Seaborne Empires and Hub Societies: Connectivity in Motion across the Indian Ocean World[1]

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ABSTRACTS

In diesem Artikel wird die Welt des Indischen Ozeans als Referenz gewählt und eine Perspektive eingenommen, die vom Konzept der „Konnektivität in Bewegung" ausgeht. Zunächst werden einige historische Varianten der Seeimperien (Portugiesen, Niederländer und Briten) betrachtet, um herkömmliche, terrazentrische Modelle des Staates zu hinterfragen und zu modifizieren. Die drei Hauptteile des Beitrags untersuchen die Insel Mauritius als „Hub" und „Hub Society" und stützen ein zentrales Argument für ein polyzentrischeres, gebrochenes und durchlässiges Modell. In drei miteinander verbundenen analytischen und empirischen Schritten wird zunächst die Außendimension des mauritischen Hubs untersucht. In den nächsten beiden Abschnitten wird auf die interne Dimension des „Hubbing" eingegangen, zunächst in Bezug auf kollektive Identitäten und dann auf der Ebene individueller und familiärer Strategien. Abschließend werden die empirischen und historischen Daten, die in diesen drei Abschnitten präsentiert werden, unter Bezugnahme auf die diskutierten theoretischen und methodologischen Fragen analysiert. Eine entschiedenere Anerkennung der Mobilität und der maritimen Dimension der menschlichen „Konnektivität in Bewegung" bietet neue Einsichten in die konventionellen Auffassungen von Staatlichkeit, Nation und Territorium – und, außerhalb von ausschließlich terrestrischen Ansätzen – der eurasischen Landmasse.

1 I am grateful to the Max Planck Society, Munich, and the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, for funding my research on some of the issues addressed here. I am especially grateful to Chris Hann for encouraging me to look at the Indian Ocean world with reference to "Eurasia" and to the issues of empire and "civilization." I am also indebted to the members of the "Indian Ocean Studies-Group Halle" for their useful and insightful comments on an earlier version of this paper. The usual disclaimers do of course apply.

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This article takes the Indian Ocean world as a frame of reference and applies a perspective guided by the concept of "connectivity in motion". It looks, to start with, at some historical paradigms of seaborne empires (Portuguese, Dutch and British) in order to question and modify conventional, terra-centric models of the state. Substantiating an argument in favor of a more polycentric, fractured and porous model, the three central sections of the paper investigate the island of Mauritius as a "hub" and "hub society". In three interconnected analytical and empirical steps, first the external dimension of the Mauritian hub is scrutinized. The next two sections zoom in to focus on the internal dimension of "hubbing", first with respect to collective identities, and then at the level of individual and family strategies. In conclusion, the empirical and historical data presented in these three sections are analyzed with reference to the theoretical and methodological issues raised earlier. It is argued that the more decisive recognition of mobility and of the maritime dimension of human "connectivity in motion" brings new insights into conventional notions of statehood, nation and territory – and of the Eurasian landmass, beyond exclusively terrestrial approaches.

Introduction

Historically, the Indian Ocean world is one of the oldest and most important zones of trading, contact and exchange in the world. For many centuries now, it has been traversed in all directions by vessels transporting not only human beings and commercial goods, but also flora, fauna, ideas, ideologies, rituals, religions, art genres, technologies, languages, knowledge, money, waste, and unfortunately also diseases. Last but not least, political systems and modes of statecraft, which stand in the fore of this paper, have also travelled across the Indian Ocean world for centuries, if not millenia. But its importance is not just historical. At present, it is re-emerging as a significant arena of globalization, with India, China and the USA as prime actors,[2] but also with a number of regional actors, such as South Africa, Iran, Singapore and Indonesia playing important trans-maritime roles. Hence, politicians and their advisors have gradually come to acknowledge that this ocean can be "neglected no longer."[3]

"Indian Ocean Studies" have long been preoccupied with studying the points of departure and arrival of maritime movements.[4] The main places starting, continuing and ending these movements are, of course, the ports and port cities along the shores of the Indian Ocean world, as well as on its numerous coastal and deep-sea islands. Submit-

2 One should not forget some remnants of the old French and British colonial powers in the southwestern part of the ocean (Mayotte, Réunion, Chagos).

3 Donald L. Berlin, Neglected No Longer: Strategic Rivalry in the Indian Ocean, in: Harvard International Review 24 (2002) 2: 26-31; Christian Bouchard and William Crumplin, 'Neglected No Longer': The Indian Ocean at the Forefront of World Geopolitics and Global Geostrategy, in: Journal of the Indian Ocean Region 6 (2010): 26-51.

4 For some of the most important studies on the history of the Indian Ocean world at large, see Edward A. Alpers, The Indian Ocean in World History, Oxford 2014; Kirti Narayan Chaudhuri, Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750, Cambridge 1985; Chaudhuri, Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750, Cambridge 2000; Kenneth McPherson, The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea, New Delhi 1993; Michael N. Pearson, The Indian Ocean, London 2003.

ting these places, here identified and analyzed as "hubs" and "hub societies", to closer empirical investigation and adopting the perspective of a *longue durée* makes one realize that ports are less the a priori foundations of these maritime movements than their relational and dynamically changing effects. While ports and port cities may achieve some stability and agency of their own, essentially they the outcome of these movements and the results of the ever-shifting, volatile and precarious relations between heterogeneous human and non-human actors on the move. Studying the places of departure and arrival of maritime movements, and investigating the exchanges that thereby take place, with a view to "connectivity in motion"[5] also brings home the need to identify the maritime routes that have criss-crossed the Indian Ocean world. Thus looking at routes and pathways offers a complementary and welcome alternative to the emphasis on space that has been dominating the discussion for some time now since the so-called "spatial turn."[6] Moreover, it is obvious that, against the background of a decidedly route- and mobility-oriented approach, the journeys themselves – and the liminal time and space they represent – enter the overall picture more forcefully.[7] Furthermore, the various material and intangible cargoes that traverse the Indian Ocean do not just move; they are *exchanged* in numerous ways. These exchanges transform the cargoes and their exchangers. Hence, the transportation of animate and inanimate, material and ideational things does not just result in their spatial transfer, but, more often than not, also in translations of their functions, meanings, values and evaluations.

In the context of the papers gathered in this special issue, I wish to argue that taking the Indian Ocean world as a frame of reference and applying a perspective guided by the concept of "connectivity in motion," as briefly laid out above, will add some important insights into the chiefly terrestrial issues that come to the fore concerning Eurasia when understood and investigated solely as a vast landmass. Adding a maritime dimension will also reveal that the "seaborne empires" of Iberian and Northwest European provenance (Portugal, Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Great Britain) arose, and were maintained in existence for a long time, not in spite of the facts that their "mother countries" were marginal, small and looked outward to the sea, but exactly because of these conditions. They were "seaborne empires" because they derived their strength decisively from sea-power, that is, from their control of the seas, islands and littoral societies.[8]

5 "Connectivity in Motion" is the key concept of my Max Planck Fellow Program, pursued in Halle since 2013. See http://www.eth.mpg.de/2952665/mpfg02. Some of the key concepts and methodological tenets of this program are discussed in Burkhard Schnepel, Introduction, in: Connectivity in Motion: Island Hubs in the Indian Ocean World, ed. Burkhard Schnepel and Edward A. Alpers, Cham 2018, 3-32.

6 See, as one critique of this approach, Tim Ingold, Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge, in: Boundless Worlds: An Anthropological Approach to Movement, ed. Peter Wynn Kirby, Oxford / New York 2009, 29-44.

7 In a sense, it is the "trans-" (with all its possible endings) that becomes salient here.

8 While France and Spain were, of course, significant "sea powers," with holdings all over the maritime world (one of which – namely, the Ile de France – will figure largely in this paper). However, as their (sea) power was based to a considerable degree on the domination of territories in continental Europe and the Americas, they could be regarded more correctly as "sea empires" rather than as "seaborne" empires. On "seaborne empires," see Charles R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600–1800, London 1967; Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, New York 1969; and Jeremy Black, The British Seaborne Empire, New Haven 2004.

Map 1: The Polities of the Contemporary Indian Ocean World.

In the following section, I shall look eclectically at some contemporary and historical paradigms of sea-powers, but also at historical kingship on the Indian subcontinent, in order to question conventional, terra-centric models of the state. In order to substantiate my argument in favor of a more polycentric, fractured and porous model of the state and a more decisive inclusion of mobility into the analysis and description of statehood, in the three central sections that follow I shall discuss the paradigm of a small island, namely Mauritius, presenting it as a "hub" and "hub society." Here, in three interconnected analytical and empirical steps, I shall first look at the external dimension of the Mauritian hub, while the next two sections zoom in and look at the internal dimension of hubbing in Mauritius, first with a focus on collective identities, then with an analyses of individual and family strategies. I shall conclude by referring the empirical and historical data presented in these three sections back to the more theoretical and methodological issues raised in this Introduction and by taking them further.

Fragmented Statehood

Some years ago, the Chinese government officially launched an initiative it calls "One Belt / One Road."[9] The "One Belt" is the "Silk Road(s)" through terrestrial Eurasia, while the term "One Road" refers to the maritime route(s) that lead from the South China Sea towards West Asia and Africa (and beyond), past the ports of Southeast and South Asia. This latter route, or better routes, are sometimes also called the "Maritime Silk Road(s)." There are at least two remarkable things about this policy. To start with, Chinese *Realpolitik* clearly recognizes a link between the two kinds of Silk Road and regards them as an intertwined whole. In doing so, Chinese foreign policy-makers are pragmatically acknowledging what historians, social anthropologists and geographers have argued for quite some time now, namely that these terrestrial and maritime routes should not be treated as separate, but as complementing one another.[10] No doubt the terrestrial and maritime pathways competed for the trade between eastern and western empires and the wealth to be gained from it, but from the perspective of the *longue durée* they functioned rather as communicating tubes, offering welcome alternatives to traders.

The second notable characteristic of China's "One Belt / One Road" initiative is that China's expansionist policies – beyond its own national borders – are envisaged strategically in terms of routes rather than space and territorial borders. Vital to this policy are the substantial infrastructural projects that have been created and accomplished at strategically important points along both the Belt and the Road. On land, China is pushing forward its neo-imperialist policies – to repeat, *en route* rather than in space – with pipelines, motorways, internet cables and high-speed trains from East China

9 This programme is the object of an ever-increasing number of studies. See, for example, Tom Miller, China's Asian Dream: Empire-building along the New Silk Road, London 2017; see also Goldstone in this issue.

10 Hermann Kulke, Die Geschichte maritimer Beziehungen im Indischen Ozean: Eine Einführung in das Thema, in: Der Indische Ozean in historischer Perspektive, ed. Stephan Conermann, Berlin 1998, 1-8.

through Central Asia and Eastern Europe as far as Duisburg in Western Germany (and further). The maritime side of this all-encompassing project is being pursued similarly, taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the more fluid medium of the sea. Small but geo-strategically important islands are one pawn in this game, as anyone following the developments regarding the Spratly Islands in the South Chinese Sea will be aware. Another strategy consists in offering poorer or investment-hungry nations around the Indian Ocean world, such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Maldives, Kenya and Oman, financial aid, technological expertise and manpower to improve their infrastructure, both maritime and other. China has built or financed a number of deep-water harbours, free ports, special economic zones, container terminals, bridges and airports in all of these countries and more. These endeavors are being supported by laying underwater fibre optic cables and gas pipelines to connect seaports to each other and to other hubs.

In pursuing these policies, the Chinese are following an example set by the European seaborne empires of Portugal, the Netherlands and Britain in the early modern period. The Portuguese set the tone when, from around 1500 onwards, they heavily armed their caravels with guns and soldiers in order to capture strategic points in the Indian Ocean world. Mozambique, Mombasa, Hormuz, Goa, Cochin, Colombo, Malakka and some Southeast Asian "spice islands" fell from Arabian, Indian or Malay hands into Portuguese ones. They built numerous small forts and factories, and a number of large ones, at geo-strategically important sites with a clear view out to sea in order to control and tax the passing traffic. One main base of Portuguese sea power, which remained in Portuguese hands until 1999, was established as far east as southern China, namely at Macau, from where the Portuguese not only conducted their trade in Chinese goods for Lisbon, but also acted as mediators between China and Japan in the profitable exchanges of silk and silver respectively between these two hostile empires. The Portuguese were only drawn into the hinterland from their more important sea-power hubs, where they founded settlements outside their forts and factories. They were sometimes also involved into territorial disputes and military adventures in-land against their express will, namely when local differences between chiefs in the interior required them to take the side of one or the other in order to safeguard the hinterland and supplies of their ports. This happened, for example, in Sri Lanka and Mozambique.[11]

Much the same applies to the Dutch and British seaborne empires, whose trading companies adopted the Portuguese fort-and-factory strategy, often capturing sites from the latter instead of building new ones themselves. Slowly but surely, however, they too were drawn into the hinterland, and even more substantially than was the case with the Portuguese. Initially, this was rather against their own overall plans, at least as far as company directors back home in Amsterdam and London were concerned. However, enterprising governors on the spot in Asia were often keen to expand their spheres of influence into

11 See Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Improvising Empire: Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal 1500–1700, New Delhi 1990; Subrahmanyam, The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History, London 1993.

the hinterland, using violence when necessary, as was the case with the Dutch governor Coen on the Moluccan Banda Islands in the early seventeenth century, where Coen eradicated almost the entire indigenous population. While reprimanding such actions officially, gradually the leading figures of what began as decidedly maritime empires came to see the benefits of acquiring and controlling territories far beyond their forts and factories. These land-grabbing and tax-robbing policies reached their height when India, the "jewel in the crown" of the British Empire, became a British Crown Colony in 1858.[12] When the British took over the sovereignty of India from the Moghul emperor, they were soon made to realize that, over the centuries, the number of political actors on the Indian subcontinent had not been confined to the Great Moghul and his provincial governors. Even during the height of power of the Moghul empire – probably the most centralized empire in Indian history before the British Raj – the Indian subcontinent was a long way away from resembling the Western ideal of a centralized state. This fragmented state of affairs did not go unnoticed by Western interpreters from Marx through Weber to Dumont. They had various explanations for this lack of an all-encompassing centralized power, but invariably they all implicitly or explicitly regarded this fragmentation as a deficiency, namely, as a failure on the part of Indian rulers to approximate to the Western ideal of a unitary, centralized state. Indian rulers, so it was assumed, wanted to found a state according to this Western ideal, but they could not. Only from the 1980s onwards did historians and anthropologists start to question this essentially Eurocentric, if not Orientalist view of the Indian state with reference to a number of alternative models or perspectives. Examples include Burton Stein's concept of the "segmentary state," Tambiah's model of the "galactic state," Kulke's idea of the "early state," Dirks' notion of the "little kingdom" and my own study of "jungle kings."[13] Whatever the period or region investigated by these and other scholars, it is now widely accepted that western models of the state are insufficient or misplaced in these Indian contexts. Indian kingdoms, relying heavily on the principle of royal authority from the time of the *Ramayana*, were not mono-archies, but poly-archies. Throughout long periods of its history, the Indian subcontinent can be viewed as harboring flexible, polycentric systems consisting of several "great kings" who stood in well-balanced, though ever-changing relations to each other, and to a large number of "little kings," many of them seeking to become "great" themselves. The boundaries of these kingdoms, whether great or little, did not

12 For the Dutch seaborne empire, see Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, and Harold J. Cook, Matters of Exchange. Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age, New Haven 2007. For British power in the Indian Ocean world, see Thomas R. Metcalf, Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean arena, 1860–1920, Berkeley 2007, and John Darwin, Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain, Harmondsworth 2012.

13 See Nikolas B. Dirks, The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom, Cambridge 1987; Hermann Kulke, The Early and the Imperial Kingdom: A Processual Model of Integrative State Formation in Early Medieval India, in: The State in India, 1000–1700, ed. Hermann Kulke, Delhi 1995, 233-262; Burkhard Schnepel, The Jungle Kings: Ethnohistorical Aspects of Politics and Ritual in Orissa, Delhi 2002; Burton Stein, Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India, Delhi 1980; Stanley J. Tambiah, The Galactic Polity in Southeast Asia, reprint in: Tambiah Culture, Thought and Social Action: A Anthropological Perspective, Cambridge 1985, 252-86.

represent clear-cut territorial borders, but shifting and overlapping spheres of influence, ever expanding or retracting.[14]

The present-day "One Belt/One Road" policy of Chinese provenience is supported ideologically by references back to the seven great sea voyages of the Eunuch commander Zheng He in the first half of the fifteenth century.[15] The "soft power" of heritage politics plays an important role here.[16] While Zheng He, or at least parts of his enormous flotilla, may indeed have travelled the western Indian Ocean's waters up to Africa once or twice, from the perspective of the *longue durée* this Chinese intrusion into the Indian Ocean was very much the exception. Chinese merchant and naval vessels seldom penetrated beyond the Straits of Malacca. For roughly 700 years, from the end of the seventh century to the end of the thirteenth, this sub-region was dominated by the now almost forgotten but once powerful Srivijaya Empire. This empire has been labelled a "thalassocracy" (with reference to the ancient Greek "thalassa" or "sea") and likened to the multi-centered system of the "Hanse" of northern Europe, since it consisted of a number of interlinked port cities controlling the sea lanes and their commercial traffic. One of these port cities, for example Palembang in present-day Sumatra, was usually dominant. While clearly relying on their sea power, Srivijaya's multiple port cities also extended their influence into the hinterland, up the inland rivers, with equally well-located trading posts along these fluvial routes. As a result, they were able to barter the goods produced there and to feed these into the transoceanic trade at great profit.[17]

The Island Hub of Mauritius: External Dimensions

It is obvious that such thalassocratic and fragmented structures of the polity can hardly be grasped by conventional models of the centralized and territorially bounded state. Rather, the individual components forcefully command our attention and analysis. These individual components do, of course, have their own histories and internal arrangements. But their main function is that of being nodes in "meshworks"[18] that make movements possible. On account of this mobility function, I suggest calling these special places-cum-people "hubs," seen as agentive knots in a network of transportation systems. As the "effective centre of an activity, region, or network,"[19] hubs are crucial actors/actants and significant points of convergence, entanglement and divergence in the global streams of human beings, animals, finances, material goods, ideas and pieces of knowl-

14 Schnepel, The Jungle Kings, 14-83.

15 Tansen Sen, India, China and the world: A Connected History, London 2017.

16 Burkhard Schnepel and Tansen Sen (eds.), Travelling Pasts: The Politics of Cultural Heritage Across the Indian Ocean World, Leiden 2019.

17 Hermann Kulke, Srivijaya revisited: reflections on state formation of a Southeast Asian Thalassocracy, in: Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extréme-Orient 102 (2017): 47-96.

18 Ingold, Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge.

19 Oxford Dictionary Online.

edge. However, hubs are more than knots or nodes in networks and in the processes of networking; they are "*highly* connected nodes."[20]

On account of the significant role of hubs in connectivity in motion across the Indian Ocean, it is at this point appropriate to "zoom in" and provide a view on an (in many senses: paradigmatic) island hub in the middle of the southwestern Indian Ocean, namely Mauritius. Lying roughly 600 kilometers east of Madagascar, the island today contains 1.2 million inhabitants of African, French, Chinese and, predominantly Indian origin. In the early phase of the island's settlement by the Dutch in the seventeenth century, and then more seriously and successfully by the French in the early eighteenth century, some cargoes that were landed on Mauritius were intended for the needs of the settlers and soldiers, while conversely other provisions like ebony, water and turtles, were loaded on to the ships and taken from the island. Nonetheless these embarkations and disembarkations were nothing but a means to an end, namely to enable the ships to reach their final and main destinations to the east or west. This dimension in the art of maritime "hubbing"[21] consisted in simply the circulation of ships and their crews.

Almost against the express will of the directors of the French East India Company, Mauritius gradually developed into more than just a port of call: it became a colony with its very own needs, but also potentialities, which emerged in addition to and sometimes independently of its function as a naval hub. Having started as a naval hub of merely "passing" significance, Mauritius, with its natural bay at Port Louis, developed into a fragile but thriving colony in the mid-eighteenth century. It eventually became the French East India Company's *chef-lieu* overseas, outstripping first its rival Mascarene sister of La Réunion and then even Pondicherry on the southeastern Indian coast in this function. As a consequence of this functional extension and differentiation, the prime dimension in the art of maritime or naval hubbing was refined and extended into other spheres of economic, socio-cultural, technological and political life. One of the first extensions and refinements of the status of being a naval hub arose out of the necessity to provide the island and its inhabitants with food, construction materials, tools, slaves, basic necessities and certain "luxuries." By the late eighteenth century, Port Louis had become a well-frequented "free port," and through its opening to worldwide commerce, trade with Mauritius increased steadily, with boats from Europe, Asia and America dropping anchor in Port Louis. Mauritius acted as an entrepôt and distribution center for the products of regular trading activities, turning into a fully-fledged *mercantile* hub.

One rather special kind of trade that was instrumental in turning Mauritius into a mercantile hub of some consequence was that associated with acts of piracy. During the decades before the British take-over of the island in 1810, Port Louis provided a safe ha-

20 Anna Collar, Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas, Cambridge 2013, 19 (my emphasis).

21 By hubbing, I mean the activities and movements that a given hub sets in motion, organizes and keeps going. For the maritime history of Mauritius I mainly rely on Adolphe Toussaint, Harvest of the Sea: The Mauritius Sea Story in Outline, Port Louis 1966; Toussaint, Port Louis: A Tropical City, London 1973; Toussaint, Port Louis: deux siècles d'histoire, 1735–1935, Port Louis 2013 [1936]).

ven for several dozen French "corsairs," who captured substantial wealth on their "commercial raids." Returning to Mauritius, the pirates unloaded their "enter-prizes" and divided their spoils between captain and crew, while also paying an obligatory share to the government according to fixed rates. Only a small proportion of the newly acquired wealth in gold, diamonds, pepper, fine cloth, spices or porcelain remained on the island in the coffers of the white Franco-Mauritian elite: the greater part of it entered into international commercial and financial circuits. Especially with merchants and whalers hailing from the newly independent America, the booty was exchanged for money and naval supplies.[22]

There were further extensions of the hubbing activities of Mauritius into other, non-maritime areas. From the mid- to late eighteenth century onwards, sugar started to become the main export and source of income for Mauritius under French rule. This continued under British colonial rule until independence in 1968, as it still is today, under various global trade regimes for this much desired commodity. Focusing on the qualities of the island and its inhabitants as a hub, one needs to emphasize the obvious: sugar is not native to Mauritius. Different varieties were brought to the island, often under secretive and dangerous conditions, from India and Southeast Asia and then tested out in the island's botanical gardens or on its sugar plantations, until the most profitable and hardiest species for cultivation under Mauritian conditions were identified. Sugar and its subsidiary products were then produced and exported by the island's planters and merchants. It is therefore a prime example of an item that was brought to the island and transformed on it, only to then leave it again, though not without realizing a surplus.

Jumping now to contemporary postcolonial Mauritius, the social, institutional and mental foundations of this island as an expert hub have experienced further extensions and refinements, namely into spheres in which the maritime dimension is virtually absent. Independent Mauritius has developed into a "service hub," achieving economic success by offering the services that are required in the global markets of today. To start with, there is the textile industry, producing in especially erected so-called "Export Processing Zones" (EPZ). Again, in both its material and manufacturing dimensions, textiles are not "endemic" to Mauritius. The material (wool) may start in Australia, it is then processed into cloth in Hong Kong or Calcutta before being "finished" in Mauritius. The finished products go to the west. For the inner working of that hub, the Mauritian state provides the political and legal framework that offers tax and customs advantages and relatively favorable manufacturing conditions in the EPZs; the Sino-Mauritian community plays a vital role in establishing this business link across the Indian Ocean to Hong Kong; Franco-Mauritians use their sugar fields and their own investments to make this hub workable and profitable; while the Indo-Mauritians and Creoles provide the qualified, but relatively low-cost work force that transforms cloth into valuable designer clothes.[23]

22 On piracy, see Burkhard Schnepel, Piracy in the Indian Ocean ca. 1680–1750" (working paper, 160, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, 2014).

23 For an expert analysis of the Mauritian textile industry and "special economic zones," see Patrick Neveling, Mani-

Then there is the tourism industry. Tourism was initially introduced to Mauritius quite literally "by the way." In the early pre-jet age of commercial air traffic in the 1950s, Qantas Airways discovered Mauritius as a convenient stopover, strategically well located and politically safe, turning flights between South Africa and Australia into flights with one or two stops (Cocos Islands) only. In those days passengers did not come to enjoy the beauties of the island and relax on its beaches, but they stopped over for a day or two only in hotels on the island's rainy upper plateau to wait for connection flights. Nowadays, Mauritius has become a major tourist attraction and destination in itself, attracting more than one million tourists a year, who spend their holidays at the island's many beaches in four- to five-star hotels.[24] From 2000 onwards, the Mauritian economy was further diversified and strengthened by the great success of services in the off-shore banking and communication technologies sectors. These "pillars" of the Mauritian economy – International Financial Services (IFS) and International Communication Technology (ICT) – have catapulted Mauritius right into the center of the present-day global economy. As far as international financial services are concerned, it is especially Indian capital going to and coming from Africa that is routed through and administered in the Mauritian financial hub, which employs roughly 15,000 people. Services in international communication technology have only become possible relatively recently, since Mauritius connected itself to the optical fiber cables going from Australia to South Africa and in other north-south directions along the East African coasts. Since then Mauritius has managed to become a node in these lines of communication, it being an explicit aim of the island's politicians, and the over 300 ICT companies with their more than 12,000 employees, to become a "cyber island."

It is not without significance, at least for the social anthropologist, that the term "hub" is often used by Mauritian protagonists themselves. In conversations or in newspapers one finds Mauritians praising their island as a "seafood hub," a "liquefied petrol gas hub," a "knowledge hub," a "Hub 4.0." or "data hub". Moreover, Mauritians refer back in history and towards their society if they wish to argue why they are experts in the art of hubbing. Take these statements praising Mauritius by a Mauritian bank hoping to attract foreign investors: "A business friendly environment with a long history of hospitality; a safe country with enduring social and political stability; a culturally diverse, multilingual and highly educated workforce; strategically located between Asia and Africa; a convenient time zone; well-developed air and sea links to the rest of the world." Hence, the long history of the island as a hub, and the skills and socio-cultural characteristics acquired by its "multi-ethnic" population thereby, are regarded in contemporary Mauritius as great assets for providing modern-day hub services.

festationen der Globalisierung: Kapital, Staat und Arbeit in Mauritius, 1825–2005, PhD diss., Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, 2012.

24 See Burkhard Schnepel and Cornelia Schnepel, Two Beaches: The Globalization of Mauritian Waterfronts, in: Multiple Identities in Action: Mauritius and Some Antillean Parallelism, ed. Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing, Ralph Ludwig, and Burkhard Schnepel, Berlin 2009, 287-317.

In stressing the island's transport and transit functions, one must not forget that during stopover periods, whether long, medium or short, certain transmutations and translations occur. No matter whether old and maritime or new and cyber in character, all these cargoes that were and are serviced on the island do not merely stop over before being transported further on. They are also acted upon and thereby transformed and translated into different kinds of a thing, more often than not with added or enhanced value, part of which stays on the island and makes it relatively prosperous. In the realm of material things, these "translations" range (in a nutshell) from run-down ships to repaired ones; from sugarcane to refined sugar and its derivatives; from fish to frozen sea-foods, waiting to be canned; from cotton, wool and rough cloth to designer clothes; and from information and communication to knowledge and "bitcoins." In the realm of human beings, these "translations" range (again in brief) from sick and exhausted sailors / soldiers / travelers to healthy and strong ones; from pale and overworked tourists to tanned, relaxed and recuperated ones; and from pirates, adventurers or explorers to settlers.
In a nutshell, Mauritius's success in the economic domain, from its beginnings until the present day, lies in the fact that it realized and developed its qualities by distributing and circulating things. The Mauritian "miracle" is based on its expertise in providing the varying and historically changing qualities and services of a hub.[25]

The Mauritian Hub Society: Collective Identities and "Persons of Indian Origin" (PIO)

So far our focus on hubs as significant actants for transmaritime connectivity in motion has – paradigmatically – identified the historical, geostrategic, and geopolitical factors that are needed to make a place – in the Mauritian instance: an island in the middle of nowhere – into a hub. The quality of hubs as being "highly connected" – and as playing a role in making and sustaining a seaborne empire – need to be complemented by another quality that hubs exhibit: Hubs are charged with an extraordinary energy that affects their own inner lives and that also and most importantly changes those beings and things that live and partake in them. Hence, hubs have agency and vitality with regard to more than just putting things and beings in motion and making them circulate and flow. They have a special inner life, which is the reason for, and outcome of, their being experts in the art of "hubbing." It is this interior life of a hub *society* – that I wish to address in this section, zooming even further in from an all-Indian Ocean perspective to a localized one, again using Mauritius, this time the social life and collective identities within the Mauritian hub, as a paradigm.

25 For further details on the issues raised in this section, see also Burkhard Schnepel, The Making of a Hub Society: Mauritius' Path from Port of Call to Cyber Island, in: Connectivity in Motion, eds. Burkhard Schnepel and Edward A. Alpers, 231-58.

To start with a rather simple but nonetheless quite particular and even unique dimension to the situation in Mauritius, it is worth remembering that each and every section of the multi-ethnic Mauritian "rainbow" population of today initially came from elsewhere. In other words, no single group currently living in Mauritius can or does claim indigeneity. Certainly, some groups, especially the descendants of the French settlers and of their African slaves, may claim to have come and settled the island first. But even claims to first-comer status do not have any legitimating force on the island today, nor did they in the past. This lack of an aboriginal population or an officially acknowledged and privileged first-comer status makes present-day inter-ethnic negotiations and identity politics quite specific: it is not indigeneity, but the idea and ideology of having come from elsewhere, that is important for many Mauritians in many domains of life. Apart from being Mauritians and Mauritian nationals, all sections of Mauritian society today consider themselves as having strong diasporic roots and continuous diasporic links to their real and/or assumed "homelands."[26]

But where did Mauritians come from? According to a census of 1982 (whose figure will still be correct, by and large) the population of Mauritius is differentiated as follows: Hindus 52%, Muslims 16%, Sino-Mauritians 3% and General Population 29%. Quite obviously, the distinction between Hindus and Muslims in this categorically blurred census is a religious one. It is, however, important to note that the ancestors of both Hindus and Muslims in Mauritius today originally came from India. It is therefore not without significance, not to say irony, that some Muslim groups on the island have recently started to claim a heritage from the Arabian peninsula and to call Arabic (and not Hindi or Urdu) their "ancestral language." The criterion identifying the third group as "Sino" is no longer religious in character, but refers to the region of origin, namely China or East Asia, of those who are subsumed under this category. Under the rather unspecified label of "General Population" are subsumed such heterogeneous groups as white Franco-Mauritians (accounting for 2%) as well as "Creoles" (in the Mauritian context these are the descendants of African slaves), and "Coloreds" or "*gens de coleur*," a hybrid category denoting the off-spring of mixed marriages. The unified "General Population" can also be circumscribed negatively, namely as all those who did not come from Asia, an indicator of the fact that by 1982 political power in Mauritius had come to lie firmly in Indo-Mauritian hands.[27]

For those well-versed in identity studies, it will come as no surprise that applying other criteria or "identity markers" would produce other figures. Many people who find

26 See Thomas H. Eriksen, Ethnicity versus Nationalism, Journal of Peace Research 28 (1991): 236-78; Eriksen, Nationalism, Mauritian style: Cultural unity and ethnic Diversity, in: Comparative Studies in Society and History 36 (1994): 549-574; Eriksen, Common Denominators: Ethnicity, Nation-building and Compromise in Mauritius, Oxford 1998; Henry Srebrnik, Ethnicity and the Development of a 'Middleman' Economy on Mauritius: The Diaspora Factor, in: The Round Table 350 (1999): 297-311; Srebrnik, Can an Ethnically-Based Civil Society Succeed: The Case of Mauritius, in: Journal of Contemporary African Studies 18 (2000): 7-20.

27 On the intricacies of census activities in Mauritius, see Anthony J. Christopher, Ethnicity, Community and the Census in Mauritius, 1830–1990, in: Geographical Journal 158 (1992): 57-64; and Oddvar Hollup, Arya Samaj and the Shaping of 'Egalitarian' Hindus in Mauritius, in: Folk 36 (1994): 27-38.

themselves grouped together under one category, such as "ethnicity" or "homeland," find themselves joined by others if "ordered" and administered according to another category. If one merely takes "religion" in all instances (and not only the first two) as a group-making criterion, the cards would be re-shuffled quite substantially. Not only all sub-groups of the "General Population," but also large numbers of Mauritians hailing from South India and most Sino-Mauritians are Christians. Taking yet another criterion, namely that of language, would make things both easier and more complicated. Official sources state that in Mauritius fifteen languages are in use, including English, French, Kreol, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Arabic, Hakka and Cantonese. However, almost everyone on the island in almost all situations of interaction speaks a French-based Kreol; many Mauritians speak French very well, and most of the national media of any kind communicate in French. The official national language, however, is English, even though or maybe just because only a minority of educated Mauritians really master this language and like to use it.[28]

This multi-level and dynamically shifting picture is corroborated if we look merely at Mauritius' "Persons of Indian Origin" (PIO). [29] These constitute, as we have seen, the majority of the Mauritian population, that is, up to seventy percent today when all Indo-Mauritians are considered, and still more than fifty percent when only Hindus are counted. However, the Indian diaspora in Mauritius is heterogeneous in its social, caste, class, religious and linguistic composition and, maybe most importantly, as far as particular places of origin on the Indian subcontinent are concerned. In terms of their social background, the majority of the Indians, who were shipped as indentured laborers to Mauritius in the nineteenth century,[30] came from rural areas and belonged to what were then the lowest and poorest castes and classes on the Indian subcontinent. These people, commonly called "coolies," were joined later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by independent clerks and priests from the higher castes and better-off strata of Indian society, as well as by merchants from western India. As for their geographical roots, almost two thirds of Mauritian immigrant laborers came from the north of India,

28 Several studies discuss the importance of language identification in politics in contemporary Mauritius. See, among others, Patrick Eisenlohr, Little India: Diaspora, Time and Ethnolinguistic Belonging in Hindu Mauritius, Berkeley 2006; Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing, Langue et indentité ethnique: les langues ancestrales à Maurice, in: Journal of Mauritian Studies 1 (1986): 117-37; Thomas H. Eriksen, Linguistic Diversity and the Quest for National Identity: The Case of Mauritius, in: Ethnic and Racial Studies 13 (1990): 1-24; Hookoomsing, Ludwig and Schnepel, Multiple Identities in action; Ralph Ludwig and Burkhard Schnepel, Some Ideas on Communication, Culture and Society in Mauritius: Multiple Identities in Action, in: Multiple identities in action, 9-16.

29 The Indian diaspora in Mauritius today has been studied by, among others, Burton Benedict, Indians in a Plural Society, London 1961; Uttam Bissoondoyal and S.B.C. Servansing (eds.), Indian Labour Immigration, Moka 1986; Marina Carter, Servants, Sirdars and Settlers: Indians in Mauritius 1834–1874, Delhi 1995; Carter, Voices from Indenture: Experiences of Indian Migrants in the British Empire, Leicester 1996; Oddvar Hollup, Kinship and Marriage in the Construction of Identity and Group Boundaries among Indians in Mauritius, in: Culture, Creation and Procreation: Concepts of Kinship in South Asian Practice, eds. Monika Böck and Aparna Rao, Oxford 2000, 219-39; Burkhard Schnepel, Guest Without a Host: The Indian Diaspora(s) in Mauritius, in: India beyond India, ed. Elfriede Hermann (forthcoming).

30 On "indentured labor" more generally, see Hugh Tinker, A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1830–1920, London 1974.

mainly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and roughly one third from the south. Those of South Indian origin are further divided into Tamils and Telugus, groups which are of equal size. Looking at another criterion, namely religion, around 65% of Mauritius's "Persons of Indian Origin" are Hindus, around 25% are Muslims and around 10% today are Christians. These various regional backgrounds and ethnic and religious identifications are dynamically combined with other identity-making and identity-unmaking criteria, such as mother tongue, education, rural versus urban residence or differences in economic success and professional standing.

All in all, one should therefore be cautious of speaking of *the* Indian diaspora in Mauritius as a homogenous "we." What is more important than making these *analytical* scruples is the fact that Indo-Mauritians themselves often emphasize these differences strategically and in shifting ways relative to the situation at hand. The diasporic consciousness and diasporic politics have a firm backing in the official policies of the state in both internal and external matters. In Mauritius we encounter an idea of nationhood and the state which differs radically from the nineteenth-century West European prototype and ideal of "one culture / one language / one religion / one nation / one territory / one state." After independence in 1968, Mauritius had to face and tackle the fact that, as we have seen, its population was made up of many different racial, socio-cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds from different parts of the world. Any attempt at building the nation and unifying its various elements into a working unit as well as a sentimental entity had to be modeled in accordance with the well-known slogan of "unity and diversity."

Mauritian Hub Society: Individual and Family Strategies

So far we have discussed collective or communal hubbing and the socio-cultural as well as politico-economic dynamics this entailed. But how, zooming even further in, did families and individuals actually enact and organize their journeys and eventual stays? How was travelling and dwelling strategically used to survive, make a living or even become rich and powerful? To illustrate these matters, I now draw attention away from Indo-Mauritians to the histories of certain Franco-Mauritian individuals and families during the founding and consolidation phases of the Ile de France (Mauritius) in the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Out first protagonist, Josselin-Julien Maingard, was born in St. Malo, Brittany, in 1719 as the fourth of nine children.[31] At the age of ten he entered the navy, first under the command of his father, and then for several years in leading positions, also fighting against the English. He left Lorient for Ile de France in December 1750 and arrived in Port Louis in June 1751, accompanied by his wife Laurence Louisson, whom he had

31 The following is based on Jacques Maingard, "Mémoire d'un mauricien d'outre-mer," which was contributed to a "Concours d'histoire et de généalogie organisé par la ville Saint-Malo, la ville de Port-Louis et l'Alliance Francaise de l'Ile Maurice" in 2004 (Archives Municipales de Saint-Malo, Signature: 80 S 5).

married three months before their departure, and by his sister Cécile. In May 1759 he received a concession of land on Mauritius and forty slaves. He had six children with Laurence Louisson before his death in 1784. These six children are the ancestors of the numerous descendants of this line now living in Mauritius, as well as in Réunion and France.[32]

One of the better known and most influential of Josselin-Julien's descendants was Josselin-Jean Maingard, born 1759 as the sixth and last child. He received his education in Paris and entered the navy as a cadet in 1777, afterwards becoming a lieutenant, captain and commander in Port Louis. In November 1810 he fought with General Decaen against the British, who were invading Ile de France. After capitulation he returned to France to continue his military service there. Finally, he went to Ile Bourbon (La Réunion) where he died in 1838. Josselin-Jean had nine children.[33] A second distinguished person of this line of descent was Etienne-Josselin, born in 1787 as the first-born of Josselin-Jean and his wife Antoinette-Julie de Barry. At the age of thirteen Etienne-Josselin joined the army, becoming lieutenant in the artillery in 1809. After 1810 he went back to France and joined the army there as captain and commandant, retiring in 1846 after receiving numerous military distinctions. He died 1860 in Bordeaux.[34] Lastly another ancestor, this time closer to the present, was Amédée Maingard de la Ville-ès-Offrans, born in Mauritius in 1918. He studied economics in Britain in the 1930s. During the war he joined the British Army and acted as an important member of the French resistance. After the war he completed his studies in Britain before returning to Mauritius in 1946, where he became one of the most influential figures in establishing the Mauritian tourism industry, thus turning the "circulation and flows" which his dynasty so vividly exhibits into a profession and business. He died in 1981 in Mauritius.

It is not without significance for our discussion of the internal dynamics of the multi-dimensional and multi-level "hub society" of Mauritius that Josselin-Julien Maingard was also the founder of a second line of the Maingard family. This branch he established after the death of his wife Laurence Louisson in "*liaison intime*" with a "*noir libre*" called Pauline. Their first child was Joseph Maingard, who was born in 1767 as, in accordance with the criterion mentioned above, a "gens de couleur." He married on the island and had one son who seems to have left the island. However, the Mauritian line of this branch was kept going by his second son, Hippolyte Maingard (born 1777). He had a son called Hippolyte-Clodomir Maingard (born 1803).[35] He left a number of children, one of whom was Joseph-Clodomir, who was born on the island in 1840 and died there in 1924. Joseph-Clodomir (and we now follow his line only) was married in 1865 to Augusta Werner (1848–1866), the daughter of an Englishman (the island was British since 1810), who lived with his family in the neighborhood. After Augusta Werner died

32 Ibid.: 25-27.
33 Ibid.: 28-29.
34 Ibid.: 29.
35 Ibid.: 31-32.

in 1866, Joseph-Clodomir Maingard married a second time, this time a woman called Marie-Angèle Martin. They had two sons, one of whom was Joseph-Raoul Maingard. In 1913 he married a third time, a woman called Augusta Simonet; they had no children.[36] Auguste Maingard, the only child of the first marriage of Joseph-Clodomir, died on the island in 1934. He never got to know his mother, who had died several days after his birth. In his grief, his father broke with the Catholic Church and converted to the Anglican Church, which also baptized Auguste. Auguste founded a newspaper and became a poet and writer. In 1863 he married Rachel Dinnematin (1863–1924), with whom he had five children.

At this point we have to go one step aside before looking at the children of Auguste and Rachel. Joseph-Raoul Maingard (1873–1919), to recall, was the second son of Joseph-Clodomir Maingard and his second wife Marie-Angèle Martin. He studied in France and, upon returning to Mauritius, married Delphine Thomé in 1903, with whom he had six children, one of whom was Marie-Louise (the second daughter). Joseph-Raoul Maingard worked as a civil servant on the "dependent islands" of Mauritius, namely Rodriguez, Diego Garcia, Coco and Agaléga, where he died. His daughter Marie-Louise was born in Rodriguez in 1906 and died in London in 1990. After Joseph-Raoul died, Delphine and her six children went back to Mauritius without any means. She started working for the Singer sewing company in Port Louis, while her two eldest daughters, Jeanne and Marie-Louise, at that time fifteen and thirteen respectively, worked as *couturières* for the ladies of society. The family was helped by a rich cousin of Délphines in Paris.[37] In 1926 Marie-Louise Maingard was married to Joseph-Bénédict Maingard (1901–1981), the fifth and last child of Auguste Maingard and Rachel Dinnematin, which brings us back to the family of Auguste Maingard. This is how it comes about that two persons both surnamed Maingard married. Hence, in terms of the anthropology of kinship, Joseph-Bénédict married his patrilateral parallel cousin, that is, the daughter of his father's brother or, more exactly, his father's half-brother. Joseph-Bénédict worked in the British Colonial Legal Civil Service, first in Port Louis and, from 1947, in Hong Kong, where he went with his family. However, in 1950 they returned to Mauritius, before they emigrated to England in 1953.[38]

What have we learned so far about families installing themselves on Mauritius from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards? The Maingard men were all involved in maritime activities in both the merchant marine and navy. These activities were combined with activities in commerce. Before the founder of the Maingard family on Mauritius (or better of the two families) brought his wife and sister to the island, he had been there before. This seems to be a general pattern: men in the navy visited and had come to know the island before they brought their families there with them. One main reason for leaving St. Malo was the hardship there and the desire to lead a better life on the

36 Ibid.: 32.
37 Ibid.: 40-41.
38 Ibid.: 44.

island. Becoming established on the island took several generations before it succeeded, and usually several families or branches of families were involved, closely cooperating economically and supporting each other in times of hardship and personal tragedy. In these early years and generations men stuck to their profession in the navy and several times went back and forth between France and Ile de France or roamed the seas on other missions across the Indian Ocean. During these early decades we also see that, bit by bit, land on Mauritius was acquired and that family members took over jobs as landlords, civil servants or businessmen on the island.

It appears that two branches of the Maingard family, one by a lawful wife from St. Malo and the other by a freed slave, Pauline, did not cooperate. One can assume that the "legitimate" branch of Josselin-Julien and his wife Laurence was not inclined to have much to do with the offspring of his father with a "negro," though we do not know for sure. The history of the Pauline branch gives us several hints about how one family always needed the support and backing of other families. For this survival strategy, marriage patterns became important. In the early nineteenth century we find, for example, that Maingards married Werners, a family well-known in the neighborhood. We also find two marriages of Maingards with Martins, one of whom seems to have been the grandmother or grand-aunt of the other. The second marriage within this circle of two families was even one between closely related parallel cousins. These marriages also show an ability to cross nation and denomination, as they were enacted between English and French families, respectively also members of the Catholic and Anglican churches. Cooperation between extended families, branches of families and families aligned by marriage (in-laws) could at times extend across the ocean. For example, a rich cousin from Paris helped a destitute widow and her daughters back in Mauritius, and a young man found accommodation and a job with relatives in South Africa, Australia or England. Hence, we find a system of individual families, more often than not with a considerable number of children, who have networks not only back home but also with other islands and coasts around the Indian Ocean. These networks are activated not only in times of trouble but also for economic purposes and again for marriages.

Individual and family hubbing was gendered. While men travelled back and forth and can be seen as the natural agents of this proto-form of globalization, women seemed to be busy staying put. To be sure, they travelled too, leaving their homes and families of origin, and not only entering a new family after marriage, but also accompanying their husbands to distant and foreign places in order to lead a settled life there. Their main task was having children, one after another, year after year, until they died – usually at a much earlier age than their husbands, who soon married again or had families with concubines. Boys entered the navy at quite early ages. Girls also travelled. It was not uncommon – remember tragic Virginie of *Paul et Virginie* fame – that they left their tropical homes from around the ages of six to twelve to be educated in France, not only in reading, writing and mathematics, but also in the mores of the civilization they were thought to have left behind. So, in the game of family hubbing, the role of women was important. They took care of the home and of the new creole family, providing offspring and stability, as

well as being responsible for the moral economy of the family, which somehow had to keep its socio-cultural identity in a world where many things were done in ways different from what seemed to be correct and acceptable by the standards at home. This local and micro-social stability was essential. Women provided the sheltered center without which it would not be possible for the men to circulate. Hence, the gendered nature of family hubbing and the reproductive as well as stabilizing role of women must not be ignored and lost when it comes to tracing family histories and sociology, even though children, in this world of men, bear the names of their fathers, and, hence the line which families (and their historians follow) is almost automatically paternal, while the world of women is divided, and they appear in larger kinship groups only as the sisters and wives and mothers of men.

In order to redress this imbalance in the awareness and conceptualization of the role of women in the art of hubbing, let us now briefly look at a another family history in which women are at the center of our attention.[39] Our first female protagonist, Julienne Le Gentil (1675–1736), married Jean-Louis Vigoureux in St. Malo in 1700. She was then twenty-five and he was forty-three, from a Malouin merchant family. All in all, she gave birth to twelve children, six of whom survived, four girls and two boys, namely Louis born in 1702 and Jean Baptiste Henry born in 1705. Of the four daughters**,** Julienne Charlotte, born in 1707, joined the monastery of Ursulines in the convent of St. Charles in Dinan. The other three, namely Jeanne Françoise, born in 1709, Marine Madeleine, born in 1712, and Anne, born in 1715, had difficulties in entering into suitable marriages. Julienne became a widow in 1730, and she was thus left on her own with three unmarried daughters aged 21, 18 and 15. When their eldest brother Louis returned from an Indian Ocean journey as soldier in 1734, he persuaded his mother and sisters to emigrate to the Ile de France, where at this time Mahé de Labourdonnais had just started to colonize the uninhabited island successfully. Life on Ile de France in that early phase was simple and very difficult: famines, cyclones, rats, marooned slaves, hardly any infrastructure and political instability constantly threatened the incipient settlement in its existence. Despite all this, Julienne and her three younger daughters, accompanied by their brother and two domestic servants, left on board the *Jupiter* for Mauritius early in 1735 hoping for a better life. The boat arrived in August 1735. Six months after their arrival, Julienne died in 1736 at the age of 61.

Julienne's first daughter, Jeanne Françoise Vigoureux, married René Joseph Colbert in February 1736 at the age of 25, one month after the death of her mother; the second daughter, Marine Madeleine Vigoureux, married Deshupry le Goff on the same day. Jeanne Françoise's husband, René Joseph, had come to the island on 1733 to work in the colonial administration. After his death in 1743, Jeanne Francoise inherited his prop-

39 The following information is based on Anne-Marie Chatelain, "Une famille dans le vent de l'histoire: De Saint-Malo a l'île de France. Quatre generations de femmes, 1638–1768" (Memoire présenté dans le cadre du concours d' Histoire et Généalogie Port Louis – Saint-Malo, October 2004), Archives Municipales de Saint-Malo, Signature 80 S 1.

erty, which was in land; they had no children. In 1745 Jeanne Francoise married for a second time, to M. Courtois de Longchamp, a high-ranking soldier in the new army of Ile de France; they also had no children. In 1762 they moved back to France. Marine Madeleine Vigoureux, the second daughter, was 24 years old when she married a cousin of the governor Mahé de Labourdonnais (Deshupry le Goff), three years her younger. Three years after the marriage, in 1739, she died without any offspring. Julienne's youngest daughter, Anne Vigoureux, lived from 1715 to 1745. She married six years after her arrival on Mauritius, namely in 1741. Her husband, Nicolas Duhamel, arrived on Mauritius in June 1735 together with Mahé de Labourdonnais and worked on the island as a company employee. Anne and Nicolas had five daughters. There were only three years and three months between the first two (twins) and the fifth. In 1745 Anne died at the age of thirty, and her husband died soon afterwards, probably a victim of the same epidemic outbreak which had killed his wife. The orphans joined the families of the two brothers, Louis and Jean Bapiste Henry Vigoureux.

The elder brother, Louis, had three "natural" children (*enfants naturels*) with a young Indo-Portuguese woman ("femme libre au service de M. Vigoureux") called Francisca Diès do Santo. These were Nicolas, born in 1744, Jacques François, born in 1745, and Anne Michelle, born in 1747. Louis also had a "natural" son with a domestic slave of Chinese origin. In 1745 Louis appears to have been living in the house of his elder sister Jeanne Françoise, who at that time was in her second marriage and had no children of her own. In 1747, Louis married Perrine Julienne Robin in Saint Denis, the capital of neighboring Ile de Bourbon (Réunion). The couple went back to Ile de France where the bride not only had to face the fact that Louis had had two "concubines," one Indo-Portuguese and one Chinese, with whom he had had three and one children respectively. Furthermore, he had yet another child with another Chinese slave called after his marriage. Perrine Julienne did not lag behind for too long. Soon after her marriage she started to have children too, namely four daughters and three sons. Jean Baptiste, the younger brother, married Elisabeth de Varennes in 1732. The couple first lived in Pondicherry and Chandernagor, India, where they had one child in 1746, during whose birth Elisabeth died. Jean Baptiste married again in 1747, to a young woman from Port Louis called Thérèse Donadieu de Pucherie. He was 42 years old, his bride fourteen and a half. She was the daughter of an officer stationed in Pondicherry after whose death she and her mother went to Ile de France. Between 1748 and 1761 Thérèse had two sons and four daughters. In sum, the two Vigoureux brothers had fifteen legitimate children in addition to five "natural" children, and they had to take care of the four (soon only three) orphans of Anne's.

To conclude this section with the additional information on women that we have now gathered. It seems to have been a common (and successful) strategy 1) to produce as many offspring as possible; however, the death rate among children was high, especially, it seems, for female children; 2) to spread the family widely across the Indian Ocean from Pondicherry to St. Malo; 3) to give the children of both sexes some education in France; 4) to marry strategically; 5) to remarry (both men and women) in case of the premature

death of a partner; 6) to provide support to the widows and orphans of parents, brothers and sisters; 7) to diversify one's assets and business options in terms of business ventures both and their locations; 8) to establish a *domaine* in Mauritius and to produce sugar and other agricultural products for export there; 9) finally, in all this it is not unusual for men to grow rather old, namely to sixty or even seventy, while women rarely get beyond thirty. Finally, we must not ignore that family strategies, as part of the art of hubbing, were racialized. While French and Indian families and communities were able to hub in the way they did, this was not possible for the African slaves; and it is still very often not possible for their "Creole" descendants on Mauritius today who lack the means to travel.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to challenge static and bounded notions of empires, replacing these with an emphasis on the fragmented and polycentric nature and permeable borders exhibited by many realms, especially if relying on or being based on sea-power. It also added mobility to the picture of sea(borne) empires, addressing the means, modes and methods of "connectivity in motion" in both time and space. Moreover, in doing so, it directed attention to the seminal role of the smaller components of empires, here understood to be "hubs," in creating larger maritime polities and aligning them to larger dynamic and ever-changing networks. A maritime and specifically "Indian Ocean" perspective to the overall picture of empires and civilizations, then, shifts the focus of analysis away from a preoccupation with the modern nation-state (and its anxieties over its territorial borders) and away from bounded space as a frame of analysis. Rather, a greater awareness arises of mobility, routes, hubs and the networking processes along and through which exchanges and connectivity have taken place.

These methodological points are congruent, by and large, with what many "new thalassologies" do not tire to point out theoretically and to substantiate empirically.[40] However, this does not mean arguing in favor of any over-exalted "celebration" of mobility, circulation and flow. Travelling and dwelling, as Clifford[41] has rightly pointed out, always need to be viewed in their dialectical interdependencies. There are always people who do not move and have to remain where they are: African slaves or their descendants, for example, or if of female gender. In fact, it may even be essential for those who move that some people do not and cannot move. Furthermore, we can agree with Salazar that the "fashionable imagery of flows is badly chosen if we want to describe how people, objects and ideas move around the world. Global forces are evidently not neutral but always subject to economic privileges and political agendas."[42] We can also follow Ferguson when he argues that "the 'global' does not 'flow' thereby connecting and watering contiguous

40 For an insightful discussion and summary, see Markus Vink, Indian Ocean Studies and the New Thalassology, in: Journal of Global History 2 (2007): 41–62.
41 James Clifford, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century, Boston 1997.
42 Noel Salazar, Envisioning Eden: Mobilizing Imaginaries in Tourism and Beyond, Oxford / New York 2010, 338.

space; *it hops instead*, efficiently connecting the enclaved points in the network while excluding (with equal efficiency) the spaces that lie between the points."[43] Overemphasizing mobility, circulation and flow, therefore, may run the risk of ignoring those places and times where and when people, things and ideas did not and do not move, where and when there were and are encumbrances and stagnation. Furthermore, and equally important, such a view will fail to identify the crucial points in space and time where and when things start (or stop) to hop or jump. What is required in this context is to identify the "jumping off points" in time and space, that is, we need a "*punctum saliens*" perspective on mobility and immobility.

Finally, by adding a maritime and, as it were, more southern perspective to the study of terrestrial Eurasia, it has been possible to re-connect the vast landmass in the north of this part of the globe with the Asian south analytically and empirically, thus acknowledging these two sides of the coin as communicating tubes highly integrated in the past, present and future.[44] Ultimately, the inclusion of the Indian Ocean world into the Eurasian perspective inevitably directs our view to Africa as well. It has long been deplored in "Indian Ocean Studies" that some of its early adherents, such as Chaudhuri,[45] and also the name of the *Indian* Ocean as such, have tended to ignore the crucial role of Africa (or at least of the East African coast) in the history of this ocean.[46] These strong African connections across the Indian Ocean world could readily be extended via the Red Sea to North Africa, linking this region historically with the southwest Indian coast and, from there, with the Malay Archipelago. For the argument propounded here it is not unimportant that this "Saharasian" world, as some call it,[47] came to dominate because of the very act of a terrestrial Eurasian force, namely the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258, which led to vital Indian Ocean trade routes being shifted from the Gulf to the Red Sea.

43 James Ferguson, Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order, Durham 2006, 47; my emphasis.

44 In more general terms, this perspective also helps us understand and study the complex and dynamic dialectics and interdependencies between land and sea that have been fundamental to human existence. See Hans Blumenberg, Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer: Paradigma einer Daseinsmetapher, Frankfurt am Main 1997; Carl Schmitt, Land und Meer: Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen, Stuttgart 1954.

45 Kirti Narayan Chaudhuri, Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean.

46 Some scholars even felt it called for another name, namely the "Afro-Asian Seas," instead of the "Indian Ocean." See Pearson, The Indian Ocean; Dietmar Rothermund and Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (eds.), Der Indische Ozean: Das afro-asiatische Mittelmeer als Kultur- und Wirtschaftsraum, Wien 2004.

47 Ravi Arvind Palat, Maritime Trade, Political Relations and Residential Diplomacy in the World of the Indian Ocean, in: The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies, eds. Abdul Sheriff and Engseng Ho, London 2014, 45-68.