

Vortrag am 1. Juni 2010

Sandra J.T.M. Evers (Amsterdam)

### Chagos 'mo pe': Children's Depictions of a Lost Homeland

This lecture analyses how Chagossian children attending primary school in Port Louis, Mauritius, reflect on their kinship and family history in relation to their imagination of the place where their ancestors come from. The expulsion of their (grand)parents from the Chagos archipelago resulted from secret negotiations between the American and British governments, when Chagos formed part of British colonial Mauritius. When the Mauritians came to negotiate their independence in 1965, the British demanded surrender of the Chagos islands territory in exchange for a three million pound indemnity. This transaction allowed the British to transfer control of Diego Garcia (the largest of the Chagos islands) to the United States. The US then established a military base on the island. As the US desired a military base 'without civilians', the transaction triggered the forced clearance of the entire population of approximately 2,000 people to the Seychelles (also a British colony at the time) and Mauritius, where the majority of about 1,500 Chagossians were relocated.

In this lecture, I draw attention to the importance of the studying children to distil their notions and roles in the construction and perpetuation of (imagined) communities. Children are socialised within these communities and actively infuse the 'imagined community' of Chagossians with meaning and indexical vigour. In other words, children embody and are connectors of kinship networks and notions of belonging. They also have their own ideas of their family's past, present and future and the significance of kinship, both in their relations to people living close to them and those in distant places.

**Sandra J.T.M. Evers**, Ph.D. (Amsterdam 2001), is associate professor and senior researcher at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, VU University Amsterdam. She specialises in Africa and South West Indian Ocean studies, with a particular focus on Madagascar, the Seychelles and Mauritius. Her principal areas of research cover the anthropology of children, (forced) migration, slavery, memory and cognition, frontier societies within the context of globalisation, natural resource management, poverty and sustainable development. She is the director of a joint research programme on natural resource management and poverty of the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology (VU University Amsterdam) and the *Institut de Civilisations/Musée d'Art et Archéologie* (Université d'Antananarivo). She also acts as convener of an international working group on the anthropology of children ([www.anthropologyofchildren.net](http://www.anthropologyofchildren.net)).



Dienstags, 18:15–19:45 Uhr

Großer Übungsraum (Raum 01-715), Becherweg 4, 1. Stock

Weitere Veranstaltungen: <http://www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de/info/ikolloqSS10.htm>