

Analysis of the Military Hospital, Port Louis, Mauritius.



Painting depicting a ship at anchor in front of the Military Hospital c1850. Source: Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

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ABSTRACT

Through a case study of the Military Hospital Complex in Port Louis, Mauritius, the influence of the World Heritage Program of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), in Mauritius is analysed.

The new Intercontinental Slavery Museum, a destination on the UNESCO Slave Route, is housed in the Military Hospital Complex. The museum's stated intention is to narrate the shared history of all Mauritians, regardless of their provenance. It aims to explain the role played by the island as a pivotal connection point in the Indian Ocean slave trade from the 18th Century.

The Military Hospital Complex is the oldest surviving building on the island (completed 1740). It was built by the French colonists, Mauritius' first permanent inhabitants. The building has a multi-layered history as it has been integral to life on the island, through changing administrations for more than 280 years. The role of the building has adapted over its life span, reflecting the changing political and social dynamics of the country.

Responding to the forces of globalisation in the 1990s the Government of Mauritius engaged with the UNESCO World Heritage Program. The focus of this analysis is on how this Government engagement with UNESCO has affected the creation of modern heritage resources within the country through this case study of the Military Hospital Complex as the Intercontinental Slavery Museum.

Methods employed have been to obtain a biographical understanding of the building through archival research, site visits and relevant literature. The historical, political, social, and legislative context of the building over its life, and relating to its transformation into a modern heritage resource have been investigated through relevant literature. Theoretical frameworks of heritage construction in multi-cultural societies have been employed in guiding this research.

The UNESCO World Heritage Conventions are discussed, in addition to the various UNESCO treaties, declarations and programs that cumulatively influenced the realisation of Mauritius' World Heritage Sites. The social processes within the country that led to the Truth and Justice Commission in 2010 are investigated. One of the principal recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius was the creation of a new Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Port Louis.

The political ramifications of Mauritius' two World Heritage Sites within the local and global contexts are discussed. The Mauritian political construct that defines the population into groups based on the places of origin of their forebears is at the heart of the way modern heritage has been constructed in the country in association with UNESCO to date. Heritage remains contested and highly politicised in the country.

This study has been limited by the politically sensitive nature of heritage within the country and interviews were difficult to secure. The difficulties encountered in conducting research

for this analysis has affirmed that these sensitivities prevail. Almost without exception, government officials, heritage professionals and academics were reluctant to discuss the heritage program of the country on or off the record. The researcher was denied access to the case study building.

This research concludes that although the vision of Mauritius' new Intercontinental Slavery Museum (housed in the Military Hospital Complex), is comprehensive and inclusive, the political construct of the country remains an impediment to the narration of Mauritian heritage. The heritages of the different groups of people who collectively comprise the Mauritian population have, to date, been separately told. The new museum has a role to play in narrating the role played by Mauritius within the Indian Ocean slave trade, a story that has relevance to all Mauritians regardless of their population group.

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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Context

According to Addison and Hazareesingh, Mauritius first appears in the written historical record c 1000CE, on maps used by Arab traders where the island is named Dina Mozare. Thereafter, historic maps used by Portuguese traders indicate they visited the island in the early 1500s, when it was named Cerné as well as Dina Arobi (Addison and Hazareesingh, 1999, Lenoir et al., 2017).



Figure 1: De Wit, F. (1680) *Occidentalior Tractus Indiarum Orientalium*, (Lenoir et al., 2017). Mauritius (red frame) within the context of the territories explored by the Dutch East India Company.

The Dutch East India Company arrived in 1598 and were the first recorded group to settle temporarily on the island. When the French established their colony in 1715, there was no indigenous population in Mauritius. A small number of formerly enslaved people, who had arrived with the Dutch remained. Therefore, no single group can justly claim to be the rightful inhabitants of the land. Similarly, no individual group can claim to be true representatives of the cultural heritage of the country (Toussaint, 1936, Vaughan, 2005).

The Dutch base in Mauritius was a result of the expansion of the greater global trade routes that was taking place during the imperial age. The Dutch, French, and British all formed quasi-state merchant companies that were involved in the exchange of goods, and increasingly people, globally. These trade routes stretched from Europe around the southern tip, and up the east coast of Africa (incorporating Madagascar and the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius and Réunion) to India and Indonesia (Figure 2) (Vaughan, 2005, Allen, 2003, Allen, 2010).



Figure 2: Arrivals in Mauritius via Imperial (yellow) Slave (red), and Indenture (green) routes. This diagram broadly outlines the places from whence the Mauritian population was drawn (Stanford University Department of Anthropology, 2012).

The Dutch had, between 1598-1710, intermittently used Mauritius as a refreshment station along their global shipping route. They had constructed a rudimentary encampment for themselves but had not established a colony. The Dutch had brought people who they had captured and enslaved with them to the island, most of whom came from Mozambique and Madagascar. Some escapees remained when the Dutch abandoned the base in 1710 (Toussaint, 1936, Vaughan, 2005).

The French colonised the island between 1715-1810, naming it Île de France and continued to bring large numbers of enslaved people to the island with the new colonists. The enslaved came from different African locations along the French trade route from Europe to India, including Madagascar. Île de France also played an important strategic role in the global slave trade of the time, its geographical location allowing it to be a connection point between the various routes traded. As a result of this history, the first permanent population of Mauritius developed from a geographically and culturally diverse group of initial inhabitants. The cultural identity of the nation was created and shaped by these first inhabitants (Allen, 2003, Allen, 2008, Allen, 2010, Allen, 2014, Toussaint, 1936, Vaughan, 2005).

The British took power in Mauritius after the French and ruled from 1810-1968. This period considerably changed the cultural dynamic of the country. As the interest of the British in Mauritius was purely commercial, they did not impose their cultural practices or language on the residents of the country in the same direct way as the French colonists had done (Miles, 1999). The way British rule did change the island and its cultural mix, was with the abolition of slavery

and its replacement with a modernised form of slavery, indentured labour. The British indentured labour program was in place in Mauritius from the 1830s – 1920s and made use of labour, principally from India. Between 1830 and 1920 over 450 000 indentured labourers arrived in Mauritius and their descendants formed the dominant population group on the island (Vaughan, 2005, Toussaint, 1936).

The social dynamic in Mauritius has been dictated by the political construct of the country. Post-independence, the ruling group within Mauritius have generally been drawn from the population of Indian descent. This group were never enslaved and therefore do not carry the stigma of slavery. The Creole Malaise, a phenomenon that is present within the Creole population of Mauritius, that is discussed in depth in this analysis, is an ongoing legacy of slavery that affects the social status and opportunities of the Mauritians of African descent (Swift, 2007, Boswell, 2008, Miles, 1999, Vaughan, 2005).

Mauritian Identity

The First Schedule of the 1968 Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius (section 31(2)) defines the population:

For the purposes of this Schedule, the population of Mauritius shall be regarded as including a Hindu community, a Muslim community and Sino-Mauritian community; and every person who does not appear, from his way of life, to belong to one or other of those 3 communities shall be regarded as belonging to the General Population, which shall itself be regarded as a fourth community.

The General Population group comprises those who do not identify with any of the other groups and is mostly comprised of Mauritians of African descent, known as the Mauritian Creoles, as well as those of European descent. Harmon describes the term “General Population” as being particularly controversial amongst the Creole population as it is seen as a denial of their identity (Abungu et al., 2020, Harmon, 2011). Despite the political construct of group representation and ethnic nationalism outlined in the constitution, the population of Mauritius is an example of a creolised society.

Creolisation is reflected in many spheres of life such as language, religion, cultural practices, and the built environment. Regardless of this mixing of cultures, and in a somewhat dissonant way (as evidenced by the packaging of the two World Heritage Sites), the modern Mauritian way of valorising heritage is structured to align with the political construct, separating the different population groups based on their provenance, and fostering ties with their countries of origin (Boswell, 2008, Swift, 2007, Abungu et al., 2020).

The implications to those categorised as “General Population” in Mauritius is a denial of identity. The label “General Population” does not reflect the cultural heritage of the people that have been classified as belonging to this population group (Abungu et al., 2020, Harmon, 2011). The Mauritian political structure denies the reality that all Mauritians are immigrants, and that mixed heritage and migration are intrinsic to the entire population of the country.

The Lingua Franca - Mauritian Creole

The Lingua Franca of Mauritius is Mauritian Creole, a hybridised tongue. Language, as with the built environment, acts as a record of development of the multiple influences within a country. The language of Mauritian Creole is principally French in its roots. The grammar and syntax of the language, show the influence of the West African languages of Wolof, Fon, and Bambara as well

as Malagasy. The Indian tongues of Tamil and Bengali are also evident in Mauritian Creole (Vaughan, 2005).

This hybridisation of the language has taken place over time and in response to the people who initially came to Mauritius and who were the nucleus of the population, as well as those who arrived later and influenced this hybridisation process. The development of the language can be viewed as an example of the broader process of creolisation that is apparent across many spheres of Mauritian society. Specifically Mauritian cultural practices that have developed, as with the lingua franca, Mauritian Creole, are all potential contributors to a sense of Mauritian national identity. (Rajah-Carrim, 2007, Eriksen, 2007).

Mauritius and UNESCO

Mauritius has been engaged with the United Nations Scientific, Cultural and Educational Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Program for more than two decades. I will research the complexities of this engagement, in terms of the Mauritian political construct, through a case study of the Military Hospital Complex in Port Louis, the oldest surviving building on the island that was completed in 1740.

Research Question

The central research question of this study is:

How has Mauritius' more than two decades of involvement with the UNESCO World Heritage Program impacted on the way Mauritian heritage is represented and valorised?

In this thesis I analyse the above question through a case study of the Military Hospital Complex in Port Louis, Mauritius' latest United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) affiliated heritage project, now packaged as the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, a destination on the UNESCO Slave Route.

Broad Aims of the Study

This study aims to assess the impact and consequences of the engagement of the Government of Mauritius with the United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Program (WHP) on the valorisation of heritage in Mauritius today, using the Military Hospital Complex which falls within the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site as a case study building. The Military Hospital Complex is home to the newest UNESCO affiliated offering of Mauritius, the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, and thus showcases the most recent ways of creating heritage resources in the country.

Specific Research Objectives

This research traces the biography of the Military Hospital Complex, from its construction (completed 1740) to its current day incarnation as the UNESCO affiliated Intercontinental Slavery Museum. I investigate how the inscriptions of Aapravasi Ghat in 2006 and Le Morne Cultural landscape in 2008 on the UNESCO World Heritage List have influenced the fate of the Military Hospital Complex, and its role and packaging as a Mauritian and World Heritage Resource. I have researched the reasons for creation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum and why the Military Hospital Complex buildings were chosen to house the new museum.

I also assess the approach to the valorisation of heritage in Mauritius and assess if it has changed over the last 20 + years, from one closely aligned with the political construct of the country to a theoretically more inclusive approach in line with the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius.

Hypothesis

The existence of the Military Hospital Complex has spanned numerous phases of Mauritian history and all phases in the life of the island since the settlement of its first permanent population in 1715. The building embodies many different layers that reflect the multi-cultural nature of the Mauritian population today, along with the inherent complexities held within these layers.

Relatively recent changes in the Mauritian political arena have focused the way that the past is acknowledged, and the way heritage is viewed in the country. The engagement of the Mauritian Government with the UNESCO World Heritage Program in the 1990s has been pivotal in the way heritage has been addressed in Mauritius. The Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius of 2009, and its official acknowledgement of the need to remember the past fully, has been similarly important. These two factors have altered the approach to heritage in Mauritius, creating spaces that allow for the layers of history of the country to be revealed from multiple perspectives.

I investigate to what extent the Military Hospital Complex, in its incarnation as the Intercontinental Slavery Museum (partially opened in 2019), can be viewed as representative of the many layers of history embodied in the building and an evolving approach to heritage in Mauritius. I will investigate the impact on the representation of heritage that the UNESCO programs have had.

I hypothesise that the UNESCO engagement has been pivotal in heritage representation in Mauritius. I will analyse heritage representation affiliated with the UNESCO World Heritage Program in Mauritius and trace its development to assess if there has been a change in the way this representation has developed within the country.

The ethnic political construct of the country, as outlined in the constitution is integral to how heritage has been represented in the country since independence. This construct has, to date, been integrated to the valorisation of heritage in association with the UNESCO World Heritage Program. I will investigate if this political construct remains influential in the creation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum.

Rationale

The current fate of the Military Hospital Complex has been directed by the engagement of the Mauritian Government with the UNESCO World Heritage Program and the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission. Mauritius signed the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and National Heritage in 1995 and with this ushered in a new era of heritage awareness and protection in the country (Hurnath,2014). Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape, Mauritius' first and second World Heritage Sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006 and 2008 respectively.

The inscription of the Military Hospital Complex's immediate neighbour, the Aapravasi Ghat, on the World Heritage List in 2006, created a buffer zone in accordance with UNESCO dictated legislation around the World Heritage Site requiring immediate and urgent conservation of the area. The fate and future of the Military Hospital Complex has therefore been directly linked with the adjacent UNESCO World Heritage Site. Understanding how this

commission were to establish a revised and inclusive version of the history of the country acknowledging all sectors of the population. This version of the “truth” would allow an examination of the consequences and legacies of slavery and indenture, in order to seek ways to achieve social justice for the descendants of those whose lives were shaped by these labour systems (Croucher et al., 2017). The Intercontinental Slavery Museum was one of the principal recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission (Abungu et al., 2020).

The post-colonial Mauritian political construct based on ethnicity and place of origin has driven the way heritage is valorised in the country to date. As all Mauritians are immigrants, this construct differs markedly from a post-colonial society where an indigenous population pre-existed colonisation (Miles, 1999). This research analyses the factors that influenced the Mauritian Government to engage with the UNESCO World Heritage Program and the consequences thereof. An understanding of the creation of Heritage Resources in Mauritius’ two World Heritage Sites, followed by a case study of the Military Hospital Complex is informative in understanding how the approach to heritage construction has developed over the last 25 years.

This study therefore allows for tracing the development of the approach to the valorisation of heritage in Mauritius under the influence of the UNESCO banner in conjunction with the Government of Mauritius for more than 25 years. A study of the heritagisation of the Military Hospital Complex is an up-to-date example of the effects of the creation of a heritage resource in Mauritius that is affiliated with the UNESCO Slave Route.

Research Methodology

Adopting an interpretivist approach in collecting qualitative data, research has been conducted using a case study methodology. The case study methodology allows for mixed methods of data collection and interpretation (Biggam, 2008, Stake, 1995, Yin, 1994, O’Leary, 2017).

A contextual framework for this study is created by the broader physical context of the Military Hospital Complex building. The Military Hospital Complex is situated in the UNESCO World Heritage Site buffer zone of the adjacent Aapravasi Ghat. The fate of the Military Hospital Complex which has been influenced by its immediate context, will be focus of this study.

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum is a heritage resource affiliated with the UNESCO Slave Route is the focus of this analysis. The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site and the Le Morne Cultural Landscape both contextualise this study as they are precedents to the Intercontinental Slavery Museum as Mauritian heritage resources on the world stage. UNESCO has been associated with the realisation of heritage sites for public consumption in Mauritius for more than two decades. An analysis of the development in the approach to heritage from their first and second inscriptions, to the creation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum will be instructive.

The way in which heritage resources are created in Mauritius both within the political construct of the country and its affiliation with the UNESCO World Heritage Program are defined areas of study that are assessed specifically in relation to the Military Hospital Complex. This descriptive case study methodology allows the boundaries of the study to be clearly defined whilst researching the building, its history and that of its context and the factors that have influenced its current and historic role in society. An analysis of qualitative data collected and synthesised will offer better understanding of the changing role and significance of the building over its 281 years.

The creation of heritage resources affiliated with the UNESCO World Heritage Program is a formalised process that is extensively documented. This is the process I will analyse with respect to Military Hospital Complex taking into consideration the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List and how the approach has changed with time (Meskell, 2018, Keough, 2011, Waterton and Watson, 2013)

The Choice of the Military Hospital in Port Louis as the Subject for the Case Study

The Military Hospital Complex was the first permanent building constructed in Port Louis (completed in 1740) and is still standing (Figure 3). The buildings were constructed by enslaved people and artisans under the direction of the French Colonists and its realisation embodies the multi-cultural roots of the first occupants of Mauritius.

Few buildings from the early period of Port Louis' development remain, as they were generally constructed with timber and have not survived. The importance of the Military Hospital Complex buildings is, therefore, even greater owing to their scarcity value.

The position and function of the buildings as both a hospital and general trading place on the dock-front in Port Louis, has ensured that it was, for centuries, central to life at the port. Being part of the daily life of the town the building regularly appears in the historical record owing to its location and function. This ensures that there is sufficient information available and accessible for this analysis (Figure 3). The building was part of the daily life of Port Louis from the outset and would have been used by all the early arrivals on the island, regardless of their place of origin. The Military Hospital Complex is therefore a multi-cultural and multi-layered building that is representative of Mauritian History.

The Hospital was an important part of the infrastructure of the colonial administration, ensuring the health and wellbeing of both the colonists and their enslaved labourers. There is archival material publicly available in the National Archives of Mauritius relating to the building which is accessible to researchers.

Until recently, this building complex was in perilous state of repair and its future survival uncertain. The raised consciousness of heritage in Mauritius, with the engagement of the Government with the UNESCO World Heritage Program, has been important in this complex of buildings being saved. The location of the Military Hospital Complex in the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site buffer zone has been instrumental in its survival. The building complex, owing to its importance in Port Louis and its long history, was selected as the site for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, the principal recommendation of the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission.

METHODS

Steps Followed

I have investigated the history and biography of the Military Hospital Complex of Port Louis by collecting qualitative and historical data from both primary and secondary sources. I investigate how the proximity of the case study site proximity to the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site has affected its current state of conservation. I have analysed relevant archival records relating to the buildings and their historical record. I have also visited the building on

numerous occasions and experienced it from its exterior despite the bureaucratic difficulties I have encountered in gaining access to the building.

The literature review outlines the theoretical framework for this analysis and how the valorisation of heritage in Mauritius has been constructed. This process is analysed with reference to Ashworth's models for the Construction of Heritage in Multi-cultural societies.

The multi-cultural nature of Mauritian society is central to the political construct of the country. Ashworth's models of heritage construction in multi-cultural societies have been important tools in analysing theoretical approaches to heritage construction within Mauritius. The different ways in which heritage can be packaged within the Mauritian context are addressed by Ashworth's models and have been influential theoretical tools in this analysis, further outlined in Chapter 2. I will assess if this approach has varied over the last 20+ years that Mauritius has associated itself with the UNESCO World heritage Program.

The Mauritian heritage program and the UNESCO World Heritage Programs frame the research question. The processes leading to the engagement of the Government of Mauritius with the UNESCO World Heritage Program, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritages and their application in Mauritius are discussed. Together these mechanisms encompass the multicultural nature of Mauritian society and the valorisation of different aspects of the heritage of the people of Mauritius.

Further, the reasons for, as well as the processes and recommendations of the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission are outlined. The literature review also draws comparisons with the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission and alternative examples of the politics of heritage and reconciliation in Africa.

I continue this analysis in explaining the Intercontinental Slavery Museum and how it has been curated as a heritage resource today. I look at the presentation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum and how it references and co-exists with the Aapravasi Ghat and the Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Sites of Mauritius.

Positionality and Ethics

As an outsider in Mauritius conducting this study, it has been clear that not being culturally immersed in the country has been an obstacle. I have experienced considerable difficulties in gaining access to the Military Hospital Complex and in securing interviews on the subject. I clearly explained the purpose of my study to all parties approached and confirmed that I had obtained ethics clearance from the University of Cape Town for the study. It was voiced to me by more than one source that as an outsider I would be regarded with suspicion and was unlikely to succeed.

The engagement of the Government of Mauritius with the UNESCO World Heritage Program is highly political. To an outsider, the political nature of heritage and its contestation in Mauritian society is not immediately apparent. Further reading and study have confirmed the reasons for the difficulties I have encountered in conducting my research. The absence of local interviewees and permission to access the Military Hospital Complex has affirmed the

top-down structures of heritage construction in Mauritius. This experience has been instructive in its silence and has assisted in answering the research question more fully.

The implications of the engagement of the Government with the UNESCO World Heritage Program and the limitations imposed on private landowners within the buffer zone of the World Heritage Site have been and continue to be controversial (Allam et al., 2018). Similarly, the commodification of heritage for the tourist market and its politically directed construction have dictated a potentially dissonant narrative that is jarring to some Mauritians (Boswell, 2005, Croucher et al., 2017, Hurnath, 2014).

I write from the perspective of a South African architect, who has been resident in Mauritius for three years (2019-2021), conducting this research toward this analysis during 2020 and 2021. In studying the historic building complex and its reincarnation as the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, I will analyse how both the UNESCO World Heritage Program and the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission have influenced the fate of the Military Hospital Complex.

From the outset of the design of the research proposal I have taken the view that although the views of the public of Mauritius with respect to heritage valorisation in the country and specifically within Port Louis, are important, these views are beyond the scope of this analysis. This research is intended to uncover how the official, top-down approach to heritage in Mauritius, through the UNESCO World Heritage Program and the Mauritian Governments policies have shaped valorisation of heritage in the country. The Government and UNESCO have worked in a close partnership to create heritage resources for consumption in the country. These processes and the resultant heritage resources are the subject of this analysis. This approach is echoed in the analysis of heritage construction in Mauritius by Swift (2007) whose rationale in analysing the top down approach to heritage construction in the country is analogous to that which I have adopted (Swift, 2007).

An alternative study, approaching the question from the perspective of the public would need to be constructed in a different way and answer a different question. The Heritage program in Mauritius is driven by the Government in association with UNESCO and hence this study is researching that aspect of its creation and development. The Intercontinental Museum of Slavery is the most recent UNESCO affiliated heritage project of Mauritius, and its positioning and expression within the Mauritian heritage arena is the focus of this analysis.

Research Failures

As outlined by Harrowell et al. (2018), research can benefit in unintended ways from the process not flowing smoothly as envisaged in the research design process. Research can gain depth when the real processes encountered are outlined in all their messy detail. The failures that are inevitably part of the research process can be instructive of deeper realities that may not have revealed themselves had the research process been smooth and seamless. Harrowell describes some research failure scenarios. Situations are described where researchers may be denied access to areas of interest, or have deal with uncomfortable interviews or situations, requiring divergence from the intended research path. The paper outlines how occasionally the exposure of these research failures is glossed over in academic work, but when they are

revealed and discussed there are generally learnings that have been revealed in the process (Harrowell et al., 2018).

This is analogous with the predicament I have encountered in my research in Mauritius. In trying to research the Military Hospital Complex in Port Louis, input from the Mauritian authorities and heritage sector have been missing voices. The experience of trying to gain access to the site of study and gain input from the Mauritian authorities has been revealing of the highly sensitive and political nature of heritage in Mauritius as discussed in this document.

Problems Encountered

Owing to the Covid 19 pandemic, the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, which opened to the public with a temporary exhibition in 2019 was effectively shut from March 2020 with brief windows of re-opening in late 2020 / early 2021.

These closures created difficulties in physical access to the building complex. On obtaining ethics clearance from the University of Cape Town, I sought, without success, to conduct interviews relating to the Intercontinental Slavery Museum within the heritage sphere in Mauritius. I also sought, through formal channels, permission to access the complex. Through the problems I encountered in obtaining interviews and gaining access to the complex, I was made more aware of the politically fraught nature of heritage in Mauritius, particularly with respect to the UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The initial research proposal I drew up was to study the material qualities of the Military Hospital Complex buildings, to understand how the use of enslaved labourers from diverse geographical origins and cultural backgrounds, under the authority of the French colonists, may have resulted in a local creolised product in the built fabric of the Military Hospital Complex. This question required a close physical examination of the built fabric and was not possible to answer without entering the building for analysis.

After experiencing protracted difficulties for over a year (outlined below) in gaining access to the facility and suitable interviewees, it became necessary for me to adjust the research topic, so that a close analysis of the built fabric was not necessary in answering the research question. I have also had to extend my dissertation by a semester as I have relocated from Mauritius and will no longer be able to access the facility on its eventual re-opening.

When I selected the Military Hospital Complex and the Intercontinental Slavery Museum as my research topic there was no indication that I would not be able to gain access to the complex. At the time the building was open to the public and there was a temporary exhibition in place. I commenced with research during a month-long quarantine period in January/February 2021, required by the Mauritian authorities as I was returning from South Africa and entry into Mauritius was prohibited to anyone who had been in South Africa in the last 15 days. This limited my research, when on release from quarantine Mauritius re-instigated a full countrywide lock-down and all museums, public gathering places etc were closed for 3 months. When the lock-down was lifted in June, I visited the museum to find it was closed for renovation, although it continued to advertise through its facebook page that it was open to the public. At this point, 5 months into my research it became clear that I may have a problem, although I was informed by museum officials that this lack of access would

not be protracted. I also did not expect the subsequent difficulties I encountered in sourcing both suitable interviewees and ongoing official refusal to access the buildings.

Owing to the problems outlined, I have referred to extensive documentation detailing the conceptualisation and creation of the museum, I have analysed documents explaining the reasons behind the need for the museum, the vision of the museum, its aims and guiding principles and the themes to be explored within the exhibits. I also have access to images of the temporary exhibits that have been displayed to a few select invited people during the last year as the museum continued to host official functions for invitees that were well publicised in the press.

I have visited the adjacent Aapravasi Ghat and have analysed the historic port area for a coursework project, and therefore I am well versed in the urban fabric and history of the Military Hospital Complex and its urban environment. I have analysed all available documents I have been able to source on the building and have spent many hours investigating and analysing its exterior. I have therefore concluded that there is sufficient literature available across a broad spectrum of sources, covering the conceptualisation of the museum, the Military Hospital Complex, and its history for the purposes of the revised research topic of this analysis.

Visiting the completed museum would have been interesting but has not been essential to answering the research question. This research is concerned with the Intercontinental Slavery Museum as a UNESCO linked heritage resource. I analyse the message the newly created museum intends to communicate and the way it intends to do this within the Mauritian political context, rather than its detailed contents.

From publicly available material I have been able to put together a cohesive understanding of the new Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Mauritius. The engagement of the Government with the UNESCO World Heritage Program is also well documented, as are contestations around the world heritage sites of Mauritius.

Analysis of this available material, along with the hesitance of academics and heritage professionals both within and outside Mauritius to discuss the deeper questions around heritage valorisation in Mauritius, has given me suitable material from diverse sources that have informed my research.

The lack of willingness to engage with me whilst conducting my research, from a broad spectrum of Mauritian and International Heritage Professionals, has been instructive of a deeper process within the Mauritian heritage sphere, of which I was not originally aware. The official UNESCO led narrative, the findings of the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius and the writings of local and international academics and scholars have been read and analysed. The experience in conducting my research has also provided material that is relevant in answering my research question. The curation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum's temporary exhibition has also been carefully considered in answering the research question posed.

Research Difficulties Outlined

In aiming to understand the way heritage has been approached in Mauritius, both in terms of identity politics and the engagement of the Mauritian Government with the UNESCO World Heritage Program, I have approached 11 individuals and two organisations both within Mauritius and outside of the country. All people I approached either have associations with UNESCO or the Mauritian Heritage program. In this exercise, I have had limited success in gaining interviews which has enhanced my insight into the Mauritian heritage program. This lack of success is instructive and justifies the continued analysis of the question to establish reasons why fewer than 10% of the potential interviewees approached felt they were able to engage with me on this question. It is, therefore, assumed that within Mauritius today the approach to heritage remains controversial. This statement is supported by literature (Calaon and Forest, 2018, Swift, 2007, Boswell, 2006, Harmon, 2011)

As outlined in the document I distributed to potential interviewees, to gain informed consent to conduct interviews - the areas I intended to explore were:

- Politics, heritage, and heritage dissonance in Mauritius.
- What role has UNESCO played in the awakening of heritage awareness in Mauritius
- What is the relevance of the building to Mauritius in its re-incarnation as the ISM and is it able to perform its role as envisaged by the Truth and Justice commission of Mauritius?

Summary of my attempts in gaining interviews

1. In February 2021, a senior academic within Mauritius was generous in acknowledging my requests for information but advised me that they would not agree to be interviewed regarding any of the matters I was investigating. They explained that as the nature of heritage within Mauritius is highly political and they would not want to comment on it. They added that they expected this would be true of most of their colleagues and associates.
2. In June 2021 an official from the Intercontinental Slavey Museum declined my request for access to the museum for academic purposes, citing ongoing works on the site and dangerous conditions related to these works, as well as concerns with the Covid 19 pandemic. The officer told me that I would hopefully be permitted access in August 2021 as a temporary exhibition was planned. The officer apologised and requested I write a formal letter to the Chairperson of the museum explaining my reasons for requesting access to the museum prior to the temporary exhibition. This temporary exhibition did not materialise, and the property remained inaccessible to me.
3. From July to September 2021 the staff at the adjacent World Heritage Site which is closely linked with the new slavery museum did not respond to my requests for discussions or assistance with access to the Military Hospital Complex.
4. In September 2021 a prominent professional who has done much research into the site and may have been a useful contact (suggested to me by an academic resident in Mauritius) did not respond to my email requesting information on the deeper history of the site.
5. In September 2021 an internationally published academic who has written extensively on the site did not respond to my requests to discuss the complex.

6. In July 2021 a representative of a heritage organisation in Mauritius suggested I contact the authorities to request information and access, which I did both via email and a formal letter of request, to no avail.
7. In September 2021, a prominent academic within Mauritius agreed to discussions and we met. This academic remains the sole person who was willing to discuss the topic with me. The academic outlined that I may be experiencing difficulties as I was an outsider and an architect, and these two realities may have created discomfort within the heritage sphere that my intentions may be other than stated. The academic suggested there may be fear within the heritage structures of the country that I may pass judgement on the way the Military Hospital Complex was being renovated. This fear appeared to exist despite my clearly explaining that the renovation of the complex would not be a part of the study and that I had obtained ethics clearance from the University of Cape Town for my research.
8. In November 2021 a prominent member of the Ministry of Culture, on hearing of the difficulties I had encountered to date, engaged with me and was willing to assist with arranging access to the buildings when he sadly contracted Covid 19 and succumbed to the disease.
9. After my relocation from Mauritius in late November 2021, an academic outside of Mauritius but with close ties to the heritage program of the country has expressed reticence to be the “*voice of Mauritians*” and has suggested I speak to the heritage authorities in the country, a process I have been engaged with for the past year with limited success.
10. During 2022 I have approached two other academics in South Africa who have ties and associations with the Mauritian heritage program. One academic as re-directed me to those who I have already approached, and the other has not replied to my requests.

Inferences Made Through this Exhaustive Process

Considering the above exhaustive attempts over the last 12 months, I have concluded that the experienced academic who in February 2021 warned me that I would not have much success in pursuing interviews when researching the heritage program in Mauritius and its relationship to UNESCO was correct.

The topic, as outlined in my research is fraught with political sensitivities and I have not been able to uncover suitable or sufficient interviewees with which I may discuss the matter. Being a foreigner and an architect has made the process more difficult as I have been informed that this would immediately generate concerns on the assumptions that I would be making judgement on the decisions taken in the renovation of the Military Hospital Complex, a topic that does not form part of this analysis.

Additionally, I clearly stated to all the potential interviewees that I had obtained ethics clearance from the University of Cape Town and furthermore explained the outline and focus of my proposed study. As discussed by Harrowell et al., these research setbacks can be opportunities (Harrowell et al., 2018). The resistance of the Mauritian Authorities in allowing me both access and interviews across a broad range of heritage specialists in Mauritius has revealed the tight control by the Mauritian state over the narrative presented about the cultural identity of the country and its way of valorising heritage.

However, I have through this process concluded, that there is a place within the Mauritian Heritage sphere for a Mauritian scholar to conduct research without the barrier of being a foreigner. The hesitance to engage with both a foreigner and architect, who cannot be culturally immersed in the country, and who may not be cognisant of the delicate balance of its heritage construction, has been notable. A local student may encounter fewer obstacles in their research.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 commences with background information on Mauritian history and the context of the study to orientate the reader. Thereafter the research question is introduced, and the study methods are outlined. The problems encountered and how these have been addressed conclude the first chapter.

Chapter 2, the literature review familiarises the reader within the field of study. Ashworth's Models of Heritage Construction in Multi-cultural societies, the theoretical framework used in this analysis, along with other theories of heritage construction are outlined. UNESCO, the World Heritage Convention and World Heritage List and its various structures are introduced as this material is integral to the research question. Thereafter the existing World Heritage Sites of Mauritius and their contribution to national identity are discussed. The review concludes in discussing the politics of heritage and reconciliation in Africa.

Chapter 3 commences with a detailed discussion of heritage construction in Mauritius. The global context of raised heritage awareness is explained and the UNESCO World Heritage Program in Mauritius. The two World Heritage Sites of Mauritius are discussed. The Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius is explained, the reasons for its establishment, its enquiries, and recommendations. Parallels are drawn between this commission and similar African initiatives.

Chapter 4 discusses the Military Hospital Complex in depth. The profile and importance of the buildings in the early development of Port Louis and its changing role in society over its 282-year lifespan. Thereafter the Intercontinental Slavery Museum is discussed and how the museum has been curated as Mauritius' latest UNESCO affiliated heritage resource.

Chapter 5 concludes the argument.

This approach has been followed to collect information relating to the case study building and to logically synthesise an understanding from multiple perspectives and museum to answer the research question. The method outlined is to gather common threads that are revealed by the study and draw these together to formulate a reasoned response to the research question.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework:

Preservation, Conservation and Heritage. The Construction of Heritage in Multicultural Societies: Construction of Heritage in Multicultural Societies

Conservation theories and those of preservation and restoration are well-developed discussions that define how heritage resources can be protected for future generations. Many theorists have addressed these questions from a theoretical perspective in order to understand how heritage resources are used in the creation of heritage and how this resources can be packaged as resources for the local and international stage (Muñoz-Viñas, 2005, Jokilehto, 2007, Ashworth, 1997).

Preservation approach to heritage precludes any interventions, other than those that ensure the heritage resource is kept intact. This approach is directed at an object or resource and is relatively simple in its inflexible focus. The object or resource can be clearly defined, and complexities are avoided by the focus on preservation only (Ashworth, 2011, Jokilehto, 2007, Muñoz-Viñas, 2005).

Conservation, however, is a process that is more far reaching than preservation as it allows more scope for intervention. Conservation generally incorporates groups of heritage resources whilst viewing them as interdependent entities that are elements of the greater whole. The heritage resource that is being conserved can be altered or changed if its heritage value and significance are assessed and respected through the intervention. This paradigm has allowed for adaptive re-use of heritage resources such as the modernisation of historic buildings so that they comply with modern safety standards (Ashworth, 2011, Jokilehto, 2007, Muñoz-Viñas, 2005).

Creating a heritage resource involves making use of the past by creating a product for consumption in the present. Heritage is therefore a process, the questions around whose heritage is being represented and by whom, and for what purpose, become relevant with the creation of heritage resources for public consumption (Ashworth, 2011).

Ashworth has created a framework that categorises the social processes that have shaped the treatment of the past in the present with a focus on the built environment in multi-cultural societies. With this framework Ashworth outlines three paradigms for the conceptualisation of the past and its use in the present (Ashworth, 2011). These paradigms have been useful theoretical frameworks for this analysis.

The models of heritage construction in multi-cultural societies outlined by Ashworth illustrated in Figure 4 demonstrate how the cultural diversity of different groups can be expressed in the construction of heritage for public consumption (Ashworth, 2007). I return to these models and their application in the creation of heritage resources in Mauritius regularly in this argument.

Figure 4: Adapted from (Ashworth, 2007)

Heritage Policies in Plural Societies – and their employment in Mauritius

MODEL	DESCRIPTION	FUNCTIONING	USED IN MAURITIUS
Assimilatory / Single-Core Model	Homogenous society values, ethnicity, cultural practices etc	Heritage expresses the values ascribed to by the society	No
Melting Pot Model	Diverse groups in society are integrated into a new society that is expressive of its different components	This model incorporates the values and cultural practices of all components of society and creates a new and localised culture	Not in practice.
Core Plus Models	A main core culture surrounded by subsidiary cultural groups. The hierarchy is evident	The different cultural identities within society are acknowledged with a unified approach although they are expressed hierarchically.	There are elements of this in Mauritian heritage expression, although not officially.
Pillar Models	Society is constructed as a series of separate entities with theoretically equal importance	Separate but equal principal approach to different cultural groups.	This is the model most evident in Mauritius.
Mosaic Model	Different cultural groupings are mixed but maintain their individual identities	Include all yet express the individual approach	This is theoretically the Mauritian approach although the pillar model is more evident in practice.

Analysis of Ashworth's Models in Mauritius:

Ashworth's Assimilatory / Single- Core Model is not applicable to the official heritage program of Mauritius, as the population of the country is multicultural and not homogenised. As the political construct of Mauritius clearly defines the different population groups in terms of political representation and cultural identity, this model is not applicable to the official heritage program of the country.

As with Ashworth's Single Core model, his Melting Pot Model is not applicable to Mauritius owing to the political construct of the country. The Melting Pot model may be more applicable in Madagascar, a similarly creolised society to that of Mauritius, with a history of slavery. According to Boswell (2008), unlike in Mauritius, Madagascan identity supercedes group identity. The population of Madagascar perceive themselves as a homogenous group. Whereas the Mauritian state is constructed in accordance with ethnic nationalism, the Madagascan state is structured around civic nationalism (Boswell, 2008)

Ashworth's Core Plus Model of Heritage Construction in Multicultural Societies, describes heritage as being constructed around a central dominant culture that is supported by subsidiary cultures that are intrinsic, but secondary to the heritage being expressed. Although this model is not in accordance with the official narrative of the Mauritian political construct, it appears in practice to be the way heritage has been approached in the country in the past. The dominance of the Indo-Mauritian community in all spheres of life is well supported by literature and appears to be a contributing factor in the engagement of Government of Mauritius with UNESCO and the creation of the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius (Boswell, 2006, Swift, 2007, Croucher et al., 2017)

Ashworth's Pillar Model is evident as the framework for the construction of heritage in Mauritius in the last 20+ years since the country has been engaged with the UNESCO World Heritage Program. The Constitution of the Republic outlines the separate, but equally important population groups, and how they will be represented politically. This construct defines identity in Mauritius and has been carried through into their heritage program.

Ashworth's Mosaic Model can be used for heritage construction in multi-cultural societies where a national identity is constructed from the different cultural groupings. This model could theoretically be used to construct a modern Mauritian heritage resource that supercedes the identity politics of the country and looks to heritage creation that is representative of national identity.

Waterton and Watson's Theories of Heritage Studies

According to Waterton and Watson, theories in Heritage are generally operational and focus on visitor experience, commodification, and commercialisation. The issues addressed by theories in heritage are generally those that are covered by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Theories of heritage are concerned with the deeper social implications of heritage and their place in the globalised world. The presentation of heritage in places such as museums and world heritage sites allow heritage to become a social phenomenon. The political aspect of heritage and its presentation are covered by theories of heritage as described by Waterton and Watson. Theories for heritage are ideas around heritage that are forward looking. These theories cover aspects such as heritage and tourism, and the societal implications of heritage resources (Waterton and Watson, 2013)

This study analyses the theories of heritage with reference to Ashworth's models of Heritage Construction in Multicultural Societies with reference to heritage construction Mauritius. I further employ theories for heritage with reference to the implications of the engagement of the Government of Mauritius with the UNESCO World Heritage Program.

Background Information on the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation, the World Heritage Program and its Origins:

The United Nations Organisation grew out of the League of Nations after World War Two, in reaction to the destruction wrought globally by the war through all spheres of society. At the time of the formation of UNESCO and other United Nations organisations, a globally coordinated effort was deemed necessary to overcome colonialism and rebuild international relations. The world was, at the time, poised to move into a new era where nationalist interest could be articulated and integrated globally. The UNESCO World Heritage

Convention aims at managing the national and global interests of cultural heritage resources (Labadi and Long, 2010).

UNESCO, a United Nations Organisation cultural program aimed at peace, cooperation, respect, and universality, has become a flagship educational and cultural institution globally. The World Heritage Convention is one of the most popular UNESCO instruments as it has allowed member states to present their cultural heritage on a global platform. The positive economic and cultural benefits associated with a world heritage listing and its associated tourism, have been an important part of the success of the World Heritage Convention (Labadi and Long, 2010).

UNESCO Involvement in World Heritage prior to the World Heritage Convention.

With the Suez crisis of 1956, Britain and France followed Israel in invading Egypt. Political concerns precipitated this invasion including Western concerns that the Egyptians were harbouring communist sympathies with the Soviets. Consequent of this crisis the United States and World Bank withdrew their financing for the Aswan Dam. Aswan was a huge and multi-dimensional project aimed at improving the lives and livelihoods of the Egyptian people. The project was intended to alleviate poverty and hence had a strong humanitarian foundation. The United Nations were instrumental in resolving the Suez crisis and thereafter their cultural arm, UNESCO became involved with the relocation of the Nubian monuments threatened by flooding from the Aswan Dam (Meskell, 2018, Keough, 2011).

The UNESCO involvement with the Nubian monuments initially did not envisage the scale or scope of the project or the extent of technical expertise that was to be required. The scientific, technical, and engineering demands of the project were immense. Because of its high profile and the extraordinary material of the Nubian monuments, the project caught the imagination of the public. The team assisting with the project was composed of international participants and comprised expertise from numerous countries and cultural groups. The project team became representative of the multicultural aspirations of UNESCO (Meskell, 2018)

The Nubian campaign presented both challenges in engineering and in archaeology. As work progressed on the project these two distinct and separate areas of work became apparent, requiring different teams to undertake the different tasks. Even at this stage of UNESCO it was reported that the paperwork and administrative aspects of the project were demanding. This administrative load remains a hallmark of UNESCO world heritage projects to this day and can be a barrier to countries that have fewer administrative resources. Through the Nubian monuments relocation project starting in the late 1950s UNESCO developed from a humanist based global educational scientific and cultural organisation into the international inter-governmental organisation with vast technical and scientific resources of today. Meskell argues that the functional and technical aspects of the organisation had over-taken the humanist ones (Meskell, 2018).

The Aswan project, and the UNESCO affiliated projects that followed it, ensured that UNESCO became the world's leading heritage management organisation. UNESCO had, through its initial major project, become the organisation to approach for technical assistance in conservation matters. The reservoir of expertise and management skills for complex projects

was encompassed in the Nubian monuments project. Thereafter, the roots were in place for these processes to be formalised, and for the development a global management tool for the world's cultural heritage, the World Heritage Convention. The deep levels of expertise and specialisation that were needed for the Aswan project necessitated a complex management and legislative structure. These complexities have reportedly burgeoned with time into an almost unmanageably bureaucratic institution (Meskell, 2018, Keough, 2011).

The World Heritage Convention of 1972

As UNESCO became increasingly involved in world cultural heritage projects the need to formalise the various conservation processes increased. In 1970 UNESCO drew up a draft convention on International Protection of Monuments, Groups of Buildings and Sites of Universal Value. Simultaneously the International Union for the Conservation of Nature independently prepared its own draft legislation, the Convention for the Conservation of the World's Heritage, which was largely focused on nature conservation. The two draft conventions were closely linked in their aims and methods and UNESCO made the decision to amalgamate the agreements into a single document, the World Heritage Convention of 1972. This document provides a global framework for the protection of natural and cultural sites of importance (Slatyer, 1983).

The World Heritage Convention Document

The World Heritage Convention of 1972 is a document that requires expertise in its management by the state. The World Heritage Convention defines culture and natural heritage, and participating nation states adopt the document into their heritage management policies. The World Heritage Convention is a framework for National and International protection of heritage. The World Heritage Committee has no legal standing within a country unless it has been passed into law in the country where the document is being applied (as described in the World Heritage Convention Article 5) (UNESCO, 1972).

States that are signatories to the World Heritage Convention take responsibility to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the state and present it to the people. This responsibility involves expertise, staff and resources to be allocated to the task. The World Heritage Committee requires member states to develop the necessary expertise for the management of their cultural heritage.

The World Heritage Convention was passed in 1972, 50 years ago, when a top-down management approach was in keeping with legislation of the era. The provisions of the convention rely on strong state institutions of management. The World Heritage Convention is governed by a World Heritage Committee, an intergovernmental body with a great deal of power. Although the state bodies are responsible for the cultural heritage that requires protection within their jurisdiction, the World Heritage Committee ultimately decides if the heritage will be included on the World Heritage List or not.

The execution of the provisions of the World Heritage Convention requires expertise in the management of the heritage being protected. This can be problematic for less well-resourced and poorer countries. The World Heritage Convention requires the individual nations to provide expertise for its application and without expertise the heritage cannot be defined, managed, or protected. The World Heritage Fund, a mechanism of the World Heritage

Convention (Article 15) allows for less well-resourced member states to gain assistance in the preservation of their world heritage. The assistance provided by the World Heritage Fund is generally in the form of expertise, staff training, equipment, or loans (UNESCO, 1972).

The World Heritage Convention also encourages world heritage properties to engage with education. The applications of properties seeking inscription on the world heritage list are enhanced by the inclusion of educational initiatives aimed at communicating the importance of the heritage to a broader audience.

The World Heritage Convention is an important document in the sphere of the preservation of cultural heritage globally. It has been a successful instrument that has gained a global profile for the role it plays in societies. This role is not without complexity considering the scope and reach of the convention. With this success there has been an increase in administrative and procedural bureaucratic processes that have the potential to mire the declaration of World Heritage Sites and their ongoing management in a state of administrative overload (Meskell, 2018, Keough, 2011).

The World Heritage Convention in Practice

The World Heritage Convention has been successful in the universalisation of cultural heritage. Heritage has been a useful tool in the development of cultural tourism globally, with its associated economic benefits. Inscription of a site on the World Heritage List has proven to be a drawcard in terms of tourism and has had economic benefits in the host country (Labadi and Long, 2010).

The success of the UNESCO World Heritage Program has led to growth in tourist numbers and development of new tourist markets and source countries. With the end of the Cold War, the traditional European markets for both attracting tourists and generating tourism were beginning to change. With this change in the profile of the consumers of heritage, the Eurocentric nature of the World Heritage Convention was acknowledged as not being globally representative of either the sites or the tourists who visited them (Labadi and Long, 2010).

UNESCO in 1994 addressed the Eurocentric nature of the 1972 World Heritage Convention with the Global Strategy for a Balanced, Credible and Representative World Heritage List. The organisation adopted this strategy as it was more representative of global culture. This approach increased the variety of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List and ensuring greater diversity in the World Heritage List inscriptions and moved away from the purely Eurocentric and Christian dominated World Heritage Sites. The aim of UNESCO with this strategy was to create a more representative World Heritage List that showcased traditional cultures more fully. UNESCO hoped that with this strategy the World Heritage List would be more inclusive and diverse (Ishizawa M and Westrik C, 2021).

The Origins of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

In 1982 the International Commission for Monuments and Sites, an advisory body to the World Heritage Convention, issued its Florence Charter which placed emphasis on the living nature of some historic sites, such as historic gardens or landscapes. Thereafter in 1989

UNESCO made a recommendation for the safeguarding of traditional culture and folklore that can be directly construed as intangible cultural heritage. The conceptualisation of heritage at an international level was clearly transforming from the monumental and tangible to a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes cultural heritage (Ruggles and Silverman, 2009).

The International Commission for Monuments and Sites Nara document was issued in 1994 in response to evolving ideas of cultural heritage globally. The Nara document was aimed at earmarking heritage for safeguarding, that did not fit into the criteria specified by the World Heritage Convention. As more countries engage with initiatives for conservation and safeguarding of their cultural heritage through UNESCO, the parameters and scope of the mechanisms for heritage conservation needed to be broadened, hence the regular need for the issue of additional documents, declarations, and conventions (ICOMOS, 1994)

The forces of globalisation have also put pressures on traditional cultures, some struggling for survival. The UNESCO Nara document was forward thinking in that it required cultural heritage properties to be judged within their own cultural contexts. This document therefore acknowledged that the context of a particular heritage resource is essential to the meaning of that resource and that heritage resources cannot be appreciated in a vacuum.

In 1999, building on the Nara document of 1994, UNESCO instituted a program for the proclamation of intangible cultural heritage. This program then became the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritages of 2003 grew out of gaps in the World Heritage Convention of 1972. The World Heritage Convention, when it was drawn up, was rooted in a Eurocentric notion of heritage. This framework resulted in an inherent bias towards physical attributes, which consequently translated into monumental buildings in need of conservation (Labadi and Long, 2010).

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritages

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention broadly defines intangible cultural heritage and how it is to be protected and its global importance. The safeguarding process is described and there is provision for documenting and recording the heritage for its preservation. The broad definition of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the many appropriate processes for its safeguarding and preservation have opened new and diverse opportunities for the identification and preservation of cultural heritage globally. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention by its broad scope has enabled heritage to become inclusive of cultures and traditions that are not expressed materially and are therefore not protected by the World Heritage Convention. Examples of such sites are more prevalent in Africa and Asia (Ruggles and Silverman, 2009).

Through the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, as with the World Heritage Convention, the state retains the primary control of the intangible cultural heritage that falls within its jurisdiction. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention document allows for the involvement of experts and community members if the state requires this input. These provisions are outlined in the introductory paragraphs of the convention. Community consultation is required as part of the nomination process as safeguarding of many of these

practices would be impossible without the direct involvement of the practitioners of the cultural heritage seeking safeguarding (UNESCO, 2003).

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention is governed by a committee who examine applications for inscription on the World Intangible Cultural Heritage List. They will also examine request for funding, expertise etc. As with the World Heritage Convention, the administrative requirements for the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention at the international level are considerable. The void of specific expertise related to the cultural practice being safeguarded at the international level is highlighted when dealing with intangible cultural heritage because of the absolute need for local expertise in this field.

State parties to the convention are involved with the identification of intangible cultural heritage to be preserved at the international level. The state parties identify the communities to whom the heritage belongs and ways in which it can be safeguarded. This role has both administrative and technical functions to ensure that the processes are put in place to safeguard the heritage. As cultural heritage by its nature is often intangible the community involvement and dialogue are fundamental to this process of identification. Without the creators of the heritage becoming involved in its preservation there is not a reasonable prospect of success in its safeguarding. Therefore, although there are requirements at state level the convention requires detailed and comprehensive community engagement for the safeguarding to take place.

The convention makes provision for international cooperation and assistance. This assistance, as with the World Heritage Convention would normally be in the form of expertise, equipment, or loans. The intangible cultural heritage is by its nature esoteric. It is therefore important that the high-level global management structures of UNESCO are tailored to ensure that the detailed community level engagement so necessary for the safeguarding of the heritage can filter up through the management structures in place.

The inscription of the Segha Dance of Mauritius on the UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2014, has been an achievement in acknowledging the cultural contributions of the Creole Community to the Mauritian Nation. The complexities of management, community involvement and local expertise and administrative requirements inherent in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention have all been tested with the inscription of the Segha Dance of Mauritius.

The UNESCO Slave Route Project

The UNESCO Slave Route project was launched in 1994 with the title 'Routes of Enslaved Peoples: Resistance, Liberty and Heritage'(UNESCO, 2022b). The project was launched as a global initiative to honour the memory of slaves, a group whose history has historically been ignored. The UNESCO project acknowledges the memory of slavery, resistance to slavery and the abolition of slavery. This acknowledgement is necessary for slavery and its legacy to be overcome in post-colonial societies. De-colonisation is an objective of the UNESCO Slave Route Project, with far reaching implications globally. The Slave Route Project aims to educate the world about slavery and its consequences, to expose the truth to achieve justice for the slaves and their descendants. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum Project of Mauritius, is being established as a destination on the UNESCO Slave Route (UNESCO, 2022b).

Nationhood, Multi-Culturalism, and Identity in Mauritius

The Mauritian Political Construct

As outlined in Chapter 1, section 31(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius, the country is governed by the concept of ethnic nationalism and the political structures, considering the history of the nation, support links with countries of origin. Political representation employs a *best-loser* system to ensure that minorities are politically represented. This approach is contrary to the acceptance of the Creole population of Mauritius being a multi-cultural and multi-faceted group (Boswell, 2008, Swift, 2007).

Heritage in Mauritius is dealt with in a way that is particular to the country and is not necessarily comparable to other creolised societies. The Creole population of Mauritius, generally the descendants of those enslaved, have been homogenised for political convenience (Vergès, 2003). In an attempt to rectify this commonly held perception of the marginalisation of the “general population” group, Mauritian heritage, and its expression and commodification have been highly politicised (Swift, 2007).

Médeia (2010) describes the way the visibility of the Creole history of Mauritius’ closest neighbour Réunion has been diluted by the 1946 incorporation of the island of Réunion as an overseas department of France. The islands of Réunion and Mauritius have similar histories of colonisation and creolisation (pre-1810). Not only has the Creole language come under threat in Réunion, cultural and national identities have been impacted by its departmentalisation, with the accompanying cultural adaptations in society (Medea, 2002, Cohen and Toninato, 2010). It appears that the different cultural groups of the people of Réunion have been replaced by French culture. This formalised change in official culture experienced in Réunion has formed barriers to the acknowledgement of how creolisation has shaped the country (Vergès, 2001, Vergès, 2003). A similar lack of understanding of the cultural roots and contributions of the Creole community are evident in Mauritius.

Eriksen (2007) describes how the use of the term ‘Creole’ varies geographically. Initially it was a term used to describe a linguistic phenomenon related to plantation societies, but over time this evolved to describe cultural groups. In Réunion the term refers to those who are locally born whereas in Mauritius the term is used to describe those of African or Malagasy descent. In Trinidad all people except those of Indian descent are termed Creole, whereas in French Guyana a Creole is one who has adopted a European way of life (Eriksen, 2007).

Eriksen describes how slaves when arriving in Mauritius from multiple source markets were split up from their compatriots to ensure that slaves were isolated and unlikely to revolt. The Creole community that developed in Mauritius was consequently multi-cultural. Any practices associated with their countries of origin were diluted and a creolised culture and language resulted (Eriksen, 2007).

The Creole community in Mauritius still value their independence and freedom. The social structures that are apparent in the Muslim, Hindu and Sino- Mauritian communities, along with their strong cultural and religious associations with their places of origin are not apparent in the Creole community (Eriksen, 2007).

The Creole Malaise in Mauritius

In Mauritius the term 'Creole malaise' has been used to describe the socio-economic circumstances of the creole community (Boswell, 2006). The term is attributed to have been first used by a Mauritian Catholic Priest in 1993 when describing the persistently difficult circumstances faced by Mauritian Creoles, a legacy of slavery (Harmon, 2011). Boswell elaborates on this reality, describing how the cultural contributions of the Creoles have not been sufficiently recognised in Mauritius and their classification as "general population" affirms this residual position (Boswell, 2014, Harmon, 2011).

The marginalisation of the Creole population has manifested itself in the poorer Mauritian communities. Many of these areas are beset by problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, and other social problems prevalent in areas where there are few opportunities. The descendants of the enslaved continue to deal with the legacy of the system and its associated social stigma and educational and material deficiencies (Boswell, 2006).

The ethnically aligned Mauritian political construct has contributed to the Creole of Mauritius being homogenised as a group, and their identity and cultural heritage being effectively disregarded. This reality is difficult to rationalise as the lingua franca of the country is Mauritian Creole, spoken across all population groups at all levels of society, yet it is not the official language of the country or the language of education (Harmon, 2011).

Creole speaking children are educationally disadvantaged in that their home language is not their language of tuition. This marginalisation becomes a vicious circle in communities where resources are scarce and parental education levels are poor. The poor start in life educationally, for Mauritian Creole children, continues to affect their community and the malaise continues. (Boswell, 2008, Seetah, 2010, Harmon, 2011).

Composition of the Mauritian Population and the Diverse Origins of the Creole Community

The Creole community of Mauritius comprise approximately 27% of the population and form the largest minority population group. The majority group, of Indian origin comprise 51% of the population and the only other group of any significant size is those of Muslim origin at 17%. The balance of the population is comprised by those of Chinese (3%), European (2%) and other diverse origins (Harmon, 2011).

Those who were sourced for slavery, from a vast geographical area, were separated into culturally diverse groups prior to shipping. This tactic was used by the slavers to disempower their captives to ensure any uprisings were avoided. This divide-and-rule tactic of the French colonists effectively isolated the arrivals and truncated cultural continuity and groupings of the arrivals. The resultant Creole population of Mauritius remains a group that has its nexus in a multicultural nucleus of different language, cultural and ethnic groups. Those who were enslaved and brought to Mauritius by the French were displaced, treated harshly, and deprived of their social and cultural roots. The legacy of this treatment remains with their descendants to this day. (Boswell, 2008, Boswell, 2014, Boswell, 2006, Vaughan, 1998, Eriksen, 2007, Abungu et al., 2020).

Ethnic group identity forms the conceptual framework of the Mauritian political construct. Ties to the original 'motherland' and its cultural traditions are strong drivers of identity in

Mauritius (Hurnath, 2014). Some Mauritian Creoles, today regard Africa as the motherland (Boswell, 2005). This construct does not necessarily bring the Creole community as a group, closer to their cultural roots as it encompasses a vast geographical area of the African continent as well as Madagascar. The vast range of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic areas from whence the slaves of Mauritius originated ensure that the culture that the group have formed on the island over the last two centuries is a local phenomenon specific to the Mauritian situation. The heritage of the Creole as a group, is at odds with the Mauritian political construct that does not acknowledge mixing (Boswell, 2006).

Intangible Cultural Heritage and Creole Cultural Expression

The Segha Dance is one of the cultural traditions, rooted in the displacement of the Creole of Mauritius. In 2014 the dance was finally recognised with a UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage List inscription. As described in the UNESCO nomination dossier, the Segha has been performed by musicians, singers and dancers with handmade instruments and traditional costume in Mauritius since the 18th century. The performers are both male and female and of all ages. The traditional dance originated within the Creole community and practitioners of the dance today are generally Creole (Government of Mauritius, 2014).

The intangible cultural heritage of Mauritius in the form of oral traditions, is embodied in the Segha Dance as well as the tradition of the performance. The social and ritual practices associated with the dance, and the crafting of the traditional instrument have been part of this community for centuries, possibly predating their arrival in Mauritius, from diverse locations.

Initially Segha Dance performances were a household practice, performed in back-yards as the cultural expression of those enslaved was suppressed. The dance has over time become a practice that has a role in family gatherings and public festivals. The Segha in modern Mauritius is a popular form of evening entertainment at the many luxury hotels of the Island. Tourists seek out performances to experience traditional Mauritian cultural practices. The Segha performers and makers of instruments have transmitted their skills and knowledge formally and informally. These skills have been passed down through families with, until recently, no organisation or body to support and manage the art form (Government of Mauritius, 2014).

The World Intangible Cultural Heritage Listing of the Segha Dance of Mauritius has recognised a cultural contribution of the Creole community to the country. This recognition has been important in the acknowledgement of this sector of the population of the country.

Museums and Heritage

The Slavery Museums Workshop facilitated by the Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture in Mauritius in 2019 is documented in a publication, *Slavery Museums Workshop: Issues and Challenges Concerning Representations of Slavery in Museums* (Abungu et al., 2020). This workshop explored how slavery can be represented in a museum in a positive way so that the truth of slavery is told, but the museum can become a place that offers inspiration, societal change, and healing and that those who were enslaved are not seen as victims. Through the deliberations about the museum conducted at the 2019 workshop, theories of heritage as framed by Waterton and Watson (2013), can be explored.

Museums are a colonial construct. Historically museums have displayed curiosities that have frequently been plundered during colonial times. Museums have in this way been complicit in the exploitation by colonial rulers. This reality, along with the horrors of slavery, a largely untold story are issues that the Intercontinental Slavery Museum will need to address (Abungu et al., 2020, Anderson, 2006)

Benedict Anderson (2006) describes his concept of imagined communities. Within this construct, the colonial state created imagined communities out of their colonies. The principal mechanisms used to create these communities were the census, the map, and the museum. By constructing the community in this way, the colonial rulers controlled the narrative of the place they had colonised (Anderson, 2006). The Slavery Museums Workshop outlines the ways in which colonists controlled the narrative of their colonies through museums. Decolonisation of the museum space is an important consideration in post-colonial societies such as Mauritius and the Intercontinental Slavery Museum provides an opportunity to achieve social justice through the museum (Abungu et al., 2020, Abungu, 2019)

Anderson's 'imagined communities' concepts explain how ethnic classifications became important in colonial societies, a legacy that persists in Mauritius today. Anderson's explanation of how certain people fell into a category he terms 'other' as they did not fall easily into one of the defined groups is analogous with the 'general population' group outlined in the Mauritian Constitution. In terms of Anderson's concept, the 'general population' label that has been constitutionally applied to Mauritian Creoles, can be viewed as a direct legacy of Mauritius' colonial past (Anderson, 2006).

Heritage, Politics, and Reconciliation in Africa

According to Meskell and Scheermeyer (2008), Truth Commissions are powerful tools in dealing with injustices of the past. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission experience shows that some of the countries' legacy projects commemorating the transition to democracy do not necessarily impact meaningfully in the upliftment of ordinary South Africans. Some of these legacy projects appear to be more geared to international tourists with their packaging of the constructed South African rainbow nation success story. (Meskell and Scheermeyer, 2008). Waterton and Watson's (2013) framework of theories *for* heritage are being employed to view these South African legacy program sites.

This perception of some of the legacy projects in South Africa and their impact, is resonant of the view of one of the residents of Le Morne Cultural landscape in Mauritius. When discussing creating heritage for both healing and tourism with Boswell, the resident asked if you can 'eat heritage' (Boswell, 2005). The ideals of heritage commodification to achieve reconciliation and upliftment may be well intentioned, but the realities of the lives of those whose heritage is being celebrated, and their life situations, must be addressed.

Truth Commissions are a way of creating a plausible version of the past. The reasons for this officialised version of the history of the country may be to create a version of the past that can be used as a point of reference in ongoing political debates (Grunebaum, 2017, Croucher et al., 2017). The traumatic histories associated with slavery have been taboo subjects in

many societies globally. Inevitably there is a need for the truth about slavery and its legacy to be confronted in order for societies that were afflicted by this system to achieve justice for all, as is evident in Mauritius (Abungu et al., 2020).

Below is a quotation the stated hope of the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam at the time the Truth and Justice Commission in 2011. This quotation is included in the Introduction to the Truth and Justice Commission Report of Mauritius, Volume 1, written by Professor Alexander Boraine, who chaired the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius.

“This Commission will pave the way to reconciliation, social justice and national unity through the process of re-establishing the historical truth. It is the legitimate expectation of everyone to know our true history. It is only after we have been faced with this reality that we can consolidate unity in our country. It is important therefore that we recognise our past history and lay that past to rest so that we can move on to reconciliation, justice and national unity.” (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011)

As the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission gave rise to many legacy projects intended to acknowledge the injustices of the past, similarly, the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius’ principal recommendation was for the establishment of a Museum of Slavery. With the realities of the lives and livelihoods of the formerly oppressed and marginalised addressed through these commissions, it is important to ensure that the projects offer real ways of addressing and acknowledging the past truthfully, whilst looking toward a better and more just future.

The creation of a museum with the goal of achieving an accurate representation of the truth is a complex multi-faceted challenge that requires careful and deep analysis of the many factors that are driving its creation.

In Summary

The literature consulted outlines Ashworth’s Model of Heritage Construction in Multi-cultural Societies which acts as the principal theoretical framework for this study. I have analysed how these models are applicable in the Mauritian situation and how these models in conjunction with the political construct of the country have guided heritage construction Mauritius in the last 20+ years.

The workings of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, Intangible Heritage Convention and UNESCO Slave Route Project are explained, contextualising the framework of Heritage construction for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum.

The Creole population of Mauritius, its cultural expression and historical marginalisation are investigated and discussed. This leads to a discussion on heritage, politics and reconciliation in Africa and the important role that museums can play in this process. This chapter, therefore, sets up the conceptual framework within which the Intercontinental Slavery Museum has been realised.

CHAPTER 3: Heritage Construction in Mauritius

Mauritius, being a former French and British colony had not until the late 1990s made any significant changes to its pre-independence heritage program. The majority of the heritage sites in Mauritius until then, largely related to colonial times, and were not representative of the Mauritian population (Calaon and Forest, 2018, Miles, 1999). The Mauritian Government engaged with the UNESCO World Heritage Program in 1994.

This Chapter, with reference to the information discussed in the previous two Chapters, elaborates on how heritage has been constructed in the country historically and how this has evolved in the last 20+ years. The history and political constructs of the country and their influences on its modern heritage construction in collaboration with UNESCO are explored.

This Chapter concludes with the recommendations of the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission of 2009 for the establishment of a new Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Port Louis. The execution of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum is discussed in Chapter 4.

Heritage and Globalisation

Labadi and Long describe how, post 1970, the world moved from an age dominated by industrial development into the current age of globalisation. This era has been characterised by multi-national organisations and multi-lateral institutions, that is inherently an age of multi-cultural understanding. Labadi and Long describe how culture is both shaped by the globalisation phenomenon as it shapes it (Labadi and Long, 2010).

In this globalised age, where cultures are being lost as societies adapt to global norms and popular culture, the protection of cultural heritage has become increasingly critical. This growing awareness has contributed to the success of the UNESCO World Heritage Program and its role in the recognition of the value of cultural heritage. The UNESCO World Heritage Program has proven as effective in promoting the United Nation's goals of peace, international cooperation and cultural respect (Labadi and Long, 2010).

Labadi and Long (2010) describe colonialism as a form of globalisation, that the world has become increasingly aware of the need to overcome. This acknowledgement has raised awareness of the diverse cultures of the world and has contributed to the success of the UNESCO World Heritage Program. The drive to ensure the World Heritage List is inclusive and diverse, has opened doors globally, for the conservation of cultural heritage. It has highlighted the use of cultural heritage as a resource that can be marketed to all in a globalised world where tourism is no longer a phenomenon exclusive to rich Western nations (Labadi and Long, 2010).

The Growth of Heritage Awareness in Mauritius

After Mauritian Independence in 1968 there was raised interest in identity and heritage in the country. Initiatives to cultivate a post-colonial national identity were locally driven by both political and patriotic forces. As a result of this new raised awareness, and aligned with the political construct outlined in the constitution of the Republic of Mauritius, places linking the different population groups with their origins, became tools in the forging of Mauritian group identities (Swift, 2007, Calaon and Forest, 2018).

The forces of globalisation have altered the economic drivers in Mauritius, and these have needed to evolve. Owing to the loss of subsidies in the agricultural (mostly sugar) and textile sectors new areas of growth have risen to prominence. Aligned with global trends, Mauritius today offers financial and business services. The country also has an active tourism sector and property development, largely on former sugar estate land, is a significant economic contributor (Hurnath, 2014).

Mauritius, over the last two decades, has re-positioned itself as a financial hub, strategically placed between Africa and Asia. According to Hurnath, heritage was seen as an opportunity that could both safeguard the cultural and architectural heritage of the nation, and potentially effective way to promote Mauritius as a cultural tourism destination (Hurnath, 2014).

Mauritius and the UNESCO World Heritage Program

Globalisation and the need to find new ways to generate economic growth were factors that influenced Mauritius' engagement with the UNESCO World Heritage Program. The growth of international tourism and the interest in the preservation of cultural heritage that accompanied globalisation provided the necessary impetus for Mauritius to move ahead with the formalisation and diversification of its cultural heritage program. Heritage in the country had previously been focused on its French colonial history with very little acknowledgement of slavery and indenture, two systems of labour that profoundly changed the cultural heritage of the country (Hurnath, 2014).

Mauritius joined the UNESCO World Heritage Program in 1994, thereby formally committing to safeguard its cultural heritage within the UNESCO framework. With this objective, the National Heritage Fund of Mauritius was established. The United Nations' identification of, amongst many other problems, the vulnerability to the loss of cultural heritage in small island developing states, led to the development of a United Nations program specifically tailored to the needs of these small island developing states in the 1990s. The UNESCO Small Island Developing States Program offered support and incentives in the development of cultural heritage projects in conjunction with UNESCO and was an important catalyst in Mauritius' development and inscription of its two World Heritage Sites (Hurnath, 2014, UNESCO, 2007).

The global awareness of the need for protection of cultural heritage along with the need to find new avenues of economic activity were therefore important drivers in the decision of the Government of Mauritius to engage with the UNESCO World Heritage Program. The support offered by UNESCO with its Small Island Developing States Program enabled this engagement to take place.

The World Heritage Sites Of Mauritius

The Aapravasi Ghat

Aapravasi Ghat means "landing place of immigrants" in Hindi. The Aapravasi Ghat site was the place of arrival in Mauritius of over 450 000 indentured labourers who arrived and remained in Mauritius or transited through Mauritius between the 1830s to the mid 1920s (Figures 5 and 7). The migrants were mainly from India, but there were also people of Chinese, Malagasy, Mozambican and Arabic origins, and other nationalities amongst the

arrivals (UNESCO, 2016, Addison and Hazareesingh, 1999, Vaughan, 2005). Prior to its use as a landing place for indentured labourers, archeological evidence of an early port slipway (Figure 6), suggests that the site was probably a landing place for those who were brought to Mauritius and enslaved (Mungur-Medhi, 2016).

The immigration depot, minimally used after the formal end of the indenture program in the 1930s, was abandoned in 1960 after a cyclone rendered the minimally functioning site inoperable. Thereafter, the records of the immigrants that had been kept at the immigration depot were left to the elements as the remains of the depot fell into disrepair. The site, at this time, held no particular profile of importance within the mind of the average Mauritian (Swift, 2007)

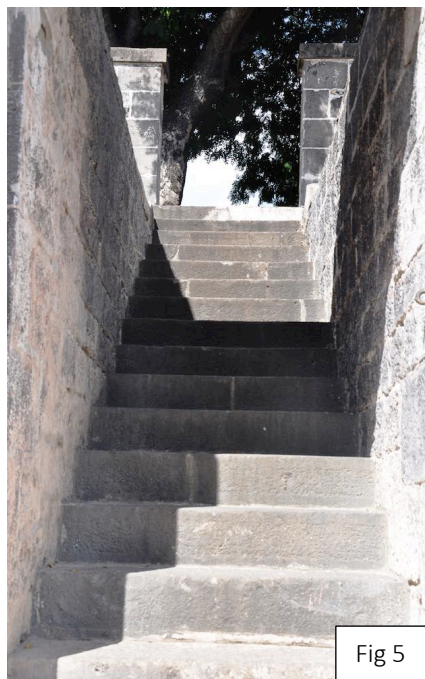


Fig 5

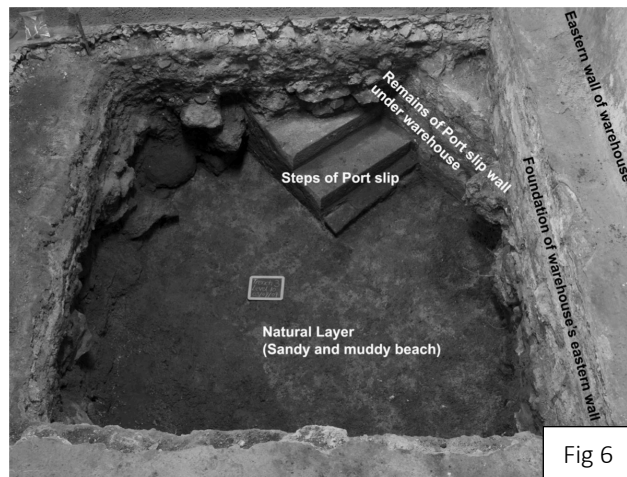


Fig 6

Figure 5: The 16 steps that mark the Indentured labourers point of entry to Mauritius. (Photograph: Author)

Figure 6: The port slip that pre-dates the immigration depot suggesting an earlier landing places where the enslaved arrived in Mauritius (Mungur-Medhi, 2016)

Heritage Advocacy for Aapravasi Ghat

Mr. Beekrumsing Ramlallah, a member of parliament at the time of Mauritian independence in 1968, launched a campaign through the newspapers to educate the population on the national heritage significance of the remains of the immigration depot complex. Ramlallah drew awareness to the need to preserve both the physical built remains and the associated memories, a process described by Kalman as “heritage advocacy” (Kalman, 2014). The advocacy campaign was timeous in the context of growing post-colonial awareness of national identity in Mauritius. In 1970 Ramlallah was able to persuade the Mauritian Government to include a visit to the immigration depot into the itinerary of Ms. Indira Gandhi, then the Indian Prime Minister, on her visit to the island. This official visit raised the profile of the immigration depot, and its ties with India, in Mauritian consciousness (UNESCO, 2016).

Ramlallah ensured that the records on the site, which had been abandoned in 1960 after it was devastated by a cyclone, were transferred to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute on the island for safe keeping. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute, opened in 1976, was itself a post-colonial nation building initiative to recognise the Mauritians of Indian origin and their culture (Forest, 2012).

Ramlallah continued with his advocacy campaign for the immigration depot to be formally acknowledged. In 1978 a ceremony of commemoration of the original arrivals, acknowledging the hardships they encountered, was held at the site (UNESCO, 2016). This ceremony has subsequently become an annual commemoration. Since 2001 the arrival of the indentured labourers has been marked by a public holiday on 2 November, with traditional prayers and wreath laying at Aapravasi Ghat by the Prime Minister. Further commemorative activities and functions take place, all focusing on the first arrivals in Mauritius under the system of indenture. According to Swift the aims of the public holiday are more politically than heritage driven (Swift, 2007, UNESCO, 2016).

The Road to the Inscription of Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage List

The Mauritian political construct as defined in the Constitution of the Country, has over the past five decades, sporadically precipitated protests within the country. Protest action against the socio-economic milieu of the Creoles of Mauritius, re-surfaced in 1999. This unrest and riot action was in response to the death in police custody of a popular Creole singer whose lyrics openly addressed the inequalities between the different ethnic groups in the country. The singer, Kaya, questioned the political construct of the country and suggested that all Mauritians were of 'mixed heritage'. In the aftermath of these riots public discourse was reported within the student community suggesting that the Indo-Mauritian Community had built the country as opposed to the Afro-Mauritian community who were perceived to have hampered progress in the views of some. This public discourse affirmed that the stigma associated with slavery remained (Swift, 2007, Hurnath, 2014).

Through this protest action, aimed at the Indo-Mauritians, the Creole community voiced their perceived marginalisation and the dominance of the Indo-Mauritian community in the country. In a politically driven move, to both acknowledge the heritage of the two major population groups and with the aim of easing political tensions, both Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape were earmarked by the government as heritage resources for development (Swift, 2007, Boswell, 2006).

Aapravasi Ghat, a National Monument since 1987, and re-named from the derogatory 'Coolie Ghat' in 1989, was renovated in 1994 with the assistance of the Indian Government. In 2001 the Aapravasi Trust Fund was established to manage the site with a view to inscribing it on the World Heritage List. The same year, 2 November was declared a public holiday, marking the date of the arrival of the first indentured labourers (UNESCO, 2016).

The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage List inscription in 2006 was under criteria (vi), a site "directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic or literary works of outstanding universal significance" (UNESCO, 2016)

The World Heritage List inscribed Aapravasi Ghat site today is 1640m² in area and comprises approximately 30% of the area of the original immigration depot. The UNESCO defined and

legislated buffer zone that provides a context for the site measures 289 000m², and extends inland of the motorway encompassing central Port Louis (Allam and Newman, 2018).

The site is bordered by a motorway on one side and lesser subsidiary tarred roads on two sides. The fourth side borders the Trou Fanfaron wharf promenade, reclaimed land that abuts the Trou Fanfaron harbour basin. The partial remains of the immigration depot comprise the original gateway and 16 steps used by the immigrants when disembarking after their long sea voyage (Figure 5). The original hospital block of the depot remains and has been restored (Figure 7). There are also the incomplete remains of the ablutions and shelters provided for the immigrants on their arrival. Part of one of the courtyard spaces remains.

The hospital block (Figure 7), restored between 2004-2010 with the aid of the extensive archival records of the site dated from 1864-1866. The materials and techniques used in the restoration were authentic – based on the information provided in the archival records. All restoration undertaken at this time was guided by the international standards outlined by UNESCO and its affiliate the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (UNESCO, 2016).



Figure 7: The Renovated Aapravasi Ghat Hospital Block dated 1773 (Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, 2016)

Heritage Advocacy for the Inscription of Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List

At the time that the Aapravasi Ghat nomination dossier was being prepared for the World Heritage List, ethnic tensions in Mauritius were high. In 2000, the Franco-Mauritian politician, Mr. Berenger understanding the root of the dissatisfaction, began to raise awareness around the Le Morne cultural landscape, a site of relevance and importance to some Mauritians who were descended from enslaved people. As a result of the Berenger campaign the profile of Le Morne Cultural Landscape, as with Aapravasi Ghat previously, was raised in the minds of many Mauritians. Resources were consequently made available by the Government to pursue knowledge and create heritage with the Le Morne Site and investigate its inscription on the WHL (Swift, 2007).

The Mountain of Le Morne (Figure 8), to some, remains symbolic of the freedom of the enslaved people of Mauritius. The intangible values represented by the mountain are closely tied to freedom for the descendants of those enslaved. Le Morne mountain was a place of refuge for enslaved people who escaped, and to their descendants, it remains representative of their resistance to the system of slavery (Bakker and Odendaal, 2008).

The physical mountain provided a place of refuge for enslaved people who had run away in its caves and ravines, as well as being a place that could sustain life. The mountain is host to plants with medicinal properties: the traditional uses of these plants, according to oral histories, are part of the folklore, and intangible cultural heritage of the place. The produce from the lagoons that surround the mountain are also life-supporting, and the cultural practices associated with fishing have been intrinsic to the people of Le Morne Village for over two centuries. These attributes combine together powerfully into a place with deep significance to those whose histories are entwined with the mountain (Bakker and Odendaal, 2008).

Le Morne's inscription on the World Heritage List as with Aapravasi Ghat, was under criteria (iv) "it is directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas or with beliefs, with artistic or literary works of outstanding universal significance".

The inscription of Le Morne under the above criteria was supported by:

- Criterion (iii) "it bears unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization which is living, or which has disappeared". This criterion acknowledges the importance of the ancestors.
- Criterion (iv) "to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stages in human history" (Bakker and Odendaal, 2008)



Figure 8: Photo by Author



Figure 9: Photo by Author

Figure 8: Looking Southward toward the le Morne Cultural landscape

Figure 9: Sculptural detail from the Slave Route Monument at Le Morne Cultural Landscape (opened in 2009), commemorating those who fell to their deaths rather than risk recapture. In 2008 Le Morne Cultural Landscape became the second inscription by the Government of Mauritius on the UNESCO World Heritage List. At the time of Le Morne's inscription, 1 February was declared an annual national holiday to mark the abolition of slavery. The Le

Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site has been packaged as representing those who are descended from the enslaved. The separation of the two World Heritage Sites on the World Heritage List to ensure that the heritage of different population groups are separately and equally celebrated, is a constructed narrative that is, according to Swift and others, not necessarily in accordance with the perceived importance of the site to the occupants of the area or to those who are descended from enslaved people or indentured labourers (Swift, 2007, Boswell, 2008, Boswell, 2006).

The UNESCO World Heritage listings in Mauritius have been a source of pride for the country and have theoretically raised the profile of Mauritius as a cultural tourism destination. The two listed sites have been selected to represent the two main population groups of Mauritius, the descendants of enslaved people and the descendants of indentured labourers. The rationale of the Government in listing both sites has been politically driven with support from the tourism sector. The Aapravasi Ghat, within its densely developed and populated urban context, provides a greater challenge in fulfilling the UNESCO criteria to conserve its buffer zone than the relative simplicity of the largely undeveloped buffer zone Le Morne Cultural Landscape.

The Mauritian authorities in collaboration with UNESCO worked to construct heritage resources of Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne cultural landscape, for commercial and political purposes. Through this process the local significance of these places was not necessarily fully acknowledged. As a result heritage presented, (or omitted), was contested by some (Bakker and Odendaal, 2008). The Aapravasi Ghat site was packaged as a place of spiritual importance to the Indo-Mauritian community who had built the country through hard work, dedication and sacrifice (Swift, 2007). The Le Morne Cultural Landscape was packaged as being representative of the maroonage aspect of slavery (Bakker and Odendaal, 2008)

Mesckell (2018) describes how the success of the UNESCO World Heritage Program has, in her view, allowed it to lose sight of some of its original intentions. The commercial benefits that countries with World Heritage Sites derive in increased revenues from tourism have made the drive for inscription a competitive process, where the heritage being preserved has not necessarily benefitted, and has been commodified with associated losses (Mesckell, 2018, Mesckell et al., 2015).

In line with the global awareness of the importance of the preservation of cultural heritage and the increased potential it offered in the tourism sector the Mauritian authorities moved ahead with their revived cultural heritage initiatives. The goal of the Mauritian Government was for both Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The prestige associated with two World Heritage List inscriptions as well as the potential appeasement of political tensions and increased tourist offerings drove the process of seeking these inscriptions. The dissonance in the narratives presented and their divisive potential, was in the view of some, largely disregarded in the drive for inscription. (Boswell, 2006, Hurnath, 2014, Swift, 2007, Bakker and Odendaal, 2008).

This goal allowed for the official acknowledgement of the heritage of the two major population groups on the island whilst simultaneously these sites could be marketed as tourist destinations. The universal phenomena of slavery and indenture were not specific to

Mauritius and therefore the UNESCO program, rooted in universal values was considered a relevant vehicle for the acknowledgement of these systems in the country. UNESCO World Heritage policies reinforce cultural differences and this alignment with the Mauritian political construct was fortuitous (Calaon and Forest, 2018). This approach raised questions within Mauritius and a new and the opportunity was created within the heritage space within Mauritius for a new and more inclusive approach to Mauritian heritage. The Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius was formed to address the past of the country and tasked with finding a way for all Mauritians, regardless of origin to be acknowledged.

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum creates the opportunity to represent all those who were involved with slavery in Mauritius, regardless of their designated population group. Slavery was a global phenomenon at the time and Mauritius was a connection point in the Indian Ocean Slave Trade. Slavery denied the enslaved their cultural identity, and the museum is an opportunity where these identities can be revealed. Both slavery and indenture required migration, the systems were locally and globally comparable and are of universal importance. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum is an opportunity to reveal the multilayered phenomena associated with migration that have shaped modern Mauritius

The United Nations Decade for People of African Descent

According to the official goals outlined by the Concept Document for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, the UNESCO goals of the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) will be supported by the creation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum (Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, 2019). The decade was declared with the United Nations Resolution 68/237 of December 2014. (UNESCO, 2022a).

The decade was declared in response to the global need to fight racism. The United Nations deemed it necessary to allocate a decade to this project as its member states would require sufficient time to achieve their objectives. The new Intercontinental Slavery Museum is one of these such projects.

On their website UNESCO describe the objectives for the decade that require time for their execution (UNESCO, 2022a).

- Recognition of slavery
- Justice for the slaves and their descendants
- Development to alleviate the plight of those whose lives have been impacted by the system of slavery.

The goals of the decade:

- Eradication of discrimination
- The Acknowledgement and understanding of African cultures

The UNESCO web page outlines the reasons for the declaration of the decade of action and how the racial prejudices rooted in slavery and colonialism will persist if action is not taken to address these issues. The legacies of colonialism and slavery are deeply entrenched globally and as a result require time to address meaningfully. The legacy of slavery has trapped many communities that are descended from slaves in a vicious circle of poverty and lack of opportunity. This reality is evident in the Creole population of Mauritius. The United Nations initiative is aimed at reversing this cycle through education. The Intercontinental Slavery

Museum, a destination on the UNESCO slave route, aims to address these goals and objectives of the UNESCO Decade for People of African Descent.

The Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius and the Intercontinental Slavery Museum:

The Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission Act was constituted in 2009. The Act was in response to continuing ethnic tensions in the country. As outlined, social dissatisfaction had re-surfaced in the late 1990s, and the consequent need to acknowledge and remember the past through concrete action became more pressing. The Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius was created as a mechanism of transitional justice, uncovering historical social injustices to realise a more just society (Croucher et al., 2017).

The objectives of the commission were to assess the consequences of indenture and slavery from the first settlement of Mauritius up to the present day. The commissioners gathered information through hearings of personal testimonies from Mauritians. It was thereafter the role of the commission to assimilate this information and formulate written recommendations, on how to address the past. The hearings took place between 2009-2011 and a six-volume report was produced. The report covered the histories of slavery and indenture and their ongoing legacies. Amongst other sources of information, archival material, oral testimonies and genealogical information all contributed to the evidence collected (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011).

The principal recommendation of the Truth and Justice Commission was for the memorialisation of slavery and indenture. Other recommendations of the commission revolved around the socio-economic conditions of those impacted by slavery and indenture, such as housing, education, literacy, skills development, and land. At the time that these recommendations were made in 2011, Mauritius already had two World Heritage List inscribed World Heritage Sites. Both Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape had, and continued to be, contested spaces (Bakker and Odendaal, 2008, Boswell, 2006). The UNESCO policies that drove the inscriptions of the two World Heritage Sites fitted well with the ethnic political construct of the country and therefore the inscriptions may have inadvertently exacerbated existing ethnic tensions within the country (Calaon and Forest, 2018, Hurnath, 2014).

Dissonance in the heritage presented through the World Heritage Sites, such as a lack of acknowledgement of the social consequences of the historical labour systems of the country were issues that, in the view of the Truth and Justice Commission, the country needed to address. The Truth and Justice Commission, had, according to Croucher (2017), extracted a version of Mauritian History that could be accepted as being accurate, this history needed to be communicated publicly through the recommendations of the commission, the Intercontinental Slavery Museum (Croucher et al., 2017).

The Intercontinental Museum of Slavery was seen as a way that the reality of slavery in Mauritius, and the role of the country in the international slave trade could be fully investigated, recorded, and communicated. The museum was seen as a tool of transitional justice that would acknowledge the reality of slavery and its consequences in Mauritius to this day (Abungu et al., 2020).

The recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission were slow to be implemented and there was considerable community pressure, such as protest action, to realise the museum. The pressures were driven by the desire, especially of the Creole community, to understand the shared history of the people of Mauritius. (Croucher et al., 2017, Abungu et al., 2020).

Although the Government of Mauritius formalised the decision to set up the Intercontinental Museum of Slavery in 2016, progress in its realisation was slow. In 2019, campaigns and marches were organised by the Catholic Church and Creole community, highlighting the slow implementation of the decision. The Creole community in Mauritius in association with the Catholic Church mobilised for the establishment of the museum and eventually a temporary exhibition was opened in the Military Hospital Complex in 2019 (Abungu et al., 2020). The Military Hospital Complex was chosen as the site for the Museum as it was built by enslaved people and when sick they were also treated in the hospital. Central Port Louis is also closely associated with slavery and much of the historic urban fabric of the port area was constructed with slave labour (Teelock, 2019).

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum, although officially open since 2019 has been largely closed to the public. During its time of closure, the site continued to host exhibitions and gatherings of commemoration for select invitees only. The Covid 19 pandemic effectively closed Mauritius to tourism for two years, and this has impacted on the functioning of the museum for the local and international market. A renovation project commenced at The Military Hospital Complex, in 2021. These renovations were intended to allow the complex to function as the Intercontinental Slavery Museum. (There are important questions to be raised regarding, the techniques and methods employed in renovating rather than restoring this historic building complex; however, these are outside the scope of this study.)

Croucher et al. (2017) state that it is debatable whether the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius was a success. Although the process was expansive, in that great deal of testimonies were heard and the reports produced were voluminous, the recommendations of the commission, have been slow to be implemented. The public response was one of frustration, particularly within the Creole Community as the Slavery Museum recommended by the Commission is eagerly anticipated (Abungu et al., 2020, Croucher et al., 2017).

In the pursuit of a sense of national unity, uncovering and revealing of the “true”, (or plausibly true) Mauritian history was deemed necessary by the Mauritian Government and hence their establishment of the Truth and Justice Commission in 2009 (Croucher et al., 2017). The ethnically divided approach to politics in the country as defined in the constitution, is evidenced in many facets of Mauritian society, including the two Mauritian World Heritage List inscriptions. The Mauritian approach to heritage construction in the country from 1994-2008, in association with the UNESCO World Heritage Program, can be seen as an example of Ashworth’s Pillar model as described in Chapter 2.

Mauritian heritage construction has traditionally been built around the heritage of the different population groups of Mauritius. This process has continued in the association of the country with the UNESCO World Heritage Program. Given that the UNESCO World Heritage Program is concerned with Outstanding Universal Value and such attributes are deemed

necessary for inscription of a site on the World Heritage List, it is pertinent to ask if these sites have national resonance within Mauritius. Understanding the case study building, its history and societal role over its 280+ year life span enables my answering this question.

An understanding of the reasons for the establishment of the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius and its recommendations give insight into how the country hopes to address its past. Similarly, a deeper understanding of the way heritage has been approached in the country in association with UNESCO in the inscription of their two World Heritage Sites is illustrative of heritage construction in the country in association with UNESCO prior to the Truth and Justice Commission.

The Truth and Justice Commission revealed that the social legacies of the systems of slavery and indenture are not necessarily clear cut and the definitions in of the different population groups in Mauritian Constitution may not be truly representative of the social realities of the country (Boswell, 2014). Understanding the history of the Military Hospital Complex and its role in Mauritian Society across all population groups, colonial administrations and in post-colonial times will reveal the multi-layered histories of the building. This study will assess if this aspect of the history of the complex and its relevance to all sectors of Mauritian society have been addressed in its incarnation as the Intercontinental Slavery Museum.

Comparative Museums Representing Slavery

The representation of slavery in museums in Africa is often associated with tourism. Examples of this are evident in West Africa, such as Elmina, Ghana and Goree Island, Senegal, both prominent embarkation points in the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Worden, 2009).

Awareness of slavery in South Africa is low. The practice was not acknowledged under the apartheid regime. The need for the acknowledgement of slavery became more vocal in South Africa in the 1990s, in line with the raised awareness in Mauritius, both of these events are associated with the launch of the UNESCO Slave Route Project in 1994. The UNESCO Slave route project was activated in South Africa in 1997 and the Slave Lodge Museum was launched in 1998 in the former Cultural History Museum (North, 2017)

The legacy of slavery and the truths around slavery in South Africa have been dealt with in this museum, but there remains scope for deeper analysis of slavery in South Africa and its legacy. There are numerous privately curated museums and displays that acknowledge slavery in the Western Cape, some that engage with the descendants of those who were enslaved (North, 2017, Worden, 2009)

As with the Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Mauritius, there is great scope in South Africa to explore the legacy of slavery more fully. Freedom Park in Pretoria, a legacy project that opened in 2006 also broadly explores slavery in Africa. The narrative presented at Freedom Park speaks of the removal of African people and their journey into slavery, rather than the reality of slavery in South Africa. A deeper and more specific history of the legacy of the system in the country remains a missing voice (North, 2017). The concept document for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum speaks of the need for a deep analysis of the phenomenon that was slavery, it appears that there are in place similar initiatives in all places that were affected by this atrocity.

Summary

Global and local factors have merged to create the opportunity for the development of the cultural heritage program of Mauritius in collaboration with the UNESCO Small Island Developing States and World Heritage Programs. Local political forces have further shaped this initiative. The inscription of The Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List have both been great achievements for the country but have not been uncontested.

The political appeasement hoped for in the listings has not necessarily been achieved. The Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius in 2009, has further investigated the legacies of indenture and slavery and recommended the establishment of an Intercontinental Museum of Slavery in Port Louis. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum is intended to more fully present a plausible version of Mauritian history that acknowledges the history of the country and the cultural roots of a large percentage of the Mauritian population truthfully.

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum is intended to be a positive contribution to social justice. It aims to provide a way for the country to achieve national unity and reconciliation through the acknowledgement of its past, and the pain and suffering endured by those who were enslaved in Mauritius.

Chapter 3 has explained the history of heritage construction in Mauritius and how the heritage program has been constructed in association with UNESCO over the last two decades. Chapter 4 investigates the Military Hospital Complex specifically. The history of the building complex, its uses and meanings through time and spanning different administrations are discussed.

The newly opened museum is discussed, with reference to the frameworks and mechanisms that have informed heritage construction in Mauritius as discussed in Chapters 1-3. The focus of Chapter 4 is on formulating an answer to the research question posed. The museum is discussed and analysed to establish how the approach to the valorisation of heritage in Mauritius has changed over the last two decades and how these changes, if any, are reflected in the museum today.

CHAPTER 4: The Biography of the Military Hospital Complex



Figure 10: Plan of the Town Nord-Ouest (former and future Port Louis) in Île de France (later Mauritius), 1785. Source, National Archives, Kew, London. The Military Hospital Complex is framed in red.

Early Port Louis: The Ideas Influencing the French Colonists When Developing the Military Hospital Complex in Port Louis.

In 1735 the Frenchman Mahé de Labourdonnais, who had been a trader in French India, was appointed as the Governor of Mauritius and Réunion (Vaughan, 2005). The French colonial vision of a successful colony at the time, was of a prosperous settlement that was driven by trade between Europe and the East. The direct consequences of this trade were the development of prestigious ports and settlements that reflected well on their empire. Vaughan (2005) outlines how the aesthetic of the trading houses of the Bengal coast of French India in Pondicherry, were influential in the early development of Mauritius under Labourdonnais.

In addition to the desire for the towns to be portrayed as places of international stature, Wright describes how the French, viewed their colonial outposts as good opportunities to explore architectural and urban design ideas that could be applied in France once they had been tested experimentally in the colonies. The colonial developments also provided opportunities to express the French colonist's perceived importance and cultural superiority (Wright, 1991). The Military Hospital, a building of significance in its siting, design, size, execution and through its essential function, and was an influential component in developing Port Louis. (Figure 10) (Wright, 1991, Wright, 1987).

The French colonial territories allowed law and policy makers more authority than they were permitted in France, and Wright describes how these outposts, particularly in Indochina, Madagascar and Morocco were seen as laboratories of urban design. The colonies presented different conditions to the metropole, but within the parameters of the design principles, experimentation with urban and architectural resolution took place (Wright, 1987).

The French adopted a policy of assimilation in their early colonies, including Mauritius. Their approach was to bring civilization and French culture to their overseas domains. This policy was known as 'mission civilisatrice', a program of civilising their colonial territories (Wright, 1987). When French colonial policy changed from one of assimilation to one of association in the late 1800s, Mauritius was under the rule of the British and was therefore not affected by these new policies. Mauritius remained noticeably French in its culture, well after the end of the French period, owing to the commercial rather than overtly cultural nature of British rule in Mauritius.

Urban planning and architecture were frequently used as forms of social control and power in colonial Africa (Njoh, 2009). The Military Hospital complex in Mauritius was built by the French colonists and was a dominating building expressing the French wealth and hence their power and control in Mauritius. The prominent position of the complex was central and integral to the new town. The French did not have an indigenous Mauritian population to control, as the island was uninhabited at the time of their arrival. However, they brought a group of enslaved workers with them, who, with the colonists, formed the nucleus of the population (Toussaint, 1936).

Detailed analysis of the built fabric of the Military Hospital Complex, reveal evidence of trans-cultural exchange in its realisation. The building, contrary to initial impressions, is not merely a neo-classical French building. The necessity to utilise local labour, materials, and locally inspired detailed solutions in places, ensured the building differed materially and in detailed resolution from its European prototypes. This adaptive process is described in an analysis of the development of colonial tropical architectural forms in the British colonies, by Chang and King (2011). Similarly, Carey describes the Military Hospital Complex as a creolised product owing to its foreign locale and the many cultural influences contributing to the final built product (Fig 11,12 and 22). The multi-cultural influences are important factors in the modern choice of the building complex to house the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, an initiative intended to represent the cultural contributions and heritages of Mauritians of African origin (Carey, 2018a, Carey, 2016).

The Military Hospital of the French Colonial Period

The Military Hospital Complex was completed in 1740 and is the oldest surviving building in Mauritius. It is centrally sited between the modern-day mixed-use Caudan Waterfront complex of Port Louis and the historic Trou Fanfaron harbour basin. It was, at the time of its construction, and remains, at the heart of the port and town (Figures 3,10,13,14,16,17).

The complex was built within an area surrounded by the original French fortifications, some of the earliest structures of the town, which are no longer in existence. The earliest timber structures of Port Louis that predated the hospital have also not survived (Toussaint, 1936). The siting of the hospital was locally controversial at the time of its construction as the port

was an insalubrious place for a hospital, but the convenience of its location and quick access for the sick arriving by sea ultimately dictated its centralised location and influential role in the town and country (Figures 3 and 10) (Teelock, 2019).



Figure 11: Photograph by Author



Figure 12: Photograph by Author

Figures 11 and 12 illustrate the precarious state of the building and its urgent need for conservation. The distinctive local coral stone walls are evident, a material is specific to Mauritius.

The French colonists ensured that the hospital complex was constructed to the highest possible standards. Labourdonnais commissioned the construction of a purpose made canal, precisely designed, to supply fresh water to the hospital complex, this was evidence of the advanced engineering techniques of the French. The large and technologically advanced Hospital Complex signified the wealth and status of the French East India Company (Vaughan, 2005, Toussaint, 1936). The position of the building at the heart of the port as well as its courtyard configuration enabled it to function well as a natural meeting and trading place in the town, thus ensuring its commercial success. The hospital building became symbolic of Port Louis' status, and it acted as a natural prototype for the colonial buildings of Mauritius (Stanford University Department of Anthropology, 2012, Carey, 2016).

The symmetrical, rectilinear plan form and neo-classical architectural elements employed in the detailing, were ubiquitous throughout the French colonies of the era, and similar buildings exist in contemporaneous New Orleans and Saint-Louis Senegal. The construction of the building required the engagement of both enslaved labourers, some of whom possessed skills required in the completion of the work and imported artisans where additional capabilities and experience was required. The use of local materials and the diverse skills employed in executing the building, distinguish the Military Hospital Complex built fabric as a hybridised local product, an amalgamation of multiple influences (Carey, 2016, Carey, 2018a, Teelock, 2019).



Figure 13: Plan du Port de Sureté. Map of Port Louis 1781. Source National Archives of Mauritius B1D.A3.4.10 The first three wings of the Military Hospital are framed in red.

Specialist artisans from Pondicherry in India were brought to Mauritius to mix and apply the argamasse waterproofing component of the Military Hospital Complex roof. Argamasse, a traditional Asian roof waterproofing compound, is a cementitious mixture of lime, sand, stone, and organic material that, when formulated, provides a good waterproof underlay for the tiled roof finish. Good waterproofing qualities are essential in a tropical climate such as that of Port Louis and it is logical that the colonists were prepared to import the skills to execute the work. Argamasse is an example of an imported building skill that was adopted in the early development of Port Louis and thereafter became part of the early building traditions of the country (Teelock, 2019).

Tropical hardwoods were also used in the buildings for fenestration, shutters and other accessories and architectural elements, lending material local elements to the buildings (Figure 11,22). The walls were constructed of neatly cut local coral and basalt blocks imbuing the building with a distinctive local character (Fig 11,12, 22). The combination of local materials and the building skills of artisans and enslaved labourers from diverse geographical locations, in a French colonial architectural form, together combine into a product that is unique to Mauritius (Carey, 2018b).

From its earliest days of the French colonial period, the Military Hospital Complex building was already a multi-cultural product. It was conceived and designed by the French colonists and built by their multi-cultural contingent of enslaved labour from diverse locations. The influences that contributed to the conception and realisation of the building have never been specific to a single sector of the Mauritian population. This embodied history becomes relevant when creating a modern Mauritian heritage resource from the building.

The Military Hospital Complex comprises four wings, one which was originally principally used as a grain store and general dealer. The remaining wings were mainly used as hospital wards

with slaves housed on the ground floor and colonists on the first floor. The buildings also housed Doctor's rooms, pharmacies, storage areas and apartments for medical staff. Labourdonnais' modular design of simple large multi-purpose spaces ensured its adaptability. Similarly, the modular design allowed the entire complex to be built in phases. Although the one wing of the central courtyard building, and the grain store were built by 1740 the remaining two wings completed the complex by 1787 according to the French archival records (Figure 13 and 16) (Teelock, 2019).

During the French period, the building functioned as a hospital for both the enslaved and free population. Within colonial administrations, the health of the colonists and their workforce of slaves was fundamentally important, without a healthy workforce the colonies would be doomed to failure (Wright, 1987). Scurvy was an ever-present danger for seafarers of the time and the hospital was tasked with addressing this scourge. An additional room for the stockpiling of foodstuffs was incorporated in the grain store wing of the complex. (Teelock, 2019). The early records of the hospital during the time of Labourdonnais' Governorship allude to the dietary solutions in place to ensure that all patients received adequate treatment and nutrition at the hospital (Toussaint, 1936).

The Military Hospital of the British Period:

During the British period, from 1810, the building continued to be used as a hospital. Although British interest in Mauritius was commercial, as with the French colonists, it was necessary for the new colonisers to maintain a healthy and productive population. The British used Mauritius as a refueling point along their trading route and did not take an interest in changing the culture, religious practices or linguistic choices of the colony (Maurer, 2015). This reality is evident in only practical changes having taken place to the building during this period such as alterations to accommodate additional officers, services, and kitchens. These are discussed in the temporary exhibition (Figures 26 and 27).

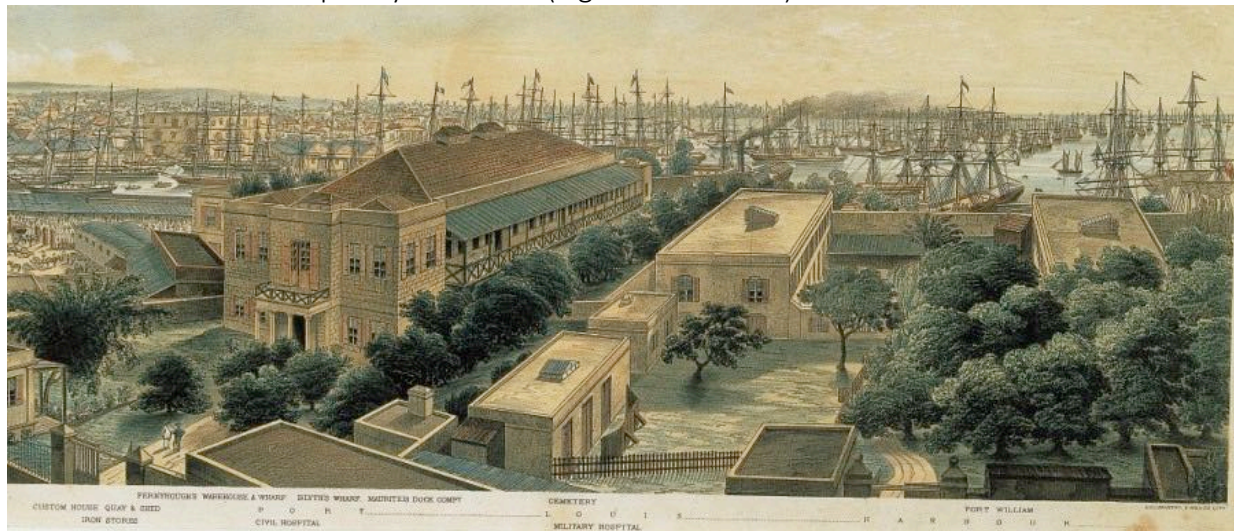


Figure 14: This painting of the complex in 1859 shows three of the four wings of the Military Hospital, the Hôpital de Noirs as labelled in Figure 10 (left). The working port is evident in the background (Le Mauricien, 2020)

Under the British, the hospital remained an important building, as it ensured that the health of the colonists and their labourers could be managed. Records in the Mauritian National Archives from the British period allude to the unsanitary conditions in Port Louis and the

need for a new hospital that was better suited to its function and sited in a healthier environment (Colonial Office of the United Kingdom, 1885, Governor of Mauritius, 1885).

This preoccupation with the need for a well-ventilated environment, evident in the archival record, is in keeping with the approach of the British throughout their colonies. The design of public buildings being influenced by the recommendations of Military Engineers and sanitation specialists to ensure a healthy environment (Chang and King, 2011).

The Mauritian National Archives contain correspondence from 1878 detailing the sale of hospital by the British Colonial Government to the War Department. The correspondence stipulates that the funds from this sale were to be used for the construction of a new hospital inland, sited in a healthier environment. The War Department thereafter sold the hospital to the private Arabian Dock Company in 1885/90 (Colonial Office of the United Kingdom 1878).

References to the unsanitary conditions of the hospital and the need for a new facility recur throughout the archival record on the building during this period (Toussaint, 1936, Governor of Mauritius, 1885, Colonial Office of the United Kingdom, 1885). The United Kingdom National Archives in London house architectural plans of some of the alterations and additions to the buildings during the British period when attempts were made to modernise the facilities for the hospital staff (British War Office Mauritius, 1865). An image from 1914 shows the grain store wing of the complex was in use as a cold store facility during which time it was under ownership of the Albion Dock Company (Figure 15) (Le Mauricien, 2020).



Figure 15: The Military Hospital, the Grain Store wing on the right with signage, as a Cold Storage Facility in 1914 (Le Mauricien, 2020)

Under British rule, the hospital remained as a functioning medical facility until the property was sold to private owners. The uses of the building complex under private ownership range from being a warehouse and cold storage facility to administrative buildings (Figure 15) (Teelock, 2019). At some stage during the late British period some parts of the complex were abandoned and fell into disrepair.

Therefore, the Military Hospital Complex under the British continued to accumulate associations with much of the early population of the country. The hospital remained a well-used building in central Port Louis. The nature of its hospital role for much of the British period affirms its central and essential role in the town at the time. These associations create

additional layers of history carried within the building fabric that relate to this period of its history.

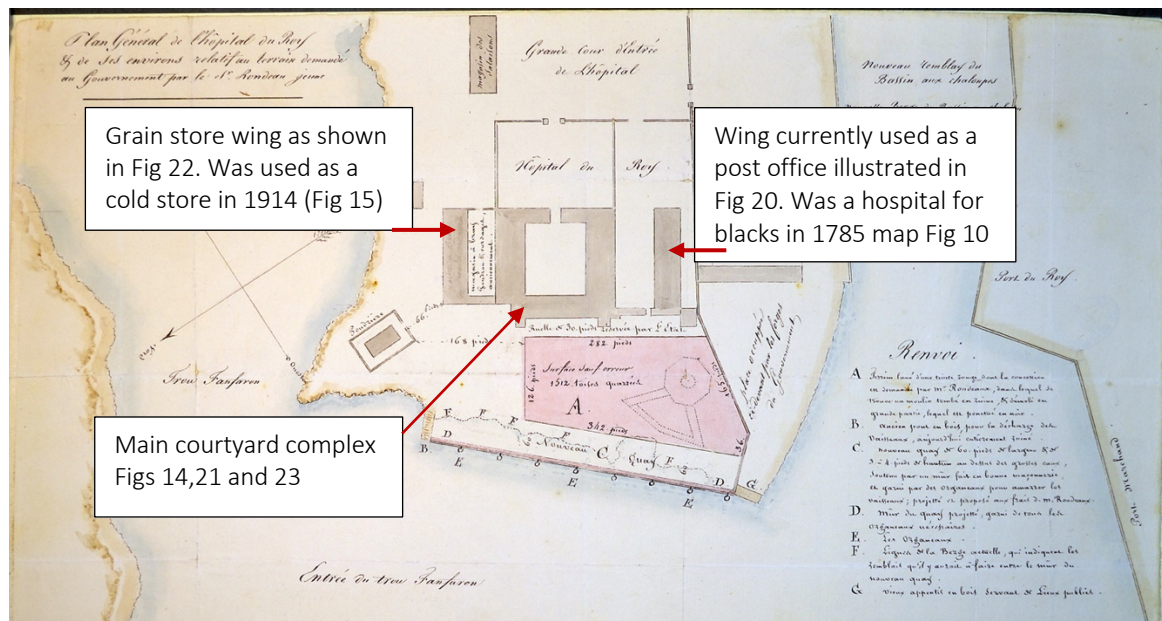


Figure 16: 1875 Plan of the Military hospital Complex held at the British National Archives WO 78 - 71 B

The Military Hospital Complex of Independent Mauritius

The Hospital Complex is sited on land currently owned by the Mauritius Ports Authority. From independence in 1968, until the Truth and Justice Commission recommendations of 2011, parts of the complex were used for administrative purposes by the Mauritian Government (Mauritius Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, 2019). The buildings have undergone a series of ad-hoc additions and modifications over time. These changes were mostly to install modern amenities such as parking, or to allow the building to function better as a place of administration.

These changes have generally been architecturally insensitive and have detracted from the authenticity of the historic complex, cluttering the aesthetic, and detracting from the simplicity of the building. Parts of the complex have been allowed to fall into an almost irreversible state of disrepair (Figures 11,12,19,20). The development of the port and town post-independence meant that the building complex was truncated from much of its original context by the construction of a dual carriageway motorway in the 1980s, precipitating the abandonment of the area (Figure 17, 18, 19).

The survival of the building complex to this day, indicates that it has been integral to the function of the town and has been considered important to Mauritius over that past 280+ years. The use potential and possibilities offered by the complex, however, have taken time to realise. The engagement of the Government of Mauritius with the UNESCO World Heritage Program, along with the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission have now, seemingly, come together to create opportunities for conservation of the complex along with valorisation of Mauritian heritage, for the local and global stage.

The Military Hospital in its Modern Urban Context

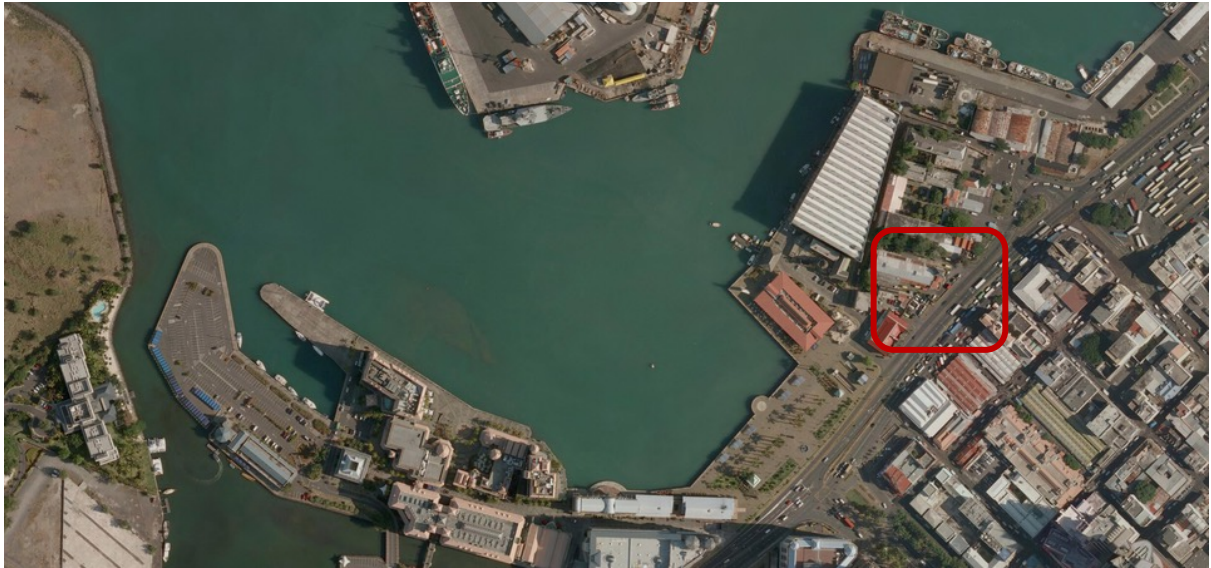


Figure 17: The Military hospital complex (red frame) within its modern urban context. Photograph: Mauritius Ministry of housing and Lands



Figure 18: The Military Hospital Complex within its urban context. Photograph L'Express



Figure 19: View of the Military hospital Complex from across the motorway, illustrating how urban development has truncated the complex from the urban fabric of Port Louis. Photo by Author



Figure 20: The wing of the hospital that was used as the Hôpital des Noirs (Fig 10) and is evident on the left in Fig 14. It now functions as part of the post office. This wing is constructed of local volcanic basalt rock. Photo by Author



Figure 21: The hospital as government administration buildings with ad-hoc upgrades, prior to renovation. The local basalt rock window surround details are clear in this image. Photograph, Le Mauricien (2020)



Figure 22: The grain store wing in a precarious state of repair. The local cut coral stone walls and tropical hardwood accessories are evident. The plastered French neo-classical cornice detail is also clear in this image. Photo by Author



Figure 23: A Modern Aerial View of the Complex showing the accumulation of ad-hoc additions of carports and storage facilities.(Le Mauricien, 2020).

The Military Hospital Complex as the Intercontinental Slavery Museum

The Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, a multidisciplinary Research Centre based at the University of Mauritius held a Slavery Museums Workshop in 2019 to debate issues around the realisation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum. Through the discussions held at this workshop and detailed in the publication produced by the workshop, it was agreed that the Military Hospital Complex was a suitable site for this museum as it is of historic significance and is an important building of early Mauritius. The workshop discussed the importance of the site being representative of the inter-cultural composition of the Mauritian population, and its suitability as being a place to facilitate cultural discovery, learning, remembrance for all Mauritians (Abungu et al., 2020).

In addition to being a suitable site from the perspective of its associations with the past, the building is in dire need of restoration, which is required for it to function as a public museum. The complex's central location in Port Louis allows it to dovetail with other attractions in the area such as the neighbouring Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site (representing the indentured labour program). Additionally, as noted in the Introduction to this analysis, the goals of the United Nations decade for People of African descent will be supported by the creation of this museum (Abungu et al., 2020).

The principal recommendation of the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius was to establish a museum of slavery in Port Louis. The Truth and Justice Commission envisaged the museum creating a space that could bring renewed visibility to the slave trade that took place in the Indian Ocean. The museum project was viewed by the Truth and Justice Commission as an initiative that would allow for the reality of the Indian Ocean slave trade to be exposed, understood, and acknowledged and through this process reconciliation and social justice could be achieved in Mauritius. The Commission envisaged the museum as being able to reveal and explore the common histories of Mauritians of African descent and create an awareness of these histories that could be accessed by all, both Mauritians and foreigners (Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, 2019).

Dr B Zimba of Edouardo Mondlane University in Maputo developed the concept for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum as a “site of conscience”. The museum was conceived as a place where the horrors of the slave trade could be communicated and remembered, but also where the diversity, cultural richness and contributions of Africans who were enslaved could be acknowledged and celebrated in Mauritius. This would allow Mauritians of African descent to know and understand more of their history, but also for their cultural identities to be acknowledged and celebrated in Mauritius. The label of ‘general population’, applied to the Creole in Mauritius could be defined and understood, allowing for acknowledgement of the cultural identities of the Mauritian Creole population to be defined. The museum was envisaged as an educational resource for the future of the country, with a place on the global stage (Harmon J et al., 2020).

The words of Dr B Zimba at the first slavery workshop in Mauritius in 2016:

“While remembering the history of slavery and slave trade, our memories tend to emphasise horrors, punishments and deaths, which are invariably connected with this tragic moment in both African and world history. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum will, indeed, bring several dimensions that are entrenched in the process of enslavement and traffic of human beings, particularly in the eastern coast of Africa from the seventeenth through to early twentieth centuries. We must obligatorily emphasise one particular feature of this Project: more than a wide range of artefacts, documents as well as modern ways of representing this aspect of African history, the Intercontinental Slavery Museum will be a reflection of African cultural heritage. By elevating the Museum into this dimension, the Project moves beyond the tendency of *victimizing* the history and historiography of slavery and slave trade. One important conceptual component of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum is to showcase not only African culture, but also the dynamics of this culture and how it was an indispensable aspect that helped to overcome this tragedy. An associated concept to this is that the museum views slavery and related processes as dynamic elements in building African culture. These two features are crucial and contribute to the uniqueness of this Project. At the same time, it looks forward to the upcoming generations, and in this perspective, the Intercontinental Slavery Museum is a highly relevant and genuine African educational Project.” (Harmon J et al., 2020)

This need for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum is further explained by various academics and heritage specialists in a short film, “Our Duty of Remembrance”, released by the Centre for Research on Indenture and Slavery of the University of Mauritius in 2019. The film describes how the system of slavery led to the indentured labour program on the abolition of slavery. A presenter describes how, during the period of slavery, a large and effectively free workforce was required in the sugar industry for it to be successful. The film explains how this practice during the period of slavery, led to the indentured labour program after the abolition of slavery. The interconnected nature of the systems of slavery and indenture and their legacy of a multi-cultural society in Mauritius is further explained in the film. The shared history of all Mauritians is emphasised in this production (Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, 2019).

The film presenters further explain how the museum is intended to serve as a place dedicated to the ancestry of the traditionally under-represented Mauritians of African origin. The museum is intended to factually convey the story of the different origins of these Mauritians. The experience of those who were brought to Mauritius and enslaved, being exposed will allow for understanding of the hardships experienced by these people. The ideals of the museum are for the cultural contributions of the enslaved to the country to be acknowledged. It is intended that through this process, the place of those descended from the enslaved, will be affirmed in Mauritian society. (Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, 2019).

The film explains the reasons for the creation of the museum in recognition of the cultural heritage and contributions of Mauritians of African origin to the country. It continues to elaborate on the shared history of all Mauritians and the interconnected nature of the systems of slavery and indenture. It appears that this message has been necessary within the post Truth and Justice Commission Mauritius, as those who are descended from the enslaved had been assigned to the “general population” group with its associated loss of cultural identity.

Another driving factor in the creation of the museum was to acknowledge and respond to the United Nations decade for People of African Descent. This museum is intended to create a space where the richness of African cultures can be showcased. This clear communication of the importance of African cultures and their contributions to Mauritian culture is intended to address the marginalisation of the Creole community of Mauritius and celebrate their achievements and allow their cultural heritage to be communicated (Harmon J et al., 2020).

There has, until recently, been a marked absence of the memorialisation of slavery within Mauritius, particularly in Port Louis. Port Louis bears tangible witness to slavery in many of its older buildings, such as the Military Hospital Complex. The creation of a museum within this historic complex is an opportunity to recognise the contributions to the country, both cultural and in physical labour, of the Mauritians of African origin (Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, 2019, Teelock, 2019).

Another anticipated opportunity with the creation of an Intercontinental Museum of Slavery in Port Louis is its synergy with the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site. Aapravasi Ghat narrates the story of indentured labour in Mauritius. A comparable narration of the story of slavery has been missing in the country, as the Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site narrates the story of maroonage more specifically than the cultural heritage that came with the enslaved labourers who were brought to Mauritius (Croucher et al., 2017, Boswell, 2005). The proximity of the Military Hospital Complex to the Aapravasi Ghat allows for the shared and interlinked histories of Mauritians of different origins to be explored and understood with equal ease of access and an equally important profile within the Mauritian heritage landscape (Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, 2019).

The Guiding Principles for The Intercontinental Slavery Museum

The Concept Document for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum (Harmon J et al., 2020) outlines the guiding principles for the creation of the new museum. These listed goals are theoretically impressive, but their realisation may be an ongoing challenge. The stated intentions of the Museum are to:

1. Recognise the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent.
2. Promote the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave trade and its Abolition established by UNESCO in 1997.
3. Memorialise the History of Slavery as recommended by the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius of 2011.
4. Encourage community participation in its promotion of the ideals of the 2015-2024 United Nations Decade for People of African descent.
5. Promote education and interactions across cultures, generations, and disciplines.
6. Be a living museum that employs creative and interactive ways of engaging with the public.
7. Be self-sustaining.
8. Be environmentally friendly.

The proposed museum creates the space for the heritage of Mauritians of African descent, whose heritage and cultural identity has been minimally expressed within Mauritius, to be researched and communicated. The Museum creates a space within the cultural framework of the country for the acknowledgment of these Mauritians, as being more than 'general population'.

A limitation of this museum is that it could be received as another vehicle for the reinforcement of the ethnically framed political framework of the country. The public reaction to the inscription of the Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a place that celebrated the heritage of Mauritians of African descent was mixed. Le Morne's World Heritage Site listing framed as a place recognising and reflecting the cultural heritage of Mauritians who are descended from the enslaved. This characterisation was contested in Mauritius (Hurnath, 2014, Croucher et al., 2017). A similar fate could await the Intercontinental Slavery Museum if its framework is too tightly defined as being representative of only a sector of the population, rather than of Mauritian and world history.

Reasons for the Choice of the Military Hospital Complex as the Site for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum

The historic importance of the buildings is integral to the site being chosen for the museum. The Military Hospital Complex is made up of the oldest public buildings in Mauritius. This status embodies its associated history. The building complex was integral to life in Port Louis from the establishment of the town and has survived the growth and development of Port Louis and has been part of the many phases of its development. With this history comes its close association with enslaved labourers who were brought to Mauritius. (Teelock, 2019, Harmon J et al., 2020, Toussaint, 1936).

The inter-cultural nature of the Military Hospital Complex, that was built by a multi-cultural group of workers from diverse backgrounds and with different skills, imbues the building with

broad relevance. The complex, owing to its location has been integrally associated with the port of Mauritius since the island was first inhabited. The building has therefore been in use by the various groups that have governed the country during the different phases of its history. This broad cultural association, along with its long history of being centrally located in the port, allows the building to be seen as being associated with the inter-cultural composition of the modern Mauritian population. The building can therefore be used as a vehicle to communicate national heritage, for all who identify with it regardless of their population group.

The concept document for the museum describes it as being ‘a site of conscience’ (Harmon J et al., 2020). In exposing the layered history of Mauritius and accepting that Mauritians of African origin have come to the island from diverse places and generally in difficult circumstances, the cultural contributions brought to the island with the enslaved labourers can be acknowledged. The acknowledgement of the realities of slavery, within a building closely associated with both slavery and all the population groups of Mauritius, allows for the history of the country to be acknowledged and for reconciliation to take place (Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, 2019).

The building complex has until recently been a perilous state of disrepair requiring restoration or renovation to ensure its survival. The buildings have not been demolished because of their historic value and importance. The location of the complex in the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat has ensured its survival in the past two decades. The legislation created around the Aapravasi Ghat is association with UNESCO outlined in AAP1, the Action Area Plan for the Aapravasi Ghat Buffer Zone. This legislation along with the input from UNESCO has been fundamental in the survival of the buildings (Mauritius Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, 2019).

The Renovation of the Military Hospital Complex



Figure 24: The renovated building



Figure 25: The Building under renovation

Figures 24 and 25: (Vikram Jeetah, 11 December 2020, Girit Mauritius, 31 January 2020)

For the second half of 2021 the Military Hospital Complex was under renovation (Fig 24, 25). This project was undertaken to convert part of the semi-derelict complex into the Intercontinental Slavery Museum. The renovation project was done with modern methods as opposed to an authentic restoration project, in accordance with international standards, as was recommended by the Truth and Justice Commission (and as was undertaken with the

Aapravasi Ghat). The choice of the Mauritian authorities to renovate rather than restore the buildings and the implications thereof do not form a part of this analysis, as I have not been permitted sufficient access to the building to suitably assess this aspect of the museum's creation. This decision has serious implications to the built fabric and the preservation of its authenticity as a heritage resource. A question around the renovation as opposed to restoration of the building complex could form the basis of another detailed analysis, investigating how the heritage resources of Mauritius are being realised for international and local audiences.

The Contemporary Importance of a Museum of Slavery

As discussed, the principal driver of the creation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum was the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius. This recommendation was based on the findings of the Commission and the need for the country to overcome the injustices of the past. The oppressive and dehumanising systems of colonialism, slavery and indenture have shaped Mauritius from the first occupation of the island. The Truth and Justice Commission was intended to create a plausible and complete version of Mauritian history that was publicly accessible and that would pave the way for national healing and reconciliation. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum, narrating the untold story of slavery in Mauritius, is intended as a vehicle for this reconciliation (Croucher et al., 2017).

The Truth and Justice Commission recommended that the untold story of slavery in Mauritius be curated in a museum for all Mauritians and the world. The importance of this initiative is relevant to the acknowledgement of the identity and culture of the Creole population of the country, who have been part of Mauritius from its first occupation. The modern political construct of the country being drawn on ethnic lines has contributed to the perception of the Creole population as being a homogenous group, defined as the "general population". This new museum emphasises the global roots of the Mauritian Creole community to be acknowledged, researched and communicated (Abungu et al., 2020).

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum is intended to be a space where Mauritians of African origin can learn about and understand their heritage. An understanding of the Indian Ocean slave trade will allow all visitors to appreciate the diversity and unique cultures that Mauritians of African origin have brought to Mauritius from their geographically and culturally diverse origins. The museum will also be able to highlight the connections between slavery and indenture and the interconnected nature of all Mauritians, regardless of their place of origin.

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum initiative is intended to assist in the construction of a Mauritian national identity that encompasses all population groups equally. If this initiative is successful, the contributions of Mauritians of African origin will be understood, discussed, and celebrated as is done with Mauritians of Indian origin. This complete picture may contribute to a cohesive sense of Mauritian national identity. The Museum also creates an opportunity for a different model of heritage construction that focusses on National identity rather than group identity.

The Curation of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum

The concept document outlining the Intercontinental Slavery Museum (Harmon J et al., 2020) and the University of Mauritius' Centre for the Research on Indenture and Slavery's short video, "The Duty for Remembrance", describes the vision for the Museum (Centre for Research on Slavery and Indenture, 2019). These two resources describe the areas of focus for the museum and its aim to be a place of local and global importance.

Mauritius' role in the Indian Ocean slave trade is discussed in the displays of the temporary exhibition. This topic allows for scope for a deeper analysis of how the Indian Ocean slave trade functioned and how migration created modern Mauritius. The system of indenture was a continuation of slavery and migrant arrival in Mauritius, this is comprehensively documented in the adjacent Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site. The connections between these systems and their interconnected legacies in Mauritius are also areas that are intended to be explored more fully in the final museum.

As with the representation of slavery in museums in South Africa, little has been discussed publicly about the lives of enslaved labourers in Mauritius. This new museum creates a platform for this history to be uncovered and communicated. Included in this story is the resistance to slavery and how this manifested in the country. The Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site is associated with the resistance to slavery and its narrative is an important contribution to understanding how slavery was opposed in Mauritius, including abolition and emancipation.

Prior to the formal opening of the new museum a temporary museum has been sporadically open to the public, sample display boards are illustrated in Figures 26 and 27. The themes of the temporary exhibition are traditionally curated, the historic site is explained and communicated through visual displays. Large painted exhibit boards display reproduced archival images, photographs, and written information in French, Mauritian Kreol and English (Girmit Mauritius, 31 January 2020, Vikram Jeetah, 11 December 2020).

The temporary exhibition display boards outline the history of the building with photographs, archival plans, and detailed information. The different parts of the hospital and their uses and services are photographically explained. The display also elaborates on some of the local materials and construction methods employed in the building and the reasons for the choice of the hospital site are explained. The exhibition describes the availability of the medical service of the hospital to the free and enslaved population of the island. The functional nature of the building and its importance to the entire population of the country is communicated.

The craftsmanship and materials and building methods used in the complex are also explained. A written display outlines the use of coral, volcanic basalt, and bricks in the construction of the building. Archival images from Reunion and the British Museum explain some of the technical aspects of the building. The use of specialised building techniques by both free and enslaved artisans is explained. Interconnected with the global reach of the system of slavery, so the multi-cultural influences are evidenced in the Military Hospital Complex.

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum Created

The Intercontinental Museum of Slavery, as a destination accessible to the public, and part of the UNESCO Slave Route, is almost a reality. Considerable thought and resources have gone into its creation. The recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius have been heeded and the Military Hospital Complex built fabric has survived in a rapidly developing urban environment.

Once the Museum opens to the public, functioning alongside the Aapravasi Ghat as a heritage destination with equal importance to the country of Mauritius, its ability to perform its intended function will be able to be re-assessed. The Museum highlighting the slave trade and its history in Mauritius as well as its legacy within the country, has been a missing voice in the Mauritian heritage space. The concept of an interactive museum allows for it to be an active community member telling its story to all. Knowledge and understanding are important steps in achieving justice. It appears that the Intercontinental Slavery Museum has the tools at its disposal to curate a museum intended to achieve justice for Mauritians of African descent.

The concept of the museum as a space to showcase the interconnected nature of the heritages of all countries associated with the Indian Ocean slave trade suggests the possibility of a softer and more blurred approach to Mauritian heritage than that expressed through the ethnically aligned Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Sites. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum is intended to narrate the story of slavery in Mauritius and its global connections. This approach allows for the Mauritian story to be told within the context of the universal phenomenon of slavery and is relevant to all of humanity.

In Summary:

The Military Hospital Complex has been integral to life in Mauritius from its first occupation and is a truly multicultural building that is representative of, and to, Mauritians of all origins. The built fabric, its creation, resolution and uses speak of a local Mauritian product.

The reasoning and planning communicated regarding the new museum speak of a Mauritian heritage resource with global significance. It appears from the conceptual framework presented that a new way of valorising heritage in Mauritius is possible through the new Intercontinental Slavery Museum in the Military Hospital Complex of Port Louis.

The new Intercontinental Slavery Museum, a modern Mauritian Heritage Resource has been conceptualised as a destination within the local and global framework that communicates the realities of slavery and its local and global legacy. The way this new heritage resource interacts with the Mauritian political construct for it to function as a Mauritian heritage resource has been considered in the concluding argument.

Figure 26 : The history of the site is explained, the phasing of the building and the water supply canal, a feat of engineering is explained (Vikram Jeetah, 11 December 2020)

Figure 27: Location of the building, the service wing and its changes over time and the ways scurvy was addressed at the hospital are discussed in this display (Girmit Mauritius, 31 January 2020)



Figure 26



Figure 27

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Mauritius' engagement with the UNESCO World Heritage Program in 1995 coincides with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee launch of its Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List in 1994. Similarly, the UNESCO program to assist Small Island Developing States in the preservation of their cultural heritage and supporting their engagement with the World Heritage Program in the 1990s, was instrumental to Mauritius' decision to embark on the road to inscription of their two World Heritage Sites (Hurnath, 2014).

As discussed, Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Cultural Landscape were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006 and 2008 respectively. Both sites were inscribed along ethnic lines, in keeping with the political construct of the country. This approach has been contested in the country as has been perceived by some Mauritians as reinforcing the differences within the population, rather than contributing to national unity and Mauritian identity. The maroonage aspect of slavery has been captured in the Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site and this is perceived as irrelevant, or even offensive, to some of the Creole population (Boswell, 2005, Boswell, 2006, Croucher et al., 2017, Bakker and Odendaal, 2008).

Although the Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site deals with aspects of the history of slavery in Mauritius, its curation is arguably not representative of the Creole population of the country. The narrative communicated by the Le Morne Cultural Landscape does not comprehensively deal with the origins, cultural practices, and contributions of the Creole community in Mauritius. The public reaction to the creation of a World Heritage Site of Le Morne that is packaged as being representative of slavery in Mauritius, has necessitated that the approach to acknowledging slavery in the country be revised more comprehensively, hence the need for the Intercontinental Slavery Museum.

As described in this analysis the Military Hospital Complex in Port Louis is a multi-layered building that has been integral to all the population groups of Mauritius from c 1740 and remains an important resource of the country. The reach of the Indian Ocean slave trade was extensive, and Mauritius was a central connection point in that system. The use of the Military Hospital Complex as the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, as outlined, is appropriate as the building has been closely linked with slavery from its early days. The building, however, is closely linked with all Mauritians and the history of the island and the country.

The valorisation of heritage in Mauritius has developed and evolved considerably from colonial days. Since the mid 1990s, with the engagement of the Government of Mauritius with the UNESCO World Heritage Program, heritage has been used as a resource with commercial and political drivers. The political aspect of the valorisation of heritage in the country has been contested and remains controversial (Hurnath, 2014).

As discussed, the Mauritian Government's engagement with the UNESCO World Heritage Program to date, has been with reference to the political construct of the country. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum aims at narrating and communicating the history and ongoing legacy of slavery in the country. The absence of the valorisation of this history of slavery in Mauritius is apparent, and the associated denial and shame associated with

Mauritian slavery has not been suitably addressed in the view of the Truth and Justice Commission of the country. The official communications regarding the new slavery museum affirm the necessity of this new heritage resource for all Mauritians, regardless of their population group.

Slavery in Mauritius was the result of a global system, and indenture was an offshoot of this system. Mauritian society has been built on immigration and this is a common shared history of the people of Mauritius, regardless of their provenance, or the labour system under which they arrived in the country. The UNESCO Slave route project, with the Intercontinental Slavery Museum as one of its destinations, acknowledges the realities of slavery and its impact globally. The engagement of the Mauritian Government with this project allows for the integrated history of all Mauritians, regardless of their origins to be understood.

On reflection of the material presented, it appears that the Intercontinental Slavery Museum provides Mauritius with an opportunity to communicate a complete and inclusive picture of the heritage of the country, that is rooted in migration. The temporary exhibition and the conceptual framework for the final museum suggest an inclusive approach to heritage construction, that is contrary to the ethnically driven approach within the country to date. The multiple and interconnected histories communicated by the displays can allow for a clear understanding of the groups of people who together have created Mauritius. The museum curated can then become representative of the country and a symbol of Mauritian national identity.

The ethnic political construct of the country, as defined in the constitution, in my view remains an impediment to the representation of Mauritian heritage, as it assumes homogeneous groups and categorises them accordingly, within a population of mixed descent. The engagement of the Government of Mauritius with the UNESCO World Heritage Program in the 1990s has had a far-reaching impact on the valorisation of heritage in Mauritius, representing the histories of the country and its population rather than only those of the colonisers. The Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne World Heritage Sites are modern resources that are interesting tourist attractions, but do not necessarily represent the full picture of the histories they embody.

In the words of Calaon and Forest:

“The globalization of tourism and the development of cultural tourism in particular have deepened Mauritians’ awareness of the need not only to make their past tangible, but also to safeguard it and transmit it to future generations. One consequence of this changing perception of heritage has been for governmental institutions to play a stronger role in developing heritage in line with its global tourism aspirations. By appropriating the process of creating heritage and memory, the Mauritian state has also sought to discourage the kind of independent public discourse about heritage that accompanies the complex negotiations about identity produced by the ongoing creolisation of Mauritian society.” (Calaon and Forest, 2018)

My experiences in conducting research into the Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Mauritius, along with the above quoted observation, affirms the highly sensitive and political nature of heritage within Mauritius. The impediments encountered in my research, also

suggest that the Intercontinental Slavery Museum may not be a vehicle for an updated approach to heritage in Mauritius, but rather a more comprehensive telling of the heritage of the different population groups within the established official narrative and political construct of the country.

The Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius identified an absence of the memorialisation of slavery in Mauritius and the need for this to be addressed. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Port Louis Mauritius represents this largely untold history comprehensively on a public platform for the first time. This initiative allows for the story of slavery in the country, with its associated cultural heritage, to be told and for its place within Mauritian history to be valorised.

In conclusion, the engagement of the Government of Mauritius has facilitated the inscription of two World Heritage sites on the World Heritage List. These resources have been notable achievements for the country and tell the story of the indentured labour system and the maroonage aspect of slavery. Both histories narrated by these sites are important and relevant to the population of modern Mauritius. The absence of a comparable heritage resource narrating the history and legacy of slavery in the country was notable, in the view of Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum is the result of this recommendation of the Truth and Justice Commission and has been realised as a destination on the UNESCO Slave route. These achievements affirm that the UNESCO World Heritage Program involvement has had a progressive impact on the valorisation of heritage in the country. The constitutionally defined ethnic political construct of the country, however, remains a framework within which heritage is valorised and this, in my view, prevents the national heritage of Mauritius, as opposed to the heritage of the different population groups, from being communicated.

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