fola Gadet. This essay had become so popular among Martinicans, that no book store had availability. The topics touched by the University professor were – are – so in synchronicity with the current political discourses in Martinique, that all copies had been sold. I was lucky enough to find a store that sold the book online, and shipped it also to my residence in Italy.

Analysing the economic and, especially, social setting of Martinique and Guadeloupe, Professor Fola-Gadet states: “Le principal obstacle à notre développement, ce sont les structures néocoloniales de notre économie, elles-mêmes des avatars des structures coloniales”100 (Fola Gadet S. 2018, p.57). What are, then, these neo-colonial structures? Contextualising the notion within Hansen and Jonsson’s analysis, and taking into account also other post-colonial and contemporary authors101, néocolonialisme would be defined as a form of economic and, thus political, control exercised by (economically and military) powerful countries over less powerful ones. This derives from the persistence, over the latter territories, of élites that keep preferential relations with the

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100 “The main obstacle to our development are the neocolonial structures of our economy, that are avatars, themselves, of the colonial structures” (Fola Gadet S. 2019, p.57) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

101 See, for example, already mentioned authors such as Dambisa Moyo (2018) and Giovanni Carbone (2012), but also Hagmann T. & Reyntjens F., Aid and Authoritarianism in Africa, Zed Books, 2016.
powerful countries, which invest resources into the development of the non-powerful countries, but such investments do not arrive to support their social and humanitarian development, and may actually provoke negative outcomes for the rest of the inhabitants in various forms (Hagmann T. & Reyntjens F., 2016). On his part, Fola Gadet describes the phenomenon of néocolonialisme as follows: “C’est un empêcher de maîtriser son destin. C’est un système politique, économique, médiatique et éducatif qui étouffe l’envie de pouvoir de ceux qui ont moins d’armes, moins de moyens, moins de forces et d’argent que lui. C’est l’utilisation de vos ressources pour leur propre prestige, pour leur propre intérêt, pour leurs loisirs aussi parfois. C’est le racisme sous un vernis de beaux principes universels bien écrits, bien gravés, bien répétés dans les discours officiels toujours pour mieux être détournés. C’est la soumission, c’est l’humiliation déguisée [...] C’est la profitasyon sans vergogne [...] C’est donner à nos élus un semblant de pouvoir pour mieux masquer le vrai pouvoir, celui du néocolonialisme [...] Le néocolonialisme, c’est l’élimination de la production locale102”103 (Fola Gadet S. 2019, p.20-22). From this definition, we can highlight the main elements that guide Fola Gadet’s critique.

First of all, the author denounces the fact that the people of Martinique are not in control of their destiny. It is important to point out that this critique has an economic matrix, which criticises the current market arrangements that exist between the Caribbean island and the hexagone, and secondarily between the island and the European common market. The critique is mainly addressed at the élite of the island, the already mentioned bèké community. Even though not much material is available about them, and the opinions I have been given during my conversations are not univocal, what can be said for sure is that this community is made up by the heirs of the French colons and land owners. They are, indeed, in control of the economy of the island: they have control over the imported

102 Italics in the original.
103 “It is an impediment to take control over their own destiny. It is the political, economic, media and educational system that chokes the will for power of those with less weapons, less means, less forces and less money. It is the use of your resources for their own prestige, for their own interest, even for their own leisure. It is racism painted with nice universal principles, well written, well impressed, repeated in daily official discourses, with the aim to better deflect. It is the submission, the hidden humiliation [...] It is the shameless profitasyon [...] It is giving to the people we elect a seeming power to better mask the real power, the one of neocolonialism [...] Neocolonialism, it is the elimination of local production” (Fola Gadet S. 2019, p.20-22)(translation by Laura Truffarelli).
and exported goods, the taxation that is imposed on these\textsuperscript{104}, and they prevent any local enterprise to flourish, due to the strong competition played by big supermarkets such as Carrefour, that are also under their administration\textsuperscript{105}.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{abandoned_cars_martinique.jpg}
\caption{Abandoned cars along the street are a common sight in Martinique. The demolishing process for cars is too expensive, and people tend to just abandon the old vehicles in order to avoid such cost. Since the ’70s – ’80s, the béké entrepreneurs invested in the automotive sector, which results in high pricing for cars and car maintenance, as well as a lack of investment in the transportation infrastructure, one of the biggest issues of the island.}
\end{figure}

From Fola Gadet’s book’s passage, we can also understand that the link between power and colour of the skin, that we illustrated in the first chapter, has strong economic outcomes on the livelihood of the island. Furthermore, Fola Gadet highlights the hypocrisy of the equality values that France conveyed, since the departmentalization of the island, that hide a strong racist attitude. In the book, several cases of racist attitude shown by the béké community are reported. Its deep root can, of course, be found in the plantation system. As Jean Casimir recalls: “The unrestrained use of torture as the normal system of management on the plantation-based colonies served also to create a distance

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{104} Indeed, Martinique, as the rest of the ultra-peripheral territories, are not part of the Schengen common market, but the free movement of people is allowed.
\item \textsuperscript{105} The information here reported have been repeated in all my conversations with Martinicans and non-Martinicans living on the island, and is a well-known controversy spoken out in the region daily.
\end{itemize}
between the planter’s value system and that of the metropolis. In the mother country, other forms of management of labour relations were practised. Its legislative system, which defined the social category of ‘slave’, was a response to certain material interests, principles and criteria whose dynamics of change bore no direct relationship to daily life in the colony. At a certain stage the metropolitan legislative system decreed the equality of civil and political rights for freed persons and even total emancipation. In the daily management of their enterprises (and of their private lives), the planters, however, had no intention of relinquishing the benefits to be derived from the subordination of the freed men, or the practice of torture, or the threat of torture of the enslaved. Since they constantly had to convince themselves that their behaviour was justified, they were in no position to fully emulate the progress achieved by the metropolis in the areas of law and justice. This divergence between the criteria applied by the planters in their daily life and the ideological progress made in Europe was never carried to its ultimate consequences. The planters could not survive without the (or a) metropolis, nor did the latter wish to divest itself of its colonies” (Casimir J. 1992, p.34).
As we understand from the last sentence of the passage quoted above, Fola Gadet’s critique is not only deconstructionist, but also aims to advocate for Martinicans’ and Guadeloupians’ rights to develop their own internal market. If we think back to Hansen and Jonsson’s analysis, the Eurafrican project saw the African continent not only as a land to produce goods for European consumers, but also as a market for the goods traded by European states (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p.136-141). The present case of Martinique is analogous to this description: as Fola Gadet himself writes “Actuellement, le statut de Région Ultrapériphérique fait de la Guadeloupe et de la Martinique des marchés de consommation pour les produits européens. Par exemple, pourquoi produire en Guadeloupe des produits de l’élevage alors que la Bretagne peut tout nous fournir? Produire en Guadeloupe, c’est faire perdre un marché et des emplois aux Bretons” (Fola Gadet S. 2019, p.59-60). Fola Gadet therefore attributes one more time the lack of development of Guadeloupe and Martinique to the trade agreements that exist among few French and European élites, and that are institutionalised by the EU given status of ultra-peripheral regions, in part, and, in part, by the specific agreements that exist between France and its departments.

Despite these negative considerations, though, the professor does not propose a detachment from France nor the EU. As he argues further in the book, total independence would be accompanied by many other issues, that politician Aimé Césaire was well aware of, and that are well understood by Martinicans today. Instead, he writes: “Le système néocolonial n’a rien a gagner en mettant en concurrence la bourgeoisie commerçante française, européenne et sa fraction tropicale. D’où la nécessité d’établir de nouveaux

106 “At the moment, the status of ultra-peripheral region makes Guadeloupe and Martinique two markets for the consume of European products. For example, why should high quality goods be produced in Guadeloupe, when the Brittany region can furnish everything? To produce in Guadeloupe means that the Bretons would lose a market, as well as employment” (Fola Gadet S. 2019, p.59-60) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

107 It is true that an independentist party of Martinique exists still today, and that it still has some support from the population. Nevertheless, their practical fight for the island independence is inconsistent, and the support they have does not reflect an actual will to separate from France, but is connected to other political objectives. In none of my readings, has the will to separate from France been presented as a reality on the island.
rapports avec la France et l’Union Européenne”\textsuperscript{108} (Fola Gadet S. 2019, p.60). Therefore, the proposition here is not to make a secession, but to re-negotiate the trade arrangements that exist between Martinique and France and the EU, in order to really empower the local markets and producers to flourish. Fola Gadet asks for more autonomy for the two islands, beyond the racial differences that may populate many discourses about politics and power relations.

2.2.3 – Martinique and Caribbean regionalism

The autonomy and empowerment required by Fola Gadet, may serve not only for the economic autonomous development of Martinique, but also for the achievement of a stronger affiliation to its geographical and cultural region. Indeed, we concluded the first chapter placing Martinique in the Caribbean, and highlighting the identitarian affiliation felt with the other islands and countries of the area. Professor Justin Daniel, to whom we also referred in the first chapter, in the essay \textit{L’Union européenne et la construction des identités: l’exemple des populations caribéennes}, part of the already mentioned collection \textit{Les minorités ethniques dans l’Union européenne}, writing about the sense of affiliation felt among the people of the French Antilles, states: “[…] d’autre part, il semble bien que l’expérience identitaire à la Martinique se caractérise par un réagencement fondé sur une superposition d’appartenances subjectives […] [à] un espace insulaire médiatisant l’appartenance à une communauté élargie. Cet espace insulaire a été le lieu ou s’est opérée la réactivation du sentiment d’appartenance à la société locale”\textsuperscript{109} (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.119). As we can understand from Daniel’s statement, then, the belonging to the Caribbean region is not only described in the discourses of influent literates, but is an actual feeling that can be perceived on the political and economic levels as well. Furthermore, the \textit{béké} peculiarity is

\textsuperscript{108} “The neocolonial system has nothing to gain from putting into concurrence the French and European trading bourgeoisie and its tropical fraction. From this, derives the necessity to establish new relationships with France and the European Union” (Fola Gadet S. 2019, p.60) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

\textsuperscript{109} “On the other hand, it looks like the identity experience in Martinique is characterized by a rearrangement funded on an overlay of subjective belongings […] [to] an insular space which conveys the belonging to an enlarged community. This insular space has been the connection where the reactivation of the feeling of belonging to a local society was re-activated” (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.119) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).
not only pertinent to the case of Martinique and Guadeloupe and it can also be found in other countries of the Caribbean. Indeed, in the 1994 article *Transnational Relations and Regionalism in the Caribbean*, author Andrés Serbin highlights the “lingering colonial legacy” (Serbin A., 1994, p.140) that still impedes the development of the Caribbean region, and that, having in their hands the economic management of the area, have influenced throughout the birth and death of regional collaborations (Serbin A., 1994). As a matter of fact, there have been in time attempts to create regional economic and/or political-administrative unions, such as the CARICOM (1973) and the ACS – Association of Caribbean States (1994 and still modestly existing) (Pantojas García E. 2008), where EU ultra-peripheral regions and other territories under the administration of states not part of the Caribe region (e.g. Puerto Rico) have the statute of observers (Pantojas García E. 2008).

Nevertheless, such attempts not only have had difficulties in becoming effective, but have also been criticised under several aspects. In the 2008 article *Economic Integration and Caribbean identity: Convergences and Divergences*, author Emilio Pantojas García observes that creating a regional organization foresees a political and economic homogeneity, that does not characterise the states and territories of the Caribbean basin, and it is not possible to “speak of a Caribbean economy or economic identity” (Pantojas García E. 2008, p.57-58). This heterogeneity is, in the first place, an inheritance of the colonial past, as also observed by Daniel in his essay: “D’autant que ce sentiment a été et est encore aujourd’hui très largement médiatisé par le rapport colonial ou la dépendance maintenue à l’égard d’une autorité tutélaire”110 (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.114), where “ce sentiment” refers to the feeling of cultural, social and artistic unity in the Caribbean region. Indeed, the languages spoken in the areas are many and different, and the créole languages are not always recognized as official, and many times do not reveal an effective means of communication111. Furthermore, the states and islands that acquired their

110 “So much that this sentiment has been and still is highly mediated by the colonial relationships and the maintained dependency from a tutelary authority” (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.114) (translation by Laura Truffarelli).

111 In the first chapter, we made a difference between Creolité as conceived by Bernabé et al., and the créole language. The linguistic developments that we described above are common to all Caribbean islands and land states, but the outcomes of such processes are not unified. For example, the créole spoken in Martinique
political and administrative independence have specific social situations, and therefore needs, that may not be analogous to those of states and islands such as Martinique, Sint Marteen and Puerto Rico, which are under a foreign administration. Also, these differences in the political panorama have effective consequences on the possibility to unify the states and islands of the territory into a regional organization. In the above-mentioned article by Serbin, the author, referring again to the colonial links that still exist in the region, highlights that, in many cases, the ex-colonial countries have promoted networks that would create economic associations among countries and regions sharing the same language, connecting them to business associations in their respective metropolises (Serbin A., 1994). Also, as noted by Pantojas García, in many occasions the territories under the control of other states like Martinique, are considered by the other members of the regional organizations as playing in favour of such countries, therefore not in the strict interest of the region development process (Pantojas García E. 2008, p.63). It can be speculated that in the case of Martinique, in such a context the bèké elite could easily act in favour of its own interest, putting therefore at full play the functioning of the neo-colonialist system, even though the statute of observers of the DOM may prevent it to have consequences on the rest of the region112.

Concerning the colonial legacy, we can also recall the fact that upon the Caribbean region ACP-EU agreements are at work. As we mentioned concluding the previous subparagraph, these instruments can be considered as a form of maintaining a form of control and influence over the previous colonial possessions. Nevertheless, in analysing the still existing relations between the Caribbean area and the old colonial metropolises, Justin Daniel gives a different depiction of the existing affiliations between the EU and the region. In his essay, part of the professor’s analysis compares the DOM territories of Martinique and Guadeloupe to ex British colony Trinidad and Tobago, illustrating how

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112 The material to us available does not specify what is the functioning of the observer status, but we can easily evict from Pantojas García’s analysis that the representatives of the economic elites which take part to the organization meetings may have the right to vote in decision making processes.
the economic associations that the EU and United States entertain with the region influences their sense of identity affiliation to the one or the other power. In the case of the DOM territories, being a department of France leads to appreciating the social benefits that French and EU citizenship brings to the population (as we have already noted, and as Daniel highlights in his work as well). At the same time, the statute of ultra peripheral region for the EU brings, upon Martinique and Guadeloupe, the fear of being “devoured” by the Union’s strength, not only economically (and we have seen how this, actually, is an existing condition, as Fola Gadet explained), but also culturally (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p. 117-119). This, according to Daniel, led the population of the two islands to search for their cultural belonging at a local level (Daniel J. in Arnaud L., 2005).

From this description of the facts, we evict that the relationship with the European Union is quite ambivalent: there is a fear of being absorbed by the Union, therefore a tendency to contrast this possibility. Yet, at the same time, there is an appreciation of the social benefits that being French and belonging to the EU brings. Daniel’s analysis comes to the conclusion that the European Union is considered, by Martinicans and Guadelouprians, as an economic opportunity, especially regarding the funds that the institution allocates to the development of these two territories, in light of their being part of the organization. In line from what emerged throughout my conversations on the island, the European Union may be connected to the old colonial power, but it is, at the same time, viewed by popular imaginary as an economic and developmental opportunity, and this image makes it so that the identification with the Union does not invest any identitarian belonging.

113 In this case, we refer to Union’s structural funds, aimed at the development of Member States: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/european-structural-and-investment-funds_en
2.3 – Martinicans, a minority at the periphery of the European Union

In the first chapter we introduced Fanon’s analysis of the alienation that a person with dark complexion – and therefore a person from the Caribbeans too – experiences when they travel to the French métropole, and their French identity, so given for granted until then, becomes controversial. After the foundation of the European Union as a regional organization that extends a certain type of citizenship and conveys a set of values to the citizens of its Member States, the people of Martinique became not only French citizens from an overseas department, but also EU citizens from an ultra-peripheral region. Until now, we spoke of this second condition more in economic and political terms than in identity terms. All of the pathway we exposed had the objective of explaining the ambivalent figure that the European Union is in the imaginary of Martinicans. In these last pages of the second chapter, we would like to analyze better the outcomes that this vision has on the identification process of the people of Martinique, with the scope to better understand the last statement with which we closed the previous paragraph, that is the actual lack of identification with the Union by the people of the island.

2.3.1 – France in the middle

As we pointed out above, even though the European Union has specific provisions for the ultra-peripheral regions of the entity, each member state has a great freedom in deciding how to administer its own territories that fall under this category. This has many consequences. For example, even though plurality is a fundamental aspect of the values and identity features conveyed by the European Union\(^\text{114}\), the French administrative system has a different vision. We already explained how the French school system tends to propose the same curriculum all over the country, without too much attention for the local history and culture of each region. Furthermore, the French law only recognizes the

\(^{114}\) See, as an example, the objective of the Union to promote the learning of at least two other EU languages, besides the mother tongue, for its citizens: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-languages_en
French language as the official one of the country, and refused to sign the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. At the same time, the identification with the European Union necessarily passes through France, as it is the French citizenship that automatically grants the EU citizenship. Furthermore, in all the discourses that we analysed in the first chapter, alongside the few and important ones in the paragraphs above, the analyses of the Martinican identity have always been put in relation (in positive and, mostly in negative terms) with the French identity. For this reason, we would like to take a brief dig into a controversial aspect that has emerged in several essays and documents, and that regards the outcomes, upon the Martinican identity building process, brought about by the automatic extension of the French values of Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.

We briefly mentioned scholar Arvin W. Murch’s theory about the departmentalization of Martinique: he believes that this alternative to independence helped to convey the respect for human and social rights, and that this achievement is in line with the values that the nationalist movements of the time withheld. In his 1968 article Political Integration as an Alternative to Independence in the French Antilles, the author compares the nationalist movements of the British Caribbean and the political situation in French Antilles. He notices that the nationalist movements mentioned, aimed at independence from Britain in order to achieve democracy and improved life conditions among their populations. In the French Antilles, the aim of remaining part of France was exactly the same: grant to their populations democratic participation to political life, and human and social rights. Indeed, since 1870, the population of the French Antilles were called to vote in the political elections of the métropole, and the values that “French romanticism” wished to spread through its “civilizing mission” were extended to the inhabitants of these lands (Murch A.W. 1968, p.544-546).

As we already highlighted in describing the post-colonialist school of thought, the discourses that colonizers imposed to their subjugated are to be considered highly eurocentric, and putting them under a critical analytical lens helps to understand the negative

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115 About the Charter: https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages
outcomes that they have on the societies that form under their influence\textsuperscript{116}. In the case of Murch’s analysis, the social and cultural assimilation process that France enacted in Martinique and the rest of French Antilles, is actually currently highly criticised\textsuperscript{117}. We already highlighted that being assimilated into the French juridical – administrative setting meant, for Martinicans and other populations, the annulment of their peculiar identity, of their existence as a different cultural group. Sociologist Juliette Sméralda describes the French assimilation behaviour as a homologation device, that aims at mono-identification with the French culture and values (Sméralda J. 2008, p.8). Therefore, the extension of the values of \textit{Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité} to the inhabitants of the island reveals to be double-edged sword, which takes away the right of smaller communities presenting a different culture – and even language, in some cases, within France\textsuperscript{118} – to express themselves and for their identity to be officially recognised.

This extension of French values is also criticised by Fola Gadet, who denounces the hypocrisy behind it (as we already saw in the passage from p.20-22 of his book, reported in the previous paragraph), and it actually shows how this assimilation became a way for the French state to wash away the slavery past. “Madame liberté avait besoin de lunettes – the author writes, calling upon one of the three fundamental values that lead the French revolution – La république et les békés ont une dette envers les descendants des personnes réduites en esclavage et ils vont devoir la rembourser ! Le silence, le dénigrement, l’exploitation ne feront qu’enfanter de la tension et la tension va immanquablement déborder”\textsuperscript{119} (Fola Gadet S. 2018, p.15-16). Therefore, Fola Gadet denounces again how the béké community tarnishes itself of perpetrating a form of violence that has its roots in the colonial past, and how the French government keeps on silencing history, just as the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{116} See Chapter One, paragraph 1.2.1.
\textsuperscript{117} It should also be pointed out that Murch’s work goes back to 1968, when post-structuralist and post-colonial thought had not begun to receive the attention that they received in the following years (Cusset F., 2012).
\textsuperscript{118} In the last chapter, we will make reference to the Minority SafePack project, which includes the examples of the people originating from the French region of Brittany, who speak a dialectic variety of French and do not see their language recognized by the French State.
\textsuperscript{119} “Madame freedom needs glasses. The Republic and the béké have a debt towards the heirs of the enslaved people, and will have to repay them! The silence, the denigration, the exploitation will only generate tension, and the tension will, inevitably, outflank” (Fola Gadet S. 2018, p.15-16) (translated by Laura Truffarelli). 
\end{flushleft}
European Union keeps relegating in the background the Eurafrica project that stood behind its foundation. Yet, “L’Histoire a ses propres lois et impératifs auxquels ni les békés, ni la France - and we should add, nor the European Union - ne peuvent déroger”\textsuperscript{120} (Fola Gadet S. 2018, p.16).

2.3.2 – Martinicans: a minority

“Quand on est migrant et que l’on arrive dans une société qui se pense - se fantasme – comme ethniquement homogène, on se trouve d’emblée confrontée au racisme, et plus encore quand on est visiblement un migrant”\textsuperscript{121} (Bertaux D., Delcroix C., Pfefferkorn R. 2011, p.45). This introductory passage of the 2011 dossier \textit{Migrations, racismes et résistances} recalls Fanon’s analysis of the alienation that a person from the Antilles lives when arriving to France. As we already mentioned when talking about Fanon, but also in other parts of this work, throughout time Martinicans emigrated from the island to go study and work in the métropole, as well as in other parts of Europe and Northern America. Here, Daniel’s essay in the \textit{Les minorités ethniques dans l’Union européenne} collection comes in handy one more time. The reason for exploiting his essay so much lies, partly, in the fact that very little literature (and available literature) exists, that considers the Martinican and Caribbean identity in relation with the European Union, not considering it as an extension of France or as the colonial entity is has been throughout time. At the same time, the professor’s analysis is so reach in precious observations that it would be a pity not to make use of them in our elaboration. In his work, Daniel presents the Martinican as a migrating minority\textsuperscript{122} within France and the EU. On the one hand,

\textsuperscript{120} “History has its own laws and imperatives, to which not the béké, nor France can derogate from” (Fola Gadet S. 2018, p.16) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

\textsuperscript{121} “When you are a migrant and arrive among a society that thinks of itself - imagines itself - ethnically homogeneous, you will find yourself immediately confronted with racism, and especially when you are visibly a migrant” (Bertaux D., Delcroix C., Pfefferkorn R. 2011, p.45) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

\textsuperscript{122} Giving a specific definition of minority is quite a complicated matter of international law, as it constitutes a topic embedded of nationalistic, identitarian and more generally political issues and controversies. Nevertheless, the 1991 UN Minorities Declaration provides that the States and their governments are to protect the minorities that live within their borders (source: \url{https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/internationallaw.aspx}).
migration brought, and still brings, impacts on the identity-building process of Martinicans. As Daniel writes: “[…] les liens tissés par le rapport colonial, puis entretenus par les flux migratoires, y compris les migrations de retour, ont une incidence certaine sur les phénomènes de recomposition identitaire”¹²³ (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.123), and this identity recomposition is represented by a strengthening of identification with France and French values¹²⁴. On the other hand, the Martinican diaspora in the EU means the territorial presence of such people on the community’s sole, allowing them to actively participate in the identity creation process of the Union and its citizens. This presence took and takes the form of active participation, by diaspora representatives, in the community associations, advocating for the recognition of the peculiarity of the Caribbean community, and for the attainment of support in various forms, to erase the effects of the discrimination (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.126). Daniel makes the example, indeed, of the funds that the EU conveys to Martinique for the realization of cultural events, that celebrate and contribute to the construction of the Martinican identity (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.126-129). Even though this recognition by the EU is very much positive, we will argue, in the conclusive chapter of our work, that there is more that the institution could promote, in order to improve the identification of Martinicans with the Union, and vice versa.

2.3.3 – Martinicans at the periphery

We would like to conclude this chapter by highlighting another characteristic of the Martinican minority, which has to do with the recognition that the Union has given to its territory. Indeed, in introducing the issue of minorities in the EU, in the second chapter of the collection Les minorités ethniques dans l’Union européenne, Han Entzinger points out that the presence of minority communities can be the result of: a. the borders between states

¹²³ “[…] the links created through the colonial relation, and then entertained by the migratory flux, including the return migrations, have a certain impact on the phenomena of identity recomposition” (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.123) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

¹²⁴ Let’s keep in mind, though, that this strengthening is often followed by ambiguity – as we already explained with Fanon’s and Glissant’s words – and by a return to a Caribbean identity, as Daniel explains later in the same essay, and as we already mentioned in the paragraphs above.
not corresponding to the actual territorial distribution of the populations; b. people belonging to several ethnic/cultural groups co-habit the same state territory; c. people migrating (Entzinger H. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.25-45). In the case of Martinicans, we already saw with Daniel that they fall under option c. Yet, in our opinion, we believe that their case can be also categorized under a partial overlapping of option a. and b., where, from the one hand, France’s borders also involve a population that is not geographically French born, and, on the other, the same borders comprehend, actually, a plurality of ethnic groups, who end up co-habiting in the same state. As a matter of fact, we have, until now, tiptoed around another concept that characterizes the relation between Martinique and the European Union, and that is interesting to take into consideration for drawing our conclusions in the next chapter. We said that Martinicans constitute a minority within the European Union population. At the same time, though, if Daniel takes into account the role that Martinican migrants to the old continent played in the identity-building process within the Union, we want to highlight, once again, that the identification of the people of Martinique is mainly with Caribbeans. Therefore, we conclude this second chapter with a brief analysis of their peripheral identity trait\textsuperscript{125}.

In order to define the peripheral status of Martinique as compared with the EU, we take into account the theories of French author and professor Alain Reynaud, whose work belongs to the field of critical geography\textsuperscript{126}. While the centre, according to the author, consists of the core of a territory, the place where the decision-making process happens

\textsuperscript{125} It is important here to notify that throughout my conversations on the island, the notion of peripheral did not come to mind very much. In finding identity traits, the distance – both cultural and geographical – from the EU was highly taken into account, the proximity with the American continent as well, and, as we will see in the conclusive chapter of this work, also the proximity with black Americans’ culture and history have a relevant role. Yet, being a periphery of Europe is not exactly seen as a paradigm for defining identity. For this reason, we do not want to inscribe the relationship between the EU and Martinique within a geo-critical paradigm. Nevertheless, a brief mention on the meaning of occupying a peripheral position of the EU serves, on the one hand, to justify a certain choice of authors to ground our conclusive notes and, on the other, to strengthen our thesis, whose request is, among others, more peripheral thought at the centre.

\textsuperscript{126} As can be easily evicted, critical geography is a branch of post-structuralism and critical theory, which considers the act of geo-graphing as a discourse, that results into a practice of establishing the relations between different parts of the world (Ó Tuathail G., 1996). At the same time, we preferred not to include the renowned theories of Immanuel Wallerstein: as much as important as his work is, especially regarding his formulation of the dependency theory, we preferred to adopt later elaborations. Furthermore, Wallerstein’s work may be more proper for countries that are not part of the EU, while Martinicans are quite satisfied in being part of the Union from a non-economic point of view (as Fola Gadet’s critique already pointed out).
and from which the identitarian discourses are, normally, produced; the periphery is the place where the decisions of the centre are accepted and implemented accordingly, and incorporates the discourses produced there (Reynaud A. 1991, p.41-70). Connected to the spatial categories of centre and periphery, is the notion of socio-spatial class, which defines a social group characterised by a specific spatial belonging and sense of identity, determining its relations to other socio-spatial groups in terms of affinity or difference, peace or conflict (Reynaud A. 1991, p.27-40). Martinicans can be therefore described, at the same time, as a Caribbean and ultra-peripheral socio-spatial class. This evident duality – which, as we know from the first chapter, strongly simplifies the complexity of the Martinican identity – is a strength and richness. Nevertheless, to conduce our analysis here we take into consideration Martinicans as an EU ultra-peripheral socio-spatial class, whose identity is part of the EU plurality discourse. The relations between socio-spatial classes regard exchange of people, goods, capitals and, mainly, information and discourses. Reynaud dedicates an extensive part of his work to the notion of spatial injustice, where the center of a State/administrative entity dominates and determines the periphery. Even though the relation between Paris and the rest of France could be framed, under certain points of view, as such\textsuperscript{127} (the origins of the author we are taking into consideration are not a casualty\textsuperscript{128}), we do not speak of center-periphery relation in terms of domination. Indeed, our work aims to analyze the possible identitarian relations that can be established between the EU and Martinique, and, as we know, one of the fundamental values of the Union is democracy, with the meaning, among others, that citizens should participate in the process of policy construction for their determination, and that there should be no domination from a part or another. According to such vision, the discourses produced at the periphery have the same value of those produced at the center. Aside, therefore, from the issues of economic exchange, which, as we saw with Fola

\textsuperscript{127} For example, Fola Gadet’s analysis of neocolonialism shows the economic domination exercised by the alliances between the béké elite and French lobbies.

\textsuperscript{128} Critical geographer Alain Reynaud is, indeed, of French origins. He studied at Bordeaux University and in 1968 became a professor at the Geography Institute of Reims University. The opening lines of the book \textit{Société et justice}, from which we derive the theories here exposed, take as example the inequalities that exist between Paris and the French regions of Brittany, Aquitania, Corsica, Lorena and others (Reynaud A. 1991, p.19).
Gadet, represent a criticality of the Martinique – France – EU triangle, the exchange of discourses between the Caribbean island and the Union represents, in our belief, a good opportunity for increasing the identification with one another between the two entities. Indeed, the EU offers all the assets for giving room and recognition to the identitarian space of Martinique. What lacks, in our opinion, is mutual attention.

Conclusions to Chapter Two

To sum up on the elements exposed in this chapter, on the one hand we explained how the European Union is a supra-national institution open to plurality and that promotes complex, mosaic identities among its citizens; on the other hand, though, we illustrated how far a reality the EU is to Martinicans, and vice versa. The European Union may represent an interesting source of funds for the improvement of the infrastructure and livelihood on the island, but there is no actual identity affiliation with the institution and the values it conveys. The connections to the colonizing past are all too vivid among Martinicans, and the erasure process that EU member States operated over such past, and especially the lack of attention given to present day similar dynamics (i.e. néocolonialisme), pushes the identity-building process of Martinicans even further from the institution. As Daniel writes: “[…] l’UE n’existe pas vraiment dans l’imaginaire des populations de la Caraïbe”129 (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.134). Yet, we believe that the factor of plurality, which so strongly characterises the identity discourse conveyed by the European Union values and its motto “United in Diversity”, offers the perfect space for the Martinican identity to express itself as part of the Union. In the next chapter, we will therefore draw such conclusion, giving also concrete examples.

129 “[…] the EU does not really exist in the imaginary of the populations of the Caribbean” (Daniel J. in Arnaud L. 2005, p.134) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
3 Chapter 3 – Identité Martiniquaise in EU history and identity discourses

“The Atlantic passage conceived by Stuart Hall in all of its colourful and dynamic significance stimulates Europe to cover again its journey to conquer the world, but upside down: to look for its identity out of itself, in the dialogue with other lands and cultures, that can help the old continent to go beyond its own borders, that are so tenaciously and regressively rooted within it. The need to find a more flexible and less exclusive modality of belonging, to imagine a new Europe, in a planetary context, where the peripheries are or become centres, looking for identities and differences in the changing mosaic of the continent”

Giorgio Baratta introducing a collection of Stuart Hall’s articles for Italian readers

In the opening of the book Penseiro Caraibico, Gazzoni writes: “The western mind is still colonial, even though colonialism takes forms, nowadays, partly different from the ones of the past” (Gazzoni A. 2016, p.14). Indeed, in chapter two, we described how the EU has an ambivalent relationship with coloniality: on the one hand, the institution relegates the responsibility for colonialism to its member states, separating itself from such historical past, that has been erased from the Union’s historical discourses, highly

130 Translated from Italian by Laura Truffarelli: “Il transito atlantico pensato da Stuart Hall in tutta la sua variopinta dinamica pregnanza, stimola l’Europa a ripercorrere il suo viaggio di conquista del mondo in senso rovesciato: a ricercare la sua identità fuori di sé, nel dialogo con terre e culture altre, che possono aiutare il vecchio continente a sconfinare oltre i propri confini così tenacemente e regressivamente radicati al suo interno. Emerge con forza l’esigenza di ritrovare una modalità più flessibile e meno esclusiva di appartenenza, di immaginare un’Europa nuova, in un contesto planetario ove le periferie sono o diventano centri, ricercando identità e differenze nel continente mosaico che cambia. (Politiche del quotidiano. Culture, identità e senso comune, a cura di Giovanni Leghissa, Milano, Il Saggiatore 2006 p. 14)”


132 Translation from Italian by Laura Truffarelli: “La mente occidentale è ancora coloniale, sebbene il colonialismo passi per forme in parte diverse da quelle del passato” (Gazzoni A. 2016, p.14)
diminishing its relevance; on the other hand, we criticised how the official relations that are withheld with ACP countries are still inscribed in dominance discourses, meaning that they still have the objective of maintaining a form of economic control over such territories and their resources, while attempting to build them as efficient interlocutors according to western norms\textsuperscript{133} (which we defined \textit{Néocolonialisme}). On the contrary, our objective is to oppose to such behaviour, by bringing to light the discourses produced in Martinique, whose past is connected to colonialism, and whose present is submerged by neocolonialism. In Gazzoni’s words: “Confronting and educating ourselves with those who thought and practiced decolonization, gives us the occasion to discover ourselves as colonial subjects\textsuperscript{134}, who try to de-colonise themselves \textit{together} with the world – ours, of the others’, of everybody’s\textsuperscript{135}\textsuperscript{136} (Gazzoni A. 2016, p.14).

Firstly, we will briefly highlight the affinities and differences between the identity of Martinicans and the one of EU citizens of the continent. Indeed, it is time to put in relation the past of unity and fragmentation that characterises, in different forms, both the EU and the Caribbean, and that we have until now described separately. In this way, we will be able to take up the renegotiation challenge requested by Fola Gadet: even though we are not going to speculate on different economic agreements, as actually proposed by the professor, we will try to hypothesize a renegotiation of identity between Martinique and the EU, that may be able to set the ground for other typologies of negotiations, such as the one concerning economic power. We will, furthermore, make a few examples of means that through which EU citizens can actively communicate with the EU, in order to promote their perspectives, their needs and their narratives. The examples we make concern citizens taking action, but our objective is not to show the lack of activity that


\textsuperscript{134} In line with Stuart Hall’s theorization of post-colonialism, which highlights that post-colonial though belongs can be practiced by those who suffered colonialism as much as those who practiced it (see chapter 1, paragraph 1.2.1).

\textsuperscript{135} Italics in the original.

\textsuperscript{136} Translation from Italian by Laura Truffarelli: “Metterci in relazione ed educarci con chi ha pensato e praticato la decolonizzazione ci dà l’occasione per scoprirci soggetti coloniali che cercano di decolonizzarsi \textit{insieme} al mondo – quello nostro, quello altrui, quello di tutti” (Gazzoni A. 2016, p.14).
Martinicans may show: we strongly believe that empowering the people of Martinique to participate in EU decision making and influencing public opinion has to go through, first and foremost, the recognition, by EU citizens, of their peculiar status. As Raynaud explains in exposing the concept of socio-spatial justice\(^\text{137}\), it is upon the public authority to make sure that marginal communities don’t remain excluded from political and economic processes (Reynaud A. 1991, p.105-130). In our case, we can transpose the same idea to preventing the exclusion of Martinicans from the identity and historical discourses produces by the European Union. Therefore, we will argue that there is a need, on the part of the EU, to acknowledge the colonial past and its repercussions on the present day, as well as a necessity to raise better awareness of the existence of ultra-peripheral territories, and of the EU citizens that live there.

Finally, we will conclude our work by taking into consideration the peripheral voices of Martinican feminist discourses, in order to understand what are the differences and analogies with the feminist quests in the EU, and how the two can be beneficial for each other, and for enriching the identity-building process of EU citizens.

3.1 – Renegotiation of identities

In chapter one, after recreating the pathway that the quest for identity in Martinique went through, we landed on the concept of Creolité elaborated by Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant. Among others, they highlight two interesting aspects of being creole: Creolité as a feature of the people that underwent colonization; and the creative ability that these showed to bring together different cultural traits, merging them into one result that unifies, but doesn’t flatten the singular character. In our opinion, this second aspect has its affinities with the “united in diversity” EU motto.

Of course, while Creolité takes into consideration the forced unification of different ethnicities and cultures, which is connected with the first aspect we recalled above, the “united in diversity” motto refers first and foremost to the diversity conveyed by different

\(^{137}\) Socio-spatial justice may be defined as a balance between core and periphery, in political, economic and narrative terms (Reynaud A. 1991, p.105-130).
national entities, and only on a secondary level diverse cultures. Furthermore, if we compare the creole identity with the mosaic identity of EU citizens, many differences arise. While the creole identity derives from the mixture of identities that did not feel a strong connection to the land they were inhabiting, EU citizens living on the European continent agreed to develop their mosaic identity, and to dialogue with the surrounding different cultures, in light of sharing and feeling an attachment to the same land. This, of course, created the result that while the creole identity was, and still is, a complex exercise of accepting certain ambiguities that characterize it, the mosaic identity allows to distinguish the origin of one or the other. One more difference lies in the fact that the creole identity was born as an act of creative resistance to a violent imposition from above, while the EU mosaic identity is an ongoing process, that is responding to certain policies and the discourses that derive from them, to foster the integration of a political-economic institution under the citizenship profile.

Despite these differences, we yet believe that the interesting analogy between the creole identity and the mosaic one, namely the unity of fragments of identities, could set a positive ground for improving a dialogue and better negotiation of identity discourses between the two parts. On the one hand, Bernabé et al. aim at freeing the Martinican identity imaginary from West produced discourses. In the perspective expressed by Fola Gadet in his book, this means having more autonomy and space for self-determination. At the same time, the EU positive attitude towards identity plurality, and towards all identity discourses produced by the institution’s citizens, is in line with such objective, and leave space for Martinican discourses to be heard. What it lacks, as we noticed, is mutual attention and understanding. In our belief, it is the European Union that, within its discourses on EU citizenship, beginning by its history, should better acknowledge the presence of ultra-peripheral areas and their specific identitarian needs. This would allow the institution and its values to be understood differently by Martinicans: instead of conceiving the EU as a mere source of funding, a renewed identity inclusiveness would allow the people of the ultra-peripheral region to actually feel citizens of the supranational organization.
To conclude this brief comparison, we want to underline that the tendency of Martinicans to feel part of the regional area of the Caribbean should be fully respected: it is the EU that should better embrace this dimension of and diversity of citizenship.

3.1.1 – EU History Discourses

Bernabé et al.’s manifesto listed first, among its objectives, to denounce the west-produced historical discourses, and to accept and give relevance to the local histories of each territory, against fausse mémoire. Indeed, by accepting the reality of the colonial past, Europe will be able to open its eyes on the present, and open its years to the identity needs of ultra-peripheral territories, understanding the dynamics of neo-colonialism. Hansen and Jonsson denounce this tendency showed by the EU in its historical discourses, as well as by historians, to diminish the relevance of colonialism: “That Europe as Europe – that is, as a politically, economically and legally sanctioned organization in its own right, and not merely as a nebulous historical, cultural or civilizational unit – has a colonial history thus remains a well-kept secret. This point is also substantiated by the ways in which the history of the European Union is conceived and disseminated by some of its most influential practitioners” (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p.291). We believe that the first step to renegotiating identities between Martinique and EU is, indeed, to cast a different light on the historical conscience of the EU, which should start to include colonialism in its discourses and to remind EU citizens of such past and the meaning it has for both Europe and those who were subjugated by its dominance. This would also help EU citizens to understand the psychological impact that colonialism had on those who suffered it, and the western narratives that describe them today. Besides Fanon’s analysis, we could recall the concept of Banana diploma, described by Kathy and recalled by Bertaux, Delcroix and Pfefferkorn in their article (Bertaux D., Delcroix C., Pfefferkorn R. 2011), which is a pejorative term that diminishes the value of a degree achieved in Martinique, and, in its

138 See chapter one, paragraph 1.4.3.
impact, means that people coming from the island may have less opportunities of access jobs or universities on the main continent.

The recognition of this double effect (on Martinicans and on main land’s EU citizens view of Martinicans) conveyed by the ignorance of certain historical and present-day fact would also foster the development of new narratives of inclusion, and a different acceptance of ultra-peripheral citizens.

In order to understand and include the Identité Martiniquaise, EU citizens should also understand that it is not only in the decolonized American countries that slavery took place and was surpassed. Europeans may study about slavery as a phenomenon of the past, but, while in the Americas there is extensive acknowledgment and ongoing studies on the consequences that such experience brought upon the population, the same is not valid for the inhabitants of the old continent, that are not normally aware of such repercussions. In Discours sur le Néocolonialisme, Professor Fola Gadet requires that all French citizens better understand their past and the crime of slavery: “Je n’oublie aucune victime du projet politique, économie et religieux appelé esclavage. Aucun(e) torturé(e), assassiné(e), violé(e) et deraciné(e). Reconnaître le crime, c’est une étape. Et encore ! Car elle peut aussi servir à donner bonne conscience aux criminels […] Voir la France rendre hommage national aux victimes de l’esclavage est important mais pas suffisant. D’ailleurs les résistances de certains maires et l’indifférence de beaucoup de Français sont éloquentes”139 (Fola Gadet S. 2018, p.32-33). We want to extend the professor’s call to all EU citizens. Indeed, the slavery system was adopted by all colonial power in their overseas possessions, and the triangular trade that we described in the first chapter is the first testimony of such past. The independence of the lands upon which slavery was imposed, made it so that EU citizens do not live side by side with the outcomes of this history, and do not see it as a character that belongs to them. For this reason, EU citizens

139 “I haven’t forgotten the victims of the political, economic and religious project called slavery. No tortured, no killed, no raped. Recognizing the crime is a step. And more! It can serve to raise a better awareness to the criminals […] Seeing France paying national tribute to to the victims of slavery is important, but not sufficient. In fact, the resistance of certain mayors and the indifference of most French people speak for themselves” (Fola Gadet S. 2018, p.32-33) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
should be better informed and educated on the thought of post-colonial thinkers, and on the outcomes described by Fanon. As we pointed out before in this work, education (in both its official/formal and unofficial/informal forms) is a powerful means to convey values and culture. On the matter, Hansen and Jonsson write: “There is a danger involved in this replacement of history by myth. We will then be educating students and the general public to think of the European project in the least European way thinkable – namely, as unrelated to one of Europe’s major histories: the imperialist project” (Hansen P., Jonsson S. 2014, p.26). Important instruments that the EU has to foster education, integration, inclusion and to dialogue with its citizens are programs and projects addressed at civil society organizations, local entities and educational institution, like Universities. As also suggested by the document published by the European Commission in 2012, the results of such projects, especially when they foster research in the most diverse fields, are absorbed by EU bodies, in order to inform their policies and the discourses that these policies promote. This precious aspect of the EU, concerning the prospecting ability to interact as much as possible with its citizens, is the best occasion for the discourses from Martinique to be expressed. Throughout our research, we encountered one project that aimed at revitalizing the memory of slavery. The research project is entitled EURESCL – Slave Trade Slavery Abolitions and their Legacies in European Histories and Identities\textsuperscript{140}, and it was carried out in the years 2008-2012. The EURESCL Brochure, the final output of the project, summarises the results achieved: “the EURESCL project has fulfilled two main objectives. On one hand, it has reintegrated the slave trade in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic into understanding the process of the construction of the European identity in terms of political, economic, social, cultural, intellectual, memorial and pedagogical characteristics. On the other, it has studied current social relationships built on these experiences and representations, and particularly those emanating from the racialization of slavery with the Atlantic trade” (Cottias M., Collain N., 2012). Therefore, the project was able to recall the European responsibility of slavery, to analyse the identity building outcomes that it brought upon both Europeans and the enslaved and, most importantly, it

\textsuperscript{140} Website of the project: http://www.eurescl.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1&lang=en
gave a strong recognition of the racialization process carried by the phenomenon. Among other results, the EURESCL project also ended up posing an interesting critique to European abolitionist movements (Hodgson K., 2012). Indeed, one of the highlights of the research concerns the fact that anti-slavery movements were tightly linked to Christianity and civilization, and, ironically, ended up justifying imperialism over Africa. Overall, the project shows how Europe, in a way or another, imposed itself over the world, and is in line with post-colonial critique. The research was carried out by European research centres and Universities, alongside research centres and Universities from Senegal, Mexico and Haiti, which experienced slavery in different forms. The EURESCL project is, therefore, an example of how the European Union can foster the expression of counter narratives, of diversity and plurality within itself, and how it can empower its citizens to denounce a forgotten past and history.

3.1.2 – Martinicans from periphery to center

In the previous chapter, we defined Martinicans as a minority within France and Europe, as well as residents of a marginal area of the Union, explaining what this entails according to critical geography. In the 2012 European Commission analytical document that we already mentioned, the following considerations on inclusiveness emerged:

- absence of legal redress mechanisms in cases of violation of language legislation concerning smaller languages;
- multilingualism itself is legally established only to a very limited extent, despite it being a core aspect promoted by the Union\(^{141}\);
- even though multilingualism is considered as an important asset for the citizens, minority languages, because they are connected to a specific ethnic group, they can result in a form of inequality linked to an “ethnic stigma”, which the EU aims to prevent, in line with its orientation towards human rights.

\(^{141}\) As we already recalled in the second chapter. See the europa.eu website at the following link: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-languages_en
For this reason, the same document suggests to promote local/ regional consciousness of diversity, promote comparative research among minorities living in the EU, and foster local activity. The report highlights that “There is an obvious tendency in public discourse to portray minorities as “others”, forgetting their historical presence or the shared historical roots of majority and minority groups. Policy-makers and stakeholders should not only make the linguistic and ethnic diversity better known but also portray it as characteristic of the region and as something that belongs to the cultural heritage of all groups” (European Commission, 2012). This enforces the belief exposed in the previous paragraph, that acknowledging the existence of ultra-peripheral lands and the history that determined them would promote better understanding of these minorities.

As we explained in the first chapter, according to Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, the message of Creolité is that diversity – word that constitute the EU motto – is preserved in small things, among small communities of people and cultures. Minorities are therefore an integral part of the EU, besides the ambivalence highlighted by the European Commission. Furthermore, according to scholar Julia Kristeva, minorities have another important role: minority groups question identity. They question their own identity when put in relation to a majority, and they question the majority’s identity that has to interact with them (Kristeva J. in Bolaffi A., Crainz G. 2019, p. 226). This behaviour is part of what EU citizens underwent throughout the building of the Union, and that still undergo now. For this reason, the presence and preservation of minorities can be an important practice that fosters EU integration under the identitarian discourse.

The 2012 European Commission report also affirms: “Despite great differences in the history and the eco-socio-political conditions, diversity and minority/majority issues across Europe show many more similarities than the communities themselves as well as national and European policy-makers seem to realise [...] Multilingual communities and minority groups could make better use of the opportunities for transnational cooperation offered by, for instance, the EU, and policy-makers at various levels would profit from information exchanges on issues of maintaining language diversity” (European Commission 2012, p.24). In our research, we found a fantastic example that applies this
recommendation by the European Commission. This example is the Minority SafePack Initiative. This kind of initiative is not a project, but fall under the category of “European Citizens’ Initiative”, meaning “an instrument of direct democracy that was introduced by the European Union in 2012. If more than one million European citizens from at least seven Member States support an initiative proposed by a group of citizens, the European Commission must engage in the proposal.”142 This instrument thus allows citizens to propose changes in the EU policy on specific matters, and the objective of the Minority SafePack initiative is, indeed, to “encourage the European Union to live up to its motto and to improve the protection of people belonging to national and linguistic minorities and strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity in the Union”. Furthermore, the project criticises the attitude of the EU, that left the issue of minorities to be dealt with at Member State level, and not in a unified way. In the case of Martinique, the Martinican minority has “suffered” of this condition twice: not only the issue of minorities is left to be dealt with to France, but also the management of the island as an ultra-peripheral territory is left, for the most part, to be decided at state level. This meant that there is no united way, within the EU, to manage the space that minority cultures can cover in public discourse, the social recognition they should have and, eventually, the social rights they can benefit from thanks to their condition of minority. An initiative like the one of the Minority SafePack is a wonderful example of how minority citizens of the EU can raise awareness of their condition, by bringing their narrative to the attention not only of EU policy makers, but also of other EU citizens. Despite the relevance of this initiative, on the website that promotes it there is no mention of the population of Martinique, or of other ultra-peripheral territories: even though the success of this initiative would most likely bring positive outcomes on the policies promoted by the EU regarding also such lands, the lack of mention of these peripheral minorities is a signal of how much their narrative and their history has been put aside. Therefore, we want to highlight one more time that the EU should change its narratives on its birth and its history, in order to better include, among its discourses, the ones coming from territories that demonstrate its colonial past.

142 Definition given in the Minority SafePack Initiative website: http://www.minority-safepack.eu/#sponsors_p
3.2 – Feminists from the Periphery

We want to conclude our work by giving an example of how discourses developed in Martinique can be integrated and, most importantly, contribute to the ones produced in the European Union, supporting further EU identity building. We will focus on the narratives put forward by feminist movements in Martinique, and compare them with the trending feminist discourses in the Union, describing how the ones produced at the periphery can give a wider perspective to the ones produced at the core. In our case, we will take into consideration the narratives created by the feminist civil society organizations of Martinique: indeed, through their activities these entities can have a strong ideological influence on the population of the island, uncovering gender stereotypes and explaining their roots, in order to advocate for a change of behaviour. Also, as the 2012 European Commission report on European identity/identities states: “civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contribute to reshaping collective identities and building a more inclusive and equal society” (European Commission 2012, p.15). Furthermore, feminist discourses, just like post-colonial discourses, stem from post-structuralist theories of Marxist matrix. Indeed, as explained by already mentioned François Cusset in French Theory, feminist movements, that begun to develop in the early ’70s in American Universities, are strongly influenced by Foucault’s writings. Feminists not only constructively criticize the French author’s analysis of the history of sexuality, but also integrate the concept of biopolitics to their theories, so that the norms that determine gender are evaluated as specific historical and

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143 As Cusset explains, in the thick trilogy Histoire de la Sexualité, published in the ’70s, Foucault does not expose theories relating to the differences between the female and male gender, and the author was also well-known for his misogyny. Nevertheless, the bottom line of his work, which is also the concept that feminist movements adopted, is that sexuality is a discursive formation, and can be used as a device for subjugation (Cusset F. 2012, p.187).

144 With the term biopolitics, Foucault meant to describe the fact that power and power relations produce, determines, classify and administer their subjects; they manipulate and determine bodies, so that they never express independently (Cusset F. 2012, p.188). Specifically, biopolitics refer to the power exercised by a political administration (http://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/05/10/michel-foucault-biopolitics-biopower/).

145 The term gender implies the sexual identity that is socially constructed, as opposed to the term sex, which identifies the anatomic sexual identity. Cultures tend to build specific social and cultural representation of
political constructions, with the aim to understand the modalities with which these norms have been developed (Cusset F. 2012, p.180-191).

As we will see in the following paragraphs, the norms that determine gender have been constructed in the context of French colonial domination and slavery. This meant that the gender relations in Martinique have been determined by both the relations between the black men and women, and the relations by the black man or woman with the white maîtres. As Boëtsch et al. explain in the introduction to the collection of essays *Sexualités, Identités & Corps Clonisés*, “[…] la domination sexuelle a reposé sur un long processus d’asservissement produisant des imaginaire complexes qui […] se sont nourris d’une véritable fascination/répulsion pur les corps ‘autres’ […] L’ordre sexuel colonial prend ainsi place dans des rapports de pouvoir et des systèmes de normes qui impliquent aussi bien les hommes que les femmes, de ‘race’ blanche et de couleur, homosexuels et hétérosexuels […]” (Boëtsch G. et al. 2019, p. 25-26). This passage speaks of the sexualized relation between the colonizer and the other, the colonized, highlighting its dominant character. To express this idea, Boëtsch et al. recall the concept of biopower as well, applying it to the regulation of sexuality and gender in the colonial context: “[la] ‘vérité du sexe’ […] dans le rapport que celle-ci aurait au désir/fantasme et à la production et réification des normes au sein mêmes des biopouvoirs: c’est-à-dire à la planification, au contrôle, à la surveillance de la sexualité, et, bien sûr, à sa punition et sa repression aux travers de violences multiples, diversifiées et répétées, elles-mêmes produits de différents dispositifs de dominations croisées” (Boëtsch G. et al. 2019, p.14). From this passage, we

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146 “[…] The sexual domination is based on a long process of subjugation that produced complex imaginaries, that […] nourished with a real fascination/repulsion for the bodies of the ‘other’ […] The colonial sexual order thus takes place in the power relations and the systems of norms that imply both men and women, of white or black ‘race’, homosexual and heterosexual“ (Boëtsch G. et al. 2019, p. 25-26) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

147 Biopower can be described as the putting into practice of biopolitics upon a society (http://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/05/10/michel-foucault-biopolitics-biopower/).

148 “[the] ‘truth of sex’ […] in the relationship that [sex] will have with desire/fantasy and with production and reification of norms is within biopowers themselves: meaning, the planning, the control, the surveillance, of sexuality and, of course, its punishment and repression by several forms of violence, diversified and repeated, themselves produced by different devises of crossed dominations” (Boëtsch G. et al. 2019, p.14) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
not only understand how biopower functions in determining sexuality relations, but it also implies that it took the form of violence. Violence has, therefore, shaped also the relations between genders of the colonized people, leaving a deep scar in modern day post-colonial societies, where such violence became part of the cultural norms that regulate the dynamics between people. Indeed, as Boëtsch et al. point out, the end of formal end of colonialism did not put an end to the colonial social settings, including the one regulating the relationship between genders, because the norms dictated by the colonial biopolitics were embedded into post-colonial cultures (Boëtsch G. et al. 2019, p.24-25).

In light of these considerations, we can highlight that a deconstructionist analysis of gender relations can, in the case of Martinique, be crossed with post-colonial discourses, with a focus on the critique of the interracial relations that derive from these. Indeed, in the United States feminist discourses have, since many years, been embracing also interracial perspectives, due to the growing critiques that these movements have received by categories of women – and groups – that felt underrepresented. One among many popular thinkers that moved these critiques since the early years of the birth of American feminist movements, is bell hooks (hooks b., 2000). As she explains, the feminist movements of the early ‘70s were born as a sentiment of indignation among white, college educated, bourgeois women, who felt that their life could not only be dedicated to being housewives, but also wished to pursue their own purpose (hooks b. 2000, p.1-17). In opposition to these views, hooks highlights that black women were not new to the feeling of being marginalised, of their role and capacities being diminished by social structures. She explains how the discourses produced by these high-class women, despite their declared will to speak to all women, did not communicate to other groups of women. For this reason, hooks wants to promote the development of feminist perspectives among different social and racial groups, in order to intersect feminism with sex, race and social class. By opening to different perspective and voices, feminism can, indeed, become a social movement that regards all women, who all share the same patriarchal subjugation (hooks b., 2000).
We can see that, varied racial perspectives are becoming more and more integrated in feminist discourses in Europe, due to the growing diversity that the Union is experiencing as a consequence of its expansion, on the hand, and of migration, on the other. Despite this, we want to present here the feminist discourses developed in Martinique, not only to give an impulse to the already started diversification, but also to put under the light a typology of feminist discourses that have been developing within the Union since its birth, and that have received far too small attention, coming, as they do, from the periphery. As bell hooks writes: “Living as we did – on the edge – we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as on the margin. We understood both” (hooks b. 2000, p. xvi).

![Picture 3.1. Picture taken in the headquarters of the feminist association Culture Egalité, born in Martinique in 2013. The association leads many awareness raising campaigns and fights for gender parity. One of the informers in our analysis is an activist of the association, which involves many young women from Fort-de-France and from all over the island.](image-url)
In Martinique, the first feminine movements – meaning realities that addressed the needs of the women – begun already in the XIX century, but these were not linked to political factions, and did not fight for the rights of the women, which, at the time, concerned mainly the right to vote in the elections. Despite this, these sociétés mutuelles were managed by women for women, and played an important role in giving a public visibility to their actions (Palmiste C., 2009). I time, these movements in favour of the women grew to be politicised, and begun to advocate for suffrage as well as to highlight the peculiar position that the women of the Antilles covered compared to women elsewhere – namely their connection to past slavery (Palmiste C. 2009, p.89). Feminist movements organized in the form of CSOs have existed in Martinique since the ‘40s. These movements have been focused, in the beginning, on reproductive health, as well as the health and education of the child. Step by step, these movements begun to embrace also social fights for women rights (in terms of health, education, labour, urban development, politics, etc.) while widening their action to supporting women suffering from violence. Today, the movements put a lot of effort not only in promoting gender equality and fighting against violence on women, but also in raising awareness on the links that exist between the violent colonial and slavery past, and the current dynamics that determine gender stereotypes and gender relations in Martinique, their embeddedness in the Martinican culture, and their reproduction through the media (Bonheur R., 2018).

3.2.1 – Feminist discourses in Martinique and the Colonial Origins of Gender Disparities

“Dans notre creuset culturel, constitué […] par différentes migrations, dans un espace déjà habité par des femmes et des hommes amérindiens, les rapports entre les genres et les représentations que l’ont peut en avoir proviennent aussi, entre autres, d’Europe et d’Afrique. Elles ont, bien entendu, évolué sous la pression des institutions sociales (esclavage) et des nécessités de survie, dans un espace en partie vidé des
mécanismes de contrôle social traditionnels […]” (Descas-Ravoteur M. et al. 2014, p.5). These words are taken from the beautiful 2014 book Femmes de la Martinique: quelle histoire?, which was created thanks to the collaboration of several professors and historians, by consulting the departmental archives of Martinique. The book presents a double aim: to include women in the historical discourses of the island, on the one hand, while exploring the historical development of womanhood and gender relations in Martinique. This book inevitably ends up aligning with the discourses produced by the feminist organizations of Martinique, who, besides their practical work and support given at social level, work on raising awareness on the peculiar historical background of Martinican women. When talking about the historical role that women covered, one special relevance is often given to the subversive actions they took during the many anti-slavery revolts against the white maîtres: as explained in both Femmes de la Martinique and L’esclavage, women took part to actions of marronage both in the plantations as well as in the urban context (Descas-Ravoteur M. et al. 2014 & Pago G. in A. Charles-Nicolas A. and Bowser B., 2018). When we focus, on the other hand, on the analysis of the historical and social processes that influenced the present-day gender structure in Martinique, a deconstructionist approach has to be adopted. As Martinican sociologist Errol Nussier writes: “[…] le préjugé est présent chez les Antillais eux-mêmes, mais également chez les hommes et les femmes venus d’ailleurs, et que si l’on venait aux Antilles avec un plan de Paris, il ne fallait pas s’étonner que les rues ne correspondent pas. […] au-delà des croyances, il fallait analyser les faits en s’efforçant de les décrypter, pour comprendre leur signification, notamment leur caractère opératoire, puisqu’ils se transmettent de génération en génération, de manière explicite ou implicite, et qu’ils demeurent présents, encore de nos jours. C’est le cas notamment de la femme noire, à l’époque de l’esclavage, souvent perçue encore de nos jours comme une femme séductrice et au pouvoir maléfique [et] l’homme noire, comme un étalon, comme un homme irresponsable, dont la fonction

149 “In our cultural melting pot, made up […] by different migrations, in a space already inhabited by Amerindian women and men, the relationship between the genders and their possible representations, come from, among others, Europe and Africa. Obviously, they evolved under the pressure of specific social institutions (slavery) and the needs to survive, in a space partly cleaned out of the traditional mechanisms of social control […]” (Descas-Ravoteur M. et al. 2014, p.5) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
procréatrice était largement exploitée […]” (Nussier E. 2018, p.204). From this passage, we already understand many elements. First of all, Nussier highlights, once again, the impact that the colonial plan had on the society of the Antilles, highlighting how its outcomes are socially transmitted from generation to generation. Furthermore, Nussier already tells us two characteristic elements of the dynamics that determine the relation between man and women: the one gender does not rely on the other, because women are considered as malefic seductresses and men as reproduction machines. This mistrust between man and women is reflected in the many social dynamics that we will now explain more in depth.

On the matter of the behaviours manifested between genders, we should recall the analysis that Edouard Glissant carries out of the matter in *Le Discours Antillais*, reconstructing the sexual relations that normed the enslaved men and women. Glissant writes: “Le maître entend que l’esclave lui appartienne, jusque dans la fonction de reproduction […] Sa marge de manœuvres sexuelle est contrainte à la marge bénéficiaire du maître” (Glissant E. 1997, p.504-505). In this way, the sexuality of the enslaved people was under the control of the maître, and this had an impact on the way enslaved men and women considered each other. Indeed, such a strict control from the master resulted in the impossibility, for the enslaved, to build an emotional, stable relationship, and build a family (Glissant E., 1997). Men could not have a stable partner because their function was to have sexual intercourse with different women, in agreement with the master’s

150 “[…] the prejudice is present among the people of the Antilles, but it exists in the same way among the men and women who came from elsewhere, and that came to the Antilles with a plan from Paris, and it is no wonder that the streets do not match. […] besides the beliefs, it is necessary to analyse the facts by decrypting them, to understand their meaning, how they work operationally, because they are transmitted from generation to generation, explicitly or implicitly, and they are still present nowadays. It is the case of the black woman, that, since the slavery time, is perceived still today as a seductress with malefic powers [and] the black man, as a stallion, as an irresponsible, whose reproductive role has been largely exploited […]” (Descas-Ravoteur M. et al. 2014, p.5) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

151 In the first chapter, under paragraph 1.3, we already explained the mistrust that the slavery system provoked among the enslaved people, and how this reflects on gender relations as well.

152 “The master believes that the enslaved belongs to him, even with regard to the reproductive function […] His sexual leeway is restricted by the margin of profit of the master” (Glissant E. 1997, p.504-505) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
reproductive plan, and women, subjugated to the same system, could not have a stable relationship with a man, because their role was only to give birth and raise children. Today, inter-gender behaviours in Martinique reflect such structure. Indeed, as observed by Lefaucher and Brown in their 2011 sociological research, in Martinique there is a generalised tendency, for both men and women, to delay serious relationships, and maintain several affairs at the same time with more than one partner. This second behaviour is stronger in men, and goes under the definition of *pluripartenariat*. Also, the two researchers highlight that *pluripartenariat* and unstable relationships are more common among groups with a lower social position, while among groups that benefit from a higher social status the tendency is to be in stable relationships and get married (Lefaucher N., Brown E., 2011). As we saw in the first chapter, social status in Martinique is also strongly connected to the past slavery and colonial social settings.

Another important element that Lefaucher and Brown highlight in their analysis is the frequent use of violence by men, to impose themselves over. As we already had the occasion to point out, the slavery system used violent biopower to impose itself over the enslaved people. In this context, women were the ones to suffer from this violent institution the most. As Glissant writes, “[…] dans ce tableau général la femme martiniquaise est la victime la plus extrême”\(^\text{153}\) (Glissant E. 1997, p.511). Analysing the social structure shown in the USA in the ‘70s and ‘80s, bell hooks highlights that black women cover the last step of the domination scale, where white groups, regardless of their social status, position themselves over man and women of colour, and black man are in a dominant position in relation to women with dark complexion (hooks b., 2000). It is important to point out that the society of the United States underwent very different social developments, due also to the institutionalised apartheid that existed long after the abolition of slavery, while the institutional behaviour of France differed greatly\(^\text{154}\).

\(^{153}\) “[…] within this general picture the Martinican woman is the extreme victim” (Glissant E. 1997, p.511) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

\(^{154}\) See previous chapters regarding the extension of social and human rights to all French citizens, regardless of race, gender and social status.
Nevertheless, this doesn’t mean that the two slavery experiences show analogous outcomes, that can, therefore, be compared. Indeed, as Lefaucher and Brown point out, “Dans une société forgée dans une grand violence institutionnelle, ces données permettent également d’approcher l’incidence des violences vécues, tant dans l’éducation que dans les relations amoureuses et conjugales, et la répétition intergénérationnelle des situations, des difficultés et des risques de victimisation, mais aussi la capacité de résilience des individus”\(^{155}\) (Lefaucher N., Brown E. 2011, p.9). Therefore, the past institutionalized violence became part of the cultural norms that determine inter-gender relations, and in many cases women are victim of violence within the love affair, as a result of the male partner feeling threatened by the possibility of her living him or developing interest for a different man (Lefaucher N., Brown E. 2011, p.14-15). For this reason, feminist organizations in Martinique – as well as in the EU and the rest of the world – dedicate a big part of their activity to supporting women that are victims of violence, and to raising awareness against this practice.

These behaviours that characterise men and women in Martinique concurred to create specific stereotypes attached to the one or the other gender, which end up being transmitted from generation to generation, and thus perpetrate the mentioned behaviours. We briefly mentioned through the words of Nussier that women in the Caribbean are seen as *malefic seductresses*, and this partly derives from the fact that enslaved women could have proximity in their relations with the maîtres\(^{156}\), which ended up putting them in an advantaged position in comparison to enslaved men\(^{157}\). This had pitfalls on the relations between enslaved men and women, because the former could not benefit from the same

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\(^{155}\) “In a society forged within a strong institutional violence, it is possible to analyse the incidence of the violence experienced, in education as well as in love and spousal relations, and the intergenerational repetition of certain situations, the difficulties and the risks of victimization, but also the resilience skills of the individuals can be evaluated” (Lefaucher N., Brown E. 2011, p.9) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

\(^{156}\) As we explained in the first chapter, the French colonial administration was not so strict when it came to interracial relations with enslaved or freed women, which is also at the origin of *métissage* (see Chapter One, paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4).

\(^{157}\) This position does not mean that women did not cover the last step of the violence chain, as stated before. They were violated, in different ways, by the white maîtres, may they be men or women, and by their enslaved male counterparts. Despite this, having some sort of relationship with the male maître, and especially having his *métisse* babies, could give them some social advantage.
social advantages of the latter, and this dynamic resulted in men seeing women as seductresses that aimed at having affairs and relationships with the man in order to obtain certain assets. At the same time, women being used for reproductive means within the slavery system resulted in complex gender stereotypes, which affects all women in the Caribbean. As Dorian Powell explains in his 1984 article *The Role of Women in the Caribbean*, one of the most diffused stereotype that affects the female gender in the area is the purpose of becoming a mother. As Powell writes, “[…] women not only are still quite heavily involved in a strong way in the traditional role of women, but feel quite strongly that a woman should experience motherhood. For them, marriage is not necessarily a prerequisite for childbearing” (Powell D. 1984, p.104). In this way, the role of the man as a carer for the children is strongly diminished, with the result that family responsibility falls entirely on the woman, and the man feels free to cover the role he prefers, even by being absent and entertain relationships with other women. At the same time, the man is made “useless” family-wise, and his role is, once again, merely the one to get a woman pregnant. Men become the means for women to achieve their purpose of motherhood, and in this way women become the evil seductresses that only need men to achieve their objective. Feminist movements of Martinique, therefore, work hard to raise awareness against this stereotype, addressing both women and men, and describing the historical dynamics that lay behind them.

There is one more consequence to this stereotypical behaviour, that feminist movements’ discourses deconstruct and de-mystify. Indeed, the absence of the figure of the bread winning man in the household, which is so common in western gender stereotypes, means that women themselves have to provide for their children, meaning that they have to work, besides carrying out the traditional family chores. On the matter, Powell writes: “Though Caribbean women tend largely to perceive a traditional female role, the various sources of information on economic activity indicate that a large proportion of them are indeed involved in economic activities and therefore in a role that traditionally has been assigned to men. Most Caribbean women work […]” (Powell D. 1984, p.111-112). In time, the idea of women taking care of the family and of the house by
themselves, because of the passiveness of men, started to become celebrated, and it started
to be defined under the term *poto mitan*. As Rita Bonheur explains in an article presenting
one of the feminist associations of Martinique (i.e. Union des Femmes de la Martinique),
“Le poto mitan est présenté comme une force de la femme, valorisée, qui la représente
comme le soutien de toute la famille, et celle qui tient le cap contre vents et marées, statut
qui lui conférait un certain pouvoir”\textsuperscript{158} (Bonheur R., 2018). Even though, apparently, the
concept of *poto mitan* seems somewhat positive, showing the strong, resilient side of
women, it actually results into a trap. Indeed, by adopting such a concept as positive, the
role of the women in the Caribbean society will remain unvaried generation after
generation, with gender stereotypes shaping the life of women and men without any
progress on the matter. Feminist movements are very active in dismantling this positive
vision, and promoting gender relations that see the family and household work more
balanced between men and women. As Bonheur underlines, “La plupart des femmes
n’auraient pas […] souhaité être «poto mitan» et auraient préféré être dans le partage de
responsabilités, et les études statistiques montrent bien que dans tous les domaines ce rôle
ne confère aucun pouvoir”\textsuperscript{159} (Bonheur R., 2018). This observation shows that the women
of Martinique do, actually, wish for a more balanced relationship between the genders,
and the feminist associations of the island, through their activities and advocacy for
gender equality, work hard to dismantle stereotypes, and put the basis for the
development of a different society.

3.2.2 – Feminist discourses: differences and affinities between Martinique and the
European Union

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights recognises, under Article 23, the Equality
between women and men, stating that “[i]t must be ensured in all areas, including

\textsuperscript{158} “Poto mitan is presented as the strength of the woman, her valor, that represent her as the support of all of
the family, the one that faces directly all the winds and the tides, and that is a status that gives her a certain
power” (Bonheur R., 2018) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

\textsuperscript{159} “Most of the women do not wish to be ‘poto mitan’ and would prefer to share the responsibilities, and the
statistics show that in no domain this role does actually attribute power.” (Bonheur R., 2018) (translated by
Laura Truffarelli).
employment, work and pay”, as well as “The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex”\textsuperscript{160}. Despite such legal recognition, feminist movements from all over the European Union move several critiques to the lack of legislation in many fields, that would grant better equality to women. To name an example of such claims, feminist movements of Europe underline that the EU the Istanbul convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Haas L., de Riquer B., 2019).

In 2019, the European Green Party edited the collection \textit{EMPOWER. FIGHT. RESIST. Five Years of Feminist Struggle in Europe}, which reports the voices of various feminist movements all over EU and non-EU countries, giving a picture of the main claims put forward between 2015 and 2019. The general aim of this publication is to show the mechanisms that prevent women from actually participating equally to men in society. Furthermore, in the first page of the report, it is stated that “Women are under-represented at a political level and they are still left out of main decision-making positions and processes, especially those whose marginalised political position intersects with other forms of discrimination” (Haas L., de Riquer B., 2019). The solutions and activities proposed in the collection deal with the many aspects of the condition of women, that contribute to their social inequality and marginalization. Overall, the publication advocates for a legislative change by the European Commission, that would effectively further the steps to gender equality among the EU community. In the vision of Irish activist Mary Collins, “All future investments must be driven through the matrix of care\textsuperscript{161} […] (re)investing in public care services across the life cycle; implementing the recent political agreement on work-life-balance to ensure that both women and men can become

\textsuperscript{160} Source: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT&from=EN#d1e364-393-1

\textsuperscript{161} As Neil Datta points out in another chapter of the same report, “The European Parliament also has the important role of approving the entire EU budget together with the Council, and therefore the capacity to safeguard priorities like equality, poverty eradication and the Sustainable Development Goals” (Datta N. in Haas L., de Riquer B. 2019, p.75). Even though in this elaboration we give for granted the distinction between the European Council and the European Parliament, in light of Datta’s statement, it is important to highlight that the former is composed by the heads of all member states, while the members of the latter are directly elected by EU citizens, thus proportionally representing all the strongest ideological movements existing among the community. This allows, therefore, for the proposals moved by feminist movements to be integrated as laws.
equal earners and equal carers throughout their lives; developing and implementing a gender-sensitive/human rights-based approach to migration; and implementing an action plan for an ecologically sustainable planet. Women have a vital role to play in leading the way. To address the democratic deficit in 2019, vote for parity democracy, for more women at the helm as the lighthouse is on the horizon” (Collins M. in Haas L., de Riquer B. 2019, p.20). From this statement, we not only understand that feminist movements in the EU have a clear agenda to advocate for, but we also acknowledge that their approach does not only focus on women issues, but also embraces the connected themes of migration and environment, among others. Even though we did not highlight it in the previous paragraph, these two topics are addressed also by feminist movements in Martinique: indeed, the island sees a growing migration from neighbouring, poorer Caribbean islands (and not only), and migrant women end up being the group that suffers the most from this condition. Indeed, many migrant women are subject to prejudices against them (especially women from Haiti), and end up having to provide for themselves and their families through illegal means, becoming sex workers (Bonheur R., 2018).

Other topics that both EU and Martinican feminist movements address, but on which we do not focus, are sexual and reproductive health and the active fight against violence162. Sexual and reproductive health is too often addressed poorly, and diminished to a secondary matter. As we already mentioned before, feminist organizations in Martinique were actually involved since their formation in promoting reproductive health among women, and the 2019 EU produced publication highlights, in various forms, the still existing lack of dedicated policy on the matter. At the same time, supporting women who were victims of violence, as well as raising awareness on the various forms of violence that women can suffer of, are pivotal activities of feminist movements and organizations not only in the EU and its ultra-peripheral territories, but all over the world (Jiménez P. in Haas L., de Riquer B. 2019, p.108-113).

162 As a matter of fact, we do explain, in the previous paragraph, the genesis of violence that men inflict upon women in Martinique, but we do not discuss the responding activities that feminist organizations lead on the theme. This is not because we do not deem the topic valuable: it is, and should always be, the top topic of all feminist movements around the world, and we share this belief. Nevertheless, we prefer to analyse topics of gender disparity that are less complex to address.
The main common points, shared by EU feminist discourses and Martinican ones, that we would like to analyse here, are: the fight against the patriarchy, the confinement of women to a reproductive role, and intersectionality.

When feminist movements speak of patriarchy, they refer to the social and cultural structures that put the man into a dominating position over the woman. bell hooks writes: “[...] patriarchy is structured so that sexism restricts women’s behaviour in some realms even as freedom from limitations is allowed in other spheres” (hooks b. 2000, p.5), where sexism defines the form of discrimination that women suffer in many social contexts. We already explained that in Martinique, besides the racial scale that defines the power relations within the society, the use of violence, alongside the stereotype of women as only dedicated to motherhood and taking care of the home, has the consequence of reinforcing a patriarchal structure of society. Through similar and also different means, the situation is the same in the EU. Feminist movements in both countries are active in leading awareness raising campaign against the structures that perpetuate patriarchy, also because, as bell hooks herself writes, in many cases “The absence of extreme restrictions leads many women to ignore the areas in which they are exploited or discriminated against; it may even lead them to imagine that no women are oppressed” (hooks b. 2000, p.5). So, awareness raising campaigns are addressed to women, in order to deconstruct the patriarchal cultural and social system, but, at the same time, they are addressed to men and, especially, politicians. In the introduction to EMPOWER. FIGHT. RESIST., it is stated “One crucial area [...] is gender parity. We need to work towards a society in which power is truly shared by all genders [...] In the European Parliament, we have been fighting for structural change [...] keeping the issue on the agenda, making it clear that we will not settle for a bad compromise, and that we are tired of being fobbed off with bureaucratic excuses. Time is up. The European Parliament has a role model function” (Haas L., de Riquer B. 2019, p.13). So, feminist movements go beyond awareness raising, and invest the administrative structures of the EU to carry out legislative change, that will contribute to
improve the levels of gender parity within European Union societies, including Martinique.

We just explained that the confinement of women to the reproductive role greatly contributes to the maintenance of patriarchal cultural and societal norms. We also extensively illustrated the dynamics behind this confinement enacted in Martinique. Regarding continental European Union, feminist movements are active in raise awareness and leading fights for the equal share of parental responsibility between men and women, beginning with legislations that address the duration of work leave after a baby being born in the family. Indeed, while maternity leaves last months, paternity leaves do not exceed two weeks, besides very rare cases. Feminist movements’ discourses include this issue both in Martinique and core European Union. Nevertheless, we noticed one difference between the discourses produced in the ultra-peripheral territory, and the core one. Indeed, in Martinique, feminist discourses directly address and raise awareness on the historical processes that led to the relegation of women in this “marginal” role, while feminism in the European Union is more focused on how to fight against it. In this case, we believe that a combination of the two approached would lead to more effective results. Therefore, giving more space to an historical and social analysis of the role of the woman in the EU within feminist discourses would help to demystify more deeply the stereotypical role that women cover for women, men and administrative institutions. At the same time, including Martinican feminist voices, as well as the ones of the other ultra-peripheral territories, in the fight for a better share of parental responsibility, would contribute to create legislations that are more inclusive and attentive to specific cases all over the EU territory.

This suggestion is actually very coherent with the third point in common between feminist discourses in Martinique and the EU: intersectionality. Intersectionality corresponds to the claims put forward by bell hooks, of including within feminist discourses, the themes of race and class. In Martinican feminist discourses, **intersectionalité** is presented as a fundamental approach. This is defined as the interaction between gender, race, class, culture and history, that build the collective and individual conception of
women, and the stereotypes attached to the female figure. Intersectionalité is employed by feminist movements and organizations of Martinique, because as we mentioned before, the island is subject to a constant migration phenomenon, and migrant women rights are addressed by feminist discourses just as much as the ones of local women (Benheur R., 2018). At the same time, in the EU the theme of intersectionality within feminist movements is becoming more and more embraced, due to the attention that minorities and migrants are receiving\textsuperscript{163}. The underrepresentation that women of colour receive at EU policy level has the consequence of these groups being also underrepresented within feminist fights. As activists Sarah Chander and Isabela Mihalache write, “At a political level, the lack of representation of women of colour is reflected in how poorly our issues are addressed. Mainstream political debates largely ignore women of colour: when our issues are deemed sufficiently political, it is usually through the paternalistic, exclusive and sometimes racist lens of mainstream feminism, with little respect to the agency of the women concerned” (Chander S., Mihalache I. in Haas L., de Riquer B. 2019, p.47). In line with the thesis we already illustrated before, that Martinicans as a peripheral minority can be better included thanks to a better acknowledgement of their past, this underrepresentation can, in our opinion, be addressed by raising awareness among the feminist communities, of the historical processes that relegated these groups to position themselves so marginally. For this purpose, the historical deconstruction that Martinican feminist movements operate of the gender stereotypes that exist among the society of the island can be taken as an operative example. Furthermore, the acknowledgment of such movements within EU feminist movements would forward the inclusion of Martinican peripheral discourses within EU core discourses.

\textsuperscript{163} Especially regarding the theme of migration, the attention given to these minor communities is both positive and negative. Migration is often presented as a problem by political public discourses, and these are usually associated with conservative political parties. In the 2019 publication we are taking in consideration, a strong denunciation of certain conservative movements is carried out, showing how these not only affect women and the progress towards gender parity, but also minority groups, as well as the LGBTI* community (Haas L., de Riquer B., 2019).
3.2.3 – Feminism: from Margin to Center

“Si les travaux sur le suffrage féminin et les mouvements féministes dans l’Hexagone ont fait leur chemin, nous connaissons en revanche moins bien la lutte qu’ont menée les femmes des Antilles françaises pour leur intégration citoyenne”\textsuperscript{164} (Palmiste C. 2009, p.79). Indeed, the main topics of feminist discourses from the Martinican periphery are not only underrepresented within the European Union feminist discourses, but their existence is near to not being even acknowledged. The publication \textit{EMPOWER. FIGHT. RESIST.} has been created not only to give a framework of the topics that populate feminist discourses today, but also with the scope of presenting a network of feminist movements and organizations within the European Union, and the activities that these carry out daily. The general spirit of the document is to highlight the global dimension of feminist movements, and its openness to issues that are specific of women from non-European countries. It is a pity, in our view, that the discourses from EU peripheral territories are so little acknowledged\textsuperscript{165}.

Indeed, if we take in consideration, for example, the intersectional approach, Martinican feminist movements and organizations can be considered quite avant-garde. As a matter of fact, these movements currently employ the intersectional approach to address the needs of migrant women just as those of the local ones, but they were originally formed as intersectional, even before the concept was developed. Due to the complex social composition that Martinique presented since the extension of the French citizenship to all its inhabitants, feminist activists came, since the beginning, from different groups. As stated in \textit{Femmes de la Martinique: quelle histoire?}, “Le Rassemblement féminin\textsuperscript{166} se forme en décembre 1944 […] L’association met en place […] une commission de travail composée de dames et demoiselles de la bourgeoisie noire et mulâtre […] mais aussi de

\textsuperscript{164} “If the activities of the suffragettes and the feminist movements in the Hexagon underwent their path, the fights that the women of the French Antilles carried out for their civic integration are far less known” (Palmiste C. 2009, p.79) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).

\textsuperscript{165} In the publication itself there is no mention of Martinique or other lands with a ultra-peripheral status.

\textsuperscript{166} The Rassemblement féminin is the first formal association in Martinique aimed at advocating and defending the rights of the women (Descas-Ravoteur M. et al., 2014).
‘békés’ […]” (Descas-Ravoteur M. et al. 2014, p.68). Even though the activists came from the Martinican higher social classes, it is of great relevance that women of colour worked, since the beginning, with women coming from the white elite of the island, going beyond all racial divisions that kept being very strong for many years in other parts of the world, and represent a social issue still today.

In conclusion, it appears obvious to us that an opening to peripheral feminist discourses could only bring benefits to the once produced here, at the core, and further enrich the identity building process of EU citizens. As the European Commission observes in its 2012 report: “[…] the most significant collectivities for a person’s identification need not be geographic at all, but can relate to a variety of other types of aggregate, such as gender or sexuality, ethnic or linguistic group, social class, affiliation with an organisation or political party etc.” (European Commission 2012, p.8).

Conclusions to Chapter Three

This last chapter serves to summarise the conclusions to which our analysis aimed at, as well as to give a more specific example of how our proposal could work out. Indeed, we began by explaining how discourses produced in marginal Martinique should be inserted within EU produced discourses, in light of their connection to the historical facts that Europe itself determined in time. As highlighted by Hansen and Jonsson, the colonies of European countries were part of the initial plan for creating the economic union, and played an important role: Martinique itself was part of it, as a colony first and as a DOM later. Furthermore, the ultra-peripheral status makes the inhabitants of Martinique a minority community within the EU, but seldom are they considered as such in EU discourses. For this reason, their call for rights and recognition should be included within the discourses on minorities produced at the centre of the Union.

167 “The Rassemblement féminin was formed in December 1944 […] The association created […] a working commission composed by women and girls of the black and mulatto bourgeoisie […] but also ‘békés’ […]” (Descas-Ravoteur M. et al. 2014, p.68) (translated by Laura Truffarelli).
In the operative example we made of feminist discourses, we showed the analogies and differences that exist between the ones produced in central EU, and the ones produced in Martinique. We highlighted the contributions that each one can give to the claims of the other, and reinforced our theory that a better recognition of the existence of the ultra-peripheral community would improve, under several aspects, the identity-building process of EU citizens. In the case of feminist discourses, the ones produced in Martinique have the merit to trace the complex pathway that led to the creation of certain gender stereotypes. The movements and organizations that are active in fighting for women rights carry out an important work of awareness raising on such background, to better deconstruct the stereotypes and to create a culture that can progressively reduce their impact. This effort should receive better attention from movements in the EU, and be considered as an interesting example of overcoming cultural and social barriers to improvements of the condition of the woman. At the same time, movements in the EU lead important advocacy activities to achieve better legislation in favour of gender parity, and more integration of discourses from Martinique would not only reinforce the advocacy quest itself, but also spread the legislative outcomes of the feminist agenda on the island, enhancing its impact.
Conclusions

“This sense of wholeness, impressed upon our consciousness by the structure of our daily lives, provided as an oppositional view – a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors – that sustained us, aided us in our struggle to transcend poverty and despair, strengthened our sense of self and our solidarity”

bell hooks, Preface to the first edition of Feminist Theory, from margin to Center, 1988

The present elaborate has been one where ambiguity and ambivalence have always played the main role, because the Martinican identity, as Glissant and others observe, is fully characterised by these, and only by showing ambiguity and ambivalence in things could we frame the essence of such identity. Indeed, we talked of ambivalence in describing the EU citizens’ identity, in its tension between nationality and the sense of affiliation to the supranational organization and its values. We recalled the ambiguity that exists between the colonial past of the entity, the fall of its empires, and yet the maintenance of some of its expressions168.

So, should Martinicans embrace their identity of EU citizens, or should they define themselves as fully Caribbean? In the perspective of professor Fola-Gadet, Martinique should receive more autonomy in order to develop under an economic point of view, and to better integrate in the local Caribbean market. At the same time, the identity calls put forward by the concept of Creolité open the way for the foundation of identities that counter-pose to the European, ex-colonial, one. Yet, throughout our work, we insisted that Martinicans should be better understood by the European Union, and should be included more in its identititarian discourses. This should be done with the objective of fostering the

168 Such as the ultra Peripheral territories like Martinique.
development, among Martinicans, of a stronger sense of affiliation to the entity, of which they are legally part, but with which they have little identity aspects to share.

So, our question, now, is: do Martinicans really want to be better included in the EU, under the identitarian perspective? Answering this query is rather difficult: besides requesting a deep sociological research, very little has been written on the matter. Furthermore, the vision and understanding that the people of Martinique possess over the European Union – as the ones of any EU citizen – strongly depends on the representations that media, politicians, and local opinion leaders give about the organization. As we stated already, the perception that Martinicans have of the Union directly influences their identity affiliation to it, and this is not unified.

For this reason, ambiguity comes at play again. We believe that the affiliation with the Caribbean region is a fundamental part of the identity of Martinique, and it should not be underestimated by the European Union. At the same time, the connection that Martinicans feel to the African continent and, more importantly, to Black communities all over America, in light of their shared past, should also be respected. Therefore, the inclusion of Martinique within the EU identitarian discourses, and the development of projects and policies for a better attention to the ultra-peripheral region, should respect the peculiarities of such identity. Moreover, we believe that opening up their identity to the area, would push the EU and its citizens to explore more aspects of the mosaic\textsuperscript{169}, that are highly undervalued.

We believe that the approach of intersectionality, promoted by the feminist thought, should be applied to all identity discourses produced by the European Union, respecting the “United in Diversity” motto. Are we aligning the concept of intersectionality with the one of ambiguity? We do not have the competencies to conduct such a deliberation, but we think that combining different perspectives, such as the intersectional approach does, ends up requesting the acceptance of some levels of ambiguity. Indeed, different social and racial points of view on the same issue may show disagreements, and giving attention

\textsuperscript{169} We recall here the mosaic identity described in the 2012 European Commission report on the matter of EU citizens’ identity.
to all of them may end up drawing conclusions that involve ambiguous elements. These are to be accepted, in order to respect and to be inclusive towards everyone.

Drawing our conclusions, we believe that EU discourses on identity should take the example from Martinique, and accept ambiguity. By doing this, these discourses can improve their adoption of the intersectional approach, that is becoming more and more important in the context of the European Union, due to the presence and growing relevance of many minorities – the Martinican one included. Furthermore, accepting ambiguity brings the identity of European Union citizens closer to the one of Martinicans, allowing for better exchange and communication between the two. Therefore, even if Martinicans may not look at the EU as a source of identity, creating a channel of communication where the two parts can converse on similar terms, would likely change this state of things. Recalling Alain Reynaud’s concept of socio-spatial justice, in order to stimulate a stronger identification as EU citizens among Martinicans, the best solution should be to have the core better recognizing the periphery, and to work towards more symmetrical relations, funded on the idea of reciprocity (Reynaud A., 1991), where EU citizens learn from Martinicans just like Martinicans learn from EU citizens.
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