

1# CFP : DIASCOM programme The indenture legacy / Les suites de l'engagisme (19th-21st century)



Dipavali, Saint-André, ile de La Réunion, 2014 (VCA)

1# Conference of DIASCOM (Diasporas, Communities, Displacement in colonial and postcolonial contexts) : **The indenture legacy**.

For **step 1# of the DIASCOM programme** we invite researchers working on diasporic communities born out of indenture, in the course of the colonial context, to a two-day conference organised at Université de Nantes (France).

We wish to hear scientific presentations based on current historical research on the diasporic groups and communities formed of indentured labourers, and their « settlement » strategies in European colonies overseas. Discussions will start with the examination of the « agency » of the first generation of indentured labourers, transported to the colonies after the abolition of slavery. Then we will analyse their descendants' community strategies in colonial and postcolonial context.

Guest speakers from other diaspora/migration programmes in Europe will also be invited to present their epistemological approach and the current research of their network.

Our research perspective in studying these less-studied diasporic groups forcefully transported to European colonies, is clearly historical and transnational (Levitt, 2010). It aims at filling up the gap in the current literature on the indenture legacy in diasporic studies.

For the sake of efficiency, the two-day conference on « The indenture legacy » will be organised along two workshops, with pre-circulated papers. In each workshop the focus will be on the « settlement » phase, on identity formation, community building, cultural strategies used by diasporic communities in colonial context. Papers will analyse the early strategies of the communities of indentured labourers, and their survival modes in specific colonial contexts. Presenters can also choose to analyse the imperial policies regarding indentured servants in colonial context.

Workshop 1 (day 1) will provide a « **historical and socio-cultural perspective on the indentured diasporas** » and on **their community agency in the oppressive context of forced migration**.

We seek presentations on the formation and settlement of indentured diasporas, from the recruiting phase of ethnic groups in their home country in the course of the 19th century (from the Indian subcontinent, Africa, Asia, Europe...) to the « settlement » process of these masses of labourers in the colonies throughout the globe. Based on case studies, papers could focus on the sense of belonging that the first generation of indentured labourers developed upon arrival in the colonies :

- How did the first generation of indentured men and women organize themselves in communities ?
- How did they position their groups regarding the rest of the European settlers or the emancipated slaves ?
- What strategies did they develop to form communities, to maintain their cultural identity and their communal values in that constrained context.
- Did they express any political views, any resistance to oppression and exploitation, or any desire to return to their home country ?

Workshop 2 (day two) will be dedicated to « **The legacy of indenture on the descendant communities** » will gather presentations on the cultural, political or social strategies of the descendants born out of the first indentured diasporas, in colonial and post-colonial contexts. Through a transdisciplinary approach, papers will address the strategies used by the successive generations by either :

- Preserving the original communities founded by their parents, and constructing an imaginary or real relationship to « home », by initiating new diasporas from home (marriage, chain migrations), by consolidating cultural and economic connections with the home country.
- Emancipating themselves from their family legacy and denying the memory of forced migration, by seeking integration in the host country and claiming social success...
- Claiming a political status within the host country, asking for reparations...
- Thinking about returning to the home country in the context of decolonization.

Bearing in mind the historical context in which the second and third generations evolved – the rise of independence and emancipation movements in the colonies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries – it would be interesting to historicize the strategies of these diasporic

communities in the host colony, or vis à vis their home country for those considering to return there after decolonization.

At the end of this first conference, we wish to establish a network of international scholars to take the programme to its next steps. Next, we wish develop further historical research on diasporic formations and diasporic communities born out of slavery and servitude, as well on their community-building strategies in colonial context. Then, we will focus on the postcolonial context to analyse the strategies of displacement and double diaspora of the Afro- or Asian descendants bearing the legacy of forced migration. (see DIASCOM presentation)

Submission:

Proposals for papers in English or French (500 words) along with a short bio must be submitted by **May 15, 2020** to the organisers :programmediascom@gmail.com.

Papers can be submitted to one workshop or two workshops for colleagues working on a transgenerational perspective.

Notification of acceptance will be sent by **June 15, 2020**.

Papers will be pre-circulated so we expect a full draft of your contribution by **November 1, 2020**.

After the conference, our scientific committee will proceed to select a number of articles (7,000 to 8,000 words) for a peer-reviewed volume.

Contact info: programmediascom@gmail.com

Practical details :

Registration fees : 25 euros . Room and board covered by the conference. Participants must pay for their own travel expenses.

Steering committee:

Françoise Le Jeune (CRHIA, Université de Nantes), Virginie Chaillou-Atrous (CRHIA, Université de Nantes), Sacha Crusson (chargée de communication, CRHIA, Université de Nantes, Aurélie Cloarec (Gestionnaire financière, CRHIA, Université de Nantes).