

## ABSTRACT

### Understanding Visibility: A Case Study of the Indian Diaspora in Martinique

Uta Maria Bianca Rampersad

This thesis explores the construction of Indian identity in Martinique. The paper briefly introduces the socio-cultural factors which both triggered and encouraged the departure of Indians from Tamil Nadu India and their arrival and conditions of settlement in Martinique, a French department in the Caribbean. Martinican identity discourses' influenced the under-representation of Indian Martinicans. An ethnography was undertaken over a period of four (4) months, and involved collecting EMIC views on identity formation in Martinique. The following questions framed discussions: Is there an Indian identity in Martinique? What led to the construction of this identity? And what accounts for the low visibility of Indianness in Martinique? Thirty 30 in-depth interviews showed persistence of an Indian culture in Martinique and representation in local literature is novel. The field research found that, in addition to absence from Martinican literature, the new structure of the Indian family and lack of a cohesive voice also influenced low visibility. Despite historical ostracism, Indo-Martinicans seek visibility through women headed associations, reinforced by youth claim to an Indian ancestral past and a desire for popular Indian culture.

Keywords: Visibility, Social identity & Representation, Indian Diaspora, Martinique, Ethnography.