

## **Research Proposal**

# **Leaders from the Front and Leaders from Behind: An Empirical Study of Leadership in Mauritian politics.**

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## **1. PROPOSED TITLE**

Leaders from the Front and Leaders from Behind: An Empirical Study of Leadership in Mauritian Politics

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximises others' efforts towards achieving a goal. A leader can see how things can be improved and rallies people to move towards that better vision. Leaders can work towards making their vision a reality while putting people first. Just being able to motivate people is not enough – leaders need to be empathetic and connect with people to succeed. Leaders do not have to come from the same background or follow the same path. Future leaders will be more diverse, which brings a variety of perspectives. The most important thing is that organisations are united internally with their definition of leadership (Ghasabeh, Soosay & Reaiche, 2015).

More than any other domain, leadership plays a critical role in politics, and it is a determining factor in a politician's success and failure (Stokes, 1999). In this research, the researcher investigates and attempts to portray the differences in leadership styles between Mauritian political leaders who have opted to lead from the front and those who have opted to lead from behind. Practical examples from this study may provide a reference for aspiring political leaders to recognise their leadership qualities and choose a leadership style that will suit them and the terrain the best.

In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela equated a great leader with a shepherd: "He stays behind the flock, letting the nimblest go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realising that all along they are being directed from behind (Mandela, 1995)". Leading from behind, also often referred to as "shepherding", is one of the leadership styles where the leader steps back to take charge (Hill, 2010). This style challenges the traditional leadership style where the leader is expected to come out and lead the troop or the organisation from the front. Leading from behind does not mean abrogating one's leadership responsibilities. After all, the shepherd makes sure that the flock stays together and reaches its destination. He uses his staff to nudge and prod if the flock strays too far off course or into danger. For leaders, it is a matter of harnessing people's collective genius. Doing so entails primary responsibilities – and they are not easy to get right (Hill, 2010).

On the other hand, leading from the front, or by example, means we are demonstrating our leadership by going first (Johnston, 2001). In many cases, the

leader accomplishes this by doing the tough things to show that they can be done. It is one thing to tell people what to do. Moreover, it is entirely different when the leader shows what needs to be accomplished. Many real leaders do not believe in asking their team to do anything they would not do. An attitude such as this can often mean a great deal to team members. However, it can also, at times, be unrealistic. In essence, this is the situation of a leader who leads from the front.

## **2.1 Background of Study**

Mauritian politics has shown signs of a varied kind of leadership ability over the years. On the one hand, many would argue that individual leadership is not the primary focus, mainly when elections occur. The party's overall impression and strength are what counts – the impression of unity and confidence as a whole unit or even concept. The concept is that the total is more significant than its individual parts. On the other hand, some believe that individual leadership and their role are instrumental to the party's success or failure. We tend to believe the latter because voters relate to a person on the other side of a microphone attempting to sway us with their supposed leadership qualities and attributes rather than a singular unit of a party representing many of the party's dynamics personalities. Very simply, the leader is the person that people look to, and if that were not the case, if people evaluated the parties as a whole, then party heads, dynamics and alliances would be a mere figment of our imaginations (Almond & Coleman, 2015).

Leadership in Mauritius has seemed to take a distinct pattern of behaviour. Someone strong enough to shove or earn his or her way into a leadership role is likened to the knight on his white horse marching in to save the day. He or she, who speaks with confidence, is charismatic, appears intelligent in these thought patterns and communication and naturally captures the crowd's hearts (Kouzes & Posner, 2016). They tell you what you want to hear; improved infrastructure, more robust economic policies, more jobs, more money and when the day comes to vote, you hand over the baton to ensure that your vote is one more that will put this leader in what he or she deems is their rightful position.

In most cases, the glory fades when the dust of voting rallies has settled, and the smell of 'biryani' has long left the nation's noses, a very harsh reality sinks in. We, as voters, have just given another human a five-year mandate to lay their rule down and determine the quality of life in the country we call home. All circumstances are not naturally the same, and analysis can only be made on occurrences that have taken place. It is not always the case where voters feel betrayed by the vote, they imagined to be heartfelt; most are happy, at least for a long time after the vote has been cast. Nevertheless, naturally, that is why we have time-bound government tenure, and in

that time frame, they are essentially meant to deliver on all the precious and innovative promises they put forward when they were so keenly trying to win over the vote, to begin with (Athal, 2014).

There exists a massive gap in the academic research and development of Mauritian political leaders. This is why the researcher wishes to contribute to this particular field and topic through this PhD research proposal.

## 2.2 Research Problem

With different political leaders of Mauritius, each possesses a unique style with the intention of all being able to get the job at hand done. In a report delivered about political leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by Bertelsmann Stiftung (2010), it speaks about the mammoth task of taking on the role of political leadership:

*“Anyone wishing to shape politics in a modern Western democracy actively has set himself a difficult task. The world is changing, particularly the open democratic societies of the Western world, interlinked on many levels. These changes are making ever-increasing demands on politics because only with the will and capacity for making permanent reforms can we adapt our societies for the future. We must assess increasingly complex interrelationships as well as the effective logic of one’s political actions. The public demands clear political orientation against a background of innumerable competing offers, and all the more so, they are often required to make huge efforts to adapt to the reform processes. Simultaneously, the democratic government in modern states is practised less often through hierarchical control and with greater frequency through complex negotiation processes between participating states and individuals (Stiftung, 2010).”*

This essentially means that political reform management requires improvement, according to the report. However, even though it speaks about the Western world, the same principle ultimately applies to any democracy across the globe. Mauritius is no different. In its democratic pursuit throughout the years, its political leaders have struggled to find the best method to assist the country to run at its best. Whether this comes down to inexperience or personal interests put ahead of duty can indeed be debated. Perhaps in the case of the Mauritian leaders who will be assessed for this PhD thesis, one could say it has been a combination of both at some point or another. Thus, this leads to the need for inquiring the following research questions.

### **2.2.1 Research Questions**

1. What is the relevance of leading from the front in Mauritian politics?
2. What is the relevance of leading from behind in Mauritian politics?
3. Which qualities should a Mauritian political leader from the front possess?
4. Which qualities should a Mauritian political leader from behind possess?

## **2.3 Research Aim and Objectives**

### **2.3.1 The Aim**

To understand how leading from the front and leading from behind can affect the outcome of political leadership in Mauritius.

### **2.3.2 The Objectives**

The following research objectives will provide a focus for the study:

1. To conduct a detailed review of the literature related to leading from the front and leading from behind in the global and local political context;
2. To investigate the traits of leaders from the front and leaders from behind;
3. To assess the impact of those leadership characteristics on the success or failure of politicians;
4. To develop a matrix to explain the relationship between leading from the front and behind, and the success or failure of leaders; and
5. To develop a model through which aspiring political leaders may seek guidance from.

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The primary sources of the literature review included studies related to leading by example (Nejati & Shafaei, 2018), transformational leadership (Burns, 2003), shepherding (Hill, 2010) and servant leadership (Greenleaf *et al.* 1988), specifically involving global examples of Mahatma Gandhi (Humphreys & Einstein, 2003), Mark Zuckerberg (Ghasabeh *et al.* 2015), Steve Jobs (Lashinsky, 2012), Nelson Mandela (Wallace, 2013), Barack Obama (Chesterman, 2011) and Ricardo Semler (1993), and local examples of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Paul Raymond Bérenger, Sir Charles Gaëtan Duval, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam and Pravind Kumar Jugnauth (Selvon, 2012).

#### **3.1 Leaders from the Front**

Leadership is often misconstrued as largely hinged on titles, a tendency that has subconsciously normalised the depiction of leaders as *untouchables* (Murphy, 1941). As such, most teams have, in the past, been crippled by disconnects between members and the team leader, who is often misaligned as an authority figure whose fundamental role is to roll out project demands and seldom make follow-ups on the achievement of project goals. Today's organisational management demands have protracted the drawbacks of such warped and part-time leadership models, which exemplify the leader as largely detached from roles (Trehan & Rigg, 2011). Interestingly, the growing popularity of the 'leading from the front' approach represents an ideal alternative, which acknowledges the impact of the leader's influence. The leader's position has primarily been redefined to accommodate active engagement in team operations under the premise that the leader's behaviour is infectious (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). The shifting mentality encourages the utilisation of the leadership position held to inspire followers to pursue greatness and offer the ultimate best, not merely by words but actions.

The concept of leading from the front is engraved on several set standards by which every leader must abide. With the criteria for realising such a concept being a complex and comprehensive process, where all standards must be met and crucially adhered to, a shortfall in one or two of the given standards denotes a failure to lead from the front. Fundamentals detailing and determining an individual who leads from the front are broad and diversely entailed by various scholars, but the bottom line is the commonality in their categorisation. Different scholars might accord unique names and titles to either standards; all the fundamentals eventually fall into specific categories. The three main categories for the fundamentals of leading from the front are personal standards, people's skills, and organisational interest (Bode *et al.* 2012).

In any organisation with management and levels of employees, a chain of command is instilled to ensure harmony and the smooth operation of such an entity. The chain of command determines operational structures, inquiry, requests and even human resource matters. Furthermore, it also avails a channel and criteria, which ought to be followed by the personnel in an organisation when making decisions, which are out of their jurisdictions. Regardless of the general drive by modern entities to advocate a democratic culture of equality in organisations, in a bid to encourage creativity and innovation from the employees, there would be unparalleled anarchy in any organisation without an apparent chain of command dictating decision-making and other work-related matters (Kasper, 2002). With this in mind, it becomes prudent for any leader purporting to lead from the front to follow and strictly adhere to the set chain of command in an organisation. The reason for this is clear and precise, where people under leadership follow the example of their leader in most scenarios. In a case where people feel that their leader is arrogantly ignorant of the chain of command, they will not have the motivation to follow the command, too (Kouzes & Posner, 2016). Additionally, a leader failing to follow the chain of command results in confusion amongst the employees, who then lack a moral compass to guide their adherence and conformity in the organisation (Kasper, 2002).

Leading, as defined by society, entails offering directions and supervising progress with employees. With such a passive role of a leader when it comes to work, leaders often get detached from their entity employees, where in some cases, leaders are not familiar with the organisation's actual work (Kasper, 2002). Straightforward enough, leaders do not need to do actual work to fulfil their mandates in their capacities. However, leading from the front requires a further commitment by a leader to familiarise themselves with the actual work (Bode *et al.* 2012). One way of a leader getting involved in actual work is allocating themselves duties or joining work expeditions like field trips. By committing to actual work, a leader stands the chance of discerning the plights faced by employees in their capacities and duties, and this shapes the attitude of a leader towards such employees. Moreover, leaders getting involved with the actual work has a way of spiking the employees' morale, where they deem their work noble and worthwhile (Kellerman, 2012). Also, a leader committing to physical work alongside employees avails an array of new skills and knowledge by the leader, which can add more comprehension in decision-making and leadership approaches.

In every organisation, leaders work with set objectives and promises towards employees, organisation beneficiaries and clients. Such objectives are part and parcel of the employment contract, and they guide the work and progress of such a leader. In many cases, most promises or objectives are not realised by a leader, owing to internal and external causatives (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). While objective measurements are used in entailing a good leader, they do not always determine the

leader. As such, many leaders are more inclined towards defending their positions through small victories than actually delivering on their promises (Ridgeway, 2001). Leading from the front calls for a leader to strive and go the extra mile towards achieving the set goals and realising the organisation's objectives while satisfying the clients and employees. One means of delivering on promised results is through delegation of work. When work is further stratified and accorded teams with micro-managers, it is easier to get results and keep the workflow healthy. The delegation also ensures that all employees are involved in the organisation's work, where many employees would slack and slow progress (Leana, 1986).

Traditionally, the role of a leader is to mandate, instruct and supervise. With such a definition in mind, a leader is entitled to give orders, and employees have to follow. Room for employees' opinions is not availed in the traditional definition of leadership. According to Kellerman (2012), modern entities must bet their success on the nobility and precision of feedback from their employees, trusting that such employees are well placed and have the upper hand in the organisation's matters and productivity. Leading from the front calls for respect and value of employees' opinions and further shows concern when employees come forth with personal or work-related troubles. Indeed, employees are an essential asset to any organisation, and their happiness and comfort in the organisation will mean improved productivity. Listening to employees gives such a leader the chance to learn new aspects of the organisation (Ridgeway, 2001). Furthermore, leaders are only familiar with certain aspects of operations and cannot purport to know it all. They need the expertise of the employees on some issues to help them make the right decisions.

Given that no two human beings are identical in temperament, sentiments and opinions, conflicts are common in human interactions (Dehais *et al.* 2012). This is not different when it comes to workers in the same organisation. Often employees disagree on matters of personality, work, ethics and leadership. With all employees having pivotal roles to play towards an organisation's success and progress, it is salient for conflicts amongst employees or between employees and management or the public to be resolved hastily to avoid regression of productivity (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). According to Kellerman (2012), leading from the front requires a leader to devise proactive measures of resolving conflicts and applying a human touch of sympathy and impartiality when solving disputes that arise. Such a leader should also act in a manner that indicates conflicts are expected, and employees should embrace them, resolve them, and forge on with their duties to the organisation. A balance between being harsh and too lenient when resolving conflicts should be adhered to by anybody desiring to lead from the front (Dehais *et al.* 2012).

Kopytova (2016) claims that human beings' nature is reward-oriented, where people respond well to positive stimuli. She further states that human beings are

hedonistic, measuring any action's gain and pain and siding with the most rewarding activities. Hence, employees will always be motivated and drawn towards being acknowledged by their leaders or materially rewarded. Leading from the front entails appreciating employees' efforts and having an open ear and mind to their sentiments. By appreciating employees, such a leader stands a chance to develop a meaningful association with the employees, revealing salient information in decision-making. A good leader will strive to maintain a healthy relationship with employees and keep them motivated, and one way of achieving such objectives is valuing and appreciating the employees (Leana, 1986). Additionally, valuing the employees goes beyond rewarding them to ensuring equality in opinions, treatment and recognition. Leading from the front calls for leaders to ensure fair treatment and valuing of employees in the organisation.

Given the plethora of evidence, which has been captured in this chapter, cementing the fact that leading from the front yields insurmountable benefits for the organisation, there is hardly anything worse than creating a *follow my words and not actions* philosophy. It is far-fetched to assume that while leading from the front accentuates the best chances for employee motivation, then the alternative — primarily focused on leading only by words is beneficial. Double standards in the organisational context create the impostor mentality amongst the team members who feel that stepping out of the desired boundaries is okay as long as one can conceal the detour (Davidson, 1963). Gandolfi and Stone (2016) draw attention to the fact that leaders are regarded as the yardstick of operational excellence, meaning that their actions inform employees' conduct. Therefore, stating one thing and doing the other can be viewed as a form of betrayal by employees, who may, in turn, seek to reciprocate the mistrust. Given the demands of today's global marketplace, where efficiency has become a non-negotiable, the cost of not leading by example can be burdening for the organisation to bear (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). For instance, not meeting deadlines may translate to a loss in customers given the vicious competition in today's marketplace.

Piper (2015) argues that the underpinning fabric behind every working relationship is an emotional investment, where both parties understand their responsibility to the other. In this regard, emotional costs dictate operational metrics between leaders and followers, each trusting the other to watch their back. By saying one thing and doing the opposite, a leader frequently breaks the emotional bond between themselves and team members, ultimately creating a toll on loyalty. Ciulla (2020) claims that loyalty cannot exist where trust is elusive. Without positive emotions, the team members are less inspired to delineate optimal performance, which affects the achievement of desired outcomes. Besides, leaders who do not lead by example often detach themselves from tasks to focus on results normalising lower uncertainty avoidance among teams, impeding clear communication. Besides, Piper

(2015) argues that team leaders are ambassadors of organisational wellbeing. Thus, whenever leaders position themselves as external observers of the organisation, their failure to practice their messages cripples accountability.

Most groups seem to understand the intricacy of leadership in the realisation of organisational goals. Often the commonly peddled assumption is that influential leaders' commitment to results augments the ability to elucidate accomplishments, which separate thriving organisations from others that are struggling (Stowell, 1988). A large body of evidence exists, exemplifying leadership approaches, which have been proven to optimise desirable results, with several behavioural researchers emphasising a focus on the traits that distinguish successful leaders. Nevertheless, amid the different spectrums accorded to understanding the primary leadership fundamentals, leading from the front remains a pervasive theme (Miniter, 2012). It is widely acknowledged that whenever leaders commit to their teams, actively tasking up roles focused on attaining desired outcomes, operational efficiency is heightened. According to Eisenkopf (2020), good leaders normalise pushing members to tap into their potential through the manifestation of a clear vision. To add, Versland and Erickson (2017) claimed that mentorship often epitomises effective leadership as leaders actively contribute to task endeavours, significantly boosting organisational morale. Despite the commonly peddled fallacy that leaders should always better employees on intelligence to aver follower respect, leaders are ordinary individuals trusted with making significant decisions on behalf of the team. Hence, despite the apparent inability to predict the future riddled with uncertainties, leading from the front exemplifies adaptability. By showing followers that challenges are typical and can indeed be resolved, leaders inspire resilience from employees who can, in turn, be trusted with vital decision making (Eisenkopf, 2020).

Nejati and Shafaei (2018) added that leading by example is hinged on prioritising actions instead of mere talk. By fostering an action-oriented culture at the organisation, influential leaders create a team of dependable individuals that have become the difference-maker in a competitively charged business environment. According to Owen (2018), there is a salient relationship between leadership models and operational conflicts. The premise herein is that with accountable leaders ready to share group failure and success, differing viewpoints are welcome and gateway better operational methods instead of splitting teams apart. Like glue, the leader holds the team together, identifying areas that may require immediate attention and tapping into their authority to address issues before they morph into crises. The fact that behaviour is heavily shaped by thinking and perception of the world, having accountable leaders that are easily approached inspires followers to perform better as they feel part of the organisation. The alternative, being alienated and treated as a means to an end, often fosters animosity towards higher hierarchy, which cripples organisational harmony (Owen, 2018).

The issue of power structures within groups has been heavily debunked over the years, with researchers exemplifying and opposing augmenting efficiency views. On the one hand, there is the proposition that widening the gap between top management and junior employees elucidates respect upon which operational foundations are merited. Opposers of this augment reiterate the need for low power-distance metrics between followers and leaders for enhanced organisation efficiency. Amid these ideological clashes, leading from the front has emerged as the ultimate exemplification of the latter's power (Versland & Erickson, 2017). Where leaders perceive themselves as part of the group and not moderating outsiders, there is a better understanding of the critical processes behind accomplishing goals.

Consequently, the leader is better positioned to understand followers' needs, prompting the adoption of programs that can drive personal and organisational development. Hendley (2019) maintains that most workplace conflicts stem from employees perceiving themselves as being on the receiving end of top-level management decisions and challenging to realise goals. This kind of pressure leads to gateways frustration that is often misdirected horizontally among employees or even externally towards customers. In this regard, leading from the front draws focus to junior employees' plight, thus enhancing practical solutions for organisational problems (Hendley, 2019). Proponents of the leading from the front model have often stood by the premise that effective leadership is about purposeful strategising. In a business environment marred by opposing forces exemplified by the global marketplace, scholars agree that academia and management need to learn from the military, where leaders take ownership of challenges, guiding followers towards accomplishing desired results (Miniter, 2012).

Owen (2018) draws attention to the fact that teams thrive better when leaders are willing to take the initiative. Such assertions by Eisenkopf (2020) have been best put to the test in today's business environment that is highly dynamic and complex, where the ability to address uncertainties is separating market shapers and losers. To keep up with the demands of a rapidly shifting business environment, most organisations have been forced to make critical adjustments. While such changes may be construed as complex, leaders that have normalised leading by example have become highly sought after as facilitators of change due to their unique ability to take risks and manage team expectations. According to Hendley (2019), the unpredictability of change means that organisations have to contend with unpredictable challenges that sometimes might require a complete overhaul of strategy. Influential leaders understand the intricacies of changing the status quo and operational modalities, given their visibility at the organisational level.

Leaders are becoming increasingly valuable assets in teams' preparation to

embrace change that sometimes may be deemed disruptive. One instance is the recurring issue of human resource concerns surrounding adopted emerging technologies that most employees have feared have been designed to replace them. In such instances, having a leader that employees relate with, one always involved in employee affairs and juggling organisational demands, can be reassuring and ensure that employees perform at their highest possible standard (Talley, 2020). Embracing change is never an easy endeavour as many cherish operational stability. This means that most followers reject new developments without even conceptualising real concerns that stem from adopting change. Change touches critical fabrics of emotional connections, meaning that followers will be more inclined to embrace leaders' developments with a track record of being counted upon (Talley, 2020). There is better change management because influential leaders would have ordinarily established accountability amongst employees.

Leading from the front is a long-standing perspective with verified benefits to the leader, the employees, concerned organisation and the clients of such an organisation (Versland & Erickson, 2017). As such, many scholars have delved into studying the parameters and the technicality of leading from the front to understand more about its underlying benefits than other leadership notions. In studying leading from the front, scholars have associated this leadership attitude with the transformational leadership style. Furthermore, leading from the front falls into place with the transformational leadership theory's salient traits, as discussed below.

The transformational leadership theory was proposed by Burns (2003). In this theory, a leader is deemed to have the potential and ability to inspire and motivate employees to support each other and oversee the realisation of an organisation's potential and objectives. Such a leader ought to have four factorial traits for effectiveness in this model. The first factor is individual consideration, where the leader tends to connect with every employee to discern their strengths and weaknesses. The second factor is philosophical consideration, where the leader is supposed to offer professional insight in coordinating and conducting the organisation's work. Thirdly, the leader should be charismatic and offer the employees motivational inspiration to keep them focused and dedicated to the organisation's objectives. Lastly, such a leader should be adept in idealised influence, which entails the innovation and implementation of robust changes and improvements to realise the organisation's goals (Burns, 2003). The theory has been idealised as the modern way of leadership, where individuals are accorded the freedom for creativity and innovation in an organisation. In its operation, the theory and its ensuing leadership style have been attributed to the success of modern century super business corporations like Facebook and Apple. One of the prominent critics of this theory is that clueless leaders can fake offering freedom to employees to conduct business in their ways and end up scooping the success accreditation when it all comes together. Where employees are

given the freedom to explore and ideate, leaders can passively joyride and eventually take credit for an organisation's success if employees excel from their creativity and innovation (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016).

One of the salient advantages of transformational leadership is the ability to unite all employees in common sense and course. With this, a transformational leader can put all matters into perspective and bring all employees on board to realise the organisation's set goals and objectives with inspiration. Additionally, a transformational leader can maintain adaptability changes in the organisation and promote employee morale through his motivation (Burns, 2003). Transformational leadership entails making critical overhaul and potentially detrimental risks in the organisation, which are deemed pivotal in the given organisation's progress. Thirdly, a transformational leader accords much freedom to the employees to shape and expand their innovation and motivation towards realising the organisation's goals and objectives (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016).

When it comes to disadvantages of transformational leadership, they tend to be in direct antagonism of the leadership style's additives. For instance, by affording employees power and freedom in the organisation, the leader stands a chance of losing credibility and control over the organisation, leading to eventual autocracy and dictatorship to regain his/her power. When making critical, difficult decisions in the organisation, such a leader also stands the chance of making terrible mistakes that pose a peril to the organisation's very existence (Burns, 2003). Also, always motivating and inspiring employees in an organisation requires feedback to check employee motivation and alignment with the organisation's objectives. Such a process can be time-consuming and tiring, leading to overworking and exhaustion of all concerned and a potential reverse demotivation. All these advantages are direct opposites to the acclaimed merits of leadership style (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016).

One of the main reasons why Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is a transformational leader, leading from the front, is his tendencies to neutralising power positions in his entity. On many occasions, Zuckerberg and his managerial team are seen and portrayed working together and jointly with junior employees to come up with viable solutions with the potential of propelling the Incorporation forward and ahead of its competitors. The practice of dissolving power barriers and mingling with junior staff is in line with a dominant trait of transformational leadership that entails a leader lowering their egos to work jointly with employees as a guide and a motivator (Ghasabeh *et al.* 2015). His act of doing actual production and initiative work with his employees denotes an individual who is power blind and more inclined towards development and progress in the organisation. That is a transformational leader.

Additionally, Zuckerberg can effectively inspire his employees and the vast pool

of young entrepreneurs who look up to him through his collective talks and actions. He is fond of giving viral speeches that generate and provoke much thinking among people working under his rule or mentorship. The aspect of inspiring other people is a common trait in transformational leadership, where the leader places value in inspired employees as very productive and effective in improving their organisations (Ghasabeh *et al.* 2015). Dawning his famous trademark shirt, Zuckerberg has a Facebook and YouTube channel where his speeches are recorded and availed to all his mentees and employees. These speeches have been a point of reference to the success of others.

To add, Zuckerberg tends to be helpful in entertaining new ideas from his employees, which has been a considerable part of his success. The Facebook Business branch was a joint team idea, which availed a platform for information and market for Facebook users to conduct business. The new branch platform has tremendously kicked off and is responsible for a fair share of the received revenues by Facebook Incorporation. A transformational leader acknowledges other employees' ability to develop viable and profitable ideas for improving the organisation and is quick to discern and implement any such ideas that sound and look prospectively lucrative (Ghasabeh *et al.* 2015). In this sense, Zuckerberg is truly a transformational leader in his own right and through his actions and tendencies. Lastly, Zuckerberg is proactive and has a high adaptability power. Everything is vastly and expeditiously changing in technology and media, which calls for flexibility and adaptability to keep afloat and up to trend. Given the stiff competition in the social media world, Zuckerberg has regularly changed and renovated his Incorporation and performed several competitor assimilations and mergers to improve his competitive ability and remain top of his game. This has seen Facebook generating a lot of income and dividends to its few shareholders, acclaiming it as one of the world's giant media platforms. A transformational leader can adapt to changes in the competition or the organisation's environment and keep up to date and well equipped to any revolutions (Ghasabeh *et al.* 2015).

Another concrete example of transformational leadership to consider is Mahatma Gandhi, whose legacy lives on because he chose to lead from the front (Humphreys & Einstein, 2003). Despite opposing forces, Gandhi remained true to his course, never once behaving violently. Today he is an icon, his legacy living on to inspire generations to exemplify what authentic leadership should exemplify. Now, consider the alternative — where Gandhi could have once turned violent and physically battled proponents of his ideology. The world would have looked at him with mistrust and suspicion, and probably his legacy would have been long written-off. Once a leader fails the integrity test, followers become architects of their approaches, making it impossible to form members to collaborate effectively. Without an accessible authority figure to lay the blueprint for organisational expectations, uncertainties may

morph into conflicts that may completely break operational efficacy (Carey, 1992).

The reality about most people is that they aspire to be leaders, have authority and make world-tilting changes towards humanity's advancement. Interestingly, this desire to be more and offer more has created accountability in a society, which is the foundation upon which various societal developments have been hinged. The only problem is, while a significant fraction is ready to jump on leadership positions and use those positions to advance change, there is lacking the willingness to lead from the front when no one is looking. Consequently, most people fail to actualise their leadership dreams, limited by the hesitance to be risk-taker. As expressed in the various arguments developed in this paper, choosing to lead from the front can not only unravel manifold operational benefits but fosters the mentorship of followers to become leaders that can be counted upon. As the world desperately craves change to balance the manifold advancements realised by day, maybe it is time leaders normalised leading from the front.

### **3.2 Leaders from Behind**

In a Harvard Business Review article, Hill (2010) reiterates Nelson Mandela's phrase that regards the most influential leaders today, and in decades to come, to be the ones that lead from behind. An analogy used to describe this type of leadership paints the picture of a shepherd leading his flock, letting even the weakest of them go out ahead, while he directs them from behind (Hill, 2010). This analogy may seem to be a weakness and a scapegoat for lazy leaders in traditional leadership models. This is due to the mindset that people in authoritative positions have, and they believe that their sole responsibility is to 'direct the show' and come up with all the big ideas (Hill, 2010). Although the model of leading from behind has proven to be rewarding to a large extent, it is essential to be cognizant of the people not enticed by the idea of being a part of decision making and setting goals. In this case, a leader leading from behind will either have to replace these individuals or change their leadership style to a more autocratic one (Cross *et al.* 2019).

The relationship between a leader and his followers is mainly psychological, and this kind of psychological contract in organisations has since evolved. People have started to value aspects like purpose in their daily and work lives. Subordinates generally want the opportunity to actively contribute towards their teams or their organisation's goals and missions. They want to feel valued and to be associated with contributing to something bigger than themselves (Hill, 2010). However, for one to feel like they are part of purpose-driven, there has to be a leader that paves the way and demonstrates the magnitude, importance and value of the goal or mission at hand. So, contrary to the concept of leading from behind, a leader has to take a stand at

'leading from the front, which can also be termed as leading by example. Combining or interchanging between the two leadership strategies will mean that a leader will go first and demonstrate what needs to be accomplished — that is, leading from the front — then they step aside and let their designated teams take over. If cultivated well, real growth and creativity can emerge from a team led from behind (Cummota, 2017).

On the other hand, Ricardo Semler (1993) defined the leading from behind style based on his experience. When he resigned as CEO of his family business, he had already sacked 60% of its top managers and empowered the frontline workers to make their own decisions. Besides, his employees were given the liberty to decide on their working hours and remuneration, including their holidays. Semler (1993) consistently led from behind while encouraging innovative ideas and entrepreneurial mindsets and behaviour. From this perspective, his ultimate goal was to lead a self-sustainable group of employees who did not need micromanagement and were empowered enough to make profitable decisions without him or a structured management hierarchy.

Nevertheless, according to researchers Greenleaf, Spears and Vaill (1988), a team or workforce will naturally recognise and look up to its leader consciously or subconsciously. It will defer any significant decisions and halt the process of closing big deals until the leader is available to attend to the matter. This ultimately slows down progress to a certain extent and cripples some functions if the leader who has been leading from behind is absent. Semler (1993) draws attention to a similar disadvantage where his teams defer to make significant decisions and to close deals until the leader returns from his trips and vacations. Hence, if the company had a defined leadership structure contrary to putting everyone on the same level of influence in decision-making, it would have been easier for a deal to be closed and finalised by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), for example. Although leading from behind encourages massive growth, independence, creativity and innovation, there are critical decisions in the business arena or the political sphere, which need to be taken solitarily by a designated leader.

Nonetheless, by adopting the strategy to lead from behind, one is ultimately giving his subordinates a fair say or a democratic approach in making decisions. In his book 'Maverick', Semler (1993) mentions a situation where he lobbied for a possible recruit who was highly experienced for an open position. However, he was outvoted by junior board members opting for a less experienced candidate closer to their age. Regardless of Semler (1993) having voting power to nullify everyone else's decision, he went for the younger candidate to prove participative management's viability in his company. Now, if this decision in question proves to be the wrong move for the company, in the long run, it may mean redoing the recruitment process, which ultimately indicates some of the downfalls of the leading from behind strategy. The

cost and repercussions of failure usually fall on the company and the leader, even though subordinates unanimously made it.

To warrant some insulation level against similar pitfalls, the "Level Five Leaders" recruitment strategy described by Collins (2001) is commendable. In this recruitment strategy, the companies were focused on two attributes for their selection: wilfulness and selflessness. Consequently, since their leaders were wilful, the latter did not allow detrimental situations or events to remain unaddressed. However, since their leaders were selfless, the leaders made sure to empower and celebrate their colleagues before themselves.

Another description that depicts leading from behind is that of an everyday leader who inspires and pushes others to use leadership skills. This is described as a critical element to develop self-motivation (Cross *et al.* 2019). Nevertheless, theorists Cross, Gomez and Money (2019) argue that this leadership strategy can be deceitful and manipulated for personal gain. This sheds light on the fact that one can fall victim to political shrewdness under the pretext of leading from behind. Moreover, one can be manipulated and led from behind without even realising it. Thus, it is vital to identify and distinguish between manipulative leaders and those who genuinely lead from behind to foster self-motivation and develop leadership skills in their followers.

Leading from behind may also mean giving your team more "rope and scope" than they would initially deem appropriate, but not overly excessive, that they may tumble down the well and struggle to rise back up (Cross *et al.* 2019). This same strategy also implies that a person neither needs to have a title nor a mantle of leadership to influence others profoundly (Wallace, 2013). Therefore, one can lead from behind by merely supporting and cooperating with the one that carries the title, regardless of how temporary or permanent their position and title are. The Obama administration adopted this strategy regarding leading from behind by only providing support to targeted countries for the building of their democracy and allowing the locals to take up most of the responsibility for their democratic system and security (Santos & Teixeira, 2015). In this strategy, the United States offered military training to all the targeted new governments to equip them for their national security responsibility. Although the American president's administration described this plan as 'leading from behind', it can be argued that this strategy was somewhat cunning. The primary reason for and emphasis on training local security for targeted countries like Iraq and Afghanistan were to ensure that terrorists do not regroup in these territories. Barack Obama and his Secretaries believed that America would only be safe if terrorist groups like Al- Qaeda failed to find a haven in any of the targeted countries. Hence, in hindsight, the strategy was influenced more by self-interest than it was by selfless aid.

Moreover, in Libya's case, former US president Barack Obama restricted

America's involvement and participation in the bombing and overthrowing of the Libyan revolutionary, politician and political theorist Colonel Gaddafi, leaving it to the French and the British to guide the campaign (Moyer, 2016). The strategy was said to lead from behind and hailed more so when Colonel Gaddafi was eventually ousted. Following this, the Obama administration (2008-2016) decided to hand over American diplomats' security to the Libyan armed forces, which led to the killing of the American ambassador in Libya under inadequate protection at a diplomatic facility. This incident illustrated some of the downfalls of leading from behind. Perhaps events would have turned out differently if the American administration had decided to lead from the front in efforts to demonstrate the goal and mission at hand, in this case, security.

Furthermore, they could have led from the middle, demonstrating a hands-on leader while assessing the Libyan security forces' strengths and weaknesses. Indeed, once confidence has been gained, a leader can then comfortably lead from behind and leave an equipped team to explore the reigns of leadership under guidance. These steps towards successfully reaching the leading from behind target can be applied in any given scenario (Moyer, 2016).

An American journalist ridiculed this concept of leading from behind, perhaps because the strategy almost seemed to insinuate that the Obama administration did not fully trust the country's ability to lead from the front (Chesterman, 2011). The subject was mocked, mainly when France assumed a prime position in the initial airstrikes, with the whole operation eventually being handed over to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Additionally, a Canadian was in operational command over the entire operation. However, although ridiculed, Professor John Braithwaite (2009) affirms that "Nugget Coombs exercised more effective power for social change in his life than any Australian prime minister, by leading from behind (2009, p.29)."

From another angle of discussion, the world's evolution at large is relatively faster than it was a decade ago, thanks to technological advancements. This means that companies, organisations, and governments continuously need to reinvent and improve themselves to keep themselves abreast of the rapidly changing world. One of the several benefits of the leading from behind style is innovation (Hill, 2010). Linda Hill (2010) argues that leading from behind results in incremental innovation amongst team members and a continual innovative breakthrough. Also, she believes this is a sure way to maintain a competitive edge in the market. To keep this stream of breakthroughs flowing and sustainable, everybody on a given team should contribute and try out their innovative ideas. However, not everyone gives brilliant ideas that yield positive results, and so, in similar cases, a leader ought to interject at the risk of demoralising a team member for the sake of avoiding an unnecessary downfall and cost. On the flip side, it would be controversial if the leader interjects an innovative idea because he fails to see the anticipated results, even though if put to the test, the

idea in question would have worked. As a result, to put a safety net that avoids counter-productivity, a leader who is leading from behind ought to harness his team's combined brilliance for sustainable innovation and progress to be achieved (Hill, 2010).

Contrary to the belief that leading from behind is a positive strategy that should be adopted, Jason Homan (2018) argues that such leaders are insecure because they choose to lead from behind instead of getting out in front of the problem like a proper leader who manages from the front of the pack. Hence, this type of leader gradually becomes irrelevant because of those insecurities and is often seen as inadequate. Homan (2018) further states that they end up losing ground, and because they are not leading the way, and instead allowing the crowd to dictate the direction, they eventually end up losing their moral authority. This assumption may prove to be true if the strategy of leading from behind is not implemented skillfully and professionally. To add, researchers have discovered that leading from behind, also referred to by some as *laissez-faire* leadership, is generally the leadership strategy that results in the lowest productivity amongst team members (Anbazhagan & Kotur, 2014).

More possible disadvantages of adopting the leading from behind strategy include the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities (Barling & Frone, 2016). If not adequately and clearly defined, some team members may lack clarity about their responsibilities and what they are meant to be doing with their time. Moreover, if poorly implemented, the strategy of leading from behind can result in low and inadequate involvement with the team by the leader and experience almost no accountability (Skogstad *et al.* 2007). This is because when some leaders take a step back, it is often perceived as disengagement and withdrawal from leadership responsibilities, and so followers tend to follow suit and express less concern or interest in the project (Barling & Frone, 2016). Likewise, other leaders end up taking advantage of leading from behind by avoiding responsibility for any team's failures. They will typically blame their followers for not meeting deadlines or completing tasks. Besides, at the peak of disadvantages of this strategy lies passivity. At this point, leaders do not put any effort into motivating their followers. Neither do they recognise team efforts nor attempt to get involved with projects under the pretext of leading from behind. Since this leadership style relies heavily on the team's capabilities, it is rendered ineffective in situations where team members lack the experience and the knowledge they require to carry out tasks and finalise decisions (Skogstad *et al.* 2007). Ultimately, these demoralise followers and result in low job satisfaction and poor job performances.

Leading from behind is also not appropriate for settings where high productivity and efficiency are a core priority. According to Barling and Frone (2016), some individuals are not necessarily good at managing projects by themselves, setting deadlines and solving problems independently. As a result, deadlines may be missed, and projects may go off-track when team members do not receive adequate guidance

and feedback from their leaders. In this instance, leaders should thoroughly evaluate the calibre of people they have in their teams and thus, adjust to a more delegate-approach until members gain confidence, competency and enough experience to go out independently.

According to Cherry (2020), to reap any benefit from applying the leading strategy from behind, specific prerequisites must be met. For instance, if team members are experts and more knowledgeable than the leader, they are likely to work without supervision and accomplish minimum guidance tasks. This leading strategy generally allows such followers to demonstrate their extensive skills and knowledge surrounding that specific subject matter. If team members are incredibly passionate and have an intrinsic motivation for their work, the leading from behind strategy affords them autonomy and liberty to maximise their efforts towards a common goal (Cherry, 2020). However, leadership expert Steve Armstrong (2015) believes that to lead from behind also requires the leaders themselves to adapt and embrace specific characteristics like developing and nurturing trust. Followers need to trust that their leader will do what he says he is going to do. This concept should apply to both big and small commitments. Once followers gain the trust and confidence in their leader, the leader needs to find ways to authentically show his team that he trusts them to commit to their work, make wise decisions and focus their efforts on a similar goal (Armstrong, 2015). So, arguably, it is inevitable that one has to lead from the front first before one can comfortably lead from behind. Also, followers are at ease to be led from behind only when given enough guidance, trust and confidence in their abilities to achieve the organisation's missions and goals.

Within any leader, there are strengths and weaknesses. Hence, it is expected that leaders will make mistakes. So, as one leading from behind, it is crucial to be transparent and, overall, to communicate well with the team (Armstrong, 2015). It can be argued that when team members or followers know too much concerning the organisation's plans, it may mean they are in a position to sabotage the organisation. For instance, according to the International Labour Organization, over 400 million jobs were lost in the second quarter due to the COVID-19 pandemic (International Labour Organization, 2020). Some employees who may have already been made aware of their company's intentions to let them go may have found themselves in a devious position to sabotage their team members or their leaders out of spite. However, regardless of the consequences, Armstrong (2015) encourages that a leader who is leading from behind should "adopt the doctrine of no surprises (2015, p.23)". What is more, leaders should avoid letting their teams be blindsided by circumstances and events they saw coming, but the team did not.

To add, in his book 'You Can't lead from behind', Armstrong (2015) highlights a civil war movie scene where a general is chastising his commander for venturing too

close to the battlefield frontline. He quotes, "We cannot afford to lose you, General (2015, p.41)." The general commander's response to this remark as he shrugged was, "Can't lead from behind (2015, p.41)." Now, could it be possible that every line or field of work has a different leading strategy that can be successfully customised and implemented for them? In this instance, is it sustainable to have an army commander leading his troops from behind or for a lead surgeon to guide his team through an operation from behind a desk? Probably not. It would be ideal if such environments and fields of work maintained a more hands-on leadership strategy to model the behaviour they expect their teams to emulate.

The leading from behind strategy often excels in creative fields where individuals are often highly motivated, creative and skilled. Furthermore, the leaders from behind typically excel at evidencing contextual information and research at the beginning of a given project, which can exceptionally be useful for self-managed teams (Sfantou *et al.* 2017). This means that teams have all the information and knowledge they require to complete tasks as directed independently. In his book 'Inside Apple', author Adam Lashinsky (2012) related how former chairman, CEO and co-founder of Apple Inc., Steve Jobs, was known for instructing his team about the kind of products he would like to be produced and put on the market. After that, he would leave the different teams to work on their own devices with an end goal of fulfilling his desires. Lashinsky (2012) further states that this strategy has worked well for Apple, which, to date, continues to lead the smartphone industry with ground-breaking innovative products being sold on the market.

A similar leadership approach can also be seen in how CEO and product architect Elon Musk lead Tesla — one of the leading companies in the automotive industry (Nandi, 2013). Former US President Herbert Hoover also became famous for governing the country using the leading from behind strategy. He often allowed his more seasoned and experienced advisors to take the lead on matters where he lacked the knowledge and expertise (Lashinsky, 2012). However, journalist Richard Miniter (2012) bluntly defined another former US president, Barack Obama, as an uncertain and temperamental president who is often incapacitated by contending political considerations. Miniter (2012) then credits many of the Obama reign victories to women like Valerie Jarrett, former Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. However, it can be argued that Obama too adopted the leading from behind strategy and allowed these women to take the lead on matters and tasks, which required more experience and expertise than he possessed at the time. Whether this leadership style worked or not is subjective and arbitrary.

Multiple leadership styles and approaches might be well applied at different stages of a given work process. For instance, the leading from behind strategy may prove to be most effective when applied during the initial or early stages of a project,

when an idea or product is being brainstormed or created (Sfantou *et al.* 2017). Once the idea or product design is ready and set in place for production, it may be beneficial to switch leadership styles to more oversight and direction. In work settings with high stakes and high pressure to maintain precision, significant oversight and attention to detail, a leader leading from behind may fail dismally. Since every detail in such working environments requires perfection and must be delivered in time at all costs, a more participatory and managerial leadership style would be appropriate (Sfantou *et al.* 2017).

It is continuously seen that characters that lead from behind — even though they are not in any announced positions of leadership — are not recognised by any award or accolade, but they significantly impact the background. An example would be that of the Sharp Street Methodist Church women, dating back to 1898-1921 (Jamison, 2010). According to Felicia Lorraine Jamison (2010), these African American women fought simultaneously for their race and sex rights. They were content at the time to do it all from the background as a way to not threaten the acquired authority of African American men that had been newly acquired. The women raised funds and organised events before ensuring that the African American man represented the race well. Consequently, the men became the community's face — it is evident by the number of male names mentioned in history books, but hardly ever the women that were the actual leaders, leading from behind.

Braithwaite (2009) provides another example in a book chapter entitled 'Leading from Behind with Plural Regulation'. He relates that an ordinary nurse has been assigned to work with one of the doctors and head nurse in a hospital. She quickly realised that the duo was reluctant to comply with a vital protocol, and she offered to do the paperwork herself. Over time, both the doctor and the head nurse began to follow through with this protocol and compliance to it generally improved across two hospital floors. Eventually, compliance was at 100%, and cases of infection had significantly reduced. From just influencing the two floors, the doctor pushes a notion to observe protocol throughout the hospital system. The ordinary nurse is just a tiny part of the entire hospital system, but she managed to lead from behind even without a title before her name (Braithwaite, 2009).

There might be some consequences linked with leading from behind when one is not the leader may result in several consequences. If the 'branded leader' does not recognise or award followers' efforts that lead from behind, this may result in demotivation and, ultimately, low performance (Braithwaite, 2009). Very often, leaders that lead by traditional dogmatic strategies risk creating resentment, stifling growth and innovation and may witness a high company or team turnover. Furthermore, there are followers or team members that are unfortunate enough to have leaders that take advantage of their willingness to lead from behind regardless of their position

(Braithwaite, 2009). Hence, they risk getting manipulated into performing or implementing tasks and ideas, that once completed, the 'branded leader' takes the credit.

Another disadvantage of leading from behind when you are not the leader is risking being targeted and sabotaged by influential leaders that may view you as a threat or competition to their position. Arguably, attempting to lead from behind without consent may come across as impolite, but in the case of the ordinary nurse's fictitious illustration, she was a targeted victim once the hospital restructured (Braithwaite, 2009). Upon joining a different team that was not following protocol, she attempts to explain its importance to the new team leaders and offers to take it upon herself to do the required paperwork. The nurse is ridiculed by her team leader and instantly becomes a target. A death occurs, which could have been avoided had the protocol been complied with, and the team leader writes up a report and blames this ordinary nurse based on professional negligence (Braithwaite, 2009). Could she have approached the situation differently and perhaps remained a silent follower to maintain peace? Or perhaps, the nurse could have opted to resign and take her leadership skills elsewhere silently, but would that decision have been ethical?

In some instances, leaders need to start by leading from the front as they demonstrate what they expect their followers to emulate. After that, they can shift from the front to leading from the middle, where they are hands-on with their team members and are consciously guiding and using a more authoritative approach. This will allow the team to gain confidence and experience before the leader can finally lead from behind, allowing their members more liberty to make decisions and work under the minimum to no supervision (Armstrong, 2015). On the flip side, leading from behind, is vulnerable when taken on by irresponsible leaders. Furthermore, it is arguably the leadership strategy that is the least productive relative to others (Anbazhagan & Kotur, 2014). Leading from behind does not always have to be implemented by designated leaders — a regular team member or citizen can effectively lead from behind and contribute to positive results. However, team members who take on leadership responsibilities may risk feeling resentment, amongst other things, if their efforts are not acknowledged, applauded or encouraged. In general, leading from behind is a leadership strategy that allows team members to work under their conditions and make the necessary decisions towards achieving a common goal.

### **3.3 Mauritian Political Leaders**

Politically, Mauritius is viewed as one of Africa's most stable democracies (Lutz & Wils 1994). This has largely contributed to its rapid economic growth relative to her African counterparts culminating in joining the league of high-income countries in

2019.

There are no original inhabitants of Mauritius. Early inhabitants came either as labourers, slaves, settlers or visitors. The Arab traders of the Middle Ages were aware of the island's existence but never took interest or attempted to settle here. In 1507, the Portuguese discovered the island. They would use the island as a brief stopover point for their fleet, but they never made any serious attempt to settle on the island. After that, the Dutch arrived on the island in the late 16th century. They exported natural wood back home, and this continued for over a century. They named the island Mauritius and brought some slaves from Africa, some of whom they left behind when they left in the early eighteen centuries (Lutz & Wils 1994).

The French arrived as soon as the Portuguese left and established a colony. They brought colonial settlers from neighbouring islands such as Reunion and Rodrigues. The island was renamed the island of France. A governor directly administered the island on behalf of the French government. Slavery and indentured servitude were the primary sources of labour. The population grew exponentially. There were frequent problems, such as food shortage and infighting (Lutz & Wils 1994).

In 1794, slavery was abolished in France and its territories. The planters in Mauritius saw this as a threat to their livelihood and refused to implement the order. The rebellion was quashed in 1803, but the law was slightly modified to create a definition loophole that would enable slavery and the slave trade to continue in Mauritius (Lutz & Wils 1994). British-French War forced the British to capture the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion. Reunion island was later returned to the French as part of the peace deal, but Mauritius and Rodrigues remained under British rule. Eventually, slavery was abolished in 1835 despite fierce opposition from the French settlers. The island remained under the British until Independence in 1968 (Lutz & Wils 1994).

The first confrontation between the government and the people took place as the planters resisted the idea of banning slavery. The next phase was led by Andrien d'Epinay, who vigorously campaigned for the planter's representation in government affairs. His effort resulted in the formation of the council of government. The other confrontations were on the treatment of Indian immigrants and the terrible working conditions. Adolf de Plevitz led the cause despite being a white planter. This earned him enemies among his white counterparts who saw him as betraying his race. Some planters even physically assaulted him. However, he gathered enough signatures to petition the government and the queen of England. This led to the formation of the loyal commission of 1872 (Mehta, 2015).

Out of this effort, the Indian and the people of colour could get into politics in an organised way. These political mobilisations efforts were boosted when Mahatma Gandhi visited Mauritius for two weeks at the beginning of the last century. He encouraged people, mostly Indians, to organise themselves to counter political oppression (Mehta, 2015). Upon arrival in India, Gandhi sent Doctor Manilal to help Indians in Mauritius organise themselves better politically. The Creole people had already organised themselves to challenge the few white dominance through a movement called 'Action Liberal' (Mehta, 2015).

Dr Manilal brought the Indians together and encouraged them to merge with the Movements Action Liberale to present one united front. The united movement mobilised at the grassroots by cultivating a sense of unity of purpose. These efforts led to the political awakening of the poor. The political organisation led general strikes of the workers and held rallies across the country. The royal commission intervened but did not achieve much. However, the planters used restricted suffrage to win the 1911 elections. This angered the people and led to looting and violence. Troops were called, but so much destruction had taken place. Most Indians, however, did not participate in the violence. With the First World War onset, the movement was pushed into oblivion (Lutz & Wils 1994).

Later on, a movement for self-determination was started by Dr Maurice Curé. The movement was known as the Retrocession Movement, which agitated for the return of Mauritius to France. The idea never gathered traction even among the Franco planters. After all their candidates lost in 1921, the movement faded into oblivion (Lutz & Wils 1994). The first British governor, Robert Farquhar (1810-1823), appointed an advisory board. It was mainly made of the few wealthy settlers, and its role was purely advisory. The board was abolished in 1819, and a council of government established in 1825 (Mehta, 2015). Initially, the council of government did not have any elected member or any planter's representative. The planters agitated, and in 1831, old planters representing the interest of the planters were admitted into the council. It would take 1885 constitutional amendments to have elected members admitted to the council. The elected members mainly were old planters and farm owners (Mehta, 2015).

However, the elected representatives were still outnumbered by the unofficial members, and hence their voice remained suppressed. They continued agitating for more representation, and in 1933, the council's structure was amended to have more elected members than appointed. However, the system was still very restricted and biased (Lutz & Wils, 1994). Voting was only allowed to a small number of exclusive wealthy classes of people. To participate in the voting, one had to be a male British, with property value above 3000 rupees. These excluded more than 98% of the total adult population. This constitutional order remained for decades, mainly because it

conformed to the ruling class's interest and the rich (Lutz & Wils 1994).

Persistent agitation led to the replacement of the governor's council with the legislative council in 1948, and the right to vote was expanded to include anyone illiterate or one who had served in the army. For the first time, there were more elected officials than appointed. The governor retained the veto powers. In 1958, the constitution was again amended to expand the legislative council and replace the governor with the assembly speaker. Universal suffrage was achieved, and 40 constituencies would each elect one representative (Mehta, 2015). The 1962 amendments required the governor to consult the popular party leader before making appointments; this further tilted the assembly's power. One year later, the council became the legislative.

Dr Maurice Curé had suffered several defeats with his prior movements when in 1936, he founded the Mauritius Labour Party (MLP). As the first well organised political party in Mauritius, MLP's support base was quite diverse. The party was meant to represent the workers (Morgan, 2015). MLP was very involved in activities to enlighten the workers on their labour relations issues and organising workers for industrial action. Despite being harassed and sometimes put on house arrest, Dr Curé continued with his mission until 1941, when he handed over to Anquetil. Curé's effort opened a political space for other political parties and trade and labour unions (Athal, 2014).

The political base of MLP considerably shifted under successive leadership. More urban Creole and fewer plantation workers joined the party. The election of 1948 opened up the political space for more political activities. More political parties and groups got involved. The importance of political parties as a tool for political mobilisation was entrenched (Athal, 2014).

Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, a medical doctor, returned from the UK. In 1935 and after a few years of practising, Ramgoolam decided to enter the political arena in 1940. He was nominated to the legislative council. He joined MLP and became its leader when Rozement faded away from politics. Ramgoolam was able to attract people of all diverse communities to the party, mainly the Hindus and the Creole. His worker empowerment policy approach made the planters feel threatened by the MLP (Athal, 2014).

This led to Ralliement Mauricien (RM), founded by the planters who were mainly of the White Franco community, to counter the MLP policies. RM was a movement to counter the MLP policies. Due to their small numbers, RM opposed universal suffrage and labour rights, which led to more alienation. MLP won subsequent elections in 1953, but nominations from the executive diluted its mandate.

To effectively counter the Labour Party policies, RM transformed itself into an official political party, Parti Mauricien (PM). Both MLP and PM continued to be the two dominant parties on each side of the political arena. PM was a party for the rich which did not enjoy popular support but relied on its association with the executive to push its agenda. On the other hand, MLP enjoyed comprehensive popular support from a diverse base (Athal, 2014).

The political theatre continued to expand, and the debate for Independence became more pronounced. Different political parties were formed, each representing a particular ethnic group, class or geographical base. Muslims formed Comité d'Action Musulman (CAM) to cater to their interests. Same years, Independent Forward Bloc (IFB) was formed to represent the rural people, especially the rural Hindu communities. IFB was viewed as a direct competitor of MLP as they were both trying to appeal to the same base.

During the ensuing 1959 election, MLP and CAM entered into an informal alliance while IFB joined the PM on the other side. The MLP/CAM won with a landslide. This victory was very beneficial to Ramgoolam's political career. During the 1959 elections, caste and threat of Hindu hegemony were for the first time used as means to directly mobilise voters, especially by the PM candidates. IFB presented itself as the voice of lower caste Hindus and tried to portray Ramgoolam as a representative of the higher caste elite Hindu. For the first time, the Hindu community was politically divided (Selvon, 2012).

Political parties were also significant in as far as getting involved in constitutional decisions was concerned. In the 1961 constitution conference, only established political parties attended. The Labour Party vouched for Independence, with the PM opposing it. CAM was for minority rights and pushed for individual liberty without constitutional changes. Again, MLP prevailed. Independence was promised but in two phases. This made the election of 1963 particularly impotent as whoever would win would set the agenda during the constitution and independence negotiation period (Selvon, 2012).

Ramgoolam had a more significant challenge of fixing the issue of minority inclusion. The opponent had worked hard in portraying him as a candidate trying to protect the Hindu elite/upper caste only and at the expense of other minorities, including other Hindu castes. His initial approach was to try and stick to discussing issues and avoid community affiliations. Nevertheless, his opponents were relentless. The PM openly launched communal and racial attacks against the Hindu community and even physically attacked MLP political gatherings. Their tactics were crude (Selvon, 2012).

The IFB mounted an opposition in the rural areas while the PM attacked in the urban areas. The stakes were high, and so were the tensions. The MLP/CAM coalition won 5 seats less than they had previously won while the opposition picked up some seats. The coalition also won only 40% of the votes. All parties had members who were not ethnically their base who won. For instance, the PM won 8 seats, but only three were white. For the first time, the general population community were more than proportionality represented. Parti Mauricien effectively became the opposition party (Mehta, 2015).

The PM took advantage of being in the government to advance their cause of opposition to Independence. When the Labour Party resolution for Independence passed, they again launched violence against the Hindu community and expressed open hostility. This resulted in the formation of All Mauritius Congress (AMC), a Hindu based political group specifically to counter PM's hostility, and they agitated for the allocation of more than half of all jobs to Hindus. AMC also attacked other Hindu based parties and even Ramgoolam to gain popularity and gain political mileage (Selvon, 2012).

AMC and PM conflict brought tension to an all-time high. In 1965, during a high-level visit by a British delegation, Gaetan Duval, the leader of Parti Mauricien, gathered his followers in the Capital, dressed in blue to signify their opposing independence position. Hindu youths began retaliations and looting, and violence began. Sadly, violence had become a standard tool for advocacy in politics for both sides. The killing of a Hindu boy by the PM escalated the violence. With rumours of a civil war, the governor declared a state of emergency, and British troops trooped in to quell the violence (Selvon, 2012).

All parties were invited to London to discuss the way forward. The independence conference of 1965 saw each side take a hard-line position for and against Independence. Labour demanded Independence, increased assembly and a chapter on fundamental rights and freedoms. The IFB wanted Independence but a different electoral system. Chinese community wanted partial Independence, with security remaining the responsibility of the UK. With no one willing to compromise on major issues, a referendum was proposed, but Ramgoolam feared this might delay Independence, and he opposed it (Lutz & Wils 1994).

The British used this desperate moment to cut a secret deal with Ramgoolam by having him agree to sell Diego Garcia to the USA for a military base, and in return, the British would support his position. A secret deal was sealed, and the undersecretary, Greenwood, changed his tune from a mere neutral mediator to pro-independence. This, of course, infuriated all the other parties who boycotted the last sessions of the conference. In his concluding remarks, Greenwood spoke against

having communalism saying this would be hard to eradicate in future. He also recognised that the new proposed constitution provided many safeguards and protections to the minorities such as the office of Ombudsman, individual freedoms and fundamental rights, best loser system and a constitution that was set in a way to protect against either Hindu or any other majority hegemony. With that, Independence was on the horizon (Lutz & Wils, 1994).

There were, however, many disagreements, including on the electoral system. An election commission was set up to deal with the issue. The Banwell Electoral Commission report proposed a merger of some constituencies to put the number at 20 and triple the number of the representatives to 3 per constituency and Rodrigues to return 2. The corrective system was another contentious issue. A settlement was arrived at with the help of John Stonehouse, who was a London based parliamentary undersecretary. He resolved that the best loser system replace the corrective system. Four categories of communities that would benefit from these extra seats were recognised as Chinese, Muslims, Hindu and others' general population'. He also established a formula used to allocate these extra seats to the underrepresented communities (Selvon, 2012). Based on this formula, the electoral commission would allocate these extra seats to ensure two essential conditions are met — they are allocated to an underrepresented minority community. The allocation of these seats must not in any way undermine the electoral victory of the majority party in parliament. With this, issues of Mauritius were resolved in order to achieve Independence (Selvon, 2012).

The Parti Mauricien (PM) decided to make one last significant attempt. They organised rallies, sought collaboration and mobilised against Independence. Duval, the PM leader, knew he was up for a huge task but was determined to teach labour a lesson. He changed his tone; he embraced the Hindus, especially the Tamils and portrayed the leadership of the MLP as a sell-out, especially once the details of the secret deal broke out. They attempted to unite every minority party or group in a single movement to ouster MLP (Athal, 2014). However, their case was paradoxical; they accused the British of stealing Diego Garcia and advocated remaining under British rule. Hindus allied to Duval formed the People's Socialist Party. Prominent Muslims leaders also joined PMSD. Political alignments were changing fast. Duval had the momentum, and it seems like he had Ramgoolam cornered. The 1967 election was held under commonwealth observers. Although MLP won, the Parti Mauricien got a record 43.1%, more than double the last election. This was an indirect vote against Independence. The minorities had united under one cause (Mehta, 2015).

A motion for Independence was placed before the assembly. PMSD and allies boycotted, and MLP carried the day with a slim majority. Independence had been achieved, and Ramgoolam had been given a new five-year mandate. PMSD was

disgruntled and incited their members to violence. They resorted to guerrilla tactics to sabotage Independence. The indolence celebrations were marked by massive violence that left at least 25 dead and a record number of casualties. Again, the British troops were called to quell the violence. Again, the PM tried to run the narrative that the presence of British troops in Mauritius was inevitable, but it was too late (Selvon, 2012).

To Ramgoolam and his party leadership, Independence was just one problem solved out of many. An end to an era but the beginning of a long journey. The young nation was sharply divided and was facing massive unemployment, inflation and poor infrastructures. He had wounds to heal and an economy to grow. He embarked on reconciliation by inviting the PMSD to form a coalition government. However, as it turned out, it is hard to please everyone. Some of his independence allies, like IFB, were disgruntled by this move. Some of them even resigned from the cabinet before the first anniversary of the Independence (Athal, 2014).

Ramgoolam approached other parties and political groups to form a national unity government and reduce the winner's feeling to take it all. He also brought sugar magnate and wealthy individuals on board to assure them of the government support despite them having persistently campaigned against Independence. Ramgoolam knew he needed to prevent capital flight that could cause further economic deterioration. Investors wanted a politically stable Mauritius if they were to invest their money in Mauritius, and Ramgoolam was willing to make concessions to offer that (Athal, 2014).

After a lengthy persuasion and pressure from the British and French, Duval agreed to join the coalition government in December 1969. The coalition also agreed to postpone the next election due from 1972 to 1976. The coalition seemed to work until Duval demanded to be the deputy prime minister. Most Labour Party loyalists would not trust such a powerful position on someone who had built his career opposing Independence and Hindus ascendancy to political power. Duval was given the position of leader of the house. The rural members of MLP distrusted PMSD, and they saw this as a betrayal of their loyalty and Labour Party values. The wealthy, powerful elite had again found their way into the government. Hindu Congress Party emerged agitating for the fair distribution of wealth between urban and rural.

On the other hand, the PMSD members also were unhappy with party endorsement of Ramgoolam and Labour Party policies of resource redistribution. The party split, and the Union Democratique Mauricienne (UDM) was born. Other disgruntled and wealthy members of PMSD left the country for Europe or Australia. The coalition was not doing well. MLP and PMS pursued conflicting economic and foreign policies. The Labour Party pursued job creation, subsidies, redistribution of

wealth and offering small grants to small businesses. At the same time, they financed these programs by heavily taxing the sugar barons and their creole managerial staff, further disgruntling the PMSD base.

Nevertheless, Duval as minister for external affairs, pursued “money without conscience”. He maintained closed ties with the apartheid regime of South Africa. He opposed bilateral relations with China just to appease western economic powers. Sometimes he would embarrass the premier by publicly declaring his position as if that is the government position. His close ties with the South Africa racist regime also affected Mauritius's close ties with India and Africa. Simultaneously, the disgruntled members of the Labour Party who felt betrayed by the cause were decamping to a new party, the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM). This forced Ramgoolam to give some concessions to keep the coalition alive, bearing in mind that MMM quickly gained political momentum. He was between a rock and a hard place.

The economy deteriorated as unemployment was rising. PMSD policies were only benefiting the top, and the mass was being left to suffer. In 1974, Ramgoolam swallowed the bitter pills, reorganised the cabinet and took charge of the external affairs docket. On the other hand, the MMM threat to power was becoming imminent. Its anti-establishment rhetoric mainly drove MMM. MMM support was from across all castes and ethnicities. It was a class war. Their slogan, “The class struggle should replace the race struggle”, was such a selling point. MMM infiltrated all sectors, especially the labour unions and the local government. They tested their political prowess by contesting in a by-election in Ramgoolam's constituency in 1970, and they got over 70%, a decisive vote of approval. In 1971, they organised a general strike paralysing almost all the sectors of the economy. The government retaliated by cracking on the members of the MMM, which made the situation worse. The strike continued, and it was so successful that even the leadership of MMM was no longer in control again. Their attempt to call it off to allow for negotiation fell on deaf ears of the workers.

The government declared a state of emergency in October 1971 and arrested MM leaders. MMM papers were banned, members spied on and any union associated with them suspended. Ramgoolam, with the support of his coalition partner Duval, extended his leadership for five more years. The crackdown softened some MMM leaders who opted to negotiate and work with the government and give a chance for democratic institutions to take their cause. The other strict adherences of MMM ideology split from MMM and formed Maoist Movement Militant Mauricien Social Progressive. They accused MMM of betrayal and continued with their agitation.

Ramgoolam was now 80 years old, yet the Labour Party did not have youthful leaders who could succeed in his negotiation policy, prioritising negotiations and

willingness to compromise where necessary. This was creating a vacuum and the establishment, both within and outside the party, was worried. The threat of MMM rebranding and resurfacing to fill this vacuum was imminent. The Labour Party had built its leadership around Ramgoolam as a person and not around his ideological figure.

The state of emergency was extended beyond 1972, which angered many, even on the government side. Some of them, like Hari Prasad Ramnarain (MLP), resigned from the government in protest. After the strike, Alex Rima, the Minister of Employment (PMSD), offered to negotiate with the workers who had lost their job. Nevertheless, the government was not ready to compromise. The minister resigned from the government in protest. As a result, the prolonged emergency and the governments' high-handedness were starting to affect the government. The strike had hardened the soft side of Ramgoolam.

After the emergency had been lifted, MMM focused on bridging the gap between different demographics to diversify its base and position itself as a party with a national outlook. Its Marxist philosophy resonated with many poor people, workers and the lower middle class, who saw this as the opportunity to tilt the power from the establishment to the people finally. To counter the narrative, the government branded MMM as a Soviet Union tool used by foreign powers to destabilise Mauritius. The government was hoping to utilise the cold war narrative to make its case. MMM was branded as the enemy of the people.

To compound the government's problem, the economy was doing poorly. The cost of living was going up by more than 10% annually due to increased imports. The steady growth in the economy that had been witnessed up to 1975 declined so rapidly. At the same time, MMM was using the economic crisis to attack the government and position itself as the saviour.

In 1975, a cyclone hit Mauritius, destroying plantations and other economic sectors. Sugars prices dropped by more than a half, resulting in the first trade deficit in 1975 and the subsequent years (Saylor, 2012). Unemployment hit an all-time high. The investment budget was now being used for recurrent government expenditure, leaving very little to invest in production and the economy. With a devastated economy and a prevalent opposition, Ramgoolam faced an election with all odds against him. Therefore, he turned to international appeal by portraying himself as a global statesman who was facing foreign interference in his country in the name of MMM. He was elected chairman of the African Union (AU). He used his new position and diplomacy to brand himself as a crucial asset not just for his country but also for the African continent. He hosted numerous dignitaries, heads of states and diplomats and also the OAU summit in Mauritius. For the first time in a long time, the government

condemned the apartheid regime of South Africa, deviating from Duval's position.

However, MMM mocked Ramgoolam for having inherited his AU chairmanship from Idi-Amin, the famous Uganda dictator who had evicted Indians from his country. To attract and solidify his Indian political base, Ramgoolam invited Mrs Indira Gandhi, highly respected and admired among the Indian people, more so the Hindus. Mrs Indira Gandhi presided over several events where she praised Ramgoolam to strengthen the unity of the Indian community and the ties with India. Her visit culminated in the opening of the mahatma Gandhi institute. However, the opposition dismissed this effort as “desperate attempts to make the suffering people of Mauritius forget the trouble they were going through due to economic mismanagement by the Labour Party”.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Hindi Congress in September 1976 was yet another effort by Ramgoolam to entice the Hindu voters. Ramgoolam pushed for pro-Hindu policies, including demanding that the Hindi language be recognised as one of the UN languages. Ramgoolam attended the non-aligned countries' meeting as part of his international diplomatic effort, and Mauritius became a signatory giving Mauritius non-reciprocity access to the European Economic Community. In the same year, he hosted the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's summit with prominent dignitaries in attendance.

Ramgoolam decided to woo the young people at home by lowering the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen years as a fulfilment of a pledge he made way back in 1967. The young population was about half of the country's population, and this move introduced 200,000 new young voters. Bearing in mind the high level of unemployment among the young people, the rising cost of living and other economic hardships prevailing in the country, this move was likely to work against the Labour Party. The move made MMM even more enthusiastic about the upcoming elections.

The assembly was dissolved in October 1976, and elections scheduled for December 1976. There was a record number of candidates, mainly from the three main political parties (MMM, PMSD and MLP). Sensing defeat, MLP pushed for an alliance with MMM, but this failed to actualise after MMM refused to compromise their core values to accommodate the Labour Party. The Labour Party allied with CAM, the independence alliance. Other parties contested independently. The fight was between the independence alliance, MMM and PMS. The Labour Party fielded old guards while MMM candidates mainly were the youth. The average age of the labour candidate was 50 years compared to 32 years for MMM. Still, the emergency state was not removed, and only political meetings and press censorship were exempted.

Going into the elections, Ramgoolam and the Labour Party key campaign issue

was the diplomatic progress it has made in the last few years and also its mixed economic achievement. They painted MMM as too communist to be entrusted with running the country and PMSD as a capitalist whose “soul was located in foreign countries”. They also pledged free secondary education. Their approach to the economy was a mixed model combining free-market principles and social safety nets. PMSD's main argument to the voters was its promise for a purely free-market system that would attract investors, expand the economy and create well-paying jobs, the famous trickle-down model.

On the other hand, MMM presented a Marxist approach to the people. They advocated for pro-people policies, including redistribution of wealth, nationalisation of the sugar sector, financial sector and increased workers participation in running their respective organisations. They denied being a communist agent and accused the Independent party and PMSD of wrecking the economy, suppressing civil liberties and democratic freedoms and using communal division tactics to keep power. They used the prevailing state of emergency to make a case that the Independence Party was a threat to democracy. MMM promised a total break away from South Africa's apartheid regime and reclaimed Diego Garcia islands from the British on foreign affairs. They also pushed for a non-executive president upon Mauritius becoming a republic. MMM momentum boosted when the Mouvement Chretien Pour Socialism (MCPS) announced their support for MMM.

The stakes were high; every party mobilised their base to come out in large numbers, which resulted in a ninety per cent voter turnout. The Independence Party garnered 25 seats, MMM 30 seats, and PMSD got only seven seats. MMM had successfully replaced PMSD as the voice of the minority. Unlike previously, the MMM base was the black creoles and the Muslims, where the PMSD presented the whites as the only minority.

No party had managed to gather a majority. With a hung parliament, the top three parties were busy lobbying to form a coalition government. The first discussions were between MMM and the independent coalition. Ramgoolam was to retain AU chairmanship and to become the first president of the republic. Nevertheless, the ideological differences between Labour and MMM were too deep to reach a deal. MMM opened negotiations with PMSD. MMM and PMSD were ideologically very opposite, with PMSD advocating for a pure capitalist, free-market system while MMM advocated for a Marxist system. To make matters worse, MMM sent to the negotiation table young inexperienced activists who were too radical to compromise. The negotiation failed before they could even start.

MPL approached its old partner, and they formed a coalition government with a two-seat majority. Ramgoolam justified the coalition as a coalition to reject the radical

communist movement (Houbert, 1981). This angered MMM, who were the largest party in the parliament. They walked out from the first parliament session in protest and threatened to force another election within a year. However, MMM now had a parliament platform as the main opposition party to fight the establishment's positive side. They forced real debates on real issues and institutionalised dissent in parliament. Fiscal management improved as every spending was scrutinised. For instance, in 1979, the budget presented in June was withdrawn for fear of defeat to allow lobbying time. For every vote they lobbied, they had to make some amendment to the budget. At the same time, the MMM young members were getting experience.

In the 1977 local elections, MMM managed to get slightly more than 50%, further diminishing Labour Party dominance. Despite the slim majority and the fear that a slight defection could tilt the power favouring MMM, the independence coalition served a full term. There were defections, but we always matched these defections by counter defection from the other side, maintaining the status quo.

After 1977, some MMM members started to become impatient. MMM was always seeming so close to power but never getting there. An internal left-wing group called "aile gauche" accused MMM of losing focus of the party's initial goal and accused the party of being too cosy with the USSR. To fix the internal dissent, the party leadership lobbied the delegates, and those allied to the group were not re-elected, rendering the group dormant. Other dissents were quickly fixed through expulsions and other party discipline mechanisms as Bérenger and Jugnauth remained firmly on the leadership. During the same period, the left-wing splinter group MMMSP re-joined the MMM, further solidifying the opposition.

On the other hand, some Labour Party members were expelled for uniting with the opposition to vote against the 1980 budget. The defeated and formed Party Socialist Mauricien (PSM). The debate of Ramgoolam succession was coming back in the limelight. Satcam Boolell was a long-serving agriculture Minister and third in command. Like many within the party, he was seen as the likely successor to support this idea. Many argued that the parliament was both the executive and the assembly. With a thin majority, most votes on the floor ended with a tie, forcing the speaker to cast his vote. The PMSD would sometimes vote against the government on some issues except government censure motions. MMM also continued to push and implement its agenda through other means. In parliament, they would use the 'motion of disallowance' to alter government policies. They organised peaceful demonstrations against the presence of the monarchy in Mauritius. They spoke strongly against the presence of the USSR and other foreign powers around the Indian Ocean. The favoured promotion of Mauritius culture, through which they introduced Creole as a communication language in Municipal Councils. MMM also supported the general strike of 1979 that saw the economy paralysed. It was the biggest strike since 1971.

The government arrested the union leaders. Although the demands were not met, the strike achieved the amendments to the Industrial Act. This time, MMM was also able to negotiate with the government on the fate of the 2000 workers dismissed due to the strike.

In 1981, political activities started to peak as new alliances started to emerge. Despite ideological differences, MMM and PSM allied. Duval broke the coalition with the Labour Party, but some members of the PMSD formed a group called 'Francois Group' (later became Party Mauricien) and allied with the Labour Party. CAM, PDSM all decided to contest independently. MMM/PSM alliance got all the 60 seats, and even in Rodrigues, its supporter OPR party won both seats. Finally, there was a shift from the establishment to the new young generation. Tribe, race, ethnicity, caste had all been rendered as an outdated political tool, at least for a moment. The country was united against a single socialist government.

Anerood Jugnauth became the Prime Minister while PSM leader Harish Boodhoo became his deputy. The expectations were high among the voters, and with an overwhelming mandate, there was a need to deliver and manage the expectations. Four opposition members were appointed through the best loser system to uphold the constitution despite their party having no single candidate. The party pursued a reconciliatory approach, especially against the injustices and excesses of the former regime. On the eve of the election, the government, sensing defeat, had recruited 21,000 new workers as a last measure to woo them. The first major unpopular decision the MMM government dismissed, despite campaigning on support for workers.

In parliament, they changed the law to make national and local elections regular. Many changes were effected. A political appointee whom the public service commission had not selected was to leave office after every election. Duty-free import by ministers and the communal election system in the census. On foreign policy, the government softened its stance on France concerning Mauritius' claim on Tromelin island, recognised the African National Congress of South Africa, recognised Palestinian liberation organisation, and established a commission to investigate circumstances Diego Garcia was sold to Britain.

The government opened negotiations with the IMF and World Bank, despite sharply criticising them during campaigns. It even went ahead to accept money and conditions that were against the party's ideology. The IMF demanded the removal of food subsidies for the poor, scaling labour and closer collaboration with the private sector. Although these measures, later on, led to a record economic boom, their immediate effect was the MMM party's fallout. Ideological pledges and economic facts became mutually exclusive. Bérenger opposed the new economic measures, including new sales tax and giving significant companies tax relief.

Jugnauth attempted to break the coalition and form his own MMM government with 42 members. The fallout also led to an internal fall out within MMM, which led to an attempt to remove Jugnauth from the party. In the next local election, MMM gathered 92 per cent of the total vote, and PMSD emerged as the main opposition. Jugnauth broke away from MMM and formed MSM. The wrangles within MMM intensified, and the government and the prime minister called for a general election in August 1983. MMM went alone while the Labour Party, PMSD and MSM formed an alliance and won 41 seats. Even before the dust could settle, MMM, which had one year before triumphed to power, was again the opposition party, but Jugnauth was still the prime minister. The new government was focused on two main issues, economic reforms and making Mauritius a republic.

A bill to make Mauritius a republic was tabled, but the motion required 75% of the votes. The government could only gather 47 votes. The new MSM government was accused of dictatorship. They tried all means to suppress the media, suppress the opposition and erode all civil right that had been achieved so far.

MMM demanded the resignation of the coalition government or changed the way it is managing the country. However, on 15 December, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam died. At the same time, some members of parliament of the ruling coalition were arrested in Amsterdam trafficking heroin. Prime Minister Jugnauth had been previously accused of being sympathetic to drug traffickers, but this was a big blow. Several ministers resigned in protest, and Jugnauth called for an election in 1987, one year earlier than due. He ran on his economic transformation record. The main contestants were the MMM alliance and the MSM alliance. MSM won 39 seats and formed the government with labour and PMSD. Jugnauth continued focusing on his mission of economic reforms.

In 1991, Sir Anerood Jugnauth again called for elections earlier and reunited with his old party MMM to ally. They won 57 seats, which was a significant endorsement of the way he was running the economy. He again called for an election in 1995 after losing a parliament's vote on language motion. To his surprise, MMM and MPL reunited and captured all the elective seats on the island. The MPL coalition, led by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's son, Navin Ramgoolam, was elected the prime minister. Jugnauth remained out of government until 2000 when he revived the MSM/MMM alliance. They went to the election and won 54 elective seats. He was elected the prime minister again.

He remained in office until he suddenly resigned in 2003 and was sworn in as the president soon after. Paul Bérenger was elected as the first non-Hindu Prime Minister, while Jugnauth's son, Pravind Jugnauth, was elected as deputy prime

minister. Navin Ramgoolam won again in 2005 and 2010 through the Social alliance. This prompted Sir Anerood Jugnauth to return to the elective political scene, and in 2014, he won the election again through the MSM-PMSD-ML alliance. The alliance won again, but his son, Pravind Jugnauth, was elected the prime minister.

### **3.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

There is a massive gap in the academic research of leadership from the front and behind. Above all, there exists an enormous gap in the academic research of political leadership in Mauritius. This study will provide a reference for aspiring political leaders to recognise their leadership qualities and strategies and choose a leadership style that will suit them and the terrain the best.

## **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Perspective**

The research will be based on an interpretivist perspective with a combination of phenomenology philosophy and symbolic interactionism (Denscombe, 2010), where insight will be gained from the interviewees' opinions (Saunders *et al.* 2015).

### **4.2 Primary Data**

Primary data will be sourced through surveys and semi-structured exploratory interviews with self-selection samples from Mauritian politicians in the ruling party, and all have parliamentary colleagues from the opposition parties. The group size will mainly be small (25 to 30 only) since the group is selected to illuminate the cases best due to their previous experiences and success in this field and the in-depth interviews conducted (Yin, 1994). Participants will be invited to participate through a participant consent form in which the purpose of the research and privacy and confidentiality aspects will be highlighted (Denscombe, 2010). The surveys will establish the preferred and adapted leadership style for each participant. It will also sensitise the participants and refresh their memories of leadership styles and practices.

The survey forms will be standard questionnaires based on the Avolio and Bass Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to save time and add credibility (Saunders *et al.* 2015). Semi-structured qualitative interviews will be held with each participant and audio recorded to gather information related to how he experiences his leadership role within the political party and how he has adapted his leadership style to living up to the notions of leading from the front and leading from behind (Bell *et al.* 2019). Critical incident techniques will be incorporated into the interview process.

### **4.3 Secondary Data**

Secondary data will be obtained through selective reading on leadership and Mauritian politicians and political analysts' topics to enable gaps to be filled, provide more context, and save time and resources.

The qualitative data will be analysed by coding the transcripts from the audio recordings using data sampling (Saunders *et al.* 2015) and combining inductive and grounded approaches (Denscombe, 2010). Emerging and recurring, and contradicting themes will be clustered and categorised and tested against the secondary data, which will direct further analysis and provide triangulation. The themes will be analysed and theorised to make meanings, which can be tested to generalise each specific case study's information to the general case study (Thomas, 2003).

### **4.4 Limitations**

Limitations to this research will include factors such as the relatively small sample size of 25-30 interviewees in political parties that suits the specification. The research will be conducted in 3-3 political parties and only one country's respondents as a cross-sectional study, affecting validity and generalisability across other groups and organisations (Yin, 1994).

The researcher is aware that purposive sampling can also lead to drawing tentative conclusions. Inaccurate inductive qualitative data analysis may result from researcher experience, time restraint and bias (Saunders *et al.* 2015).

No ministry or any organisation contacted to seek support to reach the targeted audience for fact-finding. Besides, no consent has been received by any authority to assess the political leaders' leadership styles. However, the researcher will make sure that ethical guidelines and officialdom are followed during dealing with participants.

### **4.5 Research Ethics**

To ensure integrity, correctness, and ethical standards throughout the process, the researcher has adopted several steps. Firstly, the literature review was carefully carried out to avoid repeated topics previously worked on. A clear sense of purpose, theoretical and methodological rigour, testability of relationships, parsimony of variables and transferability of results have been defined. Also, the research design was appropriate for the topic and chosen paradigm, participation was voluntary, and

respondents' identities were kept anonymous.

Several scales were adapted to form the questionnaire to minimize the risk of excessive reliance on one type of measurement scale, and appropriate context was acknowledged. Additionally, all sources were acknowledged using the Harvard referencing, and the researcher was ready to report any findings (whether negative or positive). The approach also ensured participants' cultural, religious, gender, and social status was respected by not using offensive or discriminatory language.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The rapid growth of the global marketplace has cast pressure on organisations to augment efficiency in their operations or risk being swallowed by competitors. Amid various technological advancements that have revolutionised business operations, most organisational hierarchies accept the premise that influential leaders capable of handling the current market's uncertainties have become scarce (Uhl-Bien *et al.* 2017). Today, most teams are forced to contend with the latest technological advancements, which greatly simplify operations, yet remain limited by ineffective leaders. The reality surrounding the scarcity of influential leaders has pushed the way organisations view leaders since they have morphed to become invaluable assets. While researchers have made various propositions about whether dependable leaders have it in them from birth or pick leadership fundamentals by experience, business owners have reached a commonplace agreement that adaptable leaders can augment the transition between current approaches and emerging trends are needed more than ever before. Beyond being an agent of change, the modern-day demands of a good leader revolve around leading from the front, given the salient uncertainties, which continuously threaten organisational wellbeing (Bode, 2012). Most teams have embraced the realisation that success is best achieved by visualising goals, which yardstick operational modalities. Given that success is heavily hinged on the leader's ability to evoke long-term belief from followers, leaders who can inspire commitment to goals by active involvement in operations are highly needed to overcome the current global business tides (Voegtlind *et al.* 2012). This chapter of the thesis seeks to delve into the fundamentals of leading from the front, drawing attention to how leaders break operational barriers between themselves and followers to gateway collective success as depicted herein.

While leadership is regarded as an intriguing accomplishment by humanity and a realisation that proper coordination of teams can augment teams' achievement, there exist apparent disconnects in how various people view proper leadership. To some, a good leader is someone free from blemish and is admired for his/her unique ability to see things from a perspective, which no one else can. Conversely, there is also the school of thought, which cherishes the idea that leaders are ordinary people

dedicated to constant growth and improvement (Bayat, 2013). However, despite the divergent spectrums, most people agree that leadership is about empowerment and achievement results. Under the empowerment umbrella, the leaders advance the ability to positively influence followers to personalise collective goals, translating into innate commitment and desire to elucidate success (Kellerl & Dansereaul, 1995).

On the other hand, the achievement of results delves into the frameworks behind effective leadership, focusing on how teams can be led to achieve impossibilities (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). It is imperative to understand that today's demands have raised the bar for effective leadership high, as it is not just entailing conveyance of vision but also critical actors in accomplishing such goals. Nowadays, leaders seem to have realised the intricacy of detouring from the traditional pedestal that deemed them unreachable forces within organisational structures (Trehan & Rigg, 2011). In fact, in today's world, leadership is more about mentoring followers to achieve their potential, further utilised to augment organisational goals (Bayat, 2013). Good leaders thrive on setting the tone and establishing a success-focused organisational culture that can be inferred from their behaviour. Rather than mechanising the workplace, influential leaders have shifted the narrative to recognise that followers are rational beings that can best be inspired by example (Nejati & Shafaei, 2018).

In Mauritius's political landscape, Ramgoolam, Bérenger, Jugnauth, and Boodhoo were politicians who led from the front. On the other hand, we see that Curé, Anquetil and Rozemont, who also wanted to lead from the front, might have been compelled to adopt shepherd leadership at the beginning.

## 6. TIME FRAME

No.	Activity	Completion Date
1	Finalising research question and objectives	30 May 2020
2	Completing and submitting the research proposal	15 June 2020
3	Organising semi-structured interviews	30 December 2020
4	Conducting and recording the Interviews	28 February 2021
5	Transcribing and analysing the interviews	30 June 2021
6	Collating and contacting survey target list	30 August 2021
7	Finalising survey questionnaire	30 October 2021
8	Sending out Survey questionnaire	1 December 2021
9	Collecting quantitative data	28 February 2022
10	Analysing quantitative Data	30 June 2022
11	Combining data and findings	30 September 2022
12	Write up of complete dissertation	30 March 2023
13	Submit dissertation	30 August 2023

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