

This research project concerns a cognitive anthropological study combining methodologies from the cognitive sciences and anthropology. Fieldwork for this research was conducted by Sandra Evers and Marry Kooy (*cum laude* graduate at the Department in 2008) from August 2007 until April 2008 in Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius. Everybody in Mauritius is of migrant origin, as Mauritius once was an uninhabited island. Mauritian children can trace their ancestries to Europe, Africa, Madagascar and Asia (particularly India and China). The children of this study live in the poorer quarters of Port Louis and frequent public primary schools where less than 40 percent of the children manages to pass the primary school final exam. Our query centres around two theoretical issues that have been neglected in cognitive and anthropological theory: 1) Particularly in the cognitive sciences, research on children's imagination looks at how children imagine a fantasy world, exemplified by studies on pretend play. Another category of studies analyses children's memory of the actual past that they have experienced. This study combines these approaches by looking at children's ability to imagine an actual past, event (or location), which they have not personally experienced. 2) The second angle of the study is how children root themselves in their family history and create senses of belonging to "imagined communities" anchored in contemporary Mauritius and/or other places and times. Children are crucial to such processes as they are socialized in these communities and themselves are active agents in the intergenerational transmission of what is deemed to be the socio-cultural essence of these groups.

Representative publication in 2011:

Sandra J.T.M. Evers, spring 2011, "Kinning in the Imagination: Perceptions of Kinship and Family History among Chagossian Children in Mauritius" in *Not just a victim:*

*The child as catalyst and witness of contemporary Africa*, Sandra J.T.M. Evers, Catrien Notermans, Erik van Ommering (eds.) pages 79-105. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers.

<http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=210&pid=44529>