

Beyond Sites and Methods: The Field, History and Global Capitalism

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Introduction

For a largely research-driven science such as anthropology the object(s) of investigation are crucial choices. The “field” is what most anthropologists may identify as just such an object, be this the entire world or a rural, suburban, or urban setting, a factory, a university department, or whatever other scales we may think of where human interaction and sociability take place. What is possibly significant for anthropology in contrast to other disciplines is the uneasy relationship they have with their “field” – both as individuals with academic biographies and as an epistemic community of scientists with their common quarrels over politics and analytical strands. Bronislaw Malinowski, who is often identified as the founder of mainstream anthropological research practices, himself established the practice of field research in a setting where he ended up as living for a time as a detainee on Australian territory because of his German origin in the years of the First World War. He made good use of his somewhat unwanted residence pattern and, as we all know, wrote several all-time classics about the Trobriand Islands in what was then an Australian protectorate.

The following is about the field and the changing historical “relationship” that anthropology has had with it. I set off with my own research in Mauritius in the early 2000s in order to assess what the “field” should be, in my view, for a modern anthropology that is necessarily at odds with the workings of global capitalism and what they do to humankind. Importantly, humankind is facing decisions on how it determines the nature of social life in time and space. Likewise, anthropologists, past and present, also have had a choice to make with respect to what concepts to make canonical in the discipline; how “the field” should be framed remains central among such choices. Accordingly, I assess recent debates over globalization and multi-sited ethnography, as well as earlier trends in research frameworks against their capability to capture the past and present workings of global capitalism, worldwide. I examine

the specifics of these processes as they play out in a location such as Mauritius, aiming to outline a contemporary research agenda able to consider continuity and change in the face of hierarchies, inequalities and the many efforts to overcome or sustain these systems of inequality. Now, off to Mauritius.

In the early 2000s the small-island nation-state Mauritius was in crisis. Like any nation-state, Mauritius has a history shaped by incorporation into global capitalism – and as everywhere, this history is both particular on the one hand and a reflection of global trends on the other. Accordingly, that crisis was a reflection of a changing global economic setting. The member-states of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) had been advancing plans for what they said would be a liberalization of world trade (for an overview on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [GATT] and WTO see Hoekman and Kosteci, 2001). In such agreements, two or more nation-states, or trading blocs such as the European Union, grant each other or one party preferential access to their markets; for this reason, the WTO viewed them as obstacles to the establishment of a system of global free trade and sought to therefore have them abolished by January 1, 2005.

Once we turn to Mauritius, the particularities kick in. Not all nation-states experienced the run-up to the above deadline as a time of crisis. Mauritius, however, had been one of the winners of a global trading system with many bilateral and multilateral trade agreements in place. In fact, such agreements had contributed crucially to labels such as “economic miracle” or “Africa’s first tiger,” which had become attached to the island around 1990 (Aladin, 1993; Morna, 1991). The Mauritian particularity in that period was one of anti-cyclical boom and bust. While many nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America saw their economies decline during what is called the Third World debt crisis of the 1980s, the Mauritian economy grew rapidly. The driving force behind this growth was an export processing zone (EPZ), where foreign and local investors set up an extensive network of businesses in the textile and garment sector and brought full employment to an island-state that had been considered one of the poorest nations in the world in the late period of British colonial rule up to 1968 (Neveling, 2015b).

Among the reasons that made Mauritius so attractive for investments in the textile and garment sector during the 1980s was that in addition to cheap labor, tax- and customs-free manufacturing in an EPZ, and other laws that put capital in the driving seat vis-à-vis trade unions and the state, Mauritius also had an export-quota to the market of what was then the European Economic Community that other nations did not have (even while they had everything else, such as an EPZ, and more, such as cheaper labor and even fewer workers' rights than Mauritius). After those export-quota were phased out in the late 1990s, Mauritius lost its major competitive advantage and with this change, tens of thousands of jobs and a good share of export revenues on the foreign trade balance sheet of the island nation disappeared for good.

Obviously, the crisis had been looming in Mauritius for quite some time. In mid-July 2003, when I began my research on the textile and garment industry and on the Mauritian EPZ, that crisis came to a climax. It manifested itself (again) in a number of ways after two of the leading foreign EPZ-investors announced the closure of their Mauritian operations. These investors, Leisure Garment and Summit Textiles, two Hong Kong-based consortia, would take with them 4,000 jobs. This development came on top of previous relocations from other Asian and Mauritian multinationals like Novel Garments and CIEL Textile Group. On an island with 1.2 million inhabitants and an officially registered workforce of around 400,000, unemployment rose by 5 per cent within three years (for figures see Central Statistics Office, 2004).

By the end of August 2003 the above-mentioned closures seemed inevitable and around 1,000 people took to the streets of Curepipe, one of the largest Mauritian cities, where one factory had employed around 50 per cent of Summit Textiles' Mauritian workers. The demonstrators asked for swift and determined state action to guarantee the survival of the ailing textile and garment sector and for the introduction of a national unemployment scheme. In the week before, a Mauritian weekly with considerable circulation, *News on Sunday*, reprinted an article that the *Wall Street Journal* had recently featured on Mauritius. Under the headline, "The downside of globalisation," the journal had painted a picture of doom and gloom for the small-island state, saying that "...this poster child of globalisation is starting to see the downside of free trade. As trade barriers ease around the world, China and India are

flooding the world's market with their own textiles and undercutting Mauritius's prices by drawing on their own vast pools of cheap labour" (Tejada, 2003).

Now, Mookeshwarsing Gopal, acting president of the private sector-driven Mauritius Export Processing Zones Association, announced that "all textile and garment companies are experiencing difficulties" (La Gazette de Maurice, 2003, my translation). Either the Textile Emergency Support Team, the latest in a series of collaborative efforts by the government and the private sector, would succeed and the sector would recover or the whole country and particularly all those workers already dismissed or about to be dismissed would have to look for a new (industrial) future. The state, he added, was definitely not in a position to support households affected by unemployment with "additional benefits" (La Gazette de Maurice, 2003, my translation).

As these brief episodes show, a number of actors had their say during the Mauritian crisis of 2003. Transnational corporations announced that they would shut down production sites, workers and others who were affected by these changes demonstrated against the closures and what would presumably follow, national and international media commented on the changing embeddedness of the island in the global system; last but not least, there was the Mauritian state-private sector alliance seeking to turn the leading EPZ sector around, which, interestingly, meant that a leading representative of a private sector organization felt empowered to speak out about the limited redistributive capacities of the state.

What these episodes also show is that Mauritian debates during the early 2000s were greatly concerned with temporality. From the articles in the *Wall Street Journal* to the activists taking the streets and asking for a change in state policies, concern was both with the past development of the Mauritian economy as well as with its future prospects. Such a consciousness of change in public expressions also indexed a variety of scales. For one, we find an assessment of Mauritius' position vis-à-vis a global economic system with nation-states competing with one another for foreign direct investment and employment. Secondly, there was concern about the prospects of individual households in the face of local repercussions from changes in the global economy. Thirdly, a debate over changing relations between capital, state, and labor

emerged as the state gave support to companies in the textile and garment sector while it denied support to those workers who had been made redundant (laid off).

The first section of this chapter will expand the discussion of how different actors developed and articulated some of the above-mentioned concepts in order to enhance our understanding of economic changes in Mauritius during the years 2003 and 2004. Importantly, all of the concepts I came across in Mauritius included reflections on how historical integration into the capitalist world-economy had shaped access to means of production, in the broad sense of the term, and social stratification in Mauritius, and how these historically embedded inequalities might be sustained into the future due to the crisis of the present. I suggest that the best way to capture the conversation between the various actors who took the stage in Mauritius in 2003 and 2004 is by perceiving them as the socio-genealogical positioning of actors (and of the institutions they may represent) in light of the multifarious manifestations of globalization. Globalization, suffice it to say for now, in the case of Mauritius has shaped this previously uninhabited territory since the early seventeenth century, when Dutch colonisers first took possession of the island. The contemporary crisis of the textile and garment industry and what this meant for households, the state, the private sector, and so forth, thus was then only one in a sequence of such manifestations of globalisation. Whereas globalisation surely generated different phenomena over the centuries, in structural terms the outcome of its manifestations, the real-world changes and what people make of them, is the same; different, competing explanations of what is going on, why it is going on, and what the best way to move forward should be.

In order to broaden this agenda developed based on ethnographic detail from Mauritius in section one, section two discusses new understandings of “the field” in anthropology. These came to the fore in the discipline’s globalization debates of the 1990s and I show how they reveal a lack of focus with regard to historical process and hierarchy. In the concluding section, I open up a more comprehensive notion of the “field”, which I exemplify with a short overview of macro-anthropology writings concerned with the history of the twentieth century. In this way an anthropological enquiry emerges that is attentive to historical processes and hierarchies, and to how

these have informed the socio-genealogical positioning of actors and institutions in times of crises, aiming to make sense of the prospects for their future lives and times.

Crisis and the Global System: Mauritius as a Field of Inquiry in 2003 and 2004

The most striking occurrence in Mauritius during the time of my research was surely the crisis in the textile and garment industry. As noted, the phasing out of the preferential export quota came on the heels of the liberalization of world trade. This also had an impact on the island's other revenue-generating economic sectors—the sugar industry and tourism. What struck me in particular in the first weeks after my arrival was that anthropological writings on Mauritius had little or nothing to say about the island's dependency on world market trends or on the diverse political arenas where decisions with crucial impact on the lives and times of all Mauritians had been made in the past and were made in the present.

Rather, the writings of one Scandinavian anthropologist, for example, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, focused chiefly on Mauritius as a nation whose supposedly multicultural inhabitants were descendants of French colonial immigrants, African slaves, Gujarati and Chinese traders, and South Asian indentured laborers, and who, despite this diversity engaged in (surprisingly) peaceful inter-ethnic relations (Eriksen, 1998). The longer I lived in Mauritius, the more I felt that something was wrong with Eriksen's declaration that "non-ethnic" options were secondary to how Mauritians made sense of their world. My initial impulse was to think that class interests must have been of little or no relevance in everyday life at the time when Eriksen had conducted research in the 1980s (cf. Eriksen, 1998: esp.: 20, 48), until I realized that it was not only leftist political movements (mentioned only to be dismissed by Eriksen) that rallied against ethnic politics but also that most Mauritians used "communalism" as the pejorative term to describe those who still believed that reference to ethnic origin was the paramount way to find a position in the economy and in society in general. Indeed, I regularly heard references to how a so-called best-loser-system kept the island's political parties stuck in ethnic politics as they hoped that in the case of a bad election campaign they would be allocated one of eight seats

reserved for those parties who represented ethnic groups who were otherwise underrepresented in parliament after the 69 “regular” seats had been filled via direct elections. Shortly before independence in 1968, the British had introduced this system as a way to disrupt the possibilities for class-based alliances to develop throughout the twentieth century. Such an ethnic paradigm was the dominant lens through which the Colonial Office in London and the colonial administration on the island had viewed and organised Mauritian society since the mid-1800s. This was despite the fact that the colonial census in Mauritius meant regular frustration on the side of enumerators, who found it hard to maintain a rigid, albeit ever-changing classificatory system combining one’s ancestors’ origin in France, India, Africa, and so forth with religious belief in the face of permanent migration, intermarriage, and religious conversions (cf. Christopher, 1992). Still, these classifications were upheld throughout the colonial period, based on a deliberate ignorance of a strong labor movement since the 1930s, which organized numerous general strikes, and increasingly came into conflict with proto-fascist political movements that emerged around the same time. Despite the fact that such movements grew larger and larger, Burton Benedict, a sociologist who was sent to study Mauritius on behalf of the Colonial Office, maintained in the late 1950s that the island was a “plural society” with ethnic groups in the driver’s seat of social life (e.g. Benedict, 1965).

There is much to say about the ways in which ethnic politics dominated Mauritian society and domestic political-economy in some periods and how they took the backseat in other periods, or, how it was particularly the sugar sector and to some degree the colonial and early postcolonial state where ethnic politics secured patron-client networks that kept workers’ rights movements at bay (cf. Neveling, 2012). All this could be referred to historical enquiry were it not for the fact that the anthropology of Mauritius has so far not come clean on the impact of its “colonial encounter” (Asad, 1973) on the prevailing representation of Mauritius as a multi-ethnic “paradise”. Instead, Eriksen had “written in stone” (Neveling, 2015a) Benedict’s predicament when he wrote that “Mauritian society, if anything, is a plural one” (Eriksen, 1998: 20). By “anything” he meant ethnicity, and this remains an

inevitable frame of reference for any otherwise excellent enquiry into the nature of Mauritian social relations (e.g. Boswell, 2006; Eisenlohr, 2006; Salverda, 2015).

Such a focus can hardly account adequately for the dominance of very few industries in Mauritius in everyday life. The textile and garment industry, for example, employed around a quarter of the Mauritian workforce from the 1980s to the early 2000s and these workers' lives were driven by up to 60-hour weeks in factories responding to the industry's order cycles for winter and summer seasons, as well as to a changing global commodity chain that came to be dominated by ever shorter lead times for orders in the 1990s, when retailers such as the Swedish Hennes & Mauritz, the British Primark, or the Spanish textile and garment giant Inditex entered the market (on lead times see Gereffi and Memedovic, 2003).

Another core industrial sector of postcolonial Mauritian society is the tourism industry, which grew especially rapidly from the 1980s and now brings close to one million visitors to the island each year with the bulk of arrivals during the Christmas season (Schnepel, 2009). The sugar industry, on the other hand, while important for the postcolonial state's economic trajectory, was purely a colonial creation. It is, in many ways, what Mauritian society is built on, as the islanders are well aware. In 2003, most of the land utilized for agricultural purposes was in the hands of the sugar industry. Therefore, the sugar sector and its historical foundations and legacies in the present deserve special attention in any effort to frame an anthropological "field" for Mauritius. A *tour d'horizon* shall illustrate why.

When Mauritius fell from the French to the British in 1810 towards the end of the Napoleonic wars, it had been this industry in part that enabled a truce between the resident French-Mauritian population and the new British colonial rulers. In 1825, Mauritius had been incorporated into the preferential West Indian Sugar Protocol and had quickly become one of the British Empire's leading sugar-producing colonies. As the industry boomed throughout much of the nineteenth century, descendants of French planters set up joint ventures with British trading houses and a Euro-Mauritian business community emerged as the second power alongside, and often in close cooperation with, the colonial administrations. A local banking sector provided capital on a seasonal basis until the Mauritian produce had been sold on the markets

in London and later also in British India. The principles governing the trade were delineated early on as in 1835 the Empire enforced the abolition of slavery in the face of rioting Mauritian mobs. The huge compensation paid to slave-owners not only provided capital for the banking sector but also for modernizing the sugar industry and promoting milling technology. The Empire provided indentured laborers from its South Asian colonies. As hundreds of thousands of such laborers moved between Mauritius and India, trade relations grew and British-Indian banking houses provided credit, which an increasing number of indentured laborers used to set up their own small and medium plantation businesses. For the Euro-Mauritian bourgeoisie, such business activity was a blessing as it facilitated the partition and sale of plots with soils depleted by decades of intensive cultivation and stricken by the El Niño weather pattern of the 1870s. The Euro-Mauritian petty bourgeoisie established new outlets during this period as they moved from being planters into real estate brokering since they found it ever more difficult to compete with the large estates and their state-of-the-art milling technology. Between the 1870s and the 1920s, Mauritius was a hothouse for small and medium sugar cane businesses. However, as the global crisis of the 1930s hit, tens of thousands of households lost their newly acquired smallholdings. They were driven into growing urban agglomerations while others, who managed to hold on to their land, became ever more dependent on moneylenders working in close collaboration with the large mills and on job contractors whom the large estates sent out during the cane season to recruit temporary labor by the hour, the day, or by the week at best. The sugar industry was driven by preferential access to particular markets from its inception and remains dependent on the export quota up to the present. The 1825 incorporation of Mauritius into the West Indian Sugar Protocol was nullified by the Corn Laws in 1845, only for the flow of Mauritian sugar to be diverted back from India to the United Kingdom at the onset of the First World War, which has remained the direction of exports ever since that time. But, as with the other sectors, the WTO liberalization of global trade meant that Mauritian sugar would lose its competitive edge over larger producers such as Brazil and Thailand in the 2000 with the Cotonou Agreement, running to 2020, intended to phase out

preferences step-by-step to allow the Mauritian industry to restructure (for more comprehensive summaries see Neveling, 2013, 2015b).

Mauritius is then an island of political and economic history rather than an island of ethnic history. Culture in Mauritius “is the world-system” (Wallerstein, 1990). For it is not only the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of workers on an island with 1.2 million inhabitants that are driven by the seasons of the global textile and garment or the tourism industry, or the seasons of sugar cane cultivation and processing, but also the various cosmological notions of the islanders, past and present, reflected in ritual and other practices.

For example, the International Workers’ Day, May 1, is a central ritual for all islanders and Mauritians refer to it as “the war of the crowds,” meaning that the major political parties open their war-chests and hire public busses to drive as many islanders as they can afford to political rallies held in Quatre Bornes, Rose Hill, Beau-Bassin, and other large Mauritian cities. Once the rallies are over and the increasingly drunken crowds have listened to up to five hours of speeches amplified to deafening levels, rewards are paid in kind as thousands are now bussed to the beaches where the respective party’s “agents” will have arranged for free barbecues and drinks. Stemming from the days of slavery and the French *Code Noir*, Mauritian Kreolⁱ has dozens of words to capture the kinds of beatings that the elaborate sadism of mainly European slave-owners created. This violent history surfaces in public events as a consequence of the excessive consumption of alcohol, which in Mauritius is predominantly local cane-rum, whose “triumphant” success came with the introduction of a severe anti-“ganja” law that was possibly meant to create a new stream of revenue for sugar millers at the onset of the global crisis of the 1930s. Consumption of alcohol is excessive on Mauritian beaches during the May First festivities, where party allegiances sometimes emerge when, at the end of a long and hot day, parties of men sponsored by oppositional parties face off. Other rituals of global capitalism and its Mauritian “cultural” manifestations are less violent. *La Coupe*, which marks the start of the cane cutting season, is held each year in a different mill where the owners host a selection of their employees, journalists, and high-ranking politicians.ⁱⁱ When I observed this ritual in 2004, people listened to the

Minister of Agriculture speaking about the Mauritian position in negotiations over agricultural goods in the WTO before he symbolically set in motion the wheels of the cane-crushing machine and expressed his wishes for a good cane-cutting season, a *“bonne campagne a tous.”*

In addition to such rituals that emerge from an embeddedness into global capitalism and its particularities and commonalities, the Mauritian state has its rituals. In common with most other postcolonial states there is a national Independence Day, which often been a condenser of Mauritian embeddedness into the global system. Independence day is held on March 12 when, in 1968, the British handed over authority to the first elected Prime Minister, Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. That particular day and date was not necessarily a celebration, as one important Mauritian politician noted in his autobiography (Cuttaree, 2011: 104-111). Violent clashes between gangs in the capital Port Louis broke out and were soon framed as ethnic riots. The British army had to step in to calm the situation and a curfew was declared on the night when independence celebrations should have been held (see also Simmons, 1982: 186-187). Many Mauritians regarded the sugar magnates, who were fierce opponents of independence, and their political arm, the *“Parti Mauricien Social Democrat,”* as the instigators of this violence, which they hoped would make the British see that the island was not capable of self-rule.

A different argument sometimes deployed against independence was that Mauritius was too reliant on sugar, which was the only export commodity. Having one of the fastest-growing populations among the world’s colonies in the 1950s and 1960s, a British survey mission headed by famous Keynesian economist James Edward Meade in 1960 had attested that with such a high degree of dependency on world market trends and limited capacities for diversifying its economic base due to a comparatively small domestic market made it likely that an independent Mauritius might encounter serious difficulties in sustaining itself (Meade, 1961). The fact that immediately following this period, the economy of independent Mauritius transformed from a supposedly lost cause to the economic hothouse of Africa has been a central feature of World Bank reports, which have portrayed Mauritius as an example for successful export-oriented development that all other postcolonial

nations should follow (World Bank Group, 1992). Similarly, international and Mauritian scholars published dozens of articles trying to explain the Mauritian boom, which they say was mainly driven by the government's decision to establish an export processing zone (EPZ) in 1970 where so many textile and garment businesses set up shop in the 1980s (e.g. Subramanian and Roy, 2001). Not only did the boom come to an end in the early 2000s, it also meant that more than one generation of Mauritians, most of them women, spent their early adolescence in world-market factories where they were subjected to sexist and otherwise oppressive regimes of labor, only to find that after the collapse of the EPZs in the 2000s, there were no obvious prospects for continuing to make a living in the textile and garment sectors (Burn, 1996; Neveling, 2006).

It was these workers who took the streets of Curepipe in the demonstration mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. Others I spoke to at that event and at other occasions had spent 15 or more years working on rolling night-shifts in dyeing and finishing factories, working with dangerous chemicals and machines that might easily kill a tired worker who showed a lack of caution. Not everyone was threatened by unemployment. For some, corporate restructuring aiming at higher profit margins meant revisions to shift-systems that meant they would have even fewer opportunities to engage with their families, friends, and neighbors. Many protesters were members of some of the several hundred Mauritian trade unions, which owing to the Mauritian single union agreement are put in permanent competition over who represents the workers in which factory (on this system see Neveling, 2012: 228-247).

In addition, a number of smaller political parties and civil rights groups were present, many of them looking to mobilise a protest on September 10, when the Ministerial Meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the Mexican coastal city Cancun would begin. A broad coalition of parties, unions, and civil rights groups had announced a protest march through Port Louis and their mobilization proved highly successful. Around 800 people took to the bustling streets of the capital on a weekday morning, a number that would be the equivalent of around 200,000 protesters in the United States based on a comparison the percentages of total population of the two countries.

The route taken and the demands made had been carefully selected in the weeks before. A small pavilion at Champs-de-Mars, just outside the city-center, was the assembly point. Here, Maurice Curé had officially proclaimed the formation of the Mauritian Labor Movement in 1936. From there, the demonstration moved past various ministries, reminding ministers that many legal regulations to be abolished for meeting the WTO standards were actually not achievements of the postcolonial era, but of colonial times when various British colonial commissions had recommended old-age pension, the rights of workers to unionize and so forth. These were achievements that the people of Mauritius had wrestled from the British only by dint of the efforts of the labor movement. The postcolonial state had no right, and, it was implied, not even the legitimacy to take these away. The demonstration culminated in the following address to the Minister for Industry and Trade:

Sir, do you want to go in history [sic] as the Minister who destroyed the Pension Right of the present generation of workers? Will you assume the responsibility of abolishing a right that was affordable even in colonial time [sic]? How will you explain to future generations that in the present century, with the immense progress and wealth created by people's labor, the state could not afford Universal Old Pension to its citizens? (Protest March Platform on World Trade Organsiation, 2003)

The protesters had fronted what I have called a socio-genealogical positioning (SGP) in the introduction and which is a structural term for analyzing how humans make sense of the manifestations of globalization. This particular SGP put the people of Mauritius as sovereign—albeit a sovereign under threat from the forces of global capital, which, according to their chants, used the WTO as a front for imposing their wishes on national governments. History was central to (re-)claiming the people's sovereignty. Mauritians of the present were the righteous recipients of social services and of the social welfare system that the colonial government had put in place. This was because earlier generations had risked their lives in protests against exploitation and other injustices and, to emphasize this, the protesters actually quoted from a 1938

report of a British commission that had made enquiries into deadly riots in the sugar industry (Hooper, 1938: 168).

Not only did the Minister for Trade and Industry feel the urge to respond in parliament to such accusation; around the same time, he also ran for the position of Director General of the WTO. Possibly to support the Minister's campaign, the governing coalition invited the acting WTO Director General, Supachai Panitchpakdi, as honorable speaker for the Independence Day celebrations in 2004.

The WTO Director General, to my surprise, also made references to Mauritian history in general and to colonial survey missions in particular:

In my file, my staff did, however, refer to a 1960 prediction about the future of Mauritius by a Nobel Prize winning economist. In his report to the then Government of Mauritius, the Nobel Laureate James Meade predicted that the island's development prospects would be bleak. Mauritius, as he saw it, was too dependent on one commodity – sugar, too vulnerable to terms of trade shocks, too overpopulated and had too much potential for ethnic tensions. James Meade has long since been proven wrong. He was wrong not because he miscalculated Mauritius's adverse inheritance following independence but because, he overlooked, in his otherwise thorough analysis, the determination of the Mauritian people to succeed. (Panitchpakdi, 2004)

In this speech, we encounter a very different SGP, informed by the policy ambitions of the WTO and especially so by the urge to praise the future benefits of free trade. The "Mauritian people" have a determination to succeed, which is independent of the way the global economy is organized, it seems. No attention is given to the question of why the same Mauritians who succeeded and proved wrong the predictions of a world-famous economist had come to be in such a miserable and bleak situation in the first place. This is because, as one may read between the lines, only an independent nation-state enables its population to establish themselves as independent actors on the world market. This, of course, does not take into account the persistence of Mauritius and other countries' economic dependency on preferential bilateral and

multilateral trade agreements granted by their former colonial powers. As evidenced by the crisis of the Mauritian textile and garment industry in 2003 and 2004 such preferential market access had been badly needed to gain comparative advantages and secure economic growth in the postcolonial period. Another particularity of Mauritian history, which has so far not been touched on in this chapter, is that it was the work of the British economist James Meade and his support for one Mauritian businessman that enabled the establishment of a factory in 1965 that would become the blueprint for the Mauritian EPZs and, ultimately, for the booming textile and garment industry that constituted the Mauritian “economic miracle” (Neveling, 2014).

It is not the ambition of this chapter, however, to provide a highly sophisticated historical anthropology account of Mauritian political economy. Instead, the major aim is to critically assess notions of “the field” in mainstream anthropology. This is what the following section delivers, informed by the above analysis of events in Mauritius.

A Tale of Two Fields

My overview of how globalization has manifested itself in Mauritius since around 1825 could be extended significantly (Neveling, 2012). Suffice to say here that the crisis of the textile and garment industry in 2003 and 2004 created events of a looking-glass quality. The two SGPs I have outlined in the preceding section obviously seek to substantiate political and economic worldviews of the present by highly selective references to the past. Such ideological moves were crucial at the time because Mauritians commonly refer to the three sectors sugar, textiles, and garments, which were all threatened by WTO policy changes, as “economic pillars” of their nation. With all pillars crumbling, literally, immense political labor was invested by competing alliances to establish a nexus between the present and Mauritian historical incorporation into global capitalism. It is this practice of *socio-genealogical positioning* that makes for macro-level moralities. However much these may be contradicting each other, they are all macro-level efforts to “keep sane” (Zigon, 2007) in the face of

crisis and the competition here is over who offers the better, more convincing narrative and historical analysis.

Lest not forget, however, that socio-genealogical positioning is not a phenomenon of a twenty-first-century world-system but an everyday life practice. Particular efforts in Mauritius are vividly present in the historical record – especially for earlier times of crisis. One possible socio-genealogical positioning, which was largely rejected in 2003 and 2004, took centre stage in Mauritian politics in the 1950s and 1960s, when the London Colonial Office eagerly jumped to the occasion for narrowing the analysis of Mauritian society to the “ethnic lens” (for how anthropology frames the study of migration in general in this unfortunate way see Glick Schiller et al., 2006). Instead of following the legacy of other anthropologists working on Mauritius who feed their writings analytically from this colonial encounter, what I have said so far in this chapter rests on an analysis of Mauritius as a “field” of political and economic constellations (what I call manifestations of globalization) and socio-genealogical positioning as actors and institutions aim to deal with changing manifestations of globalization, past and present.

Many of the themes that inform such SGPs, past and present, bear close resemblance to a debate that was central in anthropology during the 1990s. This revolved around a notion called “globalization.” Globalization, it was said, captured the very fact that the inhabitants of the globe engaged with one another in increasingly interconnected ways. Therefore, the lives and times of contemporary humans were much more interdependent than before. Many have claimed that the very fact of “globalization” meant there was a new global empirical setting that had profoundly changed anthropological theory and the notion of “the field”.ⁱⁱⁱ

An important intervention in this regard came from Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, who asked: “What are we to do with a discipline that loudly rejects received ideas of ‘the local,’ even while ever more firmly insisting on a method that takes it for granted?” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 4). This illustrates, for once, that “the field” is one of the crucial tropes for anthropology as a social sciences and humanities discipline. It has come to define the subject of study in the twentieth century as anthropology increasingly fetishized the idea that “the field” should be an individual

research project undertaken in a bounded area. It was said now that anthropologists should study “small places” and their “large issues” (Eriksen, 1995). But the problem with this formulation was that the assumption that the anthropologist would encounter an “alien” culture “in the field” remained in place. Following a particular set of methods this encounter was meant to turn the research process, ultimately, into an individual scientist’s rite of passage to full membership in the academic community of anthropologists (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 16-27). Such persistence, according to Gupta and Ferguson, meant that globalization, which they understand as a recent phenomenon, was largely ignored because a particular notion of “the field” as something local still allowed for “smuggling back in assumptions about small-scale societies and face-to-face communities that we thought we had left behind” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 15).

In sum, the problem identified by this critique is that in a world ever more connected and driven by a large variety of complex and contradictory movements, globalization meant there were now deficits in anthropology’s concept of the “field” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 6-8; Marcus, 1995: 96). Obviously, no anthropologist can be everywhere at once and it would be pointless to even think about capturing the entire world. Any empirical social science is dependent on certain paradigmatic decisions that compartmentalize the infinite relations that make for human sociability.

Several recommendations for such decisions have therefore emerged from the globalization debate. Arjun Appadurai’s widely received concept of scapes sought to delineate dominant streams of global movements into “ethnoscape,” “mediascape,” “technoscape,” “financescape,” and “ideoscape.” His ambition was to capture the new quality of flows as well as their disjuncture (Appadurai, 1996: 32). This proposition has a striking similarity with the way that “multi-sited ethnography” (MSE) was framed. MSE is possibly the most influential methodological move in present-day anthropology and has received wide acclaim since George Marcus proposed it in the subtitle of his 1995 publication as an “ethnography in/of the world-system” (Marcus, 1995). MSE anthropologists should, for example, follow the movement of humans, the spread of conflicts, or biographies (note the resemblance of Marcus’ proposal to Appadurai’s “ethnoscape”), the movement of things (for Appadurai “technoscape”),

the circulation of metaphor and allegories (for Appadurai “ideoscape” and “mediascape”) (Marcus, 1995). MSE is framed as offering “radical alternatives to the norms that have traditionally regulated fieldwork” (Marcus, 1999: 7) and its impact on the discipline has been labelled by Falzon (2009: 1) as a “standard reformative thesis,” which George Marcus “nailed [...] to the door of the 1995 *Annual Review of Anthropology*”.

So does MSE, within the field of anthropology, stand up to the claim that it marks a historical watershed in our notions of “the field”? A first crack in the mirror of radicalism appears if we consider that Marcus’s 1995 widely acclaimed article was informed in many ways by the reconsideration of a publication he had co-authored in the 1980s, where it appears as “multi-locale ethnography” (Marcus and Fischer, 1986: 93). The difference between labelling “the field” as “site” or as “locale” points us to the central void in the entire MSE framework. While the new state of the world, as a globalized one, is considered in detail, no issue is taken with how it should be framed epistemologically, that is, what “the field” should be and, more importantly, what it should not be. Instead, Ulf Hannerz, a second important figure in anthropology’s globalization debate (cf. Hannerz, 1992), has established a reading of MSE that takes the debate about ethnographic representation full circle. That debate was central to the interpretive and postmodernist turn in anthropology during the 1980s, of which Marcus was a central protagonist (for an up-to-date summary of the debate see Carrier, 2012). Hannerz argues that only a limited number of sites can ever be covered, which, in turn, means that the coverage of interactions in the now global field is partial (Hannerz, 2003: 207). More importantly though, Hannerz argues that a researcher’s encounters in the many sites that make for his or her global field will always raise questions regarding the relationship between cause and effect. Therefore, Hannerz says, MSE changes the ethnographer’s position towards his informants. While he or she may have lesser intimate knowledge of a given setting because there is less time to remain in one site and study the particularities, he or she will have a much more thorough understanding of cause-effect relations in the global field (Hannerz, 2003: 209-210). This approach, in short, brings back ethnographic authority on the grounds of unequal access to the means of knowledge production, which, in this case, is

embodied by the relative mobility of the anthropologist in contrast to that of our informants. What it also reveals is that MSE rests in many ways on the researcher's access to sites in settings that are hierarchically ordered.

But is this sufficient to assume an absolute (rather than a relational) difference in the understanding of cause-effect relations on the side of the two parties (informant and researcher)? Consider, for example, that the workers in a textile and garment sweatshop will most likely not get to see the Western retail stores where the products of their labor are displayed for sale. Similarly, such workers in Mauritius will not have access to the British colonial record. As the above assessment of Mauritian reactions to the crisis of the textile and garment industry in 2003 and 2004 has shown, this does not mean that there are not people other than the ethnographer who are more than happy to facilitate such access. They may even be acting in ways that make them "alter egos" of anthropologists, as a study of a South Korean EPZ has revealed (Kim, 1997). In sum, it is thus much more likely than Hannerz is ready to acknowledge that the informants have their own and fairly elaborate views on global cause-effect relations. These may be at odds with a scholar's political views on the world, however. This may actually take the extent that (Mauritian and other) informants reject notions of a world that has only recently been globalized, as was proclaimed by Hannerz, Appadurai, Marcus, and other "globalisers" of the 1990s (to borrow a term from Friedman and Friedman, 2008).

My observations address a possible second coming of ethnographic authority as much as they reveal shortcomings in considerations of what a "site" or a "locale" actually is (and was). The interpretive turn in the 1970s and 1980s focused, for example, on the practice of writing as opposed to the method of study. An important point of departure for this was a critical reading of Bronislaw Malinowski's field diaries, which included his possibly problematic views of the Trobriand islanders among whom he was living, and which also revealed how literary style was actually a central feature of one of anthropology's classics, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. This point has been summarised by an introduction to the now classic volume *Writing Culture* (Clifford, 1986, for an excellent more recent discussion see Zenker and Kumoll 2009). If we take the subtitle for the book, *Partial Truths*, literally and apply it to the

findings of the interpretive turn in anthropology, we discover that, in fact, among the *Writing Culture* crowd, there was little interest in the possibilities of discovering alternative possible truths. Instead, it was left to others to emphasize the point that Malinowski had deliberately ignored the rapid social, political, and economic changes that the Trobriands and the wider region had been experiencing in the decades before his arrival. These changes have been highlighted by anthropologists like British diffusionist Julian Pitt Rivers, who worked in the region around the same time as Malinowski and described how blackbirding^{iv} turned thousands of locals into forced laborers on Australian sugar plantations (cf. Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 20; Vincent, 1990).^v Similarly, Marcus and other proponents of the interpretive and postmodernist turn of the 1980s showed little interest in the fact that Clifford Geertz, who is identified as a kind of guiding light, made his career in a setting financed by the deadly US Cold War machine. This is ever more striking as the central “partial truth” in Geertz’s writing until today is how, in his early writings on Indonesia, he ignored a standoff between religious and nationalist right-wing forces on one side and one of the largest communist movements of the 1960s on the other side. In the aftermath of what was possibly a communist *coup d’etat* at least half a million people would be slaughtered in rural and urban regions alike, throughout the entire Indonesian archipelago, all because they were allegedly communists. This happened with the backing of the US Central Intelligence Agency and the secret services of other advanced capitalist nations and had a significant impact on Indonesian society, which is fundamentally underrepresented in Geertz’ writings (cf. Ross, 1998; Price, 2003; Geertz et al., 2004).^{vi}

An assessment of the conception of “the field” in anthropology, or of “sites” and “locales” should therefore start with a historical enquiry into the relations not covered by the proponents of new approaches to methods and the discipline in general. The globalization debate, for example, despite the plethora of monographs of an ever-more connected world, paid little attention to the grave inequalities going along with “globalization” (for a summary of this work see Kalb, 2011). The emergence of such voids in analysis might have had to do with the dominant question of the early globalization debate, which was whether increasing interconnectedness led to homogeneity or whether this still allowed for heterogeneity. Such emphasis on

identity led Appadurai to find a disjuncture at work because identities fragmented and many resorted to new (or possibly old) nationalisms and fundamentalisms despite, or because of, the emergence of a so-called “global culture.” A second elision came from an emphasis on movement, understood as obvious and without concern for the intricacies that made movement happen or not happen (or made some people and not others move or not move). Examples of seemingly powerless nations such as India that were now sending highly qualified workers to take up important positions in leading global corporations in Silicon Valley and elsewhere should serve to show that there was a multiplicity of movements working in contradictory directions. What those analytical absences boiled down to, then, was a notion of the global as a system that had functioned in orderly manner but had now turned chaotic because of “a cannibalizing dialectic between tendencies to homogeneity and tendencies to heterogeneity” (Friedman, 1994: 210). In other words, the problem was treating globalization as an evolutionary shift without giving sufficient attention to the very system’s history (Friedman, 1994: 211).

This point is what my introductory account of Mauritius in a time of crisis illustrates. In the face of developments in Mauritius throughout the twentieth century, the prominent analytical and categorical propositions of globalization scholars in anthropology are ahistorical. Appadurai’s “ethnoscape,” “mediascape,” “technoscape,” “financescape,” and “ideoscape,” designed to capture the new quality of flows in the global system as much as their disjuncture in the 1990s (Appadurai, 1996: 32), could be just as easily applied to earlier historical events such as Mauritian incorporation into the global sugar commodity chain in 1825, the abolition of slavery and the compensation paid in 1835, and the influx of indentured laborers that followed abolition. Mainstream anthropology of the 1990s and its focus on a recently globalized world therefore rested on a notion of “newness” (see Tsing, 2000; Baca, 2005; Neveling, 2006) that was not a partial truth but impartially wrong because it neglected the violence of that imperial history which had produced globalization in the first place.

Recent writings suggest that around the turn of the 1990s, the term globalization emerged as a mere renaming of modernization (Tsing, 2000: 328-330).

Likewise, Roland Robertson, who has been credited for establishing the term “globalization” in the social sciences, pointed out that it soon turned from an analytical concept into a new *telos* of progress, similar to earlier uses of the notion of “modernization”. Importantly, Robertson initially distinguished between globalization, deglobalization, and reglobalization (Robertson, 1992: 10). But in its raw form, as proposed by Appadurai and many others, globalization was a technocratic notion that rested on an evaluation of connections created by new technological means. This understanding of globalization had little to say about macro-political ambitions, let alone about the fact that world-views related to geopolitical constellations (such as the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century abolitionist movement, or the global movement for freedom and democracy that created, for example, the United States of America) had been spread into each and every single household of the world during the eras of colonization. What is more, such competing world-views became even more relevant for the everyday life of humans in every corner of the world during the era of imperialism. The first half of the twentieth century saw two global wars. Even in a remote colony of the British Empire such as Mauritius, the colonial state was contested by socialist and fascist movements during the 1930s and after. Put less politely, one may say that the global circulation of political ideas during the era of decolonization and the Cold War was deliberately ignored by anthropology’s globalizers, and so was that fact that the promises of modernization and development had spread in the decades after 1945 in the Third World as much as in the other worlds. It is now time to pick up the bits and pieces from the above and put them together to frame a more comprehensive notion of the anthropological “field”.

A Window Toward Future “Fields”: Reconsidering the Road Not Taken

In his seminal book, “The Three Worlds”, the late Peter Worsley states that “[p]aradoxically, the world has been divided in the process of its unification, divided into spheres of influence, and divided into rich and poor” (Worsley, 1964: 15). This 1964 statement signaled a very different take on global developments than that which

was proposed by the globalization debate of the 1990s. Worsley was possibly the founder of an anthropology that was global from the outset. Such anthropology considers the ubiquity of inter-dependencies in world history, without neglecting the fact that inter-dependencies vary across time and space. From such a vantage point, anthropology's 1990s notion of "globalization" is a phenomenon calling for anthropological analysis rather than for changing the foundations of the discipline. For it is one of several *deus ex machina* concepts that the particularities of global capitalism have generated since the mid-nineteenth century (cf. McKeown, 2007; Neveling, 2010). Once we look beyond teleological worldviews such as "modernization" and "globalization", we encounter a political economy of capitalism that has, instead, produced a long history of "uneven development" (Smith, 2010). Uneven development captures a different "globalization": one that may be studied for the past 5,000 or so years (see Frank, 1998; Friedman and Friedman, 2008; and with some reservations also Graeber, 2011), for the past 600 or so years (e.g. Arrighi, 2002 [1994]; Wolf, 1982); and, of course, also for the most recent decades or for the present.

This debate is increasingly important also for anthropology's dealings with another recent and very central trope. Similar to the globalization debate of the 1990s, the 2000s have seen a plethora of works on "neoliberalism" and, more strikingly, "neoliberalization". But phenomena such as the mobility of capital and a constant search for cheaper labor, which are commonly framed as genuinely neoliberal (e.g. Ong, 2006), have been analyzed in detail by historians and historical anthropologists for earlier decades of the twentieth century (e.g. Cowie, 1999; Nash, 1995; Neveling, 2015b). Similarly it has been pointed out that what is considered to have been the predecessor regime of neoliberalism—global Keynesian and Fordist patterns of regulating capitalism—was neither global nor uniform (cf. Baca, 2005).

Unfortunately, it was not the mainstay of anthropology's 1990s' engagement with globalization to establish meaningful links between political and economic developments of global reach and how these were mirrored in the lives and times of the powerful and the powerless alike. But this does not mean that there is not a rich anthropological literature on global capitalism and its workings throughout the

twentieth century, and so we turn to a consideration of that rich literature against the background of the insights developed from the Mauritian example.

The episodes from the Mauritian crisis of 2003 revealed a babble of voices from a number of actors. Transnational corporations announced that they would shut down production sites, workers and others negatively affected by these changes demonstrated against the closures and what would follow, national and international media commented on the changing embeddedness of the island into the global system, and last but not least, there was the Mauritian state-private sector alliance seeking to turn the leading EPZ sector around – which, interestingly, meant that a leading representative of a private sector organisations felt empowered to speak out about the limited redistributive capacities of the state. In a parallel case, it has been pointed out how, in the wake of the International Rubber Regulations Agreement, dated 1934, small-scale planters in Dutch East India, now Indonesia, dreamt of rice-eating rubber and rose up against new agricultural policies (Dove, 1996). Another monograph reveals how in Dutch East India, on the Sumatran oil palm and rubber plantations – a hotspot of early multinational corporate ventures such as the United States Rubber Company, later Uniroyal, now part of Michelin, and one of the first Dow Jones listed companies – socialist and communist ideas spread widely from the 1920s on (Stoler, 1985; for multinational activities see pp. 17-22).

John Gledhill has also shown how local initiatives of the colonized, sometimes in collaboration with sections of the colonizers, responded to the conjuncture of the 1930s with the establishment of populist regimes driven by “a nationalist economic model based on industrialization and political control over the working class” (Gledhill, 2000: 93). As Gledhill points out, these regimes were quite diverse, and their shape and the policies pursued had much to do with their particular roots in the middle and upper classes as well as with the export-oriented policies that had nurtured former elites. From 1945 onwards, the Cold War would see many such regimes turn to either the capitalist or the socialist bloc, shift their allegiance from one bloc to the other, manoeuvre between them, align with emerging powers such as the People’s Republic of China, or try to find a third way in the non-aligned movement of the 1960s. Cold War politics would see regimes ousted often in violent and murderous

internal warfare that was orchestrated mainly in Washington, and sometimes in Beijing, Moscow, London, Paris, Brussels, Bonn, or even Havana. It is important to keep in mind that the crucial policy element of most such regimes, the promise of modernity and development, survived the Third World Debt Crisis, while the populist developmental regimes did not, and lived on only as “expectations of modernity” (Ferguson, 1999) by the time anthropologists had begun to speak of globalization in the 1990s.

Possibly fueled by this shift and by the Third World Debt Crisis, by the end of the 1980s, the political system that had in many ways dominated world politics, and in lesser but still significant ways the global economy, had collapsed. A world that had, since the end of the Second World War in 1945, been torn apart by the struggle of two power blocs, a capitalist one and a socialist one, had ceased to exist, it seemed. But the geopolitical order had crumbled also because many governments in industrially advanced liberal capitalist democracies and in the pro-Western dictatorships created during the Cold War (e.g. Chile, Indonesia) had pursued a new path of capitalism. The globalization debate of the 1990s showed little interest in this path while this would, in the 2000s, emerge as a central concern for anthropologists known as “neoliberalism” (Edelman and Haugerud, 2005: 15-21). If we want to assess this development, it is important to reconsider what explanations have been offered for the turn from Cold War confrontation and socialism versus Keynesian economics to neoliberalism on a global scale.

Although many now write about neoliberalism, few contemporary anthropologists have sought to trace the immediate impact of this important pattern of exploitation in the global system back to the critical turning points that allowed for its dominance in particular settings. Among those few, Ida Susser analyzed the impact of the New York City bankruptcy on an urban neighborhood in Brooklyn, and described how working-class inhabitants were ousted by urban redevelopment and by the loss of industrial employment. Her book was originally published in 1982 and in a new edition in 2012. Susser is close on the trail of big capital’s double movement, which in many instances triggered neoliberal dominance over other exploitation patterns, when stating that the “same banks which withdrew financial support in 1975

rapidly reinvested in real estate development in 1980" (Susser, 2012: 76). Also, in 1960, 140 of the largest US corporations had had their headquarters in New York while this stood at 44 by 1975 when acres of office spaces in Manhattan were vacant and the average income of the city's population had declined significantly in comparison with the national median (Susser, 2012: 85).

Christopher Gregory focuses on Richard Nixon's abandoning of the Gold Standard. He shows how in the post-Bretton Woods era the world turned from "organised capitalism" (cf. Lash and Urry, 1987) to "disorganised capitalism" (Gregory, 1997: 1) and what this meant for the lives and times of the inhabitants of the Bastar District in India. Here and elsewhere, "savage money," which is the title of Gregory's highly recommended monograph, has emerged in 1971, when World Bank initiatives such as the "all India Land Mortgage Bank" introduced loan schemes that created bankrupt, and ultimately landless debtors. As Gregory points out, the common regional view of such schemes is that they are usury because the World Bank policies comply with the very regional money lending standards that the Bank claimed it wanted to overcome as they do not consider the borrower's risk (Gregory, 1997: 236).

Gregory's work and "field", which I am tempted to call "macro-anthropology", is matched by studies such as that of June Nash (1989) in Pittsfield, an industrial city in the northeastern state of Massachusetts. Nash has vividly analysed the history of the industrial rise of this region from the late eighteenth century to its decline in the 1980s, when the major industry, General Electric, failed to "take responsibility for the chaos" that resulted from efforts to increase revenues and net profits by forcing fewer workers to increase their productivity (Nash, 1989: 330-331).^{vii}

It is no wonder that highly influential humans play an important role in macro-anthropology "fields". In Gregory's study, it is mainly US President Richard Nixon, whose policies are detailed in a key chapter and are analyzed as the trigger for "free market anarchist values" (Gregory, 1997: 305). The historical development of Nash's field site in Massachusetts was even more closely linked with the policies and influence of Ronald Reagan from the 1950s to the 1980s. Reagan at first appeared "on stage" as labor relations manager for General Electric who came to town regularly to

give “pep talks” to workers at the end of which he might randomly sack unpopular foremen as a gesture suggesting that the company management was closing ranks with workers when, in fact, this was an anti-union effort intended to increase productivity. When General Electric fired workers on a large scale in the 1970s and 1980s, it would be the Reagan Administration that took away important relief measures, from unemployment benefits to community funds (see also Nash, 1995).

There are many macro-anthropology “fields” and one way to frame these is to establish legacies and genealogies of institutions and types of actors, policies, and political movements throughout the twentieth century. One might compare recent policies of the Reagan administration with the UK Thatcher administration’s post-welfare policies of the 1980s, which declared that now the inhabitants of post-1945 housing estates were in charge of their fate and many estate flats would be privatized (Hyatt, 2005). A medium-range historical comparison for macro-anthropology would consider the short- and long-term effects of such policies in comparison with those of the “ethical colonialism” of the late imperial period that sought to make dependent populations take charge of themselves. Think also, for example, of the post-indentured servitude policies in Mauritius and how these are comparable to present-day policies of outsourcing risk. In 1920s Mauritius, an array of colonial policies encouraged what would have been free wage laborers to become smallholders. As noted above, these smallholders ended up bankrupt and landless. For some time they had felt that they were now in charge of their own destinies, though they were actually pushed into pooling their incomes to survive. Smallholding also meant selling their produce to the large estates that had mills to process sugar cane. To make ends meet (and meet mortgage payments) they had to sell their labor by the day or the week to job contractors who would sell it on to the same sugar plantation estates that had before been responsible for offering complete wages, welfare benefits and housing to many workers. The few skilled technicians and foremen who still held such positions in 1930s Mauritius would become a labor aristocracy that, in one instance of a smallholder uprising, would shoot to kill on the orders of a plantation owner (Neveling, 2012: 195-198).

To end this chapter on another productive note, I would like to hammer home a few important points with regard to the major proponents of the 1990s postmodernist approach to globalization. What is impossible to grasp using either Appadurai's or Hannerz' approaches, is the primacy of the production of hierarchies. This is because the focus was on "flows," and the analytical viability of reproducing a disjuncture of global developments rested on flattening world history by chopping up entangled developments into "scapes." But, as Peter Worsley stated so boldly in the quotation that opened this section, hierarchy was, is, and most likely will continue to be an omnipresent variable for anthropology (cf. Heyman and Campbell, 2009).

Instead, I suggest that we can see the field of anthropology as a field of history, or, rather, as many fields with many histories that incorporate what Friedman, in his quotation above, identifies as a cannibalizing dialectic between tendencies to homogeneity and tendencies to heterogeneity. Although George W. Bush declared the coming of a new world order in the early 1990s and despite wars beginning, ending, or dragging out forever, "in so many ways things have not changed" once we (re-)engage in thorough anthropological analysis that is "[r]ooted neither in some philosophical binary adrift from social process, nor in any kind of ontological necessity (which may amount to the same thing)" (Smith, 2010: 242). What may have changed though is that anthropologists and many other social scientists have too uncritically taken on an important agenda in the neoliberal portfolio, which is "the idealist refusal to even recognize capitalism as a coherent category" (Smith, 2010: 241). As my brief map of "the road not taken" has shown, there are many anthropologists whose work recognizes capitalism as a coherent category. From this vantage point, mainstream anthropology and the perceptions of the field it has produced may appear like an eternal detour, with the discipline itself severely impacted by colonial, imperial, neo-imperial, Keynesian, and neoliberal encounters and, hence, vulnerable to the movement of capital and the (mis-)perceptions of crisis and prosperity that such movement creates.

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ⁱ I here use the local term and spelling for *Kreol morisyen*, which some may want to translate as Mauritian Creole.

ⁱⁱ Since the 1960s, Mauritian sugar corporations have been part of multinational consortia, connected to plantations and mills located in Eastern and Southern Africa, which is another way they are embedded into global capitalism besides the already mentioned bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

ⁱⁱⁱ Much has been written both during the globalization debate and about it – so much that already by the turn of the millennium one scholar emphasized that it was impossible to give an overview of the literature (Kalb, 2000: 12). The following acknowledges this and offers only references to the literature that is of relevance for the argument of the chapter.

^{iv} Blackbirding refers to a practice that emerged in the Pacific in the mid-nineteenth century, which was the coercion of labor from local populations. This often came with excessive use of force and may have included abducting people to work on far away plantations, for example.

^v Another important debate about Trobriand ethnographies published since Malinowski's days is now emerging in anthropology and this concerns the fact that Trobriand people, as much as many other supposed “natives”, have generally been treating as traditionalist,

backward-looking whereas many of their actions may as well be regarded as future oriented, aiming to change the patterns of their everyday lives (Shah, 2014).

^{vi} William Roseberry offered one of the earliest and a very profound critique of Geertz' writings on the Balinese cockfight. It would be beyond the scope of this chapter to summarize the debate. Importantly, Roseberry pointed to the same weaknesses in the treatment of culture as text that would later make the careers of the writing culture proponents (see Marcus and Fischer, 1986). Notice, though, that Roseberry argues from a perspective that emphasizes the relevance of history in the making of any culture: "A text is written; it is not writing. To see culture as an ensemble of texts or an art form is to remove culture from its creation. If culture is a text, it is not everybody's text. [...] we must ask who is (or are) doing the writing. [...] This is the key question, for example, in the transformation of the cockfight after the arrival of the Dutch" (Roseberry, 1982: 1022, my omissions).

^{vii} Some may want to object here and say that industry and finance are frames for "fields", which are particularly "global". Although many macro-anthropological studies of the kind I am promoting here indeed deal with finance (an excellent recent study is Palomera, 2014) and industry (e.g. Strümpell, 2014), there is an increasing number of comprehensive macro-anthropological works in the field of ethics and morality, for example (Zigon, 2014; Narotzky, 2015).