



MFJMCE

GRADUATE STUDENT EU RESEARCH GRANT

Interview with grantee Giovanna Violi



Giovanna Violi is a Ph.D. Candidate in Atlantic History at the Department of History, Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs, Florida International University. This year, she received the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence Graduate

Student EU Research grant for her research "Black Martinican Girlhood across the Atlantic: Educational Migration from Martinique to France in the 20th Century."

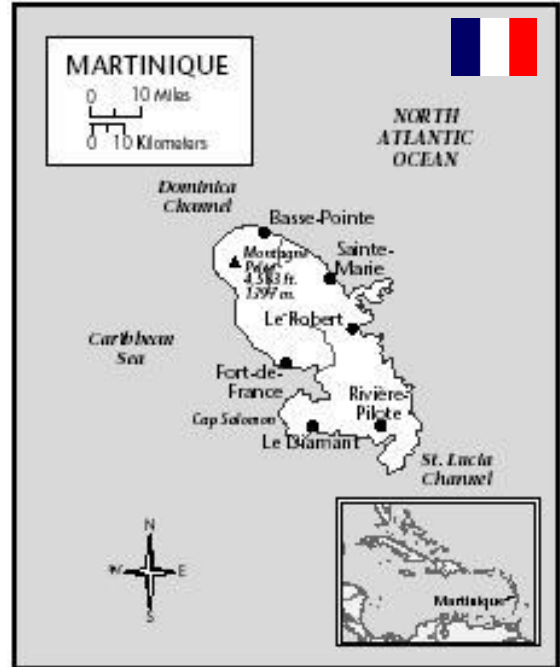
She sat down with Christine I. Caly-Sanchez, Associate Director of the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, to answer a few questions about her research.

MFJMCE: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and what studies you pursued at FIU?

My name is Giovanna Violi and I am an international student from Italy. I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Atlantic History at FIU. I previously earned BA degrees in History and Art History at UCLA, as well as an MA degree in Caribbean and Latin American Studies at University College London.

MFJMCE: Can you tell us in a few words what the focus of your EU research project is?

My dissertation project is aimed at reconstructing the experiences of young Black Martinican women's educational migration to Europe in the 20th century. The analysis will focus on how these young women navigated the complex relationship between Martinique and France and, later, between Martinique and the European Union in order to access higher educational institutions beyond the borders of their homeland. How did these macro relationships affect young Black Martinican women? How did young Black Martinican women influence those relationships in turn?



MFJMCE: What are your plans for the research you are conducting?

I aim to present excerpts of the manuscript at conferences in the US, Europe, and possibly the Caribbean during the 2024-2025 academic year as well as turn the manuscript into a book.

MFJMCE: How do you hope your research will contribute to the field of History?

The dissertation builds on existing historiography about Black girlhood, Caribbean migration, French and colonial education, French imperial practices, racial and class struggles on both sides of the Atlantic, transnational anti-imperialism movements and the role that the European Union has played more recently in the educational opportunities of Martinican youth given their French and, by extension, EU citizenship. The project aims to expand the confines of said historiographical fields by focusing the attention on a demographic, young Martinican Black women, that is understudied due to their intersectionality. Little has been written about the ways in which these young women accessed European educational institutions throughout the 20th century and the influence that

MFJMCE



GRADUATE STUDENT EU RESEARCH GRANT

Interview with grantee Giovanna Violi



they had on their home community, France, and Europe as a consequence of their educational migration. Additionally, the dissertation will provide a chance to expand a fast-growing historiographical field: Black girlhood. Mostly focused on the US context, despite a few exceptions, I believe this literature could benefit from contributions about the experience and nature of Black girlhood in other contexts, even more so if the project will showcase Black girlhood with a transnational framework.

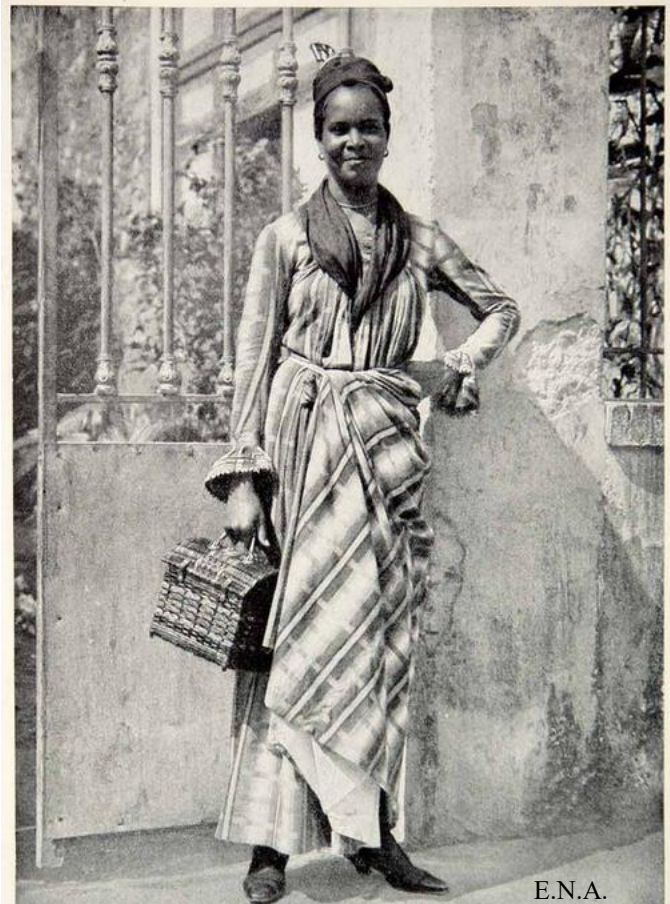
MFJMCE: Why do you think this research is essential to conduct at the present time? Once completed, this project “will help foster...”

Traditional historical narratives had often silenced the importance that Black women and girls have had, and still have, in the world. I hope the project will foster a better understanding of how significant a role they had in contexts as small as their family dynamics and as wide as transnational phenomena, movements, intellectual exchanges, feminist circles that affect all of us today. I also hope my dissertation will point out the importance of Martinique, often left out of historical narratives because of its exceptionalism in many areas. I believe there is a lot of potential in both questioning and delving deeper into Martinique’s exceptionalism. What can we learn by looking at the Martinican reality through the lens of the Caribbean region, France, the European Union? Is it really such an exception? If it is, then what can it reveal about the proverbial rule?

MFJMCE: Do you have any last thoughts to share?

I am grateful for the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet European Center of Excellence for awarding me with the grant. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Markus Thiel and Dr. Christine Caly-Sanchez, who was so supportive throughout the application and research-planning process. Their input, that of my advisor, Dr. Terrence Peterson, my dissertation committee, Dr. Okezi Otovo, Dr. Alexandra Cornelius, and Dr. Andrea Queeley, the Department of History and all my colleagues at DOHGSA have all been fundamental in my ability to conduct this research.

By Christine I. Caly-Sanchez



Native Woman from Martinique



Suzanne Césaire