

**Lang, Natalie. 2021. *Religion and Pride: Hindus in Search of Recognition in La Réunion*. New York: Berghahn Books.**

Submitted as *Source of Pride: Hindu Religion in La Réunion*.

## **Introduction**

**Chapter 1.** (Im)mobile in the Indian Ocean

**Chapter 2.** Pride Politics and the Making of a Religious Minority

**Chapter 3.** Relating to India in Different Ways

**Chapter 4.** The Quest for Religious Knowledge

**Chapter 5.** Strategic Bricolage

**Chapter 6.** Rituals, Emotions, and Aesthetics

## **Conclusion**

### **Summary**

*Religion and Pride* relates debates on religion, globalization, diaspora, and secularism to an ethnography of Hindus in the French overseas department La Réunion. Taking up the locally important notion of *fierté* – pride in the sense of justified self-esteem, this study demonstrates how aspirational pride can work as a driving force behind religious revitalization, diasporic identification, and the self-making of religious minorities. The majority of Reunionese Hindus are French citizens of South Indian origins and often mixed with African, Madagascan, Chinese, and European origins. They speak French and Creole rather than Indian languages, and many were baptized Catholic. As interest in Hinduism has prompted some Reunionese Hindus to orient themselves toward India as a source of ancestral knowledge since the 1970s, my research shows that religious aspirations can serve as a driving forces behind global interactions, rather than globalization alone leading to religious transformations, which is often assumed to be the case. While some Reunionese Hindus create a diasporic consciousness, importantly through their quests for religious knowledge in India, my research also emphasizes the importance of the local context in diaspora studies, as many other Reunionese Hindus do not relate their religious practices to India and instead value the locally created traditions. *Religion and Pride* traces how pride and recognition relate to French laicism and notions of India, and how pride and recognition emerge from neo-liberal self-making projects, diverse forms of religious knowledge and magico-religious practices, Facebook interactions, and bodily ritual experiences. The focus on pride allows the consideration of the institutional, social, and felt dimensions of religions negotiations, ways of belonging, and claims for recognition. The study is based on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork in La Réunion in 2014-15 and a five-week follow-up field trip in 2017.