Mapping Truth: What Can Geospatial Analysis Contribute to Transitional Justice?

Alyson Reynolds,[*] Chabeli Yumang,[†] and Kelebogile Zvobgo[‡]

Conflict Management and Peace Studies (accepted version)

Abstract

This article studies an important transitional justice case, Mauritius, where a novel truth commission was established to address colonial violence and its legacies. In its recommendations, the commission outlined a slate of projects to commemorate victims and educate the public. Leveraging geographic information systems tools, we map atrocity sites, memory sites, and population centers, and find that contrary to the commission's recommendations, memory projects have been relegated to a few atrocity sites far from most Mauritians, rendering memorialization less effective. Our work contributes to quantitative and mixed-method approaches to studying transitional justice and nascent efforts to more systematically study memorialization.

Keywords: transitional justice, truth commissions, memorialization, geographic information systems

[*] Global Research Institute, William & Mary.
[†] Global Research Institute, William & Mary.
[‡] Government Department and Global Research Institute, William & Mary, kzvobgo@wm.edu. Corresponding author.

Introduction

The academic field of transitional justice (TJ) seeks to understand why and how governments redress political violence, and to what effect (Bakiner, 2021; Sikkink and Kim, 2013; Teitel, 2003; Vinjamuri and Snyder, 2015). Transitional justice scholarship is often aimed at aiding policy-practice, drawing implications for civil society advocates, practitioners, and policymakers.[1]

Scholars have traditionally analyzed TJ mechanisms such as trials, truth commissions, and institutional reforms using qualitative data and methods in single-case or small-*N* comparative studies (Cronin-Furman and Krystalli, 2021; Kochanski, 2021; Loken et al., 2018; Loyle, 2025; Roht-Arriaza, 2001; Winston, 2021). Much of this work has sought to explain the causes, function, and operation of various TJ tools.

Political scientists have in the past two decades led a quantitative turn in the field, investigating TJ processes using cross-national datasets, surveys, and experiments (Aguilar et al., 2011; Bates, 2025; Dancy et al., 2019; Godefroidt and Dyrstad, 2025; Nalepa, 2010; Scott et al., 2024; Winston, 2020; Zvobgo, 2020). Many have been concerned with TJ legacies, including the effect of different processes on respect for human rights, democratic stability, and sustainable peace (Dancy and Thoms, 2025; Gibson, 2004; Nalepa, 2022; Olsen et al., 2010; Zvobgo, 2026).

Scholars have more recently endeavored to systematically study reparations and memorialization, the TJ measures most focused on victims (Buckley-Zistel and Björkdahl, 2020; García-Godos, 2020). In this vein, researchers have through quantitative and mixed-method analysis shown that governments in many cases prioritize individual reparations over collective reparations (Zvobgo, 2026: ch. 6) and more often grant reparations for some abuses, e.g. political persecution and torture, than for other abuses, e.g. sexual violence (Greenstein, 2024: 102). Researchers have also shown that governments and other stakeholders prioritize, and even prefer,

constructing new monuments and memorials (Byrne et al., 2024: 226) to removing existing ones (Wiebelhaus-Brahm and Davis, 2024), and more readily memorialize incidents of abuse and individual victims than patterns of abuse and groups of victims (Byrne et al., 2024: 231–232).

Empirical evidence suggests that the potential effects of reparations and memorialization projects are enormous: reparations are positively associated with democracy and regime durability (Greenstein, 2026), although the relationship may be bi-directional (Powers and Proctor, 2017). Museums and memorials, for their part, not only educate visitors and passers-by on the past but also induce them to oppose violence and support democracy and human rights (Balcells et al., 2022; Buckley-Zistel and Williams, 2022). This research is exceptional and fairly recent, however; systematic study of the production and impact of historical memory is fairly uncharted territory (Byrne et al., 2024; Light and Young, 2015).

Gaps in prior scholarship may be explained in part by legalistic approaches to TJ, which are endemic to the field's mainstream (hence the greater attention paid to trials, truth commissions, and institutional reforms). Regarding memorialization, scholars sometimes view it as less political, less important, and less desirable than other TJ modalities (see Byrne et al.'s [2024] criticism), although the memories that different projects reflect and reproduce can be "deeply contested, severely politicised and highly divisive, and … can readily slide into contested and contradictory narratives about history, specific events, victimhood and victory" (Buckley-Zistel and Björkdahl, 2020: 283).

Studies emphasizing the political dimensions of memorial projects in violence-affected societies are not without their own problems: they often see memorialization as a binary, as "something that governments either will or will not do, rather than something that governments can do to varying degrees and scales" (Byrne et al., 2024: 214; see also Bernal [2013]).[2] Moreover,

the literature on memorialization (and on TJ more broadly) tends to only study the things that have happened, not the things that have not happened. What we do not see in the memory landscape is often elided in favor of what we do see. Yet there is much that we can learn from the presence (and absence) of TJ in general and memorialization in particular, and the extent to which it is carried out.

This article intervenes in these scholarly discussions, offering a way to evaluate memorialization, which has the goal of commemorating victims and educating the public on victims' suffering, thereby connecting the past with the present and challenging everyday people to take up the charge of "Never Again" (Buckley-Zistel and Björkdahl, 2020: 270). We argue that to achieve these aims, memorials, museums, and other memory spaces must be established both where abuses took place in the past *and* where people can reasonably access them and receive the important education they offer. Barsalou would call these "authentic sites" and "constructed sites," respectively (2014: 49). In contexts where violence has been widespread, we should see memorial projects across the map (figuratively and literally). Yet, as our analysis will reveal, in some contexts, memory projects have been relegated to a few atrocity sites far from much of the public, rendering memorialization less effective than it could be.

We conduct a descriptive geospatial analysis, locating sites of violence and sites of memory and representing them in a visual medium that is accessible to a range of stakeholders (including affected communities, activists, and policymakers). Such an analysis requires data and tools that have rarely been applied in the academic TJ field: geo-referenced data and geographic information systems (GIS) tools (Freire et al. 2019).[3] With geo-referenced data and GIS tools, scholars can exhibit where different abuses have occurred[4] – a public good in its own right that can capture existing and potential stakeholders' attention more readily than voluminous articles and reports—

and scholars can visually demonstrate whether, to what extent, and where governments have memorialized abuses. Ultimately, maps generated with GIS tools can be used to educate local and foreign visitors, challenge omissions in the memory landscape, and support advocacy for further memorialization.

We acknowledge some nascent attempts to visualize TJ using world maps.[5] When political scientists have done so, it has often been to probe arguments about regional and subregional processes of diffusion (Kim, 2012; Kochanski, 2020; Zvobgo and Crawford, forthcoming).[6] However, in few cases have scholars centered maps and spatial data in their analyses. This is puzzling, given the importance of place: victims of human rights abuses suffer in particular places, which human rights investigators, relatives, and members of the public later visit (Barsalou, 2014; Buckley-Zistel and Björkdahl, 2020; Greenstein, 2025). Victims are also commemorated in particular places—through museums, monuments, memorials, and other memory spaces (Williams, 2007). We agree with Byrne et al. (2024) and Freire et al. (2019) that much more must be done to understand the relationships between victimization, investigation, and memorialization in different countries around the world.

For our study, we turn to Mauritius, an overlooked case that has implemented several TJ modalities, including the farthest-reaching truth commission in history (Barranger, 2021; Claveyrolas, 2012; Teelock, 2015). In 2009, the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission was established to investigate abuses that began four centuries earlier with colonization and the enslavement of Africans in 1638 and, following the abolition of slavery in 1835, the indentured servitude of South and East Asian laborers (Hayner, 2011: 70; Truth and Justice Commission, 2011). The Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission is one of just a few truth commissions that have attempted to address contemporary structural inequality stemming from historical colonial

violence (Salvioli, 2021), including by recommending reparations for descendants of the enslaved and indentured, per its mandate (National Assembly of Mauritius, 2008). Given the growing emphasis on historical injustice in TJ scholarship and practice—injustice that is "temporally distant and sometimes temporally extended" (Murphy and Zvobgo, 2023: 421)—Mauritius offers some evidence of learning in the transnational diffusion of truth commissions and indicates how "transitional justice for historical injustice" might be carried out in other countries.

When the Truth and Justice Commission concluded its work in 2011, it did what dozens of other commissions before it had done: it presented policymakers with an official set of recommendations informed by its findings. Twenty-seven of the recommendations were about memorialization (Byrne et al., 2024), making the commission a global leader in prescribing memory projects, matched only by the 1995 truth commission addressing the East German dictatorship (Hayner, 2011: 52), which also made 27 memorialization recommendations.[7] Together, these two commissions are responsible for one-third of memory projects recommended by truth commissions around the world for the period 1970–2018 (Byrne et al., 2024).

Thirteen of the Mauritian commission's 27 proposed memory projects were initiated within a decade of the commission's conclusion.[8] Of these, seven were partially implemented and six were fully implemented within this timeframe (Byrne et al., 2024).[9] Memory projects punctuate the built environment in Mauritius—at times confronting vestiges of colonization and land and labor exploitation while holding them up at other times. Yet until now, scholarship has not scrutinized, in Mauritius or elsewhere, recommended and implemented memorial projects and their geography. Yet without an understanding of recommended and implemented memorial projects and their geography, we cannot understand a truth commission's full reach or impact on

everyday people, nor can we fully comprehend a government's compliance with a truth commission's recommendations.

Building on nascent TJ scholarship and practice, we apply GIS tools to map memory, specifically historical slavery and contemporary memorialization. We first leverage historical census data of the enslaved population in Mauritius and records of the plantations and estates on which they were forced to labor.[10] These data help us understand in a new way the breadth of the slave economy in Mauritius and the plantations and estates that drove it. These data also help us see where memorialization *could* have taken place.[11]

We next draw on truth commission recommendations, a rarely used source of data in TJ scholarship (Byrne et al., 2024; Skaar et al., 2025; Zvobgo, 2026), and data on implementation.[12] Recommendations for memorial projects offer scholars guides for "the types of memory that could have been made," which scholars can then "contrast … against the ones that were ultimately made" (Byrne et al., 2024: 210). Our research thus begins to confront the problem of selecting cases based on a specific outcome (or using selection criteria that likely correlate with the outcome), a practice that is pervasive in the TJ field. When seeking to explain different events and phenomena, we must consider both when they happen and when they do not happen; hence our interest in recommendations, whose implementation varies.

In addition, we make use of government documents and other primary and secondary source materials necessary to "map memory" in Mauritius. We then cross-reference and analyze atrocity sites and memory sites. With GIS mapping, we can see the extent to which progressive historical memory (i.e. memory challenging colonization and land and labor exploitation) looms large in Mauritius—or not—especially amid regressive historical memory (e.g. monuments to enslavers) and "neutral" historical memory (addressing "more recent" issues and communities

other than Mauritian Creoles, whose ancestors were enslaved, and Indo-Mauritians, whose ancestors were indentured).[13]

As the Truth and Justice Commission concluded, and as we will demonstrate visually, the institution of slavery touched almost every part of Mauritius, although some regions contained a larger number of large plantations. We compare areas where slavery was most concentrated with where the truth commission recommended memorial projects, including a slavery museum. We also compare proposed projects with implemented projects. In addition, we scrutinize partially implemented or stalled projects; that is, projects that were initiated but not completed within a decade of the truth commission. Last, we investigate how memory sites relate to population centers, including in the capital city, Port Louis, which is home to roughly 1 in 10 Mauritians. Our analysis highlights that the Mauritian government has completed only a few of the truth commission's recommendations, and these projects are not geographically representative of the contemporary population or the enslaved population that the truth commission set out to memorialize. This has hindered memorialization's educational potential and limited the truth commission's impact and legacy.

Overall, our project demonstrates the importance of place in TJ and human rights practice. Accordingly, we invite fellow scholars to "map truth," as we have done, in the countries and regions in which they work, to uplift affected communities, support the work and legacy of truth commissions, and challenge governments that have done less than they could and less than they should to engage with the past in the present.

Memorialization and Geospatial Analysis

Memorialization is an important TJ practice, serving multiple functions including commemoration, education, and reparation (Buckley-Zistel and Björkdahl, 2020; Parente, 2025).[14]

If those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it, as the proverb says, then memorialization theoretically also contributes to non-repetition through education. Perhaps those who remember the past are destined to *not* repeat it.

In recent decades, memorial projects, including monuments, museums, and days of remembrance, have become focal points for TJ proponents and opponents: "Millions of people each year visit, struggle for, or protest against these memory projects" (Brett et al., 2007: 1). Below, we summarize the different ways that TJ scholars have studied memorialization and the different ways that scholars in the broader field of human rights have applied geospatial analysis. We also discuss the nexus of memorialization and geospatial analysis, underlining the usefulness of geo-referenced data and GIS tools for assessing states' implementation of memorial projects and for evaluating memory spaces' connection to historical violence and contemporary populations.

Different Ways of Studying Memorialization

There are many ways to study memorialization, including: analyzing when it does and does not happen (e.g. Byrne et al., 2024); evaluating different projects' aesthetic, symbolic, and utilitarian functions (e.g. Mayo, 1988); and gauging public reactions (e.g. Villamil and Balcells, 2021). Also important is assessing *where* memory projects and spaces are established. Past scholarship has noted the significance of memory centers at atrocity sites (Balcells et al., 2022; Buckley-Zistel and Williams, 2022; Byrne et al., 2024), but prior work has not sought to understand the overall geography of memorialization, including at atrocity sites.

Memory activism scholars such as Williams (2007: 77) argue that the "[c]entrality and marginalization [of the past] are related through the relative attribution of space"—an insight that builds on Massey's (1994: 255) observation that "the social and the spatial are inseparable

and … the spatial form of the social has causal effectivity". Whigham (2023: 55) expounds upon this point, observing that "sites of memory can also shape historical narratives and the ways in which a public comprehends and engages with the past". These ideas motivate our guiding research question: to what extent do memory spaces exist and to what degree are they central (or peripheral) to sites of historical violence and the consciousness of present-day populations?

To gain empirical insight into these questions, we need to have an idea of where abuses took place, where memory spaces have been established, and where people live. It is at atrocity sites that memory spaces stand to be most disruptive and transformative (Byrne et al., 2024: 211); it is here that a violent past (and present) can be most directly confronted (Greenstein, 2025: 2) and the choice to forget what happened can be most stridently refused. As Lischer (2019: 810) writes, "Using the atrocity site has the benefit of silencing doubters and heightening emotional impact". Yet atrocity sites can be far removed from population centers. So, it is also important that memory spaces are located where people can see them; it is here that they stand to reach the most people and more people can remember and acknowledge a violent past. Moreover, per Lischer (2019: 810), "[the] construction of new space[s] can indicate government attention and willingness to devote resources to remembrance". Therefore, when evaluating memorial projects, it is important to consider their connection both to the past and the present.[15]

Geo-referenced data and GIS tools can help scholars spatially demonstrate the presence, absence, concentration, and diffusion of memory spaces, and their connection to the past and the present. Yet as mentioned, geospatial analysis has rarely been applied in the academic TJ field. Moreover, the data necessary for geospatial analysis of TJ have often been incomplete, if not missing altogether.

Different Types of Geospatial Analysis

Practitioners and scholars across the social sciences use geospatial analysis to better understand human rights abuses (Madden and Ross, 2009; O'Connell and Young, 2014). Forensic anthropologists, for example, employ GIS tools to describe the extent of state atrocities like the Guatemalan military's genocide of Indigenous Mayans during the 1960–1996 internal armed conflict (Steinberg et al., 2006). More intensive site analyses, including skeletal reconstructions, can also provide human rights prosecutors forensic evidence for trials (Tuller et al., 2008).

Remote sensing, a type of intelligence analysis that uses aerial imagery to identify physical characteristics of a geographic area, can also detect breaches of international humanitarian law, like mass deportations in occupied territories. International organizations and nongovernmental organizations use remote sensing to detect on-the-ground violations, such as forced relocation or prison camps, and they generate targeted reports that can be used as evidence in criminal investigations and prosecutions (Marx and Goward, 2013).

Researchers also make damage assessments and evaluate humanitarian conditions, for example, by counting dwellings to estimate the number of conflict-displaced persons (Giada et al., 2003; Sulik and Edwards, 2010). In addition, a number of scholars use nighttime light imagery to predict the extent of destruction in conflict zones (Jiang et al., 2017; Li and Li, 2014).

GIS and Memorialization

GIS tools are not only valuable for identifying and analyzing atrocities. They can themselves be used to memorialize victims (Steinberg et al., 2006) and educate the public about atrocities (Fitchett and Good, 2012). They can also be blended with narratives such as victim testimonials, to portray lived experiences and augment evidence of atrocities (Madden and Ross, 2009). Such

uses are exemplary of critical cartography, which links and interrogates geographic space and political power (Crampton and Krygier, 2005).

Community-based civil society actors employ similar applications to produce spatial narratives that assert communities' authority and agency in different geographic spaces (Elwood, 2006). Another application of critical cartography is participatory mapping, or counter-mapping, where marginalized groups produce maps challenging hegemonic conceptions of territory. These approaches can be especially powerful, for example, in Indigenous people's representations of their communities, which use alternative boundaries, not those designated by (neo)colonial states (Bryan, 2011; Galeana, 2022).

In brief, GIS has been useful for theory development and empirical analysis in the social sciences, enabling scholars and practitioners to examine environmental conditions, the geography of power, and the relationships between peoples and spaces. As a data visualization tool, GIS can also be used to document and memorialize atrocities in powerful ways. Understanding the spatial dimensions of memorialization is critical for evaluating states' implementation of memorial projects and how these sites connect to historical violence and contemporary populations.

Beyond Beaches, Reefs, and Lagoons: Four Centuries of Racial Violence in Mauritius

Mauritius is an African nation east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. After decades of unsuccessful attempts by the Dutch Republic (1638–1710), Mauritius was colonized by France for nearly a century (1715–1810), becoming a booming slave economy. Thousands of Africans were trafficked from the Continent and were forced to produce sugar and other crops under brutal conditions (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 59–61, 64–70; Vaughan 2005). South and East Asians, especially Indian and Chinese people, were later brought to the country as indentured

servants who could gain their freedom at the conclusion of their work contracts (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 61–63, 71–73).

France later surrendered Mauritius to Great Britain, which ruled the country for more than a century and a half (1810–1968). Mauritius won its independence in 1968, but not before the British excised the Chagos Islands (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 329–331)—a territory that is continuously in dispute, although international institutions have judged British control to violate international law (International Court of Justice, 2019).

As a constitutional monarchy, Mauritius adopted the parliamentary system common to former British colonies, with Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State. Some 20 years later, Mauritius became a republic within the Commonwealth of Nations.[16] While institutions favoring non-Creole ethnic groups grew after Independence, Mauritian Creoles, who are descendants of the enslaved, remained disenfranchised, lacking political representation and subjected to endemic poverty, thus increasing *malaise creole*-related tensions (Boswell, 2006: 155).

The term *malaise creole* refers to the intergenerational trauma of slavery and systemic oppression deriving from racial hierarchies that continuously place Mauritian Creoles at the bottom of Mauritian society. *Malaise creole* also captures the intergenerational trauma of displacement in diaspora populations, such as Chagossians (Creoles indigenous to the Chagos Islands whom the British government forcibly relocated to the main island of Mauritius). There exists, too, a nationwide "banality of slavery" culture that normalizes the injustices suffered by the enslaved and their descendants.

Truth Seeking in Mauritius

Inaugurated in 2009, the Truth and Justice Commission was given an ambitious mandate: examine, in two short years, 371 years of violence and abuse, from the colonial period (1638–1968) to the

post-colonial period (from 1968), and draw out the implications for contemporary Mauritian political, economic, and social life. Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam, himself a descendant of Indian migrants, emphasized the importance of such an investigation: "Years have passed since slavery and indentured labor were abolished…. But such treatment meted out to human beings does have its psychological impact, which can be permanent and as destructive if not more so, compared to physical slavery."[17] The commission was also charged with examining land dispossession and "determin[ing] appropriate measures to be extended to descendants of slaves and indentured laborers" (National Assembly of Mauritius, 2008).

Chaired by Alex Boraine, the famed white Methodist minister who had led the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission with Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Mauritian commission detailed the political economy of colonialism, slavery, and indentured servitude—the first commission to do so (Croucher et al., 2017). Moreover, the commission laid out the inhuman conditions under which the enslaved and indentured lived, valued only for the wealth they could generate for their white masters. As in other contexts, the enslaved were treated with special cruelty and violence, including beatings, whippings, and killings, especially in cases of attempted escape.

The commission found that Mauritian Creoles remain marginalized in Mauritian society, even as descendants of the indentured have risen in power and affluence to form the country's elite. Mauritian Creoles are poorer, less literate, and more likely to be manual laborers—an unmistakable legacy of slavery. Mauritian Creoles also lack meaningful representation in state institutions and public life, and civil society groups representing their interests are weak (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 2, 284). Material reparations, including land transfers, have not been forthcoming and analysts do not expect them to be delivered (Croucher et al., 2017; Hayner,

2011). However, the government has undertaken some symbolic efforts, including memorial projects, to which we now turn our attention.

Data Collection and Methods

We collected a vast array of data to describe the presence and absence, and centrality and peripherality, of public memory of colonization and land and labor exploitation, particularly slavery, in Mauritius between 1638 and 2009, the period of time the truth commission investigated. We examine memorialization efforts before and after 2011, when the commission concluded its work, and in the decade following the commission, distinguishing between projects recommended by the truth commission and those derived from other sources.

Historical Census Data and Property Records

In the first wave of data collection, we secured historical census data on the enslaved population in Mauritius and records of the plantations on which they were forced to labor. We contacted the British National Archives through their online portal for historical record retrieval and obtained an 1832 census listing persons enslaved at the time, with breakdowns by plantation name, plantation owner, and district. (This was the last census before abolition in 1835.) We retrieved latitude and longitude coordinates from open-source databases, matching, where possible, plantation names to locations in present-day Mauritius. We also geo-referenced a map of Mauritius from 1833, to supplement the plantations data with sugar estates data, likewise with latitude and longitude coordinates.[18]

These data help us broadly describe the distribution of enslaved laborers on the main island. Tracking where plantations and estates were located and the sizes of their enslaved populations helps us understand the universe of possible memorialization cases.[19] Arguably, the plantations

and locales with the largest enslaved populations are obvious places for the truth commission to have proposed—and for the government to have implemented—memory projects. And in fact, the Truth and Justice Commission recommended, among other items, plaques at all sugar estates—a goal that the Mauritian government has failed to meet, among others.

Government Documents

In the second wave of data collection, we searched a trove of Mauritian government documents and other resources, including the Mauritius National Heritage Fund's MauHeritage app, which lists government-designated national heritage sites as of 2016. This process led us to identify where memory projects were implemented, both before and after the truth commission's conclusion. We also collected location data from Google Maps for national political, economic, and social centers in Port Louis to further assess the centrality and peripherality of historical memory.

Other Primary Source Material

In the third wave of data collection, we searched online map databases, such as OpenStreetMap, to capture location names and coordinates.[20] These databases are derived from a variety of sources including Google Earth.[21] We used these data to pair historical and present-day place names. For current population density data, we drew from WorldPop (via Esri/ArcGIS), an open-access population database.

Secondary Source Material

In the fourth wave of data collection, we supplemented the census records, plantations and estates data, government documents, and other primary sources with secondary sources such as websites documenting historical sites in Mauritius (e.g. TripAdvisor) and academic studies of historical memory on the main island.[22] We used these sources to complete our list of memory sites not

related to the truth commission and its recommendations, and to understand other sites' significance to Mauritian memory.

Truth Commission Recommendations

Data on the Mauritian truth commission's recommendations are sourced from Byrne et al.'s (2024) Global Memory Production Project (GMPP), an offshoot of Zvobgo's (2020; 2026) Varieties of Truth Commissions Project. The GMPP codes the initiation and completion of 162 memory projects proposed by truth commissions in 28 countries between 1970 and 2018. As previously mentioned, the Mauritian commission made 27 memory project recommendations (approximately 17% of the global sample). Thirteen recommendations (roughly half of the Mauritian sample) were initiated within a decade of the truth commission and six of these were completed; the other seven recommendations stalled.

Truth commission recommendations are a rarely used source of data in TJ scholarship (Skaar et al., 2025; Zvobgo, 2026), yet they offer governments—and scholars—important blueprints for post-commission TJ policies (Byrne et al., 2024; Zvobgo, 2026). Most TJ scholarship assesses the "ones" (things that have happened) rather than the "zeroes" (things that have not happened). Our research begins to confront such omissions in the literature.

Analysis

Figure 1 shows the distribution of enslaved people on the main island of Mauritius, overlaid with the locations of 500 historical plantations and other slave estates. Many are located near low-lying areas and bodies of water, explaining large stretches of the island without plantations and estates. Still, it is clear from the map that the institution of slavery was extensive in the country. This is something that the truth commission discussed but that we are only now able to visualize.

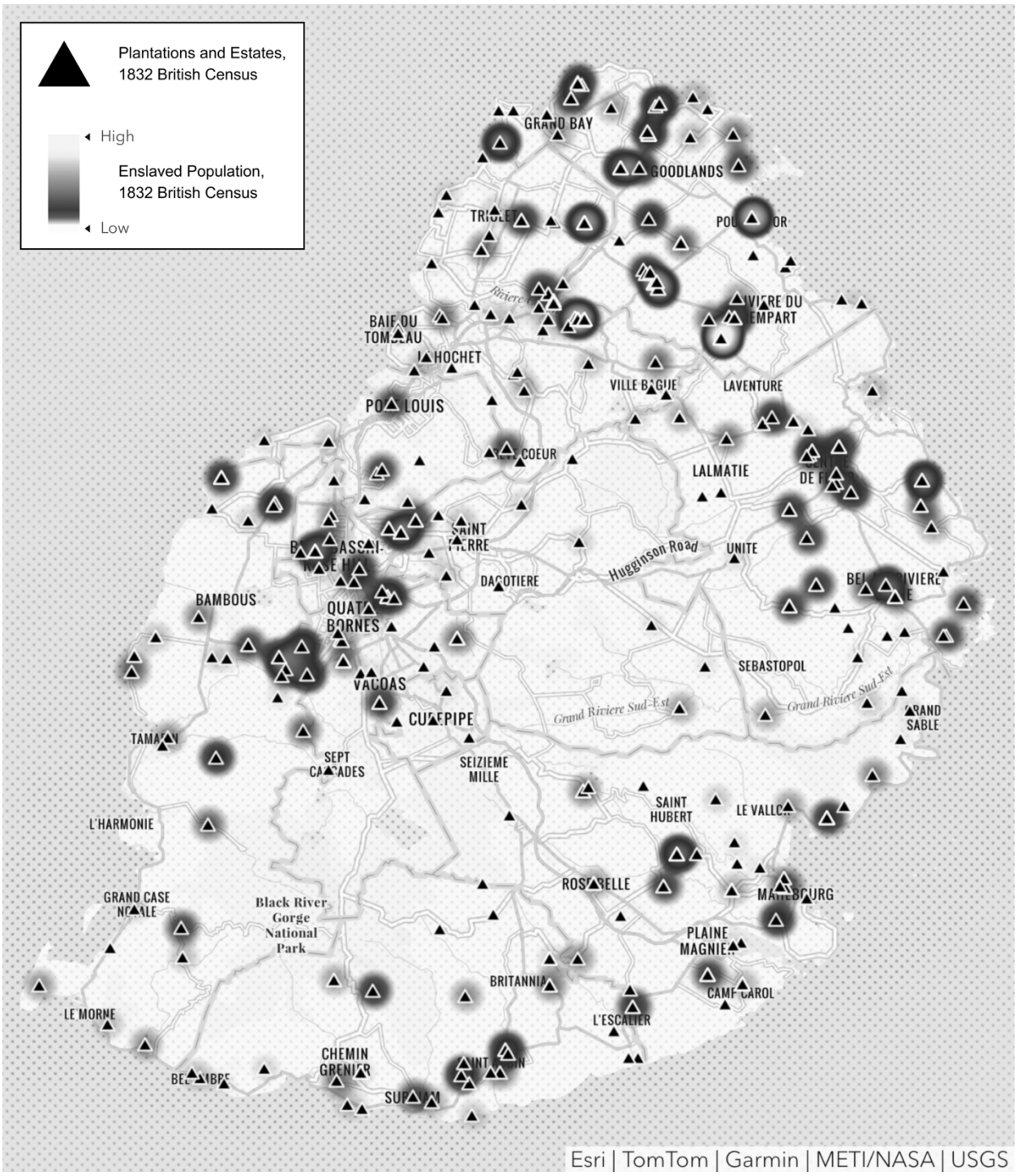

Figure 1. Distribution of plantations and estates and density of the enslaved population in Mauritius, 1832.

Interestingly, the 1832 census was not discussed in the Truth and Justice Commission's report, perhaps because it was not accessible to the commissioners. We ourselves had to contact the British National Archives and actually purchase a copy of the census data, which was scanned from the historical handwritten document. The irony is not lost on us; in fact, it is indicative of British neocolonialism in the twenty-first century. Colonialism has always involved control of information; the fact that a former colonial power can selectively place information about its past behind a paywall is a mark of coloniality today (Quijano, 2007) and we join calls to decolonize archives (Bastian, 2019). The colonial past is also certainly present in Mauritius, with many present-day neighborhoods and roadways bearing the names of former plantations and enslavers.

Figure 2 shows completed (in black), stalled (in dark gray), and non-initiated (in light gray) memorial projects recommended by the truth commission. This figure shows the 14 projects that could be geocoded, i.e. recommendations that referred to a specific location; 13 others could not be geocoded, either because the recommendation language was exceedingly broad and did not specify a location or the project concerned non-tangible memory. In one case, the truth commission recommended memorialization at every sugar estate. Given that there were so few initiated and completed memory projects and given that we already visualized plantations and estates in Figure 1, we do not include this recommendation in Figure 2.

Six of the truth commission's recommendations were completed within 10 years. Four of these six are mappable and called on the government to acknowledge the displacement of Mauritian Creoles from Trou Chenille, construct a cemetery to enslaved persons in Le Morne, make St Anne Catholic Church a national heritage site (to acknowledge Indo-Christian indentured laborers), and establish a "Museum of Slavery" in Port Louis.

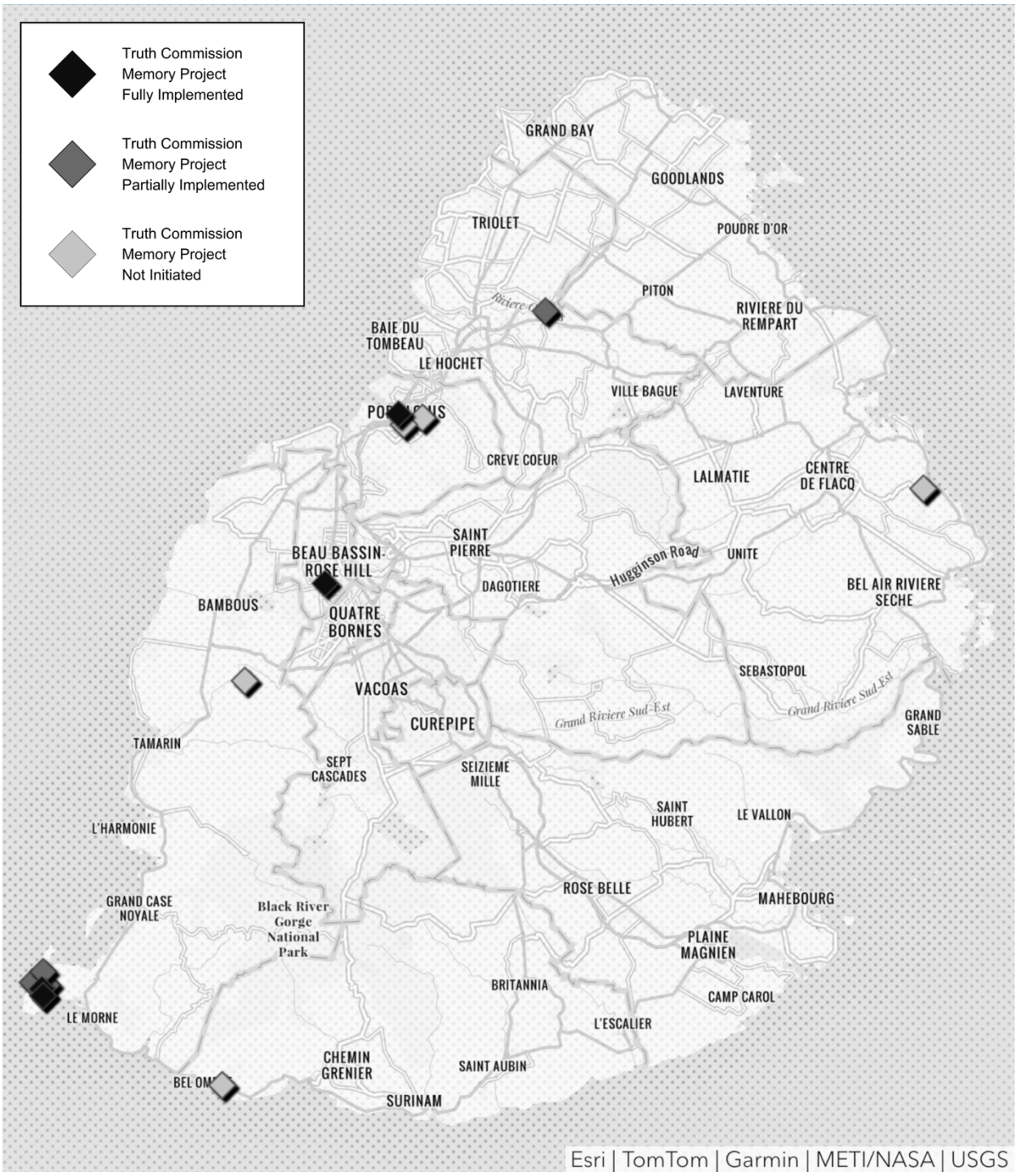

Figure 2. Memory projects recommended by the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission.

Le Morne deserves special mention here, representing a "cultural landscape" that the truth commission recognized as significant to the history of slavery and to descendants of the enslaved in Mauritius. The village was a popular site for maroons seeking refuge, with established trails leading to Le Morne throughout the surrounding forests (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 28).[23] Many descendants of maroons still live in the area, and the truth commission tailored recommendations for land reparations for descendants (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 221). Le Morne has also been at the center of Mauritian Creole history efforts, owing to its fixture in Mauritian Creole oral history and advocacy by the Organisation Fraternelle, a civil society group (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 382). This has contributed to the creation of the Le Morne Heritage Fund and the location's inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Memorialization in such a noteworthy region is important. Still, with the exception of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Port Louis, the paucity of slavery memorials in other locations, especially more-population-dense areas, invites the question of how much the Mauritian government has meaningfully engaged with the past.

The two non-mappable but completed projects relate to "increased funding for memorialisations of slavery and the slave trade in public places, especially in places where slaves have lived, died, and worked" (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 394) and "better memorialization of the economic contribution of slaves to Mauritius" (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 395). The vague wording of these recommendations allows even modest increases in funding or memorialization of enslaved persons' economic contributions to count as implementation, although such efforts might not lead to long-term and sustained remembrance and education.

Figure 3 shows the locations of initiated memory projects relative to the Mauritian population (as of 2020). Only two completed projects are in population-dense areas; thus, most memory projects recommended by the truth commission and implemented by the government are not accessible to most Mauritians. These sites can hardly achieve the goals of remembrance and education if a majority of the population is unlikely to encounter them.

Figure 4 shows non-truth commission memory projects before (in light gray) and after (in dark gray) the truth commission's conclusion in 2011. At least 176 such sites existed before 2011, while seven were established afterward. A notable pre-2011 example is Aapravasi Ghat ("The Immigration Depot"), through which hundreds of thousands of Asian indentured laborers passed. It was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006. Post-2011 sites include a monument to mark the centenary of Indian migration that was designated a national heritage site and a museum about Dutch colonialism at the Fort Frederik Hendrik Historical Site. While the pre- and post-2011 sites are distributed fairly evenly across the island, many are in the national capital area.

Figure 5 shows memory sites in downtown Port Louis, relative to key national political, economic, and social centers such as the National Assembly. The centrally located Intercontinental Slavery Museum, which opened in 2020, was previously the Labourdonnais Military Hospital, which was built by enslaved Africans and was later converted into a prison for runaways called Le Bagne (Intercontinental Slavery Museum, 2024). The recommended but not implemented projects—relating to the old Port Louis prison and the Plaine Verte Garden—are, respectively, located in some of Port Louis's and Mauritius's most politically significant and densely populated areas.

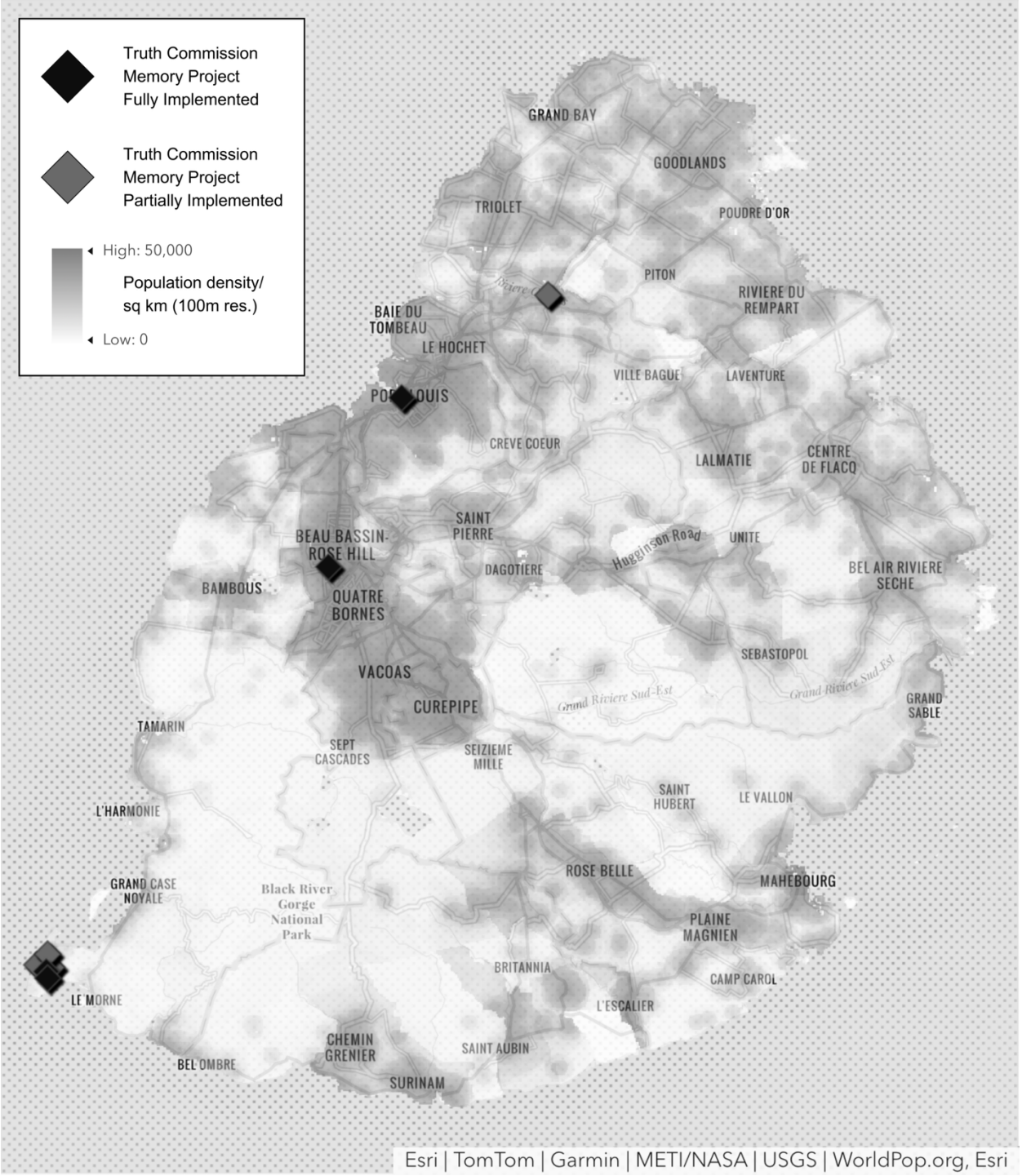

Figure 3. Truth commission memory projects implemented by the Mauritian government, relative to population density (per square kilometer at 100m resolution).

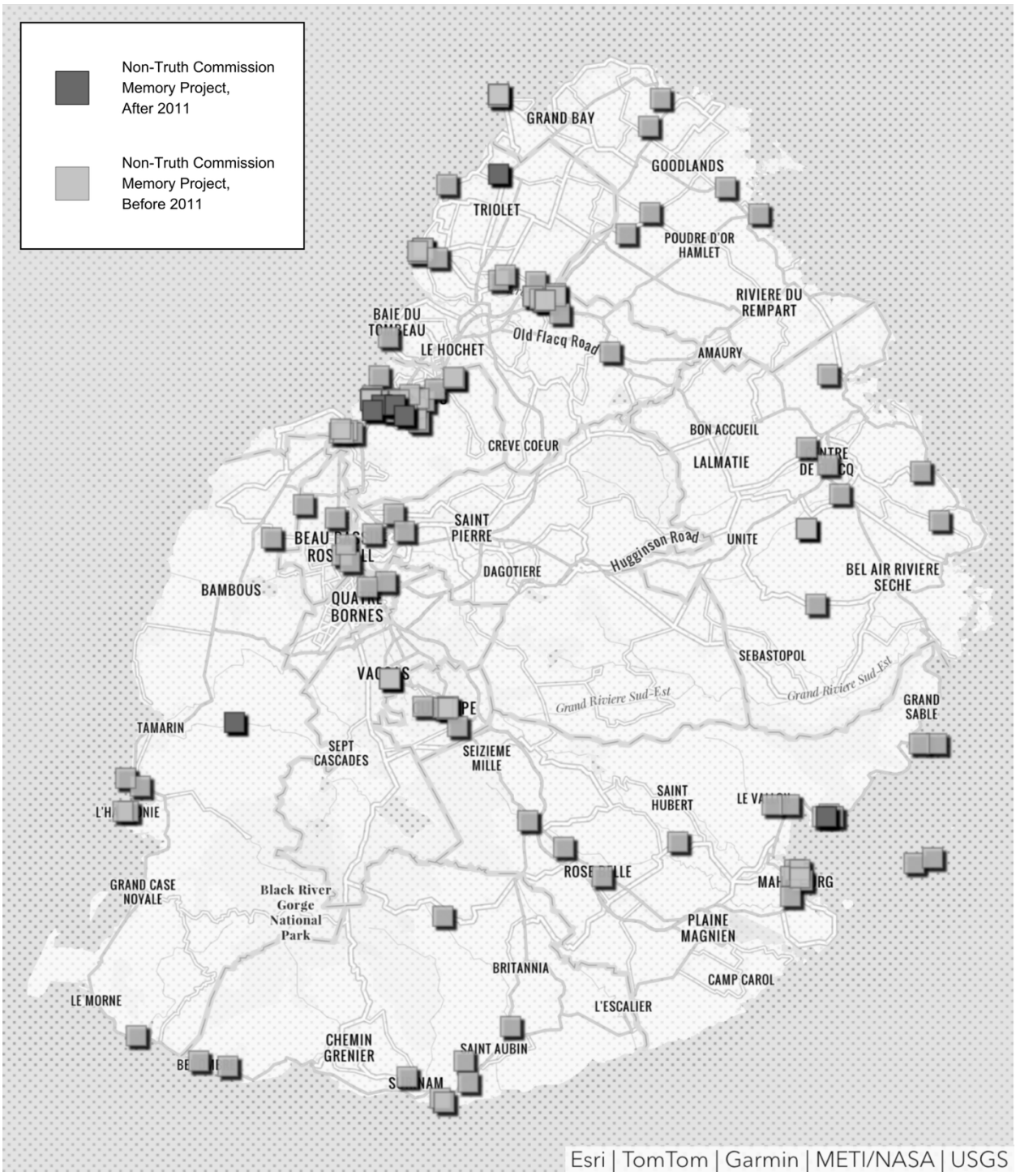

Figure 4. Other memory projects implemented in Mauritius before and after the truth commission's conclusion.

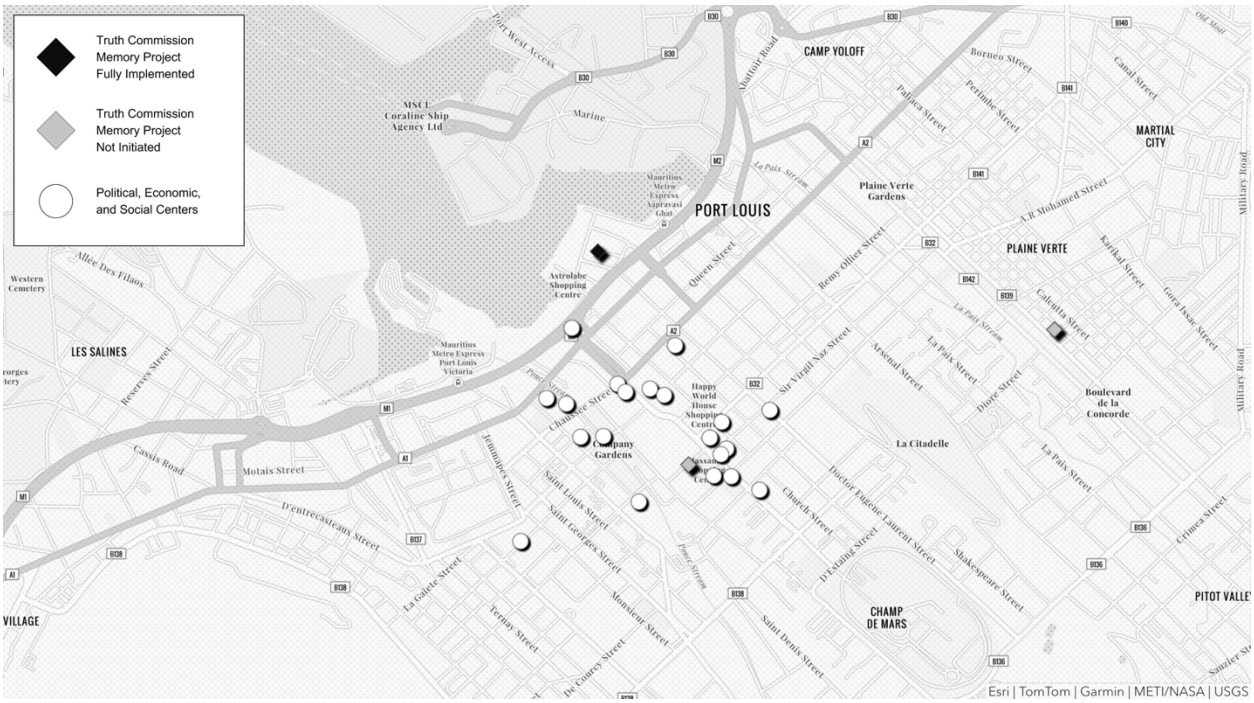

Figure 5. Downtown Port Louis.

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum clearly has a strong connection to the history of slavery and is easily accessible to many Mauritians. However, the Mauritian government's failure to implement the two other recommendations in this area is a missed opportunity for highly visible memory sites. In Port Louis, sites of memory have the opportunity to reach a large audience while simultaneously representing locations important to the history of slavery in Mauritius. As we discussed earlier, both accessibility and representation are important goals for memorialization.

Summary of Findings

Using GIS tools, we have mapped where truth commission-related memory sites were implemented in the decade following the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission. Our mapping exercise highlights that few recommendations were completed, and completed projects are not geographically representative of the contemporary population or the enslaved people the truth commission sought to memorialize. This has hindered memorial projects' educational potential

and limited the commission's legacy. By coding for different implementation levels, we can see that truth commission-recommended projects, initiated projects, and completed projects are three distinct concepts. To be sure, the truth commission's recommendations were often imprecisely worded, such that it is not particularly easy to hold the Mauritian government accountable for project implementation on a broad scale. Still, our mapping exercise shows that TJ in Mauritius is largely under-implemented, unrepresentative, and inaccessible to the public at large.[24]

Limitations of Geospatial Analysis

Geospatial analysis is not without its limits. GIS mapping tools, in particular, require that each data entry has a single fixed location. However, as discussed, some of the Mauritian truth commission's recommendations refer to general categories of sites, such as sugar estates, or propose a memorial project without specifying a site at all. Our maps thus exclude these recommendations. In addition, our geocoding uses point data instead of polygons, which may visually reduce the space occupied by atrocity sites and memory sites and, as a result, distances between sites may appear greater than they actually are.[25]

Using GIS also precludes analysis of recommendations that do not refer to sites at all (like remembrance days). Geospatial data, in our case, reflect the tangible, the material. More symbolic memory projects—like the creation of the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, recognized every August 23—and projects intended to catalyze recognition and social change cannot be mapped. While our data help us describe physical changes to Mauritius's memory landscape, we cannot visually represent social processes with our maps.

The scope of GIS projects can also downplay the full story of human rights. We centered our analysis on the main island of Mauritius, but Mauritius also consists of the islands Agaléga and Rodrigues. These less-populous areas still hold memories of slavery (Teelock and Salle-Essoo,

2008: 176–196). More broadly, we must understand slavery in Mauritius within the broader history of the Indian Ocean slave trade and the colonial borders of empire demarcating the territories where multitudes were trafficked.

We must also acknowledge that map-making proceeds from often-unequal dynamics and uses of power in world politics and has historically been used by colonial powers to assert domination through (re)definition of territory (Branch, 2013; Shah, 2012). Reducing populations to gradients and complex historical processes to points on a map risks making them objects in scholarship. Simply put, the type of work in which we are engaged is not necessarily power-neutral. However, the field of critical cartography demonstrates that making maps to tell people's stories can be part of memorialization itself. With this background, our project seeks to highlight an understudied *subject*—TJ in Mauritius—rather than construct the nation, its history, and its people as *objects* of study.

Memory as Intangible and Continuous

As discussed, not all memory projects have a physical dimension; neither can many memory projects be tied to a single location. Much of the memory of slavery in Mauritius is intangible or informal (i.e. not organized by a government body or museum non-profit). Sometimes this informal memorialization is mappable, such as burial sites at Trou aux Cerfs (Teelock and Salle-Essoo, 2008: 75–77). However, much memory lies in oral histories and traditional arts passed down through generations of Mauritians of different backgrounds.

Mauritian Creoles have preserved their own histories about slavery, mostly through oral history. For example, Sega, a music genre indigenous to the Mascarene Islands (Mauritius, Réunion, and Rodrigues), has preserved collective histories of liberation and played a major role in the Mauritian Creole Rights Movement (UNESCO, 2014). This popular genre was inscribed as

a part of UNESCO intangible heritage in 2014. The truth commission acknowledged such forms of intangible memory in its report, suggesting, for example, that possible land reparations should be determined using information from Mauritian Creole oral histories (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 311). Oral history is the foundation of Mauritian Creole historiography, as the colonial ruling class downplayed or omitted Mauritian Creole accounts in recorded history (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 1–2).

The truth commission tried to harness the power of collective memory in its recommendations, for broader recognition and remembrance in Mauritius. While this cannot be mapped, it reflects the commission's ultimate goal: creating collective memory that uplifts Mauritian Creole histories while acknowledging the ills of slavery.

Politicized Memory

Mauritius's memorialization certainly reflects a "hierarchy of memory" based on race. In the past, the country prioritized memorializing colonizers and their descendants, for example Franco-Mauritians and British Mauritians, who topped the colonial racial hierarchy. They controlled politics and the economy, so memorial projects historically romanticized colonialism. Memory sites central to Mauritian tourism, such as repurposed colonial estates, are exceedingly well preserved and much advertised, although they operate counter to the truth commission's efforts, by presenting a romanticized narrative of colonialism.

Mauritius's present racial hierarchy is evident even in the country's constitution. The most recent aggregates Mauritius's population into four groups: Hindu, Muslim, Sino-Mauritian, and General Population—the "fourth community" (Mauritius Const. Sch. I, art. 3, cl. 4).[26] The first three groups are descended from Asian indentured laborers. General Population is a blanket category encompassing not just Mauritian Creoles, but also the descendants of European

colonizers. The lack of disaggregation in population data has led to a diminished understanding of minoritized groups in Mauritius (Lallmahomed-Aumeerally, 2017). In particular, the truth commission noted that the failure to disaggregate the General Population category means that the exact population of persons descended from the enslaved is unclear (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 1). This has likely contributed to prioritizing memorialization of some groups and experiences over others. Indian cultural centers, for instance, tend to net more funding, whereas African cultural centers like the Nelson Mandela Centre tend to be chronically underfunded (Seetah, 2015).

Efforts to preserve Mauritian Creole history are recent and will hopefully continue. Most of Mauritian history has been written by the ruling class, from European colonizers to the current South Asian elite. Consequently, Mauritian narratives about the past have upheld romanticized visions of colonizers and colonial rule instead of drawing attention to the stories of the colonized and disenfranchised, especially descendants of the enslaved. Moreover, atrocity sites that should have become memory sites confronting the past are largely unchanged. All the while, former colonial powers, especially the French and the British, have not sponsored or supported memory projects confronting their regimes of abuse.

Conclusion

Mauritian Creoles have long wanted recognition, remembrance, and remedy, and, through the Creole Rights Movement, they helped spur the 2009–2011 Truth and Justice Commission. This novel commission recommended the memorial projects that we studied. The commission's goal was for memorialization to be carried out across the nation, including at every historical sugar estate—an ambitious and as yet unrealized goal. However, owing to the subordination of Mauritian

Creoles, connected to *le malaise creole*, widespread memorialization of slavery has not been a priority for the Mauritian government.[27]

Using geo-referenced data and geospatial tools such as GIS, as we have done, helps a range of TJ stakeholders understand the extent to which the memory of past violence can be both present and absent; central and peripheral to the built environment; and confrontational toward and permissive of romanticized visions of the past. We have shown that scholars can use GIS not only to document atrocities and patterns of abuse but also to monitor the implementation of memorialization projects. This is not the only way to reveal these patterns, to be sure; but GIS offers a powerful tool for doing so. And, unlike lengthy truth commission reports, archival documents, and government records, GIS-generated maps can be easily conveyed to a variety of stakeholders and can efficiently support advocacy efforts. Showing where abuses occurred, where memorial projects have been implemented, and where memorialization may yet be realized, we suggest, contributes to the redignification of violence-affected communities and to broader acknowledgment of their experiences. Our methodology can thus be used to set, and even raise, expectations for TJ and memorialization around the world.

Our research points to several exciting avenues for future research. First, grappling with the legacy of colonial violence is an enormous undertaking. Where do countries start? The case of Mauritius indicates the usefulness of truth commissions as a foundation for various redress measures, including memorialization. In light of this, scholars should theorize and analyze truth commission adoption in non-transitional contexts using cross-national data. Cross-national patterns in the adoption of transitional truth commissions are well established in scholarship (Zvobgo, 2026: ch. 3), but not so in non-transitional contexts with histories of colonial violence. Second, studying post-truth commission outcomes—notably implementation of

recommendations—is important (Skaar et al., 2025), as they suggest a country's interest in and ability to act on a commission's results and extend its legacy (Byrne et al., 2024: 210). While the Mauritian government's efforts to carry forward the work of the Truth and Justice Commission have proved wanting, it can still improve on its record, especially with civil society mobilization. Third, memorialization is not the only form of TJ that can be mapped in a given country. Future research could, for example, compare reparations awards across a country's regions, analyzing whether victims in the areas hit hardest by violence have been more likely to receive reparations than other victims (and if their reparation awards have been larger). Such an analysis could also reveal demographic differences among reparations beneficiaries, a potential source of societal conflict. When we contemplate these and other questions, it is clear that TJ practice deserves scholars' sustained interest and attention.

Acknowledgments

For helpful comments and feedback, the authors thank the editors and reviewers at Conflict Management and Peace Science, audiences at the 2024 International Studies Association Annual Convention, and members of the International Justice Lab. The authors are also grateful to Nathan Liu and Zoha Siddiqui for research assistance and collaboration. The authors are listed alphabetically.

Data availability statement

The data underlying this article are available via the Harvard Dataverse at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/0KJNGZ. Maps throughout this article were created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright © Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit www.esri.com.

ORCID

Kelebogile Zvobgo http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8701-8016

Funding

This research was supported by fellowships from the University of Southern California (Provost Fellowship in the Social Sciences) and William & Mary (Global Research Institute Pre-doctoral Fellowship). In addition, this material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program under grant no. DGE-1418060. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

Notes

[1] See, for example, Sikkink (2011) in political science, Konefal (2018) in history, and Lundy and McGovern (2008) in sociology.

[2] "Memorialization" broadly encompasses efforts to remember the past. Memorial projects can be both material (e.g., museums and monuments) and symbolic (e.g., days of remembrance). While state, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental actors can engage in memorialization (Buckley-Zistel and Björkdahl 2020: 270–71), we are particularly interested in state efforts, including the construction of memorials to victims of human rights abuses, the removal of monuments celebrating a violent past, and the transformation of atrocity cites like detention centers into museums and archives (Byrne et al. 2024: 207; see also Barsalou [2014: 4]). Throughout, we will use "memory projects," "memory spaces," "memory sites," etc. fairly interchangeably with "museums," "monuments," and "memorials". See Williams (2007) on the differences between them. What matters for us is that "memory" is tangible and tied to a physical location.

[3] Freire et al. (2019) explore spatial and temporal variation in abuses in Pinochet's Chile.

[4] For example, geospatial scientists have supported "during-conflict justice" using satellites and radar to document violations of the law of armed conflict (Huang et al 2023; Marx 2016).

[5] Some education projects have created maps to support TJ. For instance, the Documentation Center of Cambodia has mapped Khmer Rouge violence and subsequent memorialization; Canadian Geographic has used Google Earth when featuring testimonies from the 2015 Canadian truth commission on Indian residential schools; and researchers at the University of Newcastle have tracked Australian colonial frontier massacres. Documentation Center of Cambodia, dccam.org (Accessed March 18, 2024), Canadian Geographic, canadiangeographic.ca/articles/mapping-canadas-history-of-residential-schools-with-google-earth/ (Accessed March 18, 2024), University of Newcastle, c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php (Accessed September 29, 2025).

[6] See also the Global Transitional Justice Dataset introduced in Bates et al. (2020) and the Varieties of Truth Commissions introduced in Zvobgo (2020).

[7] Fourteen of 27 memorialization recommendations were theoretically mappable; 13 others could not be mapped because the commission did not specify a location for the projects. Note, some recommendations lack a location – remembrance days and commemorative ceremonies, for instance (Byrne et al., 2024: 218–220).

[8] Nine initiated recommendations were theoretically mappable. Eight of them appear in our visualizations.

[9] Four of the six completed recommendations were mappable.

[10] We were not able to find commensurate data on indentured laborers.

[11] Though an ambitious idea, the truth commission called for "[t]he National Heritage Fund to locate all sugar estates using slave labour from 1815 to 1835 and a memorial plaque placed outside each of them with all slave names.…" (Truth and Justice Commission, 2011: 396).

[12] Truth commissions make anywhere from a handful of recommendations to hundreds. Zvobgo (2026) observes nearly 6,000 recommendations made by 55 commissions between 1970 and 2018. Of these, the

Mauritian commission made 395. Given limited government resources, it is not likely that all recommendations will be initiated, let alone completed. Researchers can detect what governments value, then, by what they implement. Future research should compare implementation in other issues areas, in Mauritius and beyond.

[13] "Progressive" historical memory takes TJ forward; "regressive" historical memory takes TJ backward. We have adapted these terms from Bates et al. (2020), who conceptualize "progressive" and "regressive" TJ events and policies. As an illustration, trials would advance criminal accountability, whereas amnesties would undermine it. In a similar vein, a memorial to enslaved persons would advance TJ, whereas a monument to enslavers would impede TJ.

[14] Greenstein also views atrocity sites, which she describes as "sites of conscience," as potential sites of protest against ongoing discrimination and violence: "When people use the sites of their own victimization as sites of protest, they are able to make claims on the government that have more symbolic weight, attract more attention, and garner more support than they could if they were to make these same claims in a location that lacks this personal or in-group significance" (2025: 2).

[15] Some authentic sites can be near population centers.

[16] "Mauritius profile." *BBC News*. February 25, 2019. bbc.com/news/world-africa-13882731 (Accessed February 25, 2024).

[17] Address of Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam at the second reading of the Truth and Justice Bill, National Assembly of Mauritius, August 5, 2008. Quoted in Hayner (2011: 70).

[18] Map of the Island of Mauritius, exhibiting the Fortifications for its defence, Government and Public Buildings, Plantations, Forests, Rivers, Lakes, Mountains, Roads, &c. .. by L. Hebert, London, February, 1833. MS. 1¼ miles to 1 inch. discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C3477163.

[19] While slavery existed in urban areas, much of the violence that the truth commission detailed occurred on plantations and other slave estates.

[20] OpenStreetMap. "Nominatim." nominatim.openstreetmap.org/ui/search.html (Accessed February 21, 2024).

[21] National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. 2024. "Geographic Names Server." geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSHome/index.html (Accessed February, 21 2024).

[22] Teelock and Salle-Essoo (2008). See also *Vintage Mauritius*'s "Mauritius in the Early Years" site, which is available via: vintagemauritius.org (accessed February 21, 2024).

[23] Maroons escaped bondage and established communities in remote areas throughout Mauritius, most notably in Le Morne.

[24] One could query whether the choice to not memorialize slavery in more rural areas may be less the result of neglect or indifference but may owe more to policymakers thinking that there are better ways to transmit this knowledge – perhaps through memory spaces in higher-visibility areas. This could be a partial answer; but the truth commission itself recommended historical markers at every sugar estate. Moreover, given that roughly nine in ten Mauritians live outside Port Louis, regional slavery museums, for example, would achieve more than the Intercontinental Slavery Museum alone. Besides, the truth commission recommendations that the Mauritian government implemented are, on the whole, neither representative of historical or contemporary populations.

[25] Point data refer to discrete sites, such as those coded with latitude and longitude. By contrast, polygon data refer to a continuous set of data within a boundary. Point data can accurately depict locations for memory projects such as statues, but do not depict the entirety of a two-dimensional area such as the land occupied by a former plantation.

[26] *The Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius* (1968, rev. 2018). mauritiusassembly.govmu.org/mauritiusassembly/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/The-Constitution-Long-Upload-on-website-modify-on-28.01.22-06.04.22-.pdf (Accessed March 25, 2026). Indo-Mauritians (both Hindu and Muslim) are said to constitute around 68 percent of the Mauritian population, while Sino-Mauritians make up roughly 3 percent and the General Population accounts for the remainder (with

Mauritian Creoles at 27 percent and Franco-Mauritians at 2 percent) (U.S. Department of State, 2012). However, the Mauritius census has not had a question about ethnicity since 1972 (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2024).

[27] We are not able to distinguish non-TJ interests in government from anti-TJ interests as these tend to be observationally equivalent. There is at least a lack of interest among the ruling class, if not more hardened opposition.

References

Aguilar P, Balcells L and Cebolla-Boado H (2011) Determinants of attitudes toward transitional justice: An empirical analysis of the Spanish case. Comparative Political Studies 44(10): 1397–1430. Bakiner O (2021) Truth commission impact on policy, courts, and society. Annual Review of Law and Social Science 17: 73–91.

Balcells L, Palanza V and Voytas E (2022) Do transitional justice museums persuade visitors? Evidence from a field experiment. The Journal of Politics 84(1): 496–510.

Barranger C (2021) References to Slavery or Slaves: Mauritius Truth Commission. Hamilton, Canada: McMaster University Centre for Human Rights and Restorative Justice.

Barsalou JM (2014) Reflecting the fractured past: Memorialisation, transitional justice and the role of the outsiders. In: Buckley-Zistel S and Schäfer S (eds) Memorials in Time of Transition. Cambridge, UK: Intersentia, 47–68.

Bastian JA (2019) On Augusta's porch: A meditation on decolonizing the archives. Archival Science 19(2): 205–207. Bates G (2025) Threats and commitments: International tribunals and domestic trials in peace negotiations. American Political Science Review:1–16. doi: 10.1017/S0003055425101317.

Bates G, Cinar I and Nalepa M (2020) Accountability by numbers: A new global transitional justice dataset (1946–2016). Perspectives on Politics 18(1): 161–184.

Bernal V (2013) Diaspora, digital media, and death counts: Eritreans and the politics of memorialisation. African Studies 72(2): 246–264.

Boswell R (2006) Le Malaise Creole: Ethnic Identity in Mauritius. New York: Berghahn Books.

Branch J (2013) The Cartographic State: Maps, Territory, and the Origins of Sovereignty. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Brett S, Bickford L, Ševčenko L and Rios M (2007) Memorialization and democracy: State policy and civic action. International Center for Transitional Justice. Available from: https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Global-Memorialization-Democracy-2007-English_0.pdf (accessed 7 April 2026).

Bryan J (2011) Walking the line: Participatory mapping, indigenous rights, and neoliberalism. Geoforum 42(1): 40–50.

Buckley-Zistel S and Björkdahl A (2020) Memorials and transitional justice. In: Simić O (ed) An

Introduction to Transitional Justice. London, UK: Routledge, 269–289.

Buckley-Zistel S and Williams T (2022) A 5* destination: The creation of new transnational moral spaces of remembrance on TripAdvisor. International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 35(2): 221–238.

Byrne A, Zerie B and Zvobgo K (2024) Producing truth: Public memory projects post-violence societies. Human Rights Quarterly 46(2): 207–233.

Claveyrolas M (2012) With or without roots: The compared and conflictual memories of slavery and indentured labor in the Mauritian public space. In: Araujo AL (ed) Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space. New York: Routledge, 54–70.

Crampton JW and Krygier J (2005) An introduction to critical cartography. ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies 4(1): 11–33.

Cronin-Furman K and Krystalli R (2021) The things they carry: Victims' documentation of forced disappearance in Colombia and Sri Lanka. European Journal of International Relations 27(1): 79–101.

Croucher R, Houssart M and Michel D (2017) The Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission: Legitimacy, political negotiation and the consequences of slavery. African Journal of International and Comparative Law 25(3): 326–346.

Dancy G, Marchesi BE, Olsen TD, Payne LA, Reiter AG and Sikkink K (2019) Behind bars and bargains: New findings on transitional justice in emerging democracies. International Studies Quarterly 63(1): 99–110.

Dancy G and Thoms OT (2025) Transitional justice and the problem of democratic decline. International Journal of Transitional Justice 19(1): 36–59.

Elwood S (2006) Beyond cooptation or resistance: Urban spatial politics, community organizations, and GIS-based spatial narratives. Annals of The Association of American Geographers 96(2): 323–341.

Fitchett PG and Good AJ (2012) Teaching genocide through GIS: A transformative approach. The Clearing House 85(3): 87–92.

Freire D, Meadowcroft J, Skarbek D and Guerrero E (2019) Deaths and disappearances in the Pinochet regime: A new dataset. Available from: https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/vqnwu (accessed 11 April 2026).

Galeana F (2022) Vernacular legibility in counter-mapping: Assembling the geo-body of an indigenous socioterritorial movement in Honduras. Geoforum 128: 158–167.

García-Godos J (2020) Reparations. In: Simić O (ed) An Introduction to Transitional Justice. London, UK: Routledge, 193–217.

Giada S, De Groeve T, Ehrlich D and Soille P (2003) Information extraction from very high resolution satellite imagery over Lukole refugee camp, Tanzania. International Journal of Remote Sensing 24(22): 4251–4266.

Gibson JL (2004) Overcoming Apartheid. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Godefroidt A and Dyrstad K (2025) Hurting or healing? How conflict exposure and trauma (do not) shape support for truth commissions. Conflict Management and Peace Science 42(5): 514–535.

Greenstein C (2024) Reparations, but for what? Presenting a new approach to coding reparations. Law & Social Inquiry 49(1): 90–117.

Greenstein C (2025) Sites of conscience as sites of protest: How victims use place to advance their claims. International Political Sociology 19(3): olaf021.

Greenstein C (2026) Uncovering the uneven application of domestic reparations laws. In: Zvobgo K and Parente F (eds) Innovations in Human Rights: Concepts, Data, and Measurement. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Hayner PB(2011) Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Huang Q, Jin G, Xiong X, Ye H and Xie Y(2023) Monitoring urban change in conflict from the perspective of optical and SAR satellites: The case of Mariupol, a city in the conflict between RUS and UKR. Remote Sensing 15(12): 3096.

Intercontinental Slavery Museum (2024) Military Hospital. Available from: ismmauritiusltd.govmu.org/ism/? page_id=2319 (accessed 3 November 2025).

International Court of Justice (2019) Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965: Summary of the Advisory Opinion. Available from: icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/caserelated/169/169-20190225-SUM-01-00-EN.pdf (accessed 3 November 2025).

Jiang W, He G, Long T and Liu H(2017)Ongoing conflict makes Yemen dark: From the perspective of nighttime light. Remote Sensing 9(8): 798.

Kim HJ (2012) Structural determinants of human rights prosecutions after democratic transition. Journal of Peace Research 49(2): 305–320.

Kochanski A (2020) Mandating truth: Patterns and trends in truth commission design. Human Rights Review 21: 113–137.

Kochanski A (2021) Framing, truth-telling, and the limits of local transitional justice. Review of International Studies 47(4): 468–488.

Konefal B (2018) Memory offensives where impunity reigns. Humanity 9(2): 297–310.

Lallmahomed-Aumeerally N (2017) Minority rights and anti-discrimination policy in Mauritius—the case of ‘Malaise Creole’. International Journal of Cultural Policy 23(4): 446–463.

Li X and Li D(2014) Can night-time light images play a role in evaluating the Syrian crisis? Journal of

Remote Sensing 35(18): 6648–6661.

Light D and Young C (2015) Public memory, commemoration and transitional justice: Reconfiguring the past in public space. In: Stan L and Nedelsky N (eds) Post-Communist Transitional Justice: Lessons from 25 Years of Experience. New York: Cambridge University Press, 233–251.

Lischer SK (2019) Narrating atrocity: Genocide memorials, dark tourism, and the politics of memory. Review of International Studies 45(5): 805–827.

Loken M, Lake M and Cronin-Furman K(2018) Deploying justice: Strategic accountability for wartime sexual violence. International Studies Quarterly 62(4): 751–764.

Loyle CE (2025) Escaping Justice: Impunity for State Crimes in the Age of Accountability. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lundy P and McGovern M (2008) Whose justice? Rethinking transitional justice from the bottom up. Journal of Law and Society 35(2): 265–292.

Madden M and Ross A(2009) Genocide and GIScience: Integrating personal narratives and geographic information science to study human rights. The Professional Geographer 61(4): 508–526.

Marx A(2016) Detecting urban destruction in Syria: A landsat-based approach. Remote Sensing Applications: Society and Environment 4(October): 30–36.

Marx A and Goward SN (2013) Remote sensing in human rights and international humanitarian law monitoring: Concepts and methods. Geographical Review 103(1): 100–111.

Massey D (1994) Space, Place, and Gender. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mayo JM (1988) War memorials as political memory. Geographical Review 78(1): 62–75.

Murphy C and Zvobgo K(2023) Transitional justice for historical injustice. In: Lawther C and Moffett L (eds) Research Handbook on Transitional Justice. 2nd ed. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 421–435.

Nalepa M (2010) Skeletons in the Closet: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Europe. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Nalepa M (2022) After Authoritarianism: Transitional Justice and Democratic Stability. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

National Assembly of Mauritius (2008) Truth and Justice Commission Act, August 22, 2008. Government Gazette of Mauritius no. 84 of 28 August 2008.

O'Connell T and Young S (2014) No more hidden secrets: Human rights violations and remote sensing. Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal 8(3): 5–31.

Olsen TD, Payne LA and Reiter AG (2010) Transitional justice in the world, 1970–2007: Insights from a new dataset. Journal of Peace Research 47(6): 803–809.

Parente F (2025) Domestic accountability and non-compliance with international law: Evidence from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Journal of Peace Research 62(1): 119–133. Powers KL and

Proctor K (2017) Victim's justice in the aftermath of political violence: Why do countries award reparations? Foreign Policy Analysis 13(4): 787–810.

Quijano A (2007) Coloniality and modernity/rationality. Cultural Studies 21(2–3): 168–178.

Roht-Arriaza N (2001) The role of international actors in national accountability processes. In: De Brito AB, González Enríquez C and Aguilar P (eds) The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 40–64.

Salvioli F (2021) Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence. United Nations General Assembly A/76/180.

Scott JS, Solomon D and Zvobgo K (2024) Historical violence and public attitudes towards justice: Evidence from the United States. International Journal of Transitional Justice 18(1): 84–108.

Seetah K (2015) Objects past, objects present: Materials, resistance and memory from the Le Morne Old Cemetery, Mauritius. Journal of Social Archaeology 15(2): 233–253.

Shah N (2012) The territorial trap of the territorial trap: Global transformation and the problem of the state's two territories. International Political Sociology 6(1): 57–76.

Sikkink K (2011) The Justice Cascade: How Human Rights Prosecutions Are Changing World Politics. New York: W.W. Norton.

Sikkink K and Kim H (2013) The justice cascade: The origins and effectiveness of prosecutions of human rights violations. Annual Review of Law and Social Science 9: 269–285.

Skaar E, Rudling A, Selvik L-MM, Wiebelhaus-Brahm E and García-Godos J (2025) The implementation of truth commission recommendations: Exploring the 'Beyond Words' database for Latin America. Conflict Management and Peace Science 42(1): 82–103.

Steinberg MK, Height C, Mosher R and Bampton M (2006) Mapping massacres: GIS and state terror in Guatemala. Geoforum 37(1): 62–68.

Sulik J and Edwards S (2010) Feature extraction for Darfur: Geospatial applications in the documentation of human rights abuses. Journal of Remote Sensing 31(10): 2521–2533.

Teelock V (2015) The Mauritius truth and justice commission: 'Eyewash', 'storm in a teacup' or promise of a new future for Mauritians? In: Hall C, Draper N and McClelland K (eds) Emancipation and the Remaking of the British Imperial World. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 207–222.

Teelock V and Salle-Essoo M (2008) UNESCO Inventory of Slave Sites 2008. Réduit: University of Mauritius.

Teitel RG (2003) Transitional justice genealogy. Harvard Human Rights Journal 16: 69–94.

Truth and Justice Commission (2011) Report of the Truth and Justice Commission. Port Louis: Government of Mauritius.

Tuller H, Hofmeister U and Daley S (2008) Spatial analysis of mass grave mapping data to assist in the reassociation of disarticulated and commingled human remains. In: Adams BJ and Byrd JE (eds) Recovery, Analysis, and Identification of Commingled Human Remains. Humana Press, 7–29.

UNESCO (2014) Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee: 9.COM 10.28. Available from: ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/9.COM/10.28 (accessed 27 March 2024).

US Central Intelligence Agency (2024) Mauritius. The World Factbook. Available from: https://web.archive.org/web/20240221054l1/https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mauritius/ (accessed 23 March 2026).

US Department of State (2012) Mauritius. Background Notes. Available from: https://2009–2017.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/mauritius/201472.htm (accessed 26 March 2026).

Vaughan M (2005) Creating the Creole Island: Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Mauritius. Durham: Duke University Press.

Villamil F and Balcells L (2021) Do TJ policies cause backlash? Evidence from street name changes in Spain. Research & Politics 8(4): 1–7.

Vinjamuri L and Snyder J (2015) Law and politics in transitional justice. Annual Review of Political Science 18: 303–327.

Whigham K (2023) Memory sites. In: Gutman Y and Wüstenberg J (eds) The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism. London, UK: Routledge, 355–361.

Wiebelhaus-Brahm E and Davis SR (2024) Should heritage be preserved? Examining contention over Confederate monument removal. In: Bonaviri GM and Sadowski MM (eds) Heritage in War and Peace. Cham: Springer, 35–50.

Williams PH (2007) Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities. Oxford, UK: Berg.

Winston C (2020) Words count: Discourse and the quantitative analysis of international norms. Journal of Human Rights 19(1): 138–151.

Winston C (2021) Truth commissions as tactical concessions: The curious case of Idi Amin. The International Journal of Human Rights 25(2): 251–273.

Zvobgo K (2020) Demanding truth: The global transitional justice network and the creation of truth commissions. International Studies Quarterly 64(3): 609–625.

Zvobgo K (2026) Governing Truth: NGOs and the Politics of Transitional Justice. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zvobgo K and Crawford CB (Forthcoming) Performing truth? Examining transitional justice practice in West Africa. In: Garibian S (ed) Right to Truth, Truth(s) through Rights: Mass Crimes Impunity and Transitional Justice. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.