Pwofite Tèt Ou”(Avail YO yourself): The Minoritarian Politics of Haitian Music in Paris

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Abstract
Paris functions as a diverse site in which Haitians and French Antilleans come together most significantly in relation to musical interaction. Haitian music in Paris, especially konpa, is frequently paired with Antillean music, specifically zouk, whether it be on the radio, as Antillean stations frequently co-opt konpa or in dance clubs for deejayed events. Thus, konpa and zouk share modes of dissemination and consumption, and are frequently grouped together. These mutually shared spaces of musical consumption enable and promote the formation of connections between Antillean and Haitian communities, enabled by a minoritarian politics rooted in shared colonial histories and coupled with strict contemporary stratifications that are challenged by musical taste. This dissertation explains how the musical results of these interactions, histories, and relationships are distinctly Haitian, but transnational, complicated, and evocative of a new understanding of postcolonial relation in the Caribbean diaspora.

This project illuminates the dynamic relationship between immigrant communities, specifically the profound and significant role of immigrant communities in each other’s lives, while highlighting the complicated histories that can enable these relationships, with music as the primary unifying force. Elements like class, race, citizenship, language, history, and geographic proximity all influence the creation of minor-to-minor networks, mostly in unifying groups in difference from the major, but music over all other factors serves as the bridge that allows minoritarian politics to unfold as they have in Paris. In connecting to an inclusive identity politics, these interactions in Paris can allow us to re-think what “French Caribbean” can mean and to what musical ends. Ultimately, this dissertation is about Haitians but also in particular the unique qualities of Paris that represent it as a locale in relation to Haitian history, immigration, geography, transnationalism, and ideologies that ultimately result in expressive musical representations of contemporary life.

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“PWOFITE TÈT OU”(AVAIL YOURSELF): THE MINORITARIAN POLITICS OF HAITIAN MUSIC IN PARIS

Laura C. Donnelly

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“PWOFITE TÈT OU” (AVAIL YOURSELF): THE MINORITARIAN POLITICS OF HAITIAN MUSIC IN PARIS

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ABSTRACT

“PWOFITE TÈT OU” (AVAIL YOURSELF): THE MINORITARIAN POLITICS OF HAITIAN MUSIC IN PARIS

Laura C. Donnelly

Timothy Rommen

Paris functions as a diverse site in which Haitians and French Antilleans come together most significantly in relation to musical interaction. Haitian music in Paris, especially konpa, is frequently paired with Antillean music, specifically zouk, whether it be on the radio, as Antillean stations frequently co-opt konpa or in dance clubs for deejayed events. Thus, konpa and zouk share modes of dissemination and consumption, and are frequently grouped together. These mutually shared spaces of musical consumption enable and promote the formation of connections between Antillean and Haitian communities, enabled by a minoritarian politics rooted in shared colonial histories and coupled with strict contemporary stratifications that are challenged by musical taste. This dissertation explains how the musical results of these interactions, histories, and relationships are distinctly Haitian, but transnational, complicated, and evocative of a new understanding of postcolonial relation in the Caribbean diaspora.

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INTRODUCTION: MAKING A CASE FOR MINORITARIAN POLITICS
IN MUSIC

28 May 2011, 2:30 am at Le Zénith de Paris, backstage

The popular Haitian konpa band Kreyol la has just finished their set and Djakout #1, the headliners of La Nuit du Kompas, are preparing to perform for approximately 6,000 spectators at the largest konpa event of the year in Ile-de-France.\(^1\) The legendary venue’s backstage is a cacophonous assemblage of press, friends, media, and performers. Although the event is coded Haitian (konpa is a Haitian genre, there is a “step and repeat” with a “Haitian Power” logo and numerous Haitian flags), the people present come from a variety of backgrounds: Michel Marchand, Haitian host (in 2011) of the weekly radio show “Boulevard du Compas,” is covering the concert for Espace FM, along with his Martinican colleague, Jean François; local producer, entrepreneur, and owner of Hepitex Records (a Haitian label), Bazile Peguy, chats with Gaby Malahel, a French photographer and advocate of French Antillean social justice in Ile-de-France; and the legendary Martinican musician Dédé Saint-Prix is escorting a Haitian band, Les Frères Dodo Twoubadou, introducing them to notable attendees. Other spectators and friends backstage hail from Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, France, and the United

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\(^1\) Konpa has multiple possible spellings, including kompas, kompa, and compas depending on the context and audience. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will exclusively use the “konpa” spelling, unless I am quoting another person who has spelled it otherwise, or I am referring to a named event or show that spells it differently.
States; code switching is rampant between French, different Creole languages and English. The musical space of le Zénith de Paris is acting as a catalyst of social interaction among French Caribbean people in Paris.

“aux Antilles les gens ont soif d’Original H.” (In the Antilles, people are thirsty for Original H) – Jean Eudes Beauge – guitarist, Original H

“I always say to people, Haiti is a big country. It can be small depending on how we look at it, but the biggest industry that we have in Haiti, is the cultural industry, and I would even say the music industry and we cannot let it go.” – Pradel Saint-Fleur, Haitian radio host and entrepreneur

The above vignette and quotes are meant to illustrate the ways in which Haitian music in Paris functions as a valuable tool in forming networks between Haitians, French Antillean, and other minority groups. These excerpts highlight important elements of Haitian music’s role within the community in Paris, the interconnected nature of sites of performance in Paris for Haitians and Antilleans, the popularity of Haitian music among Antillean audiences, and the importance of music as cultural capital for Haitians. The vignette, from my 2011 fieldnotes, illustrates how an event that is seemingly coded as Haitian--a Haitian music concert featuring Haitian bands--also involves French Antillean participants as spectators, allies, and media. The second excerpt, from an interview with the guitarist of popular Parisian konpa band Original H is meant to show how Haitian music, and in this case the music of Original H, is popular among Antillean audiences in Paris and in the Caribbean. Haitian musicians in Paris, including Original H,
are able to harness their popularity among Antillean audiences in Paris to expand their fan base to Antillean audiences in Guadeloupe and Martinique. The third excerpt is from an interview with Pradel Saint-Fleur, an entrepreneur, radio Deejay, and community leader in Paris and illustrates that many Haitians in Paris view music as their greatest asset and their best hope for forging connections with other minority communities, enabling them to strengthen their community both economically and in reputation, making music the most marketable resource they have.

All of these scenarios: the diversely attended performance, the Antillean “thirst” for Haitian music, and the belief that culture, and especially music, can be the most valuable tool for Haitians are echoed throughout the chapters of this dissertation. Thus, this dissertation aims to show how Haitian music in Paris functions as a tool in the formation of minor-to-minor networks, how these networks are made possible through a minoritarian politics in place that are forged from the combination of a shared colonial past and present relations in the Caribbean, and what the musical and social outcomes of these networks and politics are.

The Haitian diaspora is made up of many disparate nodes with distinct localities across North America, the Caribbean, and Europe, yet all of these sites are connected musically through the transnational Haitian Music Industry (HMI). Of these locales, Paris is unique in the diaspora in that it engenders musical interaction with the large French Antillean population in the region. The North American sites of the Haitian diaspora lack a substantial Antillean population and the French Antilles themselves do not result in the same level of musical blending because of strict national divisions coupled with strong
anti-Haitian sentiments in the Caribbean. Despite this negativity towards Haitians, however, French Antilleans have been consumers of Haitian popular music, particularly konpa, since the mid-twentieth century. The proportionally large population of Antilleans in Paris over Haitians (roughly eight to one), combined with the historical support that Antilleans have given Haitian music, has led the Haitian community in Paris to strategically use their music, through concerts, dances, club events, radio shows, and other community events that feature musical performances (including pageants, quiz games, and cultural festivals, among others), to promote Haitian culture in general and to try to build up Haiti’s international reputation. The community strategically uses music to reach out to broader audiences, including French Antilleans as well as other postcolonial groups in Paris (primarily west, central, and north African in origin). This dissertation will illustrate how for Haitians in Paris, music is the primary force in the formation of minor-to-minor networks, providing new perspective on the importance of music in mitigating migrant and immigrant experiences and relations in a world where these topics are currently embroiled in heated debates.

This chapter thus will provide context for this dissertation, giving a brief background of French Caribbean musical interaction in Paris and explaining three theoretical pillars: transnationalism, postcolonialism, and minoritarian politics, emphasizing how music ties together these entities in Haitian Paris. The chapter will then provide an outline of the methodology used in this dissertation, give a chapter outline of the document, and end with a brief conclusion, bringing into focus the significance of
minoritarian politics to French Caribbean life in the diaspora, and music’s critical role in these processes.

Paris has served as a significant site of immigration for French Caribbean people since the mid-twentieth century. Although Haiti gained independence from France in 1804, many Haitians immigrated there during the oppressive Duvalier regime (1957-1986), especially near the end of Jean Claude Duvalier’s reign in the 1980s (Mooney 2011). Immigration policies since the 1990s have made legal immigration difficult for Haitians, who as a result have to survive as sans papiers (illegals). French Antilleans, as citizens of France, were brought to the country to fill the post-war labor shortage as low-level government workers through a program called BUMIDOM, which began in 1945 and lasted until 1965 (Vergès 2005). Despite their citizen status, however, French Antilleans were historically placed in low-quality government housing on the outskirts of the city (the suburbs, or banlieue) and were subjected to the same racism endured by Haitians and other non-citizen African immigrants.

Today, with 337,000 French Antilleans living in Paris, the city’s population rivals that of the individual islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique (around 400,000 people each) (Beriss 2004). 25,000 documented Haitians live in Paris, but scholars suspect a much larger undocumented population of at least 50,000 (Mooney 2011); called the ‘tenth department,’ Haitians living abroad make up a dynamic portion of the total Haitian population and Paris functions as a diverse site in which French Antilleans and Haitians choose to come together most significantly in relation to musical interaction (Jackson 2011). Scholars have written about Caribbean popular music in the “global city,” using
New York as their model, and have emphasized music’s importance to immigrant identity (Allen 1998). Musical immigration studies that discuss Paris, however, tend to focus on West African (Winders 2006) or Arab (Prévos 2001) music, excluding the French Caribbean musical communities that my research seeks to explore.

Studies of French Caribbean music have examined European-derived dance music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with Guadeloupean quadrilles (Cyrille 2006a; Cyrille 2009) and Haitian mereng (Largey 2009), focusing on the ability of these dances to subvert racial and class hierarchies (Cyrille 2006b; Benoit 1990; Manuel 2009). Additionally, scholars have examined the Haitian Vodou Lenten festival, Rara, and how its practice in Haiti (Largey 2000) and its diaspora (McAlister 2002) promote Haitian identity. Other studies have illuminated the intersection of Vodou, art music, and nationalism (Largey 2006) as well as Pentecostalism and politics in Haiti (Butler 2002; Butler 2008).

Twentieth century French Caribbean popular music serves as a meaningful and significant part of Haitian and French Antillean life (Averill 1997; Cyrille 2002). In the French Antilles, zouk has served as an emblem of Antillean identity and anti-colonial struggle since its inception in the late-1970s (Guilbault 1993). Zouk’s use of Creole, rather than French, lyrics played into a greater discourse of language and identity (Schnepel 2004; Prudent 1993; Bébel-Gisler 1978). More recently, scholars have examined neocolonial identity regarding popular music in the French Antilles, exploring issues of nostalgia, gender, heritage, cultural politics, and black resistance (primarily among Martinican singers and songwriters) (Berrian 2000). Haitian popular music,
konpa, has been similarly studied as a tool of resistance and cultural identity (Averill 1989; Averill 1997), specifically in protest against the oppressive Duvalier regime (Averill 1994).

Haitians in Paris, using their music as a tool, are able to foster their own community, building general support for Haitian cultural output, as well as how they connect with and leverage other minority networks (achieving more financially, broadening audiences, and forming more meaningful musical alliances) with Antilleans and other postcolonial inhabitants of Paris. All of these connections are made possible, I argue, through a minoritarian politics rooted in shared colonial histories and coupled with strict contemporary stratifications that are challenged by musical taste, and I show how the musical results of these interactions, histories, and relationships are distinctly Haitian, but transnational, complicated, and evocative of a new understanding of postcolonial relation in the Caribbean diaspora.

Transnationalism

The following section provides a background on transnationalism broadly as well as discussing it in relation to processes of hybridity and creolization, technology and media, and artistic practices and music, to frame how each of these elements are critical for an understanding of transnationalism as it relates to Haitian music in Paris.

In *Nations Unbound* (1994), Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, Cristina Szanton Blanc define transnationalism as, “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and
settlement” (Basch et. al, 1994, p.7). In other words, transnationalism stems from the idea that once an individual moves from one place to another, they can maintain ties to their location of origin while feeling connected to their new locale. Aptly summarized by Dufoix, in spite of removing themselves from their original home, “these ‘transmigrants’ develop and maintain all sorts of relations—familial, religious, economic, and political—with the place they come from, thereby laying the foundations of nonterritorial nations” (Dufoix 2008, p.32). Transnationalism, then, leads to deterritorialisation. Scholars of transnational studies have been criticized for their treatment of expressive culture. Because many texts on transnationalism are, according to Gillian Bottomley, “derived from demography, political economy, political science, or the sociology of minorities…[the studies] generally fail to cope adequately with the complexities of culture” (Bottomley 1992, p.4). This dissertation, however, makes an intervention specifically on the importance of expressive culture in transnational studies, arguing that in the case of Haitian Paris, music engenders minor-to-minor networks and enables transnational and local connections.

Scholars have tended to view migration and its effects on culture in teleological, diachronic stages. These include “survival and retention, conservation, and syncretism” (Nettl 1978); “resistance (to change), breakdown (due to change), and reconstitution (adjustment to change)” (Klymasz 1973); and “import, retention, and modification” (Dégh 1968-69). Su Zheng criticizes these models, saying they, “implied an evolutionary and/or teleological process in the development of immigrant music, with premises based on a disjuncture between the Old World and the New World, a
homogenous immigrant community, well-delineated music genres, and bilateral interactions between the immigrant community and American society” (Zheng 2010, p.15). These models fail to account for the changing environments of immigrant communities.

This dissertation rejects the idea that immigrant communities are only either tied to their homelands or acculturating into their host lands. Rather, extending on Basch and Dufoix’s ideas of multiple connections, it explores music’s place in mediating the transnational movements of culture. Looking at transnational musical life as a dynamic and constantly changing process that produces hybrid—or perhaps better, creole—forms of expression, we can tie these cultural products to the greater discourses of creolization that accompany transnational scholarship (Marcus 2009).

Several elements of immigrant (or migrant) life contribute to creolizing cultural practices. Immigrant communities can be explored with recourse to Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of “contact zones,” or, thinking with Hall, understood as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (Hall 2003, p.31). Contact zones can also be

2 Exclusively using the term “hybridity” to denote cultural blending and mixing can be problematic, as Shalini Puri argues, “the umbrella term ‘hybridity’ enacts a dehistoricizing conflation.” (Puri 2004, p.3). Within the context of this dissertation, creole and creolization are more appropriate terms to use, as Pacini Hernandez has explained: “African/European cultural hybridity is more often described with the term ‘creole,’ which signals the mixtures produced in the Americas in the wake of European conquest, colonization, and slavery, but without explicit reference to race.” (Pacini-Hernandez 2010, p.5)
contextualized as “social fields,” which Basch et.al. claim migrants build. Through social fields one community can exist and thrive across a variety of sites.

These sites of contact or social fields contribute to an environment that encourages change and creolization. Here I am drawing on Edward Kamau Brathwaite’s vision of creolization, which Stuart Hall characterized as, “a kind of continuum: a process involving, at different historical moments, different groups, always in combination, in a society which is the product of their entanglement”(Hall 2003, p.30). Tying discourses of creolization to studies on transnationalism can enhance our understanding of transnational musical life.

Technology and media are impossible to separate from contemporary discussions of transnationalism as they are the primary tools that enable people to easily and relatively inexpensively traverse borders. Thus, advances in technology and media, combined with an ever-growing atmosphere of globalization have contributed to the discourse surrounding transnationalism and culture. Despite large distances, advances in telecommunications and the internet have made possible the frequent and inexpensive interaction of a displaced person with their homeland. Basch et. al. equates these technologies with the elision of time and space, thus facilitating transnationalism: “Today’s electronic technology lends a sense of immediacy to the social relations of people who are geographically distant.”(p. 23) This elision allows for the enhanced ‘intensity and simultaneity’ of transnational relations (Zheng 2010, p.12).
This focus on technology has expanded to the transnational musical life of migrants, whether it be new Latino arrivals in the United States (Pacini Hernandez 2010, p. 11) or, more generally from Dueck: “recently, mediating technologies have permitted migrants to keep in touch in a nearly instantaneous manner with musical happenings vast distances away. Email, digitized music files and video hosting sites permit migrants to track the latest trends and dance moves from back home, and just as importantly to celebrate and create a shared musical history with distant intimates”(Dueck 2011, p.2). In the case of Haitians in Paris, technology has the same role in terms of musical circulation.

Immigrant communities, which I earlier described as entities that engender “contact zones” or “social fields,” serve as significant producers of creolized practices. The interaction of host and home among different generations in one community allows for the dynamic production of creole culture. As a result, hybridity and creolization is emphasized in transnational and diasporic studies. Thomas Turino further explains this point, saying, “diasporic cultural formation are characterized by hybridity, with practices and ideas drawn from experiences in the home and a variety of host countries. In spite of a discourse common in diasporic communities about exact replication of cultural ways from the home country, hybridity is basic to the very character of diasporic cultural formations because of the ways subjectivities emerge, the ways subjectivity intersects with identity, and because of the dialectical relationships between identity and expressive cultural practices”(Turino 2004, pp.6-7).
Artistic practices in diasporic or migrant communities frequently manifest greater cultural characteristics, including hybridity. According to Zheng, transnationalism can function as a “mode of cultural production, performance, and consumption, and as an acquired taste in aesthetics and styles manifested in the hybridity, syncretism, and particularly, the translational nature of present-day diasporic expressive cultural practices” (Zheng 2010, p. 12). Because identity formation is a vital aspect of transnational life, music can be a powerful tool for transmigrants and those living in the diaspora. From Turino, manifesting desires of self in music can allow said visions to materialize: “Whether for a new nation, a new sub-culture, or an emerging diasporic cultural position, artistic forms can be used to make the imaginings of what the new subject position might look like, sound like, and feel like through a concrete, coherently constituted perceivable form” (Turino 2004, p.11).

Since the mid-1990s there have been many ethnomusicological texts relating to music, mobility, transnationalism, migration, and diaspora. Among them have been studies about established music communities away from the “homeland” in New York (Allen and Wilken, 1998; Washburne 1998) and Paris (Winders 2006).

Ethnomusicologist Martin Stokes has investigated the musical negotiation of place in his book Ethnicity, Identity, and Music (1994), emphasizing the ability of music to transcend preconceived notions of place: “The musical event, from collective dances to the act of putting a cassette or CD into a machine, evokes and organizes collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity. The ‘places’ constructed through music involve
notions of difference and social boundary” (Stokes 1994, p.3) Stokes sees music as a catalyst for the transformation of space. Additionally, Will Straw has written on music and space in relation to communities and scenes in popular music (Straw 2004).

Ethnomusicological texts on migration and diaspora have taken the form of edited volumes that look at music’s place in diasporic communities (Turino 2004) or music and mass mediation and cosmopolitan fusion in migration (Dueck 2011). Whereas area studies books have incorporated the study of race, hybrid cultural practices and strong transnational networks in Latino (Pacini Hernandez 2010) and Chinese American (Zheng 2011) communities in the United States.

Music is central to negotiations of identity in immigrant communities, because, as Gregory Diethrich explains, “Cultural continuity is not primordial, but must be constantly reasserted and redefined. It is especially true among diaspora communities that music is central to contexts and discourses in which cultural meaning is formulated and negotiated” (2004, p.103). Music, like the term diaspora itself, can be powerful within contact zones both uniting diasporic subjects through a shared musical vision of their place of origin, and empowering them through their assertion of a distinctive cultural product. In the case of the Haitian community in Paris, music is the primary tool in the creation of minor-to-minor networks, connecting Haitians with other minority groups, and empowering them by increasing their audience base and thus resulting in greater revenue and an improved impression of Haitian culture in the diaspora.
Postcolonialism

Since 1492, Western Europe (and more recently the United States) has exerted influence over other regions of the world through colonialism in many forms. Stuart Hall and Bruno Nettl have offered concise definitions of colonialism as, “European and Western modernity after 1492” (Hall quoted in Cooper 2005, p.16), and, “domination by an alien minority, which asserts racial and cultural superiority over a majority considered inferior” (Nettl 2012), respectively. These definitions, while emphasizing modernity and hegemony, only begin to describe the complexity and prevalence of colonialism’s impact on the world as we know it.

Colonialism was fueled by and influenced politics, economics, beliefs, and military prospects (Dülffer and Frey 2011). Guy Vanhemische explains the extent of colonialism’s hold on daily life, saying that it caused: “the emigration of men and women; the export of capital; the expansion of enterprises; the spread of beliefs, languages, techniques and ways of life; and the introduction of military forces, political structures and repressive, educational and medical systems” (Vanthemische 2012, p.1). Most significantly, however, were the underlying asymmetrical power relations on which all of this activity was predicated, which according to Dülffer and Frey were, “reinforced by structural dependencies, racisms, civilizing missions, and cultural arrogance” (Dülffer and Frey 2011, p.2).

The period of rapid decolonization in the mid-twentieth century drastically changed the global political landscape. In Africa, for example, according to Le Sueur, “virtually every colonized territory in Africa (from Algeria to post-apartheid South Africa, and in Asia from Myanmar to Shanghai) passed through the doors of decolonization within the span of a few decades. In Africa alone, more than fifty new states were created from the 1950s onward” (Le Sueur 2003, p.2). However, once this period of decolonization came to an end, formerly colonial subjects found themselves faced with the lingering vestiges of colonial relationships and power dynamics.

The continued struggle of formerly colonized peoples through the remnants of their colonial past embodies the essence of postcolonialism. As Homi Bhabha has explained, “Postcoloniality, for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent ‘neo-colonial’ relations within the ‘new’ world order and the multi-national division of labour. Such a perspective enables the authentication of histories of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance.” (Bhabha 1994, p. 5) Thus, postcoloniality is embodied by the continuation of colonial power dynamics in the contemporary moment, seen in the ‘neo-colonial’ relations described above.

Others have suggested the term coloniality is more appropriate to describe ongoing processes of colonial activity in the world. Walter Mignolo has defined coloniality as: “something that transcends the particularities of historical colonialism and that does not vanish with independence or decolonization. Coloniality is also embedded in national formation, because… coloniality is constitutive of modernity and, therefore, of the modern/colonial world system.” (Mignolo 2001, p. 433) Coloniality then can be
considered, also from Mignolo, “a locus of enunciation defined by the epistemic colonial
difference. As such, it transverses the end of the first wave of decolonization and nation
building”(p.434). Not only is coloniality a connective element historically between
decolonization and the process of nation building that many newly-independent former
colonies enacted, it has become a way, through these processes, of articulating power:
“decolonization and nation building became a new form of articulation of the coloniality
of power in the Americas (in the nineteenth century) and in Asia and Africa (in the
second half of the twentieth century).”(p. 434)

The coloniality of power is what enables Guadeloupe and Martinique, as
departments of France and therefore theoretically politically equal to departments in
mainland France, to remain in an unequal power relation with France in which
Guadeloupeans and Martinicans are treated unfairly, while also allowing Haitians, who
have been independent from France for over two hundred years, to be marginalized in
French society. Mignolo uses coloniality as a term of continuation, allowing it to refer to
the continued hegemony enacted by former colonial powers, and in this dissertation both
postcolonialism and coloniality are used in this manner.

For Haitians and French Antilleans in Paris, culture, and particularly music,
becomes a method of survival and the primary vehicle for social improvement and
change. The implementation of culture in this way, particularly among displaced people
or immigrant communities, is prevalent in postcolonial narratives. To quote Homi
Bhabha, at length:
Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, whether they are the 'middle passage' of slavery and indenture, the 'voyage out' of the civilizing mission, the fraught accommodation of Third World migration to the West after the Second World War, or the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement - now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of 'global' media technologies - make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. (Bhabha 1990, p.171)

It is evident that people hold onto their culture despite being displaced, but the specificity of what culture signifies can blur in the diaspora, creating new circumstances of cultural production, consumption, and dissemination. This ties into artistic expression as well, where, drawing on Evan Chambers, “Postcolonial art is intimately linked to globalization” through, “a critical reflection on the planetary conditions of artistic production, circulation and reception. This implies focusing on the interweaving of the geographical, cultural, historical and economic contexts in which art takes place.”(Chambers et. al. 2014, p.1) This interweaving is particularly relevant in the case of Paris as a postcolonial city, with Haitians using their proximity to other groups to promote Haitian music and culture.

The Minor

The notion of “the minor,” minor-to-minor networks, and minoritarian politics are all critical in the foundation of my analysis of the complicated nature of the musical
interactions between Haitians and other postcolonial subjects of Paris. In the following section, I will define and explain these concepts and how they relate to the larger purpose of my dissertation: to illustrate how music is the primary catalyst in the formation and promotion of a set of minoritarian politics in Paris.

As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) have pointed out, to be a minority is not simply to be smaller in number than another subgroup within a population. Being designated a minority carries with it many potential implications: “The notion of minority is very complex, with musical, literary, linguistic, as well as juridical and political, references. The opposition between minority and majority is not simply quantitative. Majority implies a constant, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 105). In a colonial context, the majority can best be represented and supported by the cultural hegemony enacted by the colonizer (past or present) over the colonized. This fits with the phenomenon of the oppressed majority complying with the cultural dominance of a colonial minority (in many cases white and western European). This standard of measure is significant because in colonial situations this type of relationship presents itself frequently in some form of cultural hegemony based on race, with whiter skin being privileged over darker in many of the Caribbean colonies despite a greater number of slaves or dark-skinned people than people of European descent.

In postcolonial France, this kind of established minority/majority structure and its ties to cultural and racial hegemony continue, in the form of the Republican Ideology, an ideology that heralds itself as rooted in equality and freedom, but with the result of
supporting only a very specific idea of what is “French” at the expense of anyone who doesn’t fit into this mold. In the case of France, the major translates to Republican France and all those who fit within its parameters, whereas all others are outsiders, and thus minorities. According to Deleuze and Guattari, “Majority assumes a state of power and domination, not the other way around” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p.105). In other words, whoever holds power and dominates others in a society functions as the majority, in spite of whether or not this group is actually more numerous than another. This explains how a more numerous population can remain a minority, much like the relationship in the French Antilles and Haiti during the time of slavery; slaves were more numerous yet white Europeans held power (more details on this in Chapter 1). Paul Patton has characterized Deleuze and Guattari as pointing to, “the existence in contemporary societies of a majoritarian ‘fact’, namely the existence of a standard against which the rights and duties of all citizens are measured” (Patton 2005, p. 406). This standard in France is the Republican ideal citizen from a universalist perspective. Thus, the “majority,” in France is made up of white, secular (or more particularly, not Muslim), French-speaking, and western European (especially not Arab or Black).

Thus, the Haitians in Paris can be classified as minor (or not part of the majority), on multiple levels. They are black, Creole-speaking immigrants, and functioning as the minor in the context of this dissertation: as people who fail to subscribe to the Republican ideology implicit in the major. Significantly, within this rubric of the minor, there are hierarchies in place related to class, origin, and accent. Much like the stratification in the French Caribbean during and after slavery, in which status was still closely tied to class,
race, and occupation. Despite these divisions, minorities commonly are grouped together for the purpose of existing as the “Other.” Minor-to-minor networks emerge when these minority groups form connections with other similarly marginalized groups through shared interests, including music, in order to benefit themselves through a shared solidarity. Through minor-to-minor networks, two minority groups of different social and political standing, like Haitians and French Antilleans, can be connected through cultural output like music, while remaining unequal in status.

This dissertation deals often with networks, circuits, and other paths through which people, music, commodities, and power flow. These circuits exist transnationally, bridging oceans and borders to connect groups of people of common origins. The various configurations of minor-to-minor networks within this dissertation are numerous: there are those between Haitians in different sites in the diaspora, Haitians and Antilleans in Paris, Haitians and Antilleans in the Caribbean, and Haitians and other postcolonial minor subjects in Paris.

Each chapter touches on the ways in which established networks of Haitian musical performance, production, and consumption are implicated in processes of value-adding, through limiting and increasing access to events through peripheral geographies, through increasing mobilities between minor-to-minor networks of musical performance and taste in Paris, and through building solidarities in local minoritarian groups and their respective internationally connected communities. Significantly, the formation of these networks is strategic in how they allow Haitians in Paris to foster their community and connect with and leverage other minority networks, particularly with French Antilleans.
and other postcolonial inhabitants of Paris and in their relationship to the greater Haitian transnation. The musical expression that results is unquestionably Haitian, but transnational and complicated. Depending on the genre, music can engender different types of networks and connections for Haitians in Paris. Popular music, particularly konpa, invites interactions between Haitians and non-Haitians, as seen through the different ways in which konpa performance can be altered to better suit a diverse audience (see Chapter 3), whereas roots music performances allow Haitians to forge deeper solidarity locally among their own (see Chapter 4).

I argue that all of this is made possible because of a minoritarian politics, or the intricacies of interaction between postcolonial/neocolonial/transnational networks of interaction. This connects to the idea of “transcolonial solidarities,” or the ability to form connections across minority groups stemming from a shared colonial past. Lionnet and Shi have discussed the relationship of minor transnationalism to transcolonial solidarities, saying: “‘minor transnationalism’ is perhaps the mode in which the traumas of colonial, imperial, and global hegemonies as well as the affective dimensions of transcolonial solidarities continue to work themselves out and produce new possibilities” (Lionnet and Shi 2005, p.21). Among these possibilities include the “active participation in the production of local knowledges and global cultures” (p. 21). And these local knowledges can present themselves through locally specific forms of performance, seen in Haitian Paris through alterations in konpa performance to better suit a postcolonial audience (see Chapter 3). The productions of “global cultures,” in Lionnet and Shi’s words, have
immerged as well out of these interactions through the Haitian community in Paris’s goal of improving Haiti’s global reputation (see Chapter 4).

Thus, “minoritarian politics” within the context of this dissertation makes reference with “minoritarian” to those subjected to social hegemonies as detailed above and with “politics” to the frameworks in place that allow for hierarchies and structures of engagement between and among people, as well as how things (in this case music) are determined to have value or cultural capital.

Playing into the notion of the imaginary, or the nationalist construction of imagined communities (Anderson 1983; Appadurai 1996), for Haitians in Paris, minoritarian politics are an integral element of living under the republican ideology to which France subscribes, one that demands assimilating into a larger French community.4 If “French culture is based on the consent to live in community,”(Renan 1882) then therefore, living in France and refusing to assimilate into “truly” French culture directly conflicts with republican ideologies and creates tensions between immigrants and the state (Blatt 1997; Hargreaves 1997). In addition to the racism with which these groups contend, the aforementioned tensions within the postcolonial French state present fertile

4 France has long adopted a policy of “assimilation,” first in relation to its colonies and then with other outsiders immigrating to France. This loyalty towards a “Republican” ideology of equality has actually caused problems (mostly relating to forced secularism and xenophobia) with postcolonial subjects in metropolitan France. For more information, see Alec Hargreaves and Mark McKinney, eds. *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*. London: Routledge, 1997; Laurent Dubois, “La République Métissée: Citizenship, Colonialism, and the Borders of French History.” *Cultural Studies* 14 (1) 2000, 15-34; Jonathan Gosnell, “France, Empire, Europe: Out of Africa?” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2006): 201-212.
ground on which to study community interaction. Boundaries between groups are calculated and constructed (Baumann 1996), but importantly, these boundaries are not static, but part of a continuous process of negotiation (Dwyer 1999: 54). I believe that minoritarian politics are one of many “dialectical processes” that, “are re-forming the salience of locality, place, and community in ways that often bypass the state” (Comaroff 2001: 14). My project places this discourse of minoritarian politics in relation to musical practices, illuminating music’s central role in these processes.

Methodology

For this dissertation I conducted a year of ethnographic fieldwork from September 2013 to August 2014, as well as two month-long trips in 2009 and 2011, in Paris and its banlieues. I had previously conducted research in Guadeloupe in the French Antilles for my master’s thesis in 2008, and my research trips to Paris in 2009 and 2011 were meant to function as an introduction to the French Antillean music industry abroad. In 2011, through my connections to Moradisc, an Antillean record store, I was introduced to a Haitian entrepreneur and record producer, Bazile Pegguy, who offered to function as a gatekeeper of sorts for the Haitian community, enabling me to attend the event described in the opening vignette of this chapter.

Through additional research on the history of the relationship between France and Haiti and France and the French Antilles, but more so the generally negative environment surrounding Haitians in the Antilles, I began to realize how significant the interactions and connections forged through musical performance in Paris are (these histories are explained more fully in Chapter One). It was necessary to go back and fully participate
with the Haitian community to understand what processes and community structures are enabling these interactions.

I returned to Paris in September 2013 for a year to research the French Antillean Haitian musical communities there. I lived in Maisons-Alfort, a suburb just to the east of Paris, bordering the Bois de Vincennes to the north. Living in the banlieue deeply impacted my experiences during my time in France, particularly in how I encountered the geography of Paris as someone who relied exclusively on public transit to attend events, sometimes traveling for several hours and making multiple connections on night busses to get home at 5:00 a.m. The geographical politics of Paris, particularly between the suburbs and city, are the topic of Chapter Two.

Bazile Pegguy, my contact in my 2011, quickly connected me to new Haitian initiatives just starting in Paris, including the inaugural concert for twoubAkoustik, an event that ended up having a huge turnout among the Haitian community in Paris and connected me to many important community leaders, activists, and music advocates, including Pradel Saint-Fleur. Pradel, as the President of the Club des Artistes Haïtiens d’Europe, the organizer of twoubAkoustik, the editor and creator of BoyoMag, a Haitian diasporic magazine, a DJ for the Caribbean radio station Espace FM and host of Boulevard du Compas, the Haitian community radio show, was an invaluable resource and friend throughout my dissertation research. He introduced me to Vanessa Joachim, co-host of Boulevard du Compas and volunteer for initiatives like Haiti, Je Connais and twoubAkoustik. Vanessa and Pradel, through inviting me to their radio show and other
events also introduced me to many of the musicians I discuss in this dissertation, including Original H, Milca, and Atissou Loko, among others.

I attended many events, both Haitian and Antillean during my time in Paris, including concerts of musicians like Freepon (multiple times), Victor O, Tanya Saint Val, Kassav, Admiral T (multiple times), Kreyol la, Harmonik, and Carimi, and I traveled to important sites of performance like Club Section Zouk, la Palacio, Espace Chevreuil, New Morning, l’Olympia, le Zénith, and more. The different types of events I attended allowed me to observe the shifting boundaries and designation/coding of performances. These experiences, as well as my fieldwork in New York (September 2011 – July 2012) and Boston (June 2015) highlighted to me the parameters and shifting dynamics of the transnational Haitian music industry (see Chapter Three) in relation to locality. My continued involvement in twoubAkoustik and Haiti Je Connais, as well as meeting Evens Nicolas, Association Nouvelle Image d’Haiti Vice President, and performers like BIC cemented to me the importance and prevalence of the idea of improving Haiti’s image among the Haitian community in Paris (the topic of Chapter Four).

Chapter Summary

These concepts and ideas are revealed more fully through the chapters of the dissertation. Chapter One, “Haiti, France, and the Antilles: Waves of Colonialism, Migration, Resistance, and Musical Exchange,” gives a historical background of colonial relationship between France, the Antilles, and Haiti, the history of migration for Haitians and Antilleans to France, as well as a history of the musical dialogue that has taken place between Antillean and Haitian popular music since the mid twentieth century. It
establishes the prejudice that Haitians endure in the French Antilles to emphasize the power of konpa music to overcome firmly ensconced stigmas in the Caribbean, as well as Paris’s unique role in the forging of Haitian-driven minor-to-minor networks.

Chapter Two, “Banlieues Tropicales: Geography, Access, and Media in Ile-de-France,” provides a cultural geography of Paris pertaining to Haitian community, presenting it as a site of transformation and stratification. The banlieue, as a peripheral space, becomes centralized for Haitians (and Antilleans) in the Paris region, through its de-stigmatization through events like Banlieues Tropicales and the general exclusion of the “major” through infrastructure. Music is the most centralizing force at play in these geographic relationships: in the absence of any designated Caribbean-coded neighborhood, musical events and music media and publicity connect the community.


Chapter Four, ““Pwofite tèt ou”(Avail Yourself): Social Entrepreneurship, Community Building, and the Pwofite Ideology,” untangles the relationships among the local Haitian community, the diaspora, and Haiti’s global image, illuminating how Paris functions as a site within the transnation to stimulate minority networks of support through social entrepreneurship. These community-building practices harness the pwofite ideology prevalent in the Haitian social imaginary, using music as a focal point for these events and what the choice of music reveals about community values.
The conclusion, “Milca and Musical Representations of French Caribbean Paris,” brings into sharp focus how the history of immigration to Paris, the urban geographies, the transnational nature of konpa performance, and the prevalence of community outreach described in the dissertation all present themselves within the music of Milca, a Paris-based French Guyanese and Haitian popular music singer. Milca’s scenario is an example of one outcome of all of this history, effort, exchange, profit, and outreach.

The common thread throughout all of these examples is the *pwofite* ideology and minoritarian politics that enable Haitians to, through music, forge minor-to-minor networks in order to benefit themselves. Their geographic peripheral status coupled with the way that they embrace their position in Paris allows them to better interact with a postcolonial audience. The creation of grassroots initiatives to improve Haiti’s image and the savvy genre swapping of artists like Milca represent additional outcomes of pwofite and minoritarian politics. Through all of these contributing elements, Haitians in Paris are taking advantage of the significance of their music among Haitians, Antilleans, and other local audiences to improve their situation geographically, financially, and ideologically.

**Conclusion: French Caribbean Diasporic Meaning**

This dissertation contributes to the field of Haitian studies by evaluating Paris’s role within the Haitian transnation, illuminating the potential power of Paris as a site for connecting Haitians with other postcolonial subjects from former French colonies. Although Paris has a relatively small Haitian population compared to central hubs like South Florida or New York, its unique geography and history aids immigrants in forming
minor-to-minor networks, making Paris the most significant site of interaction for Haitians with other formerly French-colonized populations within the Haitian diaspora. This dissertation also allows us to re-think the potential of konpa an instrument of social change, showing that konpa is in fact an empowering force in forming solidarities with other groups.

This project is significant in that it illuminates the dynamic relationship between immigrant communities, specifically the profound and significant role of immigrant communities in each others’ lives, while highlighting the complicated histories that can enable or even seemingly inhibit these relationships, with music as the primary unifying force. In other words, this dissertation illustrates music’s primary role in building minor-to-minor networks. Elements like class, race, citizenship, language, history, and geographic proximity all influence the creation of minor-to-minor networks, mostly in unifying groups in difference from the major, but music over all other factors serves as the bridge that allows minoritarian politics to intertwine to the extent that they have in Paris. Music is forging postcolonial relationships- not only Haitian to Antillean (broadly), but also to Africans, and the greater disenfranchised immigrant community in Europe. The broad implications for music studies, then, are that within this context, music engenders community solidarity (both broadly and specifically Haitian), narrates history (in the musical outcomes of colonialism and immigration), illustrates geography (in the different musical possibilities that come from different transnational nodes and also in the dichotomy of music of the periphery vs. center), facilitates knowing (in the use of music to educate both Haitians and non-Haitians about Haiti and the ability of music to allow
for participation within the community), creates solidarity (among Haitians and greater postcolonial migrants and immigrants in Europe), provides opportunity (the ability to reach a broader audience than otherwise thought possible), enables success (the outcomes of this marketability and the potential for social entrepreneurs to financially benefit from outreach endeavors), and provides hope (to alter local and international stigma surrounding Haiti in general and also gain support for the Haitian community in Paris). In connecting to this inclusive identity politics, the minor-to-minor networks that are in play in Paris can allow us to re-think what “French Caribbean” can mean and to what musical ends.
CHAPTER 1: HAITI, FRANCE, AND THE ANTILLES: WAVES OF COLONIALISM, MIGRATION, RESISTANCE, AND MUSICAL EXCHANGE

They are measuring out dignity
One kilometer to their mother
A centimeter to a foreigner
Watch as they dance konpa


The above quote, from the Guadeloupean band Soft’s 2007 song “Wouvè la Pòt” (Open the Door), abstractly depicts anti-Haitian discrimination in the French Antilles in spite of Antilleans’ love of Haitian konpa music. The lead singer and maestro of Soft, Fred Deshayes, explains that Haitians have a particularly difficult time in Guadeloupe, and are seen as the source of societal problems, saying, “Currently, in Guadeloupe, anti-Haitian racism is common. We must find a scapegoat for the economic and social failure” (Deshayes 2009). The lyrics of the song poetically describe the ways in which Guadeloupeans mistreat immigrants:

An pa ni pawòl pou vlopé I have no words that embrace
Moun ka ba lanmizè masko Those who attempt to deceive the misery
Si ou chiré nanm a`w pou fui If you've torn your soul to escape a country
on péyi
Epi voyé manjé pou frè é sè And send some food to your brothers and
sisters
Si an pé pa gadé’w épi respé If I do not look at you with respect
Se pas an tandé ki jan ou ka hélé It is because I cannot hear you scream⁶

The next verse further elaborates on the theme of mistrust and inability to give to
foreigners, but it adds that these people are dancing konpa:

Yo ka mizeré dinité They are measuring out dignity
On kilomèt pou manman yo One kilometer to their mother
On santimet pou étranjé A centimeter to a stranger
Gadé yo ki jan yo sou konpa Watch as they dance konpa

The final verse shows Deshayes’s disgust with the situation:

Ola nou téré fòs an nou Where have we buried our strength
Ola nou téré rèv a yo Where we have buried their dreams
E an té konprann nou té pi wo ki sa And I thought we were much better than that

E an té vwè la vi pli bel I saw a more beautiful life
Si an pé pa gadé’w épi respé If I do not look at you with respect
Sé pas anoubliyé tout nonm Because I forgot that all men
ni dinité Have the same dignity
Woy vouvè la pòt pou mwen Oh .. Open the door for me

In explaining the significance of “Vouvè la Pòt” Deshayes discusses the shared history of oppression between Haitians and Antilleans and advocates that:

I must admit to all men equal dignity. Otherwise, ignorance of our respective histories combined with difficult economic environment make our relations more bitter. Is there a barrier between the Antilles? Barriers ... they vary origins, languages to name a few. The barrier that separates us from Haitians is not that which separates us from Cubans or Trinidadians, to name a few (Deshayes in Da Silva 2009).  

Deshayes believes Antilleans share consanguinity with Haitians because of their linguistic ties and history.

While this immigration-fueled anti-Haitian stigma is prevalent enough to be a song topic, at the same time, Antilleans experience a similar kind of discrimination when

7 « Il n’y a pas que des valeurs humaines, mais c’est le point de départ : je dois reconnaître à tous les hommes une égale dignité. Pour le reste, l’ignorance de nos histoires respectives, ajoutée au contexte économique difficile rendent nos relations plus âpres. Une barrière entre les Antillais ? Des barrières… elles varient selon les origines, les langues pour ne citer que cela. La barrière qui nous sépare des Haïtiens n’est pas celle qui nous sépare des Cubains ou des Trinidadiens, pour ne citer que cela. » Fred Deshayes in Diane Da Silva, « Soft : un groupe de valeur(s), » RFI Musique (accessed 12 November 2009) <http://www.rfimusique.com>
they migrate to Paris. In fact, “Wouvè la Pòt” comes from Soft’s album, Partout Etranger (Everywhere abroad or everywhere foreign), which is meant to highlight the feelings of alienation that Antilleans feel in Paris. Fred Deshayes, explains that Partout Étranger, “is about otherness and actually, addresses the question of identity back to front. Who is my other self? To who am I foreign? Is this not the same question? The difficulty is what makes you foreign, what created the distance (not only in its geographical aspect), what are the consequences and how I can ‘manage’?”

His inspiration behind the album title and its accompanying song, “Partout Étranger,” was an encounter he had with a young man, born in France by a Guadeloupean mother, who lives in Sarcelles, a suburb of Paris largely inhabited by immigrants and people of Antillean origin. This young man’s struggle with belonging provides the lyrical basis for the titular song of the album.

These examples begin to highlight the potentially volatile relationship involving immigration, Paris, the Antilles, and Haiti. France, Haiti, and the French Antilles do indeed have a complicated and entangled history that extends backwards five hundred years and continues to influence interactions today, notably in relation to Haitian and Antillean immigrant communities in the Paris region. To begin to understand these contemporary interactions and their complicated nature it is necessary to give a brief

background of French Colonialism, migration, and musical interactions in relation to Haiti and the French Antilles. Through these histories, this chapter will provide context for the complicated relationship between France, Antilleans, and Haitians in relation to colonialism, intellectual history, immigration, and musical exchange. This context will be critical for understanding the minoritarian politics and its musical outcomes described in this dissertation.

Several late twentieth century scholars have used boats and water in their discussions of colonialism and slavery, particularly in reference to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, whether it is through a transnational network like the French-Atlantic Triangle (Miller 2008), or Gilroy’s ship as a moving ecosystem making the middle passage (Gilroy 1993). Glissant’s open boat as an abyss, taking petrified slaves across the Atlantic (Glissant 1990), or Malcom X’s “tidal wave of darkness” to wash away the world’s evils. These models all characterize teleological or systematized movement.

Thus, I would like to draw from Kamau Brathwaite’s concept of “tidalectics,” to better characterize and organize the dynamic movement and evolution of the historical entanglements of France, Haiti, and the French Antilles. Significantly, Braithwaite’s tidalectics, taking from the cyclical movement of the tides, denounces a telos, as, according to Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “a methodological tool that foregrounds how a dynamic model of geography can elucidate island history and cultural production, providing framework for exploring the complex and shifting entanglement between sea and land, diaspora and indigeneity, routes and roots.” (DeLoughrey 2007, p.2) I will use
tidalectics to offer a critical history of the entanglement of France, Haiti, and the French Antilles.

The undulating motion of waves is continuous and never static, much like the movements of power, humans, and music I discuss in this chapter through: 1) currents of colonialism, i.e., the movement of Europeans to the Caribbean, from Africa to the Caribbean, and goods and money from the Caribbean to Europe, as well as the repercussions of these movements; 2) swells of dissent and destruction through anti-colonialist movements and literature; 3) waves of migration in the twentieth century, with their varying sizes, those that are small and receding back to the Caribbean, and the larger waves that don’t return; 4) tides of musical exchange and dialogue and the routes and links between French Caribbean dance music; 5) crashes of tension and discrimination between Antilleans and Haitians in the Caribbean and their musical responses.

Navigating the intricacies of the connections and disjuncture between Antilleans and Haitians, both in their relationship to France and each other requires a model of organization that emphasizes fluidity and change, making tides and waves appropriate to provide an over-arching theme to this chapter. Discounting the idea that waves’ repetitious nature harbors monotony, Carmen Beatriz Llenin-Figueros states, “What makes the concept of tidalectics fascinating is that, although the ocean appears to be engaged in an endless repetition of the same back and forth movement at every moment, the tide is, in fact, never exactly the same nor does it retreat or return to the same spot of “origin.” (Llenin-Figueros 2012, p.7) This pertinent statement applies to the relationship
between France, Haiti, and the French Antilles: it is always changing, shifting, and marked by the shifting, retreating, and returning of flows of power and migration.

In this chapter I will first give a brief history of French colonialism in relation to Haiti and the French Antilles, explaining how this ties into subsequent waves of migration from the Caribbean to metropolitan France. After this I will describe how migratory movements from the Caribbean to France from the Caribbean have fueled anti-colonialist literary movements from francophone Caribbean intellectuals, paying heed to the socio-political disparity of immigrants from the Antilles and Haiti and how this contributes to present day discrimination among these populations. Then I will give a background of musical parallels between Haiti and the French Antilles, showing the important interrelationships between the two music industries in the Caribbean and explaining the importance of music to these communities.

In so doing, I highlight different parameters, experiences, and expectations throughout history for the two communities while also showing how closely tied they are by shared trajectories in relation to their colonial histories. The nuances of these colonial histories, circuits of movements, and cultural relations unravel in contemporary Paris through the interactions of French, Haitian, and Antillean inhabitants of the city. Despite their diverging histories in relation to France, both Haiti and the French Antilles have experienced colonialism, and continue to experience present-day racism. Ultimately, the dynamic historical entanglements described in this chapter enable the interactions and musical interplay that provide the core of this dissertation.
Currents of Colonialism: France, Haiti, and the French Antilles

Haiti is located on the western third of the island of Hispaniola, a part of the Greater Antilles archipelago in the Northern Caribbean. Its neighboring islands include Puerto Rico to the east, Jamaica to the west, and Cuba to the northwest. Hispaniola first encountered the western world in 1492 when Christopher Columbus made his historic journey of “discoveries,” which included a stop on the island. After this initial trip, the island remained under Spanish control until 1697 when, through a treaty between France and Spain, France gained the western third of the island (Haiti, then called Saint-Domingue), and Spain the eastern two-thirds (present-day Dominican Republic). Through the use of slave labor, Haiti had become France’s most profitable colony by the beginning of the Haitian revolution in 1791.

Haitian independence was significant for many reasons, among them that with it Haiti became the second independent republic of the new world (the first was the United States) as well as the first country founded on a slave revolt. Haitian independence instilled a strong sense of nationalism in Haitians, while striking fear into colonists reaping the benefits of slave labor elsewhere in the Americas.

Unfortunately, post-independence Haiti has a tumultuous history of leadership and has suffered from a legacy of anti-Haitian discrimination from Western powers and other Caribbean islands.9 Haiti has also spent the majority of its independent history

9 General Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared independence for Haiti on January 1, 1804, crowned himself Emperor of Haiti in 1805, and was assassinated less than three years later (Dubois 2012). After the assassination of Dessalines, the country split into two autonomous states in 1806, with President, and later self-appointed King, Henri
under a crippling debt to France, who insisted, upon recognizing Haiti as an independent nation in the 1820s, that Haiti pay a restitution of 150 million francs (equivalent to $3 billion today) for damages and lost property, in this case primarily made up of former slaves (Dubois 2012, p.7).

The struggles that Haiti has faced transitioning from a colonized slavery-dependent economy to one of an independent nation and the discrimination that has been harbored against it are relevant today in Paris through the efforts of Haitians in the community to improve Haiti’s image, a central topic of this dissertation.

Jocelyn Guilbault defines the French Antilles as Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, and St. Lucia, a group of islands in the lesser Antilles, extending in that order from the North to South (Guilbault 1993). Although these islands have all been under French and English control, and their close proximity has encouraged cultural exchange between them, the unified political history vis-à-vis France of Martinique and Guadeloupe, along with their current status as French départements separates them from the English-speaking islands Dominica and Saint Lucia. Thus, for the purposes of this

Christophe ruling the profitable and agriculturally rich North and President Alexandre Pétion presiding in the South and West. When Pétion died in 1818, Jean-Pierre Boyer became his successor and reunited the country after Christophe’s death in 1820; Boyer served as President of Haiti from 1818 to 1843, when a combination of a popular revolt and a group of political rivals overthrew his government. The period of Haitian history between 1843 and the beginning of the American occupation in 1915, which I will discuss later in this chapter, was particularly turbulent with twenty-two different Haitian Presidents taking power, some for only a few months at a time. President Faustin Soulouque, for example, elected in 1847, named himself Emperor in 1849 and reigned for ten years. see Joan Dayan, _Haiti, History, and the Gods_ (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
dissertation, “the French Antilles” refers to Guadeloupe and Martinique. This designation is consistent with my experiences in the Caribbean and France, where ‘Antilles’ almost exclusively means ‘Martinique and Guadeloupe,’ despite its broader potential meanings. David Beriss reflects this view explaining that: “Technically the term ‘Antilles’ refers, in both French and English, to all the islands of the Caribbean. But in France, when people mention the Antilles, they mean only Martinique and Guadeloupe” (Beriss 2004, footnote 15, p.43).

France initially colonized the Antilles in 1635, profiting off of slave labor supported sugar cane plantations in the seventeenth century. The islands oscillated between French and British control until the Treaty of Paris in 1841, after which they have remained under the jurisdiction of France. Due to the efforts of the abolitionist movement, led from Paris by Victor Schoelcher, slavery was abolished in the French colonies in 1848.11

During the centennial of the abolition of slavery, 1948, Aimé Césaire, Martinican writer, politician, and national figure described the initial event as, « à la fois immense et insuffisante » (both immense and insufficient), saying that simply abolishing and condemning slavery isn’t enough retribution for the suffering that took place (quoted in ________________

10 I will also use the term Antillean to refer to someone from the Guadeloupe and Martinique and occasionally Domien to refer more broadly to a person from an over-seas department (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and Réunion).
11 Schoelcher’s efforts to liberate the enslaved populations in Guadeloupe and Martinique have been commemorated by giving his namesake to a commune in Martinique, as well as a prestigious high school in Forte-de-France, at which countless important Antillean intellectuals have studied (Among them, Aimé Césaire, Edouard Glissant, Frantz Fanon, and Léon Damas), as well as numerous buildings, streets, and squares in Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and France.
Vergès, 2005, p.73). What Césaire meant was that abolishing slavery did not erase the dark history of enslavement on the island nor provide political equality for the freed people of color in the colonies.

In the 1940s, Aimé Césaire strongly supported the political assimilation of the Antilles. According to Ellen Schnepel, Césaire, “envisioned political assimilation as the final stage in the long struggle for recognition of Antillean social and economic equality”(Schnepen 2004, p.1) To Césaire, and many Antilleans, political assimilation was a way of decolonizing by elevating their political status to that of regions in hexagonal France.12 Because of this stance, Césaire received harsh censures from supporters of Black Nationalist movements, including Négritude, which he helped create. He claimed, however, that as departments of France, Guadeloupe and Martinique could focus on promoting their cultural difference. Césaire’s hope was that, “The pursuit of political assimilation would, ideally, go hand in hand with cultural and spiritual dissimilation from the metropolitan model”(Burton 1995, p.143). Martinique and Guadeloupe, as well as Réunion and French Guiana were granted political assimilation, or departmental status, as official départements d’outre mer (overseas departments, or DOM) on 16 March 1946. This designation meant that all native habitants of these places were officially French citizens.

As departments of France, Martinique and Guadeloupe are not independent nations and lack political autonomy, but are in theory equal to French citizens in

12 Hexagonal France is a common way of referring to continental France, due to its hexagonal shape.
hexagonal France. Unfortunately, this was not the case: “The end of the previous colonial relationship in 1946 and the transformation [of Guadeloupe and Martinique] into overseas departments did not grant these societies the access that they had demanded” (Vergès 2005, p.68). Domiens (people from overseas departments) rarely feel equal when in France because of their cultural distance and systematized racism. This dissonance has created a crisis of identity for Domiens as postcolonial subjects, making it difficult to understand their place in French society. In describing the difficulty of defining oneself as Antillean in France, François Vergès explains: “This situation makes them difficult to define: they are no longer colonies, but they are not independent territories and they remain subject to politics of exception, both positive and negative.” Vergès 2005, p.68). These politics of exception have fueled strong nationalist movements and continued the output of anti-colonial literature post-departmentalization, a topic I will visit in the next section of this chapter.


Swells of Dissent: Anticolonial Literature in the Twentieth Century

The following section gives a history of philosophical and literary movements emerging from French Antillean and Haitian thinkers in the early, mid, and late twentieth century. Many of these movements emerged as reactions to significant events in French Caribbean history, whether it be the American Occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) or the departmentalization of Martinique and Guadeloupe (1948), illustrating how closely tied creative output can be to socio-political needs, a topic central to understanding French Caribbean interactions and music in contemporary Paris. Significantly, while these two histories do have some parallels, the spaces and ideas animating Haitian and Antillean intellectuals are very different, with Paris serving a immense role in the creative production of Antilleans whereas Haitians were more tied to conflicts at home in the Caribbean.

This history aims to: 1. show the legacy of anti-colonial intellectual thought and its many manifestations among French Caribbean people; 2. emphasize the importance of Paris as a site in which people from (now) former French colonies can interact and collaborate; 3. provide a background on the similar philosophical trajectories of the Antilles and Haiti as a way rationalizing their future common ground for interaction in present-day France; 4. provide important context for significant historical figures modern life and cultural conversation among French Caribbean people. The literary and philosophical movements described in this section are at the core of the relationship between France and Haiti and the Antilles, as well as their relationship to each other. In particular, they illustrate Paris’s significance in Antillean anti-colonial thought and
Haitian reactions and disagreements with Antillean ideologies as a result of their different political realities. There are different parameters, experiences, and expectations in the histories of the Antilles and Haiti although both share similar trajectories in relation to their larger philosophical literary output.

The early-to-mid twentieth century was a catalyst for black intellectual thought from Antilleans, Haitians, and Africans living in Paris. The city served as a centralizing location where students, removed from their colonial homes for the first time, could discuss their Otherness as they experienced it. The 1930s, just a decade after the Harlem Renaissance in the United States, found these intellectuals, led by Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Léopold Sédar Senghor (from Martinique, French Guiana, and Senegal, respectively), inaugurating the Négritude movement (Burton 1995, p.141). Négritude is a literary a philosophical movement that celebrates blackness, specifically in difference from whiteness, which reached its climax in the post-war years leading up to the rapid decolonization of Africa in the 1960s.

Significantly, Négritude rejected French assimilation, the encouraging of colonial subjects to “become French” through the adoption of French language and culture, and was meant to be a push against Western, predominately white, culture, specifically promoting traditional or creolized art forms within colonized locales. Négritude has not been immune to criticism despite its enormous weight in the history of twentieth-century black literary thought, with Richard Burton arguing that, “to the essence of Frenchness it opposes a putative essence of blackness or Africanness and, in so doing, fails to escape the transcendent, anti-historical terms in which assimilationism itself is formulated.
Above all, Négritude may invert a stereotypical European definition of blackness and black culture, divesting it of its overtly racist character and transforming the negative into the positive, yet the underlying structure of that definition is retained.”(Burton 1995, p.141).

For Antilleans, the Négritude movement and Aimé Césaire’s leadership within it were integral to enhancing a distinct national identity (separate from France) and introducing a discourse on race and colonialism that eventually led to the push for departmentalization. However, the shared solidarity and difference vis-à-vis French colonizers with French colonized African subjects that led to the promotion of Négritude wasn’t as relevant to Haitians, who had been independent for over one hundred years; early twentieth-century Haitians, however, experienced a different set of colonial hegemonies in North America.

Haitians, having gained independence from France in 1804, faced a new form of colonial control beginning on 28 July 1915, when American troops invaded the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince starting what would become a nineteen-year military occupation. While there are many supposed reasons for the occupation, scholars have emphasized the tumultuous political climate in Haiti in the 1910s as a factor motivating the State Department of the United States to deploy troops. Suzy Castor discusses the importance of the many coups that took place between 1910 and 1915 in the U.S’s decision, saying: “The overthrow of the last of these regimes, that of General Vilbrun Guillaume Sam, occurred under tragic circumstances. Having taken refuge in foreign consulates following the murder of 173 political prisoners, he and the head of the Port-
au-Prince penitentiary, General Charles Oscar Etienne, were dragged from these
diplomatic asylums by the people and put to death right in the street.” (Castor and
Garafola 1974, p.254). Gage Averill explains another reason why the State Department
would have been interested in occupying Haiti: “In 1915, the United States, fearful of the
German influence in Haiti at the outset of World War I, wanting to protect the sea-lanes
to the Panama Canal, and responding to a succession of violent political transitions,
invaded Haiti to set up an occupation government enforced by the presence of U.S.
Marines” (Averill 2009, p.12). It wasn’t until 1934 that President Franklin Delano
Roosevelt ended the occupation, during Sténio Vincent’s tenure as President of Haiti.

The occupation ignited debates over national identity. Haiti, having fought for its
freedom a century before, valued its independence very highly. Gage Averill explains,
saying, “From the revolutionary times onward, Haiti has been fiercely independent and
nationalistic with an understandably strong distaste for foreign intervention. It is the
shared history and the opposition of the categories of nèg/nwa (Haitian) and blan
(foreign, white) that reinforce nationalism and patriotism that at times of crisis can draw
Haitians together to mete tèt ansanm (cooperate)” (Averill 1989, p.229).

Prior to the occupation, Haitian elites (lelit) hardly cooperated with the lower
classes (pèp-la); Haitian elites (mostly light-skinned descendants of affranchi, or freed
persons of color) identified strongly with European culture and denounced the common
practice of Vodou. However, the unfavorable conditions that came with the presence of

15 Vodou is capitalized and not italicized in this dissertation in compliance with the more
recent library of congress change in subject heading regarding the religion. For more
Americans in Haiti allowed for an ideological shift away from European-derived emblems of culture. As a result, Haitian intellectuals encouraged the Haitian people to look to their roots to emphasize African-derived aspects of culture, or “indigenous” activities in a process of identity formation that became known as the *mouvement indigène* (indigenous movement) or *mouvement folklorique* (folkloric movement). In the words of Laurent Dubois, “Ultimately, the two-decade-long occupation pushed a generation of thinkers to revise their understanding of their own society, spurring new literary and cultural movements that reshaped the intellectual landscape of twentieth-century Haiti” (Dubois 2012, p. 286). Michael Largey elaborates on these movements, stating that they “advocated a reevaluation of Haiti’s African ancestry and the establishment of criteria for evaluating the authenticity of Haitian cultural productions” (Largey 2006, p. 23). With the evaluation of cultural practices in Haiti, the importance of Vodou came to the fore.

Haitian intellectuals like Price-Mars viewed Vodou as an authentic aspect of their culture, one that the lower classes were able to preserve in rural areas while the elites lived their cosmopolitan, European-influenced lives. Gage Averill has emphasized Vodou’s role in Haitian identity, saying, “When Haitians speak of the centrality of Vodou to the meaning of being Haitian, they see peasant culture first as a continuation of a historical pattern, as a presentation of the Haitian past into present” (Averill 1989, p. 207).

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information, see Kate Ramsey “From ‘Voodooism’ to ‘Vodou’: Changing a US Library of Congress Subject Heading.” *Journal of Haitian Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2. (Special Issue on Vodou and Créolité) 2012.
Jean Price-Mars supported *indigènisme* (indigenism) arguing that, “if Africa was to be the cradle of Haitian civilization and culture, then those elements in Haiti which were most African were to be regarded as the most authentically Haitian” (Averill 1989, p.207). He emphasized this belief in his 1920 ethnography, *Ainsi Parle l’Oncle* (Thus Spoke Uncle), which posits that, “We have nourished for a long time the ambition of restoring the value of Haitian folk-lore in the eyes of the people. This entire book is an endeavor to integrate the popular Haitian thought into the discipline of traditional ethnography” (Price-Mars 1983, p.7). Further, he laments the Haitian elite’s disdain for their African culture, saying that being called “African” is, “the most humiliating affront that can be addressed to a Haitian. Strictly speaking, the most distinguished man of this country would much prefer that one find him to bear some resemblance to an Eskimo, a Samoyed, or a Tunguse rather than remind him of his Guinean or Sudanese ancestry. It is imperative to see with what arrogance some of the most representative figures of our milieu evoke the efficacy of some bastard relationship” (Price-Mars 1983, p.8).

Price-Mars’s ethnography was well-received by his peers and succeeded in promoting Vodou’s role in Haitian national culture; Gage Averill has emphasized the importance of the book to the dissemination of Vodou into other cultural practices, saying, “Intellectuals and artists of the black middle classes rallied behind Jean Price-Mars’s *indigèniste* manifesto of 1920, *Ainsi parle l’oncle* (Thus Spoke the Uncle), which called for the study and appreciation of African traditions and renewed emphasis on Haiti’s cultural difference from France and the United States. Under the impact of the
indigèniste movement of the 1930s, Creole and Vodou influences flowed into the popular and even the elite arts of urban Haiti…”(Averill 2009, p.12).

Another important work, a journal collaboration with Jacques Roumain, Emile Roumer, Philippe Thoby-Marcellin, Carl Brouard, and Georges Sylvain known as La Revue Indigène: les arts et la vie (The indigenous revue: arts and life) in 1927 heralded the coming of the indigèniste (or Indigenism) movement in Haiti. Belinda Elizabeth Jack has pointed out the appeal of Indigenism to late-occupation Haitians, saying, “Responding to a sense of rootlessness, dislocation, loss of identity, and absence of cultural homogeneity, Indigenism involved a ‘rooting’ of consciousness and an attempt to reinstate the potential of art by reestablishing the artist as the voice of the community”(Jack 1996, p.36).

This sentiment took on a new life in post-occupation Haiti, where a surge in Haitian nationalism allowed musicians and artists to infuse their work with Vodou elements. Michael Largey supports this when he says, “The invasion and subsequent occupation of Haiti engendered resistive responses, not only in Haitian political and economic life, but also in the arts, most notably in literature and music”(Largey 2006, p.40). Post-occupation Haiti brought a shift in favor of a black-African identity that developed into the noiriste movement, which Jean Price-Mars and François Duvalier (Papa Doc) supported (Averill 1989, p.229).

François Duvalier, the notorious dictator whose dynasty terrorized Haiti from 1957-1986 (with his term lasting from 1957-1971, ending with his death), rose to popularity through his support of the noiriste movement. He was one of the organizers
behind the short-lived journal *Les Griots* (1938-1940), in which dark-skinned intellectuals promoted African-derived aspects of Haitian culture, including Vodou. Additionally, the *noiriste* movement aimed to bring more dark-skinned Haitians into politics, resulting in Duvalier’s election.

Dark-skinned Haitians seeking political power holds significance because it breaks with the previously entrenched race-influenced class delineation in the country. One’s class (*klas*) in Haiti, in addition to being tied to wealth, can be determined by the conglomeration of myriad factors, including phenotype, family history, town or origin, occupation, political ties and power, and education (Averill 1989, p.205). Most broadly, the population can be broken up into two groups, the elites (*boujwazi*) and everyone else (*pèp-la*, literally ‘the people,’ who are primarily dark-skinned). The elite class, or *boujwazi*, according to Averill, “can be further divided according to whether they belong to the traditional lighter-skinned ruling class (*boujwazi tradisyonèl milat*) made up of well-known families (*gran fanmi*), to the numerically small group of wealthy blacks (*boujwazi tradisyonèl nwa*), or to the *arrivistes* (career climbers), the higher strata of government managers, most of whom are of middle-class origins, who came into power with the black governments after the Second World War (the *klas politic*)”(Averill 1989, p.205). This rise to power of *arrivistes* is precisely what I have described with the *noiriste* movement and the prominence of François Duvalier.

Some scholars have been critical of Duvalier’s motivations for participating in the *noiriste* movement, particularly in his support of Vodou practices among the *pèp-la*, saying that he was exploiting the lower classes while not truly believing in the
importance of the rise in status of the dark-skinned masses (Bastide et. al. 1974, p.15).

Importantly, the rise of the noiriste movement, as well as its association with the journal *Les Griots* can be tied to the activities of Antilleans and the Négritude movement in Paris during the same time.

The noiriste and indigenist movements in Haiti were not connected to the emergence of Négritude in Paris in the 1930s, but rather speak to the global climate surrounding race at the time. In an interview with René Depestre in 1967, Aimé Césaire called this a “coming to consciousness,” explaining, “I believe that at the time in the history of the world there was a coming to consciousness among Negroes, and this manifested itself in movements that had no relationship to each other”(quoted in Césaire 1950 [2000], p.86). Négritude differed from the noiriste movement in Haiti in that it aimed to promote a *universal* blackness rooted in Africa whereas the Haitian movement was a locally defined and deployed concept (Depestre 1956, p.10).

Négritude emerged in Paris in the 1930s through the literary efforts of middle-class colonial students, in particular through the publication of several journals; like noirisme in Haiti, Négritude’s published journals to disseminate their ideology and literary works. These seminal publications include: La Revue du monde noir (1931), Légitime défense (1932), and L’étudiant noir (1934), as well as Aimé Césaire's iconic poem “Cahier d’un Retour au Pays Natal” (Notebook of a Return to my Native Land),

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published in 1939. Inspired by his return to Martinique after studying in France and the strange sense of otherness he felt after partially assimilating into French society, Césaire has described “Cahier,” saying, “I wrote it just after I had finished by studies and had come back to Martinique. These were my first contacts with my country after an absence of ten years, so I really found myself assaulted by a sea of impressions and images. At the same time I felt a deep anguish for Martinique” (quoted in Césaire 1950 [2000], p.81).

Documenting the violence of the experience of returning home after living in Europe continues in anti-colonial writings in the 1940s and 1950s.

Anti-colonial literature reached its apex between the late-1940s and late-1950s. Fittingly, Césaire’s scathing, Marxist critique of colonialism, Discourse sur Colonialism was published in the middle of this period in 1950. The text is a treatise that explores the colonial predicament, breaking from western discussions of colonialism while outlining a plan for the future. As Césaire sees it, western “civilization” as we know it has dehumanized itself through the process of colonization. The only remedy for the inherently diseased occidental society is a revolution, led by the proletariat, which in turn will lead to the complete renewal of civilization as we know it.

The decade surrounding the publishing of Discourse on Colonialism saw an enormous output of writing denouncing colonialism and promoting blackness. This literature was produced by a wide range of Antillean, Haitian, French, African American, and African writers: “Discourse on Colonialism is indisputably one of the key texts in this ‘tidal wave’ of anti colonial literature produced during the postwar period-works that include W.E.B. Du Bois’s Color and Democracy (1945) and The World and Africa
(1947), Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), George Padmore’s *Pan-Africanism or Communism?: The Coming Struggle for Africa* (1956), Albert Memmi’s *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957), Richard Wright’s *White Man Listen!* (1957), Jean-Paul Sartre’s essay, “Black Orpheus” (1948), and journals such as *Présence Africaine* and *African Revolution*” (Kelley 2000, p.9). Several of these works functioned as a call to action, including, Suzanne Césaire’s essay “Malaise d’une Civilisation” in the journal *Tropiques*, when she proclaims, “The most disturbing reality is our own. We will act. This land of ours cannot be what we want it to be” (Césaire 1942, p.49).  

The late 1950s marked the beginning of massive global decolonization. In Africa, for example, according to Le Sueur, “virtually every colonized territory in Africa (from Algeria to post-apartheid South Africa, and in Asia from Myanmar to Shanghai) passed through the doors of decolonization within the span of a few decades. In Africa alone, more than fifty new states were created from the 1950s onward” (Le Sueur 2003, p.2). This was also a time when many criticisms of Négritude emerged, mostly because of its monolithic and essentializing approach to blackness.

One example of such criticism came from Haitian intellectual René Dépestre, who described Négritude, saying:

Negritude, which denies the evidence of the diversity of the material conditions of evolution, which considers the creative sensibility of blacks as that of a culturally homogenous block without borders… It neglects the importance of new classes of

17 Translation mine. Original text: “La plus troublante réalité est nôtre. Nous agirons. Cette terre, la nôtre, ne peut être que ce que nous voulons qu’elle soit.”
report since the treaty and since the abolition of slavery there formed in each of our own countries (Dépestre 1956, p.10).\(^{18}\)

According to Dépestre, Négritude overlooks countries like Haiti who have long been independent and developing their own identities separate from their ancestors. A similar Haitian criticism of Négritude came from Jacques Stéphen Alexis in his 1956 paper for the Congress of Negro Artists and Writers, “Du Réalisme merveilleux des Haïtiens” (Concerning the marvelous realism of Haitians. Alexis, like Dépestre, found Négritude to be too limiting and not attuned to the Caribbean experience.

There have also been criticisms from an Antillean perspective that Négritude doesn’t accurately represent the cultures of Guadeloupe and Martinique after centuries of creolization and métissage. Martinican writer Patrick Chamoiseau criticizes negritude as, “an assertion of officialized difference,” saying further, “merely to proclaim a difference that is recognized by the masters is no longer so much resistance as a form of hypnosis” (Chamoiseau 1989, p.28).\(^{19}\) To Chamoiseau, while Négritude embraces blackness, by classifying oneself as the Other, supports of Négritude are further marginalizing themselves. As Richard Burton explains, “Négritude now stood accused of denying the West Indian-ness of Martinique and Guadeloupe, their complex creole


particularity, in the name of a simplistic generalizing black universalism’’(Burton 1995, p.142).

It is not surprising then that Caribbean writers began to re-examine their identity in relation to their experiences as Antilleans. In 1964 Martinican writer René Ménil alluded to a spécificité antillaise (Antillean specificity), describing them as, “neither African, nor Chinese, nor Indian, nor even French, but ultimately West Indian”(Ménil 1964).\(^{20}\) This statement clearly differentiates the West Indian experience from that of Négritude (or broadly defined ‘Blackness’). However, the work of Martinican writer Edouard Glissant helps define what makes the West Indian experience different, thus he is most commonly associated with the term Antillanité. Unlike Négritude, which privileges the idea of African rootedness or retentions of Africanness as essential to Antillean identity, Antillanité looks at relational rootedness or multiple rootedness.

Glissant’s views of Antillanité can be extracted from his essays, *Discours antillais* (*Caribbean Discourse* 1981) and *Poétique de la Relation* (*Poetics of Relation* 1990), in which he credits Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari for looking away from singular ideas of rootedness, saying, “In opposition to this they propose the rhizome, an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either in the ground or in the air, with no predatory rootstock taking over permanently.” he says further, connecting to this own ideas, “The notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root. Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of

\(^{20}\) Quoted in Richard Burton and Fred Reno, eds. *French and West Indian* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 146.
Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the
Other” (Glissant 1990, p.11). Antillanité (which Dash translates as Caribbeanness)
emphasizes the Caribbean experience as the dynamic intersection of different cultures.
Thus, it is rooted in place or locality rather than solely in difference.

Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant published their
manifesto of Creole identity, *Eloge de la Créolité (In Praise of Creoleness)* in 1989 as an
even more specific model of Antillean thought. Because *Eloge de la Créolité* was
somewhat radical in its break from the ideological movements heralded by Césaire and
Glissant, the writers decided to pay homage to these intellectual forefathers first in
dedicating the text to Césaire and Glissant and also within the body of the work as well.
They praise Césaire, saying, “Césairian Negritude is a baptism, the primal act of our
restored dignity. We are forever Césaire’s sons” (Bernabé et al. 1993 [1989] p.80). They
insist on their admiration by designating Négritude “an indispensable
development” (p.82). However, they argue explicitly that Négritude is too limiting,
because while it was innovative in protesting colonialist thought, “it was always in the
name of universalist generalities thought in the Western way of thinking, and with no
consideration for our cultural reality” (p.84). They then applaud Glissant for moving past
Négritude, but argue that his texts are not clear enough, stating, “We received his texts
like hieroglyphics in which we were able somehow to perceive the quivering of a voice,
the oxygen of a perspective” (p.84).

Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant clearly wish to break away from earlier
forms of thinking about Antillean identity; the first sentence of *Eloge* emphasizes this
break from Antillanité by mirroring Ménil’s earlier description of Antillanité, saying: “Ni Européens, ni Africains, ni Asiatiques, nous nous proclamons Créoles.” (Not European, nor African, nor Asian, we proclaim ourselves Creole) (p.13). Just as Bernabé et. al. replace the word Antillean with the word Creole, Eloge emphasizes the Creole language and defines what it means to be Creole over what it means to be West Indian. Créolité has faced criticism for its essentialist idea of Creoleness, arguing that slavery was the moment of creolization and emphasizing a “preserved diversity.” The views of Creolists are that Creoleness is a preserved relic of the time of slavery and not a dynamic ongoing process (greatly differing from Glissant’s views). Thus, although Antillanité and Créolité could both be viewed as reactions to the political assimilation of departmentalization, particularly in their insistence of difference from France, they do so in very different ways.

As this section has illustrated, many of these ideological movements have garnered criticisms, particularly for being othering or essentialist; however, they were still important to the renewal and reinforcement of black identity first in the face of colonialism and in its aftermath. Significantly, Paris has played an important role in the bringing together of black intellectuals, as shown through the collaborations of the “trois pères” of Négritude as well as numerous journals published in the city. This legacy of French Caribbean intellectuals in Paris is significant in that it has created a rich heritage of action for present day-immigrants to inherit. The next section of this chapter will explain the history of Haitian and Antillean immigration to the Paris region, examining in
particular how French legislation has influenced flows of people and how this affects present-day communities in the metropole.

Waves of Migration to Paris

The history of immigration of French Caribbean peoples to France is a fairly recent one, with no wide spread or substantial movements occurring until the mid-twentieth century. However, the migration of these groups has led to the establishment of Paris as a significant node of cultural activity in both the Haitian and French Antillean transnations, and thus enables the city as a site of cultural interaction between these two communities. Having an understanding of these waves of migration are thus critical to understanding the environment surrounding Antillean and Haitian immigrants in France today. With an increase of immigrants coming to France, the country France has made it increasingly difficult to immigrate through more strict anti-immigration legislation, making it more difficult for Haitians to enter the country legally and making it easier for them to be deported. For Antilleans, Bumidom legislation brought people to France en masse, only to place them in menial positions with low-wages and little growth. Leaving their home islands for a better life in Europe, some of these workers have decades later found themselves in poverty, unable to return home (Philippon 2015). Through a history of Haitian and Antillean immigration to Paris I aim to illustrate the marginal character of these communities within French national culture, while being mindful of the differences that have accrued in the processes of living these histories as Antilleans versus that of Haitians.
Prior to the mid-twentieth century, there were no significant large-scale migratory movements from Haiti or the French Antilles to Paris. However, the colonial ties between these countries have always enabled exchange and migration on a small scale (Mooney 2011, p.115). The majority of Haitians and Antilleans in the metropole prior to the 1960s were students, normally young people from elite families who came to Paris for university with the intention of returning home upon its completion. The 1960s saw a distinct increase in movement from the Caribbean to Paris, although with different motivations for Haitians and French Antilleans.

The Duvalier regime in Haiti (François from 1957 to 1971 and his son Jean Claude from 1971 until 1986) had a profound effect on the Haitian population in France (Mooney 2011), most clearly through the increase of Haitian emigration throughout the period of the regime’s power. In 1960, the Haitian population of Paris was estimated to be approximately 100 people; by the end of the decade this number increased to 400 (Delachet-Guillon 1996, p.40). The first Haitians in France were predominantly students and middle-class French speakers from Port-au-Prince, the urban center of the country. Many of these immigrants did not seek permanent residence in France and started political institutions to promote change in Haiti (Bastide et. al 1974; Mooney 2011). As a result, most Haitians who immigrated to France in the 1960s or 1970s eventually returned to Haiti or moved to the United States, where it was easier to gain employment and where they could be in closer proximity to their relatives in Haiti (Alexis 1998). Delachet-

21 Several of these students are referenced in the anti-colonial literature portion of this chapter: Aimé Césaire, Edouard Glissant, Frantz Fanon include a few.
Guillon describes a portion of this population as having assimilated into French society, saying, “Today the majority of the Haitian diaspora [in France] of that time has returned to Haiti, left for North America, or become French”(1996, p.40).

For Antilleans, the 1960s brought the most significant legislation regarding French-Antillean relations since departmentalization in 1948 with the creation of Bumidom, or Bureau pour le Développement des Migrations des Départements d’Outre-Mer (Office for the Development of Migrations from the Overseas Departments). With Bumidom, the French government began recruiting low-level government workers from Martinique and Guadeloupe, encouraging the first significant migration of people from the region (Vergès 2005). There was a post-war shortage of low-level public service jobs, many of which were formerly held by Corsicans (Beriss 2004, p.26). Every year, through Bumidom, 2,500 Martinicans and 2,500 Guadeloupeans traveled to France to work in these positions. Bumidom began recruiting workers in 1963 and in just two years it had become the predominant motivation for Antilleans migrating to France. Its influence continued for nearly twenty years until its dissolution in 1981. The massive exporting of human labor, combined with the increased reliance on imported French goods had a profound effect on the style of living on the islands. Alain Anselin explains that between 1965 and 1975, “for every four Martinicans who left the island, five cars were imported. Under slavery a man was worth less than a mule: today he is hardly worth a car. Goods arrive, human beings depart”(Anselin 1990, p.113). Brenda Berrian explains Bumidom’s

22 “Aujourd’hui la majeure partie de la diaspora haïtienne de cette époque est soit retournée en Haïti, soit partie en Amérique du Nord, soit devenue française.”
massive scope, stating, “By the time it ceased operation in 1981, BUMIDOM had secured employment for 84,572 (43.9 percent) of the 192,632 French Caribbeans living in France” (Berrian 2000, p.3). Looking at these figures, it is no surprise that Bumidom left a lasting impression on Antilleans in France and in the Caribbean, evident in the many references to it in novels, films, songs, poetry, and art, among them the novel L’Exil Selon Julia (Exile According to Julia) by Gisèle Pineau, the film L’Avenir est Ailleurs (the Future is Elsewhere), directed and written by Antoine-Léonard Maestrati, and the album Partout Etranger from the musical group Soft.23

For Haitians, the 1970s were a difficult period regarding immigration to France. This was the case primarily because conditions in Haiti worsened when Jean Claude Duvalier took over after his father’s death in 1971, leading to an increase in emigration. And yet, immigration was made significantly more difficult during this time because France cut back on worker visas in 1973 and ended all labor migrations in 1974 due to an increase in unemployment in the country. Thus, 1974 saw the essential end of legal immigration for Haitians in Paris, with the exception of family reunification or student visas (Audebert 2012, p.56). And yet, the 1970s saw an increase in the number of immigrants from Haiti to metropolitan France. A majority of these immigrants were students, although the United States was a more popular destination at the time for students from less wealthy families because of the ease with which someone could obtain

a need-based scholarship. In Ile-de-France, there is a concentration of Haitian students at Paris VIII Saint Denis, which has a reputation as an open place for international students. The 1970s was also the first wave of “l’immigration populaire” (immigration of the lower classes) for Haitians in France, in which a majority of these immigrants were women hired as maids.

The immigration of the lower classes continued in the early 1980s, with this decade boasting the largest growth of the Haitian population, from 4,724 to 12,311 (Mooney 2011, p.118). A large number of immigrants were seeking political asylum during the final years of Jean Claude Duvalier’s reign and the aftermath of the coup d’état that caused him to flee in 1986. The rural poor, particularly from southern Haiti emigrated to escape poverty as well, increasing the Haitian population in France. All of this growth occurred in spite of additional and ever-stricter French immigration legislation, particularly the Pasqua laws of 1986, which some scholars have claimed (Audebert 2012, p.56) was partially targeted at Haitian immigrants. These laws made it more difficult to legally enter the country and easier to get expelled if you were found to be an illegal resident.

By 1990, the Haitian population in Paris had increased to 14,343, thirty-six times its size in 1970 (Delachet-Guillon 1996, p.7). Unlike the educated French-speaking students of its nascent years, this Haitian community was mostly composed of rural and

24 Interestingly, I found this to be the opposite of the current situation with Haitians students looking to study abroad. The Haitians I spoke with said they chose France over the US because of the comparatively low cost of education.
semi-rural Creole-speakers. Although strict immigration policies in France continued into the 1990s, politics also continued to be fraught in Haiti, forcing increased illegal emigration from Haiti to France. As the Haitian population grew in the mid-1990s, a more cohesive community began to organize--one that intended to stay in France and help naturalize illegal immigrants.

For Antilleans, the 1980s signaled the first change in migration legislation since the founding of Bumidom in 1963; in 1981, Bumidom was replaced by the Agence nationale pour l’insertion des travailleurs d’outre-mer (National Agency for the Placement of Workers from the Outerseas) or the ANT, which was intended to encourage Bumidom workers and their offspring to return to Martinique and Guadeloupe, a particularly difficult proposition for offspring who were born in France and had no emotional ties to the Caribbean. Another critique was that the island economies had no place for a large influx of people seeking employment (Berrian 2000, p.4).

By the 1990s, the Paris region, known as Ile-de-France, had earned the title “La troisième île” (The third island) because of its large Antillean population (Anselin 1990, p.7-8). For every three Antilleans, two are born in the Caribbean, the third in France. With roughly 400,000 people in Guadeloupe and 380,000 Martinique, the near 400,000 Antilleans in Ile de France have a population comparable to its Caribbean counterparts.

25 Like Delachet-Guillon, when I refer to the Haitian community, I mean people of Haitian origin, as well as the first and second generation of immigrants. “Pour notre propos, nos appellerons “communauté haïtienne” tous ceux qui don référence à leur origine haïtienne, à la première ou à la deuxième génération de l’immigration, qu’ils soient Haïtiens ou Français.” Delachet-Guillon, La Communauté Haïtienne en Ile-de-France (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996), 65.
France passed legislation in 2006 that increased the restraints of the Pasqua laws, making it harder for families to reunite via immigration, extending the waiting period from twelve to nineteen months, and quickening deportation procedures (Audebert 2012, p.56). In the 2010s, the Haitian population in Ile de France is officially reported as approximately 25,000 (Mooney 2011, p.113). However, it is important to remember that when dealing with immigrant communities, census data is unlikely to be accurate. Many Haitians enter France on a tourist visa with no intention to leave; an estimated twenty percent of Haitians in Paris are undocumented (Mooney 2011, p.120). Other sources have said that the population is between 50,000 and 70,000 (Audebert 2012, p.56). In an interview in May 2011, one community advocate estimated the population was as high as 100,000 people (Pegguy 2011).

Today the legacy of migration from the Caribbean to the metropole continues in a similar vein as during the second half of the twentieth century. Ladom, *L'Agence de l'Outre mer pour la mobilité* (The Outer Seas Agency for Mobility), replaced l’ANT in 2006 and functions as a bureau to place Antilleans in jobs in France to ameliorate the high unemployment rate in the Caribbean. In 2014, Ladom in collaboration with SNCF, *Société nationale des chemins de fer français* (National society of French railways), publicized a large-scale recruitment in both Guadeloupe and Martinique for train conductors, advertising in both the Guadeloupe and Martinique editions of *France-Antilles* newspaper.26 The continuing role of Ladom in recruiting Antilleans for...

government jobs in the metropole shows the continued French encouragement of migration, but under its own highly controlled terms.

The condition of the immigrant worker is a primary highlighted issue at the *Musée de l’histoire de l’immigration* (The Museum of Immigration History also known as CNHI) at the Palais de la Porte Dorée. The museum, which opened in 2007, is the French government’s most recent attempt to curate a museum in this building; it was previously the site of *Musée Permanent des Colonies* (Permanent Colonial Museum) and then *Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens* (Museum of African and Oceanic Art), which later moved its collections to the *Musée du Quai Branly* in 2006.

Significantly, the site of the immigration museum, the Palais de la Porte Dorée was built as part of the Paris Colonial Exhibition in 1931. The exhibition lasted for half a year and was meant to illustrate and promote the wonders of colonialism through treasures brought back from France’s overseas colonies. Accordingly, the elaborately carved exterior of the Palais depicts people from different regions that France has colonized: “The front boasts the world’s largest *bas-relief*, a depiction by Adolphe Janniot of what the colonies gave to France, a mass of laborers harvesting rice and rubber, drying beans for coffee and picking grapes for wine, mining and fishing, and shipping wares to Marseille and Bordeaux. The great hall inside portrays the other side of the colonialist gift exchange, with images of the justice, education, science and good government that France took to its empire” (Thomas 2010, p.17). The building’s history as an emblem of the wonders and benefits of colonialism clashes with its current purpose.
as a purported way to honor the history of immigrants coming to France, most of which come from its former colonies.

Upon visiting the museum, it is clear that it functions primarily as an educational tool; the language, signage, and clientele all hint that the overwhelming majority of visitors to the museum are school-age children on fieldtrips. The objective of the museum seems to be to alleviate ignorance and include the concept of immigration into the greater French narrative of history, but from the perspective of a French narrator to that of a French spectator. Dominic Thomas elaborates on this idea, saying, “In the case of the CNHI, the defining umbrella rubric for the project is provided by the statement that ‘Leur histoire est notre histoire’ (Their history is our history’) - in each instance, the relationship between the other and the we remains exceptionally vague, confused and complicated by the question of appropriation, reductive constructs, and of course the futility of collapsing identities and origins as required by Republican ideals that have not erased racism and in which the collective signifier remains open to (mis)interpretation” (Thomas 2010, p.130).

In so doing, the language in the museum comes across as pedantic and teeters on the border of disingenuous, styled in a way that seems to say, “look children, sometimes people come here from other places.” When visiting the museum with an American friend, we (and apparently the cashier) were surprised to find that we were the only guests there who were not part of a children’s school group. I was perhaps more shocked to find that a museum focusing on people who come from countries other than France
only provided guides and information in French, unlike any other national museum I had visited in Paris.

One example of the strange distancing of the Other in the museum can be found in a section of the permanent exhibit called “Au Travail” or “Off to Work.” This portion of the exhibit is dedicated to immigrant workers who, according to the exposition guide, “participated in the construction and modernization of France. Periods of crisis and unemployment did not put an end to the jobs of immigrants. Often with low salaries, long hours, and difficult working conditions, less appreciated jobs and ones without much forward improvement were the ones of foreign and colonial workers.” The text reads as slightly apologetic and maybe pedantic, but the grateful tone of this prose is then critiqued in a lithograph displayed in the museum.

The lithograph, Chéri Samba’s “Paris est Propre” (Paris is Clean) (1989) is a striking visual in the exhibit that provides a biting commentary on the position of immigrants who are brought to the capital for service jobs. The setting of the lithograph is the Esplanade at the Palais de Chaillot at Trocadero, an iconic site most famous for its view of the Eiffel Tower. In the lithograph, night has fallen and the back center of the image features an illuminated Eiffel Tower with the Palais flanking it on both sides. Two (presumably French) Caucasians occupy the esplanade at a distance, walking their dogs.

In the foreground three black men in coveralls are cleaning up piles of dog feces, of which there are four depicted in the picture, each with vertical lines rising from it to indicate odor, heat, or both. One man is using a hose, another a mop, and the third is scooping one up with a hand shovel. Below the picture reads the text: “Paris est Propre: Grace à nous les immigrés qui n’aimons pas voir les urines et les crottes des chiens. Sans nous, cette ville serait peut-être la scorie de crottes.” (Thanks to us, immigrants who don’t like to see urine and dog turds. Without us, this town would be potentially covered with turds.) The black men in this picture are cleaning up stinking piles of dog excrement in the foreground while white French people leisurely walk their dogs, able to enjoy the view of France’s most famous monument. According to the museum, they chose to include this piece in the permanent collection because, “The work underlines the role of immigrants in a particularly difficult professional world, because it puts the workers in contact with waste, and is characterized by difficult working hours and long periods of physical activity.”

Chéri Samba, the Congolese artist who created “Paris est Propre,” illustrates with this work the hardships of immigrants from across the francophone world in Paris, while underlining the lack of equality between whites and people of color in the city.

The increase in immigration to France from former (and current) colonies in the 1980s leading into present-day has created tension between the Republican state and

28 “L’œuvre souligne le rôle des immigrés dans un univers professionnel particulièrement difficile, parce qu’il place les travailleurs au contact avec les déchets, et qui se caractérise par des rythmes de travail pénibles et une activité physique soutenue.” translated from http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/collections/paris-est-propre-de-cheri-samba (Viewed 4 December 2014)
these new metropolitan subjects. It should be noted that these issues exist for immigrants and migrants from the Caribbean, but also from Africa and Asia as well. One cause of this tension is the lack of integration for these people into mainstream French society, as well as high unemployment among these population, skewing the Republican ideal of assimilation into French culture into an ideology that promotes xenophobia. Pascal Blanchard et. al, call the rejection of the Other static and unrealistic considering the postcolonial waves of immigration into France; they criticize this ideology, calling it a “pure denial of reality”(Blanchard et. al 2005, p.29). Further, David Blatt has argued that these conditions have, “been exploited to revive a deep-rooted xenophobia that specifically targets North African immigrants, their descendants, and other post-colonial minority groups in France. Inherited colonial structures and attitudes, as well as unhealed scars from the era of decolonization, helped ensure that popular anxieties could be easily focused on the emergence of real or imagined Arab and Islamic identities”(Blatt 1997, p.52). This is especially apparent in light of the January 2015 shootings following the attack at Charlie Hebdo magazine.

Following the shootings, Prime Minister Manuel Valls gave a press conference on 20 January 2015 in which he lamented the existence of an “apartheid social, territorial et ethnique” in France. Historian Pascal Blanchard has agreed with this stance, adding that this sentiment applies to Antilleans as well, because, “Many say: ‘France,’ like they don’t belong there… this is one of the characteristics of apartheid, the feeling of being
excluded from one’s own country” (Blanchard in Santacroce 2015). He later adds that compared with ten years ago (the year of publication for La Fracture Coloniales, cited above), “the situation is worse. Ten years ago, we made the finding of a fracture in the process of growing. We showed the difficulty of feeling French because of the colonial legacy… meanwhile, there have been ten years of exclusion. Today, we are left with people in distress. Whether they originate from families of immigrants or the DOM, many are no longer able to feel French. How many are there, the Domiens, who undergo the same type of discrimination of the Malians or Senegalese?” (Blanchard in Santacroce 2015). Negative feelings towards immigrants are also applicable to Antilleans, in spite of their citizenship because the color of their skin marks them as “not French.”

Because this dissertation highlights how marginalized communities grapple with their position within Paris through music, the following section will explain the history and connections between Haitian and French Antillean popular dance music from the 1950s to today. In order to understand the intricacies of cultural exchange today, it is

necessary to understand the simultaneously entangled and divergent musical histories of Haiti and the French Antilles. Similarly to how the two groups have distinct histories of immigration, they also have distinct popular musics with strong national ties. There are, however, connections and parallels that help tie these two populations together in the Parisian metropole.

Tides of Musical Exchange: French Caribbean Popular Music Dialogues

In this section I will show how musical dialogues between the Antilles and Haiti coincided with the emergence of the commercial popular musics of the mid-to-late twentieth century, konpa (Haitian), kadans (Dominican), and zouk (Antillean), all of which strengthened musical nationalisms while promoting a common Afro-Caribbean identity and growing musical sales markets. I will then close with an epilogue that discusses the evolution of konpa and zouk into the twenty-first century and how the continuing dialogues between these genres influence the interactions of their respective cultures.

Modern Commercial Popular Music in the Mid to Late Twentieth-Century

The 1950s marked a shift in the commercialization and marketing of popular music in the French Caribbean. For the first time, companies were distributing records internationally among the different islands and bands were touring on a circuit between Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Lucia, and French Guiana, fostering musical exchange in the region (Averill 1993, p.79). Lucrative markets fueled this exchange and marketing enhanced cultural dialogue. Haitian konpa and Dominican kadans unified the French
Caribbean as a market, initiating musical dialogue in the region that remains to this day. Savvy Haitian konpa musicians capitalized on the markets of other Creole-speaking Caribbean islands, and Dominican kadans (cadence) musicians wrote their lyrics in Guadeloupean Creole rather than Dominican to appeal to a wider audience. Although money drove these exchanges, they were significant in bolstering Afro-Caribbean identity through a promotion of Creole languages, which significantly contributed to future musical production, particularly zouk.

In 1955 bandleader and saxophonist Nemours Jean-Baptiste developed a new style of Haitian popular dance music, which he called konpa-dirèk. The genre was similar to merengue from neighboring Dominican Republic, with a slightly slower tempo, but similar instrumentation and underlying rhythm. Significantly, Nemours cited the popular Haitian méringue as the inspiration behind the music, not Dominican merengue. Despite this claim, konpa-dirèk shares many similarities with merengue. For example, the chord structure in konpa (repetitive V7-I) was commonly used in the jaleo sections of merengue, until the méringue’s I-IV-V7 structure. Additionally, Nemours’ band consisted of accordion, bass, guitar, saxophones, trumpets, tanbou (drums), graj (scraper) and vocals, and his songs frequently included call-and-response sections, mirroring merengue further. However, the similarities to the Dominican genre mattered little because of Nemours’ knack for making broadly appealing music. He wished to produce, for the first time, a mass-marketable Haitian music that could be enjoyed regardless of class or race.

31 Generally Haitians are reluctant to make this connection and prefer to say that konpa has its routes in méringue. However, the popularity of merengue in Haiti in the mid-1950s and the extensive similarities say otherwise. See Averill (1997), pp. 78-9.
Describing Nemours Jean-Baptiste’s acuity for show business, Gage Averill says that while, “producing extremely commercial music, he succeeded in imposing his rhythm at the very outset by quantity, by repetition, by harassment [of his competitors], and by a constant and continually changing presence” (Averill 1993, p.70).

His success was in part due to his incredible business acumen; he saw the value of catering his music for a widespread audience. His songs were carefully manicured to appeal to a mass audience (Averill 1997, p.79). He even touts his popularity in the lyrics for the song (appropriately named) “Commercial Rhythm”:

Konpa-dirèk komèsyal Commerical konpa-dirèk
Se sak rann nou orijinal Is what makes us original
Se li tout djay ape jwe, se vve It’s what all the groups are playing,
                            it’s true! (translated by Averill 1997).

The 1960s brought many changes for the genre, from which modern konpa would evolve. In the latter part of the decade, konpa bands began to refer to themselves as mini-djaz, after djaz (the word for band), and the 1960s obsession with the mini skirt. The instrumentation of mini-djaz differed greatly from the small orchestras of Nemours Jean-Baptiste, mainly in the exclusion of the horn section (it sounded too old-fashioned to contemporary audiences), and in the introduction of more percussion and electronic instruments. The electric guitar became an important stylistic marker, and could be strummed percussively (graj) or plucked (chiré), with the foundational texture layering chiré guitar ostinati, drumset, congas, bell, and tom, and organ, with the occasional lyrical solo line in the tenor saxophone (Averill 1993, p.76). Rhythm sections became
characterized by drum kasé (breaks), lead by the kata cymbal rhythm, which is identical in sound to the first half of a 3-2 clave and the ti bwa rhythm, common in French Antillean folk music. The rhythm section was still paramount to a good performance: “The combination of subtle cymbal technique, unpredictable kasé, and a precise rhythm on the bell and tom are criteria used to distinguish well-played konpa” (Averill 1993, p.77). All of these changes gave konpa it a more modern sound, increasing its appeal in Haiti and elsewhere in the Creole-speaking Caribbean.

Once achieving popularity in Haiti, konpa groups began touring the other (French-based) Creole-speaking islands in the Caribbean on a yearly basis. The reasons for Antillean interest in Haitian popular music in the 1960s and 1970s come from their interest in consuming a distinctly non-French, Afro-Creole popular music. According to Gage Averill, “many…Haitians with whom I have talked, saw Haitian music as filling a special niche for the ethnically Afro-Antillean, Creole-speaking, French citizens of Martinique and Guadeloupe: it was in Creole, and it had a modern rock-influenced feel and a contagious dance beat. At this historic juncture for the Antilles, Haitian dance music served as an expression of contemporary Afro-Antillean identity” (1993, p.81).

By the 1970s, Haitian musicians sold only twenty percent of their records in Haiti. The most profitable market for Haitians was in the French Antilles. As Averill explains: “The records were sold above all in the Antilles. The Anson company, for example, which was the largest at the time with the records of Nemours, Sicot, Paoul Guillaume, and other artists, succeeded better in the Antilles because of its purchasing power- which always had had more attractive purchasing power than Port-au-Prince” (Averill 1993, 77).
p.80). The French Antillean market became a critical part of Haitian musical production, creating a greater French Caribbean network of exchange.

Meanwhile, in the 1970s in Dominica (an island sandwiched between Guadeloupe to the south and Martinique to the north), artists formulated a popular music to fit the island’s history as a former British and French colony. Because of this history, Dominica is an Anglophone island that uses a French-based Creole language similar to that of Guadeloupean or Martinican Creole. Dominican musicians took inspiration from the Anglophone genre, calypso, (French) creolophone kadans-ranpa (another name for konpa or Weber Sicot’s name for konpa), and local folk music to create a genre called cadence-lypso (also called cadence or kadans) (Rabess 1993).

Exile One, the group that pioneered cadence, strategically marketed themselves as a Guadeloupean group, looking to connect to the greater Afro-Caribbean musical market through the Antillean audience; the band operated out of Guadeloupe despite their Dominican origins. Their location, coupled with their choice to replace Dominican Creole lyrics with Guadeloupean Creole gave them an international reputation as a Guadeloupean group. These were strategic marketing decisions meant to increase their regional appeal and gain popularity with lucrative French Antillean audiences; Gregory Rabess explains, saying, “In order to reach out to the Guadeloupean and Martinican markets, Dominican musicians used expressions from these countries while dropping the Dominican counterparts. For example, ou (Dominican kwéyòl term for ‘you’) becomes vou (Guadeloupean kwéyòl)” (Rabess 1993, p.92).
Both Exile One and Nemours Jean-Baptiste promoted a larger Afro-Caribbean francophone identity through their marketing techniques, specifically through targeting French Antillean audiences. Because they created and promoted an open market through which to disseminate French Caribbean popular music, they connected audiences in Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Saint Lucia, and French Guiana, promoting Creole language and demonstrating the capability of their music for mass appeal. These factors primed the Caribbean market for the emergence of zouk music in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which positioned French Caribbean music as a force in the global World Music market.

Zouk and Contemporary Dialogues

In 1979 George and Pierre-Edouard Décimus, along with Jacob Desvarieux, all studio musicians in Paris, set out to produce a French Antillean popular dance music that would appeal to international markets. Through their formation of the super group Kassav’ and creation of zouk, these three men significantly impacted French Caribbean musical history. The group quickly grew to include members from Martinique, like influential female lead singer Jocelyne Béroard. They named the group Kassav’ from the Creole word for the cassava root, a popular staple in the Caribbean diet. Zouk incorporates electronically produced drum and bass ostinatos, layered with horns, electronic keyboard, and electric guitar. Electronic instruments helped Kassav’ generate the technologically sophisticated music that rivaled the French sound. Jacob Desvarieux’s career as a studio musician in Paris greatly contributed to the polished use
of electronic instruments; Kassav’ used these high-tech studios to produce an internationally accessible sound. Between 1979 and 1983, Kassav’ fine-tuned its sound, allowing its popularity to crescendo gradually until it peaked in 1984; Antillean audiences couldn’t help but dance to the electric beats of “zouk hard” and “zouk love,” the genre’s two main varieties. Zouk love songs are slower ballads, whereas zouk hard, the more popular of the two, consists of fast dance music (Guilbault 1993).

The network of Creole-speaking Caribbean islands embraced the genre before it gained popularity in Africa, Europe, and North America as well. Zouk was significant for Antilleans because it was the first mainstream popular music style to be produced by Antilleans, for Antilleans, while rejecting French and embracing Creole. Kassav’s success became a source of national pride for Martinicans and Guadeloupeans alike (Berrian 2000). With its cosmopolitan sound, zouk negotiated French Antillean identity through its use of Creole lyrics and topical subject matter, reflecting the legacy of music from the region. The genre reached its peak of international popularity after its 1984 hit, “Zouk la Sé Sèl Médikaman Nou Ni” (zouk is the only medicine we have).

The release of “Zouk-la sé sèl médikaman nou ni” in 1984 marked the emergence of Kassav’ and zouk onto the international market. The combined local and international record sales for the single totaled to over 200,000 copies. The success of “Zouk-la sé sèl médikaman nou ni” also earned Kassav’ a gold record, the first for an Antillean group (Jallier 1999). The song swept across the Caribbean like a musical hurricane, asserting zouk’s place on the international market and dominating radio play. With the addition of their West African fans, Kassav’ became the first French Antillean group to be well
known outside of the Caribbean and France. Shortly after the release of “Zouk-la sé sèl médikaman nou ni,” Kassav’ embarked on an international tour, traveling to France, Africa and the Caribbean. Their concerts brought audiences around the world first-hand exposure to zouk. Journalist Gene Scaramuzzo jokes that, “World domination seemed to be the next inevitable development” (Scaramuzzo 1990, p.27).

The 1990s marked a shift in zouk’s sound to one that is more synthetic; zouk songs today are frequently made up of a computer-produced back track with a singer, singing in French, about love. The topical Creole lyrics that made zouk so appealing in the 1980s became rare in the 1990s and 2000s. However, it is common to see “zouk rétro” (the style of zouk from the 1980s) featured in dance clubs and on radio programs. Since the 2000s there has been a surge in creative new talent who perform a variety of musical styles, including zouk occasionally, and who embrace Creole lyrics.

When zouk became sweepingly popular in the 1980s, the demand for konpa fell. Antilleans preferred zouk to konpa; the strong sense of nationalism they felt with the success of the genre wasn’t applicable to Haiti’s counterpart. As a result, konpa essentially lost a large portion of their paying audience. Even worse, by the late 1980s many Haitians preferred zouk to konpa. This in turn had a profound effect on konpa’s sound.

Konpa musicians in the 1980s tried to copy the zouk model of making music in several ways, one of these was through stylistic changes. Gage Averill explains, saying, “Some konpa bands concluded from zouk that there was a need to reduce the complexity of konpa, improve the vocals, and integrate female vocalists into the bands” (Averill
1993, p.86-7). Others were convinced that they should add more backup vocal harmonies, pare down the texture, and include fewer percussion instruments. Another tactic was to try to achieve the cosmopolitan studio sound of Kassav through the use of better technology and incorporating more electronic sounds into their arsenal.

The reality today is that neither zouk nor konpa is as popular as they once were decades ago on the international market. Accordingly, French Caribbean artists have experimented with a variety of other genres, such as R&B, soul, jazz, hip-hop, and Jamaican dancehall. Code-switching is common among Antillean artists (particularly between Creole and French) as well as konpa artists, who try to appeal to the multilingual Haitian diaspora by switching between English, Kreyol, and French in the same song. This phenomenon first gained popularity after “Sweet Micky” (Michel Martelly, the most recent president of Haiti) shocked audiences with his mid-1990s Carnival song “I Don’t Care.”

Although they are no longer the musical zeitgeists they once were in the late-twentieth century, both zouk and konpa are still emblematic to their respective places of origin and are considered national dance musics of Haiti and the Antilles. Significantly, Haitian interest in zouk has greatly diminished since the 1980s whereas Antilleans have renewed their interest in Haitian dance music. Since hearing “Antilleans love Haitian music!” for the first time in Place Schoelcher in Sainte-Anne, Guadeloupe, it has been repeated to me countless times by both Haitians and Antilleans in the Caribbean, New York, and Paris. It is this present-day Antillean preference for konpa that enables Haitian immigrants in Paris to benefit from their musical dialogue vis-à-vis Antilleans.
French Caribbean musical dialogues continue as zouk and konpa remain popular in the French Antilles, Haiti, and among diasporic Caribbean communities in South Florida, Canada, Paris, and New York. Frequently performed and marketed together, these genres and their consumers remain connected to each other, influencing trends, innovation, and the negotiation of identity through music.

Crashes of Tension: Anti-Haitian Stigma in the Antilles

The networks of musical dissemination described in the previous section are also relevant to migration patterns within the Caribbean. Haitian immigration to other, more economically stable islands in the Caribbean is extremely common and, as mentioned earlier with the song “Wouvè la pòt,” Guadeloupe is one of the most popular destinations for Haitians looking to relocate; this is most likely due to the similarities between Haitian kreyòl and Guadeloupean kwéyòl.

In 2012, the combined Haitian population in Guadeloupe, Martinique, and French Guiana was estimated to be between 50,000 and 70,000 people. Incoming Haitian immigrants in Guadeloupe (and Martinique) put a strain on the already bleak job market in the Antilles. The large number of immigrants from Haiti in combination with the low employment rates causes tensions and promotes a negative attitude towards Haitians. Ellen Schenpel explains further the source of the tension: “Over the last several decades with the political and economic deterioration of Haiti, immigration from this country to Guadeloupe has increased, and Haitians now comprise the second largest immigrant group. With return migration not a viable option, many Haitian males are a ready source of cheap, unskilled labor” (Schenpel 2004, p.49). Antilleans believe that Haitians,
particularly those who immigrate illegally, are driving down the price of labor because they are willing to work for such low wages. And, unfortunately, because many Haitians are leaving Haiti to escape poverty, they do so illegally and without any means to return there. All of these factors mean that although Antilleans and Haitians do have a shared history of slavery and speak Creole languages, Haitians are treated as outsiders in the Antilles.

The discrimination against Haitians in the Antilles is so wide spread and has become such an issue, that several Antillean musicians have written songs speaking out against it. In addition to Soft and their song “Wouvè la Pòt,” dancehall superstar Admiral T has pointed out the hypocrisy of Antillean’s love of konpa coupled with their animosity towards Haitian immigrants. Although he is known for dancehall music, a genre with Jamaican origins, Admiral T (a.k.a. Christy Campbell) frequently heralds several fundamental ideas of traditional Guadeloupean music, one of which being topical song lyrics. Accordingly, “Yo pa enmé”(They don’t like, released in 2008) discusses the hatred directed towards Haitians in Guadeloupe.

The song opens with a slick, electronically-produced groove that loops throughout the track. It features a drum kit, accenting the zouk-modified ti bwa rhythm, with the third beat of this rhythm accented by a synthesized hand-clapping sound. The track also includes a picked electric guitar that accents the second eighth note of every beat while filling in the musical texture between the zouk rhythm (played on drum machine), much like in the 1980s zouk hit “Zouk la sé sèl medikaman nou ni.”
The chorus of the song is fairly simple; Admiral T sings a simple and repetitive vocal line while using repetition to emphasize the extent to which Antilleans dislike Haitians while lauding their music, listing the names of several top konpa bands: Carimi, T-Vice, Ti-Kabzi, and Tabou Combo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yo pa enmé ayisyen</td>
<td>They don’t like Haitians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mé yo enmé Carimi</td>
<td>But they like Carimi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yo pa enmé ayisyen</td>
<td>They don’t like Haitians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mé yo enmé T-vice (vice)</td>
<td>But they like T-Vice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yo pa enmé ayisyen</td>
<td>They don’t like Haitians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mé yo enmé Ti-Kabzi</td>
<td>But they like Ti-Kabzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yo pa enmé ayisyen</td>
<td>They don’t like Haitians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mé yo vlé Tabou Combo</td>
<td>But they want Tabou Combo³²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “o” of Tabou Combo carries the singing into a repeated melismatic “oh.” A verse of the song scolds Antilleans, telling them to not denigrate or badmouth Haitians, explaining: “they went out on the same boat, so we are not better than them” (yo soti an lè memn bato, donc nou pa pli ho ki yo).

A musical interlude follows with a descending melodic line in the synthesizer that is meant to imitate the distinct timbre of the same type of moment in a konpa song.³³

³³ Leading into this moment Admiral T says “Woy fèy balancé balancé balancé,” describing a method of dancing by shifting weight from one foot to the other (balancé), to prepare the listener for the konpa-inspired interlude.
While this happens, Admiral T rhythmically repeats “We don’t need that, don’t need that, don’t need that”(Nou pa bizwen sa, pa bizwen sa, pa bizwen sa), insinuating that they don’t need to treat Haitians negatively.

A live performance of this song in Brunoy, a southeastern suburb of Paris in the Essone department, presented a different version of this interlude. The concert took place on 16 November 2013 in Brunoy’s Theatre de la Vallée at 8:00pm, accessible from Paris via the RER D (with a zone 5 fare). In this live version Admiral T started speaking as the “konpa” interlude began to play, making his way to the rear of the stage, approaching the drum set while saying:

Gwada Madinina Dominica Haiti Guadeloupe, Martinique Dominica Haiti
Nou tout soti an menm bato la We all went out on the same boat
Pa jen oubliey Do not forget
Sa pa te pou passe kon sa yeah This did not happen like that yeah
Fo nou solidé ansanm We must be strong together
Zot sav se linyon ka fe la fòs yeah The other knows if the union can make it stronger yeah

The band then started repeating a catchy konpa guitar riff, while Admiral T hovered over the tom-tom drum of the drum kit, until the band moved into an instrumental break indicative of a konpa song (which I call the “twangy break” because of the distinct timbre

34 Zone 5 is the farthest zone outside of Paris and the most expensive to travel to from the city.
of the electric guitar), and he began to play the ti bwa rhythm on the high hat while the band continued to groove and the audience reacted with glee. This was a far more accurate representation of what a konpa band sounds like than the example in the recording. Significantly, by participating in the konpa groove by playing the tom-tom, Admiral T is further emphasizing his acceptance of and participation in Haitian culture.

In an interview with Kā Magazine, Admiral T has made his feelings towards Haitians known, saying, “When I look at the Haitian flag, I see the flag of Dominica, of all the compatriots who live in Guadeloupe or in Martinique from elsewhere. It is the same also with Saint Lucians.”36 By equating Haitians with Dominicans, St. Lucians, and Martinicans, he is emphasizing Guadeloupe’s shared colonial past and cultural connection with Haiti. He continued, “As blacks, many feel discredited in France and complain but do the exact same thing at home with Haitians”(Starr 2011).37 He points out the racism that many Antilleans unjustly experience in France that makes them feel like second-class citizens despite being legal citizens of France, emphasizing that it is wrong to transfer these experiences onto other people. He finishes the interview by demanding that people try to stop this behavior, saying, “There everyone knows but doesn’t try to work to stop this kind of discrimination, saying, for example: he is dressed like a Haitian.

37 “En tant que noir, beaucoup se sentent déconsidérés en France et s’en plaignent mais font exactement la même chose au pays avec les Haïtiens.”
It must stop!” (Starr 2011)38 Considering how important this issue appears to be for Admiral T, it is curious that the song “Yo Pa Enmé” has not appeared on one of his full-length studio albums, of which he has four. It was recorded for distribution on a compilation record for his label in 2008 but was never released as a single nor received a lot of attention in the media. It is worth wondering why.

Significantly, “Yo Pa Enmé” and the Soft song “Wouvè la pòt” discussed at the beginning of this chapter discuss the marginalization of Haitians in the French Antilles but also mention Antilleans’ fondness for konpa. Antilleans have been enthusiastic consumers of Haitian music in the past, and this patronage continues today in the Caribbean and in Paris. However, because the majority of this anti-Haitian stigma comes from the socioeconomic climate in the French Antilles, these negative sentiments are greatly diminished when both groups are removed from a Caribbean setting and placed in the metropole, making Paris a uniquely positive place for Haitian and Antillean musical interaction.

Conclusion

Paris functions as a diverse site in which French Antilleans and Haitians choose to come together most significantly in relation to musical interaction. Today, with 337,000 French Antilleans living in Paris, the city’s population rivals that of the individual islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique (around 400,000 people each), making Paris the most

38 “Là tout le monde le sait mais on ne fait pas un travail sur soi pour arrêter ce genre de discrimination, on dira par exemple : « Pow! Misié abiyé kon ayisien » (« il est habillé comme un haïtien »), il faut arrêter!”
significant diasporic site for Antilleans. The Haitian population is 1/8th the size of that of the Antilleans, but Paris has been included as an important node on the transnational Haitian diaspora; Haitians living abroad make up such a large and dynamic portion of the total Haitian population, that they are called the ‘tenth department.’ (Jackson 2011).

Both Haitians and Antilleans in Paris grapple within the postcolonial city, struggling with racism as former colonial subjects living in the European metropole. If “French culture is based on the consent to live in community,” (Renan 1882) then therefore, living in France and refusing to assimilate into “truly” French culture directly conflicts with republican ideologies and creates tensions between immigrants and the state (Blatt 1997; Hargreaves and McKinney 1997). In addition to the racism with which these communities contend, the aforementioned tensions within the postcolonial French state present a desire to define oneself through the dissemination and consumption of popular culture from their “othered” culture. 39

I argue that Paris is the most profound place of musical exchange for Haitians and French Antilleans as a result of many interlocking factors: 1. Antilleans greatly outnumber Haitians in Ile de France. 2. In the French Antilles there is a similar ratio of these groups, but the dynamic of inclusivity is not present due to the negative sentiments

39 France has long adopted a policy of “assimilation,” first in relation to its colonies and then with other outsiders immigrating to France. This loyalty towards a “Republican” ideology of equality has actually caused problems (mostly relating to forced secularism and xenophobia) with postcolonial subjects in metropolitan France. For more information, see Alec Hargreaves and Mark McKinney, eds. Post-Colonial Cultures in France. London: Routledge, 1997; Laurent Dubois, “La République Métissée: Citizenship, Colonialism, and the Borders of French History.” Cultural Studies 14 (1) 2000, 15-34; Jonathan Gosnell, “France, Empire, Europe: Out of Africa?” Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, vol. 26, no. 2 (2006): 201-212.
towards Haitians as illegal immigrants and job-stealers. In the words of Fred Deshayes, Haiti serves as a kind of scapegoat for the Antilleans problems. 3. In Paris both groups are marginalized, even though Antilleans are citizens and Haitians are likely to be *sans papiers*. Logically, this makes little sense. As David Beriss explains, “Antilleans would seem to be cultural insiders. They come from islands that have been part of France for over three centuries, are educated in French schools, speak French, and are deeply entrenched in French culture and society. Since they are predominantly Catholic, unlike Muslim North Africans, their religion should not stand in the way of assimilation” (Beriss 2004, p.26). 4. However, in Paris, boundaries and differentiating factors between the former colonies melts away in the eyes of the French public. David Beriss characterizes this beautifully explaining that in his experience, “In France I discovered that distinctions between the two Caribbean islands faded away. For most French people, Martinicans and Guadeloupins were just Antilleans.” And further, “if Martinicans and Guadeloupins become Antilleans in France, they also become ‘black’”(Beriss 2004, footnote 5, p.41). Their skin color, through systematized racism associated with the universalist ideals of French Republicanism links Antilleans to those who are ‘unable’ to be French (because you can’t fully assimilate if you cannot change your phenotype to match that of the ‘true French person’).

Unlike Antilleans, Haitians seem to have every odd stacked against them when they immigrate to Paris. They face many hardships when they arrive, among them: 1. the limited availability of legal channels through which to enter France, so they are forced to enter as *sans papiers*. 2. Many of them, especially those coming from rural areas have
low levels of education. 3. A vast majority can only afford to settle in the banlieue (suburbs), where there is no centralized Haitian community, causing immigrants to be scattered and isolated from society. Thus it is inordinately difficult for Haitian immigrants to support themselves, especially because the state ignores the need for mediating institutions to help them adjust (Mooney 2012).

While it is important to acknowledge that Antilleans still face prejudices, their citizenship at the least gives them a power that is very difficult for Haitians to obtain. Antilleans are marginalized, but Haitians face even more marginalizing factors. Ultimately Paris acts as a site, just as it did for black students in the 1930s, where difference is exposed. More significantly, however, this difference (or racial divide) and the racism that fuels it are frequently denied or ignored, which François Vergès calls “the resistance to analyze the weight of colonial racism in French society” (Vergès 2005, p.71). And it is this resistance that produces layers of marginalization for postcolonial subjects in metropolitan France. Both Haitians and French Antilleans in Paris function as part of the minority group. Both are displaced and both are discriminated against. This social leveling, so to speak, allows for this particular environment where Haitians are able to fully harness their relationship with Antilleans to better the Haitian community and Haiti’s image. In the following chapter, I will present a cultural geography of French Caribbean musical Paris to illustrate how music networks are re-centering the marginal, peripheral spaces of the Parisian suburbs within the French Caribbean social imaginary.
Paris is a city characterized, at once, by transformation and compartmentalization. The city’s dynamic relationship with public space and borders is perhaps best illustrated through the case of Haussmann’s rebuilding of Paris under the rule of Napoleon III in the 1850s to 1870s. Although Paris’s “Haussmannization” brought the city sunny tree-lined boulevards, a better sewer system, and much of its characteristic architecture, it also helped cement the relationship in the city between geography and wealth, homogenizing the different districts and establishing a center-periphery relationship in which the city center functions as the height of the French social order while the suburbs, or banlieue, exist as highly stigmatized symbols of the failure of assimilation.

Many Antillean and Haitians live in the minority-occupied banlieue, which holds a marginal position both geographically and socio-politically. While peripheral and marginalized, French Antillean and Haitians in Paris are also dispersed; there isn’t a concentrated population or unofficially designated “community” in a particular banlieue or neighborhood (Beriss 2000; Delachet-Guillon 1996). Thus, these immigrant and migrant communities are faced with a number of obstacles in their everyday lives. French

40 See Pinkney (1958) for a comprehensive account of the process of Haussmannization.
Caribbean immigrants and migrants in Paris, however, are responding to these obstacles, subverting the geographic hierarchies in Paris by privileging peripheral spaces, denouncing the stigma of the banlieue by embracing the term and promoting their association with it through music festivals like Banlieues Tropicales, and defying the lack of mobility and access in the banlieue by implementing a media landscape that encompasses both the Haitian and French Antillean communities, creating networks of publicity and communication through music-based media that circumvent geographical hierarchies.

Through these efforts, French Caribbean immigrants and migrants in Paris are circumventing the “major” mainstream French society based in Paris through the creation of minor-to-minor networks between French Antilleans and Haitians, be they shared musical venues, radio stations, websites, or music festivals. By forging these networks and connecting with other minorities in the banlieue, French Caribbean people in Paris are renegotiating their peripheral social and geographic position in relation to the city center. Despite the lack of a homogenous Caribbean neighborhood or district, many Haitians and French Antilleans routinely congregate at Caribbean-centric events, which almost always include music, in the banlieue and listen to one of the Caribbean radio stations (Espace FM and Tropiques FM) to stay connected with their place of origin by listening to music from home, while remaining connected to the greater Paris region’s French Caribbean community through event announcements and publicity promoted on these stations. In addition to these radio stations, free print publications like Le P’tit Makrel are distributed in the banlieue to publicize upcoming events, print interviews with
artists, as well as provide a directory of Caribbean-themed and owned shops and restaurants in the Ile-de-France region. In light of this and the relative absence of other secular mediating institutions in the metropole (Mooney 2010), these networks of interaction precipitated by the Francophone Caribbean musical community in Paris function as a centralizing force, connecting dispersed Creole-speaking people across distant areas of the banlieue. Significantly, these networks of interaction are rooted in the peripheral spaces of the suburbs, making it difficult to learn about or participate in events as a city-dweller, rendering Paris a peripheral space within the context of French Caribbean life in Ile-de-France. Thus, this focus on the banlieue has allowed French Caribbean immigrants and migrants in Paris to re-center the periphery through established methods of publicity and music making that privilege geographically peripheral spaces.

If, as Henri Lefebvre states, “(Social) space is a (social) product,” (Lefebvre [1974] 1991, p. 26), then space can be understood not as an entity bounded by geography but rather a product of social and cultural relations. More recently, theorists characterize space as a fluid process (Prior 2011), constantly changing and in motion (Thrift 2006). It is therefore possible to uproot previously existing expectations or notions of what a particular space, or geography entails and I argue that this is precisely what is happening as a result of the dynamic musical networks in place for French Caribbean migrants and immigrants in Ile-de-France. In her discussion of youth culture in the banlieue, urban sociologist Laurence Roulleau-Berger proposes the possibility of “microgroups,” or marginalized groups, that can live in the banlieue without adopting the dominant
worldview: “In the borders of cultural transition areas where segregation and integration tend to overlap, microgroups fail to develop or maintain the common worldview” (Rolleau-Berger 1991, p.187). As the periphery may, as Rolleau-Berger suggests, resist dominant modes of thought, and as space is socially produced, then I argue that through the resistance of mainstream society and the promotion of their own peripheral culture, those living in the banlieue may also alter center-periphery relationships, particularly within the context of their social imaginary.

Charles Taylor’s definition of social imaginary as “the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (Taylor 2004, p.23), provides a broad lens through which to view the ways in which a community’s own experience and perception over time can influence they ways they view themselves and the ways in which they interact with the world. The social imaginary emerges out of practice, not analysis, and is connected to the concept of “implicit understanding.” Thus, through everyday life and practice, changes in one’s social imaginary can happen gradually over time as a result of lived experiences and through social mediation.

Drawing on Georgina Born, music is capable of engendering social mediation in myriad ways. In one of these ways, as she elaborates, “music animates imagined communities (Anderson 1991 (1983)), aggregating its listeners into virtual collectivities or publics based on musical and other identifications”(Born 2013, p.31). Thus music enables the formation of social collectivities through bonding its listeners together as an identifiable group. Music acts as a centralizing force and crucial common ground in Paris by bringing Haitian and Antillean audiences together at concerts and through media.

Another way that Born claims music engenders social mediation is related to its ability to subvert pre-existing hierarchies: “music is traversed by and refracts wider social formations: the hierarchical and stratified social relations associated with differences of class and age, race and gender, ethnicity and religion”(Born 2013, p.31). Thus, music’s crucial role in the lives of banlieusards (those living in the banlieue) could very well stem from its capability to refract the geographical social hierarchies in Paris.

By the virtue of music’s role in social mediation, the performing arts can function as political action for francophone Caribbean people. As David Beriss has argued, music is the primary mode of political action for Antilleans: “The main object of political action in the Antilles in recent decades has been to turn Martinicans and Guadeloupans into ‘cultural citizens,’ people deeply aware of each island’s history and traditions”(Beriss 2004, p.96). The importance of cultural citizenship is virtually the same for Haitians living in France. Music is an integral part of Haitian life and engenders a great deal of pride and nostalgia for those living abroad.
Considering the fluidity of space and spatial relationships, the ability for microgroups to circumvent mainstream society, the dispersal of francophone Caribbean people in the banlieue, the centralizing force of musical performance and publicity, and the role of francophone Caribbean people as cultural citizens engaged with the music of their Caribbean homes, then, there is potential to view the reconfiguration of spatial hierarchies in Ile-de-France through the francophone Caribbean social imaginary, as practiced in everyday life.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first explains the multiple obstacles with which French Caribbean communities grapple, among them the formation and implementation of spatial hierarchies in Paris, the stigma associated with the banlieue, and the lack of mobility and access for residents of these peripheral neighborhoods in the Paris region. The second section illustrates how the French Caribbean community has responded to these obstacles, subverting spatial hierarchies by privileging peripheral spaces, denouncing stigma by embracing and promoting the term banlieue in a music festival, Banlieues Tropicales, and combating a lack of mobility and access by implementing a musical media landscape that traverses banlieue borders and connects the community regardless of geography.

Histories of Hierarchies, Stigmas, and Limitations

Paris has undergone many geographical transformations in its long history. Since the tenth century Paris’s general shape has been that of an oval, split through the middle by the Seine River. With its northern half named la rive droite and the southern half la rive gauche, Paris has expanded outwards through time. Because of this expansion, in
general the closer something is to the center of the city, the older it is. This is significant because it sets the precedent for Paris privileging the center of its geography. This section will provide a brief history of the modern geography of Paris, from roughly 1795 to present day, to provide context for the entrenched correlation between geography and marginalization that began during this time and that continues today.

In 1795, the city was divided into twelve arrondissements, or quarters, with the first consisting of the western part of the rive droite, including the Tuileries gardens, Place de la Concorde, the Champs-Elysées and the future site of the Arc de Triomphe. The numbering system of the arrondissements moves in a somewhat clockwise manner, with 3-9 weaving north and south (all on the rive droite) and then the rive gauche consisting of arrondissements 10-12, moving from west to east.
Illustration 1: Map of Paris Pre-1860

Paris’s arrondissement borders (1795-1860) outlined in thick red lines with roman numerals. The black outline designates the post-1860 borders of the city, with the shaded grey area showing the annexed land from the suburbs. The Seine River is represented with blue.

This system of arrondissements remained in place until 1860, when Paris annexed several bordering suburbs, increasing the land area from 3,300 hectares, about 12.75

square miles, to 7,100 hectares, just short of 27 and a half square miles (see Map 1) (de Moncan 2012, pp.58-61). The communes that were incorporated include: La Villette, La Chapelle, Auteuil, Grenelle, Montmartre, Passy, Les Batignolles, Belleville, Charonne, Vaugirard, and Bercy, eleven in all. Seven other bordering communes were partially annexed as well.

The newly expanded city required a new system of arrondissements, this time numbering one to twenty, beginning with one in the center of the city and spiraling outwards, with an inner ring of numbers 1-8, and outer southern ring of 12-15, a middle northern ring from 9-11, and an outer ring above this from 16-20.

The annexation of the suburbs and subsequent re-division of the arrondissements was all part of a larger plan to restructure Paris brought on by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (Napoleon III) and instigated by the prefecture of the Seine, Baron Eugene Georges Haussmann. The massive changes that Haussmann introduced between 1850 and the 1870s, for which the construction continued until the 1920s, were so transformative and far-reaching that they have come to be known as the “Haussmannization” of Paris.

When Napoleon III came to power in 1848, Paris’s contemporary infrastructure posed many threats to public health: there was a lack of public sanitation, narrow,
winding roads with limited sunlight, and an elevated population density in the center of the city were among factors that were detrimental. Napoleon III wished to rectify these issues, as well as improve the city’s infrastructure for commerce, and minimize the possibility for future rebellions. Accordingly, Haussmannization entailed many aesthetic as well as practical changes.

The (arguably) most visible of Haussmann’s changes were the introduction of the wide, tree-lined streets, or grands boulevards, as well as the proliferation of “Haussmann-style” architecture, which notably treated city blocks as one cohesive unit and homogenized the look of much of Paris’s buildings. The grands boulevards were intended to open up the city by allowing more sunlight on the streets, as well as increasing mobility throughout the city, and with the construction of wider sidewalks, introducing public spaces for outdoor seating. Many public parks (Parc Monceau is one example) were also added during this period for the same reasons. In many ways, Haussmann’s renovations of Paris, particularly the boulevards, allowed for a more unified Paris, increasing accessibility between the city’s districts (Tauton 2009, p.9). Scholars have also accused Haussmann of more sinister motivations than improving the quality of life in Paris, saying that these were changes to increase the government’s power, and control, and to facilitate the further class stratification. Michael Tauton claims that Haussmannization allowed Napoleon III to demonstrate, “the absolute power of the Empire over the geography of Paris” (Tauton 2009, p. 9). This fits with Walter Benjamin’s idea that, “the real aim of Haussman’s work was the securing of the city against civil war” (Benjamin 2002).
David Harvey emphasizes the ways in which Haussmann’s changes benefited the rich and excluded the poor, calling this process *embourgeoisement*, explaining that: “The validation of the new public spaces (the splendor the boulevards displayed) was heavily dependent upon the control of private functions and activities that abutted upon it. Haussmann set about a process of ‘embourgeoisement’ of the city center that continued long thereafter. He sought to expel industrial activities (particularly noxious ones like tanning) and its associated working classes (often at the center of political revolt) from the center of the city” (Harvey 2006, p.21). This reconfiguration of the city’s spaces had some positive results, “facilitating the freer circulation of money, commodities and people (and hence of capital) throughout the spaces of the city” (Harvey 2006, p.25). Nevertheless, Haussmann’s work resulted in class stratification in Paris and led to the economic homogenization of the new arrondissements of the city, a configuration that remains relevant today.

Within the current twenty-arrondissement structure of Paris, there is a profound connection between proximity to the center of the city and wealth. Because of the centrifugal spiraling of the districts, this relationship coincides conveniently with arrondissement number and the price of real estate. Using real estate data of the price to purchase apartments divided by meter squared, it is possible to view this relationship in numerical terms:
Table 1: Average Price of Apartment in Paris, by Arrondissement

Average apartment in Paris: 7748€ per m$^2$\textsuperscript{45}

Average Price of Apartment per meter$^2$ by Arrondissement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrond.</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Arrond.</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1ère:</td>
<td>9772€</td>
<td>11ème:</td>
<td>7898€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ème:</td>
<td>8948€</td>
<td>12ème:</td>
<td>7668€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3ème:</td>
<td>9864€</td>
<td>13ème:</td>
<td>7045€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4ème:</td>
<td>11508€</td>
<td>14ème:</td>
<td>8125€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5ème:</td>
<td>11379€</td>
<td>15ème:</td>
<td>8335€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6ème:</td>
<td>12452€</td>
<td>16ème:</td>
<td>8600€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7ème:</td>
<td>11946€</td>
<td>17ème:</td>
<td>7871€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8ème:</td>
<td>9666€</td>
<td>18ème:</td>
<td>7028€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9ème:</td>
<td>8385€</td>
<td>19ème:</td>
<td>5979€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10ème:</td>
<td>7390€</td>
<td>20ème:</td>
<td>6279€</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{45} Data gathered 9/29/2015 meilleursagents.com (sample taken from 1 September 2015)
Illustration 3: Map of Average Price of Apartment per m² by Arrondissement

Map based on average of Longitude and average of Latitude. Color shows average price per m² as an attribute. Details are shown for Polygon ID and SubPolygonID.

The relationship between property value and geographic proximity to the center of Paris coincides with the west having an advantage to the east within the city. Significantly, this relationship extends outwards to the suburbs (with a few exceptions).

The suburban communes, synonymous with towns, surrounding Paris share a similar correlation between geography and wealth to that of Paris’s arrondissements; the relationship between the proximity to the center of the city and increasing cost of real estate is evident, as well as a more favorable market for the western suburbs and less
favorable for the north. This trend continues in relation to the ninety-six départements (departments), which function similarly to counties, into which mainland is divided.⁴⁶

Illustration 4: Map of Real Estate Prices in Ile-de-France Region

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⁴⁶ In addition to the ninety-six departments in hexagonal France, there are five overseas departments (French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Réunion, and Mayotte), making a total of 101 departments.
Table 2: Average Price per meter^2 of Apartments in Ile de France

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commune Name</th>
<th>Price per m^2</th>
<th>Département #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>7748 €</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulogne-Billancourt</td>
<td>6851€</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Denis</td>
<td>3033€</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argenteuil</td>
<td>2628€</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreuil</td>
<td>4030€</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Créteil</td>
<td>3188€</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanterre</td>
<td>4196€</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courbevoie</td>
<td>5512€</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitry-sur-Seine</td>
<td>3242€</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versailles</td>
<td>5184€</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombes</td>
<td>3786€</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asnières-sur-Seine</td>
<td>4530€</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aulnay-sous-Bois</td>
<td>2551€</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rueil-Malmaison</td>
<td>4947€</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champigny-sur-Marne</td>
<td>3066€</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aubervilliers</td>
<td>3055€</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Maur-des-Fossés</td>
<td>4615€</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drancy</td>
<td>2801€</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issy-les-Moulineaux</td>
<td>6253€</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levallois-Perret</td>
<td>7467€</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47 From meilleursagents.com data compiled from 1 September 2015
| Neuilly-sur-Seine | 8973€ | 92 |

*The average price to purchase an apartment in Ile-de-France is 5240€ per meter^2.*

From this data, the northern suburb of Aulnay-sous-Bois has the lowest average price per meter squared of 2551€ and Neuilly-sur-Seine in the west the highest at 8973€. Another high price average sits to the west of Paris, Levallois-Perret with 7467€ per meters squared, while northern Argenteuil, Drancy, and Saint-Denis continue the trend of further Northern suburbs holding low averages with 2628€, 2801€, and 3033€, respectively.

France is geographically divided into twenty-seven regions (*régions*), which could be compared to states in the U.S.A., which are then divided into a total of ninety-six departments (*départements*). The Ile-de-France region consists of eight departments, with Paris in the center, a ring of three departments surrounding it, and a ring of four departments surrounding the inner ring. This inner ring of departments is called the *Petite Couronne*, consisting of Hauts-de-Seine to the west of Paris, Seine-Saint-Denis to the north, and Val-de-Marne to the east. Unsurprisingly, the outer ringer of departments is then referred to as the *Grand Couronne*, with Seine-et-Marne to the east, Essonne to the south, Val-d’Oise to the north, and Yvelines to the west. The geographical pattern of property value decrease in relation to distance from Paris remains relevant in the average price of real estate in the departments surrounding Paris; the *Petite Couronne* has higher prices than the *Grande Couronne*. 
Illustration 5: Map of Average Price of Apartment by Département

Map based on average of Longitude and average of Latitude. Color shows Average price per m^2 as an attribute. Details are shown for polygon ID, Sub Polygon ID, and department name.

Table 3: Price per meter^2 of Apartment by Département

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department (with number)</th>
<th>Price per m^2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H. Paris (75)</td>
<td>7748 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Petite Couronne (inner ring of departments bordering Paris)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Hauts-de-Seine (92)</td>
<td>5359€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Seine-Saint-Denis (93)</td>
<td>3096€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Val-de-Marne (94)</td>
<td>4065€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Grande Couronne</em> (outer ring of departments surrounding Paris)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Seine-et-Marne (77)</td>
<td>2648€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Yvelines (78)</td>
<td>3634€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Essonne (91)</td>
<td>2648€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Val d’Oise (95)</td>
<td>2820€</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the suburbs are poor in relation to Paris, particularly the northern suburbs. There are, of course, some exceptions: Neuilly-sur-Seine is considered the richest commune in France and has a considerably higher price of real estate than Paris (with the average price to buy an apartment in Neuilly and Paris at 8973€ and 7748€, respectively). While Neuilly is, in fact, a banlieue, it, along with similarly posh bordering towns in Hauts-de-Seine, are frequently exempt from the stigmatized version of the term, evidencing the association between banlieue and lack of wealth.48

48 Significantly, it is normal practice to refer to Neuilly, St. Cloud, Sevres, or a number of other wealthy suburbs by name rather than referring to them as the general term “banlieue.”
The reconfiguration of Paris’s borders in 1860 created a new peripheral space. The annexation of the suburbs and the subsequent economic homogenization of many neighborhoods displaced some poorer Parisians to beyond the city’s limits. The lower-class status of many of the inhabitants of this new space differentiated it from previous settlements outside the city’s gates, called faubourgs. This new marginalized space garnered a new name as well, and the term banlieue was born. Marc Angélil and Cary Siress explain the origins of the banlieue:

Gentrification and suburban sprawl led to the creation of a new periphery in which poor communities became displaced and were relegated to the outskirts, the once-barren zone. The zone became known as a ‘place of the ban’ since residents had been excluded both physically (because of distance from the city) and culturally (because of class-based prejudice) from society. Thus, the expression banlieue infers a symptomatic breakdown of spatial politics and functions as the physical manifestation of a stigmatized social space (Angélil and Siress 2012, p.58). In the following section I will explain the concept of banlieue as stigma and how this association came to be.

Banlieue, Marginalization, and Stigma

The stigmatization of the banlieue, a space characterized by lower incomes, unassimilated immigrants, and non-European heritage, strengthens and promotes the superiority of the “true” French citizen, envisioned as white, secular (particularly non-Muslim), and speaking French without an accent, and upholds the values of a homogenous Republic. From Erving Goffman’s work, stigma can broadly be defined as, “an attribute that is deeply discrediting” (Goffman 1986 [1963], p. 3). Significantly, the
process of stigmatizing something helps solidify the dominance of whatever it is compared to, as Goffman explains: “an attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another” (Goffman 1986 [1963], p.3). Thus, the stigmatized banlieue, through its otherness re-affirms the legitimacy of the city in comparison. The banlieue symbolizes in many ways the ineficacy of assimilation, a central pillar of the French Republican ideology (Body-Gendrot 2000; Blanchard et al. 2005; Noiriel 1996; Weil 1995). Banlieue has lost its innocuous definition in many ways and has evolved into a sinister singularizing force that pushes a heterogeneous group of towns into one negative definition. This definition, according to Mireille Rosello, “now evokes one single type of urban landscape: dilapidated areas of social housing populated by a fantasized majority of ‘foreigners’ and especially of ‘Arabes,’”(Rosello 1997, p.240).

Although ‘banlieue’ literally translates to ‘suburb,’ the term carries an indisputable negative connotation today.49 Hargreaves and McKinney compare the characterization of the banlieues to ghettos or American urban inner-city designations (Hargreaves and McKinney 1997, p.12). In a more poetic explanation, Matthew Tauton

49 The use of banlieue as a singular concept can be damaging. In acknowledging this idea, Anna-Louise Milne asks: “What is going on behind the singular designation of ‘la banlieue’?” whereas Rosello laments that, “today, ‘banlieues’ is often used in the plural, as if all banlieues were the same, and the word had lost most of its semantic territory.”49 This singularizing designation is problematic in that it reduces a vast number of distinct towns into one negative entity. In reducing the banlieue to a singular idea, it is easier to critique and criticize. The city, in contrast, has been celebrated as a singular subject, with de Certeau claiming, “ ‘The city,’ like a proper name, thus provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties.”49 In the case of this text, “Paris” and “banlieue” are helpful in discussing the already prevalent binary that exists in the French social imaginary.
has explained that despite the term’s straightforward translation, “in modern parlance, nevertheless, the word sounds the note of banishment” (Tauton 2009, p.98). In Paris, thus, the peripheral spaces of the suburbs are synonymous with exclusion. Banlieue is a term bursting with meaning, and notably one that, for Rosello is “a shortcut for a vaguely formulated yet deeply seated malaise” (Rosello 1997, p.240).

The stigmatization of la banlieue was gradual, beginning in the 1920s as the result of the postwar housing shortage (Milne 2010). The rush to provide lodging for the growing postwar population led to hastily constructed communities in the undeveloped, then-rural areas surrounding Paris. Since then, journalists have portrayed the banlieue with a certain element of fear in their descriptions. Drawing on Milne: “Reports from la banlieue have long turned around faits divers: sensationalist stories of children left to burn in wooden shacks in the interwar years, or more recently of rodeos and terrified residents” (Milne 2010, p.64). After the Second World War, the banlieue’s reputation fell further with the advent of HLMs (Habitations à Loyer Modérés), or housing projects. Necessary to accommodate the many left homeless following the war, HLMs remain prevalent in the banlieue and continue as a source of negative perception.

Leading into the twenty-first century, the malaise of the banlieue escalated, raising tensions between the city and its outskirts and igniting national debates. To quote Laurent Dubois, at length:

In recent years, the malaise of the banlieue has become a central subject of debate in French public life, as the youth of these neighborhoods, many of whom are
children of immigrants, have become an 'issue' through which problems of economic exclusion, cultural difference and national identity are discussed. The economic and social exclusion of these communities confronts French society with the limits of ideals of integration that have been traditionally the cement of Republican social policy (Dubois 2000, p.17).

The conflict emanating from the banlieue, frequently referred to as “la crise des banlieues” has continued into the twenty-first century, reaching particularly high moments of tension during riots in Clichy-sous-Bois in 2005, the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo massacre in January 2015, and following the terrorist attacks throughout the city on 13 November 2015.

Thus, many living in Paris view the banlieue as exceedingly distant, undesirable, foreign and even dangerous. Laurent Dubois has characterized Parisian views of the banlieue as “basically another world”(Dubois 2000, p.17). However extreme this view sounds, I have experienced it first-hand. In 2011, I visited a community center in Saint-Denis, a northern suburb of Paris, to see Dédé Saint-Prix, a Martinican musician, perform a one-man show. The following day, I mentioned my trip while watching Roland Garros with some Parisian friends; they were shocked that I would travel so far, in their words, for such an event. When considering their reaction scene, also consider that Saint-Denis is the home to Stade de France, the national stadium of France, and it is doubtful that any of these people would hesitate to venture there to see the national French soccer team play.
Mobility and Access through Paris’s Geography

The current city limits of Paris were once outlined by a massive wall, the Theirs Fortification, constructed in 1841 and eventually demolished in the 1920s. Today the “staggering psychological barrier” (Rogers 2009) of the Boulevard Périphérique, a multi-lane highway that circulates around Paris’s borders, separates the city from the banlieue, serving as a concrete divider between the city and the suburbs.

Although there are no physical boundaries between neighboring banlieue, it is difficult to move suburb to suburb; The infrastructure in the Paris region privileges movement from the suburbs to the city, rather than movement among the suburbs, with this trend extending to before the 1860s. Prior to annexation of the suburbs, from David Pinkey, Paris was, “surrounded by a belt of eighteen independent cities, each with its down administration devoted to local interests. Each built its streets to facilitate connections with the nearest gate to Paris and gave little thought to communications with adjoining communes” (Pinkey [1958] 1972, pp.170-1).

This Paris-centric mindset continued into the creation of the vast public transit system in place in Ile-de-France. The transit system in Ile-de-France consists of a conglomerate of acronyms: RATP, STIF, SNCF, and RER. The region boasts several

50 RATP: Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens, manages the métro, tram, bus, and some RER; RER: Réseau Express Régional (express regional rail); Transilien: SNCF controlled regional rail; SNCF: Société nationale des chemins de fer français, national railway company; STIF: Syndicat des transports d’Ile-de-France, coordinates the numerous different Ile-de-France transportation organizations.
methods of transport, including bus, metro, tram, and regional rail. The layout of the rail system has trains cutting across Paris in different configurations, with the tram lines circulating around the Boulevard Périphérique, and outward moving regional rail lines extending far beyond Paris’s borders. The rail system runs like the veins and arteries in the human body: all blood must pump through the heart and transit in Ile-de-France functions to circulate people through Paris.

The RER regional rail lines are the primary mode of transportation for low-income workers who need to travel from their homes in the banlieue to the city for work, and have served as a site of contention and violence in the past. The French government’s deployment of Plan Vigipirate resulted in increased security on the RER after a series of bombings and attacks in the mid 1990s. Although this security, including soldiers on RER trains, was intended to increase safety, it quickly devolved into a promotion of France’s long-standing anti-immigrant issues. As Dubois explains: “The soldiers conduct extensive identity checks against those who ‘look’ foreign, concentrated in sites of transit which those who live in the banlieue must pass through each day on their way to work. The policing of the RER is a structural reassertion of the economic exclusion of those who live in the banlieue” (Dubois 2000, p.16-7).

Under the current system, it can be extremely difficult to move between relatively close suburban towns on public transit. For example, it takes approximately fifteen minutes to drive from Maisons-Alfort, an eastern suburb where I lived, to Fontenay-sous-Bois, a nearby suburb and the location of Club Section Zouk, with route covering a distance of 12 kilometers, with the trip only being so long because you must drive around
the Bois de Vincennes. The same trip on public transit would take one hour and eight minutes, requiring the passenger to travel back into Paris, make two additional interchanges, and then walk 10 minutes. This lack of mobility is in the process of being addressed; there is an initiative currently in place, Le Grande Paris, which began in 2009 and will span several decades, that is meant to solve many of these issues of mobility through the introduction of several new high speed rail lines to connect neighboring suburbs.

Thus, there is currently a marked disparity in mobility between the inner city and the suburbs of Paris, and this is reflected in a stark difference in the rate of car ownership between the two (ECMT 2003). According to the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT): “Rates of car ownership vary from one to eight in Paris and the outer suburbs... This difference can be partly accounted for by smaller average sized households in Paris (many students and elderly people), but the type of urbanization and quality of the different modes of travel offered are more important factors”(ECMT 2003, p.77). The lack of viable options for public transit the further you travel from Paris contributes to the increased use of motor vehicles in the outer suburbs. Car use in general in Ile-de-France has increased 60% in the past twenty years, but this is particularly evident “in sprawling outer suburbs”(ECMT 2003, p.77).

Census data compiled and analyzed by the Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE) discusses the connection between banlieue living and car ownership and usage, saying : “However, the main mode of transportation between home and work differs between areas of Ile-de-France. In Paris, car usage is infrequent, and
public transport is favored. It is the opposite in the Grand Couronne (outer suburbs), even if car use is less frequent in the provinces. Automotive Equipment & Meters of Ile-de-France households largely reflects the territorial differences in the use of modes of transport from home to work. Thus, in the outer suburbs and in the provinces occupied nine out of ten working households have at least one car, while in Paris six in ten have none at all” (Calvier and Françoise Jacquesson 2015). Making the correlation between vehicle use for commuting to work and general vehicle use, it is possible to extrapolate from the above data that in general a resident of Ile-de-France is much more likely to have access to a vehicle if they live in the suburbs than if they live in Paris.

Having access to a car makes it much easier to attend suburban musical events. In general, the timetable of French Caribbean suburban events do not coincide with that of public transit: these events frequently take place from approximately 11:00 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. and the trains stop running at 12:30 a.m. on weeknights and 1:30 a.m. on weekends and do not start running again until 5:30 a.m., varying slightly according to the train line, stop, and the direction in which you are traveling. If you take transit to an event, then you

will likely be stranded for an hour or more between the time the event ends and the metro begins running again. These factors all contribute to the fact that attending Caribbean events in the banlieue, particularly for residents of a different banlieue, is difficult without access to a vehicle. Because there is no centralized neighborhood of French Caribbean activity and the venues for events are similarly dispersed gaining access to these events is not always possible or convenient for low-income members of the communities.

Resisting Stigma, Subverting Hierarchies, and Taking Back the Banlieue

Thus far, this chapter has examined the various obstacles in place that French Caribbean people encounter in Paris in relation to their social and geographic marginalization, as well as issues of stigmatization and lack of adequate mobility and access. The banlieue is stigmatized, it is difficult to access without a vehicle, and it is separated from mainstream society (quite literally by the Boulevard Périphérique). However, I argue that by forging connections through music, Antilleans and Haitians are latching onto a powerful tool of resistance to these obstacles. Through collaborative musical efforts like the festival Banlieues Tropicales, Antilleans and Haitians are embracing the term banlieue and its association with their music, allowing the positive association with music to take away from the banlieue’s stigma. Further, they deemphasize the peripheral nature (socially) of the banlieue by privileging sites in the suburbs for concerts, bals, and other events, and building networks of publicity and media attendant to their own needs.
Banlieues Tropicales: Rethinking the Periphery

Through the festival *Banlieues Tropicales*, Caribbean artists, promoters, and governments are trying to de-stigmatize the banlieue by promoting it in a positive light with an association with Caribbean music. These efforts are attempting to re-centering the periphery by celebrating a normally stigmatized (and thus socially peripheral) and physically peripheral space, and making it of primary importance and associating it with artistic output.

The festival serves as a form of positive publicity for the banlieue, and that opportunity was not lost on the regional government: they sponsor the event and provide 25% of its funding (Gomez 2014). In explaining the rationale for the Banlieues Tropicales Festival, journalist François-Xavier Gomez explains: “Caribbean artists are not very heavily promoted in France’s radio and stage. Tired of waiting for public interest, the Caribbean music industry rose to action.”52 The festival aims to promote Caribbean music and culture, under the designation “banlieue” in both Paris and the suburbs.

Every November since 2011, the Banlieues Tropicales Festival organizes a series of concerts in both Paris and the banlieue. In 2014 the festival consisted of eighteen performances taking place from 6 November to 4 December. The *programmateur* (event

coordinator) for the event, Eric Basset, is a producer from the prominent Paris-based Caribbean music label, Aztec Musique.

The mission of Banlieues Tropicales aligns well with that of the Overseas Ministry (with the idea that promoting the music of the region could potentially also promote tourism to the region), as well as the government of Ile-de-France (in how reducing tensions between the city and the banlieue promotes safety). The coordinators describe the festival, saying that: “we have initiated, with the support of Ile-de-France, the Overseas Ministry and other partners, operations intended to showcase Caribbean musics and artists who perform them with an audience as wide as possible in Ile-de-France. Banlieues Tropicales is a festival that aims to move closer to the public in the region by offering a large number of concerts in as many cities as possible. Our goal is simple, make this event an unmissable cultural beacon.”

Of the eighteen concerts in the Banlieues Tropicales festival in 2014, ten were in Paris: at New Morning, L’entrepôt, Sunside, Le Cabaret Sauvage, and Le Bataclan, and in the banlieue at: L’observatoire (Cergy), Salle Gérard Philipe (Ste Gervaise des Bois, Le Triton (Les Lilas), Théâtre (Clichy la Garenne), and Canal 93 (Bobigny). All of the headliners were Antillean or of Antillean decent except for Emeline Michel, a famous

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53 Translated from “nous avons initié, avec l’aide de la Région Ile-de-France, le Ministère des Outre-Mer et d’autres partenaires, des operations destinées à mettre en valeur les musiques tropicales et les artistes qui les portent auprès d’un public francilien le plus large possible. Banlieues Tropicales est un festival qui se propose d’aller au plus près des publics de la region en proposant un grand nombre de concerts dans le plus grand nombre possible de villes. Notre objectif est simple, faire de cet évènement un phare culturel incontournable.” In Présentation. <http://www.banlieuestropicales.fr/>
Haitian singer, and members of the collaborative group Lyannaj, which blends Guadeloupean gwo ka and traditional music from the Brittany region of France.\textsuperscript{54}

**Dispersed Geography, United Sound**

Although the banlieue is indisputably a peripheral and marginalized space, it holds an important value for many Domiens and Haitians living in France: a large majority of French Caribbean immigrants and migrants in France live in Paris’s suburbs (Mooney 2010; Beriss 2000, p. 36). David Beriss describes this lack of a cohesive neighborhood, saying, “Half of the Antilleans in France live in moderate income public housing, but they do not form a majority in any neighborhood or town in the region (Marie 1993a, 12). Many work in the public sector, in local administrations, customs, the postal service, hospitals, and public transportation” (Beriss 2000, p.39). The same goes for the Haitians in Île-de-France, who are dispersed throughout the region, with a light concentration in the northern suburbs (Delachet-Guillon 1996).

Although the majority of Haitians living in France are in the Île-de-France region, only 10% of Haitians in Île-de-France live within Paris’s borders (Mooney 2011). Margarita Mooney laments the Haitian community’s position in the banlieue as a limiting factor for success, saying that due to, “their spatial concentration in the Parisian banlieue that isolates them from mainstream French society, Haitians face an uphill battle to earn equal footing with native French (Mooney 2011, p.113). Although this is true, there are

\textsuperscript{54} Brittany has historically been one of the strongest and most marginalized of the regional cultures of France. The collaboration between Guadeloupean and Briton musicians is significant from a standpoint of minor musical relations.
several factors, among them race and difficulty to immigrate legally that prohibit Haitians from “integrating” into French society.

Surprisingly there is no designated “neighborhood” of Antilleans or Haitians in the Parisian suburbs. In the 1960s and 1970s Sarcelles in the northern suburbs somewhat served this purpose for Antilleans, but today there is no one designated quarter. As such Haitians and Antilleans are dispersed throughout banlieue highlighting issues of mobility and access within these communities. In spite of their dispersal, francophone Caribbean immigrants and migrants have unified though musical networks of publicity and media, and congregate frequently for bals in the banlieues. As a majority of the French Caribbean population lives in the suburbs, there are a proportionately large number of French Caribbean dance halls in the suburbs as well. I have mapped several popular venues to illustrate the dispersed locations of the halls in the banlieue.
Illustration 6: Map of Popular French Caribbean Dancehalls in Ile-de-France

*The dark grey shape designates Paris’s city limits whereas light grey outlined in a white line shows Ile-de-France’s borders. Each hall is listed with venue name and commune name.*

**Table 4: Popular French Caribbean Dancehalls in Ile-de-France**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commune</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nanterre</td>
<td>Espace Chevreuil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essone</td>
<td>L’Acropol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

120
Jacob Etienne (2010) has argued that there used to be more bals within Paris, but that this has shifted in recent years due to the spatial segregation between the capital and the suburbs. Those bals that do take place outside of the suburbs are commonly run by non-Caribbean organizers, with, according to Etienne, noticeable differences in mood from the suburban bals that are characterized by a convivial atmosphere (Jacob 2010, p.53). For a more detailed discussion of Antillean and Haitian bals and other events as related to location, see Chapter 3.

Access, Space, and Media

In the piece, “Colonialism: Le zouk, victime des préjugés de la métropole” (Colonialism: Zouk, victim of prejudice in the metropole) Journalist Brice Miclet laments that zouk only receives publicity through what he calls “community media” outlets. He uses the example of publicity for a performance of Jacob Desvarieux,
Le Grand Méchant Zouk and famed guitarist from Kassav: “Saturday, October 4th, the Zénith of Paris is packed. 6,000 people were present at the annual meeting of modern Antillean music: Le Grand Méchant Zouk (The Big Bad Zouk) Yet apart from having seen the posters in the metro, it was difficult to have been informed of the event. Mainstream media outlets did not relay the event. Only France 3 was present on site.”(Miclet 2014). He argues that zouk is very popular internationally, and thus should be included in the French musical cannon, and particularly taking issue with the media’s lack of attention to the genre: “For zouk is unifying, filling whole stadiums abroad, and above all else, is a French music. But many media tend to forget that.”

The notion that zouk, or French Caribbean music, is ignored in France is not a new one. When Kassav’ was first achieving international success in the 1980s, the group still couldn’t get the support of the mainstream French media to publicize their shows. On the subject, Jocelyne Béroard, one of the lead singers in the group, has said, “They wouldn’t believe in our music in the French business. It was only after doing eight big concerts at the Zénith with up to eight thousand people each night that the French companies started to be interested in the group”(Béroard quoted in Bordowitz, p.41).


56 “Car le zouk est fédérateur, remplit des stades entiers à l’étranger et surtout, est une musique française. Mais ça, beaucoup de médias ont tendance à l’oublier.”
If Kassav, the most famous French Antillean group in the world, has had their music pushed to the periphery of French popular culture, then all other groups are even more marginalized. French Caribbean groups today, according to Miclet, can only receive publicity through outlets that favor Antillean and African communities and this limits their potential success and marginalizes zouk, which he pointedly calls “French music” and believes should have more of a mainstream following. Although it is arguable that francophone Caribbean music should receive more recognition from the mainstream media, Miclet’s account of the state of francophone Caribbean publicity presents a compelling case in favor for these so-called “community media” outlets.

I argue that this network of community media has formed a media landscape, catered to the community, that connects French Caribbean people throughout the banlieue. Considering that, as Born claims, “music seems to be ever more powerful in its generation of musically imagined community,” (Born 2013, p. 36) particularly because of its usage within social networking and online media, then music is capable of instigating musically imagined communities. And, in the case of French Caribbean music in Paris, this musically imagined community lives on through the creation and implementation of the greater diasporic mediascape.

Within Ile-de-France, francophone Caribbean music serves as a vehicle through which information can travel to dispersed communities. Popular music is the basis upon which francophone Caribbean networks of publicity and access have been built, enabling information to reach out across the city and suburbs. Because there isn’t a single, centralized neighborhood in which to advertise events, radio, print, and social media are
invaluable resources for disseminating information about festivals, bals, concerts, and merchants that are coded as Caribbean, acting as a centralizing force in place of a geographic center. Notably, Caribbean networks of publicity and access frequently appeal to a French Antillean majority (majority in relation to Haitians), at the expense of silencing, erasing, or hiding the Haitian voice within one that is coded broadly as Creole-speaking Caribbean, as Antillean.

These music-based networks thus emulate, within the context of the diasporic community, what Arjun Appadurai has called “mediascapes.” A mediascape has two possible meanings: “the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, film production studios, etc.), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world; and to the images of the world created by these media” (Appadurai 1990, p.299). The mediascape of French Caribbean Paris functions within both of these definitions. Mediascapes, along with ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes, function as one of Appadurai’s five dimensions of global cultural flows (1990), which are “deeply perspectival constructs, inflected very much by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities…” (Appadurai 1990, p.296) These flows are the foundation for “imagined worlds” or, “the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (p. 297). Thus, the mediascape built from the French Caribbean as a diasporic group, through
musical networks of publicity and media, can function as agents that underscore their own imagined communities.

Exploring further the impact of mediascapes, Appadurai states: “These images of the world involve many complicated inflections, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), their hardware (electronic or pre-electronic), their audiences (local, national or transnational) and the interest of those who own and control them. What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (especially in their television, film and cassette forms) large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and ‘ethnoscapes’ to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of ‘news’ and politics are profoundly mixed.” (Appadurai 1990, p.299) The French Caribbean mediascapes in Paris consist primarily of radio stations, print publications, and electronic event publicity resources, reaching the community across the Ile-de-France region. The mediascape within the context of French Caribbean Paris is made up of “community media,” and this results in a media landscape produced for and by these diasporic communities. This landscape enables the creation of minor-to-minor networks, privileging interactions that circumvent the major, allowing through practice to re-shape the social imaginary, emphasizing the periphery and making it the focal point.

Perhaps the most ubiquitous francophone Caribbean media outlets in Paris are the two radio stations dedicated to “tropical” music: Tropiques FM and Espace FM. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will discuss the older of the two stations, Espace FM. Espace FM was founded in 1982 and has its headquarters in the western suburb of Clichy. It broadcasts daily with a variety of programs that include news, sports, and, of
course, music. Local Caribbean businesses advertise on Espace FM’s airwaves and the station frequently sponsors most francophone Caribbean musical events in the area and thus greatly aid in the promotion of these events.

The station characterizes itself as Domien, but emphasizes an inclusivity under this broader term, focusing on their inclusion of music from Réunion, a French department in the Indian Ocean: “We have always also included the Reunionese community, somewhat forgotten by many radio stations. Thanks to our audience and the success of the mixture of our target- Antillean – (French) Guyanese and Reunionese, Espace FM is propelled towards the future and created a center of life in our programming.” Missing from the website’s list of presenters and shows, however, is any Haitian involvement.

Although it isn’t featured with the other programs, there is a small Haitian contingent at Espace FM. DJ Flo, a very popular konpa DJ in Ile-de-France, hosts a music show every Saturday and Sunday from 4:00 pm to 6:00pm. The show, “Phenomenal Kompa,” shares its name with the weekly soiree he hosts on Sunday nights at Club Section Zouk in Fontenay Sous Bois. The Saturday show features contemporary konpa music whereas Sunday focuses on konpa hits from past decades. In addition to

“Phnominal Kompa,” Espace FM features a long-standing Haitian community show, “Boulevard du Compas.”

“Boulevard du Compas” has been a fixture on Espace FM for over twenty years, greatly in part to the efforts of its creator, producer, and host Pradel Saint-Fleur. Saint-Fleur’s work on Boulevard du Compas is only one of the ways in which he is engaged with the greater Haitian community in Ile-de-France, efforts for which the Haitian Embassy awarded him the Prize of the Embassy of Haiti in its first year in 2014.

Pradel was born in Haiti in 1964 and moved to Paris when he was fifteen; as a young adult he studied communications and photography and is now involved with many different projects as a photographer, as the editor of a Haitian magazine (BoyoMag), as President of a local arts advocate organization (Club des Artistes Haïtiens d’Europe), and through working in Haitian radio in Paris since 1982, although it should be noted that he works professionally as a police officer in Paris.

Saint-Fleur created Boulevard du Compas in 1994 and presents it every Sunday from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, along with co-presenters Vanessa and Fritz. Although the name of the show implies a musical focus, the show serves many purposes, as a “community show” in Saint-Fleur’s words. He explains, saying: “this is a community show. It’s not a talk show, it’s not a music show, it’s something- I wouldn’t say bigger because I’m not going to put myself too high, but we’re trying to educate people, we’re trying to inform people, we’re trying to – I forgot the word in English but divertissement (distract/entertain) – to give some divertissement to people. To play music for them, to
give them a way to relax, and we give them a lot of information and we have a lawyer working with us, giving us some advice, every other week” (Saint-Fleur 2013).

The show provides community outreach by inviting a lawyer to occasionally visit the show and provide the community with information, focusing on a different topic every time he comes in. For example, giving legal advice on getting a divorce. But Pradel emphasized the myriad roles the show can fulfill within the Haitian community in Paris, saying, “this is one part of the show; it’s like fifteen, twenty minutes, but this is a three hour show. So, we play music we have guests every week and these guests are not only musicians, they can be anybody in the community – Haitian or – we can invite you!” (Saint-Fleur 2013).

An example of such a guest was the founder of a local coffee roasting company that exclusively uses Haitian-sourced beans, Café Lakay, from Nanterre, a western suburb of Paris. By coming on the show Café Lakay, a local Haitian business, was not only getting publicity but also was promoting Haitian agriculture through discussions of Haitian coffee growing. Lakay in creole means “Home,” and the roasters were trying to promote a vision of home in Haiti and Nanterre through their publicity on Boulevard du Compas. Musicians also promote their upcoming performances on the show; if a Haitian band is playing in the region they typically stop by the show for an interview.

Thus radio stations like Tropiques FM and Espace FM exist as “community media,” as Brice Micet named them, but this can be reimagined as a positive term. These media outlets cater to niche markets, but also provide marginalized Domiens and Haitians
in Ile-de-France with a valuable service, although at first glance the Haitian voice is virtually erased; the Haitian programming on Espace FM and Tropiques FM is notably absent from their lists of radio shows on their websites. Thus, to learn about Haitian radio on these stations, a listener would have to serendipitously tune in at the right time or simply find out through word-of-mouth. The obscure nature of Haitian radio programming is reflected in other forms of community media, event promotion, and publicity catered to French Caribbean people in Paris, including the magazine Le P’tit Makrel.

I first learned of Le P’tit Makrel while interviewing Jocelyn Moradel, the manager of Moradisc, an Antillean record store in Paris, in 2009. When I asked about different ways of learning about events he told me: “In our community there is a magazine, how do you say? That shares all…two times per month… that is called Le P’tit Makrel) and the events are “surtout antillais”(mainly Caribbean).58

It is fitting that I discovered the magazine through word-of-mouth, because Makrel, in Créole carries a related meaning: someone who gossips. Moradel explains: “makrel en Créole, savez-dire curieux.“(makrel in Creole means curious), someone “qui cherche à comprendres les choses” (who looks to learn things) and “quelqu’en qui s’occupe les affaires des autres”(someone who is involved with other peoples’ affairs)

and is a gendered term: “mako c’est pour les hommes et makrel c’est pour les femmes.” (Mako is to describe men and makrel is to describe women)

With the tagline “Le Guide officiel des Sorties Exotiques,” Le P’tit Makrel is a biweekly publication that provides details of upcoming musical and cultural events of interest for Caribbean people as well as some articles and interviews. The Facebook page describes the publication as “Guide for Afro-Caribbean parties that appears every other Wednesday. It is distributed in Paris and Ile-de-France.”

It also includes a directory of Caribbean-owned stores and restaurants, as well as a list (Calepin) of where to pick up future copies of the magazine in Paris and the suburbs.

When I used this guide to acquire a print copy of the magazine for myself, however, I was unsuccessful. When visiting more mainstream locations, like the Fnac store in Les Halles, I was met with looks of confusion, and Caribbean spaces like Debs Music, wielded similar results, where, when I asked about Le P’tit Makrel, they told me they didn’t have any. I was only able to get my hands on a copy when I complained about not being able to find one while in Moradisc. One of the men who was hanging out there offered me his copy. I accepted it with astonishment, asking him where he got it. He casually replied “Saint-Denis” (a northern suburb).

I only learned about Le P’tit Makrel because of my involvement with the Moradisc record store on Boulevard de Rochechouart in the ninth arrondissement of

59 Translated from “Guide des sortie des afro-caribéennes qui paraît un mercredi sur deux. Il est distribué à Paris et en Ile de France.”
Paris. Similarly, word of mouth can be a helpful resource for information, but you have to know where to go first. When I first learned about Le P’tit Makrel (2009), the publication had a functioning website. Unfortunately, it seems to be perpetually under construction now.

Social media has become integral in the music industry and publicity. Although a website is no longer running for Le P’tit Makrel, the publication does have a functional Facebook page. It is cheaper and easier to reach followers on Facebook than to hire a webmaster or designer. All the major radio stations, artists, and venues publicize through their Facebook pages. There are also special interest groups that focus on events in Il-de-France. In 2004 to about 2011, prior to Facebook being as widely used in the Caribbean and for artist publicity in general, artists and venues relied heavily on MySpace to distribute information to fans and provide samples of their music.

A similar media group, “bizouk.com,” provides information on upcoming concerts and cultural events as well, but typically lists fewer events than Le P’tit Makrel does. Bizouk manages a website, weekly email newsletter, a handful of social media accounts, and an online box office through which to purchase event tickets. Bizouk mostly sells tickets to soirees and bals. Lauding itself as “Simple, Innovant, Flexible et Dynamique, BiZouK.com est le nouveau point de convergence des contenus culturels afro-caribéens.” (Simple, innovative, flexible and dynamic, bizouk.com is the new convergence point of Afro-Caribbean cultural content). Bizouk.com was created in 2008, and publicizes for a larger geographic area, including: Ile-de-France, Toulouse, Montpelier, Lyon, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, although this is in practice is actually
mostly just events in Ile-de-France. The internet and social media have made it very easy
to distribute information.

Because the main forms of publicity are electronic or via radio, and not tied down
geographically, the emphasis placed on Paris as the center in many other aspects of life in
Ile-de-France becomes less significant. Access to these forms of publicity and thus
francophone Caribbean events is catered to banlieusards, although it should be noted a
more affluent type of banlieusards, or one that can afford admission and/or tickets (for
more information on prices of events, see Chapter 3). Networks of interaction in the
banlieue act as a centralizing force, constructed through the periphery, and notably,
events in which music isn’t the main focus frequently include music in some way (for
more information on the significance of musical involvement in non-music centered
events, see Chapter 4).

The potential to reterritorialize the banlieue through media is high. In discussing
postcolonial France, culture, and the banlieue, Hargreaves and McKinney have stated:
“Yet the markers – graffiti, music, dancing, dress codes, etc. –through which young
*banlieusards* (literally, “suburb-dwellers”) seek to reterritorialize the anonymous public
housing projects in which they are corralled are saturated with references to global
networks of multiethnic youth culture in which they participate daily through the mass
media (Hargreaves and McKinney 1997, p.12). If banlieuesards are able to reterritorialize
their homes through mass media, then it is also possible to envision Domiens and
Haitians can do the same but through their own musical networks and community media
constructed media landscapes.
Conclusion

Expressive culture, and particularly music, has historically been a powerful tool of social mediation in the French Caribbean. When the Antilles assimilated politically with France during their departmentalization in 1948, Aimé Césaire insisted that they must assert difference through their culture to remain distinct (Burton 1995, p.43). Similarly, because francophone Caribbean people are not spatially unified in Ile-de-France, they can use their culture as a centralizing force. Although the banlieue is socially marginalized and geographically peripheral to mainstream society in Ile-de-France, within the everyday lives of French Caribbean microgroups, the “center” has shifted from Paris’s core to that of the peripheral spaces of the banlieue.

The networks of interaction precipitated by the Francophone Caribbean musical community in Paris function as a centralizing force, connecting dispersed Creole-speaking people across different geographic areas of the banlieue. Significantly, these networks of interaction are rooted in the peripheral spaces of the suburbs, making it very difficult to learn about or participate in events as a city-dweller. The heterogeneous spaces of the banlieue, spaces French Caribbean people share with other immigrants and former colonial subjects of France from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Indian and Pacific Oceans, encourage and enable interaction among different groups, allowing for a diversity of experiences (contrasting from a situation where an immigrant might move into a neighborhood in which the majority of residents are from their homeland). Through these experiences, French Caribbean immigrants and migrants in Paris have re-centered their marginal geographic status within the practical context of their social
imaginary. In other words, they are re-centering the periphery, keeping the center out through exclusive and established methods of publicity and music making that privilege geographically peripheral spaces.

Significantly this all happens through the emphasis placed on diasporic cultural activities, particularly music. The French Caribbean mediascape’s function as a tool of cohesion in Paris illuminates music’s potential to facilitate interaction and network formation among minority communities there. Pradel Saint-Fleur expands on the power of Haitian music in an interview: “I always say to people, Haiti is a big country. It can be small depending on how we look at it, but the biggest industry that we have in Haiti, is the cultural industry, and I will say that the music industry and from there we cannot let it go” (Saint-Fleur 2013). In explaining music’s importance in bringing together Haitians in Paris, Saint-Fleur explains that “whenever you say music Haitians say ‘yes’.” The next chapter will look at some of the ways in which savvy Haitian musicians in Paris are harnessing industry structures and their connections to a broader postcolonial audience to promote themselves.
CHAPTER 3: THE MINORITARIAN POLITICS OF KONPA PERFORMANCE IN PARIS

Thus far this dissertation has explored the historical and musical exchanges between Paris, Haiti, and the Antilles (Chapter 1), and traced how geographical spaces enable connections among marginalized communities in Ile-de-France (Chapter 2). This chapter will investigate how these dynamics and processes are embedded within Haitian musical performance, particularly konpa musical performance, in Paris.

The Haitian Music Industry (HMI) functions as a transnational network of musical performance and consumption, in which popular konpa bands circulate among different sites of the Haitian diaspora and perform during all-night dances called bals. In Paris, however, this bal model of performance is occasionally overshadowed by the Antillean model of performance—concerts. Haitian music in Paris, especially konpa, is frequently paired with Antillean music, specifically zouk, whether it be on the radio— as konpa is frequently co-opted by Antillean stations like Espace FM or Tropique FM— or in dance clubs like Club Section Zouk, for deejayed events. Thus, konpa and zouk share modes of dissemination and consumption, and are frequently grouped together. In short, there are many places where Haitians play music, but Paris is the only one with these particular circumstances and resulting interactions and modifications to the HMI model of performance. The pairing of zouk and konpa, and, consequently of the Haitian and French Antillean audiences and communities in Paris, suggests the dynamics of what Françoise Lionnet, and Shumei Shi have called minor transnationalism—dynamics in
which, “cultural transversalism includes minor cultural articulations in productive relationship with the major… as well as minor-to-minor networks that circumvent the major altogether” (Lionnet and Shi 2004, p.8). These mutually shared spaces of musical consumption enable and promote the formation of connections between Antillean and Haitian communities. Although the state classifies Haitians and French Antilleans as legally distinct groups, they defy these classifications through their commonly forged musical communities. Existing as minorities in France, the “minor” network established between Haitians and Antilleans through konpa and zouk is an example of the kinds of minor-to-minor networks that Lionnet and Shi explore, but one that thrives off of a shared marginalization from mainstream society and is based in the musical lives of its participants.

French Antilleans are undoubtedly legally privileged over Haitians, and other former colonial subjects of France, in Paris: French Antilleans are citizens of France because of Martinique and Guadeloupe’s department status, making Haitians more likely to be illegal or undocumented immigrants. This distinction, along with the denser population of French Antilleans relative to documented Haitians places a premium on French Antillean buying power over that of Haitians. This premium is what has resulted in Haitian artists strategically altering their performances, catering them for Antillean audiences and blurring boundaries between the two communities.

This power dynamic and resulting cultural blending is indicative of Fabien Doucet’s description of the Haitian diaspora as a “postcommunity,” with Doucet arguing that, “the postcommunity that is the Haitian diaspora is an imposed community and thus
‘not achieved naturally’ – instead it is constructed out of a range of selections, exclusions, and boundary-maintaining mechanisms that follow the lines of cleavage of class, culture and racialized difference” (Doucet 2011, pp. 229-230). In other words, the Haitian diaspora is one that is constructed out of difference and exclusion. However, in Paris, Antilleans share a geographic and social marginalization with Haitians, inhabiting many of the same spaces and modes of musical production and dissemination (see Chapter 2). The shared peripheral nature of the Haitian and Antillean music industries in Paris then allows for the melding of these two strictly disparate musical communities in the Caribbean, which are tied to nationalist discourses in their respective countries and fiercely competitive. Thus, in the case of French Caribbean Paris, the defining characteristics of difference or “boundary-maintaining mechanisms,” that Doucet references, functioning as vectors of activity lead to and encourage musical border crossing.

These minor-to-minor networks and the musical interactions that result are complicated by the specificity of Paris as a postcolonial city and muddled further and obscured by factors of citizenship, class, and race between Haitians and Antilleans, as well as other postcolonial subjects, complicating Haitian life in Paris. While French Antilleans are definitively citizen of France due to their department status, Haitians first come to the country as non-citizens, and the process of legal immigration into France has only gotten more difficult over the past thirty years.60 This has resulted in a predictably

60 See Chapter 1 for a detailed description of French immigration policies and how their
high but impossible to accurately estimate number of illegal immigrants, sans papiers, from Haiti to France. Despite their difference in citizenship, it should be noted that Antilleans, or Domiens in general are still discriminated against and experience racism, mostly attributed to their divergence from the Republican French ideal citizen as non-white. In the words of David Beriss, “if Martinicans and Guadeloupan become Antilleans in France, they also become ‘black’” (Beriss 2004, p.42). In their mutually marginalized status as non-white with past colonial connections with France, Haitians and Antilleans find themselves sharing certain hardships despite their difference in citizenship and class, and music functions as a solidarity-forming agent throughout these struggles.

To illustrate this, this chapter will explain the structure of the francophone Caribbean music industries, specifically in regard to Paris as a functioning site within the greater Afro-Caribbean diaspora. The Antillean and Haitian music industries exist as two separate musical transnations that share a common node in Paris. The circuits along which these different musical transnations function and flow allow different mobilities to artists, making Paris a unique site of Antillean-Haitian musical interaction, allowing some musicians to move between Antillean and Haitian transnations through the minoritarian politics in place in Paris.

61 Significantly, most of these interactions are functioning from a place of privilege, with the middle class harboring and benefitting from these relations. The middle-class cosomopolitan intelligentsia living in the diaspora with disposable income. This factor is not lost on elsewhere in the diaspora. When discussing Haitian musical performance in Paris, a Haitian youth in Boston responded saying, “Paris has some bougie Haitians.”
Minoritarian politics are built from the intricacies of interaction between postcolonial, neocolonial, and transnational minority groups. These interactions and their outcomes are similar to “transcolonial solidarities,” or the ability to form connections across minority groups stemming from a shared colonial past, although in the case of minoritarian politics the minority groups in question need not have identical colonial relationships. Lionnet and Shi have explored this phenomenon within their discussions of minor transnationalism, calling it, “the mode in which the traumas of colonial, imperial, and global hegemonies as well as the affective dimensions of transcolonial solidarities continue to work themselves out and produce new possibilities” (Lionnet and Shi 2005, p.21). And these possibilities include the “active participation in the production of local knowledges and global cultures” (p. 21).

In the context of French Caribbean Paris, Haitians and Antilleans are producing local knowledge through locally specific models of konpa performance, made possible because of the connection between Haitian and Antillean audiences but also because of the hierarchical relationship between the Antillean and Haitian communities there. Although Haitians and Antilleans share a colonial past with France and are marginalized from mainstream society, Antilleans hold a power over Haitians in that they outnumber them eight to one and in that they are by default citizens of France. The value placed on Haitian music by both Antilleans and Haitians has in effect given Haitians a bargaining chip that allows them to use their cultural capital to reach broader audiences, harnessing the size and monetary privileges of Antillean audiences.
Because of the local politics in place, any group to find success in Paris must appeal to a greater postcolonial imaginary, and the Antillean zouk group Kassav is a supreme example of this happening in the past. According to Jocelyne Guilbault, “Kassav’s success has been achieved gradually, by relying first on the Antillean public and by recruiting Creole speakers from all the islands. In the same way, the group’s popularity in Paris has grown out of the support of West Indians in exile, African immigrants, and other minority groups—horizontally, as it were, through the ‘small people,’ as opposed to vertically, climbing the ladder of success with the help of the ‘big people,’ those in power, that is, the French” (Guilbault 1993, p.29). These horizontal connections are evocative of rhizomatic connections, or, as Edouard Glissant has explained in an Antillean context, “an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either in the ground or in the air, with no predatory rootstock taking over permanently. The notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root” (Glissant 1997, p.11). Thus these minoritarian connections and politics are made possible simultaneously from a mutual colonial past with France, rooted in the distant (and recent) past, while rejecting the populations’ current subservience to the French Republic. In this way Kassav’ can be considered a precursor to the types of minor-to-minor networks in place in Paris today, but under materially different circumstances. Although Antillean music is marginalized within the mainstream French media, Kassav’ was still an elite Antillean group and afforded a certain degree of influence among Caribbean audiences in France. Haitian groups in Paris, however, are considered to be marginal within the greater Haitian music industry, meaning that even
within their marginalized community they are considered to be less legitimate than Haitian or American groups. International and local Haitian groups in Paris are all functioning within the framework of the minoritarian politics in place in Paris in relation to class, citizenship, and population. The results are strategically implemented minoritarian connections, forged to improve the status of Haitians in Paris through increased revenue and enhanced cultural capital.

In this chapter I argue that konpa performance in Paris can serve as an example of the musical outcomes of the minoritarian relationship between the Haitian and French Antillean communities. To illustrate this, I will present how konpa is performed in Paris, while explaining the greater structures and politics involved in the Haitian and French Antillean music industries, focusing on their transnational nature and the significance of Paris as a hub within both industries, which allows these distinct interactions to take place. Konpa musical performance around the Haitian diaspora is somewhat formulaic, with the same core group of performers circulating around the diaspora. This changes in Paris, where the presence of a dominant French Antillean audience, along with the complicating factors described above, has resulted in the blurring of seemingly strict genre boundaries.

To better explain the complicated nature of these genre entanglements, I will present three examples of konpa performance in Paris, with Kreyol la, Carimi, and Original H serving as the groups of study. First, a performance from Kreyol la, a konpa band based out of Haiti, in Nanterre will function as an example of a typical Haitian Music Industry (HMI) performance whereas the case of Carimi, a konpa band from New
York, will present how Haitian bands can adopt Antillean concert elements into their bals to better suit an Antillean audience and fan-base in Paris. Original H, a Paris-based group, is able to appeal to the greater Parisian minoritarian community, overcoming the stigma of being a konpa group from Paris, and harnessing their popularity among Antilleans in France to enhance their own mobility, enabling performances in Martinique and Guadeloupe (and notably not Haiti). As I will illustrate, their musical output allows them to blur borders, enhancing minoritarian-lateral connections with other post-colonial people living in France through solidarities among post-colonial Creole music consumers. Original H capitalizes on konpa’s popularity and appeals to the locality of Paris by eliciting postcolonial ties in their music with the greater community of immigrants in Paris, strategically crossing audience borders, to improve their status and benefit. Significantly, Paris is the only place where all three of these outcomes could happen: a typical HMI konpa performance (bal), a crossover bal/concert, and a Haitian group functioning within the Antillean musical transnation over the HMI, and all of these are the result of Paris’s place as a unique node in both of these networks of musical performance because of politics in place between the Antillean and Haitian communities there.

The Transnational Politics of the Haitian Music Industry (HMI)

The following section will explain the transnational nature of the Haitian diaspora, and the politics at play within the musical networks based upon the diaspora as a transnation. If, Basch et. al define transnationalism as, “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their
societies of origin and settlement” (Basch et. al. 1994, p.7), then transnationalism can be understood as the idea that once an individual moves from one place to another, they can maintain ties to their location of origin while feeling connected to their new locale. Aptly summarized by Dufoix, in spite of removing themselves from their original home, these traveling people, or transmigrants, “develop and maintain all sorts of relations—familial, religious, economic, and political—with the place they come from, thereby laying the foundations of nonterritorial nations” (Dufoix 2008, p.32). These non-territorial nations, or transnations, emerge out of the process of transnationalism.

Haiti and its diaspora function as a transnation, where people and cultural commodities travel between different sites, expanding the geographic scope of Haiti to its diasporic nodes in Canada, the United States, the Caribbean, and Europe. The Haitian diaspora’s population is so influential to the Haitian imaginary, that the diaspora is frequently called the “tenth department” (dixième department), denoting the “external province of Haiti made up of immigrants, exiles, and refugees living abroad” (Jackson 2011, p.1). In the case of Haiti, diaspora is “an important signifier of nation-ness encompassing the scattered arrondissements (districts) where Haitians lived and worked” (Jackson, p.1). The diaspora and Haiti are thus tied together in what could be called a “transnational spatial flow” (Laguerre 1998, p.4).

Although “the diaspora” has a strong unifying power among Haitians, scholars, including Paul Brodwin, have warned against the homogenization and singularity of the Haitian diaspora, saying that, “undoubtedly, the vehicles of diasporic subjectivity are ideas, people, money, and media that circulate transnationally. But people weave them
into a singular rhetoric about identity chiefly in response to the situation immediately at hand, and it is often a dangerous situation of marginality and racialized stigma” (Brodwin 2011, p.35). Different diasporic sites possess different qualities and characteristics, and to only generalize “the diaspora” as a homogenous collectivity is inaccurate. Although, Brodwin does explain that diaspora can be used as a term of solidary and strength in the face of marginalization and discrimination: “for people who travel from resource-poor societies to a wealthy First World metropolis, collective self-definition is often a practical response to concrete, near-at-hand experiences of subordination and marginality” (Brodwin 2011, p.35). Ermitte St. Jacques has also supported this idea, stating that the different sites within the Haitian diaspora possess vastly different qualities: “The specific social conditions of these destinations speak to the plurality of the transnational experience within the Haitian diaspora” (St. Jacques 2011, p.91). Thus Paris as a site within the Haitian diaspora has its own particularities specific to its location. This locality in Paris changes how konpa is performed, particularly in relation to the Antillean population.

The Haitian music industry (HMI) behaves similarly to the Haitian diaspora – as a monumental transnational network of circulating culture present at home and abroad, acting through the geopolitical framework as a musical diaspora. The Haitian Music Industry functions transnationally and is defined by konpa’s ability to circulate around the diaspora. Gage Averill explains the importance of the HMI’s transnational nature, saying, “The Haitian music industry and its circulation of expressive commodities has been organized transnational from its inception. Throughout the history of a Haitian
diaspora, the recording industry linked diasporic and insular Haitians as a ‘community-of-taste, sharing a system of music production and consumption, with the circulation of musical commodities helping to bridge the distances created through migration’ (Averill 1994, p.268).

The HMI functions as a circuit through which recordings and performers, mostly of popular dance music, konpa, circulate with the purpose of performing at all-night Haitian dance parties, or bals. The recorded music that these circulating performers create makes up a majority of the recorded music that Haitians in Haiti and abroad consume. In other words, when the new Harmonik album is released, fans in Haiti, New York, and Paris are all equally excited, despite the band’s geographic roots in South Florida, making the HMI an apt example of a musical transnation, a concept that Appadurai (1996) and Sugarman (2004) have described in relation to the Albanian transnation as a connected international community comprised of one single circuit along which music is produced, consumed, and circulated, making the distinction of home and diaspora (in the terms of cultural production) negligible. Such a circuit structure exists in the HMI as well, in which a select handful of the top konpa bands are constantly touring, traveling to different sites within the Haitian diaspora and performing their music.

Konpa groups within the HMI regularly circulate between Haiti, South Florida, Montreal, New York, Boston, and Paris (and occasionally Maryland, New Jersey, and Philadelphia). Significantly, the travel allows band members to keep in touch with their extended, dispersed family; it is not uncommon, for example, for a Parisian Haitian to
have their parents in Haiti, cousins in South Florida, a sister in Brooklyn, and uncles in Montreal.

There are, however, local specificities within this transnational musical network; not all points or nodes within the greater network of Haitian musical circulation are created equal. Ermitte St. Jacques reflects this within the general context of the Haitian diaspora, saying: “the individual power the different Haitian communities that comprise the Tenth Department is not uniform. The destinations that form the geography of the Haitian diaspora demarcate central places as Miami and marginal locations as Nassau that correspond to their position within global and regional geopolitical hierarchies. Power dynamics within the Haitian diaspora, then, mimic the geopolitical configuration of the settlement countries as well as represent the uneven status of migrants within the transnational community” (St. Jacques, 2011, p. 91). Thus, the local politics of any diasporic site influence their status as peripheral or central in terms of the greater diaspora.

In the case of the HMI, Miami, Haiti, and New York function as central places; most of the konpa groups in the HMI are based out of Haiti or Miami: with NuLook, Harmonik, T-Vice, and Disip based in Miami; and Kreyol la, Zenglen, and Djakout #1 in Haiti; and with Carimi as an exception in New York, making Haiti and South Florida, “productive” nodes as far as the HMI is concerned. This leaves bands based out of more distant, or peripheral, diasporic sites, such as Paris in a position of marginality in relation to bands from the “productive nodes.”
Antillean Audiences and Paris Konpa

The French Antillean music industry is much less dispersed than the HMI; the main sites are Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Paris with performers also traveling to French Guiana and Réunion (also overseas departments of France) although their distance makes these journeys, particularly for Réunion, less frequent. Paris has a drastically different connotation within the Antillean industry as a major site of musical production than in the HMI, although significantly because of the transnation structure music produced in Paris isn’t for the most part territorialized or considered “local” Paris music, but rather just “Antillean” music; whenever I asked Antillean music enthusiasts in Paris about the differences between music in Paris and in the Caribbean they swiftly, almost defensively, and repeatedly replied that there is no difference.62

Paris has a long history as a site for Antillean music performance, most evidently shown through the popularization of exotic Caribbean dance genres for the consumption of Western audiences in the 1920s, namely, the biguine. Biguine came to the attention of international audiences in the 1920s when Antillean musicians performed for affluent audiences in Paris. The style of biguine that they played, biguine classique, became popular among cosmopolitan spectators, bringing Antillean music to an international audience for the first time. Alexandre Stellio’s orchestra became particularly popular and enjoyed success in the 1920s and 1930s. However, this music received criticisms for

62 Clearly someone in the diaspora would like to seem fully connected to their home and would defend this notion by claiming that there is not difference in the music, but in my experiences this is mostly a true statement.
being assimilationist or “doudouiste.” In spite of this criticism, biguine promoted Antillean music to an outside audience for the first time and brought the distinctly Martinican *ti bwa* with it, a rhythm later developed into the zouk rhythm. Biguine songs were also well known for employing topical lyrics with social commentary. As explained by Benoit, biguine, “offered an opportunity for Guadeloupean songwriters to relate the good and bad aspects of daily life in Guadeloupe, to convey a message, and to talk about the island’s beauty.” These lyrics gave biguine utility for Antilleans, in spite of its “doudouiste” criticisms.

The French Antillean music industry as it is known today was essentially created during the supergroup Kassav’s nascent period in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The group formed when Guadeloupean studio musicians in Paris, Georges and Pierre Edouard Décimus and Jacob Descarieux, wanted to create an Antillean popular music with a studio-polished sound. This connection to Kassav’s beginnings and later success through their frequent performances in the city led Paris to become a significant site of Antillean musical production. In the years since, there are far more Antillean-centric studios in the Antilles than in Paris, but major record companies are still based in Paris, pressing albums and controlling distribution in the city (Berrian 2000, p.224), most significantly in recent years with Aztec Musique, a popular Antillean label.

Today, there is a premium placed on the idea that you live in the Caribbean as an Antillean artist, although it is not necessary for success. Artists like Victor O, who were born in the Caribbean but migrated to and grew up in the Paris region, have emphasized their return to living in Martinique or Guadeloupe, emphasizing the importance of this
return on their music and ideology as an Antillean musician. In describing the musical outcomes of his return to the Caribbean, Victor O explains, “Upon returning to Martinique, I rediscovered the music of my youth, inspirations related to particular places, because people live differently, because the rhythm is different, I have rebuilt myself”(Koda 2011). He is using his new locale to emphasize his legitimacy as a Caribbean artist, even if his label, Aztec Musique, is based in Paris.

Paris has emerged as a significant site within the Antillean musical transnation for several reasons, but aside from its history with Antillean musical performance and production the most evident reason is the large population of Antilleans in the region. Île de France is nicknamed “Le Troisième Île” (the third island) because the Antillean population there rivals that of Martinique or Guadeloupe. Île-de-France makes up a third, metropolitan island, with an audience base that is removed from “home” in the Caribbean, making Antillean musical performance in Paris an opportunity for displaced Caribbean people to connect with their place or origin.

The combination of Paris’s place as a non-productive node in the HMI coupled with its prominence within the Antillean transnation, the large population of Antilleans in

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Ile de France, and the Antillean interest in and love for Haitian konpa as a popular music can create different, atypical for the HMI, outcomes for konpa performance in Paris, particularly though the alteration of the HMI bal format to accommodate Antillean audiences.

Bals as Sites of Mobility and Access

In Paris, konpa bals function as more than simply significant musical events, but also as one of the main opportunities for the Haitian community to assemble. As such, konpa bals provide a festive and concentrated space in which Haitians from around the Parisian region can congregate. In the 1990s, according to Claude Delachet-Guillon, several Haitian bals took place every year, provided an opportunity for the community to meet, and required an entry fee; they were typically organized by a local person or organization who were responsible for bringing a singer or group to France from Haiti or the United States (Delachet-Guillon 1996, pp.118-19). The only element that has changed from this format is the scale of the bals, now being much larger with event companies organizing them instead of local organizations. This bal format is mostly standardized throughout the diaspora, with the event timelines shifting slightly according to the laws of the locale (for example, a bal in Boston ends at 2:00 a.m. because that is when nightclubs are required to close, whereas a bal in Haiti or Paris ends at dawn).

While konpa bals are clearly important to Haitian musical consumption and community formation in Paris and some Haitians, including lawyer and community advocate Eric Sauray go as far as to say they are the only community events that take place, lamenting that: “The political and cultural activities of the Haitian community in France are dead with the exception of the Saturday dance soirees” (Sauray 1997, p.10). Here Sauray’s disappointment is in the lack of diversity of types of community events, but also a prejudice against the nature of the bals, because of their late-night timeframe and party atmosphere. Sauray is not alone in his disapproval, when discussing the bals with a number of middle-aged Haitians the general impression was that those events were too “wild.” Despite this vocal minority that takes issue with the bals, they remain relevant and popular among the Haitian population in Paris.

When internationally famous HMI konpa groups perform in Ile-de-France, they employ this bal model of performance, visiting popular venues in the peripheral suburbs of Paris and catering their performances to Haitian and Antillean audiences. More recently, however, some savvy Haitian konpa groups are blurring the distinction between the Haitian-preferred bal format of performance and that of an Antillean-style concert. With this change, konpa groups are making efforts to appeal to a wider audience, particularly of the more numerous and culturally dominant Antillean population.

65 “Les activités politiques et culturelles de la communauté haïtienne de France sont au point mort à l’exception des soirées (...) dansantes du samedi.” (p.10 in Eric Sauray’s preface, Wiener Kerns Fleurimond 1997)
It should be noted that bals do exist in an Antillean context, but within the current framework of Antillean musical consumption in Paris, they are strictly under the rubric of dance club parties, occasionally with singers performing to playback music. Antillean bals are thus not a dominant mode of live musical performance in the Paris region. In the past, lesser-known groups might perform in the bal context, but, notably, bals within an Antillean context have always functioned as moments of social exchange and blending, with Jacob Etienne calling them “places of exchange” particularly popular in France in the Paris region, functioning as, “cultural experiences which carry identity markers” (Etienne 2010, p.5).  

Since the 1970s, Haitian music performances have been popular and frequently sought-out events among non-Haitian Caribbean people in Paris (Delachet-Guillon 1996, pp.118-19). Today, Haitian groups are making it easier and more comfortable for these audiences to access and enjoy their performances. The shift in performance style for konpa groups and the subsequent influx of Antillean spectators into audiences that used

66 “Les bals populaires antillais constituent des lieux d’échanges où sont mises en scène des spécificités culturelles des originaires des départements français d’outre-mer de la Guadeloupe et de la Martinique en France, et plus particulièrement en région parisienne. Cette définition, qui n’est pas réductible à une catégorie sociale déterminée, renvoie à des expériences culturelles qui ont une portée identitaire.” (Antillean popular dance bals are places of exchange, which are staged with the cultural specificities of the French overseas departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique in France, particularly in Paris. This definition, which is not reducible to a particular social category refers to cultural experiences which carry identity markers.) from Jacob Etienne, Les Bals Populaires des Antillais en Région Parisienne (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010), 5.

67 “La musique haïtienne a acquis une grande réputation dans les Caraïbes au cours de la décennie 1970, de sorte que ces manifestations sont également recherchées par les autres caribéens de la région parisienne.” (Delachet-Guillon 1996, pp.118-19)
to be predominately Haitian, however, has made it possible to compare konpa bals in Paris to Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of “contact zones,” or, “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (Pratt 1992, p.4). These co-inhabited konpa bals, as contact zones, are also social spaces where disparate (Antillean and Haitian) cultures meet. The asymmetrical relations between Antilleans and Haitians is highlighted through the implementation of Antillean concert elements within the konpa bal setting, showing the goal of attracting this fan base to events because they are more numerous and in many cases have more money. These shared spaces result in the formation of minor-to-minor networks between Haitian and Antilleans in Paris. Minor-to-minor networks can be understood as connections that are formed between two minority groups, specifically to produce some kind of mutual benefit. Within the context of this dissertation, minority groups like Antilleans and Haitians come together through sites of musical production and consumption, in spite of their diverging political status in France. In the case of konpa bals, Haitians are benefiting from the Antillean presence because 1. The bands, organizers, and promoters make more money with more people in attendance and 2. Konpa’s popularity among non-Haitians is a source of pride and provides cultural legitimacy to Haitians who are frequently stigmatized in the world press.

The contact zones of these bals can also be contextualized as “social fields,” which Basch et.al. (1994) have claimed migrants build. Haitian musical events then, including bals, are the places where the minor-to-minor networks, are seen in action. These performances function as sites of mobility, allowing Antilleans and Haitians to
move between the Antillean and Haitian transnations, and as sites of access allowing audience members to access music, as well as allowing Antilleans, other non-Haitian audience members, and Haitians alike to access Haitian culture.

Considering the limited Haitian population and the large possible Antillean audience, coupled with Antilleans’ general interest in Haitian konpa, it is unsurprising that promoters would decide to tap into potential Antillean audiences for Haitian events. Haitian konpa bands in Paris haven’t changed the music they perform to suit this new audience contingent, but some events have fewer elements of an HMI bal and more characteristics of a concert, with specific outcomes. The result is that some events are coded more “Haitian,” or more characteristic of events elsewhere in the HMI, such as Kreyol la’s performance in the banlieue Nanterre in November 2013, which will serve as an example of a Parisian Haitian bal that conforms to the model of the greater HMI. On the other hand, performances can be co-opted by Antilleans, functioning as a collaborative event to include a wider audience. This was the case with Carimi’s concert at le Zénith in April 2014. These two performances had several diverging elements, including: the geography of the performance hall, the dress, the publicity, the time table of the performance, the style of the opening act(s), the price of ticket, the nature of performance, as well as the food and drink for sale, and the audience.

*Kreyol la : 9 November 2013*

*The Kreyol la performance was a standard HMI bal, much like any other you could attend elsewhere in the Haitian diaspora. It took place in Espace Chevreul, a large venue*
that can be rented for events, in Nanterre, a western Paris suburb located about eleven
kilometers from Paris. Tickets were 28,60 euros, which is standard for this type of event
in the region. Local Haitian music celebrity, DJ Flo, a Paris-based konpa DJ opened the
night and performing between the band’s sets. DJ Flo’s event company “DJ Flo’s
Original Events” also served as one of the main promoters for the bal, along with Gary
Ad, a Haitian events promoter and musical entrepreneur in Paris. The event was
scheduled from 10:00 p.m. until dawn, typical of a HMI bal, although it started late, also
typical of a HMI bal. After presenting my ticket, showing the contents of my purse, and
walked through a metal detector in a hallway, I entered the main room of the venue and
observed my surroundings. The entrance was located at the back of a large room, with a
riser-constructed stage featuring a black backdrop including a light screen that provided
luminous accents to the performance, punctuating the beat of the music, and a
barricaded backstage area behind curtains to either side. There was a snack bar area to
my immediate left with alcoholic beverages, mostly champagne, Hennessey, and rum, and
Haitian food (chicken and slaw) for sale. Women are mostly wearing glamorous tight and
short dresses, or very short shorts with blouses, coupled with four and five inch high
heels, bold jewelry, dramatic makeup, and meticulously-coiffed hair. Men are dressed
slightly down from this with many in dress shirts and dress pants and the occasional suit,
with some more casual exceptions. Kreyol was the main language in use by the band and
spectators. There were only four sponsors, including Gary Ad, DJ Flo, and the two local
Caribbean radio stations, Espace FM and Tropiques FM. Musically, the performance
was typical of any HMI bal: high energy, with the band frequently shouting out
participatory commands to the audience who were dancing for the entirety of the performance, and playing winding sprawling versions of their studio-recorded hits.

This Kreyol la performance is indicative of a typical HMI musical event, similar to ones that I have attended in New York, Boston, and Paris. The somewhat formal dress (the “dress to impress” attitude), the late-night and extended timeframe, the event price, the refreshments (offering a full meal), the suburban location, and the Haitian opening act are all to be expected in a konpa bal and Kreyol la’s performance in Nanterre was no exception. Thus, this performance can serve as a foil for Carimi, a konpa group that privileges crossover in its performance in Paris.

On 12 April 2014, Carimi, a very popular HMI band based in New York City, performed a concert at le Zénith, one of Paris’s largest indoor concert venues. Several elements of the performance deviated from that of a typical HMI bal, allowing the event to be more welcoming to an Antillean audience. Firstly, taking place within Paris’s borders (rather than the suburbs) and at le Zénith (a prestigious and popular venue for big-name international performers), made it accessible by metro and less catered to a suburban audience (unlike other Haitian bals in Ile-de-France). Also, rather than listing the typical 10:00 or 11:00 pm to dawn (10 hr à l’aube) timeframe, the publicity stated that the concert would begin at 8:00 pm for a four-hour show; the length of the show was likely specified so that attendees would know not to show up late, as is typical for a bal. The publicity materials, by listing the starting time and length of the performance, are essentially signaling to Haitians that this event is not to be confused with the late and all night format of HMI bals. The price of admission was 48 euros for the standing area of
the hall and 60 euros for a seat, making it nearly twice as expensive as a typical bal in the region.

In the areas surrounding le Zénith before the concert, there were many groups of people congregating around and dancing alongside drummers playing Guadeloupean gwo ka and Martinican bélé music, indicating that spectators for the Carimi concert would have an interest in these Antillean traditional drumming styles and would be knowledgeable enough to participate. Throughout the event, French was the main language of communication between the musicians and the audience, unlike the Kreyol la performance in which the band almost exclusively spoke in Creole. Marvin, a French-Ivorian zouk singer, was the first opening act of the concert, and several other Antillean performers joined Carimi on stage at various points during the performance, including Fanny J, a zouk singer, and Admiral T, a Guadeloupean dancehall artist. All of these guests are coded as Antillean, or in the case of Marvin who is not from the Antilles, more closely associated with Antillean culture (because he performs zouk) than Haitian. The spectators were dressed in casual clothes, a noticeable difference from the dress at konpa bals. The sponsors emphasize the potential crossover audience with radio stations Espace FM and Tropiques FM, Air Caraïbes (a French Antillean airline based in Guadeloupe that commonly sponsors Antillean concerts), and FNAC (a French music, electronics, and media store) sponsoring the concert. The remaining sponsors for the concert were Lyca mobile, a cheap European mobile network company, Trace Tropical, a television station that plays tropical (a term for Caribbean, broadly) music videos, and soonnight.com, a website that lists clubbing events, none of which are Haitian-specific.
The event was not without its Haitian-coded moments, however. Two Haitian artists, Izolan and Mikaben, did join Carimi on stage during the concert, with Mikaben’s performance in particular serving as an acknowledgment of Haitian culture. He performed as a second opening act, after Marvin (the zouk opener), and before Carimi (although he joined Carimi later on their hit collaboration “Baby I Missed You”), presenting the twoubadou-style song “Ayiti Se”(Haiti is). He sat, center stage, with a Haitian flag draped over his shoulders, playing solo acoustic guitar and singing while images of Haiti scrolled behind him on a screen. The song praised Haiti, with verses about food (dous makòs, pistach griye), more food (diri avek lalo), celebrations, landmarks (Basin Ble, la Sitadèj), the earthquake, and other topics, with the chorus repeating:

- Ayiti cheri pou jan mwen renmen w  
  Haiti darling my love for you

- Mwen vin depoze ti kè mwen nan men w  
  I put my heart in your hand

- Ayiti cheri pou jan m’adore w  
  Haiti darling my love for you

- Pa gen anyen kap janm fè mwen kite w  
  Nothing can make me leave you

The inclusion of Mikaben’s song on the concert is a way that Mikaben and Carimi could emphasize their commitment to Haiti in spite of the crossover elements of their performance through the inclusion of Antillean performers, and through Carimi’s style of konpa, which is sometimes criticized as too ‘watered down’ to appeal to a wider audience.
In an article in *Le Monde* from 12 April 2014, Richard Cave, keyboardist and the “ri” of CaRiMi – the group also includes Carlo Vieux (Ca) and Mikael Guiard (Mi) - responds to criticisms that Carimi is overly concerned with its crossover potential, not just with Antilleans in Paris but also a broader mainstream market in the United States and elsewhere in the Caribbean, saying: “Konpa purists, when they want to tease us, say that our music is bubble gum konpa, or konpa pop. But our predecessors have had the same happen to them. To them as well, they were accused of betraying konpa and introducing disco” (*Binet 2014*). The predecessors he is referring to are the konpa musicians of the 1960s and 1970s who altered the instrumentation of konpa from its big band-like format into the current one of the *djazz*. Throughout the article, Richard defends Carimi, saying that konpa is an evolving genre, and pointing out that nearly all HMI groups incorporate more “pop” elements into their music, including occasional English lyrics and deviations from strict konpa sonorities.

The crossover nature of the Carimi performance at le Zénith is an expression of their overall interest in appealing to a broader audience in general, but also specifically caters to Paris as a locale through the minoritarian politics in place there. They, as savvy and successful musicians, recognize the potential to appeal a more inclusive audience that looks beyond a diasporic Haitians, and they take the opportunity to do so through altering

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68 Translated from ““Les puristes du kompa, quand ils veulent nous *taquiner*, disent que notre musique, c’est du bubble gum kompa, ou du kompa pop. Nos aînés ont pourtant connu la même histoire que nous. A eux aussi, on reprochait de *tahir* le kompa en introduisant de la disco.”"
the bal model of performance to fit more closely with an Antillean concert. One Paris-based konpa group, Original H, is taking the idea of crossing over even further, however, by co-opting not just elements of Antillean performance but also co-opting the Antillean transnational musical network over the HMI, largely because of Paris’s designation as a “non-productive” node within the Haitian transnation.

Original H and Border Crossing

Original H, the most popular Paris-based konpa group, who formed in 2000, capitalizes on Paris’s potential audience as a konpa band based in the city, through minority networks of presentation and affiliation, connecting both with the Antillean musical transnation by performing in Paris and the Antilles over more typical HMI locations, and the greater post-colonial community in Paris through the lyrics in songs like “Sans Papiers” (Illegal Immigrants). Despite their appeal among non-Haitians, they draw their musical influences from “surtout les groupes d'haïti” (first and foremost Haitian groups) in particular calling Tabou Combo “oui voila des références de ce genre” (pillars of the genre) other influences include, “les jeunes de l'époque tel que T-Vice, Zenglen etc.....” (also T-Vice, Zenglen) (Beauge 2014).

The band is made up of a large group of friends, mostly first generation immigrants from Haiti, including Grégory Lazare and Jocelyn Jacob as the lead singers, Ti James on keyboard, and Jean Eudes Beauge on guitar. Other members include Masnerd Prosper on drum set, Dayan Lazare and Jean Dimmy Terneus on bass, and James D. Riguerre (Djames) on congas.
Original H uses their position among local audiences to overcome Paris’s designation as a non-productive space within the HMI and appeal to broader audiences of varying origin in the city. They forge new mobilities for themselves by performing on the Antillean transnational circuit, using their popularity among Antillean audiences in France to finance concerts in Antillean spaces in the Caribbean. As things stand, Original H doesn’t have a significant fan base within the HMI and are not well known within this context, but they have positioned themselves as the top konpa band in Paris and productively function within the Antillean musical transnation.

The prevailing sentiment among Parisian Haitians and elsewhere in the diaspora is that there are not many konpa bands from Paris, or that the ones that do exist cannot play well or put on good performances, and this stigma inevitably makes it harder for Paris-based bands to book performances in North American sites within the HMI. When discussing Paris-based band Original H with a few Parisian Haitians in their twenties, one of them said, “They are good for a Paris group,” to which another quickly replied, “Yeah but what (good) does that say.” From this comment and other conversations, it is evident that Original H’s place as Paris’s prevailing konpa band doesn’t seem to hold much currency in the greater context of the HMI.

Many HMI bands dream of crossing over to mainstream world, pop, or R&B music markets. Jamaican reggae in particular has served as a beacon of hope and model of success for artists wishing to achieve recognition beyond the Caribbean. In the case of Parisian bands, however, success at this level is extremely unlikely. When asked if Original H has crossover potential, Jean Eudes Beauge, guitarist and maestro said:
If you mean by outside, (such as in) the U.S.A. or Canada, it is difficult to make it big. Like I told you, Paris is not considered a capital of konpa and, in general, people are skeptical when they’re told that there are konpa bands in Paris...On another level, there’s the economic difficulty: we understand that it can be expensive if a promoter is based in the USA or Canada to make a tour over there with a band based in Paris. But, it’s working for bands from Miami or NYC, which come in Paris. So, with enough good will and a solid plan we can make things work with promoters (who are) visionary and audacious enough (Beauge 2014).

Even within the HMI, it is a struggle to get promoters to spend the money to bring a lesser-known Paris konpa group to perform in the United States or Canada, so the likelihood of a Paris group achieving success among mainstream audiences there is even lower. Notably, this is the same issue that prevents most French Antillean artists from performing in the United States, limiting the geography of their musical transnation to the Caribbean and Europe.

Considering stigma and physical obstacles of breaking into the greater HMI, combined with the smaller Haitian population in Paris, it is no surprise that Original H embraces a diverse mix of fans for their concerts, which often include Antillean and African audiences. Haitian performers capitalizing on Antillean interest in konpa is nothing new (see Chapter 1 for discussion of Nemours Jean-Baptiste’s marketing of konpa to French Antilleans), but Original H’s case is compelling because of their place outside of the HMI and particularly in relation to their own circuit of performance in
Paris, Europe, and the French Antilles; they perform primarily in France, occasionally in the French Antilles, but also in a larger European world music market. According to Beauge: “What is very interesting to be based in Paris is that our local market has international colors: Paris is a cosmopolitan town where we can see what pleases the most not only our Haitian brothers and sisters living here, but also the non-Haitian public going to the bals and konpa concerts. In other words, we can see Paris as a musical laboratory where can be experienced what could be, potentially, internationally appreciated” (Beauge 2014).

The group’s commitment to the greater (meaning, beyond Haitian) Paris community can be found in their music as well. For example, the song “Sans Papiers” (Illegal Immigrants), from their 2010 album “Ouvri pòt la” (Open the Door), is testimony to the plight of all illegal immigrants in Europe, not just Haitians. The track begins with several excerpts from the news with reporters giving headlines from the ongoing battle for immigrant rights in France. These clips are layered over a background of a protesting group singing a melodic chant “bouger pas” (not moving). The chant was taken from a recording of a protest against immigrant and integration policies in France.

The words in the chant, “bouger pas,” are significant for many reasons, among them the words’ diverse potential meanings. For example, it can function as a statement to stand your ground (Je ne bouge pas), or to hold onto your beliefs, or it can act as a command from the police, something to shout at a culprit to signify that they are trying to apprehend them and not to not move (Ne bougez pas). The words can be a declaration of
obstinacy while also conjuring familiar scenarios of frightening and frequently aggressive police interactions for immigrants.

The words “bouger pas” also have a history with popular music and immigration rights. Malian musician Salif Keita composed the song, “Nou pas bouger” (We are not moving) for his 1989 album Ko-yan, to speak out against the discrimination against and lack of resources available to immigrants in France. Keita’s spelling of the pronoun “nou” (from Creole), instead of “nous” (its French equivalent), according to James Winders, “hinted at the complex ways in which various cultures within France now interacted, and drove home the strong message that ‘we are here to stay’”(Winders 2006, p.59). The song became an unofficial anthem for the sans papiers movement in the 1990s. Today, the Association Nous Pas Bouger continues to lobby for immigrant rights in France.

Following the collage of “sans papiers” clips, the distinct konpa guitar enters playing a winding six note melody and then doubling in octaves with a descending vocal line, in which the group sings, “Anmwe, Anmwe” (Help, Help), adding:

Si m pa rele m ap toufe I’ll explode if I cannot express myself
Tout kote se on sèl koze Everywhere it is the same cause
Pwoblèm immigre ki pa regle Immigrant problems that are not regulated

69 Translation of “Sans Papiers” mine, with consultation from Jean Eudes Beauge.
After this vocal introduction, in which the group sings in unison with the guitar, leads into the verses, by Gregory Lazare:

Gouvernman monte gouvernman ale  Government turn up, go!

Sitiasyon nou pa janm chanje yeah Our situation is never changing, yeah

Bagay yo vid pli move yeah Something empty getting worse, yeah

Se chak jou nap fe actualite Every day we are making news

Men sa pa janm mennen ki kote yeah But it never leads anywhere, yeah

Nou monte asosyasyon We form groups

Nou fe manifestasyon We put on protests

Nou fe kòm si yon pa bon plan We pretend its not a good plan

Nou fe kòm si yon pa wi We pretend its not a yes

Yo komprann sivilizasyon They understand civilization

Yo konaise immigrasyon They know immigration

Se la pli nou pi chache It is further we seek more

Nou pa pi mouri nan pèyi etranje We do not die in foreign countries
The verses culminate with the entire band chanting in unison with a particularly staccato inflection “Man-ni-fes-ta-tion ont com-men-cê!” (The protest has begun!) to lead into a musical interlude that highlights an arpeggiating synthesized keyboard sound. This type of interlude is frequently punctuated with “call outs” in which the lead singer may say the name of the band, the title of the song, or a location in the Haitian diaspora. “Sans Papiers” mostly follows this formula, until Jacob Jocelyne calls out “Men anpil chay pa lou,” a Haitian proverb that means, “Many hands make light work.” Proverb usage is an important part of Haitian culture, and the use of this one functions as a call to action for Haitians to band together with other marginalized immigrants in Paris. Group maestro and guitarist, Jean Eudes Beauge explains the shared problem of immigration across groups, “Yes like a number of other nationalities, Haitians are also affected by and relate to this problem.” Through this mutual ground, Haitians share a common bond with a variety of sans papiers in France.

Thus, “Sans Papiers” shows that Original H is engaged beyond the Haitian community in Paris or the Antillean musical transnation, reaching out to the broader Paris immigrant community in general. “This song is dedicated to them,” explains Beauge, referring to sans papiers of diverse origins, adding that the song aims “to comfort them and give support…in the spirit of protests” (Beauge 2015). When discussing their audience and fan base, lead singer Jocelyn Jacob and guitarist and maestro Jean Eudes Beauge, take pride in the diversity of their fans, pointing out their different areas of origin:
Jean Eudes Beauge: So the majority are those with an Afro-Caribbean connection, from Guadeloupe, Martinique, Africa, and especially we call to Europeans - the French - that is our audience, and also a lot of Haitian culture (in general). But in general (it is) Haitians, people who come from the West Indies, the French Antilles, Africa, Reunion, and the metropole. That’s it, our audience.

Jocelyn Jacob: There is actually a lot of diversity among our fans. There are blacks, whites, people of all colors.

Jean Eudes Beauge: And all origins.  

Significantly, their popularity among Antillean audiences, and subsequent attention from Antillean popular media, which is tied to Paris through the Antillean musical transnation, has led to their popularity in the Antilles, where they occasionally perform. In an interview, Jocelyn Jacob and Jean Eudes Beauge explain their experiences performing in the Antilles:

Laura Donnelly: I know that you have many Antillean fans. You have gone to Martinique (Jocelyn Jacob: and Guadeloupe) and Guadeloupe (Jocelyn Jacob: Precisely). What are the differences between concerts in the Antilles and here?

Jean Eudes Beauge (JEB): In the Antilles the advantage is... we don’t go there as often: in the Antilles people are thirsty for Original H.

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70 Jean Eudes Beauge and Jocelyn Jacob. Interview with author. Paris, France. 9 May 2014.
Jocelyn Jacob (JJ): Because we go to the Antilles with long periods of (them) missing us, when we come back we are always struck by the audience. The spectators are more “hot” they are “plus chaud” because we don’t go there are often. So, that is the difference. Here it isn’t the same. It’s the same audience who come see Original H, the same people in the concerts, they are very content. (In the Antilles) they move more, they are very very very very “happy.”

JEB: The audience is also more receptive in Martinique. It is more receptive than in Paris because, in fact, because in Paris because if you want you can see us all the time.

JJ: It isn’t the same audience also because in Paris there is more diverse blend of people, you could say. But, in the Antilles it is a little more special for me to experience.

Although Original H is a staple of the Haitian music scene in Paris, they are not known in Haiti. They do not perform in Haiti, the United States, or Canada, distinguishing them from the HMI konpa groups. In the YouTube comments for one of their songs, “Evidement,” Haitians (in Haiti) seem intrigued by the group’s music, although they are mostly unfamiliar with it. One Haitian fan compliments them, saying, “who ever wrote that song is in top of [h]is game,” continuing to say “i live in haiti in i heard the song by mistake in the radio last night i had to found out what group had it to is

71 Jean Eudes Beauge and Jocelyn Jacob. Interview with author. Paris, France. 9 May 2014.
actif in by change the singer said the name of the group ‘original H’ and i reacher it on you tube i sugest to you guys put a video to it on let haiti know who you are because we do not know who you are in haiti, please contact me in haiti to at [redacted] want to help promot’’’.

Similarly, many Haitians in Paris have explained that they were not aware of Original H prior to moving from Haiti to France and even the band acknowledges that they function on a much smaller level than the popular transnational HMI groups.

To better understand the difference in scale between the star HMI konpa bands and Original H, I will present a sample of the typical performance schedules of Kreyol la, Carimi, and Original H. In examining the frequency and location of performances, Original H’s difference as a Parisian konpa band is clear. The following data presents Kreyol la’s performance schedule for the latter half of December 2013 going into 2014.

Table 5: Kreyol la Concert Dates and Locations from December 15, 2013 to January 4, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 19</td>
<td>Pétionville, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 23</td>
<td>Lake Worth, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 24</td>
<td>Pembroke Pines, FL (Miami)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 25</td>
<td>Orlando, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 27</td>
<td>Hollis, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 28</td>
<td>Dedham, MA (Boston)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince, Haiti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They have a busy schedule, performing in Haiti, South Florida, New York and Massachusetts in a relatively short span of time. Other groups, like Carimi, have even more rigorous schedules.

Carimi, arguably the most popular konpa band of their generation, performs even more frequently than Kreyol la. A colleague when describing Carimi’s demeanor at an interview after their concert in Marseille, described them as, “So nice, but so tired.” A list of Carimi’s typical touring schedule justifies this comment. I chose a sample ranging from December 2013 to January 2014, a few months before their French concerts.

Table 6: Carimi Concert Dates and Locations from December 2013 to the Beginning of January 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>Montreal, Quebec, Canada</td>
<td>December 29</td>
<td>Carrefour, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>Martinique</td>
<td>December 29</td>
<td>Gonaives, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 15</td>
<td>Martinique</td>
<td>December 30</td>
<td>Saint Marc, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 16</td>
<td>Guadeloupe</td>
<td>December 31</td>
<td>St Maarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 20</td>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 21</td>
<td>Jamaica, NY (Queens)</td>
<td>January 2</td>
<td>Cayes, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 22</td>
<td>Boca Raton, FL</td>
<td>January 3</td>
<td>La Reserve, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 24</td>
<td>Miami, FL (with Kreyol la)</td>
<td>January 4</td>
<td>Oloffson Hotel, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 25</td>
<td>Orlando, FL (with Kreyol la)</td>
<td>January 4</td>
<td>Saint Marc, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 27</td>
<td>Florville, Haiti</td>
<td>January 5</td>
<td>Gonaives, Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 28</td>
<td>Leogane, Haiti</td>
<td>January 6</td>
<td>Carrefour, Haiti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This data shows Carimi traveling to many areas within the HMI transnational circuit, only excluding France, where they traveled in April of that year, and Boston. The twenty-two performances in less than a month’s time show the frequency with which they perform, and the locations show a dedication to moving around the Caribbean (in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint Maarten), Haiti (with multiple performances in different towns), and the United States and Canada (in South Florida, New York, and Montreal).

Popular HMI bands perform frequently and sometimes travel far distances (such as from Montreal to Port-au-Prince) without any days to rest, occasionally performing multiple times a day. The konpa bals are a grueling undertaking for a performer. They typically begin at 11:00 PM or midnight and last until dawn; this means that bands can sometimes play up to six hours with minimal breaks between sets, and periods of touring rarely cease because this is the primary way that groups can generate any money, due to minimal record sales because of rampant piracy. When discussing the touring schedule of Kreyol la with their former drummer, Vladimir Alexis, I asked him how he managed to play the drum set for so many hours every night. He simply replied that the energy of the performance takes over.

Original H performs less frequently than the big HMI bands and travels shorter distances, but like Carimi, it is possible to gain insight from looking at their performance schedule. In considering all of Original H’s performances from December 2013 to June 2015, of the seventeen performances, one was in Martinique and the rest were in hexagonal France, only performing within “Paris” proper (not in the suburbs) once. Of the remaining sixteen performances, three were outside of Ile de France (the Paris
region), with one in Normandy, Dijon, and Bordeaux each. There were thirteen in the Paris region, but with varying distances between three and over fifty kilometers from the center of Paris. The farthest were Meaux (55km), Thillay (26km), and Brunoy (21km), with Clichy-Sous-Bois (15km), Massey (15km), Epinay-sur-Seine (11km) and Nanterre (11km) coming closer between eleven and fifteen kilometers. The four closest to Paris were Fontenay sous Bois (9km), Aubervilliers (8km), Montreuil (6.5km) and Ivry-sur-Seine (5km). They performed once within Paris’s border, in the seventeenth arrondissement at the Mairie (town hall) Salle des Fêtes (event hall). This performance was notably not a bal but a charity performance for a Haitian game show that was sponsored by a local organization to improve Haiti’s image (see Chapter 4 for more information on organizations like this one). Unlike Carimi and Kreyol la, Original H didn’t perform in Haiti, Canada, or the United States, essential locations in which to perform to fully participate in the HMI.

As one would expect, the output of konpa in the Paris region is not limited to Original H. At least one popular HMI group typically performs in Paris once a month, sometimes more frequently. There are also weekly DJ-led bals, like DJ Flo’s weekly party at Club Section Zouk called “Phenomenal Kompa,” which function similarly to those with live music. There are also two weekly radio shows on the Caribbean radio station “Espace FM” that cater to Haitian audiences: the first, “Boulevard du Compas,” plays from one in the afternoon to four on Sundays, is hosted by local entrepreneur Pradel Saint Fleur, and is meant to be a community show that provides information and promotes local businesses and events; the second, “L’Emission Phenominal Kompa,”
immediately follows Boulevard du Compas from four to six on Sundays with DJ Flo
hosting and playing a variety of konpa from the 1980s to today. There are also several
other local konpa groups, but few are as well known as Original H, although several
newer bands, including KDM and Teddy are gaining traction.

Conclusion

If the Haitian diaspora is in fact a postcommunity as Doucet insists, then Haitians
in Paris are using the boundary maintaining mechanisms of racialized difference in their
own favor, capitalizing on the mutual racial discrimination of Antilleans to aid the
formation of minor-to-minor networks with this group. The complicated hierarchical
interactions between and among these minority groups and how they interact, or the
minoritarian politics, result in musical outcomes most clearly visible through changes in
the model of konpa performance in Paris. Each site in a transnation or diaspora has its
own local particularities and therefore different hierarchies and subjectivities that
influence minoritarian politics. In Paris, minoritarian politics enable minor-to-minor
networks between Haitians and French Antilleans through their mutual racial
discrimination from mainstream French society, as well as shared colonial past, creole
linguistic ties, and appreciation for konpa music.

The different ways in which konpa performance in Paris presents itself illustrates
the different ways that Haitian groups are benefitting from these minoritarian politics,
whether it be through altering the HMI bal model to better suit a broader, and notably
Antillean audience, as is the case with Carimi, or whether local groups like Original H
capitalize on their popularity among Antilleans in Paris to insert themselves into the
Antillean musical transnation and perform in Guadeloupe and Martinique. Original H also appeals to the broader postcolonial immigrant community in France through topical song lyrics like “Sans Papiers,” hoping that their music will resonate with and touch those afflicted by similar problems as the Haitian community. In this way transnational musical networks function internationally while being locally curated.

In the following chapter I will expand my discussion of minoritarian politics to examine the Haitian transnation and specifically how minor-to-minor networks create solidarities that sustain and promote local initiatives within the Paris community through grass roots initiatives and social entrepreneurship.
CHAPTER 4: “PWOFITE TÊT OU” (AVAIL YOURSELF): SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE PWOFITE IDEOLOGY

In October 2010 the Haiti-based konpa group Djakout #1 released the album *Pwofite* along with the first single from the album, “Pwofite.” *Pwofite*, a verb in Haitian Creole, is similar in meaning to the French verb *profiter*, with multiple definitions, including “make the most of, take advantage of and enjoy,” but it is most commonly associated with the idea of benefiting from something, someone, or some situation. The song, “Pwofite,” includes sharply punctuated horn accents, playful guitar riffs, and a sweetly sung melody, but perhaps more importantly, the lyrics promote a message for Haitians: “Pwofite, lavi nou pa anyen,” meaning “enjoy life, our lives are nothing.” This seemingly morbid message can be interpreted in a positive way, according to Vanessa Joachim of the Boulevard du Compas radio show on Espace FM, who interprets it as, “A kind of YOLO [you only live once] thing” (Joachim 2015). In other words, the song encourages the listeners to make the best from what they have, because life is short. “Pwofite” was released during a time when Haiti was struggling to recover from the utter devastation and mass destruction of the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that struck on 12 January 2010, and Haitians largely viewed it as an uplifting message to embrace. But ability to look for something more in life, even in the face of ruin may seem staggering but this attitude is engrained as part of the greater Haitian social imaginary as something I call the *pwofite* ideology.
In demonstrating the presence of this pwofite ideology, this chapter aims to take several initiatives of social outreach in Paris and understand them better. In examining ideology as a concept, Terry Eagleton explains that, “theories of ideology are, among other things, attempts to explain why it is that men and women come to hold certain views; and to this extent they examine the relation between thought and social reality” (Eagleton 2013 [1994], p. 15).

In light of the common usage in French and francophone studies in using the term “ideology” to describe the system of republican-centered beliefs on which French society is based, it seems appropriate to contrast this Republican ideology of France with that of the pwofite ideology of Haitians in France. The Republican (in relating to the legacy of the French Republic) Ideology, “l’idéologie républicaine” (Fassin 2002), or “idéologie nationale républicaine” (Trevanian 2002), is a common mode of characterizing French political theory, with Green elaborating that, “most French historians and sociologists have emphasized the republican nature of French society, dating from the French Revolution. The state’s protection of individual liberty, theoretically brooking no intermediary groups and rejecting any form of quotas, characterizes the French model.” (Green 1999, p.1203) Thus, for the purposes of this chapter and dissertation, I will be using the term “ideology” to classify an underlying belief system of Haitians in Paris drawing from one of Raymond Williams’s Marxist definitions of the term (Williams 1994, p.175).

The sentiment echoed in “Pwofite” of making the best of what you have because life is short, will be supported as evidenced in numerous proverbs and sayings, which I
will use as subject headings throughout this chapter: “Chita pa bay” (Sitting doesn’t give), “Sak vid pa kanpe” (you get out what you put in), “Tande pa di konprann pou sa” (Hearing is one thing, understanding is another), and lastly, “Pwofite têt ou” (avail yourself). The overarching idea behind the pwofite ideology is that terrible things happen, but you must make the best of it and do everything you can to make life better, and the musical developments described in this chapter are some of the products of this belief system.

Importantly, the concept of pwofite, the idea that Paris Haitians are making the most of what they have, in turn has fueled every instance of Haitian musical interaction described in thus far in this dissertation, because above all else, music is the most valued thing that Haitians have in relation to Antilleans and other minority groups. Although this dissertation is about minor-to-minor networks, influenced by minoritarian politics, emerging from the relationship of Antilleans vis-à-vis Haitians in Paris and how music complicates these networks, this chapter untangles the relationships among the local Haitian community, the diaspora, and Haiti’s global image, illuminating how Paris functions as a site within the transnation to stimulate minority networks of support, and enforced by initiatives of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship, which can have a local, diasporic, or global scope, involves investing in the greater social good of the community, with the hope that in the future individuals can also potentially benefit themselves, through financial gain or enhanced reputation. These self-benefitting initiatives all function as a result of the pwofite ideology or the underlying desire to make the most of ones situation that seems to drive Haitian musical life in Paris.
For Haitian social entrepreneurs, music is the most important element of community building and outreach because within the Haitian community in Paris, music above all else creates value and physically brings people together (when people congregate for musical performances). This value creation occurs by enhancing knowledge and strengthening community ties through experience, privileging roots, acoustic, and socially engaged musical styles for the betterment of the Paris community, the diaspora, and Haiti. Simply put, this chapter is about Haitians doing things for other Haitians, and how they connect to Haiti and its diaspora through these initiatives.

All of this activity and the self-improvement it promotes enable transnational flows of information, artists, money, and music. For example, Haitians in Paris in an effort to improve Haiti’s economic outlook, send remittances to family members who remain in Haiti. Social entrepreneurs have organized festivals in Haiti that bring musical performances to rural areas of the country to promote agricultural industry. Thus, initiatives in Paris, functioning through social entrepreneurship and activism, have local and transnational goals and ties, and accomplish these goals by harnessing roots music, mizik rasin, and politically engaged music, mizik angaje, as the vehicles of value-adding within Haitian-to-Haitian connections in communities.

I argue that the solidarities forged within and among the Haitian community, both in Paris and the diaspora help contribute to the production of local knowledges and global cultures and in this chapter I explain this production through the Haitian community’s ability to build solidarity and enhance their value through music. Lionnet and Shi have similarly argued that transcolonial solidarities, or solidarities between formerly colonized
peoples, provide new possibilities in local production: “Beyond the nostalgic and the melancholic, these solidarities point to ways of becoming more engaged with present and future promises of transformation through active participation in the production of local knowledges and global cultures” (Lionnet and Shi 2005, p.21). This chapter focuses on the event coordinators and entrepreneurs who are active within the community in Paris in an effort to “build up Haiti’s image,” or increase the value of the community through social outreach and initiatives. Local Haitians are investing time and money into the greater good of the community, working through organizations, festivals, concerts, and iPhone apps, all with music as a driving force, making music paramount to social mobility and increasing solidarity in Haitian Paris. I examine both music-centric events (such as twoubAkoustik, a concert series) and non-music centric ones (including “Haiti, Je Connaïs,” a trivia contest organized by Association Nouvelle Image d’Haïti) to show how these social entrepreneurs are promoting Haiti’s image with music as a nucleus for these efforts, even when the event doesn’t appear to be music-based.

Jesse Shipley has discussed the aesthetics to music and entrepreneurship in relation to hiplife music in Ghana saying: “In making music, hiplife artists associate themselves with virtues of travel, translation, and celebrity to remake themselves as entrepreneurs who can transform aesthetic value into economic value”(Shipley 2013, p.20). In the case of Haitians in Paris, aesthetic value is tied to cultural legitimacy and entrepreneurship is entangled with the desire to improve life, make the most with what you have, and pwofite.
Haitian social entrepreneurs in Paris are forming a variety of networks through the local community in myriad ways: by forming local bonds through Paris-based associations with events that promote roots and socially-engaged music, through diasporic connections by enhancing Paris as a site within the Haitian diaspora with the popularity of Paris-based initiatives, and with global connections by striving to improve Haiti’s image in Paris and elsewhere with these initiatives. Thus in this chapter I will present three case studies that illustrate the ways in which non-konpa music can be used for social entrepreneurship. BIC, a Haitian musician and activist who travels to Paris through his participation in international organizations and supports Paris events; twoubAkouistik, a concert series in Paris that highlights non-konpa music as a way of building community solidarity; and Haiti Je Connais, a quiz game based in Paris that features non-konpa performances as a means to improve Haiti’s image among the local community, as well as improve Haiti’s image internationally through the use of an online application. Each example illustrates different ways pwofite is mobilized, and illuminate the role of mizik angame and mizik rasin in ameliorating the multiply marginalized status of Haitians in Paris, thus showing the value they place in this music and the importance of the pwofite ideology, while emphasizing the predilection of these types of music as a viable vehicle for social change.

B.I.C. : “Chita pa bay” (Sitting doesn’t give)

This section will discuss the work of Haitian recording artist, representative, and activist BIC (Roosevelt Saillant). The proverb Chita pa bay (sitting doesn’t give, or don’t expect anything unless you’re willing to work) characterizes BIC’s story because he has
dedicated his life and career to working to improve Haiti, through his music and participation in local and international initiatives. I will use BIC to introduce the importance of music in social outreach that is prevalent in Paris in this chapter, as well as the use of non-konpa music in these types of outreach, with BIC functioning as a model for others in Paris who wish to help Haiti in similar ways. Through BIC’s success, entrepreneurs in Paris have witnessed a musician who can serve as a model for the ideological commitments for which the community organizers in Paris are striving. When BIC was visiting Paris in May and June of 2014, he participated in and collaborated with both twoubAkoustik and Haiti Je Connais, enforcing and legitimizing their claims of empowerment through his prior success in Haiti and international status through his ambassadorship for the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) and his award as Laureate for a Visa pour la Création for the *Institut Français*. BIC’s successful initiatives to help Haiti, through the promotion of non-konpa music as a vehicle for discussing social issues in Haiti, provides a model for Paris organizations, and his participation in these events grants them a legitimacy through his position as a well-known artist and activist from Haiti. Through BIC, I mean to illustrate a successful model of musical activism, social entrepreneurship, and solidarity formation that can be applied throughout the rest of the chapter.

BIC’s mission to help Haiti, conveyed through his socially engaged lyrics takes precedence for him above all else. Everything he does extends back to his underlying desire to use his music to send powerful messages about Haiti, and his name reinforces this idea. BIC grew up in Port-au-Prince but frequently visited Cap Haitien in the north of
Haiti because of familial ties there. In choosing the name BIC, he meant to make reference for the Cap Haitien word for pen (bic), notably different from plim in Port-au-Prince. He decided to name himself “Bic” to signify his love for writing, explaining: “I have developed a passion for writing since my childhood. And when I had to start a career, I’m going to call myself Bic, just to say that I like to write” (Saillant 2014) But, this name proved to be problematic; upon trying to make a website for himself and learning that Bic is also an international brand, he decided to alter his name, explaining, “for five years people have known me as Bic I cannot change it.” So he chose BIC, an acronym for “Brains, Intelligence, Creativity.”

His dedication to writing and texts also stems from musical influences, citing his biggest influence as Manno Charlemange, the Haitian twoubadou singer, as the most impactful on his style. But it wasn’t simply the fact that Charlemagne conveyed social messages in his music, a characteristic many young artists admire, but because of the way he conveyed these messages, with BIC elaborating, saying, “the way he said things the way he plays with the words was the first thing that attracted me.” The same thing drew BIC to the Haitian rap group ORS (Original Rap Stuff): “I loved them, I loved their lyrics, and I was influenced by that group,” explaining that lyrics are the most important element when he passes judgment on other musicians. For BIC, lyrics as poetry are powerful because of, in his words, “the way you can say something differently from how someone else would say it.”

BIC thinks of himself as a poet who uses music as a mode of conveyance for his texts, which take precedence over all else: “It’s all about the text, that’s it,” making, “the
text and how he plays with the words,” to be the main points of discussion surrounding his music. He has published two editions (in 2010 and 2015) of his lyrics as poetry in “Le Champ MagnéBIC” (a play on words of Le champ magnétique or magnetic field), a printed collection of song texts, from Edika Solèy, a publisher based in Port-au-Prince. The second edition includes a preface from Frankétienne, renowned Haitian writer, poet, and painter, further legitimizing BIC’s reputation as a significant supporter of poetry in Kréyòl.

The title of his two-volumed album, Kreyòl Chante, Kreyòl Konprann (Kreyol sings, Kreyol understands), offers potential insight into why BIC has chosen music as the conveyor of his poetic messages. “Kreyol Chante, Kreyol Konprann” is a riff off of the Haitian proverb “Kreyol Pale, Kreyol Konprann,” which literally translates to “Kreyol speaks, Kreyol understands,” but is meant to emphasize the efficacy of Kreyòl (as opposed to French) as a mode of communication. BIC’s take on this, “Kreyòl Chante, Kreyol Konprann,” implies that singing is the best way of sending a message.73

With his music, BIC is deviating from the norm in the popular music scene in Haiti, which he says is his only option as long as the country remains in its current state, meaning that he cannot see himself changing his song topics until Haiti changes. He explains, saying, “We are not singing money, (or saying) we have big houses, we’re not singing about beautiful girls because I’ve been living in Haiti all of my life and there are

73 Using poetry to send messages fits with the Haitian idea of voye pwen or “sending a point” through metaphor instead of saying something directly in speech. Voye pwen is a powerful way to convey a message in Haiti.
so many things to say about Haiti when you have the chance to have that microphone because we have a lot of people who would like to talk, who would like to say something, but they don’t have the opportunity to have a mic and have people listening to them. So if that chance is given to me I said - Well, I’m going to use it to speak for those who don’t have that possibility. This is why my lyrics, my music is about my environment the world people live in.”

The general malaise among the youth in Haiti troubles BIC, which he characterizes as an “M la”(I’m here) attitude (because “M la” is the equivalent of saying “I exist” if someone asks you “how’s it going?”). But BIC believes the lack of motivation and involvement of youths in Haiti is symptomatic of the systems in place in the country. An anecdote from his youth of a genius classmate who never amounted to anything inspired BIC to fight this malaise: “if you know that man twenty years before in class (that) you would think was going to be a rich genius man and then because of how the country is- well he is like the others- like the ones who didn’t care about school - so this thing touched me. So that’s what is my concern about my environment, my society about the leaders of my country. That’s what my lyrics are basically about.”

To help promote his message, BIC started his own record label, Tizon Dife records, through which he has also promoted artists with similar values. According to BIC, he chose the name “Tizon dife” because small embers (tizon dife) are less obtrusive than a flame, but can still start forest fires, as he explains, “in the countryside… there are

74 Interview, Roosevelt Saillant (BIC) with the author. 18 June 2014. Paris, France.
the little pieces of fire that can burn if you don’t pay attention to them. They are so small that you would pay attention to the big fire but not the tizon dife and I consider myself the very small part of the fire but watch out because I can become big things.”

His creation of Tizon dife was meant first to allow him to circumvent the musical dominance of konpa in Haitian music and later to help other recording artists do the same, he elaborates, saying, “I created it because when you go meet - try to find people to help in Haiti they would say, ‘well if you are doing this kind of music in Haiti I won’t help you- if you were doing konpa, if you were doing this I would probably invest in my money in you.’” With Tizon dife he is able to, “have my own studio where I can do exactly what I feel and then I opened my own studio my own label and I started helping other people with it. So that is Tizon dife records. I am in my fifth album right now and I am going for the sixth one. I am finalizing now.” In addition to his music, Tizon Dife also sponsors a weekly event, “Sware Plim Poul,”(Chicken Feather Soirée) that showcases slam poetry and musicians every Wednesday in Port-au-Prince. Chicken feathers (plim poul) are commonly used in Haiti to clean out the ears, thus this event intended to do the same, by impacting the audience with engaged lyrics.

BIC and Tizon Dife, along with the support of the Ministère de la Jeunesse, des Sports et de l’Action Civique (MJSAC) wrote, produced, and distributed a song that is meant to be uplifting to youths in Haiti, “Nou se lajenès” (We Are Youths). Intended to function as an anthem of the generation of young people in Haiti who are struggling, the chorus of the song implores the listener to “Kenbe tèt nou, kraze bèt nou, kwè nan tèt nou!” or “support us, cast off threats, believe in us.” The group of young artists who
participate in the song alongside BIC, including K-Libr, Princess Eud, Bélo, and Jeanjean Roosevelt, represent a generation of singers and musicians who are dedicated to helping Haiti through their music.

BIC’s on the ground involvement with helping youths in Haiti is best illustrated through La Caravane, described by Pléseus Junior Louis of *Le Nouvelliste* as a “mouvement de promotion de valeurs éducatives et sociales à la jeunesse du pays.” (movement of the promotion of social and educational values to the youths of this country)(Louis 2016). Beginning its fifth annual tour on 1 March 2016, La Caravane is a tour that BIC, BélO (a.k.a. Jean Bélony Murat), and Jeanjean Roosevelt embark on every spring in which they host debates and discussions about issues in Haiti in schools, and then present free concerts for the students. Touted as “un movement d’identification et de promotion de valeurs.” (an identity movement that promotes values) (Louis 2016), “la caravane conçue par Bélo et soutenue pendant trois ans par Chantal Moreno de l'OIF, est une façon extraordinaire pour inculquer à des jeunes des notions de respect, d'amour, de partage à travers des concert-débats avec des artistes qu'ils chouchoutent.” (The Caravane that BélO conceived and supported for three years by Chantal Moreno of the OIF, is an extraordinary thing for inculcate in the young people notions of respect, love, and sharing across concert-discussions with artists that they love.)(Louis 2016). The concert-discussions have themes like “peace and tolerance,” and students engage in conversation among their peers and the musicians before lively performances. With Plésuis Junior Louis of *Le Nouvelliste* (2015) calling them, “Some of the most lovely examples of unification and of musical respect in Haitian music,” saying that “they present reflection
topics to increase awareness in the population”(Louis 2015). La Caravane has the potential to greatly impact the thinking of a new generation of Haitians. Significantly, La Caravane is made possible through BIC, Bélo, and Jeanjean Roosevelt’s roles as the ambassadors for the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

Another international organization to which he is connected, the Institut Français, part of the French ministry of Foreign Affairs, brought BIC to Paris for three months from May to July 2014 as a laureate and recipient of a “Visa pour la Création.” As a grantee of this Visa, musicians from different regions of the world are put in close proximity and encouraged to collaborate while finishing an artistic project. In BIC’s case this meant finishing his fifth album, Recto Vèso, while collaborating with musicians from Rwanda, the United States, and Colombia. These collaborations are beneficial, as he explains: “I profite because I am meeting new artists and I said why it’s a good idea to have an album here.” Saying of the Visa program, “It’s a program in which they give the opportunity to some artists from all around the world to come to a place which they call Cité Internationale des Arts, it is a place where they more than three hundred artists come to finalize something - singer, writer- so they are here all at the Cité Internationale des Arts for, some for a few months, some for five, some for one year even, depending on what you have”(Saillant 2014).

75 “Ceux qui ont donné l’un des plus beaux exemples d’union et de respect mutuel dans la musique haïtienne” … “ils proposent des sujets de réflexion pour une prise de conscience plus large de la population”(Louis 2015).
One of the outcomes of his residency was a variety of collaborative performances with organizations and initiatives around Paris, with first with Rwandan afro-pop musician Eric Rwigema in the Cité Internationale des Arts on 23 June 2014. BIC performed with another Visa recipient, a drummer from Colombia, and the two singers sang together at the end. While in Paris, BIC performed at several Haitian-centered events as well as the collaborative international ones. He performed at the World Heritage Center / Maison de l’UNESCO for a Haitian flag day celebration on 18 May 2014, as well as twoubAkoustik on 11 June and a concert in honor of Haïti Je Connais on 27 June.

His desire to help other Haitians and promote similarly minded artists and initiatives on an international scale is evident through his participation in local Paris initiatives. BIC’s presence and performances in nascent series like twoubAkoustik and Haïti, Je Connais helps legitimize them in the eyes of the local and diasporic community. His fame and popularity among Haitian audiences as well as his commitment to social messages in his music and activism can thus make these grassroots initiatives seem like they might actually work. BIC shares a deep conviction with Pradel Saint Fleur or twoubAkoustik and Evens Nicolas of Haïti, Je Connais, to want people to remember Haiti and to know Haiti (through musical messages) and from that knowledge to strengthen the community, a cause to which he has dedicated his professional life. Even though BIC isn’t a part of the Paris community, his involvement reinforces the value of the events for the community.
The following sections will illustrate two of the ways that the Paris community is expressing a similar sentiment, first with twoubAkoustik, a concert series for and by the Haitian community and then with Haiti, Je Connais, a quiz game. Both of these initiatives mean to illustrate how the Paris community cares about Haiti and also how they wish to improve their standing and the standing of Haiti within the global social imaginary.

twoubAkoustik: “Sak vid pa kanpe” (You get out what you put in)

Fitting with the above proverb that roughly translates to “you get out what you put in,” (or more literally, an empty bag won’t stand) twoubAkoustik is a local initiative, made possible through community members volunteering their time and money to organize and put on performances, as well as the performers who do so for free (there is no admission fee), to provide the community with an enjoyable experience and build solidarity. TwoubAkoustik, a concert series created by the Haitian Artists Club of Europe (CARHE) in collaboration with the radio show Boulevard du Compas (Espace FM), places Haitian twoubadou and acoustic music at the focal point of a cultural experience, taking place once a month on Thursday evenings. In addition to music, twoubAkoustik showcases local artists and offers Haitian food for sale as well. In this way twoubAkoustik serves as a communal experience made for and by Parisian Haitians, meant to build solidarity and enhance the community’s profile.

TwoubAkoustik circumvents the typical (konpa bal) model of Haitian musical performance in Paris in order to similarly circumvent the minor-to-minor networks that konpa performance enables, opting instead for roots music to forge community solidarity. Thus, with twoubAkoustik, Haitians in Paris are strengthening minor connections within
the community rather than minor-to-minor networks with other minority subjects, allowing for genres of Haitian music beyond konpa to serve productive and different functions.

The organization that sponsors and plans twoubAkoustik, CARHE or Club des Artistes Haïtiens d’Europe (Club of European Haitian Artists) is a non-profit organization that formed in 2013 with two objectives: to promote Haitian artists (particularly those that participate in roots or socially-conscious art) that reside in Europe, and through this promotion to enhance the community’s image. Founder and President, Pradel Saint-Fleur explains the need for such an organization, emphasizing the lack of opportunities afforded to these artists: “I felt like Haitian artists here in Europe didn’t have enough exposure and we’re trying to help them sell themselves. We’re trying to build some biographies for them, with them, and we’re trying to organize some events for them because they don’t have enough plays going on and we’re trying to do that with and for them.”

The main objective of the club is then to provide exposure and publicity for local artists, who otherwise would have few opportunities to present their work.

The reason for this difficulty of exposure is that Haitian musical performance in Paris is very much tethered to the greater HMI (Haitian Music Industry), with exceptions only for artists (typically who play konpa) that are willing to crossover into French Antillean markets (see Chapter 3). As a result, the majority of Haitian musical events in Paris are konpa bals in which performers from Haiti or the United States perform, with a

76 Interview, author with Pradel Saint Fleur, Clichy, November 13, 2013.
few local groups also performing. Accordingly, there is a void of locally-made Haitian music in general, but especially from any non-konpa genre.

TwoubAkoustik, as an event that privileges twoubadou and acoustic styles, especially ones that incorporate roots elements or socially-engaged lyrics. In doing so, it provides an avenue through which local artists can promote a variety of Haitian music and culture in Paris that otherwise might not have a place. Pradel explains, saying, “it is an event that we are trying to build and it’s about music. And we know that Haitian music can be seen by different ways and we know that we have konpa music – this is the most commercial one, but around konpa music we have other music that we can use to make people know about Haitian culture and music this is the reason we said ok we have twoubadou – twoubadou is a kind of music that we have that can be commercialized”(Saint Fleur 2013).

Through the collective curated atmosphere consisting of Haitian, non-konpa musical styles, paintings and other visual arts by local Haitians, light Haitian meals for sale, especially with the social aspects of the event, where long intermissions encourage the audience to socialize and relax, twoubAkoustik, in offering an alternative to konpa bals, instead encourages community solidarity through enjoyed shared heritage and fellowship.

As such, twoubAkoustik is more than simply a series of concerts that take place once a month on Thursday evenings in Paris or its suburbs, but also a solidarity-building community function, starkly contrasting from the typical konpa bals or Antillean-
influenced concerts that are popular. The difference here is that the events are made for Haitians, by Haitians, with the intent of socially enriching the local community.

Through this enrichment that twoubAkoustik provides, its organizers, CARHE and Pradel Saint-Fleur, are operating as social entrepreneurs, reacting to the multiply marginalized status of Haitians and thus Haitian music and reaffirming its cultural importance to them and their peers. If the HMI konpa bals are the musical representation of the Haitian musical transnation, twoubAkoustik is then an expression of community engagement that emphasizes the local, and ignores Antillean influence for the purpose of the building of a Parisian-Haitian locality.

TwoubAkoustik builds this Parisian-Haitian locality in myriad ways: by emphasizing the local experience and needs of Paris as a locale within the Haitian diaspora through the promotion of primarily local musicians, by celebrating Haitian arts that otherwise wouldn’t have a venue for presentation like twoubadou or acoustic music and storytelling, and through its venue for most of the first year in the Cité de Refuge and inviting all those housed within the building to attend, adding an element of outreach to the event.

In choosing a musical genre to represent their community, Haitians in Paris, with their history of transnationalism and migration opted for a genre with a similar past, twoubadou. Twoubadou, from the French troubadour, is itself a product of transnational migration; twoubadou originated at the turn of the twentieth century with Haitians travelling to Cuba as migrant workers and seasonal cane cutters. The music emerged as a
mélange of Haitian topical song melodies infused with Cuban string band instrumentation. As I have stated elsewhere, “traditionally, small twoubadou ensembles traveled in rural areas, performing for money while delivering biting social commentary to audiences”(Donnelly 2014). Despite its foreign influences, according to Gage Averill, “Twoubadou music quickly joined the wider body of rural populist music, called mizik tipik in Haitian Kreyòl, and is thought today to be natif-natal, or an authentically Haitian genre”(Averill 2009, p.29). This designation has led to the general misconception that twoubadou dates back to the time of slavery, or pre-independence.

Twoubadou became a popular vehicle for political dissent during the U.S. occupation of Haiti in the early twentieth century, leading to the genre’s increasing association over time with political activism. This legacy continued and was re-affirmed in the 1970s with artists like Manno Charlemagne and Marco Jeanty, catapulting the style into the mainstream and reviving the use of twoubadou as political activism. Their 1978 release of Manno et Marco contained scathing critiques of the Duvalier regime. Songs like “Pouki?”(Why) ask questions like “Why does the shark bring such destruction? Large tooth marks on the back of the little fish?”(Averill 1997, p. 128) This metaphorical form of resistance is a culturally endorsed method of communication called voye pwen or sending a point, in this case to Duvalier (the shark) to stop attacking the common people.

Pradel Saint-Fleur, organizer of twoubAkoustik and President and founder of CARHE found inspiration for the event in a more recent wave of mainstream twoubadou recordings, in particular a compilation of albums in 2001 and 2002 called “Haïtian Troubadours” organized by musician Fabrice Rouzier. For Pradel, while twoubadou
holds cultural value in its function as social activism, it also contains great potential for commercialization, especially since other musicians like Fabrice Rouzier have since stopped their twoubadou initiatives.

Twoubadou is also conducive to grass-roots and small performances because of the low technological requirements (no amplifiers needed) and the simplicity of the instrumentation compared to konpa music. As Pradel says: “Just take your guitar and that’s it! …These are the kind(s) of music that can be played by one or like two three four people, and you don’t need a lot of instruments to do this kind of music and anyone can listen to this because you don’t have to have big amplifiers to play or listen to this kind of music and I think it is – family wise – it is something really cozy” (Saint Fleur 2013). The coziness to which he refers is critical for Pradel in creating a welcoming atmosphere that will harbor positive interactions and allow people to build relationships and talk. Thus, twoubAkoustik combines twoubadou and acoustic musical styles with a multisensory experience, producing Haitian locality through sounds, smells, tastes, and visual arts, building community solidarity in the process.

All but two twoubAkoustik performances in the first year took place in a hall in the Armée du Salut’s Cité de Refuge on 12 rue de Cantagrel in the thirteenth arrondissement of Paris. Designed by Le Corbusieur and inaugurated in 1933 (construction began in 1929), the building primarily uses concrete and metal for materials, with the façade consisting of a series of stacked rectangles of windows and different colored balcony dividers for each floor, giving it a geometric look. However, CARHE and Pradel Saint-Fleur have taken several steps to personalize the hall for
twoubAkoustik. In addition to placing a large twoubAkoustik sign with a logo featuring a guitar and tanbou, and putting up other twoubAkoustik signage throughout the hall, the concerts also display paintings by local Haitian artist and drummer Gary Legrand and decorations (brightly-patterned decorative four-foot long tubes) designed and made by Kecita, a Haitian fashion designer based in Paris. Adding to these visuals are the smells of hot Haitian cuisine offered for sale from the bar with a kitchenette at the back of the hall, including sandwiches, pikliz (a spicy slaw), poule an sauce (chicken and gravy), bannann (fried plantains), sandwiches, and water and sodas.

The most striking element of these concerts, however, are the performances, which include the Haitian oral tradition of storytelling in addition to music. *Conteur* (storyteller) Jude Joseph performed at several twoubAkoustik, bringing an important element of Haitian folklore to Parisian audiences. During his first twoubAkoustik performance, on 5 December 2013, a spectator remarked to me, “It’s like I’m a little kid back in Haiti again” (Victor 2013). This association of *kont*, or folktales, with childhood is prominent because of the popularity of using them to teach children in Haiti valuable lessons. *Kont* as a genre of Haitian storytelling normally involves animals or other folkloric characters like Ti Malis, a known trickster, and end with some moral to the story. The presentation of *kont* at twoubAkoustik then appeals to a deep-seated nostalgia for home, Haiti, and the past, childhood.

Jude Joseph’s December 2013 appearance included an a cappella performance of the nursery rhyme “Ti Zwazo Kote ou Prale?” (Little Bird Where are You Going?), illustrating the musical format of *kont* and the genre’s use of animals and other folkloric
characters, as well as the call-and-response performance style and general impact on the audience:

Ti Zwazo Kote ou Prale? Little bird where are you going?
Mwen prale kay Fiyèt Lalo I am going to Miss Lalo’s house
Fiyèt Lalo Kon manje timoun Miss Lalo eats children
Si ou ale lap manje ou tou If you go she is going to eat you too
Brik kolon brik brik kolon brik (Rhythmic Vocables)
Wosiyol manje korosol Nightingale eats breadfruit
Woulo woulo mwen soti lavi o kay Rolling rolling I come from the village
Tout bèt tonbe nan dlo All birds fall in water
Mademoiselle voulez-vous danser? Miss will you dance with me? (he sings)
Non monsieur, je suis fatigué No sir, I am tired (audience replies)

After singing the whole tune in its entirety, Jude Joseph started again from the top, with the audience joining him.

Jude Joseph’s performances combine sung nursery rhymes and folksongs with spoken-word stories as well, which commonly incorporate call-and-response and audience participation. Keeping with Haitian storytelling tradition, to get the audience’s attention he calls out “Krik!” and the audience responds “Krak!” Followed with him
saying “Tim tim” and the audience replying “Bwa Séch” (dried wood). In his 13 March 2013 performance at TwoubAkoustik, he improvised a tale “Konpè Kabril épi Chwal” (based on the kont “Konpè Lapen épi konpè tig vé”) Kont are meant to teach children morality while explaining the harshness of the world, which is why the subjects include women who eat children and why in the case of this kont, the protagonist goat gets eaten by the Tiger. They function as a precursor to proverbs, which are an integral part of life.

Solo guitarist-singers were common at twoubAkoustik, playing in the style of Manno Charlemagne, famous mizik angaje performer and twoubadou singer of “Ayiti Pa Fore” (1988). At the second edition of twoubAkoustik on 7 November 2013 in Noisy le Sec, Henri Laurent, a guitarist who lives in Alfortville, an eastern suburb of Paris, channeled this style. Before the performance, in discussing his musical style he explained that he plays with just his guitar and his text, through singing. He considers what he does to be somewhat like twoubadou but just guitar, sometimes with a drum, but always a sparse musical texture. Because of this he called his style “chante-à-texte” because the lyrics, which he sees as poetry, are the most important part of his music. His performance of “Imajine,” in which the lyrics discuss imagining a better, changed life, highlight the importance of text to his music.

To Pradel, Henri Laurent’s style elides perfectly with the mission of twoubAkoustik, saying, “This was really what I wanted for the event. It is acoustic, it has a message.” And after the performance Pradel describes Laurent, saying, “Henri LAURENT with his folk guitar showed us what can be done in the Haitian Music Landscape.”
TwoubAkoustik also embraced the roots music (*mizik rasin*) of Atissou Loko, a drummer who incorporates rhythms from Vodou and Rara into his performances. Although Atissou frequently performs and records with his band, Adjabel, an Afro-Caribbean fusion group in Paris, he always performed solo when he visited twoubAkoustik. Atissou plays three drums, which he has mounted onto a stand, with the smallest to his right, the largest in the center, and the mid-sized drum to his left. While performing he plays all three drums, using his left hand and a stick in his right hand to strike the drums and generate different timbres. He has described the drums as coming from the Rada *nanchon* (nation) of Vodou, calling the smallest *kata*, the largest *manman*, and the other the *segon*. Additionally, his drums feature cord-attached membranes without the characteristic tuning pegs associated with Rada drums (Largey 2008, p.150). The drums for this performance are also not conical in shape like those normally associated with the Rada *nanchon*, although he has performed in other venues with drums that do feature all of these criteria. Atissou’s virtuosity with these drums is striking, especially because multiple musicians normally play the three drums as part of an ensemble and he plays all three at once. As he performs, he occasionally sings in a declamatory manner with long periods of vocal-less playing, achieving a near trans-like state when performing.

Atissou, along with his ensemble “Adjabel,” sporting twoubAkoustik t-shirts, represented the concert series with a performance for the Festival 13àQuai, on the Quai François Mauriac in the thirteenth arrondissement on 18 October 2014. With his performance at this festival, Atissou (and Adjabel) was able to represent twoubAkoustik
to a more mainstream audience, and in turn Pradel’s decision to select Adjabel for this task implies the importance of Atissou’s commitment to roots music to the greater mission of twoubAkoustik. This use of Atissou to represent a Haitian musical initiative to a public audience also hints at the importance of roots music to forging minor-major connections, implying that if a genre has more traditional roots it can be touted to audiences as more “exotic” or more in line with “world music” than popular music genres like konpa.

Atissou is a vocal advocate of roots music, citing his youth in rural Haiti as the source of his deep connection with the music of Vodou. In Paris, Atissou uses his standing in the community to educate people on the merits of roots music, but believes that Haitians should be proud of their cultural output in all forms. Justifying this belief, Adjabel gave a short speech at twoubAkoustik on 13 March 2014 imploring Haitians to take pride in their love of Haitian music, whether it is konpa, roots music, or anything else, saying:

It is the complex of Haitians: even people who love konpa are ashamed to say it and the people who love roots music are too few, and it is bizarre the people who don’t like konpa as much as everyone else they feel like they have to say, “I like konpa.” There is no reason to be ashamed of konpa. There is no reason to not love roots music.  

Translation mine. Original speech: Du complex des Haitiens: Encore les gens qui aiment le konpa ont honte de le dire et les gens qui aiment la musique racine sont peu nombreux et c’est bizarre les gens qui aiment le konpa pas des phrases autant que tous les
He continued to explain that Pradel is special because he is proud of all Haitian music and brings together performers who do roots music and konpa to celebrate Haitian culture and the community in France.

The “shame” associated with konpa that Atissou denounces might be related to the boisterous atmosphere and late hours of konpa performances, typically taking place during all-night dance parties. TwoubAkoustik is actively trying to contrast from this atmosphere, with Pradel explaining, “I think the kind of event that we’re trying to do with the Club des artistes Haitiens d’Europe, twoubAkoustik, is a better way to bring people together because they are in a place where they can talk to each other without having a big sound in their ears. And this is why we put twoubAkoustik up, because we know people can exchange views after or even during”(Saint Fleur 2013). The change of environment is meant to encourage discussion among spectators, suggesting a dialogue on Haitian music in Paris can begin at an event like twoubAkoustik rather than a konpa bals. Pradel emphasizes a difference in mission between twoubAkoustik and konpa bals: “A konpa bal is not a concert, it is a bal and we go to dance, not just sit down and enjoy”(Saint Fleur 2013). In emphasizing the communal atmosphere of twoubAkoustik, twoubAkoustik builds community solidarity.

Even though twoubAkoustik is meant to diverge from the konpa bal style of musical performance, konpa musicians frequently participate in the concert series, with a

autres ils ont de dire "j’aime le konpa." Il n’y a aucune de raison devoir honte du konpa. Il n’y a aucune de raison pas aiment la musique racine. Atissou Loko,

See Chapter Three for more details on konpa bals.
few adjustments to their sound. Some groups, like Teddy play an acoustic version of their music, heralded as “Teddy en Akoustik!” Another Paris-based konpa band, Original H, chose to pay homage to a well-known twoubadou song with their performance of Beethova Obas’s song “Si.”

Beethova Obas established himself in the Haitian music scene first working as a guitarist with Manno Charlemagne before embarking on solo career in the mid-1980s. Songs like “Plezi Mizè” (The pleasures of poverty) and “Ase babye” (Enough Nonsense) place Obas in a wave of young musicians who used their mizik angage (politically committed music) to speak out against poor social conditions in Haiti near the end of Jean Claude Duvalier’s reign (Averill 1997, p. 158).

Original H’s performance of Beethoven Obas’s “Si” at twoubAkoustik on 5 December 2013, starkly contrasted from their usual model of performance. Original H is a massive band with several singers, multiple keyboardists, drum set, congas, two guitarists, and bass. This performance, however, was a small affair: Greg Lazare sang, Jean Eudes Beauge played guitar, and James D played congas, leaving out the piano which is in the recorded version of the song. The song opened with a repeating figure in the guitar, introducing its bolero style, with the guitar functioning as a guitar and playing the bass line as well and the congas lightly improvising over the guitar.

The lyrics are heart-wrenchingly written in a metaphor-saturated Kreyol and fit with Beethova Obas’s commitment to producing mizik angage. The lyrics are devastating, with the first verse discussing the plight of bòt pipèl (boat people), or one of
the many waves of Haitians who have fled their country on small boats, taking dangerous
risks in hope of having a better life in Cuba, the Bahamas, or the United States:

Si jodi-m pran bato If today, I’m sailing
Pou-m neye kou-w krapo Far away from my land
Nan mitan vag lannmè Despite my fear of death
Pou-m kabre la mizè Tricking my misery

The next verse describes the poor state of life in Haiti, and accuses the listener of
having some accountability in the matter saying, “you aren’t surprised,” potentially
waiting to see the country fail:

Si ti moun pa grandi If children are joyless
Si pa menm rèt peyi If there is nothing left
Si tout bagay kwochi If everything is crooked
Menm si-w pa janm sèzi But, you’re laughing inside.

During the performance, two lines into the third verse, the audience began signing
along:

Si-m manje nan fatra If I ate through garbage
Si-m pran ranyon pou dra. Ragged dreams draped my soul.
A woman in the audience is singing loudly an octave above Greg and harmonizes in thirds with him on “lonjé kwi.”

Si ti nèg lonje kwi If I begged to survive
Douvan biwo Loni Your planned false charity
Si la vi-n sanzavni If we have no future
Si Ayiti mouri. If Haiti is dead

This performance illustrates that even though konpa is de-emphasized, konpa musicians are welcome to contribute to twoubAkoustik. The song choice allowed konpa musicians to reach out to the audience, allowing performers and audience members to come together through singing and revisiting past tragedy, and build solidarity through reliving the trauma of migration.

Other than Original H, there have been dozens of performers at twoubAkoustik and each has brought different musical qualities to the eclectic blend of acts. For example, Paolo “New Vibes,” who played acoustic guitar and sang love songs in English (according to him this makes him more marketable). Kecita, a local fashion designer, performed folk songs with the assistance of a pre-recorded backtrack, and Beoty Bertrand performed an acoustic version of her konpa love song “Le Voisin” with a guitarist as well as Gary Legrand and Atissou playing Atissou’s drums in accompaniment.

In trying to build solidarity among the Haitian community in Paris and promote Haitian culture, music was a natural choice for Pradel to target. He explains why music is so important saying, “Ok, like I always say to people, Haiti is a big country. It can be small depending on how we look at it, but the biggest industry that we have in Haiti, is the cultural industry, and I will say that the music industry and from there we cannot let it go… what I’m doing here is my way of showing that we have something big that we have to build on.”

Over the course of the first year of the series (Fall 2013 – Summer 2014) many evolutions have taken place in twoubAkoustik. The location moved from the banlieue (Noisy le Sec) to Paris and back to banlieue for the second season (Aubervilliers). With each edition, different artists are bringing more diversity into the catalog of twoubAkoustik, and several prominent artists have made appearances including Milca, a popular Haitian-Guianese zouk singer, and B.I.C. The genre “rules” of the series have also relaxed slightly: the performances are not always strictly twoubadou or acoustic, but the message of solidarity and importance of community was always prevalent.

The second year of the series (Fall 2014 – Spring 2015) led to more innovation in terms of themes- including one concert featuring all women musicians (28 February 2015) called “Spécial Artistes Féminins.” And one dedicated to guitarists, called “Gita Grajé,”(shredded guitar), a term for a guitar style in Haitian music. Graj is the name of a scraper in Haiti; so to play a guitar graje involves strumming in a way that the underlying

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80 Interview, Pradel Saint Fleur with the author. 13 November 2013. Clichy, France.
rhythm comes out in muting the strings with the palm of your hand in the modified cinquillo rhythm and strumming upwards to hit the strings instead of downwards.

Through all of these changes and initiatives, twoubAkoustik has maintained its purpose as an event that showcases music for Haitian, by Haitians. It is a community-building event, strengthening solidarity through roots music, on a local scale. The topic of the next section, Haiti, Je Connais, takes these solidarity-building ideas further, hoping to improve Haiti’s image globally.

Haiti Je Connais: “Tande pa di konprann pou sa” (Hearing is one thing, understanding is another)

Haiti Je Connais (Haiti, I know), a live quiz game and web application, works to promote Haiti’s image locally through positive questions about Haiti and in the diaspora through the implementation of its web application worldwide. Like the above proverb that translates to hearing is one thing, understanding is another, Haiti Je Connais’s organizers are aware that simply answering questions about Haiti doesn’t necessarily result in “knowing” or understanding Haiti. Thus, Haiti Je Connais uses musical performance as a way of enhancing knowledge – allowing spectators to experience or truly know Haiti through demonstrations and interactive performance – all, like twoubAkoustik, privileging non-konpa styles.

Haiti, Je Connais originated as a project of ANIH, or Association Nouvelle Image d’Haiti, a Paris-based organization concerned with improving Haiti’s image. Evens Nicolas, ANIH’s Vice President and the creator and host of the game, believes it is the
association’s obligation to reach the Paris community as well as Haiti and elsewhere in
the diaspora. According to Evens, “The purpose of the association is to promote a new
image of Haiti and to make some direct projects in Haiti in order to help people”(Nicolas
2014). This is primarily visible through a yearly coffee festival that ANIH organizes in
Fond Baptiste, a rural area in central Haiti. The festival highlights the organization’s
commitment to social entrepreneurship by supporting coffee growers through bolstering
awareness of Haitian coffee (a formerly lucrative industry), providing medical aide to
rural farmers who would otherwise not likely have access to it, and to putting on concerts
allowing residents of Fond Baptiste to enjoy live performances, which Nicolas describes
as “a moment of joy for them.”

ANIH’s other main project has been the development and launch of Haiti, Je
Connais, a live and online quiz game meant to improve perceptions of Haiti through
positive trivia topics. When Evens moved to France from Haiti in 2011, he was surprised
to learn how little some Haitians in France knew about their country of origin,
explaining: “I met a lot of French Haitians who are here but they don’t really know
things about Haiti. The only things they know about Haiti is in the news and when you
are looking at Haiti in the news the only things are bad things. This is earthquakes, this is
political issues, this is natural issue.” So he became involved with ANIH and began
thinking of ideas on how to fix this problem: “If we say we want to promote a new image
of Haiti, where are people going to find this information? Because they aren’t going to
get it directly (from mainstream media)…we have to find an interactive way that lets
people enjoy and learn at the same time. And I had the idea come from here”(Nicolas 2014).

Every summer, Haiti, Je Connais the live game takes place over several weeks, with one game per week and each meeting consisting of two teams competing in several rounds of trivia, with the winning team receiving a prize package that has included a big-screen television and round-trip airfare from Paris to Port-au-Prince. The questions highlight positive elements of Haitian culture, with a focus on art, geography, history, literature, music, sports, and food. The events are publicized through Facebook and word of mouth, using supplementary musical performances at the games to entice prospective audiences, harnessing music and social media’s roles within the Haitian diaspora as a primary conveyors of information, further enabling “knowing” Haiti.

Through its promotion via social media and its online platform, Haiti Je Connais participates in a pre-existing online network through which francophone Caribbean migrants in Paris communicate. Within the Paris region, Ile-de-France, francophone Caribbean music especially serves as a vehicle through which information can travel to dispersed communities. Music is the basis upon which francophone Caribbean networks of publicity and access have been built, enabling information to reach out across the city and suburbs. Because there isn’t a single, centralized neighborhood in which to advertise events, radio, print, and social media are invaluable resources for disseminating information about festivals, bals, concerts, and merchants that are coded as Caribbean, acting as a centralizing force in lieu of a geographic center.
These networks function on a global scope as well and Haiti Je Connais relies on this to disseminate its message allowing the Paris community and the diaspora to connect through the online platform for the game. Two websites function as portals to the game’s online presence, with a web-version of the game and an informational website about the game, including its objectives, and its supporters, as well as offering a place to take donations. The informational website provides a game demo, as well as a music player with examples of twoubadou (troubadour), mizik rasin (roots music), and mizik angaje (politically engaged) genres for listening, placing an importance on Haitian music as an element significant to “knowing Haiti” through participating in the game, a topic I will discuss later.

With the web version of the game, Evens Nicolas wanted to reach a broader diasporic audience outside of France, explaining: “In Haiti, every politician, every Haitian right now in the diaspora are saying ‘Ah we have to put our head(s) together to bring help.’ But this is only on paper. So for this project we would like to show to people, if we want to do something together, we will find the resources and do it” (Nicolas 2014). And through this application and the collaborative work of Haitians in the United States, Haiti, France, England, and Canada, the message of Haiti, Je Connais can reach a global audience. He continues, saying, “Thanks to the internet we have been able to plan everything and develop the application and now this is online. We have to really need to do what we say so once you are willing you find resources” (Nicolas 2014). The game is available to be played in English and Creole, excluding French as an option, implying that it is meant for diasporic residents outside of France (because the majority of Haitians
in Haiti speak Creole over French). According to the website’s metrics, the game gets the most traffic from the United States, followed by France, Canada, and then Haiti.

Perhaps the most significant element to the community building and solidarity making of the social entrepreneurship initiative of Haiti Je Connais in the live game are its musical performances. Considering the words of one of my interlocutors, “whenever you say music Haitians say “yes,“”(Saint Fleur 2013) this comes as no surprise. Each edition of Haiti Je Connais features several “animations” from musicians, who play between rounds of questions. These performances are a critical part of the presentation of Haiti Je Connais, as Evens Nicolas explains, “What I think is when we say Haiti we are talking about history, we are talking about tourism, but we are also talking about music. So this is a way for us to promote Haitian music”(Nicolas 2014).

But more specifically music that is not konpa, the Haitian dance music that is popular among Haitians and French Antilleans in France. In Paris, Haitian musical performance primarily takes place at konpa bals, a site where music serves as a vehicle for dancing during all-night concerts typically lasting from midnight to dawn. Haiti Je Connais is promoting a different musical experience meant to be educational and a mode of knowledge production. For example, when Parisian konpa group Original H performed at the game, they opted for an acoustic guitar and singer (more of a twoubadou style performance) instead of a full band with drums and electric bass, guitar, and keyboards typical of a konpa group. The duo performed Haitian folk songs instead of a hypnotic dance number popular at konpa bals, meaning to present to version of Haiti with which fewer youths in the diaspora would be familiar.
A variety of areas of Haitian musical life are on display during these performances. For example, Atissou, a Paris-based drummer and singer gave a demonstration-performance of Vodou drumming. When performing outside of the game, Atissou, typically plays in a *mizik rasin*, or roots music ensemble, incorporating Vodou drumming into its textures, a style that the band Boukman Ekspyrans made internationally famous in the late 1980s and early 1990s. For Haiti Je Connais Atissou performed alone, taking breaks to talk about his three drums, and explain the names and context of the rhythms on which he built his songs. Evans explains the educational importance of having Atissou perform: “Sometimes people do not know what kind of music there is in Haiti, and this is why I like to invite Atissou. This is to say to people we are not only making konpa, we are also making some kinds of roots music like Atissou is doing” (Nicolas 2014). Much like Original H’s performance of folk songs, Atissou’s performance enhances knowledge of musical styles of Haiti for its audiences.

BIC also performed at Haiti, Je Connais. Unlike the other performers, BIC was not local; he was temporarily in France from Haiti on a Visa through the Institute Français to finish an album and collaborate with international artists at the Cité Internationale des Arts. He is also an Ambassador of OIF, the International Francophone Organization, and was one of the featured performers at the Nuits d’Afrique Festival in Montreal with other renowned international artists including Angélique Kidjo and Kassav’.

His performance of “Yon ti Kalkile” (A Little Calculation) at “Haiti, Je Connais” illustrates these ideas while showing the power of music as a solidarity builder. The lyrics
discuss the stagnant state of improvement through the lack of action in Haiti, especially for youths, saying “How many calculations for us to calculate, young men and women who are hoping for a better life before they die.” During the performance, the audience joined in the music making, clapping and weaving their voices into the musical texture adding colorful flourishes to his voice. The crowd was not simply familiar with the song, “Yon Ti Kalkile,” they know the song, singing along and improvising harmonies and textures that are not present in the sparsely-textured rap record (and I should note that these people do not consider themselves musicians). The resulting collaboration differs greatly from the recorded single, and can illustrate how audiences can build solidarity through knowing music:

- yon bon nèg — a good guy
- ça ne va pas, konbyen zero — It doesn’t work, how many zeros
- pou’m mete au kwotiyen — for me to put in the quotient
- avan’m jwenn de twa grenn — before I find two three traces (of)
- Ayisyen ki konsyan — Haitians who are conscious
- Konbyen kalkile — How many calculations
- pou’n kalkile — For us to calculate
- Avan nou jwenn — Before we find
- Konbyen sèvèl ki boule — How many brains burning
Nan reflechi

Kran têt ki koule

Konbyen kalkile

Pou’n kalkile

Jen gason ak fam ki espere

Lavi miyò avan yo ekspire

thinking

Skulls, heads, that flow/leak

How many calculations

for us to calculate

Young men and women who hope

(for a) Better life before they die

The performance illustrates how Haiti Je Connais succeeds in building community solidarity, with music functioning as an experience, expression of knowledge, and mode of “knowing” Haiti, enhancing personal connections through musical harmonies, enabling audience members to gain significant experiences from their participation in the game’s audience.

Conclusion: “Pwofite tèt ou” (Avail Yourself)

TwoubAkoustik and Haiti Je Connais are only two of countless projects taking place in the Paris Haitian community with the intention of bolstering support for Haiti. Organizations are constantly being created and abandoned, to the point that some people criticize the quantity of Haitian organizations in Ile-de-France dedicated to improving Haiti’s reputation, L’Association Influence Positive, L’Association Nouvelle Image d’Haiti, and L’Association Evolution d’Haiti, to name a few, saying that this surplus causes a dispersal or decentralization of support. BIC was vocal about this issue in particular, saying, “One of the things I find out here is …you would find a group of Haitians doing
something here, a little group doing something here, a little group doing- instead of just one group putting the ideas of everyone- you will find someone here with twenty people, someone with thirty people, instead of having a community with everyone and I think it is also a problem”(Saillant 2014). Still the insistence of the community through the creation of and participation in these organizations and projects, like ANIH and subsequently Haiti, Je Connais, illustrates the significance of social entrepreneurship in the process of “mete têt nou ansanm” (putting heads together, working together to help Haiti), and how these organizations use music to do so.

The ubiquity of music as an agent in this process of reimagining Haiti, or reconfiguring Haiti’s social imaginary and music as modes of knowing illustrates the significance of expressive culture in the lives of migrant communities. Thus, through these initiatives and specifically through roots and engaged music, Haitians in Paris have connected with their own community, as well as the diaspora, allowing them to strategically use their music’s appeal to do something for themselves and try to make the most of what they have.

The sentiments expressed in this chapter, through BIC’s activism in music, twoubAkostik’s community building concerts, and Haiti Je Connais’s stigma-resistant trivia and performances, connect to the proverbs used as section headings, and all illustrating this pwofite ideology, encompassed by a desire to work to benefit from whatever happens. These initiatives show that Haitians in Paris are living this ideology, enacting social entrepreneurship through organizations designed to act locally and in the diaspora. And significantly, music is the most important element of these initiatives
because music is the catalyst that forges minoritarian connections between Haitians in the Paris region, as well as globally. Only through music are these networks and solidarities made possible.
CONCLUSION: MILCA AND MUSICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF FRENCH CARIBBEAN PARIS

6 February 2014, 21:00 Paris

I’m attending the fifth monthly installment of twoubAkoustik, a concert series sponsored by the Club des Artistes Haïtiens d’Europe (CAHE) in which local Haitian artists are asked to put on free twoubadou or acoustic performances for the Haitian community. The performances take place in a small-gathering hall on the ground floor of the Cité de Refuge of the Armée du Salut, on rue Cantagrel in the thirteenth arrondissement. The first act has finished performing and spectators and performers are talking and purchasing coffee, juice, soda, and homemade sandwiches from the bar in the back left corner of the room. I am standing on the far-right edge of the bar, by the back-right corner of the room near the doors, discussing a recent trip to the United States with Vanessa, a co-host of the weekly Haitian radio show Boulevard du Compas on radio Espace FM. The next performer on the schedule, Milca, is walking in our direction. She is petit in stature, with short coiffed caramel-colored bleached hair, glowing skin, and dramatic red lipstick; she is wearing a flowing black tunic with black skinny jeans and black equestrian boots. As she is about to pass us Vanessa stops her and asks me, “Do you know Milca? She is Haitian and she is going to sing tonight,” and explains to Milca that I am a graduate student writing my dissertation about Haitian music. We exchange greetings and I mention that I had seen her publicity for a recent performance at the
Cabaret Sauvage in Parc de la Villette. Vanessa compliments Milca on the concert, calling it “amazing,” and Milca thanks her before excusing herself to prepare to perform. I turn to Vanessa for clarification: “She is Haitian and lives in Paris?” Vanessa confirms: “Yes.” I continue: “But she performs zouk and konpa?” Vanessa explains: “Yeah she does both but she is from French Guiana.” A little later, while Milca is performing I observe a large group of teenage girls singing along to a heartfelt “Que des Mots” expertly reciting every word during her performance. I ask Vanessa about Milca’s fans. She says, “She is pretty famous in France and the DOM-TOM but I didn’t know her in Haiti.”

This excerpt from my fieldnotes introduces some of the ways in which broadly defined Haitian artists can blur national and genre affiliations, particularly in a diasporic setting such as Paris. Milca, the singer in the excerpt, is living in Paris and performing a blend of Haitian konpa and French Antillean zouk music; Vanessa describes her as a Haitian artist, giving her a connection to konpa, but also as coming from French Guiana, aligning her with zouk (through the country’s departmental status, giving her a Domien connection to Guadeloupe and Martinique). And although she is well known in France and the Antilles, she is relatively unknown in Haiti, implying that she is connected to Paris as a site within the Antillean musical transnation rather than the HMI.

In this dissertation, performers have formed minor-to-minor networks and blurred boundaries by altering their performance model to accommodate a wider audience, they have also co-opted other transnational musical networks using Paris as a point of elision, but they have not yet crossed musical genre boundaries; generally, bands that identify as
Haitian play Haitian music (konpa) and Antillean artists stick with zouk, but with Milca things are not so clearly delineated. In Milca’s case, the distinction of Haitian, Domien, or Antillean is complicated and thus so is her resulting musical output, which combines elements of zouk with konpa, as well as French, Haitian Creole, and Antillean Creole lyrics. Milca’s case supports how Homi Bhabha has explained that the prevalence of migration combined with new media technologies, “make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue” (Bhabha 1990, p.171), and Milca’s collaborations with Haitian, Antillean, and African artists from the United States, the Caribbean, and Paris all further contribute to the complexities.

Milca’s case ties together the long history of immigration and colonialism that has produced the urban geographies that participate in the transnational musical circuits discussed in this dissertation, as well as how members of the Haitian community organize themselves to pwofite from these different sets of circumstances. Through an analysis of Milca’s music, I aim to illustrate how Milca in many ways represents what it means to be “French Caribbean” in Paris.

The case studies I will present in this chapter are examples of how Haitian music can enable and encourage minor-to-minor networks and what the musical outcomes of minoritarian politics can sound like. “Que des Mots,” a zouk love song -- and thus coded as Antillean-- establishes Milca’s connection to zouk (her primary genre of music making); however, in a live performance at twoubAkoustik for a Haitian audience, she changes the texture of the music to sound more like konpa, while participating in social entrepreneurship initiatives emphasized within the Haitian community in Paris. Milca’s
duet with Franco-Congolese rapper Passi, “La Vie Va Donner” subtly incorporates Haitian musical elements into its texture, and both Milca and Passi give call outs to Paris, Haiti, and Brazzaville (Congo), while using a combination of French and Creole lyrics, allowing for the song to make minor-to-minor connections within its texture, message, and performance, this time emphasizing the greater post-colonial community of Paris.

“Tu étais” demonstrates Milca’s connection to the HMI (Haitian Music Industry) and the ways in which she is able to appeal to Haitian audiences. As a collaboration with Miami-based konpa band Harmonik’s keyboardist Nickenson Prudhomme, “Tu étais” incorporates konpa sonorities, through guitar and keyboard and uses a combination of French, Creole, and English lyrics, the three main languages used in the Haitian diaspora. Lastly, “Amour Impossible” a zouk collaboration with Paris-born zouk singer of Guadeloupean descent, Yoân, sounds like a typical zouk song until a distinct konpa guitar break dominates the song’s musical texture, courtesy of Jean Eudes Beauge, the guitarist of Paris konpa band Original H. With the addition of this konpa section, an otherwise tame zouk song, sung in French, acknowledges the popularity and importance of konpa with Domien audiences in Paris. All of these musical examples illustrate the musical outcomes of the history of immigration to Paris from France’s former colonies, the minor-to-minor networks created through the urban geography of Paris, the significance of Paris as a node of intersection for the HMI and Antillean music industry, and the ways in which Haitian musicians can pwofite from strategically using music and language to appeal to broader audiences, bringing together the themes from each chapter of this dissertation into one case study.
Milca, née Milca Buissereth, and sometimes “Mimi,” was born in French Guiana to Haitian parents. Her acceptance from zouk audiences in Paris and the Caribbean and the Haitian community in Paris show her success in mediating genre lines. Milca generally markets herself as a zouk singer with R&B influences, with her official Facebook page describing her initial sound as closer to R&B. However, according to her page, which functions as her official website, “Mais très vite les rythmes Afro-Caribéens font leurs apparitions dans sa carrière.” (but very quickly Afro-Caribbean rhythms made their appearances in her career.) She released her first album, Simply, in 2005 and in 2007 won “Best Female Performance” at the Trophées des Arts Afro-Caribéens (TAAC), a music awards ceremony for music of the French-speaking African diaspora. Her most recent album, Par Amour (For Love), is, according to her record label, “sans doute l'un des meilleurs albums zouk de sa génération!!” (without a doubt one of the best zouk albums of her generation)

The premiere single from Par Amour, “Que des Mots,” shows Milca’s commitment to the zouk love sound. The song follows many parameters of a typical zouk song of the time: moderate tempo, French lyrics that describe relationship troubles, and the presence of the zouk, modified ti bwa or cinquillo, rhythm. The only part of the song that is uncharacteristic of a contemporary zouk song is that Milca code-switches between verses from French to Creole. While it is not entirely unusual for zouk artists to sing in Creole, if they choose to do so they usually are singing in Guadeloupean or Martinican Creole, not in the Haitian Creole that Milca uses in the song. Milca specifically uses a straightforward register of Haitian Creole and adds a few modifications more fitting with
Guadeloupean or Martinican Creole (you instead of yo, to indicate third person plural for example) that would make the Creole easy to understand for both Antillean and Haitian audiences. The being said, her linguistic incorporation of Haitian Creole in the song is the only indication provided that Milca has any connection to Haiti at all.

After a brief instrumental introduction, Milca’s voice joins the musical texture, singing in French, with light synthesizers playing behind her and a soft zouk rhythm being played in the high hat:

Auprès de toi c'est comme
s'il ne pleuvait que des mots
Tes gestes me dépriment
j'en dénigre des fautes
Auprès de moi c'est comme
si je cherchais quelqu'un d'autre
A qui je confierais
mes pensées tous mes maux

To you it’s
as if it was raining words
Your gestures depress me
Your mistakes make me look bad
To me it’s
as if I would like to look for someone else
With whom I could confide
my thoughts and my pains

The lyrics of the first verse are typical of a zouk love song: they lament a bad relationship. And yet the texture and language are not constant; in the second verse the lyrics switch to Haitian Creole, and the underlying zouk rhythm (which is also used in konpa) becomes more pronounced:
Si’w te konnen sa mwen ye  If you knew that I was like that
T’ap poze nou pou nou cole  Asked us to stick together
Tèt nou ansanm pou n’ale  Working together for us to go
Kote pou nou ta gen tann ye  Where we could have time
Rassire mwen di’m sa’w fe  Calm me tell me what you’re doing
Sa ou renmen di’m sa wap chèche  That you love tell me what you are looking for
Pa pè pou mwen pa pale  Don’t be scared I won’t tell you
Bondyè la l’wè sak pral rive  God sees what is going to happen

The code switching in the lyrics continues with the chorus of the song in Creole and the bridge of the song in French:

Que des mots  What words
Que des mots  What words
Non non non que des mots  No no no what words
Que des mots  What words

“Que des Mots” is packaged as a quintessential zouk love song. Milca is able, however, to alter the song to fit a Haitian audience better in live performance when necessary.
Because of her reputation as a zouk singer, Milca is frequently mistaken as Antillean by other Antilleans. She does, however, make efforts to reach out to the Haitian community and her live konpa remix of “Que des Mots” at twoubAkoustik illustrates this. In Chapter Three of this dissertation, I illustrated how HMI groups touring Paris, in particular Carimi, cater to Antillean audiences by altering elements of their performance to fit an Antillean model. Milca does the opposite in her twoubAkoustik performance, altering a zouk song for Haitian audiences to sound more like konpa.

“Que des mots” is one of the songs that Milca chose to perform at twoubAkoustik in Paris for a small, local, Haitian audience. Accompanied by the Paris-based konpa group Teddy, Milca’s twoubAkoustik performance featured conga drums, electric guitar, keyboard, and vocals. She encouraged the audience to sing along, saying, “Chante avec moi,” before starting. Her twoubAkoustik version differs greatly from the studio version. Although the melody and lyrics are the same, the instrumental texture evokes a Haitian sound with the distinct guitar timbre and inclusion of congas. TwoubAkoustik is a small, local, grassroots event for the Haitian community that embraces local musicians; thus, changing her instrumentation to include Haitian musicians playing Haitian-sounding instruments was a wise decision. Part of the appeal of the twoubAkoustik concert series is its informal community-building atmosphere, and her encouraging the audience to join in emphasized this. Milca’s participation alone at twoubAkoustik shows her engagement with the local Haitian community in Paris.

Milca’s attempts to engage with the Haitian community in Paris are in part due to her admitted lack of knowledge about her Haitian roots. As she explains: “I want to learn
more, I don’t know my community that well, because I was born in French Guiana, you could say that I know more about French Guiana than Haiti, and it is too bad because everyone, the children who go abroad, they don’t have the chance to return frequently to Haiti to discover it. It is necessary to have a small step towards this." Significantly, Milca refers to Haitians as her “community” in this quote, showing her commitment to her Haitian heritage in spite of admitting a lack of knowledge about it. Aside from her participation in social entrepreneurship initiatives like twoubAkoustik, one of the ways in which Milca engages with Haitian culture is through the infusion of konpa into her recorded music.

Milca’s song “La Vie Va Donner” illustrates how she seamlessly integrates konpa sounds into her music, while simultaneously emphasizing how Paris’s locale has influenced her music making. Thus “La Vie Va Donner” (Life is Going to Give) helps characterize the different aspects of Milca’s music and identity as a Guianese-born Haitian living in Paris. The song features Passi, a well-known Franco-Congolese rapper who was born in Brazzaville in The Republic of Congo in the 1970s and moved to Sarcelles, a predominately Antillean suburb of Paris, as a child. Accordingly, Passi has

81 Translated from “Moi, j’envie de découvrir déjà, ma communauté qu’une je ne connais pas bien, comme je suis née en Guyane, on peut dire que je connais plus la Guyane qu’Haiti, et c’est dommage parce que tout la personne, les enfants qui sont allé à l’étranger, ils ont pas la chance, d’aller souvent en Haiti de découvrir. (donc c’est) Il faut faire un petit pas vers eux.” Transcribed from “Milca interview au Zenith de Paris (kompafest’indies) zouk kompa.mp4.” YouTube video for zouk-kompa.fr, 5:29. Posted by “zouk kompa,” October 9, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sb71HaGkfsk
grown up as an African immigrant in Paris surrounded with Caribbean culture.\textsuperscript{82} He began his musical career as part of the iconic French-rap group Ministère AMER in the 1990s; he began a solo career after the group disbanded following a controversy in the late 1990s which the French Minister of the Interior, Jean-Louis Debré, filed a complaint with the French ministry of justice over their song “Sacrifice de poulets,” saying that it encouraged violence against police (Prévos 2001, p.51). Her collaboration with Passi on “La Vie Va Donner” illustrates Milca’s willingness to reach an audience beyond that of Antillean or Haitian origins in France and the lyrics indicate this as well. The song discusses the plight of people of color, particularly in the \textit{banlieue}. Although the lyrics acknowledge the hardships of minorities in Paris, the song has an overall positive vibe, with the central message saying that despite the hardships that people have endured, that life will continue to give back, fitting with the pwofite ideology outlined in Chapter Four.

The song, like many of Milca’s songs, begins with an instrumental introduction, followed by a sung verse in French, after which the music breaks into a heavy zouk groove for the second verse, which she sings in Creole. This all builds to the chorus, which code switches between Creole and the French response “La Vie Va Donner”:

\begin{verbatim}
Rèv an mwen, la vie va donner    My dream, life is going to give
Sa ki pou mwen, la vie va donner   This is for me life is going to give
Destin an mwen si si si      My destiny, yes yes yes yes
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{82} Notably, he collaborated with Haitian artist Wyclef Jean in 2007’s “Paris on Fire.”
Si c’est Mimi et Passi
Yes it’s Mimi and Passi

Si fa sol si si si si
Si fa sol si si si (vocables)

Si c’est mimi & passi
Yes, it’s Mimi and Passi

After the chorus, Passi and Milca begin to trade off lines, and when they trade off the line “On connaît” (we know), the distinct keyboard-synthesizer timbre used in konpa enters with a punctuated counter-melodic line. As they repeat “On connaît,” Passi gives a geographic roll-call, a common practice in francophone Caribbean music, saying first Haïti, then Brazza (for Congo-Brazzaville), then Paris. By this point the texture and instrumentation of the underlying track of the song sounds like that of any konpa song, and Passi raps over this music.

Passi’s verse describes some of the hardships of minorities in Paris, saying:

Franchement je connais on est mal tombé
Frankly I know we’ve fallen ill

Couleurs familles dans la
Colors families in destiny that

destinée que Dieu t’a donné
god has given you

Tu peux danser dans la valse
You can dance in the waltz

des abords, on connaît
of the outskirts, we know

Quand on est sans rien dans
When we are without nothing

la haine emprisonnée
in imprisoned hatred

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Later providing encouraging words, telling the listener despite “Rester borner, résister à la spirale dans le crime” (Remaining confined, resist the spiral of crime). And finally concluding by mentioning the desire to change and shape their own their lives. There is another call out section in the song after Passi’s rap that includes a long list of places relevant to Haitians, immigrants in Paris, as well as Milca and himself, including Haiti, New York City, Miami, Guadeloupe and Martinique (referred to with their Creole names Gwada and Madinina), Réunion (an overseas department of France), French Guiana, Brazzaville, and Paris. The last half of the song continues with konpa timbres, with the final forty-five seconds acting as an instrumental conclusion, punctuating the end of the song with an unmistakably Haitian sound.

Thus “La Vie Va Donner” illustrates many elements of what it means to live in Paris as someone with Caribbean or postcolonial connections. It is specific to the locality of Paris in its testimony to minorities in the city, coming from the places mentioned in the various call out sections. Musically it appeals to a wide audience with this zouk and konpa sounds as well as Passi’s fame in France and among African immigrants.

If “La Vie Va Donner” helps illustrate Milca’s engagement with the greater Parisian immigrant community, then “Tu étais” shows her connection to the HMI and willingness to appeal to Haitian audiences. Nickenson Prudhomme, the keyboardist and maestro for the popular Miami-based HMI konpa group, Harmonik produced the song and includes konpa guitar and keyboard in its instrumentation. In addition to French and Creole, the song also includes English lyrics, a trend that is becoming more popular among HMI groups, wishing to appeal to second generation Haitians in the United States.
and sound more cosmopolitan. The music video gives visual konpa clues when it shows Nickenson Prudhomme playing the keyboard during konpa-dominant sections. Through these elements, “Tu étai” represents Milca’s engagement with greater HMI, although she is locally based in Paris and doesn’t participate in the HMI model of performance and circulation.

The song begins with an introduction and a first verse in French with the musical texture lacking any zouk or konpa specific qualities; none of the konpa-specific timbres that are frequently used to signal the genre in her music are present at first. However, after her first Creole verse, two minutes into the song, the konpa keyboard-synthesizer enters the song, along with the twangy timbred electric guitar. Notably, at this point in the music video Milca turns on the TV and longingly gazes at a konpa band, performing on stage in the TVs picture. For the remainder of the music video, whenever the konpa sounds are featured prominently, they are presented as diegetic music with Milca watching a konpa band (featuring Nickenson Prudhomme) perform on television.

Immediately following the introduction of the Haitian synthesizer line, Milca begins to sing a short bridge in English. While many artists believe that using English will allow them to target a wider audience in general, there is a sizeable population of Haitians living in the diaspora who don’t speak French but may have English as their primary language or secondary to Creole. Harmonik, the HMI band of which Prudhomme is the maestro, is familiar with this practice, as my fieldnotes from a Harmonik performance at S.O.B. ’s in New York describe:
They chose to emphasize their appeal across linguistic lines by repeating “Nou chante nan kreyòl, franse, angle, ak espangol.” (We sing in Kreyol, French, English, and Spanish.) Also, they performed several covers of other non-Haitian artists’ songs (such as Marc Anthony’s "You Sang to Me" and the opening of Bruno Mars “Billionaire,” which transitioned into a konpa song).  

It is unsurprising given Harmonik’s stance on using many languages that a collaboration with Prudhomme would include some English lyrics, although only in a short refrain that repeats once:

My boo is so far away

I try to be so proud and brave

I listen to my heart I like my life my love again

Although the song, through this short English refrain, is meant to appear more cosmopolitan, the use of English is simple and short so as not to alienate Milca’s predominately French and Creole speaking fan base. The final minute of the track, like that of “La Vie Va Donner,” is an extended konpa instrumental section that eventually fades out, further allowing konpa sounds to marinate in the minds of the listeners, or, more likely, allowing DJs to create dance mixes with the track.

83 Author’s fieldnotes. 17 February 2012. Manhattan, NY.
The differences between the konpa-inspired sections and the zouk sections in “Tu étais” may appear subtle and distinctions may seem arbitrary, but genre designations have ignited heated debates between Haitians and Antilleans. For example, on the YouTube page for “Tu étais,” one commenter caused an argument with Anaïs Bonalair’s comment: “Mwen enmew[sic] Zouk de milca, meci pour c belles pawol (I love Milca’s zouk. Thank you for the lovely lyrics)”—Another commenter, natacha salomon, responded, quick to correct the notion that the song was zouk, saying, “Hem hem for the 10000th time, Milca doesn’t do zouk (we don’t do zouk except for select Haitian singers) poufff it isn’t against you it isn’t, but it is a pain in the ass to always repeat and say that this is kompas. Listen closely to the instruments and you will see the difference. I make it known I am Haitian I know how to differentiate between zouk and kompas (eh it isn’t everyone who knows this) so, listen well to the melody of the instruments and I am sure you will tell me the same that it isn’t zouk but is KOMPAS.” When another commenter, Marie-Laure OKA tried to argue that the genre wasn’t important so long as the music is being enjoyed, saying, “on s’en fiche, c’est du beau travail, agréable pour les connaisseurs de vraies musiques!!! bravo Milca!!” (who cares, it is a good job, good for connaisseurs of good music. bravo Milca!),—natacha salomon reprimands her, with, “You don’t care but not me. If you were Haitian you wouldn’t have said that. One cannot confuse zouk and kompas. It is insulting to repeat that, people don’t recognize the work of Haitians. So yes it is good work but it isn’t Zouk and additionally no one asked you to respond to my comment…” She is then supported by a different commenter, Daniel Danz, who attacks the ambivalent commenter as well, saying, “You speak of “true connaisseurs” but you
respond “who cares” to a comment of a true connaisseur… Except, Milca’s sound isn’t Zouk but [is] Kompas, at the most you can say it is ‘Kompas love,’ the (kompas) that most resembles zouk. Zouk being born from Kompas … it is difficult to tell the difference for non-Caribbean people.” Marie-Laure OKA makes a case for positivity, saying, “Thanks a lot Daniel Danz, but you know that whether it is kompas or zouk, for us it matters little, because it is virtually the same melodies. What matters to us is simply that it is agreeable to our ears!!! You are agreeing with me that there are the same artists who make true zouk like you says but it is crap, on the other hand there are those that are very good; the same is for those who make Kompas.” The debate continues back and forth, with natacha salomon ending it, saying that people need to, “learn to recognize Haitian work.”(on fait apprenez a reconnaître le travaille des Haïtien) Thus, seemingly minor instrumental details can hold important emotional value for audiences and these intricacies are especially amenable to a variety of her fans but most significant to her Haitian fans.

Most recently, Milca was featured on “Amour Impossible,” a collaboration with Yoän, a zouk singer born and raised in Paris. Yoän was born in France, but his Guadeloupean single mother instilled in him the importance of his cultural heritage, heavily influencing his artistic leanings. Released in November 2015, this song and its accompanying music video illustrate the continued relevance of Paris as a site of musical collaboration and mixing. In many ways the song is representative of the relationship between the Haitian and Antillean musical communities in Paris: zouk is the dominant sound, but konpa makes a marked appearance in an extended musical interlude, mirroring
how Antillean culture is dominant over Haitian culture in the Paris region, but because of their love Haitian music, they share media outlets, performance venues, and consume Haitian music regularly, and in the end with Antilleans and Haitians living fundamentally different realities. This last element is illustrated in “Amour Impossible” with the strict partitioning of the konpa section of the song. Notably, Jean Eudes Beauge, guitarist for the Parisian konpa band Original H, provides the distinct guitar groove in the song that signals a shift to the konpa style.

“Amour Impossible” is more conservative musically than Milca’s other music in that it is the only song in this chapter sung entirely in French. This could be because Yoän is the top-billed artist on the song and although he has Guadeloupean ties, many children of Antillean immigrants in France never learn Creole. Having the lyrics in French rather than a blend highlights Yoän’s ties to Paris over the Caribbean, although it isn’t uncommon for zouk songs to be sung entirely in French regardless of the origins of the singers. Below, a sample of the lyrics from the song’s chorus which Yoän and Milca sing together, illustrate the general sentiment of the song: two friends are secretly in love but cannot act on their feelings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nos sentiments sont en accord</td>
<td>Our feelings are in agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le temps sera t’il notre allié cette fois</td>
<td>time will be our ally this once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malheureusement le plus beau rapport</td>
<td>unfortunately the best connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sera notre amitié crois moi</td>
<td>will be our friendship believe me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
nous sommes unis à jamais dans nos coeurs  We are forever united in our hearts

par cette envie de changer nos saveurs  by this wish to change our flavors

pourquoi se déchirer par cet  why be torn apart by this

amour impossible  impossible love

notre amitié restera invincible  our friendship will remain invincible

à nos yeux  in our eyes

notre amour est impossible  our love is impossible

Musically, the song takes few risks; aside from the konpa section near the end of the song, the rest of the song is exclusively within the typical zouk love sound, and the konpa section happens so late in the track that it would most likely be cut for radio play.

The inclusion of the konpa section shows an interest from both Yoän and Milca in maintaining ties to a greater francophone Caribbean audience in spite of the exclusion of Creole from the lyrics. In an interview with Sélène Agapé, Yoän explains his musical style and inspirations, explaining that, “It’s simple, I make zouk in the style of Yoän, that is to say that I sing in my style on zouk music. And when you’re speaking about Caribbean music, you’re talking about zouk, reggae, kompa, et cetera, these are the genres within which our parents were emerged, and which form our heritage”(Agapé
Thus, his music is a product of his own circumstances, his heritage, and his interactions with others, as a Caribbean person, in Paris.

The konpa section of “Amour Impossible,” which begins about three minutes into the song, is a substantial 45 seconds, making it almost a fifth of the total song length. The section is without vocals and features Jean Eudes Beauge with a konpa guitar in the style of what he calls “guitare groove.” At this moment in the music video, the previous shots of Milca and Yoân belting romantically towards each other are forgotten and instead the visuals focus on a party where Milca and Yoân are dancing with friends, occasionally cutting away to a scenic setting where the two are playfully dancing konpa together. The konpa section in many ways functions as an escape within the song in which the genre changes, in which the tone of the song goes from a wistful story of impossible love to that of a dance party, and significantly in the case of the music video, where the two lovers are able to finally be together, through dance.

The presence of the konpa section in “Amour Impossible” is by far the most popular topic of discussion in the YouTube comment section for the song, garnering an enormously positive reaction. Some of these reactions include “when that kompa drops tho!!!!!” and “The konpa section… there are no words (it is) totally sublime!” and

84 Translated from “C’est simple, je fais du zouk à la Yoan, c’est-à-dire que je chante à la Yoan sur du zouk. Et qui dit musique caribéenne, dit zouk, reggae, kompa, etc., des genres dans lesquels nos parents ont baigné, et qui font notre héritage.” In Agapé 2015.


86 Translated from “La partie Kompa…y a pas de mots juste sublime!!! :-()” YouTube
lastly “I have killed my replay button and the konpa section aie aie aie!!!!”\(^{87}\) as a small sample of general reactions to this musical choice.

Similar to “Tu étais,” however, “Amour Impossible” is not without debates over the genre of the song. For example, two commenters argued over whether the song is a zouk song, a zouk song with a konpa section, or a konpa song, in which Wincy Edmond stated: “I don’t listen to zouk, only konpa, and it isn’t my fault that zouk has started resembling konpa to the point where discerning the two is complicated,”\(^{88}\) with another commenter explaining, “Why are you annoyed? Listen closely to the instruments and you will quickly see the difference.”\(^{89}\) This exchange is telling because it highlights several important elements about contemporary musical reception and genre classification in French Caribbean music, particularly that genres are a source of national pride and taken very seriously, but also that over time the musical exchange between konpa and zouk has rendered the two genres to be more similar than in prior decades.


\(^{88}\) Translated from “J’écoute pas de Zouk mais du Kompa et c est pas da ma faute si le Zouk commence a ressembler au Konpa a tel point que le discernement devient compliquer.” YouTube comment. User Wincy Edmond. Yoan feat Milca – Amour impossible [OFFICIEL]. Uploaded Nov 19, 2015 by AZTECMUSIQUE. Viewed March 1, 2016.

Thus, in many ways “Amour Impossible” represents much of what it means to be “French Caribbean” in Paris. Musically the song is predominately zouk, with a separate konpa section that is relegated to near the end; konpa is used in the music video to depict people having fun, dancing in a carefree way. The singers represent themselves as vaguely Domien-Parisian; Yoân was born in France, with a Guadeloupean mother and Milca was born in French Guiana to Haitian parents but is locally based in Paris. Although the performers come from different backgrounds, their shared locality in Paris has contributed to the blend of sounds they use.

Conclusion: Pwofite, Paris, and Minoritarian Politics

Through this chapter’s analysis of Milca’s various performances, videos, and collaborations, it should be clear that when discussing musical genre and national affiliations in the context of French Caribbean Paris it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify distinct boundaries, largely due to the diverse backgrounds of musicians in the immigrant-rich postcolonial city. Creativity, curiosity, and convenience all have contributed to Milca’s collaborations with other Haitian artists in Paris, including Jean Eudes Beauge and twoubAkoustik, as well as other immigrants from former French colonies like Passi, popular zouk singers from the Antilles as part of the “Femmes Fatales” series of all female zouk singles and performances, and Paris-born singers with Antillean ties such as Yoân. All of these examples show the creation or use of minor-to-minor networks, made possible through the minoritarian politics of Paris and the pwofite ideology, with Milca and other performers taking advantage of Paris’s locality as a diverse site to produce music that appeals to a similarly diverse postcolonial audiences.
This dissertation has been about Haitians in Paris but also in particular the unique qualities of Paris that represent it as a locale in relation to Haitian history, immigration, geography, transnationalism, and ideologies. Paris is unique in that it functions as an intersecting node in the transnational musical networks of Haitians and Antilleans, but also many other minority groups. In the future, studies that open up the scope of this project to better include the diverse range of intermingling populations, including French Guianese and Congo-Brazzaville, to name a few, would be timely. The discussion of Milca and Passi hinted at these interactions, but future publications would be prudent to fully address these groups that were more peripheral within the context of this dissertation.

Considering the recent terrorist attacks in France and Belgium, and the heightened tensions in Europe in relation to immigration, it is all the more necessary to explore alternatives to assimilationist models of immigrant life. As definitions of what makes someone European, French, or Parisian shift, it is my hope that this dissertation will fuel arguments against xenophobia and encourage readers to de-center the periphery, appreciating music’s ability to function as expressive representations of contemporary life.
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