

Former British Colony

Mauritians in the Face of Globalisation

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It has been said that arguing against globalisation is like arguing against the laws of gravity.
Kofi Annan¹

[...] But globalisation is like breathing: it is not a process one can or should try to stop; of course, if there are obvious ways of breathing easier and better one should certainly do so.
Anne O. Krueger² (Chanda 2008, 271)

Abstract

Mauritius is a former French and British colony in the Indian Ocean. Now, this island country has become a multicultural and multiethnic society due to several waves of immigration from Europe, Africa and Asia, all through the past three centuries. Each wave of immigration brought in new peoples along with their cultures, religions and languages. However, all the migrants did not settle in Mauritius on their own accord. Some were slaves. Some came as free workers and others as colonizers. The differences in the arrival of modern Mauritians' ancestors are still felt like balls and chains for some communities in Mauritius today. However, they are now faced with the challenge of building their Mauritian identity and be "as one people as one nation"³ with all their differences in the face of globalisation. The different communities live side by side in relative respect and harmony, but they hardly get mixed up through inter-community marriages. Hence, they could be compared to the colours of the rainbow. Nevertheless, the diversity in local cultures, religions and languages of Mauritius is today at stake in the face of globalisation. In my work, I will first show that globalisation is nothing new to Mauritius. Then, I will focus on the possibility of Mauritian society to build up its national identity thanks to globalisation; but at the same time Mauritius might, to some extent, lose its economic independence. Finally, I will work on the chance that Mauritius may lose its local richness and diversity on the altar of globalisation.

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1 Ghanaian diplomat who served as the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2006. Annan and the United Nations were the co-recipients of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize for his founding the Global AIDS and Health Fund to support developing countries in their struggle to care for their people. (Source: United Nation)

2 First Deputy Managing Director, International Monetary Fund, 2002.

3 This phrase appears in the Mauritian National Anthem.

Key words: globalisation, culture, belonging, religion, identity

General Introduction

From the day of its inception in our modern society, the concept of globalisation is believed to affect the economy of every country, but in its wake it affects and also remodels nature and cultures worldwide. Today globalisation is accused of all the woes happening to planet Earth, from the destruction of cultures and civilisations to that of nature and rainforests. However, we should remember that, either for good or bad, we are on the verge of global change. We also have to bear in mind that this phenomenon is nothing new (Chanda 2008, 271). In his book, Nayan Chanda⁴ argues that the history of globalisation goes back to the time when the first human came out of Africa on a very long journey to conquer the world *following game herds... or shellfish beds around the Arabian Peninsula*. (Ibid). Furthermore, according to Chanda, that conquest continued through worldwide trades of goods and slaves, horse domestication, rise of various religions – mainly Christian and Muslim starting in the Middle-East and spreading all over the world. The conquest prolongs in our modern societies through the *World Wide Web and the spread of diseases like SARS and Avian flu* (ibid). Starting in the past and still relevant today is the global conquest through traders and soldiers from rich countries sent on international missions⁵. Thanks to that historical awareness concerning globalisation as being an integral part of human history, we may infer that this situation is not going to stop soon (Ibid). Although globalisation started with the Out of Africa theory, the term itself has only become commonplace in the last three decades (Wells 2004). At least since the advent of industrial capitalism, however, intellectual discourse has been replete with allusions to phenomena strikingly akin to those that have garnered the attention of recent theorists of globalisation. Nineteenth and twentieth-century philosophy, literature, and social commentary include numerous references to an inchoate yet widely shared awareness that experiences of distance and space are inevitably transformed by the emergence of high-speed forms of transportation and communication. Long before the introduction of the term globalisation into recent popular and scholarly debate, the appearance of novel high-speed forms of social activity generated extensive commentary about the compression of space. (Scheuerman 2002).

Globalisation: Definition(s)

Before discussing globalisation in our era, we have to understand the concept, which includes several meanings depending on the other concepts it is attached to. Three definitions, which are quite close to each other, caught my attention for they cover a wide range of other concepts in the present work. James L. Watson⁶ gives quite a general definition of that concept. It is seen as *the process by which the experience of everyday life, marked by the diffusion of commodities and ideas, can foster a standardisation of cultural expressions around the world* (Watson 2008). Nowadays globalism is *boosted by wireless and Internet communications and electronic business transactions, destroying local traditions and regional distinctions, creating in their place a homogenised world culture* (ibid). More theoretically than an encyclopaedia, here is another definition of this concept. Referring to the definition given by Hall, 1995, Asawin Nedpogaeo wrote that, *By definition, globalisation is the process by which the relatively separate areas of the globe come to intersect in a single imaginary 'space'*. (Kennedy 2001, 99). The former part of the encyclopaedic definition gives a wide view

4 Nayan Chanda is the Director of Publications and the Editor of YaleGlobal Online Magazine at the Yale Center for the Study of Globalisation. For nearly thirty years before he joined Yale University Chanda was with the Hong Kong-based magazine the Far Eastern Economic Review as its editor, editor-at-large and correspondent. In 1989-90 Chanda was a Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. From 1990-1992 Chanda was editor of the Asian Wall Street Journal Weekly, published from New York.

5 Globalisation has not only developed through commerce. It is also mainly, due to soldiers (and mercenaries) from industrial countries being sent to the rest of the world to defend natural resources such as petrol, as well as soldiers from humanitarian organisations such as the UN or NATO who are sent to defend peace and populations of poor countries around the globe.

6 Fairbank Professor of Chinese Society and Professor of Anthropology, Harvard University. Editor of Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia.

of globalisation, setting it in any period of humanity, whereas globalism refers directly to our modern world and enlightens the darker side of globalisation showing its destructive power over local traditions and customs through global economy and global communication. The way people communicate today is very different from what it was like when there was no Internet or even before Graham Bell's invention. In the definition given by Hall, it is interesting to note that globalisation destroys the idea of boundary but that the single space is in fact something imaginary. The concept is presented in a much less evil style, but more in the idea that globalisation is bringing change either good or bad. Here is another definition of that concept from the State University of New York website and this time we are faced to a softer and quite idealistic view of the concept. Globalisation is viewed as a *process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations through international trade and investment aided by information technology. The process affects environment, culture, political systems but it also helps in economic development and prosperity. It also affects human physical well-being in societies around the world* ("What is globalisation?" 2011). The concept is magnified in this description; it is shown as a way to avoid exclusion of people in society. But, the verb "affect" has both positive and negative connotations. This reveals that globalisation is not devoid from negative consequences. Furthermore, if it has so many positive aspects, then why, for example, are the French people and other European countries afraid of that concept? We might suppose that globalisation could be a good thing for poor and developing countries but even more so for rich, developed and industrialised countries. The latter countries would export their cultures, lifestyles and goods to the former countries. However, during a debate on the present situation in Muslim countries, especially concerning Egypt and Libya, a socialist said that democracy⁷ could not be exported to every country in the world. All countries in the world do not perceive democracy the same way as Westerners do. The third definition, from William Scheuerman⁸, is more closely related to the economy than any of the other two. Actually, there are two parts in that definition, the first one is a compendium of 'popular discourse' while the second deals with the view endorsed by most of the social theorists. Hence, globalisation is first defined as:

the pursuit of classical liberal (or "free market") policies in the world economy ("economic liberalisation"), the growing dominance of western (or even American) forms of political, economic, and cultural life ("westernisation" or "Americanisation"), the proliferation of new information technologies (the "Internet Revolution"), as well as the notion that humanity stands at the threshold of realising one single unified community in which major sources of social conflict have vanished ("global integration").
(Scheuerman 2002).

This definition omits the main drawbacks of globalisation, which is the exclusion of groups or sub-groups population in their countries' economic development. Instead it highlights the inclusiveness of population worldwide – "global integration" – which might result in the world's peace. Conversely, for some theorists, globalisation is precisely defined as a process of *fundamental changes in the spatial and temporal contours of social existence according to which the significance of space or territory undergoes shifts in the face of a no less dramatic acceleration in the temporal structure of crucial forms of human activity* (ibid). Those theorists also consider globalisation as an annihilator of space and time. However, they disagree about the precise sources of recent shifts in the spatial and temporal contours of human life. Nevertheless, they agree more or less that alterations in humanity's experiences of space and time are working to undermine the importance of local and even national boundaries in many areas of human endeavour (ibid). However to complete the attempt to understand this concept, it is worth taking into account the definition given by the American anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai. He sets globalisation in a postcolonial era and apparently, he sees that concept as a challenge for nation-states. In his book he defines globalisation as being a cultural phenomenon that has made us enter a post-colonial era, an era where imagination becomes a social force while the nation-state is violently challenged, where relations

7 Democracy as it is seen in, and in the definition of, Western countries.

8 William E. Scheuerman, Professor (Ph.D Harvard, 1993). Bill Scheuerman's primary research and teaching interests are in modern political thought, German political thought, democratic theory, legal theory, and international political theory. After teaching at Pittsburgh and Minnesota, he joined the Indiana faculty in 2006.

between Western and non-Western cultures are profoundly reshaped (Appadurai 1996, back cover).

Questions

The above definitions shed light on the fact that in our modern world globalisation has far-reaching consequences for every country. No country, no single person is immune to globalisation especially big countries like the United States of America or France. However, if we consider the first definition of that process, big countries are responsible for the side effects of globalisation in the form of “Westernisation” or “Americanisation”. Globalisation of the world seems to be predominantly a “Westernisation” or “Americanisation” of northern, southern and eastern countries. The other way round, that is to say people from poorer countries bringing their cultures to the West, is true as well, due to migration of people from poorer and politically unstable countries towards rich and former settlers’ countries. Nonetheless, globalisation is a human concern and cannot be avoided for it is an integral part of humanity right from its beginning. Hence, even for countries as small as Mauritius⁹, globalisation is topical. Mauritius is a very small island with a population of 1,280,000. (“Mauritius” 2011). As a result, the island ranks 15th on the world population density scale (“Ile Maurice” 2006). With such a large number of people dwelling on such a small piece of land, the population per square kilometre is 627 (“Mauritius” 2011). Thus, Mauritius cannot rely on itself and needs the outside world through imports of basic necessities for its survival, mainly rice, which is the Mauritian staple diet. As a result, without globalisation Mauritius would certainly sink. Ambiguously, globalisation can be seen as a foe and a woe to Mauritius as long as cultural diversity is concerned, but at the same time it is a friend and a saviour to the island and its people. The question we might ask is whether everybody benefits from globalisation or it is meant only for a selected group of the population. This is a case where a few benefit from globalisation at the expense of the great majority.

Methodologies and Difficulties

To work on this subject, the first thing to do was to set up a brainstorming concerning all the questions that may arise about Mauritius in the face of globalisation. Then, before confronting the concept of globalisation to the situation of Mauritius, I selected the three above mentioned definitions for globalisation. It was difficult to find a definition of globalisation, for all the definitions are said to be quite inchoate. This work is quite complex, that is why I set up more than one hypothesis, which all need verification. Therefore, a single method might simply not be enough to deal with the entire subject. So, I combined two research methods in order to have the widest view of the question concerning Mauritius in the face of globalisation. Hence, on the one hand, I investigated not just on the what, where and why questions of globalisation but also on the hows and whys. And on the other hand, I gathered quantitative data to enable to test the hypotheses. That is why I am using both the qualitative – although it is difficult for the moment to directly verify those hypotheses in Mauritius through direct investigation – and quantitative research techniques. The latter technique is the most helpful because I can gather information from the government of Mauritius’, the CIA’s and the Commonwealth’s websites as far as historical, cultural, economic and geographical facts are concerned. For the moment I am relying on data collected through my last visit to Mauritius in 2008 and through data collected from ten people thanks to written interview via the internet. Further investigation is planned. For this part of my work I will use the qualitative method to isolate target populations in order to show the effects of globalisation on such groups, and isolate the constraints that operate against changes in such settings (Denzin 2005, 26). The last difficulty that I encounter lies in the following question: where and when does globalisation start? and how to start dealing with globalisation. The concept itself is not new but the term was first used in the 1960’s. I came across an

9 The total surface of Mauritius alone, without the other islands, is around one fifth of the size of Savoie, a French department, the French ‘Department’ in southeastern France. Savoie is 10,874 km, while Mauritius is 1,860 Km². (Source: Savoie Prefecture and Government of Mauritius website). I chose Savoie as a reference to compare the size of Mauritius, because my university is located there.

excerpt entitled *Globalisation is nothing new* while studying globalisation with a small group of pupils at the Granier High School, in Savoie. This theme was part of their curriculum and as I was studying globalisation I paid particular attention to that extract where the author traced back the history of humanity in the light of this concept. The book where this excerpt was taken from became the reference book giving valuable information on globalisation. The author of that book is mentioned above; he is the Director of Publications and the Editor of Yale Global Online Magazine at the Yale Center for the study of Globalisation. Based upon the theory of Nayan Chanda, I decided to study globalisation from the beginning. With this theory, I shall be able to validate the hypotheses and thus study the following three parts.

Working Plan

In this paper, I first study globalisation as something that is not new to Mauritius, as it is the case for the rest of the world. Consequently, I focus on the fact that Mauritius is, by itself, the result of globalisation and one of the hypotheses is that Mauritius could not survive if it practiced protectionism, relying on what is locally produced and protecting from outer world, like the USA did before entering World War II. The second hypothesis is that Mauritius cannot rely on itself for at least its economic development. The third hypothesis is that there is no strong enough national identity in Mauritius but rather there are ethnical identities, which make the country's cultural diversity quite brittle in the face of globalisation. As a result, I first deal with the historical background of Mauritius and how it became a country founded thanks to globalisation. My second part focuses on the chance that the Mauritian society might take the opportunity of setting up its national identity thanks to globalisation. But the question is: are all Mauritians, from all communities, willing to have a common national identity? In the final part, I work on the possibility that globalisation might be a double-edged sword to Mauritius, and that to some extent, the island might lose its independence and local richness¹⁰ on the altar of that concept.

Globalisation as part of Mauritius' Historical Background

General historical background

Globalisation is not new and Mauritius is no exception to the rule. In his book, Nayan Chanda shows that globalisation started from the time Man came out of Africa to colonise planet earth. First there were only people who followed their "food" through games herd. Then, there were adventurers, among whom were Genghis Khan, the Vikings, Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus. Those adventurers spread people on the Earth, either by deportation or displacement, and they introduced their cultures in places they visited, or they took tidbits of cultures from the places they visited and introduced them to their own cultures. That paved the way for cultural globalisation. As a result, today we tend to think that, for example, Europeans have always known potatoes, whereas they come from Latin America and that they were originally cultivated by the First Peoples. Globalisation came also to a great extent from preachers. Indeed, religions like Christianity and Islam, to take only these examples, originated from Israel and from the deserts of Arabia respectively. Both spread worldwide and created the globalisation of religions, for they replaced pagan religions – Celtic and Viking religions, for example – that existed before their introduction. That is how a lot of Europeans were converted to Christianity, and all of early medieval Christian Northern Africa to Islam. It was the same in African countries where religions dating back Before Christ were replaced, forcibly sometimes, by Christianity and Islam. The biggest wave of globalisation, however, occurred with trade – both goods and human. Marco Polo discovered a completely different culture in Asia; he brought back silk, porcelain and spices to Europe. But before that, there was an exchange of goods among the various Asian countries; it was the same among the various European countries. But when Europeans started

¹⁰ The term local richness refers to what attract tourists nowadays in Mauritius, that is to say, its cultural and ethnical diversity along with its peaceful and harmonious lifestyle.

to trade with eastern countries, trade went global. The human trade was a long tradition of humanity. This seems to have always existed, but with the development of world trade and with colonisation, it became the essential point for the economic development of colonies and paved the way for the Triangular Trade¹¹ – human and goods trade – and for the Spice Route. Since Mauritius is located on the transition from Europe to Asia, it became a trade and political issue for the two then super powers – France and England.

Facts concerning Mauritius

Mauritius is an island country situated in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar, south-east of the African coast and neighbour to La Reunion – the French territory. La Reunion used to be known as Isle Bourbon and Mauritius was called Isle de France during the French colonisation. The two islands used to be uninhabited until the Dutch colonisation in 1598 and lots of unique plant and animal species¹² developed freely and peacefully without any human predators. In the Middle Ages, Arab sailors visited Mauritius and called the island “Dina Arobi”. Around 1511, the first European to have probably visited Mauritius was the Portuguese sailor Domingo Fernandez Fereira. Mauritius was named “Cirne” on that period’s Portuguese map. The first people to settle in Mauritius were the Dutch, but, although they started its economic development by the introduction of sugar cane, they left the island in 1710, and it remained uninhabited for the five following years until the French took it over and from then on Mauritius became an inhabited land. The French introduced slaves from Madagascar, Mozambique and other parts of Africa¹³. For economic reasons and to prevent their boats full of luxury goods from India from being attacked by French pirates and buccaneers, the British needed Mauritius. After the French lost the battle against the British, the latter took possession of the island in 1810. La Reunion was given back to France and Napoleon, French Emperor at that time, but the British settled in Mauritius until 1968 when it became an independent island country¹⁴. Those waves of immigrations brought about the economic development of the island and at the same time the waves of immigrations made Mauritius a global island because of the several cultures brought there. Nevertheless, if we consider the various definitions of globalisation we learn that the process is the

11 In this triangular trade, England France and Colonial America equally supplied the exports and the ships; Africa the human merchandise; the plantations the colonial raw materials. The slave ship sailed from the home country with a cargo of manufactured goods. These were exchanged at a profit on the coast of Africa for Negroes, who were traded on the plantations, at another profit, in exchange for a cargo of colonial produce to be taken back to the home country. As the volume of trade increased, the triangular trade was supplemented, but never supplanted, by a direct trade between home country and the West Indies, exchanging home manufactures directly for colonial produce (Source: Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and slavery*. Virginia: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944. P. 51 – 52)

12 One of the well-known extinct animal, which used to live peacefully in Mauritius and has become the emblem in the Mauritian armorial bearings, is the Dodo, its Latin name being *Raphus Cucullatus*. (Source: Commonwealth, Secretariat. "Mauritius". 2011. 04 mar. 2011. <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/YearbookInternal/145169/history/>)

13 All those historical facts can be seen on "History of Mauritius, Official Home Page". Port-Louis, 20 sept. 1999 (30 nov. 2009): Government of Mauritius, 20 avr. 2010 (<http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/auditsite/menuitem.ef06fd7017a71302b4c3bb4e52a521ca/>). And in Nagapen, Amédée. *Histoire de la colonie. Isle de France - Ile Maurice. 1721 - 1968*. Port-Louis, Ile Maurice: Diocèse, 1996.

14 In the 1990's, one of the darkest transaction concerning the independence of Mauritius was revealed. I learned that Mauritius gained its independence thanks to “occult” transactions between the British government and some Mauritian politicians, among whom the well-known “Father of the Nation” and great architect of Mauritius’ Independence, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam. That “occult” transaction includes mainly the giving up of the coral atoll, Diego Garcia, by Mauritian politicians in exchange of their independence. What a high price to pay for a people’s freedom – the Mauritians. The Chagossians were ripped off their freedom and their land. The people from Diego Gargia were dispossessed of their native land so that the United States could build an army base on their “small paradise”. It was a strategic place during the Cold War and it is still the case nowadays to keep an eye on the Middle East. (Source: Ollivry, Thierry. *Diego Garcia : Enjeux stratégiques, diplomatiques et humanitaires L’Harmattan* ed, 17 mars 2008.) Anthropologist, David Vine called the Chagossian island, Diego Garcia, “Island of Shame”. This is the eponymous title of his book, where he recounts with extreme meticulousness, the sad and secret history of the people who were deported by night and scattered in Mauritius and Seychelles, after the Americans had their domestic animals gassed.

destruction of cultural diversity. From the definitions given we may see globalisation as a destructive element to culture, but we may consider globalisation as an element meant to destroy in order to build the culture back better. However, cultural and religious diversity is still relevant today in Mauritius as it was at its origin. Looking closely, the island is much more “Europeanised” in many ways today. For example, in its cultures – mainly in eating habits, dressing habits and in music – Mauritians tend to imitate European styles¹⁵.

In 1835, slavery was abolished and the British replaced the Black African slaves with Indian indentured labourers. Almost during the same period, there was the Chinese settlement. The last big wave of immigration occurred in 1968, when settlers came from Diego Garcia. After the arrival of that large wave of migrants, there have been people immigrating to Mauritius but no more on such a large scale. Recently, in 1992, Mauritius took the status of republic.

This is how a small island – once a French colony and then a British colony – has now a rainbow population originating from three continents, Asia, Africa and Europe.

The result of global waves of immigration

Today Mauritius and its population can be seen as the direct result of globalisation. The result of those waves of immigration is that the island has turned into a multicultural and multiethnic society. Each wave of immigration brought in new people and each of them added their ancestral cultures along with their religions, food behaviours, traditions and languages. However, all the migrants did not settle in Mauritius thanks to their own accord. Some were slaves. Some came as free workers, others as colonisers and some were even deported to Mauritius. The differences in the arrival of modern Mauritians’ ancestors are still felt like balls and chains for some communities in Mauritius or even within sub-communities¹⁶. This is true, especially for the Ilois or Chagossians mentioned above. They are not really or hardly integrated in, practically excluded from, the Mauritian society and of its miraculous rising and wealthy economy (Pilger 2004). Indeed, the Chagossians do not consider themselves as Mauritians but they think they belong to Diego Garcia. We may compare the feelings of the Chagossians to that of Algerians in France today – some consider themselves not so much as French as Algerians. This is true even for Algerians’ children who were born in France and have French citizenship. Still the children say that in Algeria they are considered French and Algerians in France. As a result, they feel stateless. The Chagossians do have Mauritian passports, but they do not feel Mauritian. They feel alien to Mauritius¹⁷. However, they have no choice but to live in Mauritius. Around forty years later, the Chagossians and their descendants are still claiming the right to go back and live on their island¹⁸. These days their situation is critical, for they live in extreme poverty on an economically successful island. The challenge of modern Mauritians is now to build their Mauritian identity and be *as one people as one nation* with all their differences in the face of globalisation. But it is important to state that not all the communities are willingly building up a common identity. This depends on the position each community decides to take. To attract tourists, there are advertising brochures praising a people living in peace and harmony despite their cultural differences. There are also T-shirts displaying *No problem in Mauritius*. Conversely, the different communities live side by side in

15 This part will be studied further in another article.

16 The community mentioned is the Creole community, but not all Creoles feel like that. This feeling comes from poor Creoles. For the sub-communities, one may think of the Rastafarian, who is a Creole sub-community, and for Hindus, one may think of the low caste members. This system of caste is relevant in Mauritius because it was brought from India. This will be explain further in another article.

17 This feeling is put forward in John Pilger’s television documentary.

18 The old Chagossians, those who were young when they were deported to Mauritius, claim their right to die on their island. (Source: Pilger, John. *Stealing a nation*. ITV, oct. 2004.) Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, Literature Nobel Prize, seeing the desperate situation of that people wrote a letter to US President Barack Obama so that the military forces be removed and the Chagossians could go back home. (Source: Edouard, Pamella. "De la lettre de Le Clézio à Obama"; *L'Express* (18 déc. 2009): 19 déc. 2009 (<http://www.lexpress.mu/news/244-blog-de-la-lettre-de-le-clezio-a-obama.html>).

relative respect and harmony, but they hardly mix through inter-community marriages, for example¹⁹. However, as to date the number of inter-community marriages is on the increase. Nevertheless, the concept of globalisation may play a part in the unification of the various communities under the banner of a national identity.

National Identity and Globalisation: Overview

When modern Mauritian ancestors, from different horizons, arrived in Mauritius, they brought not only their specific caste system as far as Indian immigrants are concerned, but also the European class system. However, the major difference from other former British colonies, like, for example, the USA or Australia – though Mauritius is not as big as those countries – is that Aboriginal peoples already existed before the arrival of colonisers, who imposed on them their own cultures and lifestyles. Furthermore, the newcomers displaced the native people to take over their land and this was not the case in Mauritius. Increasingly, newcomers started to be considered the majority group that imposed their cultures on the natives who became the minority group. In Mauritius the situation was completely different because it was an uninhabited island and this may explain the present situation concerning diversity. No culture was clearly imposed on minorities, except for the slaves who adopted their masters' religion. The descendants of the first immigrants perpetuated the original differences until today. This is what makes Mauritius – along with other islands like La Reunion²⁰, for example – a particular island with a rainbow population, but at the same time it prevents the island from having a solid national identity. People hardly see²¹ Mauritians wearing their flag's colours or even decorating their front porches with the national flag, which is different from what can be seen in the US. We can compare Mauritius to the French people, who does not wear red, white and blue, except for an important international football match for example. However, Mauritians would not dress in the national colours of their island as French would in the same situation. Does this mean that Mauritians are less patriotic than Americans? Considering the situation of the two countries – Mauritius and the US – we might infer that it is not the case because of the original diversity that perpetuated in Mauritius. On the contrary, in the USA, the newcomers imposed their culture on the First Peoples, trying to destroy cultural diversity. But with lots of immigrants arriving in the country each year; they do bring their cultures and the USA had to take into consideration multiculturalism²². Furthermore, even newcomers would proudly display the US flag in front of their homes, unlike newcomers in Mauritius.

Nonetheless, when one deal with globalisation, one first think of globalisation of commerce, thus of the economy.

19 There is a slight increase of inter-community marriages, but investigations among mix-married couples showed that they have to face their respective families' wrath before their marriage and then they continue to encounter various difficulties after being married, especially when there are children. Each family would ask for the children to be raised in their religion for example instead of in the religion of the other party.

20 Although the major group in La Reunion, unlike Mauritius, is not the Hindu and at the same time Mauritius has obtained its independence and is now a republic; that is not the case for La Reunion.

21 During my visit in Mauritius in 2008, I noticed that Mauritians wear colourful garments and sometimes the colour seems to be linked to the ethnic group they belong to. Indeed, the four colours of the Mauritian flag display the colour of the four major ethnic groups – red is for the Hindus, blue for the Creoles, yellow for the Chinese and Green for the Muslims. There is another way though to interpret those four colours – red for the blood shed by slaves and for Mauritius independence, blue for the colour of the sea and the sky, yellow for the ever shining sun and green being the colour of sugar cane fields, the backbone of Mauritian economy (Source: I got that information from a woman living in Tranguebar, Port-Louis. She asked for her name not to be mentioned).

22 This concept is very controversial and is widely criticised in countries, such as the US, Canada and Australia, where this is practiced. Famous writer, Neil Bissoondath, is a staunch critic of that concept. Multiculturalism is briefly and ideally defined as a celebration of "human diversity by willingly promoting legal, political, and social recognition of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences." But it is far more complicated in its implementation (Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/multiculturalism.html>).

The Economy: an overview since 1968

Today Mauritius has one of the most successful and competitive economies in Africa; 2010 GDP – Gross Domestic Product – at market prices was estimated at \$9.5 billion and per capita income at \$7,420, one of the highest in Africa. The economy is based on tourism, textiles, sugar, and financial services. In recent years, information and communication technology, seafood, hospitality and property development, healthcare, renewable energy, education and training have emerged as important sectors, attracting substantial investment from both local and foreign investors²³. That was far from being the case in the 1970s after its independence, in 1968. At that time, the Mauritian economy was mainly based on producing and exporting sugar buffeted by the vagaries of world demand. In addition, the country had to face a high rate of unemployment (Chapin Metz 1994). Then slowly but surely, it has grown into an industrial, financial and tourist-based economy. Indeed, the 1970s marked a strong government commitment to diversify its economy through the promotion of tourism and the creation of an EPZ – Export Processing Zone. Unfortunately, by the late 1970s the economic situation deteriorated due to the rise in the price of oil; hence, the sugar production and export boom ended and the balance of payments deficit rose steadily as imports outpaced exports. (Ibid). However, the Mauritian economy experienced a steady growth in the 1980s *thanks to a widespread political consensus on broad policy measures*.(Ibid). The country also enjoyed a declining inflation, high employment and increased domestic savings. During that period, tourism boomed thanks to the increasing number of hotels built and increase in air traffic. The country was compared to other economically dynamic Asian countries like Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and the Republic of Korea. (Ibid). Larry W. Bowman, an expert in Mauritian economy, said that to face the 1990s Mauritius should aim at *modernising the sugar sector, expanding and diversifying manufacturing infrastructure, diversifying agriculture, and developing tourism*. (Ibid). In addition, because of the threats to agriculture resulting from Europe's common agricultural policy and the potential effects on textiles of the GATT – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade – Mauritius hoped to transform itself into a center for offshore banking and financial services. (Ibid). That was what the government did. The annual economic growth from the date of its independence to the present has been around 5% to 6%. 90% of the cultivated land is devoted to the growth of sugarcane, and it generates 15% of the export benefits. To this day, there are more than 32,000 offshore entities in Mauritius. The aim for most of them is to engage in commerce with India, South Africa and China. Furthermore, the textile sector is well poised to take advantage of the AGOA – Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. Additionally, investment in the banking system alone has reached over \$1 billion. Hence, Mauritius' sound economic policies and prudent banking practices helped to mitigate negative effects from the global financial crisis in 2008-09 and the country continues to expand its trade and investment outreach around the globe (CIA 2009).

Globalisation: Constructing Mauritian Economic Identity

Although the Mauritian government referred to that economic stability and growth²⁴ as a miracle, economists argue that Mauritius has substantially benefited from globalisation. It is clearly stated that Mauritian products alone would not have brought wealth to Mauritius, unless the island sells its goods to countries worldwide and generates money from them to develop and diversify the local economy through services and does not relying only on exports but more on services provided to rich countries²⁵. Since Mauritius has proven after its independence that it was able to surf on the greedy wave of the economic world and climb the social ladder to rival with bigger countries, it has paved the

23 Source: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2833.htm#econ>

24 Former Mauritian Prime Minister, Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, coined that economic growth as the “Boom économique mauricien”.

25 aSometimes when Europeans receive phone calls from a telephone operator, the operator is calling from Mauritius. That was what M. told us in 2008 on my visit to Mauritius. M. is a lady working in a call-centre and she told us that she calls people in Europe and has them believe that she calls from the country where the person is.

way to build its economic identity. In the face of the world and economic globalisation, Mauritius is well positioned. The labels “Made in Mauritius” or “Product of Mauritius” provide Mauritians with a sense of pride and of belonging to Mauritian society. A survey showed that Mauritians living abroad, in the US and in France, felt that sense of belonging even much deeper than Mauritians living in Mauritius. Moreover, a Mauritian who now works as a cook in a hotel in Mauritius told us that he lived in France for twenty years, and he felt more Mauritian while living abroad than when he was living in Mauritius. He said that now that he has come back to Mauritius, he could not imagine himself living elsewhere. Nevertheless, that statement should not be considered as a general opinion. This testimony underpins what British sociologist, John Urry writes in a manifesto for the 21st century about belonging. He centers his definition on a new sociology of flows to replace sociology of ‘territory’ and argues that belonging almost always involve(s) diverse forms of mobility. He adds that people dwell in and through being at home and away, through the dialectic of roots and routes” (Urry 2005, 1). Mauritians living abroad say they would buy tea or sugar imported from Mauritius, and we might infer that it is to remind them that they are from, and belong to, that island. At least we may say that, even if people who live on their island do not feel the sense of belonging, yet thanks to globalisation, Mauritius has been able to spread, to export, its products around the world. Thus, this small island manages to display its name on its products’ brands worldwide and alternatively gives the illusion that there is a Mauritian identity. However, a look at Mauritian society shows that Mauritians tend to give more importance to imported products than to their own production. This reveals the drawback of globalisation, at least as far as the economy is concerned. The situation tends to become more complicated when it comes to cultural identity in the face of globalisation. For globalisation does not have an effect on the economy only but, through economy, it also influences to a great extent, culture worldwide. Let us analyse to what extent it affects the various cultures in Mauritius.

Globalisation and culture in Mauritius

As I searched for the definition of globalisation, it seems relevant to understand what culture consists of and what it means before studying this concept in Mauritius. There are 164 definitions of culture cited by two U.S. anthropologists A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn in their work entitled *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*²⁶ (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952). But I have to define the concept more thoroughly first. In general, Leslie A. White states that culture is the behaviour peculiar to *Homo sapiens*, together with material objects used as an integral part of this behaviour. Thus, culture includes language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, and ceremonies, among other elements (White 2008). On a more theoretical level Bates and Plog define culture as *the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning* (Bates & Plog 1988, 7). The elements that modern Mauritians share today are institutions, for every Mauritian goes to school, for example, there is no school reserved for specific communities and that is true for law as well. Law is not made only for one ethnic group and not for the others. Everybody is governed by the same rules. Another element common to all is tools and techniques. Various communities in Mauritius share the same language, which is Creole, although each community has kept their ancestors’ language and uses Creole as an additional language²⁷. Mauritians also share the same food and although it is the ancestral cuisine of each community every Mauritian has adopted curry, which comes from

26 I do not intend to give all the definitions about culture given by numerous researchers for more than a century. Instead I will use a more global definition.

27 ^aThe Creole community is a mixed, Métis, community composed of mixed-blood people from Europe, Africa and Asia. Nevertheless, the main background of that community comes from slave ancestors, from Africa. They did not keep their ancestral language. History has it that they adopted their masters’ language and mixed it somehow with their ancestral language to form the Creole. The other waves of immigration helped in the continuous shaping of Creole. This is still the case today with the modern Creole language. It was created from borrowings from the various communities in Mauritius.

India, as well as the “mine frit” which is a Chinese dish, the “coq au vin”, a French speciality and the bryani which is a Pakistani relish. Hence, curry is no more considered as an ethnic dish but as an integral part of the Mauritian cuisine. One element in food that all Mauritians share without any exception is rice, which is their common staple diet. However, the elements they share do not go further. The first thing that I notice on this island is the diverse communities, which result in diverse beliefs. When referring to beliefs people commonly tend to think of religion. For example, each community has kept their ancestral faith and religion; again except for the Creole community, which adopted the Catholic religion, the former slave-owners’ religion. It is quite rare, though not unusual today, thanks to the globalisation of travel facilities, to see in a same area, a Christian church or an Anglican church next to a Muslim mosque and a Chinese pagoda next to a Hindu temple²⁸. That is the magic of Mauritius, which may be qualified as the crossroads for three religions – Catholicism, Islam, a very small amount of the population practicing Judaism and Hinduism²⁹. The only downside to that idealistic picture is that it is displayed in touristic brochures to attract tourism, the modern backbone of Mauritian economy. Consequently, this statement is far from the Mauritian reality. Furthermore, there is something special, worth being put forward, in the way Mauritians practice their religious faith. There are various religions in Mauritius, but it is commonplace for Mauritians to believe in two religions at the same time. I have an example from an inhabitant of Port-Louis, I met on my visit to Mauritius in 2008 for my Master Memoir. The woman, who asked to remain anonymous, told us that she fervently believes in Christianity and at the same time, she would go to Tamil temples and take part in the kavadi celebration³⁰. This may be qualified as religious syncretism³¹. That woman is not an isolated case. Father Henri Souchon, a Christian priest in Port-Louis, used to say in his sermon during Saturday or Sunday masses that people must choose either to serve the Christian religion or any other. He strongly criticised that kind of practice. This woman recently told us, by email, that ten years ago, she discovered another religious practice and belief from Shri Sathya Sai Baba³². She “confessed” that she is now following that man’s teaching because it inspires her. That is how it goes in Mauritius as far as religions

28 This is the case in the United Kingdom, for example, because they used to own lots of colonies and after decolonisation, the British would accept migrants from their former colonies with their different cultures. Hence, those migrants built up their own mosques or temples depending on their faith.

29 As to the Chinese community, many Chinese descendants were baptised and became Christians.

30 Actually, the full name is Thaipusam Kavadi. It is a Hindu festival celebrated mostly by the Tamil community on the full moon in the Tamil month of Thai (January/February). It is celebrated not only in countries where the Tamil community constitutes a majority, but also in countries where Tamil communities are smaller, such as Mauritius, La Réunion, Singapore and Malaysia. The word Thaipusam is derived from the month’s name Thai and Pusam, which refers to a star that is at its highest point during the festival. The festival commemorates the occasion when Parvati gave Murugan a vel “spear” so he could vanquish the evil demon Soorapadam. Devotees prepare for the celebration by cleansing themselves through prayer and fasting approximately 48 days before Thaipusam. Kavadi-bearers have to perform elaborate ceremonies at the time of assuming the kavadi and at the time of offering it to Murugan. The kavadi-bearer observes celibacy and takes only “pure” food, once a day, while continuously thinking of God. On the day of the festival, devotees will shave their heads and undertake a pilgrimage along a set route while engaging in various acts of devotion, notably carrying various types of kavadi (burdens). At its simplest this may entail carrying a pot of milk, but mortification of the flesh by piercing the skin, tongue or cheeks with vel skewers is also common. (Source: Asgarally, Issa. *L’île Maurice des cultures. Le Printemps* ed. Vacoas: Le Printemps, 2006; p. 37 and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thaipusam>).

31 ‘Syncretism’ is a contentious term, often taken to imply ‘inauthenticity’ or ‘contamination’, the infiltration of a supposedly ‘pure’ tradition by symbols and meanings seen as belonging to other, incompatible traditions. (Source : Stewart, Charles & al. *Syncretism/ anti-syncretism. The politics of religious synthesis*; 1994. Ed. Shaw, Charles Stewart & Rosalind. London: Routledge, 2005; p. 1)

32 aSathya Sai, born as Sathyanarayana Raju, on 23 November 1926, is a popular Indian guru, spiritual figure and educator. He is described by his devotees as an Avatar, godman, spiritual teacher and miracle worker. The apparent materialising of vibuthi (holy ash) and small objects such as rings, necklaces and watches by Sathya Sai Baba has been a source of both fame and controversy – skeptics consider these simple conjuring tricks, while devotees consider them evidence of divinity. Sathya Sai Baba has claimed to be the reincarnation of the great spiritual guru, Sai Baba of Shirdi, whose teachings were an eclectic blend of Hindu and Muslim beliefs (Source: <http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pages/SriSathyaSaiBaba/Introduction.htm>)

are concerned. Still, there are religious conflicts among the various religions forced to cohabit on that small island just as it is for the communities tied to them. The thing is that religions and beliefs are both subjective, and it might be seen as a dictatorship if the state imposes a particular religion over the others to give the population a Mauritian cultural identity. The implementation of this idea is impossible in Mauritius, or elsewhere, as it may lead to social unrest or even to civil war. Mauritius is like a dormant volcano; people can easily imagine what could happen if a single religion is imposed over the whole population. Mauritius underwent two civil wars, one in 1968, just before its independence involving the Muslims and the Christians; the second one in 1999 between the Hindus and the Creoles. Of course, both civil wars were linked to politics but their religious nature cannot be set aside. My hypothesis in this section is that there is no Mauritian culture or Mauritian religion and that each religion controls its community. The Mauritian Constitution does not clearly separate the state from religion unlike what is clearly stated in the French law passed in 1905; Mauritius is not an overtly secular state.

Even if faith is a personal matter, one can hear on the radio, or one can see on television, especially nowadays, about the French culture, and about France being a Catholic country. People also notice, thanks to the media, about the Italian culture or the British culture but there is no such thing as the Mauritian culture. There are ethnic-based cultural identities in Mauritius. As far as ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, works of art, rituals, and ceremonies are concerned, they are all ethnic-shared not national. Each ethnic group has kept its ancestral ways. Furthermore, there are various cultural centres in Mauritius, each for one community. The other thing that Mauritians share with a kind of ambiguity is language. They all speak Creole, but each community would defend their ancestral language. Moreover, it is not exaggerated to say that each community would defend their ancestral language to death. The following incident recounted by Auleear-Owodally, in his study on education in Mauritius, underpins the difficulty of having a single Mauritian culture. It relates the introduction by the Bank of Mauritius of a new banknote. On the old notes, the Hindi language was written first, followed by Tamil. On the new ones, it was the opposite – Tamil came before Hindi. What may look like a mild and inconsequential incident in the eyes of any Westerner took dramatic proportions in the Mauritian society, causing tension to such an extent between the two communities that the Bank of Mauritius had to destroy the new notes and use the old one. The Tamils wrote on the wall of a temple enclosure: *We are ready to die to save our language* (Auleear-Owodally 1998). That “unimportant” incident shows how the subject of languages, and by extension that of cultures, is sensitive, even taboo, in Mauritius. One cannot change the present situation and expect that every community would just agree to a common Mauritian identity. However, it is worth remembering that the two languages, which attracted so many tensions, come from two different parts of India where Hindi is the lingua franca, while Tamil is the language of the Tamil Nadu in Madras. The same tensions that exist between those two ethnic groups in India are to be found in Mauritius. Conversely, this situation reflects Mauritius as a global island, in other words, it is like a world in miniature. Culture includes also music and literature. There is a typical Mauritian type of music called the Sega³³ and almost all Mauritians share that music. Although, we

33 The most typical folkloric dance of Mauritius is the Sega of African origin. This dance is pulsated by the beat of the ravane, a circular drum, and other rhythmic instruments like the maravane and triangle. Danced and sung by the slaves, the Sega has been adopted by all Mauritians and is played on all occasions. More recently a new sound, a mixture of the Sega and Reggae music has found its way in our musical culture. This fusion music called the Seggae, a melodious and entertaining new rhythm that reflects the mixed aspect of Mauritius, emerged in the 80's. Originally the music of the Rastafaris and the poor suburbs of Port Louis, it has found its way to the nightclubs and the mainstream of Mauritian local music. You can find an array of albums or compilations that you can buy on CDs or cassettes from a number of Sega and Seggae artists. There are also traditional music and dances that have been introduced by the Indian and Chinese migrants coming to Mauritius. Western music is also well represented in the Mauritius culture. There are as always the mainstream music amid rap, hip-hop and rock dominating the scene. But you can see Jazz band and other more traditional music like the waltz as well as all types of ballroom dancing (Sources: Asgarally, Issa. *L'Île Maurice des cultures*. Le Printemps ed. Vacoas: Le Printemps, 2006; p. 76 – 79; and http://mauritius.voyaz.com/cultural_folklore_music.htm)

should say that in the Creole community, there is a group known as the Rastafari, who mixes reggae and sega, creating a new type of music known as seggae. This sub-group of the Creole community shows how Mauritius is made up through globalisation because they also wear clothes displaying the Ethiopian flag's colours. They say that those colours, which have become the symbol of Rastafarianism, remind them of their origin (Confavreux 2010). One may thus deduce that the Creole community is having a growing awareness of their cultural heritage, which might help exorcise the ball and chain of being slave descendants and have an ethnic identity. Still, almost all Mauritians recognise themselves in the sega and even Hindus, and Chinese would dance to this music. Contrary, the White community would not dance to that kind of music for obvious reasons – it belongs primarily to slave descendants. The Mauritian musical landscape, especially the sega, has been shaped by globalisation. Furthermore, literature is also a particular field in Mauritius, for a wide range of Mauritian authors writes novels involving characters relating to their community³⁴. This is true after Mauritius' independence because most writers before that period were of European origin. Nevertheless, there is no true Mauritian literature. Even Bernardin de Saint Pierre's famous novel, *Paul et Virginie* depicted the white community with their slaves. The last thing related to culture is the way people dress. In Mauritius, there is no particular way of dressing. The way Mauritians dress comes from various parts of the world like its population. As a result, when strolling in the streets of Port-Louis, one can see people dressed in saris, churridar, suit and dress. Saris are worn only by Indian descendants, yet they will also dress in the European ways. Most young people of any community have adopted the European style while older and young rural Mauritians tend to cling to their ancestral dressing style (ibid). As far as gender is concerned, male Mauritians are all dressed in the European style regardless of their community. The only thing that all Mauritians share is the bright and rainbow-like colour of their garment³⁵. Still, the colour they share does not mean that they share a national identity. In other islands like La Reunion, Madagascar, Seychelles or in Martinique and Guadeloupe, one can see people wearing bright and colourful clothes. It seems that it is the brand of island people, of Asian or African peoples but it is not peculiar to Mauritians.

Mauritius is in many ways the result of globalisation, but the concept which was once the source of the present cultural situation in Mauritius, has reached its limits.

Mauritian Diversity versus Globalisation: Overview

Originally, Mauritius was built out of globalisation thanks to the several waves of immigrants who brought along their ancestral cultures. But none of those immigrants imposed their culture on the others. The Creole community has not entirely kept its ancestral culture. The reason is that most of the ancestors of the modern Creole community came to Mauritius as slaves, resulting in the deprivation of their ancestral culture, though not completely, and the adoption of that of their masters³⁶. Apart from religion, there is also food that is part of culture, and I notice, when studying Mauritian food that it also originates from the various countries of the ancestors. Hence, there is diversity in food because it

34 While Kreol Morisyen (Mauritian Creole) is the most widely spoken language in Mauritius, most of the literature is written in French, although many authors write in English, Bhojpuri, and Morisyen (Mauritian Creole), and others such as Abhimanyu Unnuth in Hindi . Mauritius's renowned playwright Dev Virahsawmy writes exclusively in Morisyen. Important authors include Malcolm de Chazal, Ananda Devi, Raymond Chasle, Loys Masson, Marcel Cabon, and Edouard Maunick. Other younger writers like Shenaz Patel, Amal Sewtohul, Natacha Appanah, Alain Gordon-Gentil and Carl de Souza explore the issues of ethnicity, superstition and politics in the novel. Poet and critic Khal Torabully has put forward the concept of "coolitude," a poetics that results from the blend of Indian and Mauritian cultural diversity. Other poets include Hassam Wachill, Edouard Maunick, Sedley Assone, Yusuf Kadel and Umar Timol. (Source: Asgarally, Issa. *L'Île Maurice des cultures*. Op. Cit. p. 52 – 60, and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Mauritius)

35 The Mauritian dressing style and code is studied quite succinctly in this article. This part will be widely studied in my doctoral dissertation.

36 In 2008, on my visit to Mauritius, I learned that a sub-group from the Creole community has never given up completely the ancient African religious practice. They said that their ancestors kept the practice of their original religion along with that of the *masters*, but it was done in secrecy.

comes from Europe, Asia and, to a lesser extent, from Africa. However, in this part I will focus on the definition of globalisation as it is given by the Encyclopaedia Britannica to deal with the situation of Mauritius. That definition along with the related article gives, quite a frightening overview of that concept. If we consider that globalisation might drive humanity towards the standardisation of cultural expressions around the world, it means that there will be no more cultural diversity in the world and on a smaller scale in Mauritius as well. This is how globalisation, which once helped create a country, is now the bane that might destroy that fragile society. Following the definition given in Encyclopaedia Britannica, I read that *some observers argue that a rudimentary version of world culture is already taking shape among certain individuals who share similar values, aspirations, or lifestyles. The result is a collection of elite groups whose unifying ideals transcend geographical limitations* (Watson 2008).

Globalisation: the situation in Mauritius

From the above definition of globalisation, we might wonder whether the situation is similar in Mauritius with *a collection of elite groups whose unifying ideals transcend geographical limitations*. Still, there is a political proverb in Mauritius, which says that *sak zako bizin protez so montayn*³⁷; literally translated as: *each monkey must protect its mountain*. This proverb makes it improbable that there can be any such collection of ethnic groups who will transcend, not geographical limitations, but at least communal and ethnical limitations to create an elite group. This proverb conveys a deeply rooted sense of communalism³⁸ even in politics in Mauritius. Not only is communalism an integral part of Mauritian society, especially with the above-cited proverb, but it is rooted in politics preventing any transcendence of cultural differences. Still, wealth and intelligence can be the fuel to transcend ethnic barriers. In fact, the first thing that comes to mind while dealing with globalisation is economy. Mauritius has built an economic identity thanks to the Mauritians' *savoir faire* and also to the government's will to develop its economy and to make the island a reference for developing and developed countries. With globalisation or, if we consider the definition given by The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, westernisation and Americanisation of world economy, Mauritius might lose its economic independence. Nevertheless, Mauritius has certainly built its economic identity but it is like a house of cards. In effect, Mauritian economy relies entirely on global economy, that is to say, it relies on the world economy, thus on the development of globalisation. As a result, if the world economy collapses so will the Mauritian economy. Furthermore, Mauritius may be losing its soul on the altar of globalisation, because thanks to economic development and job creation, there is an increasing development of fast food franchises like McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken – the latter known as KFC. This is creating an Americanisation of food in Mauritius as it is the case in other countries worldwide as well. Such imported fast food brands are destroying food diversity in Mauritius and at the same time its cultural diversity as well, that very cultural diversity, that very richness, which attracts tourists. This time one clearly notice that far from helping in the creation of a national identity, globalisation is destroying the local richness of Mauritius, for it is not helping in creating a Mauritian identity but promotes a single World identity. It has been mentioned that tourism is the backbone of Mauritian economy. Of course, there are wonderful beaches, but according to testimonies made by a group of Mauritians there is cultural but also, increasingly, sexual tourism in Mauritius nowadays. The former type of tourists would surely desert the island if Mauritius loses its cultural diversity on the altar of globalisation, while the other one would probably keep coming and hence destroying Mauritian society by allowing AIDS to spread on the island. According to the Government of Mauritius' website, people who got AIDS used to be drug addicts, but from the year 2000 onwards it extended to women having more than one partner, especially women having sexual relations with tourists. This situation is changing the way people around the world perceive Mauritius. However, people have to take into account that sexual

37 This was used in a public political meeting during an electoral campaign by Sir Anerood Jugnauth, former Prime Minister and now the President of Mauritius. This phrase is widely used now by any community in Mauritius.

38 Social organisation on a communal basis ; loyalty to a sociopolitical grouping based on religious or ethnic affiliation. (Source: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/communalism>)

tourism reached Mauritius because of global poverty which reached the island, in the same way it has spread in developing or rich industrialised countries alike worldwide. Nonetheless, Mauritius is no more considered as a developing country but as a rich industrialised country. But people should not forget the left-behinds of the Mauritian economic miracle. Among these are the Chagossians.

Conclusion

Globalisation seems to have marked the life of Man since the dawn of humanity and we cannot argue against that concept, as Kofi Annan puts it, for it is part of our life. At the beginning humans did not even realise that they were on the verge of creating something that would have far-reaching consequences thousands of years after humanity got out of Africa to colonise planet Earth. No place is left deserted today due to the increase of world population and because of the globalisation of trade; we are destroying the heart of our planet by destroying rainforests worldwide. But since we have to live with it and since it is an unstoppable concept, maybe we can find a way to live with it in a better way, as Anne O. Krueger puts it. The situation of Mauritius is not different from the rest of the world. What Nayan Chanda says about globalisation being nothing new is completely true in the case of Mauritius. We could find evidence of that situation in the history of Mauritius, with the waves of immigrants from several parts of the world. In its modern concept, globalisation is seen as the best way to bring peace to the world; for some theorists think that it is a way to have a world population with a single identity. However, there are still ethnic groups around the world that would not quit their ancestral identity and culture. Without diversity, as it is now the case in the world and in Mauritius, there is no reason for fighting each other. This is somehow childish; it is like going back to the beginning of humanity when there was only one race, the human race, if we consider the DNA's Out of Africa theory. Nevertheless, in its modern sense, globalisation has taken a new turn and now some people are scared of that phenomenon. This fear has paved the way for the destruction of all rational discussions because of the conspiracy theories, mainly spread by the media, concerning the creation of a single world government and a single new world order through global economy. There are several conspiracy books and texts that deal with this subject, among them is the book written by Robin Ramsay where conspiracy is viewed as normal politics whether it is about globalisation or war against terrorists. We might thus wonder whether we are heading towards a new paranoia spread worldwide on account of an irrational fear of globalisation.

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