



THE ROAD TO CHAGOS

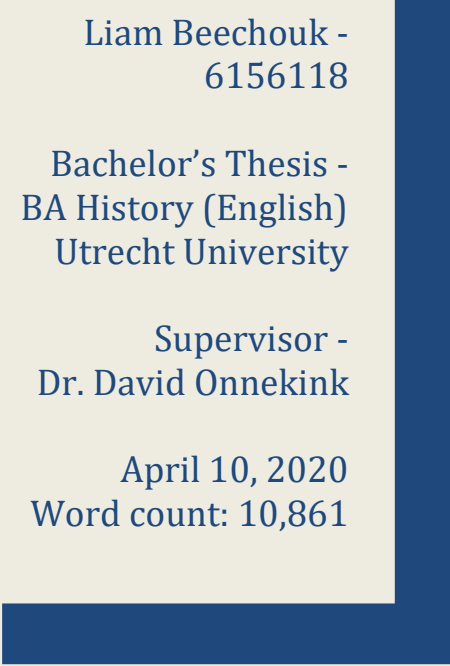
An Analysis of Mauritius' Foreign Policy

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Abstract

The International Court of Justice case between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Mauritius over the detachment of the Chagos Archipelago in 1965 establishes that the deconstruction of postcolonial legacies is an ongoing process. The underdevelopment of studies regarding the historiography of Mauritius' policy towards Chagos also reveals that traditional international relations theories are insufficient in examining this case. This thesis addresses this gap by exploring the extent to which 'islandness' can sufficiently explain the change of Mauritius' foreign policy regarding Chagos between 1976 and 1980.

This research prompts the question of how Mauritius' identity as an island influences its development as a state. The field of Island Studies argues that the particular history and geography of islands naturally produces certain forms of organisation which impact state behaviour, thus culminating in the concept of 'islandness'. This thesis assesses the applicability of 'islandness' in examining the foreign policy of islands and proposes the integration of the English School's concept of 'international society' into the Island Studies framework. Mauritius is used as a case study in the application of this modified theoretical framework by analysing Prime Minister Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's explanation of Mauritius' foreign policy in interviews and speeches in the United Nations. This thesis concludes that Ramgoolam's language and framing choices demonstrate the influence of islandness alongside an international society and the presence of islander agency.

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List of Abbreviations

BIOT:	British Indian Ocean Territory
ICJ:	International Court of Justice
MLP:	Mauritian Labour Party
MMM:	Mouvement Militant Mauricien (Mauritian Militant Movement)
NAM:	Non-Aligned Movement
OAU:	Organisation of African Unity
OCAM:	Organization Commune Africaine et Malgache (African and Malagasy Common Organisation)
PMSD:	Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate (Mauritian Social Democratic Party)
UN:	United Nations

Introduction

A glaring reminder of the failure of the decolonisation process in the 1960s came to light on the international stage with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case of the Republic of Mauritius v the United Kingdom in 2019. In 1965 the United Kingdom detached the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of the colonial state of Mauritius three years before it gained independence.¹ The Chagos Archipelago, a collection of islands located approximately 2000 kilometres to the northeast of Mauritius subsequently became part of the newly founded British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).² The BIOT was then leased to the United States for the development of a military presence in the Indian Ocean, resulting in not only the eviction of Chagos' approximately 2000 inhabitants but also their arbitrary and inadequate resettlement across the Indian Ocean.³

The Advisory Opinion of the ICJ ruled that the UK's detachment and continued possession of the Chagos Archipelago is illegal under international law.⁴ This violation occurred just five years after the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples which specifically states “Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”⁵ Mauritius' victory in the ICJ embodies the case of an ex-colony island, previously threatened by the whims of two international powers, rising to challenge their old imperial overseer in an international arena. The case of the Chagos Archipelago is just one of several examples of islands with territorial disputes whose origins can be traced back to colonialism in the Indian Ocean alone.⁶

¹ Peter Calvert (ed), *Border and Territorial Disputes of the World*, (London: John Harper, 2004), 48.

² Calvert, *Border and Territorial Disputes*, 48.

³ Sandra Evers and Marry Kooy, *Eviction from the Chagos Islands: Displacement and Struggle for Identity against Two World Powers* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 9.

⁴ United Nations, International Court of Justice, *The Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965: Summary of the Advisory Opinion*, (25 February 2019), 1.

⁵ United Nations, General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), *Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples*, A/res/1514(XV), (14th December 1960).

⁶ Tor Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean: Islands in Ebb and Flow* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 334. (See for an example of France's colonial involvement in the Indian Ocean)

However, within the context of the decolonisation of the Indian Ocean, there are two motives for this thesis to use the example of the Chagos Archipelago in particular to examine the process of deconstructing postcolonial legacies. The first reason is that research into this case is very socially relevant because of the thousands of people currently affected by this territorial dispute.⁷ The second and more academically relevant incentive is that this case raises several questions concerning state behaviour in a system of international relations. This is one of the most successful peaceful escalations of a territorial dispute beyond bilateral discussions to the United Nations (UN) since 1945. And yet, Mauritius only officially announced a claim to Chagos in the UN in 1980 and even then it was still 37 years before it reached a significant level of attention. This raises the questions of how accessible the UN as a site for international justice has been for the duration of its existence and the nature of Mauritius' policy towards the territory. The case of Mauritius and the Chagos Archipelago serves to introduce an international dynamic into the behaviour of particularly a postcolonial island state, an area of research that requires more attention.⁸

Having said that, the historiography concerning this topic has two main areas where research has been concentrated; the conduct of the United Kingdom at the time of the detachment as well as the struggles of the Chagossian people and their antagonistic relationship with the UK and USA. Authors such as anthropologist David Vine have worked extensively to deconstruct the narratives created by the UK and USA to legitimize their actions and expose the realities shaping the lives of Chagossians to the present day.⁹ Similarly, fellow anthropologist Laura Jeffery has closely examined implications of displacement on the Chagossian community. An example of this research is the investigation into the debate between Chagossians on the best course of action to regain their homeland, including the process of identity negotiation surrounding the decision to accept either British or Mauritian sovereignty.¹⁰ Alternatively, researchers such as Stephen Allen have dedicated entire books to the legal history of the detachment, including analysis of the

⁷ United Nations, International Court of Justice, *The Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965: Summary of the Advisory Opinion*, (25 February 2019), 1.

⁸ Adam Grydehøj, "A Future of Island Studies," *Island Studies Journal* 12 (2017): 1, 10.

⁹ David Vine, "From the Birth of the Ilois to the 'Footprint of Freedom': A History of Chagos and the Chagossians," in *Eviction from the Chagos Islands: Displacement and Struggle for Identity against Two World Powers*, ed. Sandra Evers and Marry Kooy (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 12.

¹⁰ Laura Jeffery, *Chagos Islanders in Mauritius and UK : Forced Displacement and Onward Migration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 2.

litigation efforts by Olivier Bancoult and other Chagossians.¹¹ The prevailing academic perspective on the Chagos territorial dispute is encapsulated in the historical, anthropological and legal approach taken by the works compiled in Sandra Evers and Marry Kooy's book, "Eviction from the Chagos Islands : Displacement and Struggle for Identity Against Two World Powers" which place the Chagossians at the epicentre of research.

However, although the politics of Chagossian mobilisation are undoubtedly fascinating, the negotiation of this territorial dispute by the newly independent island state of Mauritius is an especially interesting yet under-researched mechanism. The early history of Mauritius' navigation of this territorial dispute after the detachment is sorely neglected.¹² Since the state of Mauritius became the eventual successful conduit for the Chagossians in the ICJ case, an analysis of the conditions which affected the feasibility of an effective international territorial dispute over Chagos will provide insight into the history of international justice, postcolonial and island state behaviour. Therefore, the role of Mauritius will be more closely examined in this thesis.

Theoretical Framework and Research Question

This lacuna in research could be in part attributed to the lack of a single overarching theoretical foundation upon which this analysis can be adequately based. When approaching a topic centred on understanding state behaviour and the pursuit of international justice the first theoretical framework which naturally presents itself is International Relations (IR). However, the field of international relations is plagued with issues particularly concerning the theorisation of small states.¹³ And yet, even when discussing small states in IR there is a loose but fundamental set of assumptions regarding statehood that are not universally applicable. In the case of Mauritius, the field of Island Studies would argue that the spatiality of islands results in distinct forms of social, political and economic organisation that distinguishes them from other states.¹⁴ This

¹¹ Stephen Allen and Christopher Monaghan, *Fifty Years of the British Indian Ocean Territory, Legal Perspectives*, (Cham: Springer, 2018), 4.

¹² Robert Aldrich and John Connell, *The Last Colonies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 181.

¹³ Baldur Thorhallsson, "Small States in the UNSC and the EU: Structural Weaknesses and Ability to Influence," in *Small States in a Legal World*, eds. Petra Butler and Caroline Morris, The World of Small States, 1 (Cham: Springer, 2017), 36.

¹⁴ Stephen A. Royle and Laurie Brinklow, "Definition and Typologies," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Island Studies, A World of Islands*, ed. Godfrey Baldacchino (London: Routledge, 2018), 10.

interdisciplinary concept of ‘islandness’ affects both interactions with and the behaviour of island states and thus can provide a remedy for the more generalised approaches of traditional IR theory. Moreover, taking an Island Studies approach not only allows a multifaceted approach to understanding the complexity of island behaviour, this choice equally coincides with the call for more research into how the geophysical and geopolitical situation of islands affects their position in a broader context.¹⁵ However, the benefits of such a broad scope of research are undercut by the underdevelopment of certain aspects affecting the manifestation of ‘islandness’. For example, despite respecting the distinctness of islands, it could be argued that the island’s identity and role as a state within an international order are not fully explored in Island Studies.

Therefore, this thesis addresses the question of: to what extent does ‘islandness’ sufficiently explain the factors shaping the shift in Mauritius’ foreign policy regarding the Chagos Archipelago from 1976 to 1980? This question naturally lends itself to two main sub-questions. First, the thesis examines how theoretically suitable the field of Island Studies is for examining international relations. How effective is the concept of ‘islandness’ when investigating state foreign policy? Secondly, can islandness be used to justify Mauritius’ stance leading up to 1980 and its adoption of a long-term policy for the return of Chagos?

Structure and Methodology

As such, this thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter includes a necessary description of the history of Mauritius and the Chagos Archipelago prior to 1976 which lays the foundation for the subsequent analysis. This chapter also reveals that Mauritius’ island identity has played a fundamental role in defining Mauritius’ organisation. The second chapter argues for the merging of strands of Island Studies with aspects of IR theory to accurately examine the foreign policy of Mauritius. This combination is rooted in the shortcomings of the individual theories. The English School of IR is introduced to broaden the scope of ‘islandness’. This approach to international relations introduces the effects of an ‘international society’ on state policy and is particularly well suited to understanding the behaviour of small states.¹⁶ The bulk of the analysis

¹⁵ Burkhard Schnepeland and Edward A. Alpers (eds), *Connectivity in Motion: Island Hubs in the Indian Ocean World*, Palgrave Series in Indian Ocean World Studies (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 18.

¹⁶ Robert W. Murray, *System, Society and the World: Exploring the English School of International Relations* (Bristol: E-International Relations, 2015), 2.

of the Mauritian case study with the proposed theoretical framework is located in the third and final chapter. This research chapter will focus on Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the first prime minister of Mauritius, as a response to a methodological issue in the field of Island Studies. Due to the majority of the work about islands being conducted by ‘outsiders’, there has been a tendency to project characteristics such as vulnerability to structural influences onto islands. However, this inclination is challenged by granting islanders agency through the active study of how the factors affecting ‘islandness’ are interpreted and acted on.¹⁷ Therefore, this chapter will more accurately be examining the extent to which ‘islandness’ impacted and features Ramgoolam’s formulation of Mauritius’ foreign policy.

The investigation consists of analysis of primary source material in the form of interviews and speeches delivered by Ramgoolam during his final term in office between 1976 and 1980. The reason for considering Ramgoolam’s final term stems from the desire to neutralise the effects of multi-party alliances and frequent opposition victories on foreign policy so that politically uninterrupted period can be considered.¹⁸ The year 1980 is considered because, as previously mentioned, that was the first year Mauritius actually asserted a claim to Chagos. Moreover, by starting from 1976 the context leading up to the 1980 change in policy can be established. The primary sources chosen from this period are Ramgoolam’s annual speeches at the UN General Assembly and two interviews; one conducted by Professor Philippe Decraene for the French “Le Monde” newspaper in 1976 and the second by the researcher Anthony J. Hughes for the “Africa Report” of the Africa-America Institute in 1979.

The statements made in the UN were chosen because there is arguably no arena more international in which a state’s foreign policy can be expressed. Moreover, the oral format allows the influence of the speaker to be analysed alongside the content of the statement. Admittedly the information gained from an interview is different to that of especially a UN speech but what is important is the international context of both sources. A qualitative analysis will be conducted on the UN statements to see if the influence of ‘islandness’ and an ‘international society’ can be

¹⁷ Godfrey Baldacchino, “Studying Islands: On Whose Terms? Some Epistemological and Methodological Challenges to the Pursuit of Island Studies,” *Island Studies Journal* 3 (2008): 1, 39.

¹⁸ Henry Srebrnik, “‘Full of Sound and Fury’: Three Decades of Parliamentary Politics in Mauritius,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28 (2002): 2, 277; Nirmal Kumar Betchoo, “Bipolarisation, a likely trend in Mauritian politics,” *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development* 5 (2018): 4, 159.

observed in the language used by Ramgoolam to state Mauritius' foreign policy in an international forum. Moreover, since interviews are relatively less rehearsed and require more explicit justification by the interviewee on their stances, the interviews provide both context and landmarks against which observations can be cross-checked. It could be argued that interviews guided by Westerners might impose certain values upon the content, however, both Decraene and Hughes had academic careers focused on the study of Africa which adds an element of academic neutrality to the interview. The interviews also allow for observation of how Ramgoolam as an individual and islander rationalises his decisions as more than simply a representative of state. This comparative analysis provides a multilateral approach to the question of how an island leader situates himself within a particular island culture and international society and the political implications of said decisions on foreign policy.

Chapter 1 - The Development of an Island State

Before an analysis of the foreign policy of Mauritius can take place, there are two main aspects of this topic which require contextualisation. The first is the establishment of a brief history of Mauritius and the socio-economic and political developments that took place immediately after gaining independence. In order to adequately analyse a country's foreign policy it is fundamental to comprehend the underlying domestic factors which help shape national interest. It would be naive to assume that a state can immediately transform from a colony to an effective international actor without any teething issues. Moreover, Mauritius' history demonstrates that its island status has had a significant impact on the course of its development. The second is an explanation of the creation of the British Indian Ocean Territory in 1965 and the role played by Seewoosagar Ramgoolam in said process. Since this thesis is examining how Mauritius' specific political and geographical organisation influenced the policy towards Chagos, it is important to situate the dispute in the proper context of the island's development. Furthermore, as Mauritius' policy under Ramgoolam regarding Chagos is being examined, it is necessary to understand how the situation surrounding Chagos unfolded to provide context for Ramgoolam's policy later.

A Colonial Enterprise

The Republic of Mauritius is a subtropical volcanic island located in the Indian Ocean just over 800 kilometres east of the Republic of Madagascar near the French department, Réunion Island. Originally uninhabited, populated only by unique flora and fauna such as the Dodo bird, the island is only approximately 1800 square kilometres but is still one of the largest islands scattered throughout the Indian Ocean.¹⁹ The anthropological history began with the failed settlement attempts made by the Dutch between the 16th and 18th century.²⁰ The most notable outcome of the Dutch presence in Mauritius, apart from some minor forts, is a legacy of environmental abuse and exploitation epitomised by the extinction of the Dodo, a flightless bird indigenous to Mauritius. The Dutch used the island as a well-located resource mine and abandoned

¹⁹ James E. Meade, *The Economic and Social Structure of Mauritius* (London: Routledge, 2011 [1961]), 1.

²⁰ Perry Moree, "Discovering the Undiscovered Country: Dutch Mauritius 1598-1710," in *Globalisation and the South-West Indian Ocean*, eds. Sandra J. T. Evers and Vinish Y. Hookoomsing (University of Mauritius and International Institute for Asian Studies, 2000), 3.

caution in their exploitation of the island's assets, particularly evident in the depletion of the expansive ebony forests.²¹ The history of Mauritius during the French and British colonisation can equally be described as a history of exploitation however, it is only after the Dutch occupation that Mauritius' strategic position became fully recognised and the source of international competition.

The French took over from the Dutch in 1721 and appeared determined not to allow a shortage of labour to cripple their settlement, as it had with the Dutch settlement, so that they could take full advantage of the island.²² Several generations of French governors emphasised the importance of slavery for the maintenance of a French outpost in the Indian Ocean during escalating imperial competition with Britain.²³ Approximately 50,000 slaves, mostly from West Africa, were imported to Mauritius during the period of French control compared to the roughly 200 that inhabited the island while the Dutch had control.²⁴ These were used mostly for shipbuilding and agriculture. A successful sugar plantation economy was formed, albeit one sustained by a largely Afro-Mauritian slave population and a Franco-Mauritian plantocracy.²⁵ Moreover, the French succeeded in significant developments of administrative infrastructure in the capital, Port Louis and inadvertently created an influential minority of Indo-Mauritian artisans and servants.²⁶ However, most famously, Mauritius acted as staging from which two successful naval attacks were launched against British forces in India in 1740 and 1746.²⁷

²¹ Richard Grove, "Conserving Eden: The (European) East India Companies and their Environmental Policies on St. Helena, Mauritius and in Western India, 1600-1854," in *Agriculture, Resource Exploitation and Environmental Change*, ed. Helen Wheatley, An Expanding World: The European Impact on World History 1450-1800, no. 17, (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997), 325.

²² Daniel Sleight, "The Economy of Mauritius during the Second Dutch Occupation (1664-1710)," in *Globalisation and the South-West Indian Ocean*, eds. Sandra J. T. Evers and Vinish Y. Hookoomsing (University of Mauritius and International Institute for Asian Studies, 2000), 53.

²³ Jean-Michel Filliot, "La traite vers l'Île de France," in *Slave Trades, 1500-1800: Globalisation of Forced Labour*, ed. Patrick Manning, An Expanding World: The European Impact on World History 1450-1800, no. 15, (Aldershot Variorum, 1996), 246.

²⁴ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 230; Ranjith Jayasena and Pieter Floore, "Dutch Forts of Seventeenth Century Ceylon and Mauritius: An Historical Perspective," in *First Forts: Essays on the Archeology of Proto-colonial Fortifications*, ed. Eric Klingelhofer (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 254.

²⁵ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 230.

²⁶ Abdool Cader Kalla, "Migration, Memory and the Meaning of Community in Mauritius (C1780-1940): a Historical Geographer's Approach to the Settlement of Indians," in *Globalisation and the South-West Indian Ocean*, eds. Sandra J. T. Evers and Vinish Y. Hookoomsing (University of Mauritius and International Institute for Asian Studies, 2000), 160.

²⁷ Patrick J. Barnwell and Auguste Toussaint, *A Short History of Mauritius* (London: Longmans, Green, 1949), 59.

The footprint of the French presence remained long after the British seized the island in 1810 fueled by a desire to fully control the naval routes through the Indian Ocean.²⁸ Despite this largely strategic motivation, that does not mean social and economic development did not continue under the British. One of the most significant changes to the social configuration of Mauritius came about as a result of the introduction of indentured labour to the island after the abolition of slavery in 1833. The ethnic composition of the island shifted from a population of majority African and Malagasy descent, to one dominated by Indian emigrants who made up over 60% of the population.²⁹ The increase in indentured labour also served as the catalyst for the cementation of the sugarcane industry with the island's share of sugar produced in the British Empire rising to almost 20% by 1851.³⁰ This increase in the workforce was also accompanied by land reforms throughout the 19th century to maintain the sugar industry which still encouraged the concentration of wealth in an increasingly small class of plantation owners.

Despite British policies contributing to the establishment of an effective plantation colony in the 19th century, by the middle of the 20th century it resulted in worrying implications for the future of an independent Mauritius. From an economic perspective, the gloomy prospects are discussed in detail in James Meade's 1961 report on the economic condition of the island. One of the key issues highlighted is the problems of relying on the sugar industry, which already has a problematically high land to labour ratio, coupled with the growing concern that the drive for efficiency as a colony would continue into independence, not only reducing the amount of labour needed but also increasing the output of sugar beyond Mauritius' capability to export as an independent state.³¹ This is a troublesome prospect for an island state with limited space and a Malthusian population growth rate.³²

On a different note, it has been argued that direct British rule created a bureaucratic foundation upon which Mauritius' successful transformation into a democratic state was based.³³ Whilst true to a certain extent, British policies on community in particular also had serious

²⁸ Barnwell and Toussaint, *A Short History of Mauritius*, 118.

²⁹ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 232.

³⁰ Jean-Louis Miège, *Indentured Labour in the Indian Ocean and the Particular Case of Mauritius*, *Intercontinenta*, No. 5, (Leiden: Centre for the History of European Expansion, 1986), 14.

³¹ Meade, *The Economic and Social Structure of Mauritius*, 17.

³² Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 238.

³³ Matthew Lange, *Lineages of Despotism and Development: British Colonialism and State Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 68.

repercussions for the socio-political organisation of the island in the 20th century. British fixation with the idea that the communalism of the island would complicate democracy resulted in the creation of a system in which the agency of community leaders was ignored in favour of their official political counterparts which were ultimately elected by the Governor.³⁴ The British argued that this was in part due to the fallibility of communal politics, whose flaws could be traced to the primordial nature of ethnicity and religion.³⁵ However, the British simultaneously contributed to the reification of ethnicity by systematically dividing the population into four categories in census data, Hindus, Muslims, Chinese and General Population.³⁶ Although more time could be spent discussing the criterion and use of these divisions, the knowledge that former Creole slaves (27% of the population) were included in the General Population category with former European slave owners (2% of the population) whilst the Chinese category (3% of the population) existed is testament enough to the controversy of this categorisation.³⁷

The consequences of this aspect of British policy became politically visible in the backlash after the first elections held on the island in 1948. Despite the British attempts to maintain some control by asserting their right to select members of the Legislative Assembly the Mauritian Labour Party (MLP), supported by Indian and African Mauritians and led by Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, still challenged the British-backed Franco-Mauritian regime through a popular vote.³⁸ This sparked the creation of the Franco-Mauritian-led Mauritian Social-Democratic Party (PMSD) and thus began in earnest the politicisation of ethnicity and religion. A process codified by the introduction of the four ethnic categories into the bedrock of the electoral system after 1965 wherein all candidates were forced to choose one category to represent.³⁹ The concurrent economic struggles and socio-political unrest leading up to and in the years following independence served as the perfect proxies through which ethnicity was politically mobilised. The culminating illustration of this process can be observed in the development of the Chagos debacle and the realisation of Mauritian independence.

³⁴ Deborah Sutton, "The Political Consecration of Community in Mauritius, 1948–68," in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35 (2007): 2, 241.

³⁵ Burton Benedict, *Mauritius, The problems of a Plural Society*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), 47.

³⁶ Sutton, "The Political Consecration of Community in Mauritius, 1948–68," 241.

³⁷ Srebrnik, "Full of Sound and Fury," 277.

³⁸ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 234.

³⁹ Sutton, "The Political Consecration of Community in Mauritius, 1948–68," 242.

The Cost of Independence

The Chagos Archipelago was first mapped around the same time as Mauritius by the Portuguese in the 1500s. Three main island groups make up the Chagos Archipelago: Peros Banhos, the Solomon Islands and Diego Garcia. The archipelago was officially tied directly to Mauritius when a coconut plantation was formed on the largest island of Diego Garcia in 1783 whilst Mauritius was still under French rule.⁴⁰ The archipelago continued to enjoy an almost exclusive economic relationship under the British wherein Chagos exported coconut oil and copra while Britain governed the archipelago as a dependency of Mauritius.⁴¹ Throughout roughly 200 years of Chagossian history, a permanent community was built around the plantation industry with infrastructure such as schools, churches and cemeteries.⁴² This was populated by an ethnically diverse yet uniquely Chagossian community with its own history, music, culture and language, named the 'Ilois'.⁴³ The Chagossian people come as close as it is possible considering Mauritius' history to being an indigenous collective despite later attempts to classify them as purely migrant workers associated with the boom in indentured labour during British rule.⁴⁴

Be that as it may, after the 1965 Constitutional Conference held in London the Chagos Archipelago was detached by Order of Council and Mauritius was paid £3 million.⁴⁵ The decision was made without the consultation of the Chagossians by representatives of a majority Indo-Mauritian political coalition led by the Mauritian Labour Party (MLP) and Ramgoolam. After failing to publicly announce the decision to excise the archipelago from Mauritius, British administrators refused entry to Chagossians that had left the islands for recreational or medical reasons and began reducing the supplies reaching the islands between 1965 and 1972.⁴⁶ The British even resorted to gassing pet dogs to coerce people into leaving and those that remained

⁴⁰ Evers and Kooy, *Eviction from the Chagos Islands*, ix.

⁴¹ Vine, "From the Birth of the Ilois...", 12.

⁴² *Ibid*, 29.

⁴³ Vine, "From the Birth of the Ilois...", 12.

⁴⁴ Steffen F. Johannessen, "Dis/Entangled Hubs: Connectivity and Disconnections in the Chagos Archipelago," in *Connectivity in Motion: Island Hubs in the Indian Ocean World*, eds. Burkhard Schnepeland Edward A. Alpers, Palgrave Series in Indian Ocean World Studies (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 274.

⁴⁵ Jocelyn Chan Low, "The Making of the Chagos Affair: Myths and Reality," in *Eviction from the Chagos Islands: Displacement and Struggle for Identity against Two World Powers*, eds. Sandra Evers and Marry Kooy (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 62.

⁴⁶ Jeffery, *Chagos Islanders in Mauritius and UK*, 2.

were then arbitrarily and forcefully relocated to Mauritius and Seychelles without a resettlement plan in place.⁴⁷ Only in 1972 was a partial reimbursement plan put in place by the UK, however in reality, this support did not reach all Chagossians and it proved insufficient for the recipients to significantly negate years of poverty.⁴⁸

The decision to detach Chagos and unintentionally begin the chain of events leading to the abuse of the Chagossians was and still is viewed as being inextricably tied to the official outcome of the 1965 Constitutional Conference which concluded that general elections, not a referendum would decide the independence of Mauritius.⁴⁹ As it was believed by anti-independence PMSD that a referendum would have resulted in the island remaining a part of the British Empire, it has been claimed that the UK offered Mauritius independence, but only at the expense of losing Chagos.⁵⁰ It has even been confirmed further by the release to the public of notes from the Colonial and Prime Minister's Office. In one of these documents it was explicitly stated in a private meeting with Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, that "[he] could return to Mauritius either with Independence or without it. On the Defence point, Diego Garcia could either be detached by order in Council or with the agreement of the Premier and his colleagues".⁵¹ The choice between remaining a colony and the chance to become independent, not concerning the detachment of Chagos and resettlement of the Chagossians.

Nonetheless, due to the political power of ethnicity the PMSD framed this as a decisive move by the MLP-led coalition to assert Indian dominance over the island under the guise of the 'Independence Party'.⁵² This would set the tone for the development of a general election in which independence and ethnic domination were framed as being in the balance. The 1968 general elections and independence were accordingly marred by the flaring up of political violence along ethnic lines during two weeks of rioting just two months before independence was gained in March.⁵³ Shockingly, despite the tensions surrounding independence, in 1969 the PMSD joined

⁴⁷ Godfrey Baldacchino, "Displaced Passengers: States, Movements, and Disappearances in the Indian Ocean," in *Connectivity in Motion: Island Hubs in the Indian Ocean World*, eds. Burkhard Schnepeland and Edward A. Alpers, Palgrave Series in Indian Ocean World Studies (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 97.

⁴⁸ Jeffery, *Chagos Islanders in Mauritius and UK: Forced Displacement and Onward Migration*, 2.

⁴⁹ Chan Low, "The Making of the Chagos Affair: Myths and Reality," 62.

⁵⁰ Chan Low, "The Making of the Chagos Affair: Myths and Reality," 62. .

⁵¹ United Nations, International Court of Justice, Public sitting held on Monday 3 September 2018, at 10 a.m., at the Peace Palace, President Yusuf presiding, on '*the Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965*', 53.

⁵² Sutton, "The Political Consecration of Community in Mauritius, 1948–68," 242.

⁵³ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 235.

the MLP-led coalition government and created for the first time a political alliance between Creole, Hindu and Muslim Mauritians.⁵⁴ Notwithstanding what appeared to be a beneficial socio-political development, economic and ethnic inequality was still capitalised on by the newly founded leftist Mouvement Militant Mauritian (MMM) and ultimately ended in the government prohibiting political activity after weeks of strikes in 1971.⁵⁵ Political activity was only allowed to resume during the 1976 general election in which the MLP-PMSD coalition narrowly beat the MMM.⁵⁶

Despite the persistence of internal turmoil, upon gaining independence Mauritius was immediately initiated into the international system through its membership to the UN and Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1968.⁵⁷ Moreover, the island was immediately thrown into the middle of the ongoing debate concerning the UN Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in 1971 by being added to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean in 1972 based on its status as an Indian Ocean state.⁵⁸ Shortly after that Mauritius became a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1973 and signed a security cooperation agreement with its littoral neighbour India in 1974. By 1976 Mauritius was the host for the annual OAU summit with Seewoosagur acting as chairman.⁵⁹ Almost immediately after gaining independence Mauritius was already deeply installed in both its regional and international position.

Conclusion

Since gaining independence Mauritius has become distinguished from other Indian Ocean islands due to its present status as a stable multi-party democracy and a diverse globalised economy despite its ethnic heterogeneity and history of imperialism which has typically proven to destabilize new states.⁶⁰ Despite this eventual level development and a natural history of isolation, Mauritius' history since the arrival of humans on the island has been wrought with colonial exploitation. This exploitation has been fundamentally linked to Mauritius island characteristics

⁵⁴ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 235.

⁵⁵ Srebrnik, "Full of Sound and Fury", 279; Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 236.

⁵⁶ Srebrnik, "Full of Sound and Fury", 279

⁵⁷ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 256

⁵⁸ United Nations, General Assembly resolution 2992 (XXVII), *Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace*, A/res/2992(XXVII), (15th December 1972).

⁵⁹ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 254

⁶⁰ Ibid, 236; Vinay Ancharaz and Sanjeev K. Sobhee, "Globalisation and governance: an African perspective and a case study of Mauritius," in *Pacific Islands Regional Integration and Governance*, ed. Satish Chand, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2005), 127.

both in terms of motivation and method. This colonial situation came to define how Mauritius gained independence, the sacrifice of the Chagos Archipelago and resulted in a distinct form of ethnic, political and economic organisation.

Nonetheless, what is especially noticeable throughout Mauritius' history is the geopolitical significance of the island. Mauritius' history has been largely dictated by its strategic position in the Indian Ocean, a trend that is also recognisable after Mauritius' independence.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Approach to Islands

The history and developments discussed in Chapter 1 lead us to the field of Island Studies to provide a framework for analysing island behaviour. This chapter will first outline the utility and current limitations of the Island Studies approach, after which an interdisciplinary international relations approach is proposed for this thesis in response to the shortcomings discussed below.

It is important to note at this point that a conscious decision has been made to focus on the field of Island Studies as opposed to that of Indian Ocean Studies. This decision is rooted in the origin of regional studies such as Indian Ocean Studies which can be traced back to a desire to correct existing views of the region.⁶¹ What results is the primary use of islands as locus of analysis and an almost singular consideration of the early modern period in the majority of research which is of little use when discussing Mauritius' approach to Chagos.⁶² Although not directly affiliated with Indian Ocean Studies, this thesis does situate itself within a parallel movement in Island Studies to correct interpretations of island behaviour. An illustration of this development in Island Studies is the rejection of the concept of 'insularity' which inherently attributes an essence of isolation and backwardness to islands, a noticeable trait of early writings on islands.⁶³ Instead, the current emphasis within Island Studies is to research islands on their terms.

The Merit of Island Studies

This desire for a more holistic treatment of islands culminates in the concept of 'islandness', a more neutral description of the distinct form of social, political and economic organisation, which affects interactions with and the behaviour of island states.⁶⁴ This organisation comes about through a combination of physical geography, history and international perceptions

⁶¹ Shanti Moorthy and Ashraf Jamal (eds), "Indian Ocean Studies, Cultural, Social and Political Perspectives," (New York: Routledge, 2010), 4.

⁶²Markus P. M. Vink, "Indian Ocean Studies and the 'New Thalassology.'" *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 1 (2007), 54.

⁶³ Godfrey Baldacchino, "The Coming of Age of Island Studies," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 95, no. 3 (2004), 273.

⁶⁴ Stephen A. Royle and Laurie Brinklow, "Definition and Typologies," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Island Studies, A World of Islands*, ed. Godfrey Baldacchino, (London: Routledge, 2018), 10.

of islands, and affects domestic governance and island interactions with the rest of the world.⁶⁵ ‘Islandness’ is treated in this context as an “intervening variable that does not determine, but contours and conditions physical and social events in distinct, and distinctly relevant, ways”.⁶⁶ This places the island at the epicentre of analysis and allows for theoretical flexibility in approaching both contemporary and individual cases.

The applicability of theoretical formulations of ‘islandness’ to the historical development of Mauritius demonstrates the specific benefits of using island theory. Political scientists Edward Warrington and David Milne’s work on updating the concept of island governance is used to demonstrate the necessity and utility of such an approach. For example, the history of Mauritius leading up to independence is typical of what Warrington and Milne identified as a ‘plantation’ pattern of island governance.⁶⁷ This pattern affects the manifestation of ‘islandness’ in several ways, namely, the concentration of economic potential in the hands of a plantocracy which coincides with deep social cleavages caused by the forced ethnic diversification through colonial immigration. However, the island can now be more accurately classified under the Warrington and Milne conceptualisation of island governance as an ‘entrepôt’ island due to its characteristically diverse economy and open market economy.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, even though Mauritius moved from one category to another these theoretical categorisations are still useful for observing patterns within seemingly unconnected policy decisions.

For instance, when examining Mauritian domestic policy from independence until 1976 a clear transition period between patterns of governance can be observed. The development of the ‘unholy’ alliance between the MLP and PMSD could be argued as stemming from the political dissidence within the Independence Party and in response to the emergence of the unconventional yet popular MMM. Moreover, economic decisions such as the Sugar Protocol, which guaranteed favourable access of Mauritian sugar to the European Economic Community could be interpreted as an opportunistic bid for economic gains.⁶⁹ However, considering Island Studies these developments acquire a more coherent or systemic appearance. The formation of such an

⁶⁵ Royle and Brinklow, “Definition and Typologies,” 10.

⁶⁶ Baldacchino, “*The Coming of Age of Island Studies*,” 278.

⁶⁷ Edward Warrington and David Milne, “Governance,” in *The Routledge International Handbook of Island Studies, A World of Islands*, ed. Godfrey Baldacchino, (London: Routledge, 2018), 190.

⁶⁸ Warrington and Milne, “Governance,” 190.

⁶⁹ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 245.

unanticipated coalition can now possibly represent an active attempt to mend ethnopolitical cleavages lingering from imperialism to create an effective democracy able to sustain economic development. Equally, beyond simple diversification, the Sugar Protocol can be interpreted as a plantation island accounting for the loss of an imperial market and establishing its global reputation to encourage international economic interest.

Island Studies posits that it is “historical and spatial practices that gave rise to particular modalities of ‘seeing’ and ‘knowing’” spaces which structure governance and are especially relevant to islands considering their distinctive histories and geography.⁷⁰ Subsequently, a significant contributing factor to ‘islandness’ is imperialism simply due to the history of many islands being linked to colonialism.⁷¹ And yet, despite the unquestionable significance of colonialism, Warrington and Milne would more accurately describe an ‘ecology’ made up of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ perspectives which structure the appearance of island governance.⁷² According to them, the ‘external approach’ focuses on the deterministic nature of geographical and historical facts on the domestic organisation of islands. Alternatively, the ‘internal approach’ highlights the ability of islanders to form distinct identities that in turn affect domestic structures and interactions with said historical and geographical factors. An analysis from this perspective would highlight how Ramgoolam’s fixation with independence, combined with domestic ethnopolitical tensions sourced in colonial influence, impacted political development and goals to the point where the loss of the Chagos Archipelago was rationalised as an acceptable sacrifice for freedom.⁷³ An understanding of both internal and external approaches is necessary to adequately analyse island behaviour in the field of Island Studies and will be used as the guiding framework for the analysis of this thesis.

The interdisciplinary nature of Island Studies is what enables the incorporation of natural science concepts of ‘ecology’ into governance to broaden the understanding of the relationship between the multitude of factors affecting islands discussed above. The advantage of a diverse

⁷⁰ Bruce Braun, “Producing Vertical Territory: Geology and Governmentality in Late Victorian Canada,” *Ecumene* 7, no. 1 (January 2000), 18.

⁷¹ Robert Aldrich and Miranda Johnson, “History and Colonisation,” in *The Routledge International Handbook of Island Studies, A World of Islands*, ed. Godfrey Baldacchino, (London: Routledge, 2018), 153.

⁷² Warrington and Milne, “Governance,” 174.

⁷³ Sydney Selvon, *Ramgoolam*, (Port Louis: Éditions De L'Océan Indien, 1986), 93.

approach is that the relations between many complex factors can be adequately theorised if one field is lacking. And yet, this interdisciplinary approach has nonetheless led to certain topics such as postcolonial economic development and social construction of islandness taking centre stage in recent writings.⁷⁴ A consequence of such a focus is the under-theorisation of certain aspects of the manifestation of 'islandness'. One of these gaps is visible in the writing on island governance. When discussing the external influences on governance, an island's imperial relationship is discussed quite extensively with the enduring consequences of colonialism affecting governance.⁷⁵ However, Warrington and Milne briefly identify that this function can be performed by a regional or even global entity that governs international relations.⁷⁶ Although research has been conducted on the explicitly imperial impact on the appearance of political institutions of islands, there is a recognisable lack of research conducted on the constitutive effects of post-imperial governing structures on the manifestation of island organisation.⁷⁷

Placing Islands in an International Context

Therefore, this thesis argues for the introduction of an international dynamic outside of the field of global economics and the scope of ex-imperial influences typical of many works in Island Studies. To this end, International Relations theory provides a framework to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the external influences on state behaviour in an international context of sovereign states beyond purely historical and human factors. This thesis argues that the English School of International Relations theory is best suited to provide the theoretical tools to unravel the concept of 'national interest' in the case of Mauritius and extend the breadth of factors contributing to the formation of 'islandness'.

There are two main reasons for choosing the English School, the first is the conceptualisation of the dynamics of the international order into a structure with observable effects on state behaviour. The significance of this can be best understood by explaining the problematic binary nature of international relations, illustrated in two ideal types of international organisation,

⁷⁴ Grydehøj, "A Future of Island Studies," 8.

⁷⁵ Godfrey Baldacchino, *Island Enclaves : Offshoring Strategies, Creative Governance, and Subnational Island Jurisdictions*, (Montreal: MQUP, 2010), 58.

⁷⁶ Warrington and Milne, "Governance," 176.

⁷⁷ Dag Anckar, "Islandness or Smallness? A Comparative Look at Political Institutions in Small Island States." *Island Studies Journal* 1, no. 1 (2006), 44.

a realist ‘international system’ and a liberal ‘world society’. Realists conceive international relations as a Machiavellian international system governing individualistic states in terms of power and security defined by anarchy. Conversely, a liberal world society is made up of non-state actors and organisations which contribute to the formation of global identities and regulations which in turn govern international relations.⁷⁸ The English School attempts to find some middle ground between this dichotomy by introducing a third ideal type of organisation, ‘international society’, which:

“exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.”⁷⁹

Said society tempers the realist system of fundamental anarchy by liberal institutionalised shared norms, values and regulations, however, these agreements do not merely act as a governing system but are instead decided through the active dialogue of specifically states motivated by a mutual interest in maintaining such arrangements.⁸⁰ This approach admittedly bears striking resemblance to a constructivist interpretation of IR due to the emphasis on the holistic nature of state identity formation and the far-reaching governing effects of ‘international society’. Though the English School distinguishes itself through a focus on the normative implications of state construction of an international society and the political manifestations of international influences.⁸¹

The second reason is that the English School offers a framework to interpret ‘small state’ dynamics through the regulatory effects of an international society.⁸² The extent and nature of this influential ‘international society’ is nevertheless still a point of contention within the scholarship. The School is split between what are labelled as pluralist and solidarist branches. IR scholar Hedley

⁷⁸ Barry Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR”, *Review of International Studies* 27, (2001), 474.

⁷⁹ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, (Palgrave, 1977), 13.

⁸⁰ Robert W. Murray, *System, Society and the World: Exploring the English School of International Relations*, (Bristol: E-International Relations, 2015), 2; Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR”, 476.

⁸¹ Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism and the English School,” in *Theorising International Society, English School Methods*, ed. Cornelia Navari, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 59.

⁸² Thorhallsson, ‘Small States in the UNSC and the EU: Structural Weaknesses and Ability to Influence,’ 36.

Bull, who sparked this pluralist-solidarist distinction, explains pluralism in international relations as a balance between the realist anarchy of the world and the ‘international society’ which asserts that states agree to regulation up to the extent determined by voluntary agreement.⁸³ This approach emphasises sovereignty but allows, for example, international constraints on the use of violence up to a certain extent determined by the states within said society. However, it can be argued that there are several reasons a solidarist interpretation is better suited to structure the argumentation of this thesis.

To begin with, there is a faulty assumption of sovereign equality that underlies pluralist conceptualisations of coexistence.⁸⁴ For instance, weak military strength or limited economic influence, means that ‘small states’ are more likely to find it in their ‘national interest’ to submit to the constitutive regulation of an ‘international society’ which can regulate aggressive state behaviour.⁸⁵ In this case, Mauritius has no standing army and is instead reliant on India’s support in issues of security.⁸⁶ Solidarism proposes that mutual ‘global or human concerns’ determine the regulation of state behaviour and these concerns depend on state contribution but crucially do not rely on individual state consent.⁸⁷ A solidarist society allows for the hegemonic dominance of certain values or norms based on the concerns of the majority. Thus, the English School identifies the maintenance of ‘good international citizenship’ as a separate category of ‘national interest’ that competes alongside political and economic security.⁸⁸ Moreover, due to the tendency of ‘islandness’ to produce peripheral island-mainland relations, the need to sacrifice a measure of sovereignty and specific natural interests to comply with the contemporary institutional values and norms of the international society is what this thesis is investigating.

The last note on the formulation of this theoretical framework is the concession of a final deviation from the traditional English School which is nonetheless vital to this research. The postcolonial critique of the School asserts that simply because states accept the ‘international

⁸³ William Bain, “The Pluralist–Solidarist Debate in the English School”, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia, International Relations*, (2020), 2.

⁸⁴ Reus-Smit, “Constructivism and the English School,” 70.

⁸⁵ Scott Burchill, *The National Interest in International Relations Theory*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2005), 167.

⁸⁶ Sellström, *Africa in the Indian Ocean*, 254.

⁸⁷ Ole Wæver, ‘International Society: Theoretical Promises Unfulfilled?’, *Cooperation and Conflict* 27 (1992): 1, 98.

⁸⁸ Burchill, *The National Interest in International Relations Theory*, 155.

society’, said society is not inherently universal and neutral. Professor Sanjay Seth argues that despite the English School being more encompassing than many traditional IR theories, it still slips into the Eurocentric trap of considering international organisations as universally applicable entities whilst ignoring the realities faced by postcolonial states.⁸⁹ Seth posits that although the concepts of national sovereignty and non-intervention govern diplomacy, the rules of international interaction are normative instead of purely procedural.⁹⁰ Therefore, we have reason to doubt the assertion that “although originally European, [international law] was cleansed of any cultural particularities, and became a neutral resource available to all”.⁹¹ Although this issue is partly resolved by applying English School thinking within Island Studies which despite already having a distinctly imperial focus, recognizes the need to expand scholarly understanding of the multitude of persistent colonial legacies.⁹²

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates how the use of an Island Studies perspective allows for a very nuanced understanding of the factors affecting island state structures. This was accomplished by introducing the concept of islandness and illustrating how specific forms of organisation can be directly tied to the spatiality of islands. However, this chapter also demonstrated that in theorising the factors affect island state behaviour the realm of international relations beyond ex-imperial relations is lacking. Therefore, this thesis proposed the inclusion of a solidarist interpretation of the English School’s concept of international society within this Island Studies framework. This decision is based on the argument that in the case of Mauritius, its small island status has predisposed it to the influence of an international structure labelled as an international society. This modification of the breadth of factors affecting islandness is designed to provide a more refined understanding of Mauritian foreign policy.

The Island Studies approach does also provide the methodological framework for this thesis derived from Warrington and Milne’s concept of an ecology of island governance examined

⁸⁹ Sanjay Seth, *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 22.

⁹⁰ Seth, *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations*, 23.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Adam Grydehøj and Yaso Nadarajah, “Island studies as a decolonial project,” *Island Studies Journal* 11, no. 2, (2016), 443.

above. This theoretical framework permits analysis of structural influences as identifiable in the identity construction of islanders. This is directly applicable to the research of Ramgoolam's interviews and speeches since the next chapter is examining how Ramgoolam relates Mauritius international position to characteristics of its islandness. This thesis' addition of IR theory is readily incorporated into the methodological framework provided by Island Studies by the choice of speeches delivered in such international circumstances. In the subsequent analysis the influence of international society is considered as another external influence that influences Ramgoolam.

Chapter 3 – The Influence of Islandness

The final chapter is structured around a two-fold argument which examines how islandness presents itself in the foreign policy of Mauritius and will be divided into two sections dealing with the two groups of primary sources. The first section aims to establish how Mauritius' islandness played a significant role in shaping Ramgoolam's perception of Mauritius' foreign policy. This will be done by conducting discourse analysis on the interviews with Ramgoolam in 1976 and 1979. The theoretical framework discussed in the second chapter established the influence of historical and geographical facts of islands on patterns of governance. Therefore by placing Ramgoolam's language within Mauritius' specific island context, the extent of the influence exerted by islandness on foreign policy can be gauged.

Although islandness provides an appropriate foundation, the second section argues that the influence of an international society can be identified in Ramgoolam's expression of Mauritian foreign policy and becomes even more evident in an international context. This will be ascertained by situating Mauritius in a regional context and examining how the structural influences of the international society are observable in how Ramgoolam frames Mauritius' foreign policy in his speeches in the UN General Assembly. However, to avoid contributing to the construction of perceptions of island vulnerability to structural influences, a subsection will argue that Ramgoolam's speeches demonstrate that islanders can use islandness and its international implications strategically. When placed once more in the proper context, Ramgoolam's framing choices on the Chagos question exemplifies islander agency to control the effects of islandness and subsequently the influence of an international society on foreign policy.

Islandness in Mauritian foreign policy.

Although both interviews will be used to establish a broad sense of how Ramgoolam identifies the presence and influence of islandness in the configuration of Mauritian foreign policy, for the sake of structure they will be examined chronologically. Therefore, the interview with Ramgoolam from the 13th of March 1976 conducted by Philippe Decraene for the "Africa" section

of the French newspaper *Le Monde* will be discussed first.⁹³ This interview technically falls outside of Ramgoolam's official term in office between 1976 and 1982 since the elections only took place in December, nevertheless, it provides an insight into Ramgoolam's stance going into his term and establishes a baseline leading up to 1980.

There are two genres of observations that are of particular interest to this thesis, the first refers to Ramgoolam's answers concerning Mauritius' international associations. When asked about relations with Western and Eastern powers, despite acknowledging receiving financial aid, Ramgoolam refrains from admitting any preferences. Ramgoolam declares, "[we] do not pronounce any exclusive [relations] and, in return, nobody seems to pronounce against us."⁹⁴ Instead, he states, unprompted by the interviewer, that this neutrality is rooted in the country's strategic position in the middle of the Indian Ocean which grants the island "a certain freedom to maneuver."⁹⁵ This neutrality especially makes sense if we consider Mauritius contemporary transition towards an 'entrepôt' island pattern of governance in which a level of impartiality is necessary to nurture a global open marketplace.⁹⁶

And yet, when it comes to African countries Ramgoolam openly proclaims allegiance. One of the most noticeable examples is Ramgoolam's declaration that OAU was "the supreme organisation of all Africans..." whilst actively withholding diplomatic contact with South Africa because of the country's unwillingness to accept the views of the OAU.⁹⁷ Ramgoolam qualifies this political connection by stating that Mauritius shares both cultural and economic goals with many African countries. Mauritius' association with Africa is underpinned by its membership of organisations such as the OAU, or African and Mauritian Common Organisation (OCAM), which visibly has an effect on the island's international conduct. However, in the same interview Ramgoolam highlights Mauritius' connection to the African continent at the same time as emphasising the island neutrality based on its geo-strategic profile. Mauritius' spatiality acts as an escape clause which the island uses to justify its policy as will become clearer in the next part of

⁹³ Philippe Decraene, "La position stratégique qu'occupe notre pays au cœur de l'océan Indien nous laisse une certaine liberté de manœuvre... déclare au 'Monde' Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, premier ministre," *Le Monde*, March 13, 1976.

⁹⁴ Ibid; My translation, original text: "Nous ne prononçons aucune exclusive et, en retour, personne ne semble en prononcer à notre rencontre."

⁹⁵ Ibid; My translation, original text: "une certaine liberté de manœuvre."

⁹⁶ Warrington and Milne, "Governance," 192.

⁹⁷ Decraene, "La position stratégique...", 1976; My translation, original text: "l'organisation suprême de l'ensemble des Africains..."

the chapter. In this interview it is used as the grounds for the island's economic neutrality concerning countries outside of the Indian Ocean.

The second interesting observation is related to Ramgoolam referencing Mauritius' imperial connection which becomes most visible when discussing Chagos. Although Ramgoolam admits having good relations with the UK he makes a point of not distinguishing the UK from the amicable relations Mauritius has with other countries such as India and China. However, when it comes to Chagos, Ramgoolam stresses that the archipelago was sold out of fear of continued colonial rule and with no knowledge of the future of the archipelago which makes a point of the unequal history of Mauritian interactions with an imperial UK. Moreover, what is especially interesting is that Ramgoolam expresses regret and admits that "Diego Garcia will have to return to Mauritius," yet also states that this is contingent on "the expiration of the contract between the Americans and the British".⁹⁸ This hesitance to challenge the UK despite its illicit conduct and the persistent struggles of Mauritian inhabitants, namely the Chagossians, alludes to the endurance of imperial dynamics despite state sovereignty.⁹⁹

Essentially, this interview demonstrates the fundamental connection of Mauritius' foreign policy to the manifestation of islandness ranging from the island's 'imperial connection' to its unique spatiality.¹⁰⁰ Both of these features are recognised as key factors shaping island identities and organisation by traditional Island Studies. And yet, even in just this source the regional influence of Africa is discernible. This could be interpreted as the construction of cultural hinterlands by islands based on shared ethnicity for example.¹⁰¹ However, the decidedly political implications of this connection perhaps already point to the influence of an international society. This leads us to a second interview of Seewoosagur Ramgoolam which serves as a second landmark in which the island's foreign policy is more explicitly explained and the trends identified in Decraene's interview can be consolidated. The interview itself was conducted by Anthony J. Hughes in November 1979 for the Africa Report of the Africa-America Institute. Although the interviewer is once again of a Western background, the nature of the Africa Report is aimed at the detailed examination of African countries on their own terms, so in that regard this interview

⁹⁸ Decraene, "La position stratégique...", 1976; My translation, original text: "il est clair pour nous que, le jour de l'expiration du contrat passé entre Américains et Britanniques, Diego-Garcia devra faire retour à l'île Maurice..."

⁹⁹ Grydehøj and Nadarajah, "Island studies as a decolonial project," 439.

¹⁰⁰ Baldacchino, *Island Enclaves*, 58; Warrington and Milne, "Governance," 176.

¹⁰¹ Baldacchino, *The Coming of Age of Island Studies*, 273.

provides an arguably more thorough and well-rounded snapshot of Ramgoolam's perception of the state of Mauritius in 1979.¹⁰²

The interview supplies some more insight in Ramgoolam's rationalisation of his international stance, especially in the case of the OAU. Although Ramgoolam highlighted economic and cultural goals Mauritius shares with much of Africa, when directly asked why a nation with a majority Hindu population of Asian descent is so invested in the OAU, he states; "Mauritius belongs to Africa as a region because of its location. We have to live together with Africa and observe its policies."¹⁰³ Ramgoolam invokes Mauritius' island position as the primary reason for he has to comply and support the African institution. He even points out that it is not the island's cultural diversity or history that guides this decision, once again emphasising Mauritius' proximity pressuring the island to "try to cooperate within the OAU."¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Ramgoolam once again portrays Mauritius' foreign policy as being more directed towards regional as opposed to bilateral cooperation. Even when directly asked if Mauritius has good connection with the British as a former colonial power Ramgoolam responds by stating that Mauritius enjoys positive relations with both the UK and France. Throughout the interview Ramgoolam highlights the flexibility of Mauritian foreign policy rooted in its distinct islandness to the point where even Hughes recognises that such a multilateral approach naturally suits Mauritius as an island state.¹⁰⁵

Ramgoolam's emphasis on the spatial and globalised influence of Mauritius' islandness is made even more evident in how he phrases his stance on the question of Chagos in 1979. Similar to 1976 Ramgoolam once more states that he "would like to see the territory return to Mauritius" however, this time he admits that a request for the total return of the territory to Mauritius would simply be a "cry in the wilderness."¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Ramgoolam's framing of Mauritius' stance is what separates the two interviews. Hughes specifically asks if the desire for the return of Chagos is motivated by the need for territorial integrity, a question which provides an opportunity to reiterate the narrative of the imperial injustice of this territorial detachment pointed out in the 1976 interview. Moreover, from an Island Studies perspective, the inherent boundedness of island territory means that territorial jurisdiction features heavily in how islands consider the extent of

¹⁰² Vivian Lowery Derryck, 'Preface,' *Africa Report*, (May-June 1995), i.

¹⁰³ Anthony J. Hughes, "Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius," in *Africa Report* 24, (1979): 6, 53.

¹⁰⁴ Hughes, "Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam..." 54.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Hughes, "Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam," 53.

their sovereignty.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the presence of a foreign base on territory that historically existed under Mauritius' jurisdiction threatens that conceptualisation of sovereignty and thus provides ample territorial motivation to complete said quest for true sovereignty. And yet, Ramgoolam dismisses this option.

Instead, Ramgoolam argues that Mauritius is motivated by its support for the creation of a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean alongside the UN, NAM and littoral states making up the Indian Ocean region. The choice to switch from the imperial implications of islandness towards situating Mauritius within an international society dedicated to disarmament and peace will be elaborated on in the next section. However, from the analysis of the interviews it can be extrapolated that Ramgoolam consistently focuses on the influence of spatial aspect of Mauritius' islandness on foreign policy. Ramgoolam has both argued that Mauritius's position allows and even necessitates a foreign policy of neutrality whilst also demonstrating that Mauritius' place in a region has specific constitutive effects on the island's foreign policy.

Before the analysis of an international society can begin it is important that this thesis establishes how this concept applies to this specific case and reiterates the relationship between islandness and international society. As a reminder, an 'international society' is roughly defined as a "group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, [which] form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules ... and share in the working of common institutions."¹⁰⁸ Considering this definition and based on Ramgoolam interviews, this thesis identifies the influence of two coexisting 'international societies' in the foreign policy of Mauritius, a Pan-African and a non-aligned international society in the Indian Ocean.

The Pan-African international society can be associated with the proliferation of sovereign African states in the second half of the 20th century which are bound by their opposition to colonialism and desire for economic development.¹⁰⁹ Although English School scholars specifically do not consider the Eastern and Western blocs that formed during the Cold War as 'international societies' this thesis argues that the common goals of peace and disarmament

¹⁰⁷ Baldacchino, *Island Enclaves*, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 13.

¹⁰⁹ Tim Murithi, *Handbook of Africa's International Relations*, (Routledge, 2013), 2.

associated with non-alignment were enough to encourage specific international conduct.¹¹⁰ The presence of both in Mauritian foreign policy and the nature of their influence is directly linked to the characteristics of its islandness.

The implications of international society

The presence of international structures in the language used by Ramgoolam becomes decidedly more evident in the formulation of Mauritius' stance in the UN General Assembly. Ramgoolam moves away from the discourses of postcolonialism and periphery neutrality, instead he situated Mauritius directly within an international society. The aim of this section is to demonstrate that Ramgoolam as an islander identifies the coercive power held by the international society rooted in Mauritius' islandness and then actively adopts the language and method of the international society in order to achieve his goals concerning Chagos.

To begin with, it has been identified in the interviews that Ramgoolam maintains a desire for the return of Chagos but due to the structural implications of Mauritius' islandness he recognises such a direct strategy is unrealistic. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the Chagos Archipelago or Diego Garcia do not directly feature in any of the speeches between 1976 and 1979. Nonetheless, the archipelago is implicitly referenced consistently in Ramgoolam's commentary from the perspective of an African nation. This theme revolves around the deconstruction of persistent postcolonial legacies and the active opposition to all forms of imperialism in an African context. This manifests in references to the "unlawful occupation" of land, framing the economic struggles of developing states within a "world system of inequality" and cautions against the "everlasting desire for recolonization".¹¹¹ However, Chagos is never mentioned, instead Ramgoolam offers decidedly nuanced stances and courses of action on the colonial struggles of other African nations, with his commentary on the Namibian national liberation movement being particularly detailed.

¹¹⁰ Cornelia Navari, "World Society and English School Methods," in *System, Society and the World: Exploring the English School of International Relations*, ed. Robert W. Murray, (Bristol: E-International Relations, 2015), 19.

¹¹¹ United Nations, General Assembly (UNGA), *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/31/PV.31, (14 October, 1976), 592; UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/32/PV.8, (27 September, 1977), 93; UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/33/PV.7, (25 September, 1978), 55.

Incidentally, Ramgoolam's views show numerous similarities with the stance of the OAU proclaimed in the resolutions of the organization's annual Ordinary Session which take place before Ramgoolam's speeches in the UN. This could just be purely circumstantial if considered in isolation, nevertheless, a clear connection between Mauritius' view and that of the OAU can be observed with Ramgoolam periodically referencing OAU mandates when establishing Mauritius' international stance.¹¹² Interestingly, the Chagos Archipelago is also not mentioned in the resolutions of the OAU between 1976 and 1979 which raises the question of whether Mauritius' subscription to the OAU as an international organisation had an indirect inhibiting effect on the inclusion of Chagos into Mauritian foreign policy.¹¹³ Considering the IR theoretical framework of this thesis, the continued subscription to an international agenda that did not directly support his goal of regaining Chagos at the time is indicative of two phenomena; the constitutive and coercive effects of an international society and Ramgoolam active practice of maintaining 'good international citizenship'.

Ramgoolam demonstrates that he recognises the benefits of good international citizenship and its associated international support in his speech in 1976 when he was acting as Chairman of the OAU.¹¹⁴ During his time as Chairman he was able to successfully call the UN Security Council to meet based on the concerns voiced by the OAU surrounding Israel's act of aggression against Uganda in 1976.¹¹⁵ Ramgoolam explicitly expressed doubt that a single nation could effectively act in the UN against the interests of one of the Security Council members.¹¹⁶ The postcolonial legacies lingering within the UN structure combined with Mauritius' relatively weak status as an island state helps justify Mauritius' compliance with the goals of the OAU. This in turn explains

¹¹² UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/31/PV.31, (14 October, 1976), 592.

¹¹³ Organisation of African Unity (OAU), *Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Thirteenth Ordinary Session, Port Louis, Mauritius*, AHG/Res. 79 - 83 (XIII), (2-6 July, 1976); OAU, *Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Fourteenth Ordinary Session, Libreville, Gabon*, AHG/Res. 84 - 85 (XIV), (2-5 July, 1977); OAU, *Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Fifteenth Ordinary Session, Khartoum, Sudan*, AHG/Res. 86 - 95 (XV), (18 - 22 July, 1978); OAU, *Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Sixteenth Ordinary Session, Monrovia, Liberia*, AHG/ST. 3 - 4 (XVI) Rev. 1 and AHG/Res. 96 - 97 (XVI), (17 - 20 July, 1979).

¹¹⁴ UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/31/PV.31, (14 October, 1976), 592.

¹¹⁵ Yitzhak Rabi, "OAU calls for UN Council Meeting," in *JTA, Daily News Bulletin* 43, no. 103 (1976), 1.

¹¹⁶ UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/31/PV.31, (14 October, 1976), 592.

the omission of Chagos in Mauritius' international stance up until 1980 due to the lack of support of the OAU.

This influence is directly visible in Ramgoolam's reformulation of his stance concerning Chagos after 1979. In his 1980 speech, Ramgoolam officially reaffirms Mauritius' claim to sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. There are two interesting aspects of this decision, one of which, is that this declaration marks the first occasion where Chagos is mentioned by Ramgoolam in the UN. The declaration itself is prefaced by Ramgoolam noting that he had already expressed this decision in the Assembly of the OAU just three months earlier. The timing of Ramgoolam's first explicit policy regarding Chagos and the support of the OAU is indicative of the significance of the international society in the formulation of foreign policy. However, in his speech Ramgoolam also reveals that he has accepted the clause that Chagos will return to Mauritius when it is no longer needed for the "defence of the West."¹¹⁷

Agency in an island context

At this point, this thesis deems it necessary to separate the analysis of the intricacies of the 1980 reformulation of Mauritius' foreign policy in order to highlight the role played by Ramgoolam himself. Still using Ramgoolam's speeches, the aim of this subsection is to illustrate how the prime minister as an islander strategically used the implications of Mauritius' islandness and the influence of international societies in the configuration of Mauritius' foreign policy regarding Chagos. This is also to demonstrate that islanders are able to act with a measure of agency within the restrictions of islandness and that Ramgoolam's structural functionalist approach allowed him to also factor the impact of international societies into his foreign policy.¹¹⁸

There is a second recurring theme throughout Ramgoolam's speeches alongside the unwavering support for decolonization. Although only briefly mentioned in the interviews, Ramgoolam's emphasis on Mauritius' location in the Indian Ocean and the urgent need for the region to be actively treated as a Zone of Peace is one of the most consistent international positions taken by the island. So much so, that the frame ultimately chosen by Ramgoolam for the affirmation of sovereignty over Chagos is one of non-alignment and peace in the Indian Ocean

¹¹⁷ UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/35/PV.30, (9 October, 1980), 590.

¹¹⁸ Baldacchino, "Studying Islands," 41.

whilst the postcolonial aspect of the territorial dispute is not mentioned. Two key factors can be identified from Ramgoolam's justification of non-alignment and his acceptance of the British clause during his 1980 speech.

The most evident influence is Ramgoolam's observation of good international citizenship. Ramgoolam once again expresses doubt concerning the lingering postcolonial structure of the Security Council. With neither Africa nor Latin America represented Ramgoolam identifies the clear willingness of the USA to use its veto for its vested interests at the direct detriment of other member states as a fundamental flaw of the UN.¹¹⁹ Moreover, it argues that the persistence of this flaw is what is encouraging regions to take care of their grievances internally, a clear reference to the contemporary activity of the OAU.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, Ramgoolam insists that the Indian Ocean is a United Nations problem and thus requires a United Nations oriented solution. Mauritius' reasoning for this stance is made explicit through reference to its membership of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean created after the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in UN resolution 2832. The choice of Mauritius is obviously sourced in its geographic location but was supplemented by the island's support of non-alignment.¹²¹ Ramgoolam demonstrates the ability to respect international institutions and goals above the direct interest of Mauritius by not bringing Chagos directly into this discourse before 1980.

Furthermore, the influence of islandness can be directly observed in this instance with Ramgoolam specifically referring to Mauritius' distinct geo-strategic profile placing extreme importance on the continued freedom of trade and movement within the Indian Ocean, something only guaranteed by an effective Zone of Peace.¹²² In the Ramgoolam's interviews, it became evident that Ramgoolam placed significance in particularly in Mauritius' spatiality using it as the primary reason for cooperation with Africa. However, in this instance it is clear that Ramgoolam is able to negotiate the implications of this spatiality by arguing that Mauritius' position in the Indian Ocean is a more constitutive contribution to Mauritius' islandness than its geographically imposed association with Africa. As is the nature of islandness this spatiality obviously only acts

¹¹⁹ UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/31/PV.31, (14 October, 1976), 592.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 590.

¹²¹ UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/34/PV.23, (5 October, 1979), 476; UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/35/PV.30, (9 October, 1980), 590.

¹²² UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius*, A/31/PV.31, (14 October, 1976), 593.

as an intervening variable and should be considered alongside other factors, nevertheless it remains important in the eyes of Ramgoolam and thus remains significant in the study of Mauritian foreign policy.

This is a demonstration of Ramgoolam capability to recognise international perceptions of islands and take full advantage. Throughout his speeches Ramgoolam supports the creation of a zone of peace based on Mauritius' island vulnerability. Nevertheless, in his 1980 speech Ramgoolam is able to shift this international frame in favour of Mauritius by citing the inaction of other states as the justification of Mauritius' renewed claim on the Archipelago.¹²³ Moreover, with the international support of non-alignment this acceptance of a more long-term approach to Chagos was the option with the greater chance of seeing Mauritius regain the territory. This is evidence of Ramgoolam's ability to conduct himself as both an islander with specific goals within an international societal framework, a skill associated with islanders due to their constant need to contend with external perceptions of themselves.¹²⁴

Conclusion

This chapter examines the extent that islandness features in Ramgoolam's formulation of Mauritius' foreign policy. By using the theoretical framework of Chapter 2 the influence of Mauritius' geographic location and imperial history could be observed in Ramgoolam's expression of the island's position in interviews. Although it also became evident that the island's spatiality was significant to Ramgoolam specifically and notably featured in many of his answers. From that analysis the pressures of international society were also visible. By placing Ramgoolam's speeches in a regional and international context the influence of Pan-African and non-aligned international societies becomes clear in the language and framing choices.

However, the actual path chosen concerning Chagos is a result of Ramgoolam's ability to assess the functionality of these two structural influences. This allows him to choose to subscribe to a non-aligned international society because he gauged it as the most effective path to regaining the Chagos Archipelago. Ramgoolam's 1980 approach is an example of an islander using the international framing of Mauritius' vulnerability to his perceived contemporary advantage.

¹²³ UNGA, *Address by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime-Minister of Mauritius, A/35/PV.30*, (9 October, 1980), 590.

¹²⁴ Baldacchino, "Studying Islands," 42.

Conclusion

All too often when studying international relations and the decolonisation process small island states are swept to the periphery. Nevertheless, Mauritius' victory in the International Court of Justice against the United Kingdom concerning the dispute over the Chagos Archipelago demonstrates that island states are more than capable of effective action in an international arena. The history of the dispute over the detachment of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius is a long and complex one, however, the duration of this conflict only serves to demonstrate that Mauritius' policy towards this dispute has not been fully explored. Therefore, in a bid to find more clarity this thesis examined the factors that affected a key moment in determining the trajectory of Mauritius' approach to Chagos.

Nevertheless, the source of the conflict is rooted in Mauritius' imperial history before the island was even an autonomous state and therefore, an understanding of Mauritius' considerable history of colonialism was necessary to even approach the topic. In the description of Mauritian history two trends became apparent; Mauritius would not exist in its current form without the influence of colonialism and the nature of Mauritian colonialism was significantly influenced by its status as an island. This became particularly clear when the reasoning and method of the detachment of Chagos were explored. The island's geographic location is the most consistent determining factor shaping the island's organisation and thus demonstrates the necessity of considering the influence of islandness, as advocated by the field of Island Studies.

Considering the impact of islandness on state governance provided a framework for analysing Mauritius' foreign policy. The presence of structural influences could be ascertained by examining Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's framing and description of the island's policy. In the interviews with Ramgoolam it became clear that the island's spatiality had a pronounced effect on his explanation of Mauritius' foreign policy. Ramgoolam argued that Mauritius' central position in the Indian Ocean to a certain extent, allows and requires the pursuit of more neutral international relations. However, at the same time Ramgoolam posited that Mauritius' location in the region of Africa had specific constitutive implications and it also became clear that there are still lingering imperial undertones present in Mauritius' foreign policy. These influences on the stance of

Mauritius can so far be attributed to the ability of islandness to influence political organisation. Namely, the lack of an assertive policy on Chagos can be credited to Mauritius' geo-strategic profile and imperial history inhibiting confrontation.

However, a theoretical assessment of islandness coupled with the investigation into Ramgoolam's interviews revealed that islandness fails to adequately account for the effects of international relations structures. Theoretically there is an emphasis on postcolonial relations in Island Studies however the interviews suggested the presence of more international pressures. Therefore, this thesis proposed the introduction of the regulatory influence of 'international society' from the English to account for these ulterior motives. This suggestion was proved as justified during the analysis of Ramgoolam's UN speeches.

Specifically, the timing of Ramgoolam's first explicit policy regarding Chagos and Ramgoolam's international support of the OAU is indicative of the significance of international society in the formulation of foreign policy. In this sense leading up to 1980 the nature of international societal power is largely dependent on the characteristics of islandness with Mauritius' status as an African country outweighing its other goals. Nevertheless, in this investigation it also became clear that Ramgoolam was able to negotiate the implications of this spatiality by arguing that Mauritius' status as an Indian Ocean island was a more constitutive contribution to Mauritius' islandness than its geographically imposed association with Africa. Ramgoolam's value for 'good international citizenship' as an island leader, demonstrated through his respect for a non-aligned international society to the detriment of the direct interest of Mauritius before 1980 ultimately shaped his policy towards Chagos in 1980.

Ultimately, the answer to the question, "to what extent does 'islandness' sufficiently explain the factors shaping the shift in Mauritius' foreign policy regarding the Chagos Archipelago from 1976 to 1980?", is two-fold. On its own, Mauritius' islandness is not entirely sufficient to explain the trajectory of the island's foreign policy. However, when the influence of an international society is incorporated into the concept of islandness, then this modified approach provides a plausible explanation of Mauritius' strategy towards Chagos leading up to and including 1980.

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to the historiography of both the fields of island studies and international relations. From an island studies perspective it highlights the effectiveness of the theoretical concept of islandness in explaining island behaviour. However, this

thesis also addresses one of the weaknesses of the theorisation of island behaviour and advances an solution that still respects the values of Island studies. In doing so the utility of an underexploited theoretical asset in international relations theory. Therefore, not only does this thesis expand the theoretical breadth of Island Studies but it also illustrates the effectiveness of an interdisciplinary approach in gaining a more holistic understanding of island behaviour. Furthermore, since most of the writing on the island is directed towards either its diverse cultural history or the development of its globalised economy this research also serves to contribute to the writing on the international relations history of the island.

That being said, as this thesis is directed towards not only a topic that is under researched, but also uses a relatively new field of study. Bearing in mind the lack of a concrete foundation upon which to base research there are some methodological shortcomings with this investigation. For instance, the English School has been argued as lacking a credible methodology due to the inability to effectively measure the impact of international society. Although Island Studies is more suited to supplying a methodological framework for the analysis of structural influences, even then the Island is such a broad field of study that extrapolating an explicit methodology from this theoretical framework is problematic.

Despite this limitation this thesis still serves as an entry point for discussing how small island states are considered within international relations and demonstrates the explanatory potential of an Island Studies approach in the analysis of island state behaviour.

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