

**DISTANT RELATIONS: A STUDY OF IDENTITY, ETHICS
AND POWER IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRITAIN
AND THE UNITED KINGDOM OVERSEAS TERRITORIES**

By

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ABSTRACT

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DISTANT RELATIONS: A STUDY OF IDENTITY, ETHICS AND POWER IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

This thesis contributes to new understandings of the contemporary relationship between Britain and the fourteen remaining United Kingdom Overseas Territories. By examining the discourse of social and political elites in Britain and in several Overseas Territories, it identifies the significance of the role of identity in shaping perceptions and relations between these international actors. The thesis explores how understandings of the Overseas Territories as either part of, external to, or occupying an intermediate position with regard to the British state, shapes power relations and ethical considerations in the relationship between Britain and the territories. The importance of identity in this analysis contributes empirically and theoretically to a constructivist research agenda in which inter-subjective meaning attributed to international actors holds equal weight to power and material factors.

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For C + E + B

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Chapter One: Introduction

In 1958, senior Conservative politician Viscount Soulbury described the future status of Britain's small or strategic dependencies as an "unusually thorny problem" (Viscount Soulbury, 1958, p.4). While the "wind of change"¹ was sweeping away the structures of colonialism across the globe, some territories were perceived by British policy-makers of the period to be either economically or politically 'unviable' (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Drower, 1992; McIntyre, 1998; Sutton, 2009), or too important militarily to become independent (Blood, 1958; Hendry & Dickson, 2011; Killingray, 2005)². Today, more than half a century later, fourteen Overseas Territories still remain under British sovereignty (FCO, 2012). Policy-makers and academics continue to grapple with how to conceptualise, to frame, and to relate to these entities (Clegg, 2009; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012; Lambert, 2005) in an era when colonialism is discredited (Croft, 2012; Frost, 1996; Frost, 2010) and independent statehood the norm (Brown, 2002, p.35; Jackson, 1990, p.4).

This thesis provides new empirical and theoretical insights on the link between Britain and the Overseas Territories at a time when the British Government is calling for increased engagement (FCO, 2012) with these disparate enclaves and islands. Drawing on extensive research interviews and documentary data, the study explores the ways in which the relationship is imagined and articulated by those involved. It examines the role of identity, ethics and power in the ongoing bond between the Territories and the United Kingdom, identifying and investigating the ways in which discourses of inclusion and exclusion shape relations between the actors. Through detailed analysis of the language

¹ Harold Macmillan famously used this term during a speech in Cape Town, South Africa in 1960 to describe the rapid movement to de-colonisation across the continent. Quoted in: Judd, D. (1996) *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present*. London: Phoenix Press. p.368.

² For a discussion of post-war British policy on the de-colonisation of the smaller territories see Drower, G. (1992) *Britain's Dependent Territories: a Fistful of Islands*. Aldershot: Dartmouth. Chapter 2.

used by elites and policymakers to describe the relationship, this research provides new perspectives on the significance of identity in shaping relations between international actors within a postcolonial setting, thereby extending a constructivist research agenda.

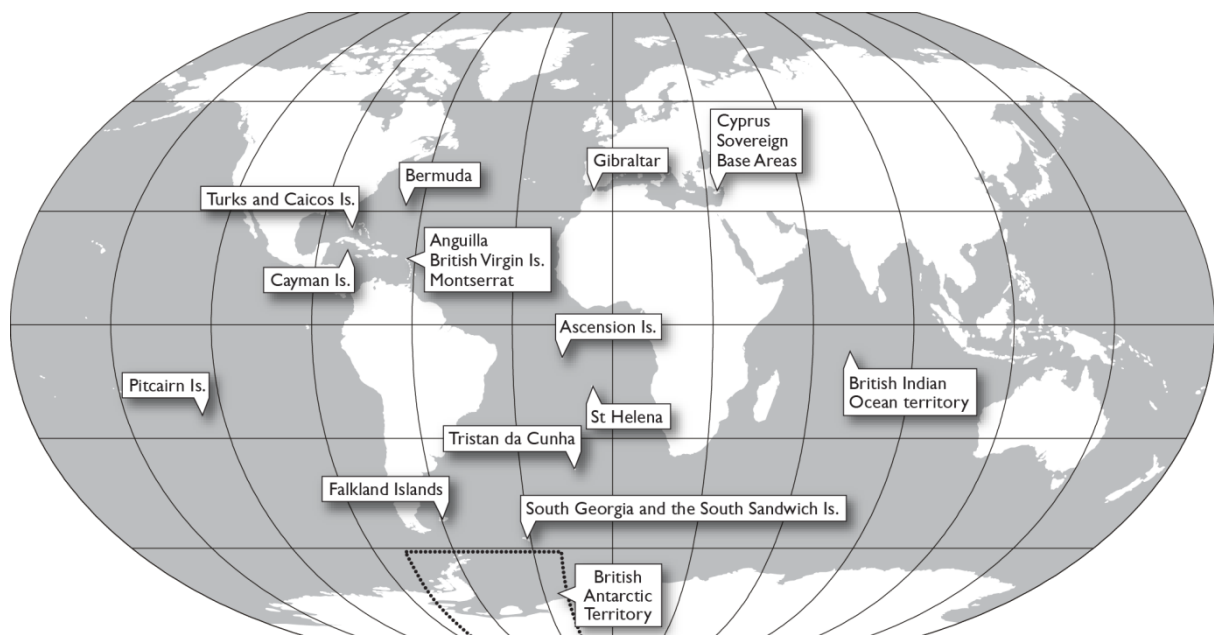
The remaining United Kingdom Overseas Territories are mostly islands (Drower, 1992; Hendry & Dickson, 2011), widely scattered across the globe: see Figure 1.0. They include: Anguilla; Bermuda; British Antarctic Territory; British Indian Ocean Territory; Virgin Islands³; Cayman Islands; Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; Montserrat; Turks and Caicos Islands; Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands; the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia in Cyprus; South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; and St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha (FCO, 2012, p.11). While diverse in terms of their geographies, histories, economies, and cultures, the Overseas Territories are each constitutionally linked to the United Kingdom (Hendry & Dickson, 2011). Following the 2002 British Overseas Territories Act (Great Britain, 2002a), they are referred to officially as 'British Overseas Territories', yet under the 1978 Interpretation Act (Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.4) they may still be termed as colonies. And while the populated territories have varying, and in most cases significant, levels of local government, the British Parliament and the Privy Council are empowered to legislate for the Territories (Hendry & Dickson, 2011)⁴. It is this ultimate reserved authority which defines the Overseas Territories as non-sovereign (O'Brien & Leslie, 2010). As such, the ten permanently populated British Overseas Territories remain listed by the United Nations as "non-self-governing territories" (United Nations, 2009), thereby, by

³ The Virgin Islands is the correct name of the Territory (see the Report of the Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005, p.1). However, the Territory is also often referred to and known internationally as the British Virgin Islands. Several interviewees explained this usage was partly to help differentiate the Territory from the neighbouring US Virgin Islands. This thesis will use both 'British Virgin Islands' (BVI) and the 'Virgin Islands (UK)' interchangeably.

⁴ See Hendry and Dickson (2011) pages 57-61 for an explanation of Orders in Council and the absence of general powers to legislate under Orders in Council in the case of Bermuda.

implication, may be perceived by some as requiring further de-colonization⁵. This is despite the position of the British Government that the territories “have all chosen to retain their link to the UK” and “have a large measure of internal self-government” (FCO, 2012, p.84).

Figure 1.0 Map of the Overseas Territories



Plymouth University Cartography Unit, 2012

The retention of constitutional links with the Overseas Territories has implications for British foreign policy and is also of theoretical significance to both the disciplines of International Relations and Political Geography. In terms of foreign policy, the ongoing sovereignty dispute with Argentina over the Falkland Islands (Dodds, 2012); a legal case against the British Government at the European Court of Human Rights over any right of

⁵ The British territories listed by the United Nations as non-self-governing territories include: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Montserrat, St Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands, Gibraltar, and Pitcairn. The other territories listed by the Committee of 24 are: Western Sahara, United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, New Caledonia and Tokelau (United Nations, 2009).

return of the Chagos Islanders (Lunn, 2012); and ongoing British Government aid commitments in St Helena, Montserrat and the Pitcairn Islands (DFID, 2011), are examples of the impact of the relationship on Britain in terms of diplomatic resources, defence obligations, financial commitments, and reputational costs. More broadly, the UK Government retains significant international responsibilities for the territories (Clegg & Gold, 2011; FCO, 2012), notably in terms of ensuring adherence to international human rights commitments⁶, environmental obligations⁷ and good governance⁸, particularly where territories are involved in offshore financial services (Clegg & Gold, 2011; Foot, 2009; National Audit Office, 1997; National Audit Office, 2007). A *laissez-faire* approach by the British Government risks charges of neglect (Clegg & Gold, 2011; Drower, 1992; Hintjens, 1995; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012; Ritchie, 1997; Rosindell, 2010; Stringer, 2010; UKOTCF, 2010). A more proactive policy engenders criticisms of heavy-handedness (Abbott, 2009) or micro-management (Rosindell, 2010). Both of these charges have been levelled at the UK over the handling of corruption allegations in the Turks and Caicos Islands⁹. The importance accorded to the relationship with the Overseas Territories by

⁶ The 2012 White Paper on the Overseas Territories lists the core UN Human Rights conventions which have been extended to most of the territories. These include: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention of Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Punishment; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Page 52 of the 2012 White Paper details those territories to which the above Conventions have not yet been extended and also those territories which are covered by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

⁷ International Environmental Legislation applying to the Territories includes: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species; The Convention on Biological Diversity; and the Convention on Migratory Species. See Page 41 of the 2012 White Paper on the Overseas Territories.

⁸ Good Governance features prominently in both the 1999 and 2012 White Papers on the Overseas Territories and was a focal point of an FCO paper presented to Territory representatives at the Overseas Territories Consultative Council in 2006: FCO (2006) 'Good Governance'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.dgo.gov.vg/index.php?mpageid=113> (Accessed: 13.3.2010).

⁹ For an overview of concerns raised about alleged corruption in the TCI see the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (2008) Overseas Territories, Seventh Report of Session 2007-2008.55-69. For a recent overview of the situation in TCI following the imposition of direct rule by the UK, the approval of a new Constitution see Lunn, J. & Thompson, G. (2012) 'House of Commons Library Standard Note: The Turks and Caicos Islands'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05038> (Accessed: 06.09.2012). See also: Clegg, P. & Gold, P. (2011) 'The UK Overseas Territories: a decade of progress and prosperity?'. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 49 (1). pp

the Coalition Government is indicated through the emphasis on their defence and as overseas bases for Britain and its allies, in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (Great Britain, 2010). Their perceived significance is also underscored by the new Coalition Government's publication in 2012 of a White Paper: *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability* (FCO, 2012). The White Paper lists the engagement in Overseas Territories work of eighteen British Government Ministries and Departments and emphasises the Government's vision of the territories' role as "an important part of the future of the UK" (FCO, 2012, p.86).

From a theoretical perspective the non-sovereign Overseas Territories are often interpreted as representing anomalies (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Baldacchino, 2010; Hendry & Dickson, 2011; Hintjens, 1995; Skinner, 2002) in an era dominated by the model of independent statehood (Brown, 2002; Jackson, 1990). As such, their study provides fertile ground for the exploration of theoretical issues around non-sovereignty, particularly questions of how political community, democratic participation and access to state-based rights may be achieved outside formal statehood and how the ongoing constitutional link may affect the identities of the territories and Britain's own self-image. The retention of sovereignty by a state, over geographically distant and historically and culturally differentiated communities, provides significant theoretical challenges to widely-held assumptions within International Relations (IR) and Political Theory about the location of political authority within the bounded territory of the state (El Ouali, 2010). The idea that the people living within particular bordered communities are best placed to make decisions about their own futures is at the heart of much modern political thought

115-135. For a comment by the Foreign Secretary William Hague on the restoration of democracy following elections in November of 2012 see: UK in India (2012) 'The Foreign Secretary has commented on elections in the Turks and Caicos Islands'. [Online]. Available at: <http://ukinindia.fco.gov.uk/en/news/?view=News&id=833426382> (Accessed: 13/11/12).

from John Stuart Mill (Brown, 2002; Mill, 2002) to nationalist movements struggling against colonialism (Anderson, 1991; Geldenhuys, 2009), and theorists of the state (Brown, 2002; Frost, 1996; Snyder, 2007; Walzer, 1983). Moreover, the extension of political authority from a central government in London over distant and individuated communities in the Overseas Territories, which in turn lack electoral representation in the centre (FAC, 2008a)¹⁰, would seem to contradict centuries of thinking about the value of democracy (Held, 1995b; Held, 2006; Rousseau, 1968) and political community (Frost, 1996; Walzer, 1983; Walzer, 1994).

Yet, it is also widely asserted that the Overseas Territories choose their continued relationship with Britain (Clegg, 2009; Connell, 2001; Skinner, 2002). Indeed much of the academic literature on the Overseas Territories explains the on-going link in terms of the benefits, particularly economic advantages, which are seen to derive from a continued attachment to the former colonial power (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Clegg, 2005; Clegg, 2009; Connell, 2001; Royle, 1995; Sanders, 2009a; Skinner, 2002). And some scholarship compares favourably the development trajectories of non-sovereign islands with many newly-independent small island states (McElroy & Parry, 2011; McElroy & Pearce, 2009; Sanders, 2009a). The relationship has even been characterised as “‘upside down de-colonization” in which there is an “active and dogged pursuit of extended colonial relationships” by the smaller former colonies (Baldacchino, 2010, p.46).

¹⁰ The case for representation of the Overseas Territories in the House of Commons was made in Early Day Motion 1219 sponsored by Lindsay Hoyle MP (Labour) in 2010. In answer to a Parliamentary Question on voting rights for Gibraltarians in a referendum, Lord McNally outlined the position that people from the Overseas Territories may vote in UK elections only when resident and registered within the UK, except for Gibraltarians who are able to vote in the South West constituency for European elections. Lord McNally (2010) 'Elections: Gibraltar: Written Answers and Statements, 10th November 2010'. Column WA80 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101110w0001.htm> (Accessed: 11.11.2010).

House of Commons (2010a) 'Early Day Motion 1219 Overseas Territories' Representation in the House of Commons'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2009-10/1219> (Accessed: 11.4.2011)..

Both the existence and the character of the link between Britain and its Overseas Territories thus clearly unsettle theories of statehood and sovereignty (Baldacchino, 2010) which presuppose a desire for independence and the conjunction of people, territory and governance as the norm (Held, 1995a). Yet these theoretical challenges have largely eluded mainstream International Relations scholarship (Baldacchino, 2010). The literature on failed states (Anderson, 2005; Clapham, 1998; Halvorson, 2010; Potter, 2004) and scholarly work both on contested states (Geldenhuis, 2009; McConnell, 2010) and on quasi-states (Jackson, 1990) explores the status of international entities where sovereignty is in question, but does not address the position of overseas territories where independence is, in most cases, possible but has generally not been sought. Recent work on the foreign policy and security strategies of micro states and small states (Chong & Maass, 2010; Sharman, 2007; Wivel & Oest, 2010) tends to overlook differences between sovereign and non-sovereign actors, while the Overseas Territories, as Godfrey Baldacchino has argued, have also tended to elude postcolonial scholarship (Baldacchino, 2010, p.63). Postcolonial theory (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998; Barnett, 2006; Fanon, 1967; Said, 1978; Young, 2001), in the main, focuses on the cultural, ideological and economic impacts and legacies of colonialism in countries which have become independent rather than those which remain non-sovereign.

As will be discussed further in the following chapter, scholarly work on the Overseas Territories has emerged over the past decade from within a broadly International Political Economy/IR/Commonwealth Studies tradition (Clegg & Gold, 2011; Clegg & Pantojas-Garcia, 2009; Killingray & Taylor, 2005; Ramos & Rivera, 2001) and from the sub-discipline of Island Studies where the Overseas Territories receive attention as part of a wider grouping of “subnational island jurisdictions” (Baldacchino, 2010, p.29;

Baldacchino, 2012; Baldacchino & Milne, 2009; McElroy & Pearce, 2009). Much of this work provides analysis of British policy and its impacts since the 1999 White Paper, *Partnership for Progress and Prosperity: Britain and the Overseas Territories* (Clegg, 2009; Connell, 2001; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012; Russell, 2000; Taylor, 2005). It also assesses the extent to which constitutional change has led to devolution of power to the territories (Clegg, 2009; Fergus, 2003; Fergus, 2005) and discusses tensions in the relationship between local politicians and British officials (Clegg, 2009; Russell, 2000; Sutton, 2009; Taylor, 2005). The consensus among these scholars (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Baldacchino, 2010, p.56; Connell, 2001; Sanders, 2009a; Taylor, 2005) is that “the independence candle for islands has been snuffed, at least for the moment” (McElroy & Pearce, 2009, p.41) and that the benefits of the link with the former colonial powers override any desire for full autonomy, particularly in a world where state sovereignty is seen to be increasingly eroded through processes of globalisation (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Sanders, 2009a). Instead, non-sovereign actors, it is argued, creatively utilise their jurisdictional resources (such as the ability to create low or no tax regimes) to exploit successful niches in the global economy and to capitalise on advantages from independent states (Baldacchino, 2006; Baldacchino, 2010).

While the academic work outlined above provides an excellent account, firstly, of the mechanics of the relationship and, secondly, of the development strategies of these unusual international actors, it does not usually focus directly on how non-sovereignty and the continued link with Britain is experienced, perceived and described by those involved. This thesis engages with this body of scholarly work but will provide new empirical and theoretical perspectives on the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories by exploring how the link is viewed and articulated, both in the

United Kingdom and in the territories. It will focus on three case study territories, British Virgin Islands, St Helena and Ascension Island, representing different types of Overseas Territory as explained in Chapter Three. Through the analysis of documentary evidence and research interviews with elites from Britain and from the Overseas Territories, it will extend understanding of the ways in which the relationship is conceptualised by those involved, while also addressing the theoretical challenges posed by non-sovereignty in a post-Westphalian international system (Jackson, 1990; Saul, 2006). This focus on how the relationship is framed, shifts the study towards constructivist approaches (Adler, 2002; Checkel, 2008; Guzzini, 2006; Hopf, 1998; Hopf, 2010; Kubalkova, Onuf & Kowert, 1998; Reus-Smit, 2005; Wendt, 1992), in which shared social meanings such as normative values and the identities ascribed to the actors are given greater emphasis than in realist theories. While material factors such as economic aid, military capacity and political power remain important to the analysis, in this approach questions of identity and ethics are also seen to play a vital role in shaping relations between the parties (Brysk, Parsons & Sandholtz, 2002; Daddow & Gaskarth, 2011a).

A framework which provides for the inclusion of material factors such as power, as well as ethical values and identity, is proposed by Daddow and Gaskarth in their Identity, Ethics, Power (IEP) model of foreign policy analysis (2011a, p.16-19). This framework takes into account not only the power and resources of actors, but also explores how state behaviour is shaped by questions of normative values and the identities of the actors involved (Daddow & Gaskarth, 2011a, p.17). The authors' model re-figures Churchill's 'three circles' concept of British foreign policy (see Bogdanor, 2005) which, they argue, has been central to the practice and theorisation of foreign policy in Britain for the past sixty years - even if it was expressed through the New Labour years in the

language of Britain as a hub, bridge or pivotal power between Europe and the United States (Daddow and Gaskarth, 2011a, p.12-13). Daddow and Gaskarth's framework instead sets British foreign policy making within the intersection between the three circles of identity, ethics and power, the influence of which may vary according to differing circumstances (2011a, p.17). This model, it is argued, allows policy-makers and analysts to give greater weight to questions of how Britain sees itself and is seen by other global actors and to what extent policies embody core British values (2011, p 16). This thesis will use Daddow and Gaskarth's model to explore the hypothesis that in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories, identity, ethics and power play key roles but that the influence of identity is predominant. Discourses of inclusion and exclusion based on the identities ascribed to and adopted by the actors, it is argued, shape how ethics and power are mobilised by Britain and the territories.

Identity, as will be discussed further below, is defined here not as a fixed or innate set of attributes belonging to a group (Campbell, 1992; Cohen, 1995b)¹¹ but instead as a relational concept, an "imagined community", co-constructed between actors and grounded in particular material and historical circumstances (Anderson, 1991). Identity in individual Overseas Territories has been the subject of academic study, predominantly by geographers and anthropologists (Blinkhorn, 2005; Cohen, 1995a; Cohen, 1998; Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993; Cohen, 1983a; Cohen, 1983c; Dodds, 2002; Gold, 2010; Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005; Lambert, 2005; Royle, 2010a; Royle, 2012; Skinner, 2002; Yon, 2007b). This research draws on these rich and varied accounts but focuses specifically on the construction of identity (or identities) in relation to the connection with Britain and how these understandings of the ongoing constitutional link with the British

¹¹ See also Marco Antonsich (2010) for a discussion of belonging which has affinity to but is not equivalent to identity: Antonsich, M. (2010) 'Searching for Belonging - An Analytical Framework'. *Geography Compass*, 4 (6). pp 644-659.

state relate to ethics and power. So, for example, the proposition is explored that claims for financial assistance by some territories draw on ethical norms about the privileged economic support due to a territory as an entity closely related to Britain as opposed to an independent state. Conversely, economic, social or political goods may be restricted by Britain on the basis that the Overseas Territories are perceived as not being “parts of the home state” (Hague, 2010a).

As will be argued in Chapter Four, the Overseas Territories occupy an indeterminate position (see also Hintjens & Hodge, 2012) with regard to the British state. They are part of ‘an undivided realm’ (FCO, 2012, p.8) in that they remain under the sovereignty of the Crown in terms of their international legal status and the legislative authority of Parliament, but they are legally not part of the UK as defined by the 1978 Interpretation Act, nor are they part of the British Isles (Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.5). Although a “UK Government-wide responsibility”, the lead Department for the territories is the Foreign Office (National Audit Office, 2007, p.4), suggesting their status as non-domestic. Some of the Territories receive aid from DFID, a Department primarily dealing with poverty overseas; yet under the 2002 International Development Act (Great Britain, 2002b), the territories receive first call for “reasonable assistance” on the aid budget (DFID, 2011a) and currently receive a higher proportion of aid per capita than some of the poorest independent states (CAFOD, 2011). Between 1981 and 2002 British citizenship and right of abode was removed from most people living in the Overseas Territories (The Home Office, 1980)¹², signalling their exclusion from the body politic (Hintjens, 1995;

¹² The 1981 Act granted British citizenship to people who, or whose parents or grandparents were, born, adopted, naturalised or registered in the United Kingdom or who had been settled in the UK for some time. Those in the Overseas Territories who did not qualify became Citizens of the British Dependent Territories. See Home Office (1980) *British Nationality Law: Outline of Proposed Legislation*. Cmnd. 7987 London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Moore, 2000). Citizenship was restored in 2002 (Great Britain, 2002a), but Overseas Territories inhabitants still cannot vote in UK general elections (Lord McNally, 2010) or receive state benefits unless resident and registered in the UK. The identity of the territories in relation to the United Kingdom is therefore problematical (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012). Discourses of inclusion or exclusion, it is argued, are fundamental to the relationship as they structure the type of claims that can be made for further autonomy and devolution of political power to the territories, or, alternatively, ethically-based claims to further inclusion within the ambit of the British state and a greater share of the state's economic, social and political resources.

By focusing on how the link is understood and characterised by those involved, the study has implications for theory and will also contribute to policy-making. Firstly, in terms of theory, the research will contribute towards a deeper understanding of non-sovereignty in a postcolonial world. By exploring the influence of identity, power and ethics in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories, it provides the potential for new understandings of the relative importance of these factors in relations between actors on the international stage. If, as the research hypothesis suggests, identity is seen to play a predominant role in shaping the relationship, this has implications for realist theories within IR which privilege power in explanations of state behaviour (Carr, 2001; Morgenthau, 1993). Where identity is seen as pivotal, this would suggest the importance of constructivist theories of interstate relations where "the importance of ideas is often contrasted with material factors" (Houghton, 2007, p.29). Furthermore, the research, through an examination of these particular articulations of non-sovereignty, seeks to probe and problematize communitarian assumptions about the

The British Nationality (Falklands) Act 1983 restored British citizenship to those Falkland Islanders who had not qualified for British citizenship under the 1981 Act, following the 1982 conflict.

location of rights, identities and political authority predominantly within bounded political communities (Frost, 1996; Walzer 1983; Walzer 1994).

In terms of policy, the thesis will contribute to a deeper understanding of this unusual, and sometimes challenging, set of relations¹³. Analysing understandings of the relationship among elites in the UK and in the territories will help to inform policy-making by highlighting sensitivities, tensions and strengths in the relationship. The ongoing association with the Overseas Territories has important implications for British foreign policy, not only because of obvious challenges such as sovereignty disputes over the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar, but also because of its implications for Britain's self-image and international reputation as a postcolonial power. As will be discussed in chapter seven, online responses to a 2011 FCO consultation on the Overseas Territories illustrate how Britain's actions towards its "last pink bits" (Ritchie, 1997) can form a powerful leitmotif, either positive or negative, symbolising Britain's wider role in the world.

The section above has discussed how the Overseas Territories represent a challenge to theorists and policymakers in a postcolonial era. As non-independent entities they raise questions about democracy and political community where authority is extended from a distant central government in which the local territory population has no

¹³ William Hague referred to some of the recent "substantial challenges" arising from the relationship with the Overseas Territories in Parliament in 2010 – mentioning in particular financial crises in some Caribbean territories, the situation in the Turks and Caicos Islands, and air access to St Helena: Hague, W. (2010a) 'HC 438-i Developments in UK Foreign Policy; uncorrected transcript of oral evidence to be published as HC 438-i, September 8th 2010'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmfa/438/10090802.htm> (Accessed: 2.10.2010). Examples of past challenges include the 1990s explosions of Mount Soufriere on Montserrat and the subsequent evacuation of a large portion of the island. For discussion of the fall-out, humanitarian and political, of the explosion of Mount Soufriere in Montserrat in 1997 see: House of Commons International Development Committee (1997) 'First Report into Montserrat Volcanic Crisis'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmintdev/267i/id0103.htm> (Accessed: 27.1.10). House of Commons International Development Committee (1998) 'Further Report into Montserrat Volcanic Crisis'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmintdev/1098/109804.htm> (Accessed: 27.1.10).

franchise. The discussion then outlined Daddow and Gaskarths' IEP framework, which gives equal attention to the factors of identity, ethics and power in the analysis. Approaching the relationship through this model will provide theoretical insights regarding the predominant factors influencing the relationship and the relative value of constructivist as opposed to realist approaches.

The next section will address the three core concepts of identity, ethics and power, derived from the IEP model of foreign policy analysis developed by Daddow and Gaskarth (2011a).

1.1 Identity

This thesis seeks to understand how the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories can be characterised in a postcolonial era. One way of achieving this objective is to analyse the ways in which those involved with the relationship experience and represent the connection, either through interviews or in official documents. Articulation of the link will inevitably involve representations of commonly-held conceptions about the identities of the actors involved. For example, when participants describe the actions of Britain towards their territories, the choice of certain shared patterns of reference construct a discourse in which a portrayal, or identity of the other party is represented. Identifying and analysing these identities and how they relate to each other is therefore central to creating a better understanding of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories.

The concept of identity, most importantly national or state identity, has become of increasing interest to scholars within IR over recent decades, particularly within the constructivist tradition (Doty, 1993; Guzzini, 2006; Hopf, 1998; Wendt, 1992). As Stefano Guzzini argues, the fact that social actors "can become reflexively aware" of the

“attributions” given to their actions by others “is one of the reasons for the importance of ‘identity’ in constructivist writings, theoretically and empirically” (Guzzini, 2006, p.149). A contested concept, national identity has been defined in the past as based on factors such as shared religion, ethnicity, language, culture or shared economy¹⁴. However more recent understandings avoid seeing national identity as fixed or natural (Anderson, 1991; Campbell, 1992; Cohen 1995b). Instead it has increasingly become viewed as an “imagined” community (Anderson, 1991, p.6), a powerful set of ideas which are co-constructed by groups to form shared sets of meanings deriving from particular social, economic and political circumstances (Guzzini, 2006). In this vein, Benedict Anderson provides a widely-used definition of national identity as “an imagined political community”, a description which captures the inter-subjective and ideational nature of the concept (Anderson, 1991, p.6). This definition will be used here as its stress on the social construction of the meaning of identity as shaped by particular historical and material circumstances (Anderson, 1991) accords with the broadly constructivist approaches to be adopted in this thesis, as detailed in Chapter Three.

Anderson’s definition of national identity also comprises theoretical assumptions that highlight the ambiguous position of the territories (Hintjens and Hodge, 2012) and draws attention to the way in which these entities disrupt theories of statehood (Baldacchino, 2010). Anderson writes that the nation is a political community which is imagined “as inherently limited and sovereign”. It is envisaged as sovereign, he argues, because “nations dream of being free...the gage [sic] and emblem of their freedom is the sovereign state” (Anderson, 1991, p.7). However, as argued above, the majority of the Overseas Territories have remained linked to Britain by choice. Their goal, therefore, is

¹⁴ For a classic definition of a nation based on objective factors see Joseph Stalin’s account in Stalin, J. (1983) “The Nation”. in Hutchinson, J. and Smith, A. (eds.) *Nationalism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp 18-21.

not necessarily sovereign statehood (Baldacchino, 2010). And yet the academic literature suggests the existence and development of significant expressions of national identity, or island identities, within many territories (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Cohen, 1995a; Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993; Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005). Other authors have described the use of symbols of nationhood by the territories such as national flags, emblems and songs and their participation as individuated actors in international events and para-diplomatic activities (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Baldacchino, 2006; Bartmann, 2009; Clegg, 2005; Corbin, 2001)¹⁵. Anderson's inclusion within the definition of identity of the national group's desire for sovereignty, may need to be adjusted in the case of the territories and a more flexible account of identity adopted. Such an account is provided by Matthews and Travers writing on islands and Britishness (2012). They use Anderson's definition to apply to places which:

regardless of their continued legal relationship with Britain...might be viewed as having something akin to a national identity because they are self-contained societies that define themselves, at least in part, by their natural geographic borders (Matthews & Travers, 2012, p.3).

In a similar vein Geographers Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop (2005) use the concept of 'concentric circles' of spatial identity at different scales to describe feelings of attachment by a group to various locations, allowing the co-existence of multiple identities with, in the case of St Helena, a local identity including a wider British national identity (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005, p.98).

However, even where alternative types of identities and loyalties are recognised, the state-based model of national identity remains a powerful theoretical model (Walker,

¹⁵ In BVI in 2010, the Governor in his Throne Speech wrote about a proposal to create a Territory song: McCleary, B. (2010) 'Speech from the Throne Delivered by His Excellency the Governor Mr. Boyd McCleary, CMG, CVO Thursday October 21st 2010'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.bvi.org.uk/london/news/speechfromthethrone> (Accessed: 3.1.2010).

1993) which underpins much communitarian thinking about the shape and locus of political community (Brown, 2002; Frost, 1996). The idea of a differentiated national identity expressed through statehood is supported by the concept of self-determination, a founding principle of the United Nations (United Nations, 1945a), and one drawn upon by previously colonised peoples (Anderson, 1991; Geldenhuys, 2009). The concept foregrounds, and at the same time problematizes, the question of identity, raising difficult questions about the shape and demographic make-up of territorial divisions worldwide (Brown, 2002). Self-determination, as articulated by J.S Mill, expresses the idea that:

Where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force, there is a prima facie case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart. This is merely saying that the question of government ought to be decided by the governed (J.S. Mill, 2002 p.464).

This formulation begs the question of how a nation or a particular division of humanity can be defined (Brown, 2002) and fails to account for the frequent lack of correspondence between nations and states (Geldenhuys, 2009). Nonetheless, self-determination underscores a notion that national identity requires expression through its own political institutions. While the populated Overseas Territories each have systems of democratic representation and many have significant levels of self-government, authority over some areas of Government is reserved by the British Government¹⁶. This means that in some respects the territories do not have “a government to themselves apart” as proposed by Mill above¹⁷.

¹⁶ See Hendry and Dickson (2011) for an outline of the division of authority and powers reserved to the UK in individual territories.

¹⁷ According to Hendry and Dickson the UN’s adoption in 1970 of the Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among states in accordance with the

A lack of a government that is fully sovereign in all areas of political life, through which national sentiment may be expressed, is particularly problematic for communitarian theory where the state is viewed as a set of political institutions which gain their legitimacy from their expression of the collective identity and the normative values of a particular group of people (Frost, 1996; Walzer, 1983). Thus Michael Walzer argues for the importance of political communities as being the legitimate vehicle through which a people or group “shape their own destiny” (Walzer, 1983. P29); and Michael Doyle argues that “the sovereign state historically has provided the mechanism that... allows people to perpetuate their cultural identity” (Doyle, 2007 p.189). Again, the Overseas Territories are not sovereign states and although having many of the attributes of statehood such as bounded territory, stable population and varied forms of government (Aldrich & Connell, 1998), they lack sovereignty or ultimate authority over some activities within their own borders. As such they problematize the link between identity, rights and the state proposed by communitarian theorists.

Following on from these observations, this research asks how this lack of sovereignty and the ongoing connection with a distant state, affects the territories’ sense of national identity and how in turn this influences and shapes the relationship with Britain. The research will explore the extent to which interviewees in the Overseas Territories feel an ongoing sense of connection with the UK or whether national identity is predominantly developed locally. It will also address questions of to what extent people in the Overseas Territories see themselves as a part of Britain, as separate particularistic communities, or whether identity is seen as fluid, hybrid (Betts, 1997, p.109), and

Charter of the United Nations, acknowledged the people of a territory could freely choose a different political status than independence, integration or free association and which the UK “Government considers has been reached by all the substantially populated territories in the exercise of their people’s right to self-determination” (2010, p252).

transcending national borders (see Baldacchino, 2010 p.116; Hintjens, 1995, p.27; Hoogvelt, 1997, p.158). The impact on British identity of the ongoing link with the territories will also be examined.

1.2 Ethics

The second core concept at the heart of this thesis is ethics, a factor which has played a less prominent role (Brown, 2002; Frost, 1996) in thinking about relations between states within a dominant realist tradition, where instead *realpolitik* is privileged (Donelan, 1990; Donnelly, 2005). Nonetheless, as several authors from differing theoretical perspectives argue, normative values and moral questions do, and should, play an important role in relations between international actors (Brown, 2002; Cochran, 1999; Frost, 1996; Graham, 1997; Linklater, 1998; Walzer, 1994). Mervyn Frost, for instance, argues that many questions in international affairs can only be answered in terms of “what ought to be done” on the basis of “normative ideas about what we are entitled to” (Frost, 1996, p.2). Questions of ethics remain central to how the ongoing link between a state and its territories is legitimised or critiqued in terms of normative understandings of the behaviour due to other international entities. Ethical arguments, for instance, are used to justify the extension of aid to territories where economies are struggling and to decide whether rights adopted within the UK should be extended to territories where cultural mores may differ.

But scholars concerned with ethical issues in IR vary widely in their understanding of the ways in which normative values are constituted (see Cochran, 1999). Andrew Linklater (1998), for example, argues for a cosmopolitan conception of ethics in which individual rights are seen largely as universal rather than particular to individual states. Mervyn Frost, Michael Walzer and Chris Brown, conversely, see rights as constituted

locally and either protected by the system of mutual recognition that is the state system (Frost, 1996) or only existing in a “thin” or “minimal” form internationally (Walzer, 1994). These different ideas of how and where rights are constituted are fundamental to gaining a better understanding of the part ethics play in shaping the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. A discussion of press freedom in Gibraltar at the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) in 2008 illustrates the tension between these two theoretical positions. Labour MP Andrew Mackinlay told Gibraltar’s Chief Minister:

I hesitated before raising this issue because I thought, ‘Well, that’s a matter for you.’ On the other hand, is not freedom of press something that overall is a norm? It is something for which we must have regard (FAC, 2008a, p.Ev 51).

The above quotation draws attention to the tension between a conception of rights as particular to an individual political community “a matter for you”, and as something universal, that “overall is a norm”. Furthermore, the assertion that it is “something for which we [the UK Parliament] must have regard” highlights the position of the Overseas Territories as constitutionally linked to Britain, making it both legally possible, and, arguably, morally imperative,¹⁸ for the British Government to intervene if rights upheld in the UK were seen as unprotected in the territories.¹⁹

Communitarian and cosmopolitan formulations of ethics in international relations raise key questions about the character of the relationship between Britain and the territories. A communitarian conception of rights, as proposed by Frost and Walzer, prompts consideration of to what extent rights ought to be considered as locally constituted, therefore allowing different conceptions of rights and ethics between state

¹⁸ See Guzzini (2000) on the link between responsibility and power within moral and legal contexts.

¹⁹ The UK Government used the Caribbean Territories (Criminal Law) Order 2000 to decriminalise homosexual acts between consenting adults in the Caribbean Overseas Territories against the wishes of these territories. See Hendry and Dickson, (2011) Page 160. Clegg, (2009) p.11

and territory. However, Frost's theory of ethics, by emphasising the state as the "constitutive context of paramount importance" through which individuals and their rights "can be fully realised" (Frost, 1996 p142), also serves to highlight the absence of statehood in the case of the Overseas Territories. The state, according to Frost is not simply a "device which protects certain pre-existing rights" (p138) but is the most important institution in which rights are constituted. Furthermore, citizenship of a state, according to Frost, is only "fully actualized" when their state is "recognised by other states as autonomous" (Frost, 1996 p151). The rights of individuals are, in this argument, upheld by the existence of states within an international system of mutual recognition from which other "settled norms" follow (Frost, 1996). This is a complicated argument but its utility in terms of this thesis lies in its stress on the importance of the state as a necessary context for the production of social values. Frost writes:

People in colonies are not free, because the political entity in which they live is not recognised as autonomous. Few people would agree to their state becoming a colony even if accepting colonial status brought with it substantial economic gain. The reason for this is that in a colony the people are in a subject position and are not free individuals in a way that citizens of an autonomous state are (Frost, 1996, p152).

The connection between Britain and its Overseas Territories may no longer be considered as colonial in the traditional sense (Aldrich & Connell, 1998) but significant powers reserved to the British Government mean the Territories cannot be considered fully autonomous²⁰. Thus the relationship, if one pursues Frost's reasoning, must be open

²⁰ Held, McGrew et al differentiate between state sovereignty as the legitimisation of authority over a territory, and autonomy as the de facto power of a state to achieve policy goals. Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D. & Perraton, J. (1999) *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press. In terms of the Overseas Territories this differentiation of legitimate and overarching authority and the achievement of local aims through areas of autonomy over local jurisdictions is explored by Godfrey Baldacchino (2010. P.99-110). Paul Sutton also explores the concept of autonomy and its constraints in the UK Caribbean territories (Sutton, 2009).

to ethical scrutiny as the parties are involved in a situation where people's rights are not fully realised nor recognised through sovereign statehood. Yet, if one accepts that the majority of the Overseas Territories choose to remain non-independent, this raises a weakness in Frost's argument.

Two points follow from this discussion. The first concerns the possibility that rights may be constituted locally within the Territories and protected by constitutions which, although they are approved by the British Government, are heavily influenced by the people and values of the various Territories (Hendry & Dickson, 2011). The second argument regards another settled norm listed by Frost and already mentioned in the section on identity: that of self-determination. The principle has usually been used to legitimate anti-colonial struggles (Young & Kent, 2004, p.99) but has also been referred to in the context of the Territories' ability to choose whether or not they remain linked to the British state (FCO, 1999; FCO, 2012). The use of self-determination in this way suggests a different ethical framework from that in which continued constitutional links with territories are condemned and only full statehood is valued. Indeed, as mentioned above, much of the academic literature on the Overseas Territories suggests the value to the territories of non-statehood. If this description is accurate, and a value can be sought in non-statehood, then the ethical dimensions of the arguments about the relative value of the non-independent versus the sovereign may be seen to shift. If the arguments about statehood no longer have relevance for this continuing relationship between a state and a territory, what other ethical frameworks are available with which to make judgements about the behaviour of the actors? How are ethical obligations of the territories towards their own inhabitants and those between state and Territory understood and articulated?

The question of ethics is intimately linked to questions of identity. This point is illustrated by Chris Brown's summary of the communitarian position on the privileged ethical duties owed to domestic citizens; a position critiqued by cosmopolitan thinkers but which he argues is shared by most statesmen:

...we have obligations to our fellow citizens that are stronger than the obligations we have to the inhabitants of the world in general, and we shouldn't confuse the two (Brown, 2010).

As argued above, the Overseas Territories' identity in relation to the British state is ambiguous (Hintjens and Hodge, 2012). This begs the question of to what extent they may be seen as inside or outside the state in terms of the ethical obligations which, in a communitarian account, are owed to citizens. To what extent may ethical obligations to the Overseas Territories be restricted by the British Government on the basis of their identity as non-domestic? Or, conversely are normative values, which have been developed within the context of British society, extended to the Overseas Territories on the basis of their identity as "part of the British family" (Bellingham, 2010a)? To what extent is a common identity with Britain articulated by the Overseas Territories in order to share in the ethical obligations of the centre; or, instead, to what extent are separate cultural identities mobilised to argue for the irrelevance of certain ethical obligations within the territories? Alternatively, in the articulation of discourse around ethics, are particularistic conceptions of rights challenged by appeals to universal rights, expressing a more cosmopolitan conception of ethical obligation in international society (Linklater, 1998). This study explores these questions through the examination of research interviews, the academic literature and key documents, identifying significant ethical discourses and how these relate to identity and power in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories.

1.3 Power

Finally, the third element in the IEP framework is power. A highly contested concept, it has been described as “one of the most elusive aspects of international relations” (Stoessinger, 1973, p.27). Yet power remains central to thinking about relations between actors on the international scene and is a factor persistently identified by scholarship on the Overseas Territories as pivotal to the functioning of the relationship with Britain (Clegg, 2009; Killingray, 2005; Osborne, 2005). The proposed devolution of power to Territory governments through constitutional modernisation over the past decade, and the extent to which this has been realised, are also principal topics within academic work on the British Overseas Territories (Clegg, 2009; Corbin, 2009; Dodds, 2009; Fergus, 2003; Fergus, 2005; Gold, 2009 ; Killingray, 2005). Island Studies scholarship (Baldacchino, 2010; Baldacchino, 2012) and some recent work on offshore finance (Kersell, 1998; Sharman, 2007), also foreground the issue of power by challenging assumptions about the powerlessness and vulnerability of small island jurisdictions. Instead they argue that these entities adopt creative strategies to extract advantages from larger states, achieving significant levels of development (Baldacchino, 1993; Baldacchino, 2010; Baldacchino, 2012; McElroy & Parry, 2011; McElroy & Pearce, 2009). The balance of power between the territories and the United Kingdom is therefore a central issue for academics seeking to characterise and to understand the continued link between former colonies and erstwhile colonial power.

While Baldacchino, quoted above, adopts a Foucaultian conception of power, seen as regulation of conduct through a dispersed range of institutions and systems (Baldacchino, 2010; Baldacchino, 2012), power remains undefined in much of the literature on the Overseas Territories, but suggestive of classical realist understandings of

the concept (Bull, 1966b; Carr, 2001; Morgenthau, 1993). Within IR, classical realist definitions of power are based largely on factors such as military capabilities, economy, natural resources, geography, technology, diplomatic capacity and popular support (Morgenthau, 1993, p.30; Stoessinger, 1973). While realist definitions of power are often thought to exclude ideational factors (Barnett & Duvall, 2005), both Morgenthau and Carr recognise and discuss the role of ideology in power politics. Morgenthau, for example, describes power as “a psychological relation” based on “man’s control over the minds and actions of other men” (Morgenthau, 1993, p.30). Nonetheless in these accounts material capabilities are generally privileged over ideological factors.

John Stoessinger (1973), however, while listing the material components of power, comes closer to constructivist accounts by emphasising the importance of ideology, the relational nature of power, and of nations’ images of other and self.

Stoessinger writes:

For though power always involves capabilities, it concerns other dimensions as well... the psychological aspect of power is crucial, since a nation’s power may depend on what other nations think it is or even what it thinks other nations think it is (Stoessinger, 1973, p.27).

What differentiates constructivist accounts (Guzzini, 2006; Hopf, 1998) from realist conceptions of power is the theoretical weight accorded to ideational as opposed to material capabilities. As Ted Hopf writes: “Constructivism argues that both material and discursive power are necessary for any understanding of world affairs” (Hopf, 1998, p.177), with discursive power described as “the power of knowledge, ideas, culture, ideology and language, that is discourse” (Hopf, 1998, p.177).

This study will utilise a constructivist definition of power which acknowledges the importance of material capabilities but emphasises the way in which power also works through social structures and social practices, including language and knowledge (Guzzini, 2006), to shape and constrain how actors think and behave (Hopf, 1998). In terms of the Overseas Territories' relationship with Britain, the sharp differentiation in land mass, populations, administrative capacities, economic resources and military capabilities, mean material factors cannot be excluded from an analysis of power relations between the two parties. However, this research goes beyond an audit of the material capabilities of the actors involved and instead seeks a deeper understanding of the multiple ways in which power may operate between the actors. This will include the way power works through official and alternative discourses as well as social practices and juridical structures. Furthermore, the possibility must also be explored that exercise of power is not the sole preserve of the larger state (Baldacchino, 2010; Sharman, 2007; Sutton, 2009), and may also be exerted, through various means, by the smaller actors' use of the "weapons of the weak" (Sharman, 2007, p.45).

The discussion above has focused on the issue of power between international actors. Yet because of the identity of the territories as neither wholly within, nor wholly outside, the British state, consideration must also be given in the analysis to ideas about how power operates and is legitimised in a domestic setting. Because Britain retains the power to legislate for the territories (Hendry & Dickson, 2011), it is necessary to explore how power exercised between a state and its territories as "part of the British family" may differ from that operating between two sovereign powers.

For example, one way in which power has been envisaged as gaining legitimacy within domestic politics is through the construct of the social contract (Hobbes, 1914;

Locke, 1993; Rousseau, 1968). Here citizens are seen to exchange the authority of the state for protection of, and a share in, common state benefits. As mentioned above, Overseas Territories residents have no electoral representation in the UK, with the exception of Gibraltarians voting in European Union Elections (Lord McNally, 2010), nor do they contribute to the UK tax base (FAC, 2008a; National Audit Office, 2007). They could, therefore, be seen as lying outside the implicit social contract between the British state and its domestic citizens. Most territories have their own political institutions (FCO, 2012) but these are not entirely independent of Britain as authority is retained over areas of territory administration as detailed in individual territory constitutions (Hendry & Dickson, 2011). This thesis seeks to ask how the lack of representation of the territories in the UK Parliament and the extension of the power of the British state over the domestic affairs of an Overseas Territory may disrupt ideas about the assumed social contract between population and government (Held, 2006, p.1) and how this disjuncture of citizenship from political authority can be understood in terms of the legitimation of domestic power.

Furthermore, if the Overseas Territories are not seen as part of the social contract that forms the British state, it is important to ask to what extent may they be considered as non-domestic and thus subject to different ideas about power which dominate thinking about relations between actors in a state-based model of the international system. While Thomas Hobbes' vision of the latent violence of international anarchy (Hobbes, 1914, p.187) may be overstated (Campbell, 1992; Der Derian, 1995), it nonetheless highlights a division which is fundamental to much thinking on international relations. As Michael Donelan writes of the realist world view:

On the one side we have the security of the state, on the other the bleak wastes of international relations, where the states, great associations, confront each other in cold hostility (Donelan, 1990, p.24).

The situation of the Overseas Territories, where British political authority and power are extended beyond the border of the state over widely dispersed and culturally differentiated communities, may serve to undermine this theoretical division of the domestic and the international. Nonetheless, it is argued that the realist vision of international relations represents a powerful, if problematic, model in thinking about relations between actors on the international scene (Agnew, 2009b; Brown, 2002; Walker, 1993) and it must therefore be taken into account when seeking to understand British policy towards the territories, which may be considered as neither wholly within, nor entirely outside the British state. These ideas about the differing ways in which power is understood and exercised in the international and domestic arenas underscores the importance, both theoretically and empirically, of identity in the relationship between Britain and its territories.

The above section has outlined power as a key factor in thinking about relations between actors on the international stage and as a significant theme in the academic literature on the Overseas Territories. While classical realist conceptions of power are pertinent to an analysis of the relationship with Britain in terms of understanding the relative material capabilities of the actors, constructivist notions of power also include more subtle ideational influences which operate through social practices and discursive power expressed through language. The discussion then turned to the problematic of legitimising British power within the territories in the absence of representation in British political institutions and the disruption of the social contract between populace and

government where some authority is held externally to the territory. Contrasting ideas about how power is utilised and legitimised domestically, as opposed to in the international sphere, is also connected to the identities of the territories in relation to the British state.

1.4 Summary

The above section has introduced the key concepts which structure the research and outlined their importance to the task of gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between Britain and its fourteen Overseas Territories. While power has usually been seen as key to understanding relations between international actors within a realist tradition of international relations, the above discussion has highlighted the relevance of ethics and identity to analyses of the international scene, suggesting the centrality to this research of constructivist approaches. The conceptual importance and interaction of identity, ethics and power is contained within Daddow and Gaskarths' IEP model where, under different circumstances, one factor may be seen to predominate. This thesis explores the proposition that in the case of the Overseas Territories, the indeterminate position of the territories as neither wholly part of nor entirely separate from the British state (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012), means identity plays a dominant role. The identity of the territories influences what ethical frameworks apply - local and particular, norms widely accepted within Britain, or universal rights - and also structures how power is understood, exerted and legitimised within the relationship.

The thesis will proceed by reviewing the academic literature which relates to the Overseas Territories and examining how this addresses the three core concepts of identity, ethics and power. Chapter Three details the research methodology, explaining the rationale and philosophy underpinning the design of the research project. It will also

discuss the methodological challenges which arose during the research and how these were dealt with by the researcher.

The second section of the thesis is made up of four chapters of analysis structured around the three core concepts of identity, ethics and power. Chapter Four analyses UK policy towards the Overseas Territories from 1945 until the present. It sets the policy background for the relationship and characterises UK policy over the last seven decades. By examining policy in terms of the three categories of identity, ethics and power, it highlights the ways in which the British Government has viewed the relationship and the implications of these understandings for the current link. The following three chapters each take as their theme one of the core concepts: identity, ethics and power and it is against these that interview data and documentary data from each of the case study territories is analysed.

The final section contains discussion of the results in terms of the key themes. It will assess to what extent the hypothesis that identity is the predominant factor influencing the relationship is substantiated or whether other factors play an equal or greater role. It is hoped that the discussion will contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between Britain and its territories, which will inform policy decisions and advance theoretical conceptions of the interrelationship of identity, ethics and power in the absence of sovereignty.

Chapter Two: The Academic Literature

In the past fifteen years the British Overseas Territories have become the subject of increasing academic interest from within a wide range of disciplines. Attention following the publication in 1999 of the first White Paper on the Overseas Territories (FCO, 1999) has gathered pace with authors seeking to assess the extent to which the aims of this policy document have been achieved and exploring the challenges and benefits of the ongoing link between Britain and its territories. As will be detailed below, anthropologists, geographers, Caribbean Studies specialists, former British officials and IR scholars have drawn on their individual specialisms to shed light on varying aspects of the continued association between Britain and its Overseas Territories. However, the following discussion will argue that while many of these authors address aspects of the themes of identity, ethics and power which are central to this research, a framework which supports the exploration of the intersection of these factors is not explicitly theorised within the literature. This thesis addresses this gap through an interrogation of the inter-linkages between questions of relational identity, the distribution of power, and ethical claims as expressed in extensive interviews with elites in the UK and in the territories.

The literature on the Overseas Territories may be grouped into three wide categories, with some overlaps, which will be detailed further below. First is scholarship from a broadly International Political Economy (IPE) and IR approach (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Clegg & Gold, 2011; Clegg & Pantojas-Garcia, 2009; Drower, 1992; Hintjens, 1995; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012; Killingray & Taylor, 2005; Ramos & Rivera, 2001; Russell, 2000; Taylor, 2000). These texts largely analyse policies toward the Overseas Territories; assess the division of authority between Territory Governments and the British state; and

explore the implications of globalisation on the Overseas Territories and on their relations with their former colonial powers.

The second strand of academic literature derives from the sub-discipline of Island Studies, a broad grouping of scholars from Development Studies, IR, Geography, and Anthropology concerned with understanding the particular situations of islands (Baldacchino, 2010; Baldacchino & Milne, 2009; Matthews & Travers, 2012; McElroy & Parry, 2011; McElroy & Pearce, 2009; McElroy & Sanborne, 2005; Royle, 1992; Royle, 1995; Royle, 2010a; Royle, 2010b; Royle, 2012)²¹. Much of this work stresses the development successes of these small actors (McElroy & Parry, 2011; McElroy & Pearce, 2009; McElroy & Sanborne, 2005) and their ability to use their non-sovereign status for socio-economic advantage (Baldacchino, 2006; Baldacchino, 2010; Baldacchino & Milne, 2009).

The third group represents a heterogeneous collection of scholarship on individual territories from a wide range of disciplines including IR (Khan, 1983; McCourt, 2011); Historical and Cultural Geography (Gold, 2010; Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005; Lambert, 2005; Pulsipher, 2001; Royle, 2004; Royle, 2008; Schulenberg, 2003; Skelton, 1996; Skelton, 2003; Skinner, 2002; Skinner, 2007); Critical Geopolitics (Dodds, 1997; Dodds, 1998; Dodds, 2002; Dodds, 2010; Dodds, 2012; Sidaway, 2010); Sociology (Cohen, 1983a; Cohen, 1983c; Moore, 2000; Sheller, 2008); Post-Colonial Studies (Jones, 2009); Anthropology (Cohen, 1995a; Cohen, 1998; Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993; Jeffery, 2011; Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 1997; Maurer, 1998; Maurer, 2000; Maurer, 2009; Vine, 2009; Yon, 2007b) and other disciplines including, among others, law and history (Brown, 2004; Byrom & Medway, 2004; Eshleman, 2012; Fergus, 2003; Gifford, 2004;

²¹ See Baldacchino (2010) p.xviii-xxx for a background to the development of Island Studies as an academic sub-discipline.

Grocott, 2012; Grove, 1995; Hendry & Dickson, 2011; Janish, Morgan & Connell, 2000; Jaques, 2005; Kennedy, 2007; Kersell, 1998; O'Brien & Leslie, 2010; Oldfield, 1999; Pienowski, 2010; Sand, 2009; Sand, 2010; Sand, 2011; Shotte, 2007; Snoxell, 2008; Wilson, 2011). Scholarship on offshore financial services (Hampton & Christensen, 2011; Palan, 2002; Palan, Murphy & Chavagneux, 2010; Shaxon, 2011; Vlcek, 2010) relates to the role of some Overseas Territories in the global financial system. Finally, travel writing by journalists (Ritchie, 1997; Winchester, 1985) and others (Bain, 1993; Birkett, 1997; Blackburn, 2000; Fogle, 2004; Ghione, 2002; Souhami, 2007) provides context and background, gives voice to local people, and indicates ways in which the Overseas Territories have been imagined and represented by outsiders.

The academic literature is used in three distinct ways within this thesis. Firstly it provides empirical information on the Overseas Territories; secondly, analysis of the literature allows an assessment of research gaps; and thirdly, where the literature overlaps with the specific research aims, it provides data against which to triangulate research findings. The following section will assess the extent to which the existing literature addresses issues of identity, ethics and power in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories, turning first to the theme of identity.

2.1 Identity in the Academic Literature on the Overseas Territories

The majority of texts which deal with identity in the British Overseas Territories focus on individual territories and approach issues of identity from the disciplines of Geography, Anthropology or Sociology. While the connection with Britain usually forms part of the analysis, it is often peripheral, with the main focus on understanding the construction of local identities. The following discussion will focus firstly on identity in texts which deal

with the Overseas Territories as a whole before turning to examinations of identity in texts on individual territories.

2.2.1 Overseas Territories as a category

The question of identity in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories is usually dealt with either obliquely or in reference to the question of whether cultural difference has an influence on desires for independence. The question of how Britain views the territories (and how, in turn, Britain is viewed by the islands and enclaves in question), is discernible in the language used in the academic literature to describe the territories. For example, much of the literature initially frames the Overseas Territories as unusual entities, whose dissimilarity from sovereign states justifies further academic exploration. Territories are frequently introduced as “anomalies” (Aldrich and Connell, 1998, p.242) and “political oddities” (Hintjens, 1995, p.26). Their status is described as “problematic” (Clegg & Pantojas-Garcia, 2009, p.xvii) and they are characterised as “neither fish nor fowl in the international community” (Sanders, 2009a, p.87). Their unusual identity in these accounts derives from their non-independence in a state-based international system and legitimates further enquiry.

The territories’ anomalous status is often linked to the idea of their being out of time, suggesting a chronological movement from imperial system to independent statehood. Skinner, for example, describes the territories as “social, political and economic anachronisms” (Skinner, 2002, p.302) and in 1987, travel writer Harry Ritchie initially considered the idea of remaining British dependencies as an “anachronistic absurdity” (Ritchie, 1987, p.3). Aldrich and Connell argue that the territories had been “regarded as distant and quaint relics of Britain’s Imperial past” (1998, p.1); and Lambert describes them as “imperial remnants” (Lambert, 2004, p.206). The territories are

approached as intriguing and also insignificant, the unimportant leftovers from an earlier era of global power; they are now “dots on a map” (Aldrich and Connell, 1998. P11; Ritchie, 1997, p4; Dodds; p.142) or the “stranded hulks of imperial adventure” (Winchester, 1985. P331).

But while the territories are initially introduced as unimportant, the above authors are generally concerned with deconstructing these assumptions and exploring the significance of the territories either to British foreign policy or in terms of wider questions regarding sovereignty and globalisation. So for several authors the use of ‘dots on the map’, or similar terms, is contextualised within its original reported usage by FCO Minister Ted Rowlands describing his brief from James Callaghan to “watch the dots on the map that create enormous embarrassments...if not bring Governments down” (quoted in Dodds, 2002, p. 142). A similar exhortation by Callaghan to Rowlands regarding “...these specks on the horizon” is quoted in Drower (1992, p.82) and repeated by Hintjens and Hodge, (2012, p.91). Thus the territories’ potential for impacting on Britain’s reputation or requiring military or economic intervention is highlighted (Dodds, 2002; Drower, 1992; Hintjens, 1995).

Furthermore, the territories are often seen to embody types of governance associated with the change from a state-based system to one in which sovereignty is decoupled from the territorial state. Here the Overseas Territories, by virtue of their non-sovereignty become “avatars of a post-modern future” where state sovereignty everywhere is undermined by processes of globalisation and increasingly disconnected from territory (Aldrich and Connell, 1998. P251). Baldacchino (2010) claims that the sub-national jurisdictions, including the Overseas Territories, “are not just relicts from a bygone age but are a response to the opportunities afforded by globalization” illustrated

by their “innovative governance” (Baldacchino, 2010, p.xxii). Baldacchino’s argument, based on the superior economic, social and political development in non-independent islands (McElroy & Pearce, 2009) aims at overturning earlier portrayals of small island developing states as particularly vulnerable (Baldacchino, 2010). Instead these islands and enclaves are posited as the possible “face of the future” (Baldacchino, 2010, p.14).

The Overseas Territories are thus commonly introduced as unimportant, anachronistic, and anomalous, only to have this initial identity challenged and subverted in terms of their potential significance for British foreign policy or as heuristic sites for future modes of governance in a landscape of shifting and compromised sovereignty. However, detailed analyses of the identities ascribed to the territories by British foreign policy-makers and *vice-versa* remain sparse within work which engages with the territories as a whole or with significant sub-groupings such as the Caribbean territories. Detailed analyses of discourses of inclusion or exclusion and the effects of constructions of identity on power relations and normative frameworks in the relationship between the United Kingdom and its territories are not evident in texts which deal with the territories as a category.

Aldrich and Connell (1998) explore the links between culture, nationalism and identity, particularly in terms of assessing (and largely dismissing) movements towards independence. They argue that despite an assumed connection between claims to statehood and cultural difference, in the territories there is little cultural homogeneity and that in several a majority European population influences desires for ongoing connection with the state (Aldrich & Connell, 1998, p.146-151). The authors argue that: “Cultural identity is thus only tenuously linked to issues of autonomy and independence” (Aldrich & Connell, 1998, p.155).

Ramos and Rivera (2001) note the cultural impacts of colonialism and argue that political movements in the territories are often formed around cultural identities. However their focus is the potential for alternative models of governance between territories and administering states rather than analysis of the intersection of identity, ethics and power. In Killingray and Taylors' edited publication (2005), identity formation in Gibraltar is discussed (Blinkhorn, 2005) but the publication deals predominantly with policy, and economic development in other territories. The issue of identity forms a section within Clegg and Pantojas' edited volume (2009) but the chapters directly addressing this theme concentrate on migration in the Dutch and French Caribbean, and with Puerto Rican emigration. Relational identities between Britain and its Overseas Territories are not therefore examined in detail.

While dealing primarily with governance in the Caribbean Overseas Territories, Hintjens and Hodge (2012) raise pertinent questions about the identity ascribed to the Overseas Territories through UK Government policy over past decades. The authors frame their analysis as an investigation into "the complex mix of attachments and detachments" in the relationship between Caribbean Overseas Territories and the UK (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012, p.192) and ask whether UK policy now offers a "shared post-colonial sovereignty" to replace the "separation" of the past critiqued in Hintjens' (1995) comparative study of the UK and French overseas territories. The authors identify a partial "paradigm" shift from the identified neglect of the pre-1999 White Paper years to a greater sense of "shared postcolonial responsibilities" (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012, p.192). However, the authors argue that the representation of the territories as contingent liabilities for Britain, creates a separation from UK Government and the re-engagement of postcolonial responsibilities have to an extent been derailed due to a lack of equal,

transparent and open dialogue between the two parties (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012). While the authors highlight the ambiguity of the relationship between Britain and the Territories, the analysis is primarily concerned with the details of governance and does not take further questions of identity, of how these detachments and attachments are viewed by actors in the territories, or how they may link with ethics and power.

It may therefore be argued that although literature which deals with the British Overseas Territories as a whole (or as part of a larger group of non-independent entities) addresses aspects of identity construction within the territories and touches on links between identity and autonomy, the examination of the construction of relational identities and the subsequent ramifications for questions of ethics and power have not been explicitly theorised. The next section will discuss the attention given to identity within the literature on individual territories.

2.2.2 Individual territories and territory groupings

Discussion of the construction of local or national identity in individual Caribbean Overseas Territories has tended to stress the significance of culture, particularly traditions of land ownership (Skelton, 1996; Skelton, 2003; Skelton, 2009; Skinner, 2007). In the literature on Montserrat, the particularity of local culture, rooted in place and history, is related to questions of power and ethics, as Skelton critiques the UK Government response to the 1997 volcanic eruption, arguing lack of understanding on the part of UK officials of the importance attached to “family land” meant resettlement efforts were inappropriate (Skelton, 2003). Geographer Lydia Pulsipher (2001) also reflects on the intimate knowledge of place and its past in her account of a return to Montserrat following the volcano. Again the lack of knowledge of local ways of life on the part of British agencies is identified as problematic, linking questions of ethical responsibilities,

power and identity (Pulsipher, 2001). This focus on the particularity of local cultures and the difficulty of external forms of governance in the absence of sophisticated understanding of the complexities of local attachments and values, suggests the importance of links between place, identity and governance, which are explored further within this thesis in the context of the case study territories of BVI, St Helena and Ascension.

A rich seam of academic literature, largely from within Geography and Anthropology, also deals with the marginalisation of immigrants from the Caribbean within the relatively wealthy Overseas Territories. These social exclusions are explored in the BVI context by anthropologists Coleen Cohen (2010) and Bill Maurer (2000), as will be discussed further below, and in TCI by anthropologist Dennis Brown, investigating the experiences of illegal Haitian migrants (Brown, 2004). Mimi Sheller (2008) also contrasts the marginalisation of Haitians in TCI with the treatment of wealthy tourists and investors in the offshore services. While these exclusions are not the focus of this research, their profile within the literature provides a caution against approaching the Overseas Territories as culturally homogenous entities and reminds of the internal complexity, fluidity, and multiplicity of identities within these small islands and archipelagos.

Extensive scholarship on the South Atlantic, particularly the Falklands Islands, has been carried out by critical geographer Klaus Dodds (1997; Dodds, 1998; Dodds, 2002; Dodds, 2007; Dodds, 2009; Dodds, 2010; Dodds, 2012). *Pink Ice: Britain and the South Atlantic Empire* (Dodds, 2002), through an analysis of political documents and wider cultural artefacts, explores the representation of the Falkland Islands both in Argentina and in the UK and how the islands became potent metaphors for domestic concerns. In a chapter entitled 'Kith and Kin' Dodds explores how questions of the connection between

the Falklands and the UK were linked to issues of race and nationalism within Britain before and during the 1982 conflict. Recently, IR scholar David McCourt has examined the connection between roles and identities in foreign policy (2011), using the Falklands conflict to illustrate the importance, within a constructivist research agenda, of identities and the roles played in order to make identity meaningful (2011, p.1600). However, McCourt's analysis is less concerned with the identity of the Falkland Islanders, or of their views of Britain, but rather what the conflict signified regarding Britain's own identity and how this identity was recognised or rejected by other international actors.

The ways in which individual Overseas Territories may be mobilised for particular political agendas within Britain is also explored by Geographer David Lambert, writing on identity in Gibraltar (2004). Lambert gives voice to a Gibraltarian civilian identity from within a dominant military/imperial discourse, and interrogates the subject choices of postcolonial scholars and the ways in which these may speak more to metropolitan agendas around national identity than to local concerns (Lambert, 2004). Critical scholars are put off, he posits, by an image of Gibraltarians as 'anglophile' and 'conservative', of the place as 'a distasteful anachronism', a view which in turn limits the legitimate exploration of the local identities and discourses in the continuing relationship (2004, p.10). Also on Gibraltar, Chris Grocott emphasises how history is drawn upon for both political purposes and as part of the cultural production of identity (2012). The author argues that identity is constructed to differentiate "Gibraltarians from the Spaniards by appealing... to notions of Britishness" but ignores other social divisions, particularly that of class (Grocott, 2012, p.149). Grocott's work is notable in its stress on narratives of identity and their links with issues of power and is a reminder of the extent to which elite discourses may differ from their constituencies and are themselves embedded in local

political projects in which the identities of external actors may be mobilised for specific purposes. Peter Gold's survey of identity in Gibraltar (2010) identified a "hybrid population that fully identifies with Britain in terms of political alignment whilst at the same time creating a distinctive cultural identity of its own" (Gold, 2010, p.377). The finding that many people believed themselves to have a distinct Gibraltarian nationality "even though this is legally impossible" (Gold, 2010, p.380), suggests the divide between legal categories of citizenship and a more flexible and ideational construct of national identity (Cohen, 1995b), which fails to map precisely onto internationally recognised allocations of sovereignty and will be explored further in the case study territories.

Academic literature on the Chagos Islanders also explores issues of identity and belonging (Curtis, 2003; Jeffery, 2011; Jones, 2009; Moore, 2000; Snoxell, 2008; Vine, 2009), relating particularly to their dispossession in the early 1970s. Mark Curtis describes a historical "Whitehall conspiracy" (2003, p.13) to deny the islands had been settled for generations and to instead cast islanders as merely contract workers from Mauritius or Seychelles, thus avoiding obligations and responsibilities to the inhabitants provided by international agreement or conferred through British citizenship (Curtis, 2003). Curtis's work underscores the links between identity, ethics and power – and the extent to which the construction of identities of difference, which place groups outside the protection of the state, makes possible the privileging of power politics over ethical concerns. Similar points are made by David Snoxell (2008) and by anthropologist David Vine, who provides a detailed ethnographic study of the social and psychological effects of removal to Mauritius and Seychelles on the former inhabitants of the islands (Vine, 2009) .

Stephanie Jones, (2009) in her analysis of the legal cases surrounding the Chagossians' bid to return to the islands, focuses on discourses of belonging in the legal

judgements and on wider Overseas Territories citizenship legislation. Jones argues that the use of the term 'belonger' in judgments given by the law lords in successive legal cases on the issue of rights to return, serves partially to rescue the term from its connotations of rights-based immigration legislation in the Overseas Territories to a more inclusive "culturally embedded concept" with its roots in the Magna Carta's protection of "freemen" against exile (Jones, 2009, p.227).

The work of the above authors therefore highlights connections between identity and ethics, and identity and power. Dodds and Lambert, in particular, explore not only local constructions of identity, but how these are formed in relation to external actors such as Britain and how, in turn, British constructions of the territories relate to domestic concerns. This thesis takes forward these issues, shifting the geographical focus to St Helena, BVI and Ascension, and exploring the articulation of identity, ethics and power by elites interviewed across different territory types.

St Helena and Ascension

Identity has been the focus of several studies on St Helena (Cohen, 1983a; Cohen, 1983c; Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005; Royle, 1992; Royle, 1995). Sociologist Robin Cohen analysed young people's aspirations on the island as well as wider questions of identity, (Cohen, 1983a). Critiquing the impact of imposed British immigration legislation on the Island, Cohen described attitudes towards Britain as:

Extraordinarily complex – compounded as they are, from the reality of total economic dependence, a history of loyalty and affection for the mother country...cynicism and hostility directed at the often well-intentioned colonial officials and a sense of resentment and helplessness in the face of the adverse circumstances that confront them (Cohen, 1983a, p.1).

While the highlighting of complexity, economic dependence and vulnerability has resonance with some findings in this thesis, what is notable in Cohen's work is the discussion of ethnicity, particularly of many islanders' African heritage – a factor less evident in later studies in which an English/British connection tends to be foregrounded. Cohen's conclusion that "this is a society which lacks binding self-definitions, a people without a nationalism" (Cohen, 1983a, p.26), is contested by subsequent research which describes a distinct St Helenian identity as well as a broader identification with Britain (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005). In 1992 Geographer Stephen Royle followed up Cohen's study (Royle, 1992), linking questions of identity and constitutional status, and noting that 76% of islanders wanted to remain a British colony and none desired independence for St Helena (Royle, 1992, p.35-37). Royle contextualised his findings within the island's seemingly "intractable" economic challenges and, despite significant British investment, the need for ongoing financial support. In this, and subsequent work on this issue (2012), the author links the need for and the provision of, aid and feelings of identification with Britain, suggesting a link between economic power and identity. The question of St Helenian identity is also explored briefly by Robert Moore (2000) within an analysis of the varying effects of the 1981 Nationality Act on the Island, on the Falkland Islands, and the Chagos Islanders. Moore, noting how the Falkland Islanders' British citizenship was restored following the 1982 conflict, describes British policy as inconsistent and underpinned by racial discrimination against non-white citizens of the territories, including the St Helenians (Moore, 2000).

A study on St Helena following the restoration of British citizenship (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005) uses the concept of 'spatial identity' to signify people's attachment to particular geographical scales and identified a distinct St Helenian identity

based around extended family, a particular way of life, friendliness and resourcefulness (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005). This is accompanied by a broader British national identity “although in an outdated version” (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005, p.101). The researchers point to the popularity of cricket, the school curriculum, an attachment to monarchy and an inclination towards British products. The authors conclude that the two identities do not contradict one another and indeed that “being a Saint includes Britishness” (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005, p.102). The researchers raise the issue of potential air access and fears over its impact on island life but also the difficulties of economic development without air access and the concomitant reduction in the population:

The possibility of a complete depopulation of the island in the (more distant) future does not seem as impossible at present as it was perceived in the past (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005, p.103).

This study suggests the coexistence of a local island-based identity and a wider British connection. Identity is contextualised by economic constraints, the island’s isolation and past restrictive British citizenship legislation, but issues of ethics and power in the relationship are not explicitly theorised in relation to identity.

While the above studies stress the British connection, Dan Yon has described St Helena as part of “an oceanic world of mobility and flux” (Yon, 2007b, p.144) and the “island as a place of movement and convergence, where racial identities are more mobile” (Yon, 2007b, p.145). Approaching race as social construction, Yon explores historical ‘snapshots’ of St Helena as a place of comings and goings, diaspora and exchange. St Helena’s history is here evoked as a hub in a world of movement, meetings and mixing of people, but one where the vicious history of slavery is imprinted. Yon

focuses on emigration to South Africa until Apartheid and the continuing sense of attachment to the Island among emigrants, many of whom faced racial discrimination in their destination (Yon, 2007b), a theme echoed in *One Hundred Men* a documentary on the St Helenians recruited by the British Government to work in England as agricultural labourers after WWII (Yon, 2007a). Yon's work contrasts with the other studies as it foregrounds fluidity, complexity and global connectedness associated with the history of the island and her peoples.

Work by Alexander Schulenberg on the use of Edenic, Arcadian and picturesque imagery in representations of St Helena in literature and art, deals predominantly with historical texts but raises the issue of the links between the idealisation and the colonisation of islands by outsiders (Schulenberg, 2003), a theme which connects to concerns within Geography and Cultural Studies about the appropriation of islands as sites of European fantasy (Courtman, 2004; Sheller, 2008) and to work on the marketing of BVI as a tourist destination (Cohen, 1995a; Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993). Schulenberg's exploration of representations of St Helena by visitors as "a corner of England" (Schulenberg, 2003, p.544), links with spatial imagery used by elites interviewed for this thesis and his discussion of the appeal of islands to "the lone fieldworker, struggling to make sense of other people's worlds" (Schulenberg, 2003, p.549) is a reminder of the positionality of the researcher who inevitably brings pre-conceptions to the site of study.

Simple equations between St Helena and Britain are also contested in work by David Smallman (2003, p.4) who argues: "St Helena is not a few acres of Britain in a subtropical environment" and insists that St Helenians have "a unique personality of their own". Yet he also argues that "no one really belongs" and "there is no deep-rooted

culture, nor traditions disassociated with colonialism” (2003, p.5). This analysis rests on the island’s geography and the historical forms of colonial governance, which he argues led to an entrenched dependence on Britain (Smallman, 2003). Travel writer Ben Fogle also links a lack of a strong sense of “identity or heritage” with the island’s “absolute dependency” (2004, p.131).” The connection between geographical isolation, economic disempowerment and identity are themes which will be explored in greater depth within the following chapters.

In summary, identity on St Helena has been explored within the academic literature and the link between a distinct St Helenian and British identity has been theorised. This relational identity has been discussed with reference to citizenship legislation and to economic dependence, suggesting the articulation of a link between identity and power. However, this thesis extends this analysis through the exploration of the links between identity and ethical claims to social and economic collective goods and to questions of political power and empowerment in the relationship with Britain.

In contrast, academic literature focusing on contemporary identities on Ascension Island is sparse. Stephen Royle, writing on governance on the Island between 1922 and 1942, suggests connections between identity and the practice of colonial power. He explains how pre-1922 the island was “viewed as a ship” by the Navy and all aspects of life therein were defined by its function as “...a military base entirely at the service of the distant British state...” (Royle, 2004 p.113-114). Royle’s discussion of the replacement of the West African workforce by St Helenians after 1921 and the racial discrimination faced by Saints on the Island in this period, also suggest the connections between the exertion of colonial power and ideas about the obligations owed to the workforce on the basis of their identity as colonised others. While touching on the reform process started in 1999,

Royle's focus is Ascension's early Twentieth Century history rather than current relations between governance and identity on the island. Sergio Ghione (2002) makes passing reference to the effects on the islanders of the lack of right of abode but the question of identity is not explored in any depth. This is clearly a research gap which this thesis will address.

Identity and the BVI

Writing on identity in the Virgin Islands derives predominantly from the discipline of Anthropology and largely explores relations between citizenship and identity (Maurer, 1997; Maurer, 2000) and tourism and national identity (Cohen, 1995a; Cohen, 1998; Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993). Anthropologist Coleen Cohen examines the construction of the islands as a tourism destination, highlighting tensions between the construction of a national identity and the island's increasing enmeshment with the global movements of tourists, finance, and immigrants as the economy has expanded (Cohen, 1995a; Cohen, 1998; Cohen, 2010). Cohen argues that recent political developments and the way that the BVI is marketed, suggest a natural or essential BVI identity that excludes recent immigrants (Cohen, 2010). Cohen's emphasis is on the relationship between British Virgin Islanders and non-British Virgin Islanders on the basis of "socially constructed categories of race, kinship and nationality" (Cohen, 2010, p.101). The relationship with Britain provides context to this discussion but is not the central focus of these texts.

Bill Maurer also examines questions of citizenship and belonging in BVI, particularly the effect of UK citizenship legislation on the division between BVI islanders and 'non-belongers' and the development of the offshore financial sector in the islands (Maurer, 1997). Maurer explores the position of poorer immigrants to the BVI from other

Caribbean countries (Maurer, 1997), arguing that UK citizenship law and local legislation created a link between “paternity” and “legitimacy” in “ascribing identities” which exclude many immigrants from the political and economic life of the Territory (Maurer, 1997, p.150). Maurer’s discussion of the impacts on BVI of the British Nationality Act, provides a striking contrast with its reception in St Helena. Whereas in St Helena the Act was received with dismay, in BVI, Maurer argues, it was “welcomed” as it “provided a legal justification for denying rights to immigrants *as well as to their BVI-born children*” (Maurer, 1997). Cohen and Maurer, while not focusing on a detailed examination of current attitudes to the link with Britain, both interrogate the connections between economic development, identity and external influences, including British legislation (Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993; Maurer, 1997; Maurer, 2000).

Work by Victor Konrad and John Everitt (2011) also has some synergy with this research. Their comparative analysis of border security in the Pacific Northwest and between BVI and the US Virgin Islands (Konrad & Everitt, 2011) touches briefly on identity in BVI, re-iterating the division between belongers and non-belongers explored by Cohen and Maurer, and exploring differences and continuities with the US Virgin Islands. The researchers noted a decline in British influence and argued that despite efforts at re-engagement, British influence was seen as largely symbolic (Konrad & Everitt, 2011, p.299).

These texts provide valuable context for the further exploration of the ways in which identity is expressed specifically in terms of its relationship to the UK and the extent to which discourses of separate or linked identity relate to desires for further empowerment or the extension of normative values to the BVI – issues which will be explored in this thesis through the IEP framework discussed in Chapter One.

2.2 Ethics in the academic literature

While ethical issues lace the literature on the Overseas Territories, they are seldom the main object of study and are rarely explicitly scrutinised or theorised. Nor are the ways in which elites in the UK and in the Territories articulate and frame ethical claims arising from the ongoing relationship with Britain explored in detail or related to issues of identity and power. Nonetheless ethical concerns are apparent in the literature in terms of human rights issues and good governance, and in discussions of environmental protection and the regulation of the offshore financial sector.

2.3.1 Responsibility for the Overseas Territories

Within a significant strand of the academic literature, the Overseas Territories are introduced alongside a charge of neglect, or past neglect, by Britain (Drower, 1992; Hintjens and Hodge, 2012). Harry Ritchie, for instance, describes them as “neglected territories” (1987, p.10); journalist Fred Pearce as Britain’s “abandoned empire” (Pearce, 1994); and Clegg and Pantojas-Garcia as “rather forgotten but important” (2009, Pantojas-Garcia p.xix). The use of the term ‘neglect’ suggests a framework in which there is an implied relationship of obligations between the actors. While some authors identify this framework explicitly in terms of international obligations regarding the political, social and economic development of the territories (Corbin, 2009) or international agreements on the environment (Sand, 2009; Sand, 2010), in much of the literature the basis for the ethical obligations is assumed rather than detailed. Drower (1992), for example, is critical of British official neglect of the territories, explaining:

The era of colonial permanence has now been in existence for some ten years, yet Britain continues to administer the dependent territories by methods devised for decolonization. Although the FCO has responsibility for the territories it has few officials or ministers who know much about them (p.71).

The ethical basis for these responsibilities is not interrogated. Similarly Hintjens and Hodge argue for “shared post-colonial responsibilities” (2012, p.192) on the basis of the existence and longevity of the link and the consequences of neglect. As several authors argue (Clegg, 2009; Clegg & Gold, 2011; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012; Skelton, 2003) the volcanic crisis in Montserrat focused attention on Britain’s responsibilities towards the Overseas Territories. Peter Clegg argues that the fallout from the crisis and an 1997 National Audit Office report into the territories led to increased UK Government control (Clegg, 2009). Thus the growing awareness of Britain’s ongoing responsibilities is highlighted and connected with power in terms of maintaining the ability to act in order to fulfil ethical expectations. This analysis echoes David Killingray who described the challenges of:

...reconciling Territory desire for full self-government with the UK's need to retain the powers and levers needed to fulfil overall responsibilities (Killingray, 2005, p.15).

While power and responsibility are here related, the question of responsibility in relation to the identities of the actors is implied rather than assessed critically and therefore demands further theorisation. The extent to which the responsibilities outlined in the White Paper have been shouldered have been critiqued recently by Hintjens and Hodge (2012) and related to the sense of separation of Britain from the Overseas Territories. Here, therefore, a relationship between the actor’s relational identities and ethical obligations is raised, but not further theorised. Specific issue areas such as responsibility for the environment, human rights and financial regulation have also been tackled individually in the academic literature, as outlined below.

2.3.2 Responsibility for biodiversity

In the past two decades the extensive biodiversity and potential threats to ecosystems in the Overseas Territories have been highlighted by environmental organisations (Chagos Conservation Trust, 2009; McWilliams, 2009; Oldfield, 1999; Pew Environment Group, 2009; RSPB, 2009; Stringer, 2010; United Kingdom Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, 2009) and academics (Grove, 1995; Hilton & Cuthbert, 2010; Pienowski, 2010; Richardson et al., 2006; Sand, 2009; Sand, 2010; Sand, 2011). While the environment is an area devolved to Territory Governments, the support of sustainable development in the territories has formed a plank of UK Government policy towards the territories (DEFRA, 2009; DEFRA, 2012; FCO, 1999; FCO, 2010; FCO, 2012; FCO Polar Regions Unit, 2010) and, as mentioned in Chapter One, Britain is the signatory to a raft of international conventions on the environment, many of which are extended to the Overseas Territories. Yet the extent to which the UK has funded and fulfilled its obligations has come under scrutiny from Parliament (FAC, 2008b; House of Commons, 2007; House of Commons Debate, 2010), environmental organisations (RSPB, 2009; Stringer, 2010), academics (Pienowski, 2010; Sand, 2009), and journalists (Pearce, 1994). This thesis picks up on this work and explores further the ways in which ethics around environmental responsibility is related to the identity of the territories in relation to the UK.

2.3.3 The Overseas Territories and offshore finance

The offshore financial service sectors within several of the Overseas Territories have been the subject of scrutiny by governments, NGOs and academics in the past decade (Clegg and Gold, 2011). While a concern in terms of its potential for the movement of criminal (Clegg and Gold, 2011) or terrorist finances, the offshore world also raises wider ethical questions regarding distributive justice both within states and at an international level (Palan, Murphy & Chavagneux, 2010). Palan et al, for example, stress the ways in which

tax havens undermine state finances and “skew the distribution costs and benefits of globalization in favour of a global elite and to the detriment of the vast majority of the population” (Palan, Murphy & Chavagneux, 2010, p.3). Like Nicholas Shaxon (2011), the authors explore Britain’s historical role in the development of the offshore sectors in some Overseas Territories and ongoing links between these territories and the City of London (Palan, Murphy & Chavagneux, 2010, p.11). While offshore finance is not an issue in Ascension Island or in St Helena, this thesis will examine the ways in which elite discourses around the offshore sector in BVI connect with issues of local identity, ethics and power.

2.3.4 The exile of the Chagos Islanders

The ethics of British policy are scrutinised by several authors writing on the removal, in the early 1970s, of the Chagossians from BIOT to make way for a US military base (Bradley, 1999; Curtis, 2003; Fogle, 2004; Gifford, 2004; Jeffery, 2011; Jones, 2009; Khan, 1983; Moore, 2000; Sidaway, 2010; Snoxell, 2008; Vine, 2009). Former British High Commissioner to Mauritius, David Snoxell, describes the treatment of the Chagossians as a “42-year-old saga of deceit, perfidy and human rights violations” and “a shocking stain on the UK’s reputation” (Snoxell, 2008, p.129). Mark Curtis condemns what he sees as the ethical bankruptcy of British policy (2003), while Diego Garcia is also the subject of discussion of rendition, human rights abuses and race (Sidaway, 2010). A clash between human rights and environmental responsibilities is also pertinent to a 2010 UK Government decision to create a Marine Protected Area around the Islands (FCO, 2010). The zone aims to protect globally important ocean environments but the ban on fishing may provide a further barrier to the return of the islanders (Duffy, 2010; Fogle, 2010; McCarthy, 2010; Sand, 2011).

Ethical issues within the academic literature thus tend to focus on specific areas where Britain is alleged to have neglected its responsibilities: human rights in the Chagos Islands, regulation of offshore finances, and environmental obligations. Within the academic literature questions of access to funding for the territories receive less attention and rarely are the ways in which ethical obligations are understood and articulated by territory elites explored in detail. Connections between ethics and identity are made in the literature on the Chagos Islands but are not extended to other territories and their relationship with Britain, suggesting the potential for further exploration of the links between identity and claims to enhanced economic, social or political rights within the relationship.

2.3 Power in the Academic Literature on the Overseas Territories

The issue of power in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories permeates the academic literature on the Overseas Territories but is seldom held up for explicit theoretical scrutiny. Much of the writing on the Overseas Territories from the IPE and IR disciplines describes the balance of powers between the UK Government and the Territories in terms of evolving constitutions, the good governance agenda, and the extension of human rights legislation, but seldom are people's views of power and empowerment analysed or power theorised specifically in terms of its relation to identity and ethics.

2.3.1 The benefits of dependency

A significant strand of literature on the Overseas Territories challenges traditional notions regarding power relations between colony and colonial power, arguing instead for a significant measure of agency and empowerment for territories within the contemporary link. The "propensity for political affiliation" (McElroy & Parry, 2011, p.1) is explained by

the socio-economic advantages afforded by dependency (Baldacchino, 2010). Here political empowerment is seen to be weighed against socio-economic advantages.

Geographer Stephen Royle (1995), for example, dismisses significant calls for independence, except possibly in Bermuda, citing the benefits of retained links including fiscal support, stable political structure, defence and preferential trade. This view is echoed by David Taylor who explains the continued association of the Caribbean Overseas Territories with Britain in terms of “dependence as a safeguard against weak or corrupt government” (2000, p.338). John Connell also claims:

The quest for independence in Britain’s Caribbean colonies now appears to be over ... (Connell, 2001, p.113).

Tensions in the relationship remain, it is argued, but these are framed as a desire for cultural identity rather than appetite for significant constitutional change (Connell, 2001). Former senior British official Thomas Russell, touching on proposals for independence in Bermuda in 1987, claims there has been “no move to independence since” (Russell, 2000, p.346); while Roy Osborne, claimed in 2005 there was little desire from the territories for either integration with, or independence from, the UK (Osborne, 2005, p.28). More recently Godfrey Baldacchino and David Milne argue:

...most of these territories exhibit no urgency to become independent. Instead they seem to have decided that there are political and economic benefits accruing today when island territories are autonomous but not sovereign (Baldacchino and Milne, 2009).

The lack of desire for full sovereignty is generally explained in the literature in terms of the benefits accruing to dependency on a larger state (Baldacchino & Milne, 2009; Clegg, 2009; McElroy & Parry, 2011; McElroy & Pearce, 2009; Ramos & Rivera,

2001). Ronald Sanders (2009a) and McElroy and Pearce (2009) make the case for the economic empowerment of dependent island states pointing to earlier research (McElroy & Sanborne, 2005) which compared favourably the socio-economic and demographic profiles of 16 non-self-governing islands with 19 independent island states. More recently McElroy and Parry point to stronger development indicators in the non-independents to explain the status quo (McElroy & Parry, 2011). Assessing developments post-1999 White Paper, Clegg notes high per capita GDP in the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands and highlights the impression of stability afforded by enduring links with the UK in terms of attracting investors (Clegg, 2009). Shared language and legal systems, along with the benefits of an “ill-defined political status” allow “manoeuvre in political and economic matters” (Clegg, 2009, p.125). Godfrey Baldacchino lists factors such as preferential trade terms; access to EU markets and to capital through tax concessions; aid financed infrastructure; and access to labour markets through migration as factors giving advantage to non-independent island territories (Baldacchino & Milne, 2009, p.2). In these accounts, therefore, further political power within the ongoing relationship with the larger state is seen to be subordinated to socio-economic development. Furthermore, the use of terms such as “political affiliation” (McElroy & Parry, 2011) suggest both choice and neutral power relations, de-emphasising colonial histories and any ongoing power differentials.

Linked to the idea of economic empowerment through creative use of jurisdictional power is the ability of small actors to employ the “power of powerlessness” (Baldacchino, 2010, p.150). Here, small international entities are argued to use their diminutive size and presumed vulnerability to gain advantage in negotiations or access to privileges (Baldacchino, 2010, p.149-152). Baldacchino argues that often the

larger state does not want to be seen to bully smaller states or open itself to charges of neo-colonialism (Baldacchino, 2010). A similar argument is proffered by J.C. Sharman, who argues that small states have used the “weapons of the weak” by employing the normative constructions used by larger states regarding competition to undermine efforts to regulate offshore financial services (Sharman, 2007, p.45). In these accounts, realist ideas of power based largely on material capacity are subverted by the recognition of the smaller actors’ use of widely held norms regarding international behaviour. These accounts are intriguing in that they offer novel analyses of power relations between large states and small non-sovereign actors. This thesis explores these propositions within the case study territories to assess the extent to which the smaller actors are perceived by elites to hold power and whether this varies across different types of territory.

2.3.2 Power and empowerment: tensions

Despite the advantages attributed to dependency, however, the literature is not insensitive to ongoing tensions over power distribution between the territories and the centre (Clegg, 2009; Clegg & Gold, 2011; Connell, 2001; Ramos & Rivera, 2001; Russell, 2000; Taylor, 2005), particularly regarding limits to the further devolution of power and the UK’s promotion of a good governance agenda (Clegg, 2009; Clegg & Gold, 2011; Dodds, 2009). Several writers, predominantly on the Caribbean Overseas Territories, flag up tensions in the relationship (Clegg, 2005; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012; Killingray & Taylor, 2005; Osborne, 2005; Russell, 2000). Ronald Sanders (2009a) and Peter Clegg note friction over legislation regulating the offshore financial sector (Clegg, 2005), which he argues, illustrates “the lack of real control microstates have over their economic destiny” (2005, p.123). Osborne argues that post 9/11 security concerns have caused a “blurring of international and domestic issues” leading to an extension of UK government influence in the territories, in turn causing friction with locally elected governments (Osborne, 2005,

p.27). Like Killingray and Taylor, he highlights the UK's need to retain the necessary powers to fulfil responsibilities (Osborne, 2005, p.28), a concern echoed by Thomas Russell (2000) who catalogues problems including lack of knowledge in the FCO; lack of Overseas Territories representation to the UK Parliament; lack of consultation of local ministers on Governor's appointments, and resentment over Orders in Council. Writing in 2001 and despite noting advantages to continued dependency, Ramos and Rivera argue that the British Caribbean territories:

Remain organised as classical colonies with a governor appointed from outside and only a small amount of domestic decision-making granted to local actors (Ramos & Rivera, 2001, p.xvi).

Several of these themes are taken up by Clegg (2009) who outlines constitutional arrangements in the Caribbean Overseas Territories and addresses areas of friction which include lack of distinction between the remits of governors and local ministers and conflicting agendas. Clegg sees recent increased oversight and restrictions on further devolution of power to the islands, as cause for tension in the relationship (Clegg, 2009). These tensions will be explored further in this thesis and extended beyond the Caribbean to the case study territories of St Helena and Ascension Island. Elite discourses on power and empowerment will also be examined to create a deeper understanding of the ways in which identity and responsibility intersect with the distribution of power within the relationship.

2.3.3 Voices of empowerment

Godfrey Baldacchino argues that the literature on islands is predominantly by "white, western, middle-aged men" and "those observing from the outside in" (2007, p.2).

Alternative voices may be found in several Caribbean writers (Corbin, 2001; Corbin, 2009; Fergus, 2000), who provide a critical perspective on issues of decolonisation and local

empowerment. Howard Fergus (2005) examines the constitutional modernisation process initiated by the FCO following the 1999 White Paper. He argues that educational campaigns on constitutional matters contributed to limited calls for greater autonomy in Montserrat, Cayman Islands and BVI (Fergus, 2005) but that FCO responses underscore a division between the UK Government's rhetoric on modernisation and partnership and the retention of powers to carry out its obligations (Fergus, 2005, p.43). Carlyle Corbin (2009) measures the advancement of democratic governance in the territories against the international obligations contained within the UN Charter. He argues that the provisions of Chapter 73(b) regarding the progressive development of free political institutions have not yet been achieved and that de-colonisation is therefore not complete (Corbin, 2009, p.253). Corbin compares the "exemplary" treatment by New Zealand of Tokelau (2009, p.260), which it helps "in its political evolution towards free association" with the administration by the UK of its territories, which Corbin describes "an accommodation strategy" (2009, p260). This, it is argued, involves challenging and undermining the UN decolonisation mandate and attempting to legitimate the:

often cosmetic colonial reforms emerging from internal constitutional modernisation which does not modify the status quo condition (Corbin, 2009, p.260).

Corbin highlights the reserved powers of Governors, the role of the UK in drafting, following local consultation, Territory constitutions, the potential for the UK to use Orders in Council, and the blocking of options of integration and free association (Corbin, 2009). Caribbean Studies professor Paul Sutton also provides a cautionary note regarding the limits of autonomy (2009), pointing out that some areas of autonomous jurisdiction remain at the "discretion of the metropolitan patron" (Sutton, 2009, p.xxxix). Power, within the relationship is thus identified as uneven, providing a caution to accounts in

which the agency and empowerment of the smaller non-sovereign actors is highlighted. This thesis will explore these varying conceptions of power within the case study territories, extending the analysis to include the non-Caribbean territories of St Helena and Ascension Island and focusing on the ways in which elites interviewed articulate and frame issues of power within the ongoing relationship.

2.4 Summary

The academic literature on the Overseas Territories represents a diverse body of scholarship. Some of this literature speaks directly to one or two of the research themes explored within this thesis. The question of identity within several territories, including the case study territories, is explored; ethical questions are raised with regard to specific areas of governance; and the distribution of power is discussed with a particular focus on the UK Caribbean Overseas Territories. The following chapters will take this forward through the application of an Identity, Ethics, Power framework (Daddow & Gaskarth, 2011b) to the analysis of extensive interviews with elites from the UK and case study territories. The use of this framework allows for equal and sustained analysis of each of the key themes of identity, ethics and power and an exploration of the links between these factors, thus furthering empirical and theoretical knowledge regarding the contemporary relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The main rationale for the choice of approaches and methods is that they are effective in helping to provide answers to the research questions, not that they are convenient or fashionable (Murray & Overton, 2003; Silverman, 2000; White, 2009). This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories and how it is viewed on both sides. It is argued that that such a relationship between international actors is material (for example based on trade and aid); it is also institutional (a legal and political entity defined by domestic and international law, and practices); and at the same time it is an ideational and emotional link based on shared histories, narratives of identity, and feelings such as affection, or antipathy. While each of these facets of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories could be studied in isolation, it is argued that these categories are interrelated and that a robust account of the relationship, and how it is understood by both parties, could not have been achieved if any of these were neglected.

In order to study these different aspects of the relationship between Britain and its Territories, a range of approaches and methods were required, each of which will be outlined in the following sections of this chapter. A classical approach derived from IR (Bull, 1966a; Jackson, 1996; Jackson & Sørensen, 2007; Shapcott, 2004) draws on history, political philosophy and international conventions to explore questions of power and the normative basis of the relationship within the international system. A broadly constructivist approach (Adler, 2002; Doty, 1993; Guzzini, 2006; Hopf, 1998; Kubalkova, Onuf & Kowert, 1998), and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001; Fairclough, 2003) supplement a classical

approach by providing tools for the analysis of the language used in interview and documentary data and for exploring how these relate to the shaping of identities, norms, and relations of power between Britain and the Overseas Territories. Quantitative methods play a lesser role - used to assess the material basis of the relationship and to produce a typology of the Overseas Territories. While these approaches are varied, it will be argued that their combined use is productive in furnishing a rich and detailed understanding, sensitive to issues of identity, ethics and power, of relations between the Britain and the Overseas Territories.

This chapter will start by outlining the three main approaches used in this study. It will explain why these approaches are beneficial in answering the research questions and outline the ontological and epistemological implications of this methodology. Explanation of the choice of case study sites will follow before an outline of methods of data collection and analysis and discussion of the ethical challenges encountered during the research.

3.1 Combining three approaches

3.1.1 A Classical Approach

The classical approach to International Relations, based on “...theorizing that derives from philosophy, history and law” (Bull, 1966a, p.361) offers a framework for the analysis of several aspects of the Overseas Territories relationship with Britain. Firstly, it provides an account of the convention of sovereignty - an idea underpinned by international law, practice and norms – and an attribute lacking in the Overseas Territories. The history of individual Overseas Territories and wider processes of colonialism and decolonisation are also key to understanding the current status of the territories. Furthermore normative questions concerning the legitimacy of the relationship and of political goods derived from or deficient

in the relationship, can be explored through questions of political philosophy. The classical approach draws upon a canon of political philosophy “handed down by past generations” (Jackson, 1996, p.205). Classical political and international relations literature provides a resource of theories about the operation of power in international relations and of normative values in international affairs which form two of the central themes in this thesis.

The defence of the classical approach (Bull, 1966a) arose in reaction to the development of more scientific, behavioural approaches (see for example Deutsch, 1956), to explain and predict state behaviour. Hedley Bull stressed the importance of “judgement” and “a scientifically imperfect process of perception and intuition” over “strict standards of verification and proof” (Bull, 1966a, p.361). Understanding the behaviour of states is here an art rather than a science (Jackson, 1996), a qualitative study involving subjective assessments, which eschews truth claims in favour of understandings or interpretations of “tentative and inconclusive status” based upon logical argument and historical evidence (Bull, 1966a, p.361). As Bull writes, many of the questions addressed by international relations are:

...at least in part moral questions, which cannot by their very nature be given any sort of objective answer, and which can only be probed, clarified, reformulated, and tentatively answered from some arbitrary standpoint, according to the method of philosophy (Bull, 1966a, p.366).

Questions regarding the operation of power, of ethical issues and the influence of international norms within the relationship between Britain and its Overseas Territories are all susceptible to interrogation in terms of political philosophy and normative values. A non-scientific approach, as Jackson and Sørensen (2007) point out, does not preclude rigorous academic skills:

Good IR scholarship is not a matter of technical training in correct methods or models or statistical techniques. It is a matter of immersing oneself in the subject by becoming a careful, thoughtful and critical observer of the world's politics, both contemporary and historical (Jackson & Sørensen, 2007, p.286).

In summary, the classical approach is in part appropriate for the study of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories as it involves developing understandings of the operation of abstract and normative concepts such as power, ethics and sovereignty. A secondary argument for the classical approach is that it speaks a “non-technical language which ordinary people can understand” (Jackson, 1996, p.205). This aspect of the approach has benefits in terms of ease of dissemination of the research and its subsequent impact²².

However, Bull’s 1966 article reveals more about what the classical approach is not (a scientific method), than what it is (Shapcott, 2004). While Shapcott argues that Bull’s 1972 paper ‘International Relations as an Academic Pursuit’ re-emphasises the role of history and normative values in the study of international relations (Shapcott, 2004, p.274), Bull does not provide a guide for the collection or analysis of data (Jackson & Sørensen, 2007, p.281) beyond the advice that “to understand how it [a state] acts we have to acquire a sense of its singularity that is best imparted by historical knowledge” (Bull, 1972, p.256).

The classical approach, therefore, is not a method in the sense of a technique for data collection or analysis. As such it was used in this study as an overarching approach to evaluate the link in terms of its historical, political, legal and normative significance. It was

²² For a critique of post-modernist approaches in the social sciences see Schwalbe, M. (1996) 'Rejoinder: This is Not a World'. *Qualitative Sociology*, 19 (4). pp 539-541. He condemns some forms of postmodernist sociology for abandoning the “common tongue” in favour of “code...that is accessible only to insiders” and for bracketing study of material social life for a focus on linguistics.

necessary to supplement this with analysis of qualitative data about peoples' perceptions of the relationship and with quantitative data to underpin an assessment of the material aspects of the relationship, as discussed below.

3.1.2. A Constructivist Approach

Constructivism, a more recent development within IR (Adler, 2002; Checkel, 2008; Guzzini, 2006; Hopf, 1998; Kubalkova, Onuf & Kowert, 1998; Reus-Smit, 2005) helps provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories through an exploration of the identities of actors in the study and of how their perceptions of self and others affect policies, behaviour and attitudes (Hopf, 1998). Constructivism provides tools for analysing the social construction of identity and ideology as they are evidenced in qualitative data such as interview transcripts and official documents. Furthermore some forms of constructivism, such as "conventional" constructivism (Hopf, 1998, p.172), a middle way constructivism (Adler, 2002), and even some forms of critical constructivism (Fairclough, 2003) can be argued to be compatible with a classical approach in terms of attention to social and historical context and the employment of interpretative rather than semi-scientific methods (Reus-Smit, 2005).

Constructivism, as Ted Hopf explains (1998), is not a political theory but an approach, which has grown out of, and contributes to, varied academic disciplines. It offers ways of exploring the socially fabricated nature of social and political life and how these are made sense of and are influenced by the understandings of participants (Adler, 2002; Frost, 1998; Hopf, 1998). Mervyn Frost (1998) summarises the main elements of constructivism which include the idea that states or institutions are produced through human activity rather than occurring naturally; and that ideas about the world are not a direct reflection of reality but

instead help to create and shape that world. As Frost argues: “we constitute ourselves within the social formations, which themselves are constituted by us” (1998, p.126). Furthermore, Frost adds, the idea of ‘reason’ itself is socially constructed and language plays an important part in the construction of the social world (Frost, 1998, p.126). These basic tenets are amplified by Hopf, who explains constructivism aims to:

...denaturalize the social world, that is to empirically discover and reveal how institutions and practices and identities that people take as natural, given or matter of fact, are in fact the product of human agency, of social construction (Hopf, 1998, p.182).

Constructivism thus offers a method of exploring the way in which the identities of the actors in the study - Britain and the Overseas Territories - are constructed in relation to each other and how these identities are given social meaning. Secondly, Hopf, explains that data, in the form of shared social meanings, must be “contextualised,” within their own particular social environment (Hopf, 1998, p.182). Thus data pointing to the formation of particular identities must be related to the cultural and historical context of particular Overseas Territories, calling for a familiarity with the literature and social life of the Overseas Territories by the researcher. This approach moves away from a scientific approach and closer to an ethnographic “thick description” (see Geertz, 1973). Finally Hopf underscores the importance of the “nexus between power and knowledge”; the concept of human agency in social and political life; and, as Frost also emphasised: “the mutual constitution of actor and structure” (Hopf, 1998, p.182). In terms of this study the stress on agency and the way in which individuals and groups of people are able to influence, but are in turn influenced and constrained by, social structures, is relevant as will be discussed in section 3.2.1 below.

Constructivism however is a broad approach embracing several forms (Checkel, 2008; Guzzini, 2006; Hopf, 1998; Reus-Smit, 2005). Jeffrey Checkel differentiates between the North American and the European variants (2008, p.72-73), with the European providing a less predictive model of interactions between actors and social norms, and instead emphasising language and interpretation. Hopf, like Reus-Smit (2005), divides constructivism into what he calls the “conventional and critical variants” (Hopf, 1998, p.172). The conventional, he argues, maintains a positivist methodology, attempts to predict state behaviour in terms of identity, and downplays the effect of the observer in the study (Hopf, 1998, p.183-184). Critical constructivism emphasises power in its analysis (Checkel, 2008) and the role of the scholar in exposing and challenging power relations, in the interests of emancipation (Hopf, 1998).

This study focuses on language use to provide better understandings of the role of power, ethics, and the construction of identity within the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. Examples of this type of analysis from within politics and IR are provided by Roxanne Doty (1993), Jennifer Milliken (1999), Brysk, Parsons and Sandholtz (2002) and Norman Fairclough (2001; 2003). The authors provide the framework and tools for analysing use of language in documents and interview transcripts. Work from within Geography on discourse (Ó'Tuathail & Agnew, 1992) and spatial imagery in geopolitics (Agnew, 2009b) also provides examples of discourse analysis.

A similar focus on the way in which language shapes and expresses ideologies is provided by critical discourse theory (Fairclough, 2001; Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough explains:

Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions (Fairclough, 2003, p.124).

This understanding of discourse is relevant to this study as language is of interest but only in as much as it provides a tool for understanding social reality (Fairclough, 2003). As Reus-Smit argues, unlike the generalisations of neo-realism or the “abstract philosophical argument” of early critical theorists, constructivism returns to a focus on “the systematic analysis of empirical puzzles in world politics” (Reus-Smit, 2005, p.195).

This section has outlined the basic elements of constructivism, how it supplements a classical approach by emphasising the construction of identity in international relations, provides tools for relating language use to social relations, and stresses the importance of historical and social specificity in the study of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. The next section will turn to the use of quantitative data in the study.

3.1.3. Quantitative contributions

Quantitative methods play a minor but important role within this study. Mixed methods in research are challenging in terms of mastering several techniques but can contribute by “expanding an understanding from one method to another [and/or] to converge or to confirm data findings from different sources” (Cresswell, 2003, p.210). Indeed King, Keohane and Verba argue that understanding a complex and “rapidly changing social world” can only be achieved through use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994, p.5). Geographer Gordon Clark also argues that secondary data, including quantitative and statistical data from official sources, can offer “a vital guide to the

geography of your topic” and “a context for primary data you will subsequently collect” (Clark, 2005, p.59).

This study draws on secondary statistical data for two purposes: to help create a typology of the Overseas Territories based on their economic strength, demography, and strategic/military importance; and to provide background and context for the substantive study, which explores more abstract concepts of identity, ethics and power relations in the relationship. As argued earlier, a relationship between international actors must take into account material, as well as the legal, political and ideological factors and the links between these elements. For example, questions about the responsibility of Britain to the Overseas Territories may be influenced by levels of socio-economic development therein and views on devolution of power may be affected by the size of population and available resources. A simplified typology of the Overseas Territories has been produced by the researcher based on secondary data and describing the key demographic and economic features of each Overseas Territory (see below, Section 3.3.2).

The next section will examine the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the study and how these are reflected in the methodology.

3.2 Philosophy of Research

The choice of methodologies, as outlined above, is indicative of the *philosophical assumptions underpinning this study*. As argued above, this thesis will hold an ontological position that views material factors as influencing the relationship between Britain and its territories, as well as institutions, norms and ideational factors. The study also proposes, as will be outlined below, an epistemological argument that the processes at work in this

complex web of material, social and ideological factors, may be understood in a way which goes beyond merely juxtaposing a plurality of versions of reality and instead argues for a “minimal foundationalism” (Hoffman, 1991 quoted in Reus-Smit, 2005, p.194).

Nigel King and Christine Horrocks argue that qualitative research should “focus on meaning and experience, with reference to a particular group of participants” (King & Horrocks, 2010, p.26) rather than generalisations or causal mechanisms. While this study does not identify strictly causal mechanisms determining the behaviour of international actors, it seeks to go beyond describing how various groups make meaning of their world. Critical realism, which asserts the existence of a material and social world existing, to a large extent, independently of our knowledge of it (Archer et al., 1998; Sayer, 2006) provides a philosophical framework against which to advance this argument, one which accommodates both classical and constructivist approaches.

Critical realism lies between broadly positivist philosophies, which seek “the same kinds of laws and regularities” in social and political relations as “they assume characterise the natural world” (Smith, 1996, p.14) and post-modernist philosophies which, although varied, are generally anti-foundational in that knowledge and truth are viewed as historically and culturally specific (Clarke, 2006) and knowledge is instead “multiple”, relative, inseparable from the preconceptions of the observer, and enmeshed in power relations (Smith, 1996, p.30). Critical realism proposes instead that the world exists “largely independently” of our knowledge of it (Sayer, 2006, p.98). However, it is argued, we interpret this world through “ways of seeing – perpetual schemata, concepts and discourses” which mean that “our descriptions” of the world reflect prior assumptions and that our “knowledge

will be fallible” (Sayer, 2006, p.98). Nonetheless, within this framework some grounds for knowledge are retained and some accounts can be judged as more compelling than others based on reasoning and evidence (Archer *et al.*, 1998). Furthermore causes or “reasons” may be found for events in human history and social life (Archer *et al.*, 1998). Sayer argues that while the social world is constructed, social institutions are historically anchored and substantial (Sayer, 2006). They are not reducible to individual’s or group’s ideas about them (Sayer, 2006, p.99). They are “social facts” (Adler, 2002) which, while produced and understood through social practice, nonetheless have an existence outside the understanding of them achieved by individual observers and participants (Archer *et al.*, 1998; Sayer, 2006). Mathew Miles and Michael Huberman argue:

social phenomena exist not only in the mind but also in the objective world ...some lawfully stable relationships are to be found among them (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.4).

This research goes beyond the identification and representation of various discourses or accounts of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories and evaluates these narratives against other versions and against quantitative data and other relevant information and to carry out an “exercise of judgement” (Bull, 1966a, p.361) about the character and dynamics of the relationship, aiming for what Mark Hoffman calls “minimal foundationalism” (Hoffman, 1991 quoted in Reus-Smit, 2005, p.194).

3.2.1 Agency

While constructivists hold that “systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values also have structural characteristics and that they exert a powerful influence on social and political action” (Reus-Smit, 2005, p.196), most constructivist approaches also recognise the ability of individuals or groups to achieve change. While individual and group action is seen as heavily

constrained, indeed constructed, through social processes, these are in turn created by people (Frost, 1998). This is in an iterative process; a constant interaction between agency and structure (Adler, 2002; Frost, 1998; Kubalkova, Onuf & Kowert, 1998). Furthermore individuals and groups are seen by constructivists as capable of “resistance” (Sayer, 2006, p.100). Social forces, therefore, are not seen as monolithic but instead as plural and interacting with other sets of ideas about social and political life. As Kulbáková and Onuf write, “exercising choices, agents act on, and not just in, the context within which they operate, collectively changing its institutional features and themselves in the process” (1998, p.61).

This point is particularly pertinent in terms of the study of a postcolonial relationship. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1998) note that agency has been problematic for postcolonial studies where “it refers to the ability of post-colonial subjects to initiate action in engaging or resisting colonial power” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998, p.8) and explain that an emphasis on structure can be disempowering, particularly to people in developing countries or marginalised economies. This study adopts an approach which assumes that people and groups are shaped by social structures but that action and change within those constraints is possible and that “the two kinds of phenomena help to constitute each other in a perpetual process of interaction” (Hill, 2003, p.26). This thesis explores the material, social and ideological structures which shape the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories, while also seeking to identify how people contest and influence these structures.

3.2.2 Levels of Analysis

In seeking to characterise the relationship between Britain and the territories, the study crosses several levels of analysis (Singer, 1961). Questions about the international status of

the Overseas Territories deal with the international system; Britain's policy towards the territories necessitates attention to the state/territory level, and questions about how the relationship is viewed, concerns individuals. Christopher Hill has argued that IR, until recently, has paid insufficient attention to the experiences of individuals (1999). Hill refers to the experiences of soldiers in war but the point is applicable to any impact of foreign policy:

...social science, and especially International Relations, deals in generalisations which all too easily become abstract and remote from the lives of actual people. We need the necessary corrective of understanding what international confrontations mean to those involved at ground level and we should have the humility to listen to their own voices... (Hill, 1999, p.111)

This study therefore incorporates the voices of individuals, giving their views on the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. However this is not "individual reductionism" (Guzzini, 2006, p.164); instead people's views and experiences are interpreted in terms of what they say about the character of the connection between Britain and the territories.

3.3 A Case Study Approach

The next section turns to the methods of data collection used in the study and the process by which case studies were chosen.

3.3.1 Case Studies

According to Martyn Denscombe, the case study provides a "spotlight" on a particular instance (2007, p.36). It also focuses on "relationships and processes", involves the study of phenomena within their settings, and includes several sources of data and methods (2007, p.36-37). The case study therefore provides an opportunity for an in-depth approach to a

subject. It is important to consider, however, the basis on which case studies are selected. As

Denscombe argues:

A case study should be chosen deliberately on the basis of the specific attributes to be found in the case – attributes that are particularly significant in terms of the practical problems or theoretical issues that the researcher wants to investigate (Denscombe, 2007, p.39)

Case studies may be selected on the basis of their typicality, because they contrast with the norm, as a test site for theory, as a least likely instance, or for practical considerations (Denscombe, 2007).

3.3.2 Classification of the Overseas Territories

A review of the academic literature did not reveal a systematic categorization of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories, although typographies of islands have been produced (Royle, 2007; Warrington & Milne, 2007) and predominant types of economies in small island developing states have been identified (Baldacchino, 2006; Bertram, 2006; McElroy & Pearce, 2009; McElroy, 2006). The researcher therefore undertook a classification of the Overseas Territories, represented in Table 1.1 below, which draws on previous scholarship but creates an original typology based on secondary data from official organisations.

Of assistance in categorizing the UK Overseas Territories are the Migration-Remittances-Aid-Bureaucracy model (MIRAB) (Bertram, 2006); the PROFIT model (Baldacchino, 2006); and the Small Island Tourism Economies (SITE) model (McElroy & Pearce, 2009; McElroy, 2006). The MIRAB model highlights two dominant economic factors: remittances from expatriates and a public sector supported by international aid (Bertram, 2006). Remittances are a significant element in the economies of several Overseas Territories, particularly Montserrat, Pitcairn and St Helena (see table 1.1 below). UK aid also

plays an important role in these three islands' economies. However, the economic success of a significant number of small island economies challenges the MIRAB model (Bertram, 2006). Godfrey Baldacchino's PROFIT model represents small islands' use of a "broad strategy for securing unorthodox economic development" (Baldacchino, 2006, p.54). Baldacchino (2006) argues that this alternative to the MIRAB model captures the significant autonomy, flexibility and economic success of many small islands. While the PROFIT model makes reference to tourism (Baldacchino, 2006, p.52), the significant contribution of this sector to several of the Overseas Territories (Gibraltar, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Cayman Islands, Bermuda, Turks and Caicos Islands and, increasingly, the Falkland Islands) is catered for by the SITE model (McElroy, 2006) where tourism is seen as aiding development, particularly in non-independent jurisdictions.

The models outlined above were adapted for use in the categorization of the Overseas Territories in Table 1.1 below. Firstly, the MIRAB model provided the basis for: Type A: Aid Dependent Territories. While these territories receive significant levels of remittances, and while St Helena in particular has a high level of government employees, (60% of the workforce) (St Helena Government, 2009), in terms of the islands' relationship with Britain, the dependence on aid and the involvement of the Department for International Development (DFID) are considered key. Secondly, the SITE and PROFIT models were combined to highlight the importance of tourism and financial services in the economies of many Overseas Territories – sectors which provide for financial independence from Britain. Table 1.1 therefore combines these two models within Category B: Finance/tourism economies.

Several of the Overseas Territories, however, fall outside these two types. Firstly are territories characterised by their defence or strategic role. These include the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, British Indian Ocean Territory, Ascension Island, although officially part of the St Helena/Ascension Island/Tristan da Cunha grouping (Great Britain, 2009), and, to a lesser extent, the Falkland Islands. Ascension Island will be included separately within the case study categorization as it differs significantly from St Helena and is largely defined by its use as a strategic military and communications base: “an invaluable link and airhead for the South Atlantic” (Royal Air Force, 2010). Type C in Table 1.1, therefore covers those territories characterized by their military or strategic significance to Britain.

The fourth type is territories devoid of permanent populations. This includes British Antarctic Territory and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and are labelled Type D: Uninhabited/scientific. These territories, without permanent inhabitants or representative government, maintain a qualitatively different relationship with Britain than inhabited territories, due to their lack of permanent population.

While the categorization in Table 1.1 presents a working typology of the territories, it is not unproblematic. The table below gives demographic and economic data on the Overseas Territories including population, Gross Domestic Product per capita, number of military personnel, DFID aid received, and where available, remittances and tourist numbers. However several territories have characteristics across more than one type. Gibraltar, for instance, could arguably be classified as a military/strategic territory; the British Army Website describes the territory as: “an important base for NATO” (The British Army Website, 2010). However, the military contributes to just 7% of the territory’s economy, down from

60% in 1984, and the economy is now dominated by tourism and finance (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009).

The Falkland Islands presents another borderline case; it has a strong base in natural resources - fisheries represent 60% of the islands' GDP (Falkland Islands Government, 2010b). The possibility also exists for licensing and revenues from oil drilling; and the islands have a growing tourism sector (Falkland Islands Government, 2010a). The islands could therefore be included in Type B: finance/tourism, yet the number of military defence personnel stationed in the islands and the significance of this commitment in terms of the relationship with Britain, means it has been designated a Type C: military/strategic territory. British Antarctic Territory and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands have a growing number of visitors (FCO, 2009a) but are characterized chiefly by their lack of populations and significance for science and conservation. The Turks and Caicos Islands received financial assistance following a bailout agreed by the Coalition Government in 2010 (House of Commons, 2010c). However the territory remains in the Tourism/finance category as the financial assistance can be seen as an exceptional circumstance and not part of an ongoing pattern of aid dependency.

A further challenge is presented by the availability of official statistics relating to the Overseas Territories. For example, figures for GDP per capita for St Helena given by the CIA's *World Factbook* (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010b) were more than a decade old, dating from 1998. Similarly, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office country profile for St Helena presented a figure for GDP per capita from 2000-2001 (FCO, 2010a). Pitcairn Island, while profiled in the CIA's *The World Factbook*, had values missing from many indicators including

birth, mortality and infant mortality rates, migration rate, age structure, literacy and life expectancy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010a). The Pitcairn Government website provided no statistics or demographic information beyond a figure for the population of the islands (The Government of the Pitcairn Islands, 2010). Figures are sometimes available from individual Overseas Territories Government statistics departments but when using data from different agencies problems of “lack of comparability” occur (Clark, 2005, p.69). This is particularly acute with the figures given in Table 1.1 for remittances, tourism and numbers of military personnel, where figures could not be sourced from a single agency and were collected from across Overseas Territory government publications, international organisations and from media reports.

To summarise, a categorization of the Overseas Territories has been undertaken by the researcher adapting the MIRAB, PROFIT and SITE models of small island development discussed above. The categorization includes aid dependent territories; finance/tourism territories; military strategic territories; and finally uninhabited/scientific territories. This typology provides a working framework for differentiating territory types in terms of their economies and key aspects of their relationship with Britain. It facilitates the selection of case studies, enabling the identification of contrasts and continuities across the varying categories of territory.

Table 1.1: Overseas Territories

	Population	GDP/per capita	Visitor numbers	Main features of economy	Troops stationed	Remittances US\$	DFID Aid
<u>TYPE A: AID DEPENDENT</u>							
Montserrat	5097	\$3,400 (2002)	6,311 (1.)	Volcanic activity severely affects the economy which is based largely on UK aid and construction in the public sector and limited tourism.		US\$ 71 million (2.)	£11.7 million (DFID, 2007/2008) £23,260,000 for 2010-2011 subject to review (8.)
Pitcairn	48	Not available	n/a	Subsistence fishing, farming and sale of handicrafts and produce to passing vessels. Some sale of postage stamps.		Not available	£1.5 million (2008-2009) (DFID, 2009) £3,260,000 for 2010-2011 subject to review (8.)
St Helena	4257 (12.)	Average pre-tax income in 2005/6 was £4063 (13.)	1,000 (3.)	Dependent on financial aid from UK. Some fishing and agriculture for local needs.		£2.6million (2005/6) (3.)	£12.4 million (2006-7). £28, 580,000 2010-2011 subject to review (8.)

<u>TYPE B: FINANCE/TOURISM</u>	Population	GDP/per capita	Visitor numbers	Main features of economy	UK military stationed	Remittances US\$	DFID Aid
Anguilla	14, 436	US \$12,200 (2008 est)	51,192 (1)	Few natural resources. Dependent on luxury tourism, small but growing finance sector and remittances.			
Bermuda	67,837	US\$ 69,900 (2004b est)	235,000 (1.)	Third highest per capita income in the world. Tourism and insurance industries are significant.			
British Virgin Islands	24,491	\$US 38,500 (2004 est)	308,000 (1.)	Economy closely tied to the US Virgin Islands. Tourism and offshore incorporation important.			
Cayman Islands	49,035	US\$ 43,400 (2004 est)	271,958 (1.)	Tourism 70% GDP, banking and offshore finance significant.			
Gibraltar	28,034	\$43,000 (2006)	10 million (majority are cross border day visitors) (9)	British military contributes 7% to the local economy compared to 60% in 1984. Finance sector, tourism and shipping each make up 25-30% of economy and telecoms 10%.	300 (BBC, 2008) (5.) RAF manages the airport (4.)		

Turks and Caicos Islands	22,942	\$11,500 (2002)	175,000 (2004)	Tourism and offshore finance			£750,000 2010-2011 (8.)
<u>TYPE C: MILITARY/STRATEGIC</u>	Population	GDP/per capita	Visitor numbers	Main features of economy	Troops stationed	Remittances US\$	DFID Aid
British Indian Ocean Territory			n/a	Economic activity concentrated on Diego Garcia. Construction projects and servicing military.	4,000 US and UK military personnel and civilian contractors, 2004 (CIA, 2009) According to the RAF, UK military personnel are of "very limited number" (4.)		
Cyprus Sovereign Bases	15,700 people reside in the areas including 7,700 Cypriots, 3,600 service personnel and 4,400 dependents.		n/a		3,300 RAF base at Akrotiri (5.)		
Ascension Island	884 as of March 2010 This figure is made up of 696 St Helenians; 106 UK citizens; 70 US citizens and 12			Revenue for 2010/11 £5.4 includes income tax, business levy, import duties, philatelic sales and fishing licences (11)	RAF and US Air Force presence. The RAF manages Wideawake		n/a

	others. These are workers and not permanent residents (10)				airfield (4.)		
<u>TYPE D : UNINHABITED/SCIENTIFIC</u>							
	No indigenous population. Small British Antarctic Survey base and small Government Office, Museum and Post Office at King Edward Point.		8,089 approx (2008) (7.)	Postage stamps produced in the UK, sale of fishing licenses, and harbor and landing fees from tourist vessels. Tourism from specialized cruise ships is increasing rapidly.			
South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands							
	No permanent inhabitants. 4,400 non-permanent scientific personnel in the whole of Antarctica.		45,652 (2007-2008) for the whole of Antarctica).		No military purposes allowed. Troops take part in scientific research activities or for peaceful purposes.		
British Antarctic Territory							

Sources for Table 1.1

All figures from CIA's *The World Factbook*, 2009 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009) unless otherwise stated.

(1.) (Caribbean Tourism Organisation, 2010)

(2.) (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2009)

(3.) (St Helena Development Agency, 2009).

(4.) (Royal Air Force, 2010).

(5.) (BBC News, 2008).

(6.) (Falkland Islands Government, 2010a)

(7.) (South Georgia Wiki, 2010)

(8.) (House of Commons, 2010b)

(9.) (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2010b).

(10) Ascension Island Government Website (2012)

(11) FCO country profile – Ascension Island (2012)

(12) (St Helena Government Census, 2008)

(13) (St Helena Government, 2010)

3.3.3 Selection of Case Studies

In order to allow for sufficient depth of analysis and to make data collection manageable within the timescale and resources available, the study focused on one territory from each of the above categories, except Type D where no permanent populations reside. Ideally, the choice of territory would be based on its representativeness of its type (Yin, 2009). However other factors such as accessibility, breadth of research already carried out in the territory, and representation from across geographical regions, also affected the choice of case study territories.

Type A territories, those in receipt of aid from Britain, include the Pitcairn Islands, Saint Helena and Montserrat. St Helena and Montserrat received roughly equivalent amounts of aid from DFID, approximately £28 million and £23 million respectively in 2010/2011, while Pitcairn, with a population of just 48, received just over £3 million. Pitcairn remains difficult and expensive to access (The Government of the Pitcairn Islands, 2010) and the tiny population would make providing confidentiality for participants problematic. While St Helena is also remote²³, the territory has a larger population (approximately 4,000), thus reducing problems of confidentiality. It also had the advantage over Montserrat of representing an example of a South Atlantic community and providing opportunity for research en route at Ascension Island – an example of a military/strategic island.

Type B, finance/tourism territories, includes Anguilla, Bermuda, Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Gibraltar and Turks and Caicos Islands. In terms of GDP per capita, Gibraltar and the Virgin Islands lie at the median, with Bermuda being the wealthiest territory and Turks and Caicos the least economically buoyant. The choice of British Virgin Islands over

²³ Travel is currently by ship either via Cape Town (six day's voyage) or Ascension Island (three days voyage).

Gibraltar can be justified on two counts: firstly, six of the Overseas Territories lie in the Caribbean, by far the largest group in any one geographical region. Furthermore, Gibraltar has attracted the attention of several scholars in the field of politics and geography (Gold, 2009 ; Gold, 2010; Grocott, 2012; Lambert, 2005). While the Virgin Islands have been the subject of extensive anthropological research (Cohen, 1995a; Cohen, 1998; Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993; Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 1997; Maurer, 2000; Maurer, 2009), views on and attitudes to the UK link have not been the main focus of these studies.

Type C, islands with a primarily military or strategic function, includes British Indian Ocean Territory, the Cyprus Sovereign Bases, the Falkland Islands and Ascension Island. In terms of numbers of British military personnel stationed on the territory, the Falklands Islands represents the median in this group. However the islands have received extensive academic attention (Dodds, 1998; Dodds, 2002; Dodds, 2007; Dodds, 2012; Royle, 1995). Travel to the British Indian Ocean Territory is restricted (Fogle, 2004) and was therefore not feasible. Ascension Island, while needing a permit to visit, could be accessed on the way to St Helena and people with knowledge of Ascension Island could also be contacted in St Helena and in the UK.

The final grouping, Type D in Table 1.1, is that of uninhabited islands – South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and British Antarctica. Lack of permanent inhabitants and a limit to research funding meant it was not appropriate to visit. However some interviews with experts also touched on these territories²⁴.

²⁴ South Georgia has a small Government Office based on the island, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands Government (GSGSSI), but no permanent inhabitants.

To summarise, the three case study areas selected were St Helena in the South Atlantic, British Virgin Islands and Ascension Island. Interviews were also conducted with a wide range of elites in the UK with an interest in these and other territories.

3.3.4 Generalising from the Case Studies

Two issues arose from the decision to use what Yin (2009) describes as ‘multiple case studies’. The first was how to generalise across the selected case studies. Yin warns against confusing these cases with samples in a single study (Yin, 2009). Instead case studies should be treated as replications of individual ‘experiments’ from each of which conclusions are drawn based purely on the evidence presented therein (Yin, 2009). When conclusions have been reported on each case study, Yin advises, a cross-case analysis may then be made and conclusions drawn about similarities and differences in findings between the cases (Yin, 2009). The second difficulty flagged up by several authors (Denscombe, 2007; Gray, 2009; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009) concerns the ability to make generalisations from case studies to wider contexts. In this study this concerns the ability to generalise about Britain’s foreign policy or the character of the wider international system based on the particular case of the relationship of Britain with its Overseas Territories. Here the generalization needs to be based on what Yin describes as ‘analytic generalization’ rather than statistical generalization (Yin, 2009, p.38). This means evaluating the results of the case studies against accepted theoretical constructs (Gray, 2009), such as ideas about whether states act in terms of maximising power (an essentially Realist theory of international relations) or whether as Reus-Smit argues “*normative or ideational* structures are just as important as material structures” (Reus-Smit, 2005, p.196). The relationship between Britain and the Overseas

Territories may therefore help to confirm or contradict theories about the roles of identity, ethics and power in relationships between international actors.

The above discussion has explained the use of the case study approach in this thesis, outlining the benefits and specifying reasons for the selection of individual territories. The next section will discuss the data collection methods employed within the study.

3.4 Data Collection

The study triangulates data from the academic literature with that of key official documents and interviews with elites in Britain and several Overseas Territories. The following section will discuss the selection of documents for analysis before discussing the use of the semi-structured interview technique in the research.

3.4.1 Triangulation

Triangulation can be in the form of multiple theories, multiple researchers or multiple data technologies (Berg, 2007). As Bruce Berg explains:

By using several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements (Berg, 2007, p.5).

This study has drawn on multiple theories and sources of data in order to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. It employs realist IR theories (Bull, 1979; Bull, 1995; Carr, 2001; Morgenthau, 1993) and also draws on theories which emphasise the importance of identities and ethical concerns (Cochran, 1999; Frost, 1996; Wendt, 1992). The study also uses three types of data in order to triangulate the study. These include the academic literature on the Overseas

Territories (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Baldacchino & Milne, 2009; Clegg & Pantojas-Garcia, 2009; Drower, 1992; Hintjens, 1995; Killingray & Taylor, 2005; Ramos & Rivera, 2001), official documents from both the Overseas Territories and the United Kingdom, and data from semi-structured interviews with a wide range of elites in both the United Kingdom and in the Overseas Territories.

3.4.2 Official Documents

Documents were selected on the basis of their importance in terms of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. These included key policy documents such as the 1999 and 2012 White Papers on the Overseas Territories (FCO, 1999; FCO, 2012); a 2007 National Audit Office Report on the Overseas Territories (National Audit Office, 2007); House of Commons Select Committee reports, and ministerial statements. Also included were Parliamentary debates, the Constitutions of individual territories and newspaper and online media reports about and from the Overseas Territories. These documents provided information about the attitudes and perceptions of both parties to the relationship.

3.4.3 Fieldwork Interviews

Face-to-face interviews formed the main method of data collection - a powerful and effective method in a primarily qualitative study (Gray, 2009) and one which allows for both “more depth” and greater “flexibility” than a questionnaire (Valentine, 2005, p.110). Core literature on research methodology divides interview types along a spectrum from unstructured to fully structured (Bell, 2005; Berg, 2007; Gray, 2009).

This study employed face-to-face, individual, semi-structured interviews to elicit the opinions of a wide range of elites in Britain and the Overseas Territories. This method afforded privacy for the expression of political opinions which would not be possible within a

focus group. Face-to-face interviews were favoured by the researcher as they help create trust, allow for the establishment of a deeper rapport with interviewees, and as Andrew Herod argues, give weight and importance to the study (Herod, 1999). However, in several cases where distance or time made a meeting impossible, interviews were conducted by telephone or email. This was not a significant disadvantage as the study did not depend on the detailed examination of context, or body language.

Semi-structured interviews allowed for a balance between flexibility and focus on the key research themes of identity, ethics and power. While the questions were open-ended and allowed for a wide degree of elaboration, they were designed to elicit information concerning the character of the ongoing relationship between the Territories and Britain in terms of these core themes. Interview schedules were prepared as a list of questions, not all of which were asked at each interview and which could be asked in any order to allow flexibility and adaptation for specific interviewees (Gray, 2009). The semi-structured interview also allowed for 'probing' to seek expansion on some questions and for 'diversion' (Gray, 2009). An example of an interview schedule is attached in Appendix A.

It was initially intended to carry out approximately 55 interviews, spread equally across the case studies territories and the UK. This figure was estimated to provide a balance between validity in terms of the representation of different perspectives and providing a manageable quantity of data in terms of the time available for collection and analysis. However, the number of interviews increased to seventy-eight as interviewees suggested other participants and in order to achieve saturation across the case studies (Morse, 2010).

As will be discussed below, this large number of interviewees created challenges in terms of the transcription and analysis of large volumes of qualitative data.

The majority of interviews were tape recorded, with the permission of interviewees, so as to provide an accurate record of the conversation. While interviewees can be off-put by a tape recorder, others find it reassuring through the indication that their insights are being given weight (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Tape-recording also allows the researcher to focus on listening and thinking rather than note-taking (Bloor & Wood, 2006). The vast majority of interviewees were happy to have their interviews recorded; only three declined and in these cases shorthand notes were taken. The tape-recordings provided a useful learning tool for the researcher as alterations in interview technique were made after listening back to the tapes. Audio-taped recordings were transcribed by the researcher into word-processed documents in preparation for analysis. This was a time-consuming procedure, taking more than a day's work for each, but one which allowed for immersion in the data and familiarity with the interview texts before analysis, which would have been lost with use of a transcription service or transcription software.

3.4.4 Interview participants

Interviews can provide access to knowledge about facts, subjectivity or discourse (Wengraf, 2001). This study is not concerned with individual subjectivity but aims to collect data about shared perceptions of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories.

Decisions about which groups could best provide this information were not straightforward. Political elites were likely to have greater access to facts about the workings of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories as they are involved in

decision-making and discussion as part of their work. However, all members of society hold views on the relationship as it has a bearing on their national and, at times, personal experiences. Limited resources, however, meant sampling needed to be highly targeted and effective; identifying not a “representative sample” but “an illustrative one” (Valentine, 2005, p.112). Random sampling of populations in remote territories undertaken from the UK risked an over-commitment of time and resources. ‘Purposive sampling’ of elites (Berg, 2007, p.44) was therefore undertaken prior to departure from the UK in order to make the best use of limited time in the case study territories. This group included politicians, officials, and wider civil society representatives. Berg describes this type of sampling as one in which “...researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this group” (Berg, 2007, p.44). The restriction of the sample to elites means the study cannot be argued to be representative of society as a whole. Nonetheless it is hoped that the inclusion of civil society representatives in small island communities meant the inclusion of voices from a wide cross-section of society.

It was anticipated that initial contacts might suggest other potential participants, allowing for ‘snowball’ sampling (Berg, 2007, p.44). This was the case and many participants helpfully provided further contacts. Gill Valentine’s advice regarding “multiple initial contact points” was followed to avoid interviewing participants from “a very narrow circle” (2005, p.117) and to achieve “a diversity of views on the topic” (King & Horrocks, 2010).

A ‘long list’ of potential participants was created, followed by a shortlist (Wengraf, 2001), who were contacted by letter where possible. In the case of the British Virgin Islands, letters were sent six weeks ahead of the planned research visit but had not arrived by the

time the researcher set out. In the absence of replies, email and telephone were used to contact some potential interviewees prior to the fieldwork. The researcher also made enquiries in person at the House of Assembly offices, a direct but effective technique. Some interviewees were also recruited through snowballing or through the researcher's participation at events in the territory.

Mail to St Helena travels by ship and can take weeks to arrive, so potential interviewees were contacted by telephone or email. An online telephone directory provided contact numbers and the researcher phoned, explained the research briefly and where participants expressed an interest, emailed further information. This technique was very effective with the majority of people either suggesting an interview time or asking the researcher to get back in contact when on-island.

This section has covered the methods of data collection undertaken within this study: the selection of key documents and the technique of face-to face semi-structured interviews with elites in the United Kingdom and in the territories. The following section will discuss how the data was analysed.

3.5 Data Analysis

As discussed above, this study examined data for facts and for evidence of the social and political belief systems which inform understandings of the relationship between Britain and the Territories. The key techniques were drawn from discourse analysis which provides tools for identifying how language use signifies social and political constructs (Billig, 1995; Fairclough, 2003; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001).

3.5.1. Analysis of interview transcripts and documents

David Silverman writes of three broad approaches to data analysis. A positivist approach sees the interview as containing information giving a direct correspondence to facts and reality; the emotionalist sees in-depth accounts as having an “authentic” correspondence with the interviewee’s experience and feelings; and the constructivist views the interview as a process in which meaning is jointly constructed (Silverman, 2001, p.87). This corresponds broadly to Wengraf’s schema in which the data gives either access to knowledge about objective referents, to subjectivity, or to discourse (Wengraf, 2001, p.6).

This study combines Silverman’s ‘positivist’ and ‘constructivist’ traditions into what the author describes as Gubrium and Holstein’s ‘twin-track approach’ (Silverman, 2001). This means that in answer to Silverman’s question of “Must we choose between seeing interviews as either potentially ‘true’ reports or *situated* narratives?” (Silverman, 2001, p.113), it is argued that both help to shed light on different aspects of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. Participants were drawn from elites who have privileged access to certain types of knowledge about political, economic or social aspects of the Overseas Territories. As such they provide valuable factual knowledge about the territories and relations with Britain. Their transcripts were also analysed, however for what their use of language revealed about shared social meanings regarding the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories.

An example of this approach to qualitative data analysis is given by Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman (1994). Describing themselves as “transcendental realists” (critical realists), the authors position their work “closer to the centre” along a “stereotyped continuum between the “relativism” of post-modern, post-structuralist approaches and

more scientific strategies” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.4). Their methodology for coding ‘first-order “facts”’ through the use of simple thematic description codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.57) was adopted within this research project and supplemented with specific techniques derived from discourse analysis to be discussed below.

Discourse analysis, while embracing a wide variety of methods (Taylor, 2001) can be defined as “the close study of language in use” (Taylor, 2001, p.5). While some types of discourse analysis are studies in linguistics, others examine language to gain a better understanding of social structures and processes (Taylor, 2001). For instance, Agnew and Ó Tuathail describe discourse as “sets of socio-cultural resources used by people in the construction of meaning about their world...” (1992, p.192-193). This section will outline Critical Discourse Analysis, (CDA) proposed by Norman Fairclough (Fairclough, 2001; Fairclough, 2003).

Critical Discourse Analysis examines the use of language within texts to reveal political processes at work in the particular social relations under scrutiny (Fairclough, 2001, p.231). This approach was applicable in this thesis as it offered a set of practical techniques for language analysis of documentary and interview data and complemented other methods of analysis.

Fairclough argues that social activity includes various elements which are interrelated and affect each other (Fairclough, 2001, p.244). These include “social relations”, “social identity”, “cultural values”, “consciousness” and “semiosis” (Fairclough, 2001, p.244). Semiosis is the meaning-making, communicative aspects of social life which include language, spoken and written, body language and representation such as visual images (Fairclough,

2001, p.227). Critical Discourse Analysis looks at how language is used in social practices particularly by identifying the use of various linguistic forms in and across texts which may indicate particular ideologies or discourses which help construct and maintain social hierarchies (Fairclough, 2001; Fairclough, 2003).

Fairclough (2001) provides tools for relating language use in texts, including official documents or interview transcripts, to social practices and norms (2001, p240). This includes identifying choices of voice or genre in the texts and by looking at the linguistic features included (2001, p 240). The choice of genre is examined to help indicate the assumed or desired relationship between the producer of the text and the reader (Fairclough, 2001). The analysis then proceeds to examination of “whole-text language organisation” which looks at the narrative structure of the document or interview transcript. With the analysis of transcripts of semi-structured interviews, the choice of genre and the narrative structure will be highly influenced by the form and structure of the interview itself. Therefore issues of genre and narrative were more relevant to documentary analysis. Clause combination in sentences is also noted (Fairclough, 2001) and the content examined for the use of transitive or intransitive verbs and use of the active or passive voice (Fairclough, 2001, p.244; Fairclough, 2003). Different types of modality and speech acts can indicate, according to Fairclough, the extent to which the text either invites or closes down political dialogue with its audience. Analysis also includes asking whether many different voices are represented in the text and if so, whether they are given full voice through reported speech or presented more passively through indirect speech (Fairclough, 2001, p.258).

Finally the analysis looks at the use of particular words in the text: for example the use of synonyms or metaphor, or the way in which words are given value or devalued by their linking to other words (Fairclough, 2001, p.244). Other textual features include the repetition of particular words or phrases within or across texts, assumptions or 'givens' within texts which can indicate dominant discourses, and the use of 'universals' to represent and reinforce the validity of particular social or political structures (Fairclough, 2003). This technique provided a range of analytical tools for the analysis of interview and documentary data in this study.

One drawback of discourse analysis is that it is highly labour intensive (Silverman, 2001; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001) and can usually only be carried out on a small number of texts and documents (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001). As already mentioned, more than seventy interviews were undertaken for this study. While a few were brief, between twenty and thirty minutes, the majority lasted for around fifty minutes. Relevant documents also multiplied over the three years of the study and therefore discourse analysis in the detailed form advocated by Fairclough could only be carried out on a few select documents and extracts of interview text. Nonetheless, the analysis of all documents and interviews retained sensitivity to genre, language use and to inter-textual links as advocated by Fairclough above.

3.6 Positionality and ethical considerations

Issues of ethics and positionality were important considerations in the research design and implementation. Ethics has broader implications than simply conforming to institutional ethical guidelines and approvals (King & Horrocks, 2010; Scheyvens, Novak & Scheyvens, 2003) and must address difficult questions of broad responsibility to others, inequality, power, race, gender and academic or financial privilege which may have a bearing on the

research process. These issues were likely to be particularly relevant when carrying out fieldwork in the Overseas Territories which remain in a postcolonial relationship with the United Kingdom and where, in some, there is a history of slavery, exploitation and inequality. However the diversity of the territories and the use of elite interviews meant issues of positionality were complex as will be discussed below.

3.6.1 Ethics in the research process

The overriding ethical consideration of the research is the avoidance of harm to participants (Hopf, 2002; Wengraf, 2001). As such, ethical codes such as the University of Plymouth's *Ethical Principles for Research Involving Human Participants* and the University of Plymouth *Code of Good Practice in Research* (University of Plymouth, 2007), the Economic and Social Research Council's *Framework for Research Ethics* (Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), 2010), and the UK Data Protection Act (Information Commissioner's Office, 2010) underpinned the research. These principles include those of informed consent, openness and honesty, the right to withdraw, protection from harm, debriefing, and confidentiality.

6.1.1 Informed consent

Informed consent is a fundamental of ethical research (Scheyvens, Novak & Scheyvens, 2003). As such participants were informed by letter or by email about the purposes of the research. A comprehensive printed information sheet explaining the project, the research process and the use of data was provided in clear, non-technical language. This sheet, together with a consent form was given to participants before the interview (see Appendix B). The only cases where these documents were not provided were in the exceptional cases of very senior figures where the research was instead explained in a formal letter requesting an interview and consent was given through invitation to meet. The information sheet

explained that the participant was not under any obligation to participate (Scheyvens, Novak & Scheyvens, 2003) and might withdraw from the study at any stage, and contained the researcher's contact details and the contact for the Faculty of Science and Technology Human Ethics Committee in case of complaint. Participants were also sent a full transcript of their interview in order that they could review their comments and agree to them as an accurate record of their interview. During this process three interviewees were not contactable and their interviews were withdrawn by the researcher from the study.

6.1.2 Confidentiality

The researcher made every effort to protect interviewees' confidentiality. Each person's data was referred to using a numeric code: e.g. 'St Helena 1', 'British Virgin Islands 2', which was cross-referenced to a separate, securely stored list of names of participants. All data will be stored securely for ten years before being destroyed and will not be made available to others. Numeric codes are also used to identify individual participant responses in reporting and publication; respondents are not referred to by name or title unless they gave written consent to their names being used. Schveyens, Novak and Schveyens note that some respondents want to be identified in the research but warn the decision should rest on an assessment by the researcher of likely harm (Scheyvens, Novak & Scheyvens, 2003). This assessment was taken on a case by case basis but it was assumed that experienced politicians and other senior figures in the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories were able to make informed judgements about risk in these circumstances and were named if that was their wish. Although most interview data is anonymised in the thesis, an issue raised by Cristel Hopf is that of the "many more or less overt clues as to the identity of informants" which can be found in interview transcripts (Hopf, 2002, p.338). Great care was taken to

remove any references to place, roles or relationships which might identify those who wished to remain anonymous. This was particularly pertinent in Ascension Island where there is currently no right of abode and residents may therefore be seen as particularly vulnerable. In this case quotations were not used and comments were reported as generalised observations derived from and combined with conversations on the island but also with elites in the UK and in St Helena.

6.1.3 Debriefing

A further issue concerns that of debriefing and involvement of participants in the project. Over the past few decades the idea of mitigating against issues of unequal access to the benefits of research have been highlighted (Scheyvens, Scheyvens & Murray, 2003; Wengraf, 2001). Some authors recommend empowering participants through engaging them in the research process and allowing participants far more control over how their data is used and reproduced (Wengraf, 2001; Yin, 2009). Indeed Tom Wengraf describes as “not-very-ethical” an approach which stresses participant confidentiality but attempts “to keep ownership of tape and transcripts and complete control of any interpretation” (Wengraf, 2001, p.184). Yin, in his discussion of the case study approach, advises that asking participants to review and contribute to the final version of the report can also strengthen the validity of the project as findings are confirmed (Yin, 2009). However, several characteristics of this study limited attempts to involve research participants in the production of the thesis. Firstly there is the issue of confidentiality. Participants were only be able to view their own transcripts, as even anonymised transcripts might have given clues as to the identity of individuals within small communities. Secondly distance and communications challenges could have led to delays

between completion and submission of the thesis. Instead participants will be sent a 2,000 word report on the research findings and the full thesis, if desired.

6.1.4 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was gained from the University of Plymouth's Faculty of Science and Technology Human Ethics Committee before data collection began. In some respects the research was ethically unproblematic; it did not involve any form of deception and the participants were neither children nor vulnerable adults. There are no identifiable third party interests, and no conflicts of interest. However, the Ethics Committee was concerned that employees should not be interviewed in their workplace without the consent of the employing organisation unless the employee was the most senior person in that area and thus able to consent to their own interview. This was not problematic for politicians or individuals but meant that in some cases letters were sent requesting an interview from the most senior person in a Government Department – in a few cases the Minister responsible. The request was then passed down to officials who helped to organise interviews. While this shared knowledge of the fact that the interview had occurred meant lack of confidentiality for the interviewee, responses were either given as official accounts by a representative of a department or else anonymised as one of several NGO representatives.

3.6.2 Power and positionality

Researchers within Human Geography and Development Studies have drawn attention to the thorny issue of the researcher's often privileged position in relation to research participants (Crang, 2003; Herod, 1999; Jazeel & McFarlane, 2009; Petley, 2004; Pulsipher, 2001; Rice, 2010; Scheyvens & Storey, 2003; Sidaway, 2000; Skelton, 2004, p.27; Valentine, 2005). These issues can be particularly acute when research is between countries in the economically

developed North and the less economically developed South, and as Scheyvens and Storey point out:

Relationships can be particularly skewed when the country being studied is a former colony of the western country from which the researcher derives (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003, p.2)

These concerns are echoed by Valentine who underlines inequalities of “wealth” and “education” between researcher and participant and the undertaking of research within “the context of colonialism” (Valentine, 2005, p.114) – a pertinent concern in territories which remain constitutionally linked to Britain.

However, the situation is complicated by the diversity of the Overseas Territories and by the choice of elites as interviewees. Firstly, although Britain retains sovereignty over the Overseas Territories, they are self-governing in many respects and most have chosen to remain linked to the United Kingdom (FCO, 1999), suggesting agency and consent. Furthermore some of the territories have high socio-economic indicators which disrupt characterisations of “sub-national islands as weak and subordinate containers purely at the mercy of outside metropolitan powers” (Baldacchino & Milne, 2009, p.8). For example, the Virgin Islands (UK) has a GDP per capita and literacy rates comparable to that of the UK²⁵. Conversely St Helena is dependent on aid from the United Kingdom and annual incomes are much lower than in the United Kingdom (DIFD, 2009).

²⁵ The CIA Factbook (2012) gives the 2011 estimate for GDP in the UK as \$36,600 and literacy rates of 99%. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uk.html>. Accessed 21.09.2012. BVI had a GDP per capita of (\$38,975 in 2006) and literacy rates of 98.2% Government of the British Virgin Islands (2012) 'Facts and Figures'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.bvi.org.uk/islands/factsandfigures> (Accessed: 24.08.12)..

However, this study focused on interviewing elites such as senior officials, politicians and senior representatives of civil society. As such these participants conform to both elements of Zoe Slote Morris' definition of 'elites' (in turn based on those by Lilleker (2003) and Burnham et al, (2004)) as proximate to power loci or as holding particular expertise (Slote Morris, 2009). As such power relations are complicated (Valentine, 2005). Slote Morris warns that elites are busy and can be hard to access (Slote Morris, 2009). However, the researcher found the majority of those contacted were willing to be interviewed and generous with their time. Secondly, the literature suggests that interviewees might not want to share privileged information and may dominate or steer discussions (Rice, 2010; Slote Morris, 2009). Gill Valentine warns: "It is often they who have the upper hand, by controlling access to knowledge, information and informants" (Valentine, 2005, p.114).

To address these challenges Rice suggests using "institutional affiliation" and "personal connections" or enlisting the assistance of an "influential sponsor" (Rice, 2010), although this strategy then introduces a further set of problems around the use of 'gatekeepers' (Scheyvens, Novak & Scheyvens, 2003) and was avoided in this research. Rice also suggests using what he calls 'elasticity of positionality' (Rice, 2010, p.74) by which the interviewer emphasises certain elements of their social selves to adapt to and gain access to different situations (See also Crang, 2003). It can be argued that this type of flexibility is a common reaction in differing social situations but could slip into the realms of dishonesty and these techniques were not consciously adopted. Geographer Andrew Herod, writing on interviewing elites abroad, recalls many positive aspects of the process, particularly the warmth and helpfulness of contacts (Herod, 1999) an experience mirrored in this research.

Race and gender is another issue highlighted by academic literature as relevant to fieldwork (Courtman, 2004; Sheller, 2003; Skelton, 2004). Tracey Skelton explains:

Writing about the Caribbean is a political act. We must be vigilant about stereotypes, racism and cultural elitism both in how we write and how our readers may interpret what we say (Skelton, 2004, p.30)

The researcher attempted at all times to act with cultural sensitivity and respect. Several writers suggest finding out as much as possible about the fieldwork site, its culture and norms before entering the field (Gray, 2009; Leslie & Storey, 2003; Skelton, 2004) and this advice was followed in terms of reading widely and talking to knowledgeable contacts before fieldwork in the case study territories.

And finally, as Scheyvens and Storey point out, an assumption that people in the global south have no power, can itself be disempowering (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003). Power on both sides can instead be seen as complex (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003) with the researcher's positionality shifting from outsider to partial insider as the research process unfolds (Herod, 1999). As Mike Crang argues, the insider/outsider binary cannot reflect the complexity and diversity of issues across research practices and research sites (Crang, 2003).

3.7 Summary

This chapter has outlined the two broad methodological approaches used in this research: a classical approach to international relations enabling understanding of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories in terms of sovereignty, power, political community and ethical values. This approach was supplemented by a constructivist methods including 'critical discourse analysis' (Fairclough, 2003). Also discussed in this chapter were the choice of case studies; methods of data collection, particularly the use of semi-structured

face-to-face interviews; and data analysis. Ethical issues were also discussed as well as wider issues of positionality and power necessitating sound research prior to entering the field and cultural sensitivity at all stages of the research process.

Chapter Four: British foreign policy and the Overseas Territories 1945-2012

This chapter examines British policy towards the Overseas Territories from 1945 until the present. Using documentary evidence and drawing upon the academic literature, it explores the influence of identity, ethics and power on British policy during this period. The analysis focuses on the ways in which the identity of the territories in relation to the British state are constructed by policymakers; how ethical obligations to the territories are framed; and how power is exerted by the British state through the retention and use of some territories. It will also explore the language used by politicians and policymakers to help understand Britain's view of the territories and how this relates to Britain's own identity during this period.

The analysis draws on a wide range of documents including White Papers, Parliamentary debate, newspaper articles from the comprehensive *Times* digital archive, archived Government papers and the academic literature. Many of the documents pertaining to the first two periods have been published in full in the *British Documents at the End of Empire Project* series (Goldsworthy, 1994, p.252; Hyam, 1992) and Frederick Madden's *The End of Empire* (Madden, 2000). Hansard Online, the National Archives online resource, and the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (HCPP) online have also been used as the main sources of material. A full history of this period is beyond the scope of this thesis; instead the analysis aims to focus on the core themes of identity, ethics and power and how these are expressed in British policy towards the Overseas Territories.

This chapter is divided chronologically into four sections. Within each of these sections, identity, ethics and power are dealt with in turn. The first section examines the

period from 1945 to 1959, during which time the size or strategic importance of several of Britain's colonies raised questions over their future independence (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Boyce, 1999; Butler, 2008; Drower, 1992; Killingray, 2005; McIntyre, 1996; Sutton, 2009). The second period, 1960-1979, was dominated by security concerns leading to the retention of the Cyprus Base Areas and the Chagos Islands for strategic uses. The failure of the West Indies Federation also marked the demise of a popular solution for the dealing with smaller territories (Drower, 1992) and immigration legislation began to demarcate Britain from its erstwhile empire (Boyce, 1999). The third period, 1980-1997, was dominated by citizenship issues and conflict in the South Atlantic over the Falkland Islands. The fourth, examines the period from 1997 to the present during which two White Papers on the Overseas Territories were published and British Citizenship was returned to Overseas Territories Citizens.

4.1 1945-1959: "What indeed is to be done with these places?"

By the end of the Second World War, Britain's empire consisted of sixty-five colonies spread widely across the globe (McIntyre, 1998). Five years later India and Pakistan became independent (McIntyre, 1998) and in 1956 Ghana provided the precedent for de-colonization in Africa. Nationalist struggles (Butler, 2008; McIntyre, 1998) and sustained attacks on the legitimacy of colonialism at the United Nations (McIntyre, 1998; Young & Kent, 2004) helped to usher in a new paradigm of world politics defined by self-determination and statehood for all. Or nearly all - the future of the smaller colonies in an era of de-colonisation presented a conundrum for policymakers from as early as 1948. Successive post-war governments wrestled with how to deal with these "non viable little patches of earth" (Hinden, 1959, p.16).

Britain's colonial policy may be seen in the context of a power anxious to remain a major player on the world stage (Butler, 2008; Young & Kent, 2004), yet economically devastated following five years of conflict (Butler, 2008; Goldsworthy, 1994) and acutely aware of the growing international moral distaste for the practice of colonialism (Goldsworthy, 1994)²⁶. The increased strength of the Soviet Union and the United States also provided the context for decisions about the status of the smaller territories (Butler, 2008; Goldsworthy, 1994; McIntyre, 1998), fourteen of which form today's Overseas Territories. Within this framework both Labour and Conservative Governments debated, albeit without conclusion, the possible destiny of those territories considered too small for independence (Drower, 1992; McIntyre, 1996). Committees of enquiry were established and schemes put forward for categorising which states could qualify for potential systems of integration, federation, diarchy or dominion (Drower, 1992; McIntyre, 1996). Concern over the economic viability of small entities generally led policymakers to favour the federation of smaller territories, but concrete policy, beyond the creation of the Caribbean Federation, failed to materialise (Butler, 2008) and successive governments continued with a largely piecemeal approach (Drower, 1992; McIntyre, 1998).

4.1.1 Identity

During the post-war period the smaller territories increasingly became framed by British policy-makers as problematic. Confirming the argument of authors mentioned above, analysis of official documents and newspaper articles from *The Times* show the territories as

²⁶ David Goldsworthy quotes a comment from 1954 by WG Wilson of the Colonial Office International Relations Department: "...the antipathy towards colonialism among many influential governments 'is such that it is a concrete and important factor affecting Her Majesty's Government's ability to maintain satisfactory foreign relations and to achieve the objectives of United Kingdom foreign policy.'" (Goldsworthy, 1994 p.xi)

consistently represented as either too small, too politically immature, or of too great a strategic importance to become independent.

The idea that the small size of some territories was problematic in terms of independence was raised by Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones, in 1949. He warned against the creation of: “a large number of small political entities, technically independent, but in reality isolated and feeble” and instead advocated “new principles and methods of association and integration” (Cabinet Commonwealth Affairs Committee, 1949). In 1945 *The Times* reported a House of Lords debate in which Viscount Trenchard called for the speedier amalgamation of colonies without which “some of the smaller colonies would never get self government, because they were too small to stand on their own feet” (*The Times*, 1945). This metaphor, suggesting immaturity through its evocation of pre-toddling infancy, is repeated in a 1950s Conservative Party political pamphlet (Blood, 1958), in contemporary British Government statements, and in newspaper coverage in the 1950s. In 1953, Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttleton is quoted:

The future of the smaller colonies which are never likely to be able economically to stand on their own feet, has been exercising the Colonial Office ever since the war... (The Times, 1953).

A letter to *The Times* of the same year claimed the issue to be:

one of the most difficult problems facing us - namely, our relationship with small dependencies which reach the stage of full self-government but are not large enough to stand on their own feet as independent nations (Walker & Duncan, 1953).

And in 1959 *The Times* editorial asked:

Human, vital, enmeshed in their own parochial preoccupation, and now a constitutional problem. What indeed is to be done with these places?
(The Times, 1959a).

In a House of Commons debate in 1955, the question of the smaller territories was aired. Here “their geographical position, their lack of viability, or their multiracial society” is posited by James Johnson, Labour MP for Rugby, as obstacles to full independence (House of Commons, 1955). Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd agreed that “One of the vital problems... is the future of the smaller territories” and promised to “study that most important theme with care” (House of Commons, 1955).

This discourse constructs an identity for these territories as “a problem” for the British state underpinned by expectations that they should be separate, individuated entities but lack the capacity to go it alone. The presumption that the smaller territories have their “own feet” suggests a widespread acceptance of a communitarian state-based paradigm of world affairs. The colonies, however, are identified primarily in terms of their smallness, signifying vulnerability and dependence.

Smallness was not universally seen as a barrier to autonomy. Constitutional Commissioner to the Virgin Islands in 1965, Mary Proudfoot, argued that smallness was not a hindrance to constitutional development and noted that 5,000 was considered a large polis by the ancient Greeks (Proudfoot, 1965). And in the House of Commons debate mentioned above, Conservative MP Bernard Braine was confident that a “solution for the smaller territories” can be found and asked:

Why not frankly acknowledge that even the smallest of peoples can reach an honoured and an appropriate place in our Commonwealth circle?
(House of Commons, 1955).

Labour's 1957 pamphlet: *Labour's Colonial Policy – the Smaller Territories* (The Labour Party, 1957) was also more optimistic about the possibility of an independent future for the smaller colonies. While these entities were represented as a challenge - Chapter 2 is entitled: "The Problem and its solutions" – the quandary is prefaced by a chapter detailing the successes and political and social maturity of smaller territories, profiling how:

"The Pitcairn Islanders, in their tiny isolated community, have proved that it is possible to develop a happy, healthy life..." (The Labour Party, 1957).

The shift of focus in this document from a representation of the territories as small and enfeebled, to one where small is seen as viable and positive is achieved through the textual representation of the detail of islanders' lives rather than references to the territories in which local people are hardly mentioned, let alone given a voice.

But as contributions to *New Fabian Colonial Essays* of 1959 show, the smaller territories were not unproblematic within the Labour Party (Creech Jones, 1959b). As both Drower (1992) and Cheesman (2009) argue, they revealed a tension within socialist thinking between the recognition of legitimate desires for freedom and equality, with concern over the readiness and ability of these entities to provide decent standards of living for their inhabitants (Hinden, 1959).

Political statements and newspaper coverage in the 1950s make frequent references to economic weakness as a key obstacle to full independence. Coverage in *The Times* for this period provides eight references to the smaller territories in terms of economic weakness creating challenges for independence (*The Times*, 1950; *The Times*, 1953; *The Times*, 1954b;

The Times, 1955c; *The Times*, 1955b; *The Times*, 1955a; *The Times*, 1957a; Walker & Duncan, 1953), while just one prescient 1959 leader titled ‘*Pocket powers*’ predicted their future success to lie with offering:

...special attractions in the way of low taxes or accommodating commercial laws...a casino and a radio station are good modern sources of revenue... tourism must not be forgotten. Nor must postage stamps. All of which suggests that some places may continue in isolation very much as they are, joining the ranks of prosperous anomalies (The Times, 1959b).

Nonetheless this upbeat analysis is a lone voice in a lament over the economic vulnerability of small island colonies. In 1950 a leader in *The Times* stated:

Few sovereign states today, it is true, can boast of economic self-sufficiency or total financial independence, but there is a plain level below which political independence must be merely illusory. Most of the Caribbean colonies made independent, would almost certainly fall below this level, unless they combined together to form a federal union (The Times, 1950).

Concern over economic viability was also raised in a Cabinet paper of 1955 where “reasonable economic stability” was described as a precondition for qualification for “statehood” (Cabinet, 1955). While Labour’s 1957 pamphlet highlighted “insufficient resources of wealth or manpower” as an impediment to full independence, it advocated federation, integration or alternative arrangements to allow political representation (1957, p.18). The Conservatives pamphlet was unambiguous, setting out criteria for statehood within the first paragraph of the document:

To assume the burden of national sovereignty a country must obviously be of a certain size, with a certain population; it must have an adequate income, actual or potential, to sustain this burden... (Blood, 1958, p. 7).

It argued that there was no clear threshold for viability and that some small states had flourished; nonetheless only Nigeria, the Central African Federation, the West Indies Federation and some larger African territories were likely to be eligible (Blood, 1958).

The view of the territories as small and economically unviable created two related sets of concerns. First was anxiety over the cost of meeting expectations for local political development (McIntyre, 1998). For example, as David McIntyre points out (1998, p.248), when Gibraltarians argued for a Legislative Council, Prime Minister Attlee considered “the cost of administration and the establishment of staff was all out of proportion to the area and population of the Colony” (Cabinet Commonwealth Affairs Committee, 1948, p.210).

Attlee’s comments reveal concern over the financial burden to the UK of political development:

The ultimate constitutional objective for these colonies has not been defined; and it has been too readily assumed that the parliamentary and administrative system suitable to large countries should be reproduced in miniature in the smallest Colonies. In consequence, authorities and officials were needlessly multiplied and unnecessary costs incurred (Cabinet Commonwealth Affairs Committee, 1948, p.211).

Anxiety over the cost to Britain of smaller colonies is a theme which runs through the relationship between Britain and the territories until the present time.²⁷ The comments

²⁷ Later parliamentary debates on the Falkland Islands reveal concern among some MPs about the level of financial support to the islands compared to aid to poorer African countries (House of Lords, 1979) and to poorer areas of the UK (House of Commons, 1982). In 2008 the Government announced a delay on the airport for St Helena due to financial constraints (House of Lords, 2009) and DFID consulted islanders on the options for access DFID (2009) 'St Helena: Consultation on whether an airport is the most appropriate option for access to St Helena in the current climate'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/consultations> (Accessed: 4.5.2010). In 2011 British Government funding for an airport was announced: Binyon, M. (2011) '£200m airport will save Saints from exile and bring life to remote outpost'. *The Times*. London.

indicate uncertainty about the future status of the territories in relation to Britain and a desire to protect Britain from potentially burgeoning financial liability.

In summary, throughout this period the smaller colonies were identified as problematic. In a state-based international order where colonialism was discredited, their economic unviability represented a perceived impasse in terms of independence. Their inclusion in discussions of de-colonisation, however, suggests they were perceived by British policymakers as having expectations of nationhood and were conceived of as separate entities from the British state, even if their “own two feet” could not yet support them economically without assistance.

4.1.2 Ethics

As colonialism became increasingly discredited following the Second World War, British policy-makers were faced with difficult ethical questions about the responsibilities owed to the smaller colonies which were seen, as discussed above, as unlikely to survive as independent states. The international context and the British response to the changing norms of the era are illustrated in the following quotation by Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones, speaking in the House of Commons in 1955:

...the fact is that colonialism is obsolete today as a driving force and the sooner we can throw this colonialism overboard the better for us. I think that it is the agreed policy of the people in this country to desire that our territories should pass as quickly as possible to self-government and independence. Therefore, we have to keep economic and social progress in line with political advance... Arthur Creech Jones (House of Commons, 1955).

Creech Jones' quotation vividly expresses the impact on British policymakers of international sentiment on colonialism and the discomfort at being judged out of step with these norms. Britain's reputation required de-colonisation to be embraced but a sense of

responsibility remained for the socio-economic development of the territories (Creech Jones, 1959a; Hinden, 1959; McIntyre, 1996). David Cheesman (2009) argues that post-war debates within the Fabian Society heavily influenced Labour's colonial policy in which development was seen as a preliminary to independence. It was "Britain's duty", he argues:

to hold the colonies in trust until the country had redeemed the misdeeds of imperialist exploitation by setting them on the path to prosperity, democracy and eventually – a long way down the line – self government (Cheesman, 2009, p.252).

Two essays written in 1959 by Creech Jones and Rita Hinden, Fabian Colonial Bureau founder, further illustrate what Drower describes as a duality in Labour's colonial policy (Drower, 1992). Hinden discusses the divergent traditions in socialist thinking which at once sees imperialism as an exploitative anachronism to be ended without delay, while also drawing on a more liberal humanist tradition (see also Drower, 1992 p. 49) evoking responsibility to aid the development of territories before independence (Hinden, 1959). In both Hinden and Creech Jones' texts the notion that the colonies were not fully adult, justified ongoing engagement. The following quotation illustrates the prevailing Eurocentric assumptions regarding the superiority of western political and social life:

Much of what is wrong in under-developed societies comes because of the poverty of nature and the backwardness of people who have been insulated for centuries and tied by tradition and tribalism and oppressed by ignorance and superstition (Creech Jones, 1959a).

A teleological view of modernity based on Western development models formed the basis of Labour's colonial policy and Creech Jones listed at length the positive interventions of the Attlee government in the realms of education, health, economic, social and political life in the colonies (Creech Jones, 1959a). Cheesman argues that a pro-development policy was

attractive also to the Conservatives, economic development being seen to enhance Britain's reputation internationally and create markets for British goods (Cheesman, 2009), illustrating a connection between British economic empowerment and ethical concerns regarding human development.

Ethical concerns about de-colonization at this time therefore had two dimensions. The first is sensitivity over morally-based criticisms of Britain's role as a colonial power and the second is a residual sense of responsibility and paternalism towards the colonies which had yet to achieve prevailing paradigms of post-war development (Boyce, 1999; McIntyre, 1996).

4.1.3 Power

Post-war policy discussions show that several of the smaller colonies were considered of strategic importance to Britain and its allies during this period and their retention connected to Britain's ability to project power on the world stage. A 1949 report to the Chiefs of Staff detailed the value of each of the then twenty-one small territories in respect of a potential Soviet threat (Joint Planning Staff, 1949). Of today's Overseas Territories it was felt essential that authority be retained for defence and security in Gibraltar, Cyprus, St Helena (because of Ascension Island), Falkland Islands and Bermuda (Joint Planning Staff, 1949). Although the degree of retained authority over defence matters varied across the territories, it is clear that many of the smaller territories, partly due their geography, continued to be seen as vitally important in terms of defence.

The Conservative's 1958 pamphlet on the smaller territories underscored their perceived strategic importance, particularly Malta and Cyprus, and the degree to which the

future status of some of the territories were connected with wider strategic concerns (Blood, 1958). Viscount Soulbury's foreword argued:

And the destiny of the smaller territories is not being worked out in some quiet backwater, but in the main swirl of the West v Communist struggle, and the running tide of popular self-determination... If only because some of these territories are of the "fortress" type, here again, much more than their own destiny hangs on a reasonable solution of an unusually thorny problem... Quite apart from any strategic considerations of defence or politics, the flame of liberty can burn just as fiercely in a small lamp. We have to see that it burns safely and well enough (Viscount Soulbury, 1958, p.4).

The quotation above illustrates the complex weave of normative pressures from the international community, support for the principle of freedom, strategic concerns, and paternalism regarding the oversight of political development. The pamphlet counters earlier statements on decolonisation by successive Secretaries of State for Colonies from 1948-1951 which, it is claimed, had raised "false hopes" of independence for some:

In the result there has been built up an atmosphere of public opinion, here and overseas, which is extraordinarily sensitive in its reaction to any suggestions that there are in fact places, which must of necessity, through no fault of their own, remain dependent territories for geographical, economic or strategic reasons (Blood, 1958, p.9).

For the Conservatives, emphatic about the importance of Cyprus, full independence had to be dependent on the absence of "strategic considerations" (Blood, 1958). The assumption was that fortress colonies would remain under British control in order to secure trade routes.

Sir Hilary states:

Any idea that a non-sovereign territory, however small, has nevertheless an inherent and absolute right to 'self-determination' should be exposed as the complete fallacy which in fact it is (Blood, 1958, p.19).

The issue of security and defence was also problematic for Labour. Hinden claimed of those colonies with strategic importance:

Geography has placed them in a position where their concerns are also the legitimate concerns of many other nations: is it right that their desire for independence should take priority over the desires of other people for security and safe commerce and perhaps the supply of their essential needs? Perhaps it is right but at least there is a case to be argued (Hinden, 1959, p.16).

However, in the 1957 booklet *Labour's Colonial Policy – the Smaller Territories*, the importance of the Overseas Territories as fortress colonies is downplayed: “It is obvious that a military base among a hostile people is virtually useless” (The Labour Party, 1957, p.25).

Although defence issues are discussed in debates and policy documents, newspaper coverage is sparse, limited to discussion of Malta's strategic importance in 1955 (*The Times*, 1955c) and a coy reference in *The Times* leader of June 18th 1957 to “international complications” hampering Cyprus's bid for independence (*The Times*, 1957b). However, a further qualification for independence – linked to security concerns - was raised in newspaper reports during this decade. A leader in *The Times* of 1957 argued for the necessity of political (and economic) maturity to survive “the blizzards of the outside world” and the “necessity to concentrate on forging a sound governmental, administrative and economic structure. Without this, independence will prove an illusory benefit” (*The Times*, 1957b). Coverage of the issue in *The Times* for this period reveals six references to the importance of political maturity in the process of decolonisation (*The Times*, 1950; *The Times*, 1955a; *The Times*, 1957b; *The Times*, 1959c; *The Times*, 1959b). This concern was also expressed in policy documents. In 1955, Cabinet discussions called for qualifications for a proposed new category of “statehood” to include representative government and proven capacity for self-

government (Cabinet, 1955). While Labour policy was less emphatic about political development, it was argued that the right of self-determination can only “legitimately be exercised when democracy has been firmly established and thus all the people have an equal opportunity to share in the decision” (The Labour Party, 1957, p.20). This accorded with the Conservatives requirement that, for independence, a territory “...must be sufficiently far advanced politically to have thrown up leaders not merely demagogues...” (Blood, 1958, p.7).

The importance ascribed to political maturity is a repeated theme throughout British policy towards the Overseas Territories (Madden, 2000) and can be seen in the promotion of a “good governance” agenda by the Foreign Office (FCO, 2006) and prominence in White Papers in 1999 and 2012 (FCO, 1999; FCO, 2012). In the context of the 1950s, two concerns may be identified: firstly with the development and political well-being of the territories, and secondly, as Rafael Cox Alomar has pointed out, the Caribbean was seen as strategically important to Britain’s post-war ally, the United States and as, as Cuba and British Guiana had illustrated, vulnerable to communist influence (Cox Alomar, 2009). As George Boyce (1999) argues, Colonial secretary Lennox-Boyd had inherited Colonial Office ideas that both for moral reasons and for those of national interest, one should only hand over to a responsible government.

The period from 1953 to 1960 can be characterised as an era of many proposed solutions for the smaller territories (Drower, 1992). Analysis of *The Times* in this period shows eleven references to federation, five to integration, four to Dominion Status, one to City-State and six to various other constitutional arrangements. Of note is the lack of discussion of any consultation with, or preferences from, the colonies themselves. Indeed

Cox-Alomar suggests the federation agenda was set predominantly by London rather than by colonial elites and fulfilled UK and US strategic needs to retain stability and security in proximity to the United States (Cox Alomar, 2009). However a belief that federation would enable socio-economic development must be also taken into account. The 1949 report of the Standing Closer Association Committee, the basis for the Federation in the West Indies, underscored the importance of financial viability:

...we place on record our considered and emphatic view that Federation, and only Federation, affords a reasonable prospect of achieving economic stability and through it that political independence which is our constant object (Standing Closer Association Committee, 1949, p.70).

In 1958 a federation of ten Caribbean islands was created with the aim of eventual independence within the Commonwealth. However, as will be discussed below, by 1961 the Federation was in jeopardy.

The idea of integration moved onto the agenda in the early 1950's following suggestions by Malta for representation at Westminster (Drower, 1992; McIntyre, 1996). The 1957 Labour Party pamphlet had predicted that most of the smaller territories would achieve sovereignty through integration with the UK or another country (The Labour Party, 1957). The Conservative pamphlet, however, dismissed integration with territory representation in Parliament as posing problems of "disproportionate influence" by territories and the "need for economic parity with the UK" (Blood, 1958, p.12). The proposal for integration with Malta was described as "novel and revolutionary" by an editorial in *The Times* in 1955; the colony's proposed representation at Westminster as "controversial", "diverging so drastically from the norm", and "unprecedented" in the British system, though familiar in the French colonial

model (*The Times*, 1955c). Potential dangers cited included sectional interests, undue influence in Parliament, and the potential financial costs of integration where Maltese standards of living would have to be equivalent with mainland Britain (*The Times*, 1954a). Dominion status, similar to that provided for under the Statute of Westminster, was proposed by the Labour Party in 1957. Territories would be internally self-governing while choosing which state would provide defence and foreign policy (The Labour Party, 1957). Commenting on this solution in 1959, *The Times* editorial claims the suggestion “has sense” and might also include representation at Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conferences (The Times, 1959a). Yet this formula was never adopted.

4.1.4 Summary

This section has argued that smaller territories were seen by British policymakers during the period from 1945 to 1959 as problematic. Their small size was equated with economic vulnerability. This, their presumed political immaturity, and the strategic location of some territories was seen to preclude the likelihood of independence. This was firstly problematic for the British Government because it meant being out of step with strong normative ideas about the moral bankruptcy of colonialism. It also raised ethical issues about the continuance of economic, political and social support that was owed to the colonies in the absence of independence. Paternalistic notions of colonial responsibility were also linked to perceptions of the need for power projection and national security.

4.2 Drawing boundaries and making bases: 1960-1979

The period from 1960 to the end of the 1970s may be seen as dominated by two issues – the restriction of immigration of peoples from the former empire to Britain and the carving out of strategic territories in Cyprus and the British Indian Ocean (BIOT). These policies illustrate

the tension between a closing off of Britain from the former empire indicating a new conception of British identity as focused on the home state (see Boyce, 1999, p.251), with continued pressures to play the role of a world power in military strategic terms (Young & Kent, 2004). Underlying this dichotomy were ongoing ethical questions about the responsibilities owed to the peoples of the remaining colonies (McIntyre, 1996) and the extent to which these would be fulfilled where security interests or financial pressures intervened.

4.2.1 Identity

British policy towards the territories in this period reflected a fundamental tension between Britain's identity as military power and ally to the United States, and as a former colonial power, attempting to affect a responsible retreat from the empire. Immigration legislation introduced during this period legally divided British citizens from the majority of the peoples of the territories and former colonies (Hendry & Dickson, 2011), indicating a withdrawal from an imperial identity to one based on the state alone (Boyce, 1999). Yet, while the divestment of the imperial legacy continued, the creation of a new colony – British Indian Ocean Territory – and the retention of strategic bases on Cyprus (Aldrich, 2011) underline the continued importance of Britain's image as world power and junior partner to the United States.

Immigration legislation introduced in the sixties and the seventies demarcated legal boundaries between the citizens of the state and the peoples of the former empire. Until 1948 “the term British subject covered all those citizens of the Dominions and Colonies equally with native-born Britons” (Smallman, 2003, p.78) and even until the 1960s, the right to enter the UK for all those in the Commonwealth was conferred by the British Nationality

Act of 1948 (Moore, 2000). However the Commonwealth Immigrants Acts of 1962 and 1968, and the 1971 Immigration Act, which introduced the notion of the right of abode, restricted the ability of many people from the Overseas Territories to settle in the UK (FCO, 1999).

Robert Moore argues that the “legislation was concerned mainly with keeping non-white immigrants out of the UK without actually using the language of race” (Moore, 2000, p.2).

Sociologist Robin Cohen has written of the imposed nature of this legislation on St Helena whereby:

the British Government and its local minions have, by unspoken agreement, chosen to define the rights of St Helenians in a manner which they see fit, without serious input from the islanders (Cohen, 1983a, p.21).

The Labour Government’s 1977 Green Paper on nationality law emphasised the changing conception of the relationship between Britain and the former empire:

...because Britain is no longer an imperial power the all-embracing concept of nationality associated with this role, including citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies, is no longer appropriate (Home Office, 1977, p.4).

Britain’s identity is argued to have changed fundamentally and, as such, the identity given to others would also shift. The Green Paper suggested creating British Citizenship “for those who have close ties with this country” and British Overseas Citizenship for the rest (Home Office, 1977, p.4). The text suggests a shift in policy regarding Britain’s relations with the people of the territories and former colonies. Britain’s idea of self is restricted rather than

inclusive and expansive²⁸, with legislative barriers demarcating the home state from the former empire and creating, in David Campbell's words, 'the inscription of boundaries that serve to demarcate an "inside" from an "outside", a "self" from an "other", a "domestic" from a "foreign"' (Campbell, 1992, p.9).

Yet this restricted post-imperial domestic identity was not necessarily mirrored in terms of Britain's self-identity as an actor on the world stage. Policy towards Cyprus (McIntyre, 1998) and the creation of the British Indian Ocean Territory during this period illustrate Britain's continued desire to be seen as an important player militarily. Historian Denis Judd argues that British withdrawal from first Palestine, then Egypt, in 1956 only increased the importance of Cyprus "both in practice and symbolically - as evidence of Britain's continuing status as both a great and Imperial Power" (Judd, 1996. p.358; see also Goldsworthy, 1994 and McIntyre, 1996). Similarly, the creation of BIOT in 1965 emphasises Britain's continuing identity as a close ally and supporter of the United States.

US anthropologist David Vine claims the British were initially alarmed to learn of the US desire to have the inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago removed (Vine, 2009). Documents show, he claims, that the British "were 'clearly disappointed' to hear that the United States was not interested in offering aid or base employment opportunities that might benefit the economies of Mauritius or Seychelles" (Vine, 2009. p78). Nonetheless a later secret Foreign Office document quoted by Vine shows an acceptance that:

we could not accept the principles governing our otherwise universal behaviour in our dependent territories, e.g. we could not accept that the

²⁸ This is not to underplay the exclusions and domination practiced during colonial times and explored by Edward Said (1978) *Orientalism*. 2003 edn. London: Penguin and Franz Fanon (1967) *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin; Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. 2003 edn. London: Penguin.

interests of the inhabitants were paramount and that we should develop self government there (UK Foreign Office 'Steering Committee on international organisations presentation of British Indian Ocean Territory in the United Nations' Quoted in Vine, 2009 p.79).

The reference to “universal behaviour” suggests the self-conscious subversion of a normative practice and the disruption of Britain’s self-identity as an ethical actor. However, Vine and Mark Curtis also quote from documents in which the Chagossians were described by a Foreign Office official as “some few Tarzans or man Fridays whose origins are obscure” (Curtis, 2003, p.418; Vine, 2009, p.91). This description constructs a transient, insubstantial identity for the Chagossians as culturally and racially distanced from Britain (see also Moore, 2000). The language draws upon what Rob Walker describes as the “temporal tropes of civilised and barbarian”, which it is claimed has allowed the exclusion and domination of some groups of people on the basis of assumptions about the meaning and teleology of modernity (Walker, 2006, p.69). In other words, their ascribed identity as rootless may have underpinned behaviour towards them in contradiction of international norms and conventions. An Immigration Ordinance was put into effect leading to their removal to Mauritius and the Seychelles between 1971 and 1973 (Edis, 2004, p.83-84).

Early newspaper reporting of the creation of BIOT was largely uncritical. Norman Fairclough argues that ‘dialogicality’ – an openness to difference and inclusion in texts – can be signified by incorporation of many voices, particularly through direct quotations; conversely, the use of assumptions and the exclusion of voices suggests hegemony (Fairclough, 2003, p.61). The lack of inclusion of voices either from the Chagossians or from those speaking on their behalf is notable in reporting on the issue until 1976. Before this

time, articles simply reported official British and American Government statements, and the inhabitants were usually described as temporary or migrant workers, supporting the official version of the Chagossians' identity (Vine, 2009): (*The Times*, 1964; *The Times*, 1965a; *The Times*, 1965b). In an article in 1966, the population is estimated at 1,000 "mainly migrants from Mauritius and Seychelles" and it is argued that plans for the Territory did not include a colonial administration in order to "obviate the expected criticisms that the native populations are once more being subjugated to the wishes of the British Chiefs of Staff" (*The Times*, 1966). In 1967 a joint British-American survey of the islands is reported under the title 'HMS Vidal's Sunny Survey' wherein the population are described as "a migratory workforce of up to 1,500 in the plantations" (*The Times*, 1967a).

The coverage also shows a lack of curiosity about the islanders and their future. For example, no islanders were interviewed during this period. This might be explained by the extreme geographical isolation of the archipelago. However, it is striking, particularly when contrasted with anxiety expressed over the natural environment which, in 1970 received a lengthy article in *The Times* under the headline 'Saved for the moment' and describing how "thoughtless plans for a military airstrip on Aldabra"²⁹ had been thwarted after opposition by conservation groups and the Royal Society. Remaining, however, was "grave anxiety for the wildlife of territories" (*Wright*, 1970). Further coverage of flora and fauna appeared in 1974 and 1975 when a joint services survey of the archipelago formed the basis of a BBC2 Documentary in *The World About Us* series (Stanhope, 1975; *The Times*, 1974).

The portrayal by the British Government of the Chagossians as temporary or migrant workers rather than the people of the islands had implications for the rights which were

²⁹ Aldabra is a neighbouring island in the Indian Ocean, which was part of BIOT until 1976.

extended to them (Jones, 2009). It may be argued that the construction of their identity as not belonging to the islands enabled the privileging of power politics (Khan, 1983) over ethical obligations owed to the islanders (Jones, 2009).

4.2.2 Ethics

British policy regarding BIOT was critiqued by several non-aligned states for its militarization of the Indian Ocean (*The Times*, 1965b). In 1967 *The Times* reported India would raise the issue at the United Nations – based on fears of escalating international tension in the Indian Ocean (*The Times*, 1967b). Objections were also reported from India, Malaysia and Australia who wanted the ocean preserved as a “peace zone” (Rendel, 1974). Muted criticism came from *The Times* Defence Correspondent in 1966, who questioned the cost-effectiveness and defence value of the proposals and warned of their potential to stir up anti-colonial sentiment (*The Times*, 1966). But a subsequent article in *The Times* diary in 1970 argued for the territory’s benefits in countering the Russian naval presence in the Indian Ocean compared with a base on Mauritius (*The Times*, 1970).

However by 1975 the tone of coverage had changed and hard questions were being asked of British policy (*The Times*, 1975a). *The Times* Diplomatic Correspondent questioned firstly the accuracy of the British government’s portrayal of the islanders as migrant workers: “Some families had worked in the Chagos Islands...for two generations”, and asked “how the islanders were moved”, raising the possibility of “coercion” (*The Times*, 1975c). The issue of compensation was also discussed: “the British Government insists it has been very conscious of humanitarian considerations, hence the agreement in 1973 to pay £650,000 for relief and resettlement” and the *Guardian* newspaper reports of a deal for cut price Polaris missiles in exchange for the islanders’ removal; enough doubt to allow political capital to be made, the

newspaper claimed, by the opposition in Mauritius and in the United States (*The Times*, 1975c). The same year claims were reported of the Chagos Islanders “living in abject poverty in Mauritius” after being “forcibly removed before 1972” (*The Times*, 1975a). The Government was later forced to deny allegations that it “pocketed” £2 million from the £5 million US payment for the base, only giving £3 million in compensation to Mauritius (*The Times*, 1975b).

Then in June 1976 a lengthy article in *The Times* provided for the first time a voice for the Chagos Islanders: quoting several displaced families and including a picture of Chagossians living in the slums of Port Louis. Titled ‘Shanty towns illustrate story of delay and indifference’, the article concentrated on the alleged failure of the Mauritius government to provide adequate welfare for the islanders, but also cast doubt on the British portrayal of the islanders as migrant workers as seeking “to underplay the upheaval which these people have undergone as a result of British policy” and claiming that the affair was “hardly to the credit of the British and Americans” (Taylor, 1976).

These ethical dimensions of the policy – the militarisation of the Indian Ocean and the treatment of the Chagossians – can therefore be seen to have emerged throughout this latter period and would resurface from the 1980s onwards in the form of protests by the Organisation of African Unity and from Mauritius (Khan, 1983), and through subsequent legal challenges against the British Government by displaced Chagossians (Gifford, 2004).

4.2.3 Power

While Britain’s post-war austerity meant financial constraints (Goldsworthy, 1994), the perception of Britain’s continued role as a world power was encapsulated in a speech by

Harold Wilson in 1964 where he argued that “whatever we may do in the field of cost effectiveness...we cannot afford to relinquish our world role...” (quoted in Harvey, 2011). The creation of BIOT may be seen as part of a strategic vision in which Britain was able to continue this role, closely linked to the United States.

The strategic importance of the Chagos Islands was summarized by Joneed Khan in 1983:

From a secure base in the middle of the Indian Ocean, the United States could control events in the Middle East, in the Gulf area, on the Southern African subcontinent, on the Eastern flank of Africa, in the Cape of Good Hope area, and in the Malaysia-Indonesia- Australia sector, where the waters of the Indian and the Pacific Oceans mingle (Khan, 1983, p.175).

Both Vine (2009) and Richard Edis, commissioner for BIOT from 1988-1991 (2004), argue that the idea to use Diego Garcia as a mid-ocean base came from military analysts in the United States in the mid 1950's rather than from the UK. Edis claims the British government was initially reluctant but came round to filling the perceived “strategic vacuum in the area” (Edis, 2004. p.81). Following British withdrawal East of Suez, the new base allowed Britain an Indian Ocean presence, with the costs largely borne by the United States (Vine, 2009 p.70). The news that construction of a naval communications centre would begin, was welcomed by *The Times* Diplomatic Correspondent later that year as “an important step in countering of any Soviet naval buildup [sic] in the area in the next few years” (Rendel, 1970).

Cyprus was also considered by successive governments of this period to be of strategic importance in the Eastern Mediterranean (Goldsworthy, 1994; Judd, 1996).

However, Parliamentary debate in 1960 shows that for many the Suez crisis underlined the

difficulty of maintaining a military presence against local wishes (Goldsworthy, 1994). In 1958 Macmillan put forward a partnership plan for Cyprus offering limited internal self-government (House of Commons debate, 1958). This was rejected and at the London Conference in 1959 an agreement was concluded giving Cyprus independence in return for renouncing claims to union with Greece and the retention of British sovereignty over two areas which were to be used only for military purposes (Great Britain & The Prime Minister, 1958). The agreement was presented as a balance between “the right of the people of Cyprus to an independent status in the world” with that of Britain to protect not only British interests but that “of the greater alliances of which we are members” (Great Britain & The Prime Minister, 1958, p.3). Heated debate in 1960 on questions of the sovereignty of the base areas and the size of the military enclaves showed the impact of the Suez incident on Labour and Conservative positions. Several Labour MPs argued that bases could not be held without the support of the local people as demonstrated by Suez; and highlighted suspicion on the part of islanders that the bases might represent quasi-colonies (House of Commons debate, 1960),³⁰ a position denied by the Government and explicitly countered in the Cyprus Treaty of 1960 (Great Britain, 1960). Nonetheless, the Government position on the bases held and continues until the present time, with the areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia remaining under British sovereignty. Richard Aldrich, writing on the history of GCHQ, has argued that the British decision to retain bases in Cyprus was (like the policy in BIOT) heavily influenced by the Americans (Aldrich, 2011, p.7). Policy towards Cyprus and BIOT during this period can be seen as predominantly influenced by strategic concerns and power politics. The bases allowed Britain to retain a global presence and assist a key ally, the United States.

³⁰ Denis Healey MP and Kenneth Robinson MP both explicitly refer to Suez during the debate and the lesson that bases could not be held against local opposition (House of Commons, 1960).

In the Caribbean, military concerns did not predominate but issues of power were bound up with economic constraints and the perception of the need to retain power where de-colonisation was as yet incomplete. By 1961 the newly-formed West Indies Federation was disintegrating (Drower, 1992, p.24)³¹. Of today's Overseas Territories, the Federation included Montserrat, and Anguilla as part of St Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla (Drower, 1992, p.24)³². Following Jamaica's withdrawal, concern was expressed about continuing UK financial support to the smaller islands (Cabinet, 1961). Secretary of State for the Colonies Iain Macleod believed that with Trinidad a smaller East Caribbean Federation could be cobbled together, showing the extent to which the idea of federation was seen as central to the decolonisation agenda. In a 'secret' letter to the Prime Minister in 1961 Macleod raised the possibility of Antigua's withdrawal, leaving the poorer Windward and Leeward islands unable to manage independence alone and "supported financially by the UK – a most dismal prospect" (Macleod, 1961, p.93).

This correspondence makes clear a shift in emphasis from earlier policy. The territories were framed as financial burdens, which one former Governor suspected officials, while genuinely fearing for the economic viability of small islands also "preferred to bundle up territories into convenient units before sending them off to independence" (Posnett, 2001, p.130). With Trinidad on board Macleod argued:

³¹ Colonial Secretary Rt Hon Iain Macleod was reported in minutes of a Cabinet meeting that "Given the precedents of Cyprus and Sierra Leone, and having regard to the size of the population, economic viability and relative stability of the territory, a request from Jamaica for full independence within the Commonwealth could not reasonably be resisted" (Cabinet, 1961).

³² Trinidad, Tobago, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent, all of which subsequently went forward to independence, were also members.

...we might salvage a viable federation which could move forward to independence without Jamaica and relieve us of the prospect of having the smaller islands indefinitely on our hands (Macleod, 1961, p.93).

Also of concern to British policymakers during this period was the retention of responsibility without the power to control events within the territories (Madden, 2000). This concern was raised in a secret memorandum from Secretary of State for the Colonies, Ambler Thomas, who claimed:

...we have over the past few years allowed ministers in the Leeward and Windwards to secure a measure of control over their own affairs which their competence and experience do not justify (Thomas, 1961).

Although he argues that “constitutionally it would be difficult to put the clock back”, Governors were urged to use their powers to the full and expect greater financial control over aid expenditure (Thomas, 1961). And yet, conversely by 1963 when the smaller territories were proposing to federate and move to independence, British concern over the federation’s preparedness was expressed and caution advised (Sandys, 1963). This suggests a difficult interplay between responsibilities towards British colonies as against a perceived national interest to mitigate ongoing financial burdens.

By 1965 hopes of an East Caribbean Federation had faded and in 1967 a new experiment, of Associated Statehood, was launched in the Caribbean (Drower, 1992 p.25-26;). Included in the new grouping were St Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla, Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent. The states had internal independence while Britain remained responsible for defence and foreign relations (House of Commons, 1971). Within the year Anguilla declared its independence from the Association (Westlake, 1973). A State of

Emergency was declared, and in 1967, British paratroopers, policemen and a Commissioner were sent from London to restore order.³³ Anguilla remained a British dependency as has Montserrat, while the other Associated States gained independence.

4.3 The South Atlantic: conflict and identity: 1980-1997

The two decades from 1980 to 1997 saw a further disengagement of Britain from empire as eight smaller territories gained independence. The period has been characterised by George Drower as one of profound neglect by Britain of its remaining colonial responsibilities (Drower, 1992). It can also be seen as a period of active distancing of the centre from the periphery (Boyce, 1999) as the 1981 British Nationality Act marked a new boundary; a clear distinction of inside and outside between Britain and the dependencies by removing British citizenship from many in the Overseas Territories (Hintjens, 1995).

4.3.1 Identity

In the 1980's a subtle shift in emphasis can be seen in British policy towards the remaining Overseas Territories which became framed increasingly as liabilities (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012). The British Nationality Act of 1981 represented a division between those on the inside and those on the outside (Campbell, 1992), a re-drawing of borders which saw many former British subjects in the Overseas Territories denied the right of abode in the United Kingdom (Hintjens, 1995; Moore, 2000; Skinner, 2003). The conflict in the Falkland Islands drew attention to the consequences of citizenship legislation (Moore, 2000)³⁴ but did not, during

³³ When in opposition in 1969, Edward Heath questioned the legality of the operation under the provisions of the 1969 West Indies Act (House of Commons, 1971).

³⁴ According to Moore (2000) of the approximately 2000 residents of the Falkland Islands, around 400 would not gain British citizenship under the 1981 legislation but would instead become Citizens of British Dependent Territories. P. 4.

this period, lead to a re-think on the issue for the other territories, leading to suspicions of the operation of a double-standard based on ethnicity (Moore, 2000)³⁵.

By 1979 a Conservative government came to power on a manifesto which clearly linked immigration to race:

The ethnic minorities have already made a valuable contribution to the life of our nation. But firm immigration control for the future is essential if we are to achieve good community relations (Conservative Party, 1979).

Here the notion of immigrant is elided with that of ethnic minorities, of huge significance to the redrawing of boundaries of nationality in 1981 which demarcated the UK from the territories and former colonies, along seemingly racial lines (Moore, 2000).

The 1980 White Paper *British Nationality Law*, restricted the definition of who was a British citizen and aligned this status with the right of abode (Home Office, 1980). Following consultation it proposed a category of British Dependent Territory Citizen (The Home Office, 1980).³⁶ Yet despite the Government's claims that the new status would not alter Britain's relationship with or "...obligations and commitments to the dependent territories and their citizens..." (Home Office, 1980, p.3), it did not include the right of abode in the UK (Hintjens, 1995). Under the legislation, British citizenship was reserved for those "who have a close personal connection with the United Kingdom" being those whose parents or grandparents were born in the United Kingdom (The Home Office, 1980). The White Paper referred repeatedly to the term "close connection" or "real connection" with the United Kingdom

³⁵ See also Dodds (2002) Chapter 7 on connections between nationality, ethnicity and patriotism with reference to the Falkland Islands.

³⁶ The idea of separate citizenship for each territory as proposed by some respondents was rejected by the Government as impractical.

(The Home Office, 1980, p.3), thus excluding many in the dependent territories who may have defined their identity as British subjects. While the 1981 Act purportedly aimed to clarify the previously complex and obscure situation with regard to nationality and immigration, Robert Moore argues that: “Muddle, inconsistency and racism continue to mark the evolution of immigration and citizenship law” (Moore, 2000). The granting of citizenship to Gibraltarans under the 1981 Act and later to all Falkland Islanders in 1983 (Great Britain, 1983) gave rise to strong suspicions of racial discrimination (Moore, 2000).

Following news of the Argentinian invasion of the Falkland Islands in April 1982, Thatcher reminded the House that the Falkland Islanders are “British in stock and tradition, and they wish to remain British in allegiance” (Thatcher, 1982). Closing her statement she used repetition to underscore her point:

“Their way of life is British; their allegiance is to the Crown. They are few in number, but they have a right to live in peace, to choose their own way of life and to determine their own allegiance. Their way of life is British; their allegiance is to the Crown” (Thatcher, 1982).

In an interview with ITN News the following day the Prime Minister again referred twice to the islanders as being “of British stock” and also “British” (Thatcher, 1982 April 5): “We have a duty to our territory, to our people...” (Thatcher, 1982 April 5). Despite criticism of the Government, the opposition also cast the Falkland islanders as firmly British. In the House of Commons, James Callaghan described “a peaceful and inoffensive community of British subjects” (Thatcher, 1982 April 7). In 1983 British citizenship was restored to all Falkland Islanders under the British Nationality (Falkland Islands) Act 1983 (Great Britain, 1983). It

would be another nineteen years, however before citizenship was restored to the other dependent territories.

The perceived injustice of the 1981 Act was felt very strongly in St Helena where in response a Commission on Citizenship was set up by the Anglican Church on the Island. Two resulting reports: *St. Helena: the Lost County of England* (The Bishop of St. Helena's Commission on Citizenship, 1996) and *St Helena: a British Island* (Turner, 1997) argued forcibly that St Helena's people had always been and remained firmly British and that the denial of their British citizenship was due to a fundamental misunderstanding of their status (see also Moore, 2000). The report recommended not just the restoration of British passports but the "re-integration" of the island into Britain (The Bishop of St. Helena's Commission on Citizenship, 1996, p.6). The reports see the British Nationality Act as part of a wider move by Britain to turn its back on past responsibilities to former empire (The Bishop of St. Helena's Commission on Citizenship, 1996; Turner, 1997).

4.3.2 Ethics

The section on the Caribbean Federation above highlighted the tension between postcolonial responsibilities and the desire of the UK government to limit expenditure on the colonies where possible. This was arguably the case with the Falkland Islands (Dodds, 2002) until the Argentinian invasion in 1982. The 1976 Shackleton report highlighted economic and social decline in the Islands (Dodds, 2002) but, as Klaus Dodds argues, the recommendations of the report were largely ignored due to the costs, concern about exacerbating tensions with Argentina, and potential censure from the United Nations (Dodds, 2002, p.153). By 1980 a "lease-back" solution for the islands was proposed. In a House of Commons debate in December, Russell Johnson MP described "shameful schemes for getting rid of these islands"

(House of Commons, 1980) and later that month John Farr MP (Conservative) claimed a “wish in the Foreign Office not to be troubled by the Falkland Islands” (House of Commons debate, 1980b).

House of Commons debates, however, also provide references to “huge fishing potential”, “farming in a meaningful way the many thousands of square miles”, potential mineral resources, and strategic uses – showing the Falklands were seen by some as “valuable territory with tremendous potential...for the use of not only the Falkland Islands people but the people of this country” (House of Commons debate, 1980b). In December 1980 Nicholas Ridley argued that improving the economy on the Falklands had not been possible due to “the dead hand of the dispute with Argentina” (House of Commons, 1980). The Government’s scope for action was limited, however, by the principle of self-determination - the official line on colonial policy since the Second World War and restated by Ridley in 1980:

Her Majesty’s Government’s policy with regard to independence for the remaining territories for which they have responsibility is to respect the wishes of the local inhabitants as expressed through their elected leaders (House of Commons debate, 1980a).

Subsequent debates on the future of the Falkland Islands would return repeatedly to this concept of the wishes of the local people. Analysis of a House of Commons debate on a proposed leaseback of the Falklands to Argentina saw the concept evoked more than 27 times in various forms on both sides of the house (House of Commons, 1980). And in December 1980 Ridley was emphatic that the islanders’ views were paramount. Closing the Commons debate in 1980 Ridley refers nine times in a short five paragraph statement to the

government's deferral to "the interests of the islanders" and similar assurances to put their interests and wishes first. Writing of the Falklands conflict in 1982, David McCourt has argued that the "decision to re-invade had no economic or political rationale: Britain's principled sense of self was at stake..." (McCourt, 2011, p.1599). McCourt argues that identity, however, is based on the social roles played by international actors and that in this case Britain chose to play a "status quo oriented role, with a large stake in the norms of international order, and the capacity and right to remove Argentina by military means" (McCourt, 2011, p.1600). In this view, Falklands policy was determined less by power politics than maintaining Britain's own sense of identity as an ethical actor upholding the norms of "proper international political conduct and self-determination"(McCourt, 2011, p.1603).

4.3.3 Power

However, following the Falklands conflict, the islands were transformed in political discourse to a leitmotif of British power and renewal: "Our country has won a great victory and we are entitled to be proud...we have ceased to be a nation in retreat" Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told a Conservative rally at Cheltenham (Thatcher, 1982). Full British Citizenship for all Falkland Islanders was restored in 1983.³⁷ In post-conflict speeches the idea of empire is evoked through the idea of "waverers and fainthearts" who:

thought we could no longer do the great things we once did...that Britain was no longer the nation that had built an Empire and ruled a quarter of the world (Thatcher, 1982).

³⁷ The British Nationality Act 1981 had granted British citizenship to those who were born or whose parents or whose grandparents had been born in Britain, meaning that some people in Overseas Territories continued to qualify.

Yet the speech is primarily concerned with enlisting the “Falklands factor”, to further a domestic position on industrial relations (Thatcher, 1982). The other Overseas Territories are not mentioned; the Falklands are seen as an individual case rather than expressive of a collective body of overseas territories.

The period from 1980 to 1997 can be characterised by an out of sight out of mind attitude on the part of the British government to the remaining Overseas Territories (Drower, 1992). It was also a time of drawing in the boundaries of empire (Boyce, 1999) and new more restricted visions of who was considered to be British. The Falkland Islands conflict, while mobilising ideas of a common heritage with one particular Overseas Territory did not at this point lead to a reappraisal of relations with the others (Boyce, 1999).

4.4 White Papers and re-engagement: 1997- Present

In 1997 a Labour government was elected championing a new ethical dimension to foreign policy (Daddow & Gaskarth, 2011a; Little & Wickham-Jones, 2000). Devolution was also on the agenda for the nations of the UK and, potentially, for English regions (FCO, 1999). Ethical responsibilities to peoples in the Overseas Territories and further devolution of power to local governments would also form a central plank of early Labour policy towards the Territories during this period (FCO, 1999). The new Government was prompted into a review of relations with the Overseas Territories by volcanic disaster in Montserrat (Clegg, 2009; Clegg & Gold, 2011; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012), growing awareness of economic hardship in several territories, and challenges posed by the offshore financial services industry in some others (FCO, 1999), the implications of which were highlighted (Clegg & Gold, 2011) in a critical National Audit Office Report (1997). The resulting White Paper: *Partnership for Progress and Prosperity* emphasised a mature and modern partnership based on reciprocal

responsibilities (FCO, 1999). However, as the decade progressed, issues of power and national security would also be reasserted as the limits to devolution were circumscribed by the British Government (Clegg, 2009; Fergus, 2005) and the military strategic identity of some territories was foregrounded over ethical concerns.

4.4.1 Identity

In 1998 a House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs recommended the Government review the difficulties of Dependent Territory passport holders who faced obstacles to travel for work, education and training (FCO, 1999). The 1999 White Paper on the Overseas Territories proposed restoration of citizenship to all British Overseas Dependent Territories citizens, enacted through the Overseas Territories Act 2002 (FCO, 1999, p.17). This *volte-face* represented a symbolic re-inclusion of the peoples of the Territories as United Kingdom citizens and addressed a widely-expressed “sense of grievance” (FCO, 1999). The 1999 White Paper stressed that the measure would not be reciprocal, it would not affect the ability of the territories to set their own tax rates, and would have no bearing on the territories ability to choose their constitutional link with the UK (FCO, 1999). The proposals did not represent integration of the territories with Britain; and democratic representation in the British political system was not extended to the territories. Nor was citizenship intended for those connected with the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus or BIOT as “Both are special cases. British usage of these territories is defence-related”, the White Paper stated (FCO, 1999, p.18).

While the extension of citizenship signalled greater inclusion of the Overseas Territories than hitherto, the identity of the Overseas Territories in relation to the British state remained somewhat ambiguous (Hintjens and Hodge, 2012). For instance, although the

territories are a Government-wide responsibility (National Audit Office, 2007), the lead Department for the Territories is the Foreign Office, suggesting their international rather than domestic status. When questioned on this matter by MP Andrew Rosindell in 2010, Foreign Secretary William Hague replied:

...remember we're not the same as France; we don't regard our overseas territories as parts of the home state. They do not have representatives in our national legislature, so they are in a different position...(Hague, 2010a).

A further indication of the Territories indeterminate status with regard to the British state lies in the International Development Act of 2002 which gives the Overseas Territories first reasonable call for assistance on the British aid budget (FCO, 1999) and which “specifically exempts the OTs from the poverty reduction criteria that apply to the rest of the DFID budget” (DFID, 2011b, p.2). A report by CAFOD on the 2011 UK Bi-lateral Aid Review (CAFOD, 2011) claimed the Overseas Territories received eighteen times more assistance per head of population from the British Government than those living in some of the world’s poorest countries. The receipt of international aid from DFID suggests that the territories are outside the ambit of the domestic state, yet the privileging of the territories over other independent states suggests an exceptional or special relationship between Britain and the territories.

In 2012 the Coalition Government published a White Paper: *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability* (FCO, 2012). The language used in the document towards the Territories is warm and inclusive. They are described by the Prime Minister David Cameron in the foreword as “a valued part of the realm” and this description is repeated

three further times within the document (FCO, 2012). Until the 2012 White Paper there has been no collective word used to describe Britain and the Territories. The use of 'realm', while sounding anachronistic, is constitutionally accurate as the link between Britain and the Territories is a sovereign one (Hendry & Dickson, 2011). The use of this term, which stresses cohesion and commonality, may be seen as part of a "reengagement" with the Territories across the whole of British government, a move recommended by the National Audit Office Report on the Territories of 2007 (National Audit Office, 2007). The White Paper is in large part made up of statements from each of the eighteen ministries and departments working on territory issues, outlining their involvement in, and commitments to, the Territories (FCO, 2012). However, while support, involvement and engagement with the Overseas Territories are highlighted in the White Paper, constitutional arrangements remain unchanged and there is no mention of representation for the peoples of the Overseas Territories in the UK Parliament, signalling their continued status as neither entirely inside nor outside the British body politic.

4.4.2 Ethical issues

The 1999 White Paper stated that the Government recognised that "we have a particular responsibility to ensure the well-being of sovereign British territories" (FCO, 1999, p.30). This was reflected in successive White papers since the 1970s (DFID, 2011b) and in the 2002 International Development Act, and included budgetary aid and technical assistance to the territories³⁸. The emphasis on British responsibility for the Overseas Territories may be seen

³⁸ UK Government figures give DFID aid to St Helena and Tristan Da Cunha as £31,050,000 for £2010/2011 with an additional £201.5 million for the design and construction of an airport, £10 million in shared risk contingency and £35.1 million for ten years of operation Baroness Warsi (2012) 'House of Lords Debate: Overseas Territories'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/120924w0008.htm> (Accessed: 25.09.2012). Projected figures for Montserrat in 2010-11 were £23,260,000 and £3,260,000 for Pitairn

as partly deriving from the perceived deficiencies in Britain's response to the explosion of Mount Soufrière on Montserrat in 1997 (Clegg, 2009; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012; Skelton, 2003). The House of Commons International Development Committee's *First Report into the Montserrat Volcanic Crisis* (1997) identified shortcomings in the provision of health and housing to displaced people on the island, failures in emergency preparedness and planning, and in coordination between the British Government and the Government of Montserrat. A further International Development Committee report in July 1998 highlighted lack of co-operation between the FCO and DFID and recommended responsibility for the Overseas Territories should lie with one department. A lack of "political will" was identified and the Committee called on the UK Government to face up to its responsibilities to Montserratians (House of Commons International Development Committee, 1998).

But the 1999 White Paper also stressed "obligations and responsibilities for both sides", the territories' responsibilities including good governance and the adherence to Britain's international obligations (FCO, 1999, p.8). The determination of the UK Government to uphold these standards may be seen during this period in respect of pressure on the Overseas Territories to abolish the death penalty in 1991 and the use of an Order in Council in some Caribbean Territories to pass legislation in 2000 legalising homosexual acts between consenting adults (Clegg, 2009; Clegg & Gold, 2011; FAC, 2008a). In evidence submitted to the Foreign Affairs Committee in 2008, the FCO explained that while human rights is a matter of "local ownership", Britain would stand liable for any breaches, particularly under the European Convention on Human Rights and "the aim is that the Territories should abide by

Mitchell, A. (2010) 'House of Commons, Written Answers 17th June 2010. International development. British Overseas Territories: Overseas Aid'. *Hansard*, [Online]. Available at: <http://services.parliament.uk/hansard/Commons/ByDate/20100617/writtenanswers/part019.html> (Accessed: 9.4.11).

the same basic standards of human rights, openness and good government that people in the United Kingdom expect of their Government” (Ev 154 FAC, 2008a). This insistence on a minimum standard of rights suggests a cosmopolitan understanding of rights as universally applicable as opposed to particularistic and culturally relative.

Ethical issues were also raised in 2008 following reports to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs of serious alleged corruption in the Turks and Caicos Islands (House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2008). The report of the Committee concluded that:

The Government must take its oversight responsibility for the overseas territories more seriously – consulting across all overseas territories more on the one hand while demonstrating a greater willingness to step in and use reserve powers on the other (FAC, 2008a, para 437).

The Committee felt the investigation of corruption in the Turks and Caicos had been too hands-off. The failure to tackle good governance issues was also a matter of Britain’s identity and the report worried about the damage to “the UK’s own reputation for promoting good governance” (FAC, 2008a, p.para 196).

The Committee also criticised the British Government’s performance in respect of the environment. The lack of strategic assessment of conservation needs in the Overseas Territories was seen as “highly negligent” and current environment funding “grossly inadequate” (House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2008, p.93). This criticism was echoed by some environmental organisations during this period who argued

that funding for conservation work in the Overseas Territories was inadequate (RSPB, 2009; Sanders, 2009b; UKOTCF, 2010).

The stress within the 1999 White Paper on the importance of mutual responsibilities and obligations is also reaffirmed within the 2012 White Paper which states: “The choice to remain a British Territory engages responsibilities and benefits for the Territories and for the UK” (FCO, 2012, p.8). This includes assistance for territories “in need” but also stresses the support of “developments which will reduce aid dependency” (p.8). The decision to fund an airport in St Helena may be seen in this vein as a symbol of responsibility, but also with an aim of reducing financial dependence on the UK and to “accelerate aid-dependent OTs towards self-sufficiency” (DFID, 2011).

The 2012 White Paper emphasises a depth of ethical obligation that goes beyond the requirements of the international community in terms of United Nations declarations. These international conventions are recognised in the White Paper, but ethical responsibility is also seen to derive from “...our shared history and political commitment to the wellbeing of all British nationals” (FCO, 2012, p.13). Here ethical obligation is constructed in terms of shared identity, a broadly communitarian conception of a hierarchy of rights in which citizens are privileged (Brown, 2010).

4.4.3 Power

The fallout from the allegations of corruption in the Turks and Caicos Islands raised difficult issues about the use of power by Britain in the Overseas Territories. Following an investigation by a retired British judge, which alleged serious corruption within the islands’ government (The Economist, 2009), the British government, in 2009, suspended parts of the

TCI constitution and imposed rule, effectively, through the British Governor (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2009b; Lunn & Thompson, 2012). The move provoked some criticism from the Caribbean Community which, while expressing concern at allegations of corruption, questioned whether “suspending the Constitution of TCI and its democratic institutions and resorting to direct rule by the colonial power” were the best way to tackle the situation (CARICOM, 2009b; CARICOM, 2009a). The CARICOM statement, which stressed the ability of the people of the islands to govern themselves rather than direct rule through a British Governor, shows the sensitivity of this use of British power in the Caribbean and the propensity for Britain’s role and identity to be perceived as colonial. There was also some criticism from within Turks and Caicos (Bird, 2009; Handy, 2010), but as *The Economist* pointed out there were also those who felt the British government should have acted sooner to protect their interests (The Economist, 2009). Some politicians in TCI called for an end to direct rule and the British Government defended its action as a question of fulfilling responsibilities to territory citizens (Handy, 2009). A Foreign Affairs Committee Report in 2010 welcomed the Government’s action in Turks and Caicos Islands and a new local Government was established following elections on the islands in November 2012 (UK in India, 2012).

British policy towards its territories also came under the spotlight in 2008 when the Government appealed to the Lords against earlier court rulings in the Divisional Court and the Court of Appeal permitting the Chagossians to return to the outer islands of BIOT (Lunn, 2012). The Law Lords ruled 3-2 in favour of the Government’s position. The *Guardian* reported: “Lord Hoffman ruled the government was entitled to legislate for a colony in the

security interests of the United Kingdom” (Campbell & Weaver, 2008). Foreign Secretary David Miliband was quoted as saying:

We do not seek to excuse the conduct of an earlier generation. Our appeal to the House of Lords was not about what happened in the 1960s and 1970s. It was about decisions taken in the international context of 2004. This required us to take into account issues of defence [and] security of the archipelago and the fact that an independent study had come down heavily against the feasibility of lasting resettlement on the outer islands of BIOT (Campbell & Weaver, 2008).

The decision to prioritise defence and the relationship with the United States over human rights issues seems at odds with the commitment to an ethical foreign policy as outlined by Robin Cook in 1997 when he claimed the government would “put human rights at the heart of our foreign policy” and recognise “that the national interest cannot be defined only by narrow realpolitik” (Cook, 1997). However, of the four goals of UK foreign policy outlined by Robin Cook, the first is security for nations based on the North Atlantic Alliance; prosperity for Britain based on overseas trade comes second; followed by quality of life in Britain; while “securing the respect of other nations” for peacekeeping and democracy-building comes fourth on the list (Cook, 1997), suggesting the ongoing overriding concern with domestic responsibilities and further underscoring the importance of the identity of the territories in relation to the state.

A similar balance of power over ethical issues is evident in policy during the last decade towards Ascension Island, as will be discussed in later chapters. The 1999 White Paper, within the context of constitutional modernisation and the “promotion of representative and participative government”, stated the Government would “consult the people of St Helena and its dependencies about how to develop the democratic and civil

rights of people living on Ascension Island” (FCO, 1999, p.13). However in 2005, what Vince Cable described as a “Government policy U-turn” (House of Commons debate, 2006) occurred, dashing any hopes of rights of abode on the island, although representation in an Island Council remained. Parliamentary debate in 2006 saw Vince Cable suggesting that the U-turn, against the wishes of some islanders, represented “a very seedy and disreputable episode in recent British colonial history” (House of Commons debate, 2006). While concerns of economic liability represented by settlement were given for the policy shift (Lord Triesman, 2006), Mr Cable suggested the importance strategically of the island may also have been an issue (House of Commons debate, 2006).

The perceived ongoing strategic importance of Ascension Island and other British Overseas Territories is expressed in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review: which noted the importance of bases in several overseas territories, including Ascension Island. These bases, it is argued:

give us and in some cases our allies wide geographical reach and logistic support hubs for deployed forces. They will continue to be central to our ability to deploy military force around the world and to respond to changing strategic circumstances (Great Britain, 2010, p.28).

The Overseas Territories White Paper of 2012 also stresses the importance of the territories to Britain’s ability to project power on the global stage. The White Paper lists the territories’ contribution to the “security interests” of Britain and her allies in terms of “training environments”, support for recent military operations, and providing permanent bases: “Our Overseas Territories give Britain a global strategic reach in support of our international objectives” (FCO, 2012, p.22).

The period from 1997 to the present may be seen as a watershed in relations between Britain and the Overseas Territories. Helen Hintjens and Dorothea Hodge argue that the 1999 White Paper represented a “paradigm shift” (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012, p.192) from a British Government expectation that the territories would eventually become independent to a period in which the British Government accepted some shared “postcolonial responsibility” (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012) for the remaining territories. The authors, however, see British responsibility as falling short because of a continued emphasis on the Overseas Territories as liabilities. Following from their analysis, the above section has demonstrated that while citizenship was restored during this period and significant responsibilities defined by the 1999 White Paper, the continued economic separation of the territories and their lack of representation means that despite closer engagement in some areas, the identification of the Overseas Territories by Britain as outside the polis means ethical obligations were, at times, able to be constructed as lesser than those applying domestically, particularly where security issues were relevant.

4.5 Summary

In the introduction to his book on British foreign policy in the twentieth century Mark Curtis gives a damning picture of Britain’s record in the world:

Britain’s role remains essentially an imperial one: to act as junior partner to US global power, to help organise the global economy to benefit Western corporations, and to maximise Britain’s (that is British elites’) independent political standing in the world and thus remain a ‘great power’ (Curtis, 2003, p.5).

British policy towards the Chagos islanders, the limitation of civil society on Ascension, and earlier hard negotiations over the retention of bases in Cyprus suggest the accuracy of

Curtis's portrait. Yet it is possible also to discern another set of influences at work in British policy towards the Overseas Territories: a distinct discomfort at criticism from international society over colonialism in the post-war years³⁹; a recognition of a moral responsibility towards the well-being of populations in the dependencies; and successive attempts to create appropriate systems and relationships of mutual benefit that, while protecting Britain's interests, would also provide autonomy for people in the territories. Ideas about the best solutions were admittedly largely defined by the administering power and not always appropriate; and the understanding of both the level of desire for and the ability to realise independence sometimes lagged well behind reality. They were, however, it may be argued, made within the framework of a wider set of principles than the exclusive demands of a ruthless imperialism.

In conclusion it can be argued that policy towards the Overseas Territories has been deeply divided. At play are normative principles around self-determination and international responsibility set against the perceived imperatives of national security, defence, and by implication the 'special relationship' with the United States, which have often proved paramount. However, underlying the tensions between ethics and power is the fundamental question of identity – of the status of the territories in respect of the British state.

³⁹ Mervyn Frost discusses the discomfort of states charged by others with violations of shared ethical norms within international society (Frost, M. (2010) 'Ethical Competence in International Relations'. *Unpublished Paper given to Plymouth International Studies Centre Research Seminar Series*. Plymouth: 22nd January 2010.)

Chapter Five: Identity and the UK Overseas Territories

This chapter will examine the role played by identity in the relationship between Britain and its Overseas Territories. It will explore the extent to which Britain's Overseas Territories are seen by Britain as part of the state, as separate national communities or as occupying some intermediate status. It will also examine the degree to which the territories see themselves as distant extensions of the United Kingdom or else as particularistic national communities. The question of identity, as was argued in Chapter One, is central to understanding the behaviour of actors on the international stage (Daddow & Gaskarth, 2011a). Where realist theories of IR tend to privilege national interest as an explanatory factor in state behaviour, constructivist accounts pay greater attention to the question of the identities of international actors (Brysk, Parsons & Sandholtz, 2002; Checkel, 2008; Doty, 1993; Wendt, 1992). As Guzzini (2006) explains, the analysis of identity has helped both to expose how systems of difference between groups are constructed and also to undermine realist theories which assume interests precede identities (see also Wendt, 1992).

This thesis utilises Daddow and Gaskarth's IEP framework, in which the construction of identities of self and other by international actors is a key factor in understanding state behaviour (Daddow & Gaskarth, 2011a). The framework avoids essentialist notions of the nation-state and national identity, instead focusing on how people understand or define themselves as belonging to particular groups or political communities (Anderson, 1991). The multiplicity of peoples and the shifting constructions of identities over time, mean state and people are rarely one and the same (see Brown, 2002; Buzan, 1983; Stoessinger, 1973). Furthermore, since the British Overseas Territories occupy an indeterminate status as non-

sovereign entities in a post-Westphalian system (Aldrich & Connell, 1998; Baldacchino, 2010; Hintjens, 1995; Sanders, 2009a; Skinner, 2002), ideas about who is seen to belong and who is included or excluded from the idea and institutions of the state, are likely to be complex.

The following analysis focuses on documentary and interview data from fieldwork undertaken in the UK and in the case study territories of St Helena, Ascension Island and the Virgin Islands between November 2010 and October 2011. It examines to what extent the Overseas Territories are seen by elites within the UK and in the Overseas Territories as part of the British state, as separate autonomous communities with their own idea of the “common good” (Clinton, 1993) , or instead are represented as something in-between, neither here nor there, problematizing ideas of the coherence and bounded nature of statehood (Baldacchino, 2010). By looking closely at language use within the interview transcripts, particularly at how the spatial relationships between the Overseas Territories and Britain are described, a deeper understanding of the construction of identities and their relation to ethics and power may be achieved. As Ó Tuathail and Agnew argue:

To designate a place...is to open up a field of possible taxonomies and trigger a series of narratives, subjects and appropriate foreign policy responses (Ó'Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p.194).

The chapter will look firstly at how the Overseas Territories are viewed and represented by elites within the UK. It will then examine how elites within St Helena and BVI see themselves in relation to the British state.

5.1 British elite views of the Overseas Territories

This section will explore varying conceptions among British elites regarding the character of the connection between Britain and its remaining Overseas Territories. It will identify a trend whereby the Overseas Territories are represented as more closely enmeshed with the British state than hitherto, challenging dominant historical official representation of these entities as separate. Instead, some interviewees suggest that the Overseas Territories should be seen as similar in status to parts of the British Isles, and thus eligible for some of the social and political goods available to people living within the United Kingdom. The idea of a closer link is often articulated through the use of spatial imagery, which according to Geographer John Agnew, works to familiarise the unfamiliar (Agnew, 2009a). However, this discourse was not universal, nor does it entirely mirror official British Government policy regarding the status of the Overseas Territories.

5.1.1 Spatial and familial analogy

As discussed in the previous chapter, UK Government policy has tended to frame the Overseas Territories as entities separate, although connected to the British state, despite a shared citizenship. This separation enables varying degrees of political autonomy within the territories but means that their inhabitants do not share wholly in the common goods of the British state. What communitarian theorist Michael Walzer terms “distributive justice” (Walzer, 1994, p.21) operates largely at the territory rather than the state level.

Interviews with some elites in the UK, however, revealed ambivalence about the exclusion of the Overseas Territories from some aspects of British political and economic life. The territories were felt by some, by virtue of their shared identity as ‘British’, to be eligible for a greater share in the resources of the state. This position was expressed through

discourses which critiqued implicitly the distancing or exclusion of the territories; through the use of familial language, and also through spatial analogy (Agnew, 2009a) which served to collapse the imagined physical distance between the territories and the UK.

5.1.2 UK awareness and engagement

Lack of awareness among the British public of the territories and their connection to the United Kingdom, also mentioned recently by Hintjens and Hodge (2012, p. 211), was noted by several interviewees, suggesting that they are not commonly considered as closely associated with the UK. For example, one former senior Government official said:

I think apart from the Falklands, maybe Gibraltar, I think if you did some polling you would find very, very low levels of awareness of which are the Overseas Territories and what our relationship is (Interview, UK 7, 2011).

One participant from an Overseas Territory agreed, adding:

...and whilst they may know of us individually, they may not know of our constitutional relationship with the UK (Interview, UK 12, 2011).

Another senior former Government official described the territories as “quite a hidden bit of the UK” (Interview, UK 02, 2010) and explained: “If you say to people, how many are there, you get answers from five to three hundred. People literally have no idea.”

Some interviewees felt public awareness of the link with the Falklands and Gibraltar was greater than for the other territories, or highlighted interest in specific issues such as biodiversity, or the history of exploration in South Georgia and Antarctica. However, the majority of those interviewed suggested that the territories are not well-known within the

UK. It may be argued that in this sense the territories are not felt to form part of the United Kingdom within the public imagination.

Several interviewees also reflected on what they saw as a historic lack of understanding of the Overseas Territories on the part of the UK Government.⁴⁰ One former senior Government official saw this lack of engagement as a feature of Governments up until the 1997 election when Robin Cook became Foreign Secretary and the 1999 White Paper on the Overseas Territories was published:

So my impression...was that under the previous Conservative Government and possibly even Labour governments, it had been a much more sort of laissez-faire arrangement where the Overseas Territories did what they did and we didn't provide a great deal (Interview, UK 2, 2010).

Lord Jones of Cheltenham, a peer with a longstanding interest in the Overseas Territories, agreed, echoing discourses of neglect as identified within the academic literature:

I think Governments in the past have regarded them as a bit of a nuisance, a hangover from Empire and have not really looked after them as well as they might (Interview, UK 20, 2011).

A former senior Government official believed that that the Overseas Territories had been seen at civil servant level as “the complete backwater at the Foreign Office...” (Interview, UK 7, 2011). Another expert discussed a perception that at times they may have been seen by some parts of the British Government as “a bit untidy administratively... rather than being a treasure” (Interview, UK 3, 2010).

⁴⁰ Former Governor of Montserrat David Taylor, writing in *The Round Table* in 2000, volume 355, page 337, discussed how he felt the British Government “thought of the islands as of marginal importance” Taylor, D, ‘British Colonial Policy in the Caribbean: the Insoluble Dilemma’.

This sense of disengagement and distancing of the territories is further reinforced by the representation of the Overseas Territories in terms of the risk and potential costs they may present to the United Kingdom (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012; Taylor, 2000). Indeed one former senior Government official interviewed, highlighted the level of contingent liability represented by the Overseas Territories as a key feature of the relationship:

...I mean, we've got about three hundred million pounds' worth in contingent liabilities for the Overseas Territories so basically the Overseas Territories couldn't function without the support infrastructure and the financial guarantee from the UK...(Interview, UK 7, 2011).

Elites concerned with the territories within the UK, therefore, largely characterise the view of the territories from Britain as having been marked by disinterest or lack of awareness – a position at times countered through their own interest in, or assertion of the value of, the relationship. However, it should be noted that the interviews took place before the 2011 FCO consultation and 2012 White Paper on the Overseas Territories which indicate, arguably, greater Government interest in and engagement with Territory issues.

5.1.3 Access to financial resources

The issue of territory access to funding from the UK underscores questions of the Overseas Territories' identity in regards to the British state. Levels of assistance were noted by one former Governor who felt the British Government still had “a tremendous responsibility” to the Overseas Territories, not just for “good governance” but also “to enable people to live at a standard which we would find acceptable in this country”, rather than treating them as “foreign”, and therefore limiting financial assistance (Interview, UK 11, 2011).

Here a construction of the Overseas Territories as lying wholly outside the domestic state is undermined and greater inclusion in the resources of the state is urged. The description of the Overseas Territories as “foreign” is also critiqued by several elites interviewed. For instance, Andrew Rosindell MP, Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Committee on the Overseas Territories, explained that he had “always had a belief that territories that are British should be treated as British and not as foreign”; and that their position within the Foreign Office was problematic (Interview, 2010).

The above extracts suggest discomfort at the idea of the Overseas Territories being conceived of and treated as wholly outside the British state. While underscoring a division between international and domestic, foreign and non-foreign, these extracts serve to re-imagine the ‘domestic’ as, in some respects, inclusive of the territories. During interview, several other research participants reflected on which Government Department might be best suited to deal with the Overseas Territories. One interviewee claimed French partners might think “...the British must be completely mad if their foreign ministry looks after some of their territories” (Interview, UK 3, 2010), while Lord Jones of Cheltenham believed the role could be “shared between DFID and the Home Office because technically they are British citizens” (Interview, 2011). This uncertainty about the appropriateness of the FCO as the lead Department for the Overseas Territories may reflect a shift in thinking about the Territories as separate and foreign, to a consideration of them as more closely connected with the domestic sphere of the state.

Interviewees also raised the need for greater involvement of a wider range of UK Government Departments in Overseas Territories' issues.⁴¹ For example, another former Overseas Territories Governor remarked upon levels of assistance from some government departments and contrasted the help available in the event of natural disaster in an English county with that available to the Overseas Territories, arguing that the territories:

...are not meshed into the wider structure and find it quite difficult to get the help that in many ways they ought to be entitled to as part of the UK in the wider sense (Interview, 2011).

The above phraseology may be interpreted as suggesting an enlarged vision of the UK, expressing the sense of there being a peripheral zone of belonging. The extract above and other similar responses, suggest an understanding of the Overseas Territories as potentially entitled to greater access to the resources of the British state than currently achieved. Nonetheless, other research participants noted and welcomed a wider involvement and coordination across Government in recent years. One NGO representative explained:

...in the past I think we all felt we would write to the FCO...and we would just get continually passed around. And I think that co-ordination has improved between the departments (Interview, UK 08, 2010).

A member of the Tristan Da Cunha Association commented:

So there is genuine Government involvement in Tristan. You may say: "What are they doing for the other Overseas Territories?" They are doing

⁴¹ The question of wider engagement across Government was recommended by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee in 2008 FAC (2008b) *Overseas Territories: Seventh Report of Session 2007-08. Report, together with formal minutes HC147-1*. London: The Stationery Office. It was also addressed within the 2012 White Paper on the Overseas Territories where a wide range of Departments described their work in and support of the territories: FCO (2012) 'Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/publications/overseas-territories-white-paper-0612/ot-wp-0612> (Accessed: 29.06.2012).

a lot. There's the definite feeling now that the attitude of the UK Government to the UK Territories has changed markedly and I'm talking in more general terms now. The previous attitude, going back some way, was that these were a bit of a nuisance: sores in the system. The attitude now is that they are part of the British family (Interview, UK 23, 2011).

Here, a perceived change of emphasis in Government approach is welcomed and the interviewee uses familial language to suggest a relationship that is close by virtue of emotion and heritage. As Brysk, Parsons and Sandholtz have argued in relation to the ties between former European colonial powers and their ex-colonies, the frequent use of familial language emphasises historical bonds and responsibilities, rather than interests, and legitimises continued intervention:

In contrast to other metaphors like 'partners' or 'enemies', the family metaphor constructs post-colonial relationships as domestic, paternalistic and dedicated to reproduction (Brysk, Parsons & Sandholtz, 2002, p.270).

Similar usage of familial metaphors will be noted and discussed in further sections and chapters as it represents a recurrent theme throughout the data.

Another set of metaphors which are notable in interview transcripts are those which draw on spatial imagery to subvert a strict binary between inside and outside, foreign and domestic (Walker, 1993). MP Andrew Rosindell, commenting on what he saw as the historic neglect of the Territories, drew an analogy between the Shetland Isles and the Overseas Territories. Asked by the researcher whether Britain or the territories benefitted most from the ongoing relationship, he critiqued the framing of the question and asked instead:

Is it an equal partnership between London and the Shetland Isles? You know in every country there are areas that contrast with each other and I

think all have their own value and all have their own place within the overall idea of the British nation (Interview, Andrew Rosindell MP, 2010).

Here, although the speaker later acknowledges their different constitutional status, the Overseas Territories are made similar, through the use of analogy, to the other geographical components that make up the UK and the listener is asked to reimagine the “the nation” or the “British family” as inclusive of the territories.

The idea of the Overseas Territories as similar in status to islands, regions or parts of the United Kingdom is also discernible in discourses around financial responsibilities to the territories. Several research participants highlighted a perceived correspondence between the obligations due to people in the Overseas Territories with those in other remote or rural areas of the UK. One NGO representative, for example, drew a parallel between the mainland UK and the Outer Hebrides and again stressed their belief that the Territories are not “foreign” but instead part of an enlarged idea of Britain:

I think that’s the big attitude change we have got to get: that these places should be regarded, as they legally are, as distant parts of Britain - or the British family of countries, if you like, rather than some odd foreign places (Interview, UK 03, 2011).

Here the analogy between the Outer Hebrides and the territories renders extreme geographical distance irrelevant and the Overseas Territories are seen to have similarity in terms of claims to share in the resources of the centre. The idea of the territories being distant parts of Britain is reiterated by a member of the UK-based Tristan Da Cunha Association who explained that they sometimes refer to Tristan as “the most remote county

of England” and adds that “the Tristan Islanders are more British than the British...”

(Interview, UK 23, 2011) – a phraseology echoed by some interviewees on St Helena.

An analogy with Scottish Islands was also drawn by Liberal-Democrat MP Sir Bob Russell, Chairman of the Island of St Helena All-Party Parliamentary Group⁴², who argued that Britain owes a “debt of gratitude to these last remaining ‘pink bits’ of the British Empire which realistically are not large enough to be independent but wish to remain part of the family of the United Kingdom”. He argues that because they are “British - full stop” therefore:

...we shouldn't differentiate between Britons who live on the Island of St Helena any more than we would those who live in the Orkneys and Shetlands and we should give them the same respect and support we would give any British citizen living in mainland Britain or within the British Isles (Interview, Bob Russell MP, 2011).

Here familial language is again employed and an analogy is made between islands off the Scottish coast and that of St Helena, collapsing a distance of five thousand miles and the separation of tax regimes to argue for their inclusion within the wider responsibilities of the state based on their shared familial identity, their historical contribution to Britain, and their vulnerability in terms of size.

The idea of lack of capacity of the Overseas Territories is also a factor underlying arguments used to encourage greater British Government funding and involvement, particularly in the area of conservation. While Territory Governments have primary responsibility for the environment, several interviewees have argued that remoteness or the

⁴² The Island of St Helena All-Party Parliamentary Group is currently not active according to the Registry of All Party Parliamentary Groups at July 2012.

small size of territory populations represent a constraint on local conservation efforts, necessitating greater involvement by the UK Government. A perceived shortfall in UK Government funding was critiqued by several NGO representatives with arguments for further investment based on an identification of the territories as part of the wider UK. One interviewee explained:

I find it odd that the UK Government...wouldn't be actively involved in the conservation of its threatened species, even if they are not on this island, and they are on a different one (Interview, UK 08, 2011).

The implication in this statement is inclusive: the idea that the biodiversity in question is, in some sense, part of Britain and that this engenders responsibility for the UK. Yet while the significance of the territories' biodiversity to the UK is stressed by several interviewees, others mentioned difficulties in accessing funding for environmental projects in the Overseas Territories – partly because they are not eligible for some domestic funding streams. The same participant explained:

...it's like they can't get the funds for not being in the UK, and they can't get the funds for being in the UK, so they are in a funny little gap (Interview, UK 08, 2011).

As a former minister at DEFRA, Huw Irranca-Davies argued for the inclusion of the Overseas Territories within National Lottery funding:

The benefit to UK citizens is a direct one because we, as UK government, hit our biodiversity targets more easily and also we are protecting the best of our partners in the Overseas Territories (Interview, UK 1, 2010).

Here the Overseas Territories are described as ‘partners’ in the more distancing language of the White Paper⁴³, but their inclusion within the National Lottery (my emphasis) suggests their special status as partial insiders.

5.1.4 A voice within Parliament?

A further issue signalling ambivalence about the identity of the Overseas Territories as part of, or separate from, the UK body politic is that of representation within the British political system⁴⁴. Responses during interview to the question of Parliamentary representation were mixed. Andrew Rosindell MP argued forcefully during interview for the Overseas Territories to be represented in the British Parliament based on the power which the British state is currently able to wield over the lives and fortunes of their peoples:

I personally I think that if the British Parliament can make foreign policy, defence policy, declare war on behalf of them, if in many cases we ultimately control the currency, we can legislate for them, ultimately govern them, I think it's wrong they have no voice here. What form that voice should take is a matter for discussion...There's all sorts of options but I think to deny them any voice is wrong (Interview, Andrew Rosindell MP, 2010).

Conservative MP Graham Brady, Chairman of the 1922 Committee and of the Cayman Islands All-Party Parliamentary Group, expressed some sympathy for the idea of some form

⁴³ Hintjens and Hodge suggest the imagery of partnership in the White Paper suggests “an agreement between several relatively equal partners” (Hintjens and Hodge, 2012, p.212).

⁴⁴ The Overseas Territories are not represented in the British Parliament. Instead territories with permanent inhabitants appoint official representatives based in Britain who deal directly, or through the umbrella UK Overseas Territories Association, with parliamentarians and British Government officials. Chief Ministers, Premiers and Representatives of Overseas Territory Governments meet British ministers at an annual Overseas Territories Consultative Council (OTCC), upgraded since 2012 to an Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, and the Territories are also represented by their British Governors who will channel territory issues and concerns to the Foreign Office. All-Party Parliamentary groups also exist for most of the Overseas Territories.

of representation for the Overseas Territories within the British political system. If this happened, he explained:

I suppose the complex interplay of different responsibilities for Members of Parliament would be just another layer on top of Scottish members who can still speak and vote on tuition fees and health and whatever else, even though it doesn't directly affect their constituents (Interview, 2010).

The speaker suggests that the existing complexity and devolution of powers to the constituent parts of the UK mean a direct correspondence between territory, people and decision-making is already complicated, implying the possibility of imagining the hypothetical inclusion of the territories.

A discourse of inclusion is also evident in some UK-based responses to an online forum forming part of a 2011 FCO consultation on the Overseas Territories. One contributor, for example, argued for the territories, which so desire, to be “more integrated with the rest of the UK”. The UK based respondent suggests:

They remain British through their own want so they should be allowed to contribute to the British parliament as well as have some devolved Government, similar to Wales and Scotland... (October 5th, 2011).

Another UK based respondent supports this online post, arguing for a:

“...federal UK where all regions that want to be in the UK are treated equally, with a fair amount of autonomy over their own affairs, but within a consistent, clear-cut national framework...” (December 31st 2011).

The suggestion is made alongside the claim that the current system is “unfair on everyone” with some territories “being treated awfully” and the “Constituent Countries (England/Wales/Scotland/N.Ireland) also have a very inconsistent relationship with central government”. In both the above comments, analogies are made with the constituent parts of the United Kingdom, suggesting an understanding of the Overseas Territories as occupying an analogous position and the inclusion of the territories in a re-imagined geopolitical outline of the UK.

However, views among interviewees on representation of the territories were mixed. MP Bob Russell, for example, argued that in the case of St Helena it would be hard to justify forming a constituency where the population is just 4,000 and that “when it comes to domestic politics, then they have their own island governments” (Interview, 2011). One former senior government official dismissed representation in the House of Commons: “because they are not part of the UK in that sense” (Interview, UK 7, 2011), but indicated a possible case for some form of representation in a reformed House of Lords. A few suggested the question of representation needed consideration, while one person questioned the effectiveness of what would be a very limited number of MPs. One participant from an Overseas Territory argued that representation was currently adequate through the ability of the territories to lobby widely in the Commons and the Lords.

5.1.5 Summary

The discussion above has traced the development of a discourse among some British elites which seeks to recover the territories from alleged past anonymity, exclusion and neglect, instead framing them as more firmly enmeshed with the domestic state in terms of social, economic and political rights. Using spatial analogy to subvert physical distance and evoke

familiarity; and employing familial language to suggest emotional connection and shared history and heritage, the discourse promotes an extended set of responsibilities for the UK. It also suggests flexibility in thinking about the make-up and identity of the contemporary UK itself, in which devolution to the constituent parts, or nations, allows a model for further reconceptualization of the state, its complexities and anomalies.

This discourse is not universal and does not fit, wholly, with the constitutional position or recent Government policy which, although it promotes the Overseas Territories as “an important part of the British family” (Bellingham, 2010a), maintains the essential dichotomy between state and territory in terms of representation and taxation regimes. It is also one which is underpinned by a stated intention to devolve decision-making to the people of the territories and their political institutions as far as possible (FCO, 1999). As explained to the researcher in an official email response from the Overseas Territories Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office:

The Overseas Territories are constitutionally separate from the UK. Yet, our relationship with the Territories is quite different from that with independent states...so we do not regard them as foreign countries (Interview, Overseas Territories Department, 2011).

The ambiguity of the identities of the actors within the relationship between Britain and its Overseas Territories means, ongoing conversations about what aspects of political, social and economic life are the proper preserve of which overlapping political community. These discussions are not exclusive to Britain’s relationship with its Overseas Territories and are partly a reflection of an increasingly interdependent international system which, David Held explains, undermines the congruence of people and decisions (Held, 1995b, p.116). However

the overlap of responsibilities and obligations across bounded political communities may be seen to be particularly acute where sovereignty is retained over distant, and yet in many respects self-governing territories. The following sections will examine how national identity is imagined and represented within the Overseas Territories themselves, starting with the case study territory of St Helena where, despite passionate assertions of identification with Britain, anxiety is evident over the extent to which this “loyalty” has been recognised.

5.2 Identity in St Helena

St Helena, just 47 square miles and lying in the mid-South Atlantic Ocean, was initially established by the British as a re-victualing station for ships sailing to the East in the seventeenth century (Gosse, 1938). Run by the East India Company (Royle, 2008) and then the Crown from 1833 (Gosse, 1938), the Island was peopled by English settlers, slaves from Africa, Madagascar and south Asia, freed slaves, and indentured labourers from China (Schulenberg, 2003). The population is predominantly mixed-race or, as one St Helenian interviewed described the island community, a “league of nations”. Excluding visitors, the population at the 2008 Census was 3,981 (St Helena Government, 2010).

The Island’s nearest neighbour is Ascension Island, 700 miles north, and as there is currently no air access, the Royal Mail Ship (RMS) St Helena provides a link to the outside world.⁴⁵ Until the British Nationality Act of 1981, St Helenians, who also refer to themselves as ‘Saints’, were able to work in the UK and many emigrated to Britain, and other destinations, to escape economic hardship on the Island caused by the collapse of the flax

⁴⁵ The researcher spent four weeks in 2011, travelling via Ascension Island, to carry out fieldwork in St Helena.

industry, the lack of viable agricultural land or other resources, and extreme isolation following the demise of maritime trade and travel up the West Coast of Africa (Royle, 1992).

British immigration and nationality legislation from the 1970s onwards removed automatic right of abode in the UK for St Helenians and severely limited their ability to move to and work in the UK (Cohen, 1983c; Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005; Moore, 2000). Emigration to South Africa was substantial before apartheid (Yon, 2007b) but as Yon and Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop (2004 p. 99) point out, racist policies during the apartheid years discriminated against St Helenians.

The early 1990s saw the formation of the Citizenship Commission, a campaign group aimed initially at restoring British citizenship but also committed to exploring an alternative constitutional status for the Island which would enable Saints to:

live on St Helena, with the rights, privileges and responsibilities of ordinary British citizens, not as second class dependents (Turner, 1997, p.2).

British Citizenship was restored in 2002, but the economy on St Helena continued to stagnate with substantial amounts of financial aid - over £30 million in 2010/11 - (Baroness Warsi, 2012), supporting the Island's annual budget (St Helena Government, 2010). Many St Helenians left the island (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005) to set up home in the UK or to work offshore in Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands⁴⁶, resulting in a diaspora which, contacts explained, significantly outnumbers the population on the island and which can contribute to social problems where families are divided.

⁴⁶ In the 2008 St Helena Government Census 229 Saints were reported to be living on the Falklands and 710 on Ascension Island: St Helena Government Census/Statistics Office (2008) *The 2008 Population Census of St Helena*. Jamestown: St Helena Government.

Analysis of interviews carried out in St Helena during the summer of 2011 suggests that some islanders feel St Helena to be part of the British Isles in the same way as Scotland, the Hebrides, or an English county, despite being thousands of miles from the mainland⁴⁷. These findings are similar to those of Hogenstijn and Middelkoop (2005) and of Stephen Royle (Royle, 2012) who note a strong feeling of connection with Britain. In several research interviews for this thesis, the physical distance and separation of the two land masses is rendered irrelevant by a sense of interconnected histories, heritage, common cultural factors and citizenship, frequently articulated through the use of spatial analogy (Agnew, 2009a). Interviewees also describe themselves as fiercely loyal to Britain and the Crown, also noted by the researchers above, and this feeling was often expressed through statements concerning affection for the Royal Family, for support rendered by the Island during the Falklands War, and service by St Helenians in the British Armed Forces.

However, further analysis of interviews suggests a more complicated picture. While assertions of Britishness are strong, their expression is sometimes made in the context of concerns about the difficulties of economic viability and an implied anxiety about rejection by Britain and de-population⁴⁸. As will be discussed further in Chapter Six, St Helena's position of ongoing economic dependence can create tension in the relationship with Britain, and claims to be "more British than the British" can be understood in part, as will be explored below, as defence against rejection and a claim for a more equal share in the attention and resources of the centre. Furthermore, while the idea of St Helena as a part of Britain is

⁴⁷ The idea of the islanders seeing themselves as part of the mainland was recognised, but not explored in detail by Robert Moore, writing in 2000 regarding the removal of British citizenship in 1981 (Moore, 2000).

⁴⁸ A report published in 2010 advocated "carefully and considerably de-populating St Helena", see: Schoon, N. (2010) 'A Really Green Way of Saving £300m'. *The Ends Report*, 429 pp. 34-36 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.endsreport.com/25538/comment-a-really-green-way-of-saving-300m> (Accessed: 26th October 2010).

expressed, this is not necessarily equated with a desire for full integration with Britain. Some interviewees also express a defined St Helenian culture and identity (see also Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005). And while the relationship with the UK is highly valued on the Island, some interviewees also indicated an aspiration for greater input into decisions over their future, which it is hoped might derive from a future diminishment of economic dependence following the construction of an airport.

The representation of St Helenian identity and the understanding of this identity in relation to Britain is therefore complex – at once shared and nesting within that of British identity (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005), while at the same time given distinctiveness by a sense of local uniqueness and the prospect of greater economic independence. Fieldwork carried out by academics Maarten Hogenstijn and Daniël Van Middelkoop on the Island in 2002 noted fears surrounding declining population and discussed what they saw as elements of British national identity (though an outdated version) included within a distinct St Helenian identity; and many of the issues noted by these researchers, such as economic dependence, offshore working and fears for the St Helenian way of life in the face of a potential airport, were also raised by interviewees for this thesis (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005). However the analysis focuses on identity within the context of the ongoing constitutional relationship with Britain and explicitly links expressions of Britishness to anxiety around economic dependency, limited political agency, and fears about de-population.

5.2.1 “It is like this really is East Greenwich”

During fieldwork, some interviewees referred to the island as being similar to part of the mainland - meaning Britain rather than Africa, the nearest land mass. As with a similar discourse identified in some British interviews, St Helena is often equated to a part of the British Isles such as Scottish Islands, or a county of England. For example, one British person living long-term on the Island described the United Kingdom using familial imagery “Mother Britain”, and explained:

...we see ourselves as British, but we see ourselves as a detached colony of Britain, I would suppose is the way of talking about it. To my mind St Helenians are as British as Welsh people or Scottish people ... (Interview, Robert Midwinter, Managing Director, St Helena Development Agency, 2011).

The understanding of St Helenians as having a similar constitutional status *vis-à-vis* Britain as the Scottish or the Welsh does not reflect the juridical position, as was discussed above. This feeling of equivalence to the devolved nations of the United Kingdom is nonetheless expressed in some fieldwork interviews. A St Helenian interviewee stated that:

...a lot of people here...truly do believe that they are British through and through; they are as British as somebody living up in Liverpool or London or Southampton (Interview, St Helena 13, 2011).

One interviewee on the island, discussing the St Helenian diaspora in the UK, explained that many Saints “feel comfortable in the UK” and also “still feel that St Helena is their home”.

They claimed: it is “like this really is East Greenwich” (Interview, Stuart Moors, President, St Helena Chamber of Commerce, 2011)⁴⁹.

This discourse of belonging highlights a difference between an emotional or, in Benedict Anderson’s term an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991), and the legal, constitutional, position. It is also an understanding that de-emphasises the physical separation and extreme barriers to access between the two communities, as a connection of cultures and sense of belonging facilitates movement between the two. The divide between foreign and domestic is thus blurred and challenged.

As discussed in Chapter Four, British citizenship was returned to all Overseas Territories citizens in 2002. Yet analysis of interviews also revealed implied doubt over adequate British recognition of St Helenians’ British status, suggesting that a legal definition of citizenship is not necessarily identical to, or fully expressive of, a sense of national identity (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2010, p.922). This feeling of not having been fully recognised as part of Britain is indicated by one interviewee quoted below:

What I myself would personally really like, and I think it’s happening now, is for Britain to realise that we are British people and that we are part of them. We don’t belong to the Portuguese or the Dutch or the Russians or anyone else...And we would like them to think that way and be that way inclined so that we can develop a better partnership (Interview, St Helena 27, 2011).

The excerpt above suggest an ongoing insecurity about the extent to which claims to belong are recognised by the state. IR scholar Stuart Croft has written of the ways in which

⁴⁹ The reference to ‘East Greenwich’ reiterates the language of the Royal Charter granted to the East India Company in 1673 by King Charles II in respect of St Helena. The full text is reproduced in Turner, N. & Hopkins, C. (1996) *St Helena: The Lost County of England: A Report by the Bishop of St Helen's Commission on Citizenship*. St Helena: The Bishop of St Helena's Commission on Citizenship.

particular images or stories of Britishness have circulated socially in the UK and become fixed, providing ontological security (Croft, 2012). Images which fulfil this function within St Helena will be discussed below, but Croft also notes how these include differentiation from others; the past, traditions and monarchy (Croft, 2012). Using Anthony Giddens's notion of 'critical situations', Croft argues that ontological security may be disrupted by "social crises, shocks to established beliefs and ways of doing things" (Croft, 2012, p.16). In St Helena it may be argued, such a 'critical situation' was provided by the removal of British citizenship, providing a profound shock to islanders' sense of identity and trust in the UK. As social anthropologist Robert Moore writes, the legislation was:

a symbolic rejection by the mainland of people who felt themselves to be essentially English and particularly loyal subjects of the Crown (Moore, 2000, p.10-11).

While the removal of citizenship between 1981 and 2002 was described by some interviewees as lying "in the past" (Interview, St Helena 19, 2011), and "water under the bridge" (Interview, St Helena 11, 2011), among others it is still a sensitive and emotional issue referred to variously as "appalling" (Interview, St Helena, 09, 2011), "sort of an act of betrayal" (Interview, St Helena 15, 2011), and "a very painful episode" that made people feel "that we were drifting further from Britain" (Interview, 27, St Helena, 2011) until the 2002 Act when "we felt [we were] going back closer and then we began to trust" (Interview, 27, St Helena, 2011).

During the campaign to restore citizenship in the 1990s, the articulation of St Helena's identity as a distant part of Britain proved a powerful argument for the restoration of citizenship and was expressed through the landmark reports: *St Helena: a Lost County of*

England (Turner & Hopkins, 1996); *St Helena: A British Island* (Turner, 1997); and later *St Helena's Rights Under International Law* (Janish, Morgan & Connell, 2000). Informal discussions during fieldwork suggest the Citizenship Commission remains a respected voice on the island both on wider domestic issues and those concerning the relationship with Britain. Narratives of St Helena as a part of Britain thus remain a prominent discourse on the island. In pushing for the restoration of citizenship in 1997, the Citizenship Commission argued that St Helena was a British Island, mistakenly understood by the metropole as other because of its distance from "mainland Britain" and because of its poverty (Turner, 1997, p.14). The report argued that, despite British misconceptions: "It is self-evident to all St Helenians that they are British and always have been" (Turner, 1997, p.13) and that this Britishness is based on continuous and exclusive settlement of the Island and shared language, values, institutions and influences. In short: "It is a British society" (Turner, 1997, p.15). One strand of argument in this document and similar reports (Janish, Morgan & Connell, 2000; Turner & Hopkins, 1996), and one evoked by several interviewees, is the granting of a Royal Charter to the Island by King Charles II in 1673, which stated that "...all and every persons being our subjects, which do and shall inhabit within the said port and Island, and every of their children and posterity" born on the island:

shall have and enjoy all liberties, franchises, immunities, capacities and abilities of Free Denizens, and Natural Subjects, within any of our Dominions, to all intents and purposes as if they had been abiding and born within this our kingdom of England, or in any of our Dominions
(Quoted in Janish, Morgan & Connell, 2000, p.6).

The Royal Charter is at times evoked as a historical precedent and moral claim for the Island to be included more directly within the state, based on the identity of early settlers as

English. The Preamble to the St Helena Constitution, following an affirmation of “allegiance to the United Kingdom, its Government and the Crown”, reminds “of the historic link between St Helena and the United Kingdom that dates back to 1659” and “the Charter granted for St Helena by King Charles II...” (Great Britain, 2009, p.5). This contrasts with the Constitution of the Virgin Islands which, as will be discussed below, emphasises the “distinct cultural identity which is the essence of a Virgin Islander” (Great Britain, 2007, p.5). Previous concern about British commitment to citizenship is reflected in comments by one islander who explained that: “originally we were told that no way would our citizenship be guaranteed in the Constitution” but that this was achieved following a teleconference with the Minister in the UK” (Interview, St Helena 15, 2011).

This anecdote emphasises the uncertainty and doubt, continuing beyond the restoration of citizenship, over the depth of British commitment to the Island which, it is argued here, contextualises assertions of Britishness in St Helena.

The idea of St Helena as closely connected with the mainland informed the responses of several island elites interviewed during the research. One St Helenian explained:

Well, that was the thought in the past that perhaps we should go for British Island status so that Britain would recognise that we are more British than anything else (Interview, St Helena 27, 2011).

Here again the discourse suggests a need to claim recognition in the face of potential rejection of this status by the British. However, while the idea of British Island⁵⁰ status is sometimes referred to, it is also indicated, regrettably that this status is not accepted:

So whenever we talk about association or a model based on the Channel Islands, we always get: "Well historically, their history is different to ours". But it isn't about history; it is about the people's rights. We still feel that sometimes when we operate in St Helena under the current government, the structures, it's very colonial, you know, and we have to break out of that - the decolonization (Interview, St Helena 08, 2011).

The quotations above represent a strand of discourse expressed during interviews, which base a claim to be considered more closely a part of the UK than is currently the constitutional position, on the history of English settlement and heritage. A second, closely related theme, is the assertion of an idea of essential Britishness preserved on the Island, which also underpins claims to be considered more closely associated with the British state.

5.2.2 "More British than the British"

A repeated claim made by interviewees during fieldwork is that of being "more British than the British". Analysis of research interviews suggests a conception of a relatively fixed and essential notion of 'Britishness' that is narrated on the island⁵¹. Three 'markers' (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2010, p.923)⁵² of 'Britishness' may be identified as forming leitmotifs throughout the interviews. These include: the Island's support of British forces during the Falklands

⁵⁰ The Idea of British Island status is set out in the pamphlet *St Helena: a British Island* published by the Citizenship Commission (Turner, 1997). The model was based on but not identical to the status of the Crown Dependencies such as Jersey, and was seen to offer relative autonomy whilst being considered part of the United Kingdom in terms of the rights of citizens.

⁵¹ Hogenstijn and Middelkoop mention briefly the "outdated" character of what they see as the Saints British - or "broader national identity" - as expressed through cricket, the British school syllabus, love of the Monarchy and "the preference of Saints for British products" (Hogenstijn and Middelkoop, 2004, p. 101).

⁵² McCrone and Bechhofer (2010) define 'markers' as the social attributes used by individuals to assert their national identity. Most significant of these, they argue, are birth, accent, parentage, sometimes ancestry, and residence (p922-923).

conflict and the numbers of Saints serving in the British Armed Forces; the display of portraits of the British monarchy; and the importance of the physical link to Britain via the RMS St Helena.

Several interviewees framed the identity of St Helenians in relation to the United Kingdom as “more British than the British”, a phrase also used in one of the 1997 campaign documents for the restoration of British citizenship on the island (Turner, 1997). One interviewee claimed that “In fact the Saints here are more British in thinking, I think, than some of their own people” (Interview, St Helena 27, 2011). The idea of being ‘more British than the British’ suggests an adherence to values, traditions or institutions that are seen as unchanging. For example, discussing the importance of the British Monarchy to St Helenians, one Councillor indicated some of the features that contribute to this understanding of being British:

...our loyalty, our tradition, our heritage and everything, as you can see, we are very much British. We are more British than the British themselves in some respects. There is a lot of respect within our Parliament, within the Island for the Governor, who represents the Queen (Interview, St Helena 14, 2011).

The indicators of Britishness in this conception include “heritage”, “loyalty”, “tradition” and respect for the monarchy, each of which was reiterated during fieldwork interviews. At times “Britain” is used interchangeably with “England”, with some interviewees speaking of ‘Englishness’ and of St Helena as equivalent to a county of England⁵³. While this may be a

⁵³ See Schulenberg (2003) for a discussion of how St Helena has been interpreted and represented by settlers and visitors over the centuries in terms of arcadian and “archaic English landscapes” Schulenberg, A. (2003) 'Island of the Blessed: Eden, Arcadia and the Picturesque in the textualisation of St Helena'. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 29 (4). pp 535-553.

colloquial interchange of the two terms, also commonly heard in the UK, it may also be a deliberate historical reference to the fact that many of the original settlers came from England “before we had the Union with Scotland” (Interview, St Helena 11, 2011), thus lending greater weight to the claim to English (or now British) heritage (also noted by Moore, 2000).

Of note in the stress on British heritage is the lack of emphasis, though not absence, of reference to other heritages and peoples who have played a role in St Helena’s history. While one interviewee grounds identity in the triad of “settlers, soldiers and slaves” and others mention tolerance in terms of the island’s ethnic diversity, the insistence on Britishness is more prominent than discussions of other connections. Robin Cohen, writing in the early 1980s claimed how “most islanders determinedly reject, or are kept in ignorance of their African past” (Cohen, 1983a, p.24). However, a St Helena Labour Party Manifesto from the 1975, although written by a non-St Helenian, emphasised the history of slavery on the island – “we were first slaves, then freemen” (Thornton, 1975, p.7) and the subsequent formation of a distinct St Helenian identity following the alleged abandonment of the island by British families: “we have become one people with a common heritage” (Thornton, 1975, p.4). In recent discourse however the English/British connection is often given greater emphasis than other histories and associations.

The idea of being ‘more British than the British’ may be seen as a rhetorical device which serves to contest the idea of nationality as defined merely by citizenship (Hogenstijn & Van Middelkoop, 2005; McCrone & Bechhofer, 2010) and introduces a further set of attributes which contribute to national identity. Britishness here includes what McCrone and

Bechhofer call 'markers' of a chosen national identity - the group characteristics which are used to signal and assert identity (2010, p.922). In St Helena, these include a shared British/English heritage and of a set of cultural values, which are seen as immutable and based around patriotism, a willingness to help defend the state, and community spirit. One British national living on the island stated:

The people here are very much of a British culture. You would have to go to some of the smaller country villages in the UK to find people as British these days as you would find in St Helena (Interview, Robert Midwinter, 2011).

Expressed here is an essential idea of Britishness, its validity derived from its connection to the past with the language of "these days" suggesting survival in the face of change over time. Instead, St Helena is imagined as the signified for symbols of an idea of 'Britishness' which may be waning on the mainland and which is employed as powerful claim to belonging. The factors, highlighted in the above interview, that make up this essential Britishness are: heritage, patriotism; and a strong sense of community is also mentioned at a later stage.

5.2.3 The Falklands Conflict

Writing on national identity, Benedict Anderson describes the nation as a "community" because, notwithstanding inequalities, "the nation is conceived as deep and horizontal comradeship" for which "people are willing to die" (Anderson, 1991, p.7). The idea of sacrifice as a marker of national belonging is also stressed by Ernest Renan who emphasises the role of past shared sufferings in the idea of the nation (extract in Hutchinson & Smith, 1994). A sense of shared British national identity was invoked during the research through

references to St Helena's contribution to the Falklands conflict when the RMS St Helena and her crew were commissioned to support British forces. This involvement is represented by some as symbolic both of the islanders' loyalty and patriotism but also, to a lesser degree, of feelings of lack of recognition by the British. One interviewee saw the commissioning of the ship as a symbol of "the strength of our relationship: that Britain knew they could ask us and knew how we would respond" and yet the "irony" is also noted that at the same time "the 1981 Nationality Act came into force and we had our citizenship rights reduced" (Interview, St Helena 11, 2011).

The sacrifice and shared suffering was experienced both at the local level, as the island was left isolated, but also as part of a wider British communal experience, suggesting the complexity of identities. Another interviewee emphasised the British descent of St Helenians, and patriotism of those serving in the British armed forces as indicators of loyalty:

...there are no indigenous people on St Helena, so the majority, although we are all sort of multi-race, we are all mixed-blooded humans, the original St Helenians came from the UK, and most people are quite patriotic you know, and our ancestors served in the forces, for instance in the World Wars, and we have got quite a lot of St Helenians serving in the armed forces in both Afghanistan and Iraq (Interview, St Helena, 30, 2011).

The willingness of St Helenians to go into conflict on behalf of the British state stands as a powerful claim to inclusion and recognition.

5.2.4 Affection for the monarchy

A further indicator evoked by interviewees of a shared British identity is that of positive feelings towards the British monarchy. Many interviewees spoke of a strong feeling of

“loyalty to the British Crown and the Monarchy” (Interview, St Helena 27, 2011) and many people evoked as evidence for this claim, portraits of Royal Family members on the walls of family homes. One Councillor explained:

Whatever happens in the future, we will always maintain our relationship with London. We are very loyal British. The monarchy is very, very strong within our culture and if you were given the opportunity to visit some of our more elderly citizens, you would find pictures of the Royal Family hanging on the walls of their homes (Interview, 14, 2011).

However there is also a sense that this form of display of loyalty to the monarch might be waning or more common among the older generation. One St Helenian interviewee remarked:

When I was growing up it was much stronger. You would see a photograph of the Queen or the Royal family in every house and Britain was always referred to as “the mother country”. That is still true to a large extent but not as strong as when I was growing up. But no, we are still very British; oh yes (Interview, St Helena 15, 2011).

The excerpt suggests that while Royal Family portraits may be less common, the loyalty and sentiment remain; the symbol is removed but the referent is still seen as relevant. Another interviewee explained:

There was once upon a time when you would see pictures of the Royal family on the walls in every house. But that’s not the case now. The trend has changed, I think, but the loyalty is still there (Interview, St Helena 27, 2011).

There is a suggestion in these last two interviews that the emotional attachment to the monarchy is perhaps less overt than previously, particularly among younger generations.

Attachment to the British Monarchy thus remains a symbol of loyalty to Britain but one which is potentially lessening amongst younger generations.

5.2.5 A sea voyage to the UK

A further indicator of identification with Britain is the significance attributed to the sea voyage between Britain and St Helena by the RMS. Until 2011 the ship made, albeit increasingly infrequent, trips from St Helena to Portland in Dorset and this journey was represented by some as highly significant in terms of the physical and psychological connection between the Island and Britain. The long sea passage to the UK, one interviewee explained, is not advantageous to the island as the ship would be away from the South Atlantic for at least seven weeks during which time the Island is cut off. However the announced curtailment of the service to the UK (Dorset Echo, 2011), was described as unpopular by some due to the emotional links with the UK. Despite the “hardships and problems on the island” caused:

...there is a real emotional link that I can't quite describe but it is there and you do feel it, and when the ship comes in it's a really important part of the island, particularly when she comes back from the UK. It's like a bit of homecoming here or a bit of...it's emotional, it's not logical; it's totally emotional (Interview, St Helena 21, 2011).

As illustrated in the quote above, the sea voyage to the UK is seen by many as significant as it provides a physical and emotional connection to the UK. Its removal is seen by some as a severance of the link and a symbolic distancing by the mainland of the territory. As will be discussed further below, this emphasis on the importance of the British connection, together with the other claims to Britishness discussed, when understood in the context of economic dependency, the limitation of financial assistance, de-population on the

island and a sense felt by some of having been “let down”, contribute to a discourse of anxiety around rejection, separation and at its most extreme, the future viability of the island.

5.2.6 Claims to social and economic resources

Assertions of belonging to the British state need to be seen in the context of feelings expressed by some during fieldwork, that Saints may have “been let down” by the British over the years, not only over citizenship but also over the development of a settled community on Ascension Island, delays in provision of an airport on St Helena, and the limitation of financial assistance. These anxieties may be seen as linked to the continuance of a constitutional model which separates territory and state, resulting in a limitation of funds to the Island and consequent grievances around inequality. Appeals to be considered as part of Britain may therefore, to some extent, be seen as a call for inclusion in a more equal share of the social and economic benefits of the British state.

A sense of ongoing exclusion, and hence reasserted claims to belonging, was expressed directly by several interviewees but was also manifested in the setting of expressions of identity and belonging to Britain within the context of economic assistance from Britain. For instance, speaking passionately about a perception of inequality of treatment of those living within St Helena, one islander explained:

...we had our passports re-instated which gave us right of entry and abode but we don't have our civilian rights. For example, while I was in the UK, I was a full British person, benefitting from all the civilian rights that go with it but when I get on the ship in Portland to come South, I lose those rights, or certain parts of those rights (Interview, St Helena 08, 2011).

Here the movement across the ocean from the physical territory of the UK to the island is seen to signify a downgrading of status and restriction of certain rights, mentioned later as British pensions, national insurance and social security, all of which are inaccessible due to the constitutional status of the island as separate from the UK. Spatial imagery of the ocean journey suggests loss and separation while the later use of the term “mainland” reasserts a connection by the suggestion of proximity.

A related argument made by several interviewees is that loyalty and belonging to Britain should lead to greater assistance in terms of economic resources. For example, one interviewee explains that because St Helena contributed historically to Britain’s colonial expansion: “we seem to think: come on Britain, now, we are part of you. You used us in the past – help us out now” (Interview, St Helena, 27, 2011).

The phrase ‘second class citizens’ peppers discourse on the Overseas Territories suggesting experiences of inequality. Geographer Stephen Royle, discussing the effects of the British Nationality Act on St Helena, quotes an expert on Tristan Da Cunha who describes the Act as relegating the islanders to “second class citizens” (Quoted in Royle, 1992, p.39). The phrase was taken up by the Citizenship Commission when it argued that “Saints want to live on St Helena with the rights, privileges and responsibilities of ordinary British citizens” and not “second class dependents” (Turner, 1997) and the term is also mobilised in the recent FCO online consultation in which Caymanians are claimed to have resented being treated like “second class citizens” by English expatriates in the past (FCO online consultation, 2011)⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ The phrase is also quoted twice by Moore (2000). The first instance is a quotation by a Conservative MP, quoting a letter in Parliament in 1981 from the Director of the Falkland Islands Office p.4 and the second is from a Labour anti-colonialist MP in Parliament in 1982.

During fieldwork in St Helena, expressions of loyalty to Britain were sometimes set within the context of the need for financial aid⁵⁵. For example, one St Helenian interviewed, stated:

...from a purely economic point of view, St Helena requires development assistance still. And although we are working towards financial sustainability, that link with the British is still very important to a lot of people here who truly believe that they are British through and through (Interview, St Helena 13, 2011).

The juxtaposition of a need for economic assistance and the assertion of being “British through and through”, suggests a claim to the social and economic benefits of the state on the basis of a shared identity which undercuts the traditional binary of division between domestic and foreign. The connection between identity and a feeling of vulnerability, however, is clearly expressed in the following extract where the interviewee first described a “strong” feeling of connection with Britain. Asked how this was experienced in daily life, they answered:

Well, at times some of the requests that Britain asks of St Helena are not very friendly for the general public...but on the other hand ‘he who pays the piper calls the tune’. So we have to be careful, because all Britain needs to do, which I don’t think they would, but they could, is cut back on our budget and that would be a bigger disaster (Interview, St Helena 6, 2011).

This fear of the consequences of the limitation of aid on an island where the ability to survive economically is severely constrained by geography, both in terms of small land mass and isolation, is evident in this extract and will be discussed further in Chapter Seven in terms of

⁵⁵ Stephen Royle argues that a factor in the identification of St Helenians with the UK may be economic dependency (Royle, 2012, p.18).

the link between political agency and economic independence. An understanding of the coexistence of feelings of loyalty with concerns about any possible future weakening of the link may be interpreted in the following extract from a British expatriate working on the island:

There's a very patriotic feeling on the Island and if that was to end, a lot of Saints would feel betrayed, I think; to be told that you are miles from the UK and we are going to allow you to go your own way (Interview, St Helena 28, 2011).

Patriotism, is sometimes, therefore, contextualised within the backdrop of hypothetical abandonment. While the British Government has stressed that “Our Overseas Territories are British for as long as they wish to remain British” (FCO, 1999, p.4), a sense of anxiety about constitutional status, economic dependence and even survival remains⁵⁶. Another interviewee linked claims to a greater share of Britain’s economic resources to a common identity. The interviewee explained:

Well I don't feel that we get enough aid from the UK. You know, okay, it's frustrating when we hear so many millions of pounds going to like Ethiopia, because they have got a drought, and of course that is necessary. But I feel like they need to look after their own first. They need to value us as their own. Because we are! You know we hold British passports... (Interview, St Helena 30, 2011)

Here a privileged claim to financial assistance compared to that of independent countries is based on the conferral of British citizenship. This suggests a hierarchy of inclusion such as

⁵⁶ Historical geographer and St Helena expert, Stephen Royle, (2010) briefly discusses fears of population loss due to emigration and economic stagnation and asserts that “Without an airport ...the future of the island itself must be in some doubt” Royle, S. (2010b) "Small Places Like St Helena have Big Questions to Ask': The Inaugural Lecture of a Professor of Island Geography'. *Island Studies Journal*, 5 (1), pp. 5-24 [Online]. Available at: <http://vre2.upei.ca/islandstudies.ca/sites/vre2.upei.ca.islandstudies.ca/files/ISJ-5-1-2010-Royle.pdf> (Accessed: 3.6.2010).

that critiqued by solidarists such as Linklater (1998) and defended by Brown (2010) in which citizens are privileged over others in terms of some rights. The interviewee continued:

...they [the British] need to see our importance in the existence of St Helena. Because if they don't, if they continue to cut budgets...eventually we will go out of existence.

Fears of de-population can be linked to falling numbers of people on the Island, particularly among those of working age and was also identified in earlier research by Hogenstijn and Middelkoop (2005)⁵⁷. The exodus of working age people is in turn blamed by some interviewees on low wages on the island, which are well below the UK average⁵⁸. Fears about de-population were raised by one Councillor in the context of a discussion of British aid and the provision of air access:

Most certainly we look forward to the airport; we certainly hope it's going to come. We are deeply grateful to the UK for that because, quite honestly, if we don't get an airport, the Island is going to die. Maybe in the next twenty years it will be cheaper for the UK to take all of the 4,000 inhabitants and put them in a corner down in Cornwall or somewhere than to have to keep on paying out the enormous aid increasingly over the years ahead. It is recognised that the airport is the only way out really...(Interview, St Helena 25, 2011).

The discussion above indicates a sense of anxiety about the levels of inclusiveness within the British state. McCrone and Bechhofer have argued that:

...one's national identity is greatly affected by how one's claims are regarded by others. If you claim a particular national identity, and your

⁵⁷ The number of St Helenians resident on the island was 3,981 at the 2008 Census, down from 5,157 in 1998 and 5,644 in 1987 St Helena Government (2010) *St Helena and Dependencies Statistical Year Book 2009/10*. Jamestown: SHG Development and Economic Planning Department, Statistics Office.

⁵⁸ The average pre-tax income on St Helena in 2005/6 was £4063 (ibid.)

claim is rejected, it has the potential to lead to social exclusion (2010, p. 921-922)

Claims to belong to Britain by many islanders interviewed are forceful and passionate and can be taken at face value. However, they can also be seen as a reaction to previous rejection and continued socio-economic challenges and as an argument for further inclusion within the state so as to be eligible for equal financial assistance and other rights conferred on UK citizens living on “the mainland”. St Helena’s status as part of Britain is sometimes differentiated against other independent states and used to legitimate calls for greater levels of assistance, while a discourse of survival is also suggested.

5.2.7 “Our own type of culture”

While interviews show that many St Helenian elites identify strongly with Britain and a sense of British culture, many of those interviewed also talked about aspects of St Helenian life that, it is suggested, differentiate St Helena from Britain. Key aspects of this local identity mentioned during interviews were community spirit and self-reliance engendered by the need to survive in a small, extremely remote island. The other was a tolerance and diversity derived from St Helena’s unique history of settlement. One interviewee explained:

...socially, I think there has been tremendous development coming from a background of slavery. In a few decades there has been total integration with Islanders having a common identity, which is very much British (Interview, St Helena 11, 2011).

The interviewee identifies a “sense of fair play” and “a sense of humour” as “English/British values” which “contributed to integration” but also highlights a huge “resourcefulness” and

reliance on “practical skills”, which developed independently out of the isolation of the island:

So people either build their houses themselves or with a combination of family help or partly contracted out. That kind of system and those values, I don't think have been truly assessed, although people know about it. It is another indicator of the strengths within our Island society and it is not how it happens in the UK. The person does everything themselves (Interview, St Helena 11, 2011).

The qualities of tolerance and diversity are also highlighted within the Preamble to the St Helena Constitution which is “mindful of the fact that St Helenians, whatever their diverse backgrounds, have become fused into a single, harmonious community” and notes “the resourcefulness” of the people of St Helena, Tristan da Cunha and Ascension and “their respect for Government under the law” (Great Britain, 2009, p.5). Another interviewee also differentiated St Helenians from the rest of the world by suggesting a unique identity constructed around tolerance and diversity. Other interviewees expressed the distinctiveness of St Helenian culture and society in terms of the threat of change imposed or imported from outside. For example, arguments for closer association and equality with the mainland are not a bid for integration and arguments for differentiation are expressed:

Under the main component of the desired association with the UK is internal self-government because one of the things we are saying is that St Helena is unique, because immigration, the carrying capacity of the Island, the natural resources of the Island, so you would have to have certain levels of internal self-government. You can't just open up and then expose St Helena to everybody and anybody because the Island just wouldn't be able to sustain it. It's not discrimination. It's just about good management of the place (Interview, 08, St Helena 2011).

The uniqueness of the island (derived partly from its diminutive size) needs, in this argument, to be recognised and protected. Despite the desire to be seen as part of Britain and not foreign, St Helena, it is argued, needs to protect its own territorially defined identity, with the ability to control who is inside or outside. The creation of barriers to the outside world was illustrated by “the Thornton Affair” when the island administration became nervous of one business individual potentially creating a power base on the Island (see Cohen, 1983c). Following this person’s exclusion from the island, as one interviewee explained:

... everybody from the outside was a villain and the Island just shut the door and there is pretty fierce legislation to make sure nobody could come and buy anything or set up a business. And the door has remained fairly shut. It has opened a bit (Interview, UK 25, 2011).

A recent raft of legislation, introduced to meet DFID conditions in advance of the airport decision, included opening the island to outside investors and landholding reform legislation, which one elite interviewed described as “a very sensitive issue...a really political issue where people are going to have great concerns” (Interview, St Helena 29, 2011). Another person explained:

You see there are just 47 square miles of land and at the moment we have very strict control over that land. An outsider comes in, it doesn’t matter whether he is a British citizen or not, previously he had to have a licence to purchase land. But now that has gone out of the window... (Interview, St Helena 15, 2011).

Another interviewee used emotive language to describe the potential effects of some of the legislation prompted by recent reforms, suggesting the level of anxiety about outside influence and the impact on local culture. The person argued:

And when I saw this piece of legislation it just [appals] you because we are now open to be raped. We will be raped, you know, because two acres of land on 47 square miles is a lot of land (Interview, 08, 2011).

Of note here is the defence of an island culture that is defined by its own particular identity rather than being subsumed within a British identity. The island's smallness, uniqueness and vulnerability, it is argued, necessitate recognition and protection. This sense of particularism is summed up by a younger St Helenian interviewed, who expressed ambivalence about a complete identification with Britain at the expense of a local identity:

Well, I guess we are British citizens. UK will never be home for me – St Helena is always home... I think we embrace it when people come from overseas with new ideas and all the rest of it. It's just important that we don't lose sight of the fact that we do have our own ideas and visions of how we would like St Helena to go forward as well (Interview, St Helena 22, 2011).

St Helenian identity is not therefore solely a British identity and an island way of life, deeply rooted in place and practice is also asserted as in need of protection.

5.2.8 Summary

The discussion above has identified a discourse among some interviewees that claims St Helena as a part of Britain and Islanders as “more British than the British”. In keeping with the discourse identified in some British interviews, which saw the Overseas Territories as distant parts of mainland Britain, St Helena, in this construction, is also often represented as

equivalent to a Scottish Island or a county of England. This use of language serves to attenuate extreme physical distance and constitutional separation. Discourses of inclusion, it is argued, are contextualised by anxieties around exclusion, inequality of treatment and fears of survival in the face of economic vulnerability. However, interviews also suggest a keen sense of local or St Helenian identity which is perceived as potentially under threat from the intrusion of outsiders, particularly in the light of reforms introduced as part of the agreement with Britain to enable air access. Identity in St Helena it may be argued, underpins normative claims about the kinds of access to common goods that are appropriate on the basis of shared British citizenship.

5.3 Ascension Island – “a permanent aircraft carrier in the mid-Atlantic”?

The question of identity on Ascension Island is sensitive and is complicated by the island’s history and current role as a military base. As discussed in the chapter on methodology, the difficulties of researching on Ascension mean that data in this case study has been sourced predominantly from outside the Island or draws upon previously published records such as evidence to the 2007-2008 Foreign Affairs Committee and correspondence in local newspaper, *The Islander*.

Ascension had no known indigenous inhabitants (Royle, 2004) and has been used by the British, predominantly as a strategic base, since 1815 when a garrison was established (Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.333). Throughout the island’s history its strategic function has tended to define its identity⁵⁹. For example, after 1815 it was referred to as “HMS

⁵⁹ Ascension is used by the United States Air Force as a missile tracking station, as a stop-off for RAF flights en route to the Falklands, by Cable and Wireless, the BBC, the Composite Signals Organisation and the European Space Agency: (Hendry and Dickson, 2011 p. 336).

Ascension”, a “Stone sloop of War of the smaller class” (Ascension Island Government Official Website, 2012) and during a Parliamentary debate in 2006 the island was referred to as “a permanent aircraft carrier in the mid-Atlantic” by Daniel Kawczynski (House of Commons debate, 2006).

St Helenians have worked on the island on contract since the 1920s when the West African workforce was repatriated (Royle, 2004, p.118). The 2008 St Helena Census showed 710 St Helenians on Ascension in 2008 (St Helena Government Census/Statistics Office, 2008). However work contracts are temporary and most workers have to leave the island on retirement or when their contract ends. Writing of the island in 2000, Sergio Ghione explained:

People only pass through Ascension. People live there because they work there, but they are destined, even forced...to leave sooner or later...There is no memory of history and there are no old people (Ghione, 2002, p.55).

As MP Vince Cable explained in Parliament:

Workers on the island are in effect, Gastarbeiter in the truest sense; they are there to work for a period and are required to leave when they retire (House of Commons debate, 2006).

For many St Helenians, Ascension provides opportunities for work and the development of skills and experience not currently available on St Helena. Employment on Ascension allows earnings to be remitted to St Helena, which for many people remains ‘home’ and where many build homes for their retirement and will spend their annual leave, despite the long sea voyage. However, debates over the last decade have raised the possibility of Ascension being considered as more than simply a workcamp. The 1999 White Paper proposed consulting

“the people of St Helena and its Dependencies about how to develop the democratic and civil rights of people living on Ascension Island” (FCO, 1999, p.13). As will be discussed in later chapters, this policy, and subsequent events, led to hopes by some of a more settled community on the island and the researcher understands that for some people there may be much deeper feelings of attachment to, and investment in, life on Ascension, in the broader sense. This may be particularly pertinent where family members or generations may be divided as work contracts finish.

In a debate in Parliament in 2006 Vince Cable MP raised “the interesting issue of what constitutes a resident of the island”, challenging the “Foreign Office doctrine” that “there is no indigenous population of islanders” and asserting that the “truth is more complicated” (House of Commons debate, 2006). Mr Cable discussed the number of people born on the island over the years, extending to grandchildren of residents. Furthermore he argued that following a report by consultants from Portsmouth University and the expectation of the development of a settled community “the expectation of normalisation” in terms of rights of abode was “explicit” (House of Commons debate, 2006). An economic study of the island in 2005, which highlighted the potential financial risks to HMG of allowing a settled community on the island, nonetheless highlighted the “great affection” felt for the island and noted that “some evidently desire to make it their home” (Watson, Wyatt & Holloway, 2005, p.9). The report’s authors were unable to give figures for the numbers of people wishing for further social and economic development and to the researcher’s knowledge no survey has been carried out to date, so figures remain “impressionistic” (Watson, Wyatt & Holloway, 2005, p.30).

The identity of the island is therefore indeterminate. To a large extent it is defined by its function as a military and communications base and remains a place of transience with feelings of belonging located elsewhere, either in the UK, St Helena or other places. And yet there is also community; children are born on the island, there is a school, there are families, and for some it feels like home. The island's identity with respect to Britain is therefore ambiguous: a complicated tension between functionality and community and between belonging and feelings of attachment elsewhere.

5.4 Identity in the Virgin Islands (UK):

The third case study territory examined in this thesis is the Virgin Islands (UK) in the Caribbean⁶⁰. The following section presents analysis of themes of identity in interview transcripts from fieldwork on the islands in 2011 and from documentary data, including the Territory's recent 2007 Constitution and the report of the Commission investigating constitutional change.

Academic work on identity in BVI has been carried out by anthropologists Coleen Cohen (Cohen, 1995a; Cohen, 1998; Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993) and Bill Maurer (Maurer, 1997; Maurer, 2000) and their work, to a large extent, underpins and is used as a platform for the following discussion. A detailed exploration of the complex historical roots of BVI identity is beyond the scope of this thesis, which instead investigates identity as one aspect of the current relationship between the Territory and the UK.

⁶⁰ The researcher spent three weeks in the islands in May 2011, undertaking formal interviews with a wide range of elites. Community events were also attended as part of the fieldwork.

5.4.1 History and demography

To understand the relationship between the British Virgin Islands and the UK, it is first necessary to give some historical context and demographic background to the islands. While the 2007 Constitution (Great Britain, 2007) gives a legal definition of a ‘belonger’, rapid economic development over the past three decades and an influx of migrant workers means questions of citizenship and belonging are currently complex and contentious (Cohen, 2010; Maurer, 1997) and serve to upset any simple notions of a discrete and coherent political community based on the population of the territory.

The Territory’s changing demographic has been closely associated with the peaks and troughs of economic development over the past three hundred and fifty years since annexation by the British in 1672 (Cohen, 2010). According to BVI historian Vernon Pickering (1983) slaves, mostly from West Africa, were brought to the islands by early colonists in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. As several commentators have noted, the relatively unprofitable nature of plantations meant that, unlike many Caribbean islands, following the abolition of slavery, most of the white settlers left, leaving a free black population with ownership rights to much of the land on the Islands (Cohen, 2010; Harrigan, 1971; Maurer, 1997).

Writing in 1971, Norwell Harrigan notes that the first census in 1717 showed 795 whites and 575 slaves (p.76) but that “by 1893 the President and the doctor were all that were left” of the white colonists (p.78). The absence of settlers, local land ownership, half a century “during which time the islanders lived in a poor but viable economy, largely cut off from the rest of the world” (Proudfoot, 1965, p.6), followed by more recent economic success and gains in political autonomy, may have nurtured the development of a feeling of

strong and distinctive local culture (Cohen, 2010). This sense of a distinct cultural and national community, as also pointed out by Coleen Cohen in her discussion of tourism and nationalism in BVI (2010; Cohen & Mascia-Lees, 1993) is emphasised in the BVI's latest Constitution of 2007, the preamble to which begins:

Whereas the people of the territory of the Virgin Islands have over centuries evolved with a distinct cultural identity which is the essence of a Virgin Islander (Great Britain, 2007, p.5).

The claim here is that the people that constitute the nation represented by the Constitution, have over time developed shared and specific social mores which makes this group individual. This is not an island satellite of the UK in the sense suggested by some British or St Helenian interviewees, but in the words of the BVI Constitution, a separate "people and a country" who have "their quest for social justice, economic empowerment and political advancement" (Great Britain, 2007, p.5). The text of the Constitution is a clear statement of a separation from Britain; of a self-consciously proud and delineated political community.

While population levels on the island remained stable until the postwar years, (according to the official Census, in 1871 there were 6,651 people and 6,505 in 1946), population levels rose in the eighties and nineties due to economic development and an influx of migrant workers (Cohen, 2010; Government of the British Virgin Islands, 2001) and by 2008, BVI Government figures report a population of 28,213 (Cohen, 2010; Government of the British Virgin Islands). This rapid increase in population can be explained in terms of development in the tourism and financial services sectors (Cohen, 2010). The 2001 Census states: "Fertility levels are low, economic activities are high and active migrants continue to pour into the BVIs" (Government of the British Virgin Islands, 2001, p.7) with an estimation

that in 2001 only 39% of the population was born on the Islands, while just over 60% were born elsewhere (Government of the British Virgin Islands, 2001, p.11). During this period of economic growth, migrants have arrived from a wide range of nations worldwide but with the largest percentages of the total population coming from other Caribbean countries such as St Vincent and the Grenadines (6.1%); St Kitts and Nevis (5.1%) and Guyana (4.3%) (Government of the British Virgin Islands, 2001). The recent influx of international migrants complicates any discussion of identity in BVI.⁶¹

Concerns around identity and belonging were raised in the Constitutional Review of 2004-5 (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005, p.45). The Constitutional Commission report talks of “The protection of the rights and privileges of the indigenous people of the British Virgin Islands” (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005, p.27). While the demographic make-up is currently diverse, the idea of who belongs in terms of political community is circumscribed, with some rights and privileges reserved for those who are defined as “belongers” (Cohen, 2010; Maurer, 1997). For example, non-belongers cannot stand as elected members to, or vote in elections for, the House of Assembly (Great Britain, 2007), own land or work in the Territory without a permit (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005). Political community is therefore not equivalent to the population but represents a minority. The next section will discuss how this discrete political community, problematic though it may be in terms of representing the wider community, relates to and identifies with Britain, to which it remains linked constitutionally.

⁶¹ For a more detailed discussion of immigration and BVI identity see Cohen (2010) and Maurer, B. (2000) *Recharting the Caribbean, Land, law and Citizenship in the British Virgin Islands*. Paperback edition edn. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

5.4.2 The UK and BVI: a historical connection

Most elites interviewed in BVI did not express a strong sense of connection between the Territory and Britain. Instead, affinity with the UK was discussed as a largely historical phenomenon, a sentiment confined to the older generation and diminishing in recent decades. One senior BVI Politician explained to the researcher that for many years there was little “exchange” between the parties as the BVI was part of the Leeward Islands Colony, governed from Antigua “and we were left alone to go ahead on our own sweet way” (Interview, BVI 17, 2011). A closer engagement evolved following the Second World War, the politician explained, when the recommendations of the earlier Moyne Commission (the West Indies Royal Commission of 1938) were implemented in areas of development such as health and education and “we began to see a greater interest taken by England in at least this Territory” (Interview, BVI 17, 2011).

The post-war period was also identified by former Deputy Governor, now Complaints Commissioner, Elton Georges, as a time of closer engagement on the part of Britain. He described the ways in which identification with Britain had been fostered through social and cultural institutions. He explained there was a feeling of connection during the world wars and up until the 1970s:

There was a lot of patriotism and you know ‘rah rah Britain’ and ‘Churchill’ and ‘King’ and so on at the time. We celebrated something called Empire Day up to the ‘60s and there was a big holiday and school picnics and sports and we were all taught these songs to sing like Rule Britannia and Ye Mariners of England and Native Seas. There was even one that they taught us in Virgin Gorda “Oh for the roast beef of old England and oh for Old England roast beef” and none of us had any idea what this ‘roast beef’ was! It was some kind of sailors’ song. But as children, that was what we were taught and that’s what we learned and so all that along with the King James Version of the Bible, the fact that the religious leaders in the early years were mostly Methodist

missionaries, ministers from England and Anglican priests from England, took us up to the '60s. And since then things have really gone and the population itself has changed so much. So from the point of view of feeling and emotion, I don't think it's much of a connection still there (Interview, 2011).

The distancing, temporally, of the connection with Britain suggests a set of references that are out-dated. The description of the songs and the expression of patriotic sentiments may be read as implying rhetoric imported, imposed and repeated rather than organically developed, autonomously embraced or autochthonous expressions of cultural identity. The songs were learned because they were taught, but the cultural and social referent was, in the case of the roast beef, unknown and irrelevant to people's lives in the islands. The interview extract may be read as depicting the emotional connection with Britain as something transitory; a thing of the past, that has little contemporary resonance in people's lives today.

The fading sense of association with the UK is also attributed to the ending of grant-in-aid which lasted from the post-war period until the late 1970s. During this time the Territory's annual budget was supported by Britain and development aid and technical assistance were provided by Britain. Mr Georges explained that the financial assistance was fundamental to the development of the BVI and "still is much appreciated and really very well used", however he felt that the ending of the financial commitment from Britain changed the relationship. He explained:

...I suppose one of the reasons that the feeling of the link would be diminishing is that really since we went out of grant aid in '78 and especially since in 1980s we came into budget surpluses, that enabled us to finance quite a lot of our capital budget, so we are not dependent on the UK anymore. That link really diminished in a lot of ways and it was quite a relief in '78 to get out from under the close involvement of the UK in your local operating budget, to the extent that, for example, where the

local Government couldn't raise salaries or anything without getting their agreement, their plan approved. So 1978 was a watershed year from that point of view in the relationship (Interview, 2011).

The weakening link is connected to financial independence and further autonomy for the Territory – articulated as a positive development rather than something regretted.

Fiscal independence as a marker of change in the relationship is confirmed by a senior educator interviewed who discussed the waning feeling of connection with Britain over recent years compared to past decades when “English symbols such as the monarchy” held significance for BVI Islanders. The interviewee explained:

...and it's such a different thing that the children nowadays understand far less about the relationship or have that sense of a relationship with the UK as opposed to people in earlier times and perhaps there was much more impact by the UK on the Territory then. Certainly into the 40s, 50s and 60s we were receiving grants from the UK Government, but even in the '80s when the grants weren't there. With each succeeding generation, I guess, the UK itself in some ways becomes less relevant until a point of crisis; until there is some piece of legislation that we have to rise up in arms about (Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

Yet another interviewee signalled the end of economic dependence as a turning point in the relationship. Asked whether there was strong sense of connection with the UK in the present, they answered:

No. When I was growing up, yes, there was different kind of reverence, when I was growing up as a child. But then again there was a closer link between Britain and the BVI. You had the grant-in-aid; Britain was more involved in the running of the Territory. But in 1967 when the Ministerial form of Government was introduced and we became more internally self-governing, I can see evaporation of that bond (Interview, BVI 18, 2011).

Feelings towards the British monarchy are mentioned by several interviewees in terms of the sense of connection with Britain. Elton Georges, discussing the possibility of the BVI being merged into the US Virgin Islands in the 1960s, identified “sentiment” as one reason why BVI Islanders decided to remain linked with Britain rather than the United States. “People sentimentally liked belonging to Britain,” he explained, “and that was so especially after the Queen visited in 1966” (Interview, Elton Georges, 2011). The senior educator quoted above also discussed the importance attached to the monarchy by the older generations:

...you really have the sense that, when you speak to elderly people that up until now there are certain things that the Queen would not allow...that confidence in the actual Monarch as somebody who has influence in the running of their affairs (Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

In common with interview responses in St Helena, the figure of the monarch was sometimes evoked by interviewees as a leitmotif for the relationship with Britain. Yet this symbol of Britishness is often discussed in terms of the past. For example, one former senior educator, when asked about the feeling of connection answered:

Yes, it's still here; less so than when I was growing up. I mean growing up we were totally British. But you have less now, but you still have people who feel very strongly you know, very strong (Interview, BVI 03, 2011).

This extract suggests a close but waning sense of identity with Britain, particularly expressed through symbols of monarchy. However later in the interview this association becomes more ambiguous:

In generations before, and even in the '60s and '70s, it was strongly British and we looked up to Britain and we expected help from Britain and modelled some parts of our lives on British systems. And we knew

that our whole education system, our whole Government was, we were truly British. And presently we have mixed feelings about the relationship and as we go along we feel strongly that this feeling of being British is going to be less and less...and that's why, I suppose it's important for us still to have the Governor in the Territory because it lends some credence to the whole point of our history...(Interview, BVI 03, 2011).

Thus while the connection may be increasingly seen as outmoded, elements of the link, such as the figure of the Governor, are represented as a part of the islands' distinctive past and thus heritage.

Interviews suggest, therefore, a sense that a strong feeling of connection with the UK is something that has been outgrown as the Territory has graduated out of grant-in-aid. A sentimental attachment to the monarchy, while still discernible as a symbol of British paternalism, is seen to be losing its resonance among younger generations, and is largely associated with the past.

5.4.3 Geography and journeys

The island's geography is a further reason given by interviewees for the lack of close connection between the UK and the BVI. This encompasses the distance between Britain and the Virgin Islands and also the proximity to the islands' neighbours, the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the mainland United States. Most interviewees, when asked about a feeling of connection with Britain, swiftly switched the conversation to talk instead about close ties to the United States.

One senior politician highlighted the physical distance between the UK and BVI to explain a lack of a strong sense of connection:

I would not say it was a strong feeling because we are so many thousand miles away from Britain. It takes us a night and a day, or part of the next day, to reach there (Interview BVI 17, 2011).

They argued that instead “The stronger feeling was with the United States, because, of course, we are next door to them”. The close proximity of the US Virgin Islands, which are visible from BVI’s main island Tortola, and their relative economic prosperity in the mid-twentieth century, meant many BVI Islanders lived and worked in St Thomas or St Croix (Cohen, 2010, p.26). Furthermore, as pointed out by several interviewees, BVI Islanders did not migrate in large numbers to the UK. When discussing the destination of students from the BVI, one interviewee explained that the majority tended to choose higher education institutions in the United States because of family ties there. They added:

...one of the things that didn’t happen is that we didn’t go to live in Britain. I can think of only two Virgin Islanders who actually went to live there (Interview, BVI 03, 2011).

When asked to explain this phenomenon they stated: “Because we went to the United States and that was it. There was not all that interest in going to Britain.”

A senior educator explained that while they felt there “is still a sense of connection” with Britain, it is not “a cultural connection” because of migration patterns to the United States or US territories rather than to the UK:

... I’m most willing to bet, that there wouldn’t be one home of British Virgin Islanders that they wouldn’t be able to tell you of a relative in the United States and chances are they could tell you of a relative in the US Virgin Islands as well, whereas on the other side now you would be hard pressed to find one that could say of a relative or someone that they know personally in the UK who has lived in the UK all their life (Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

Many interviewees, when asked about feelings of connection to the United Kingdom, talked instead about the ways in which the British Virgin Islands are closely linked to the United States. These connections are described in terms of culture and economic activity and attributed largely to the geographical proximity of BVI to the nearby US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, gateways for flights to the US and where, the researcher was informed, many BVI Islanders go for specialist medical treatment. One politician interviewed during the research described the relationship with Britain as “distant” because of the history of social and economic interaction with the United States:

The people of the British Virgin islands, based on the history of this Territory and the way we have grown and our present as we relate to the United States and certain privileges that were granted to us by the United States, mean that the majority of our people have migrated in that direction both for medical treatment, education purposes, and even economic strength in the earlier years (Interview, BVI 09, 2011).

Many interviewees spoke of the strong influence of American television and its effect on BVI identity as more significant than cultural influences from the UK:

From a cultural standpoint we are building a society that is closely modelled on, I would say, America. We watch a lot of American television and that has a real impact on our sense of identity. And even in terms of the economy that we are building, it's closely linked to America. So, I think what's really a challenge for many developing countries is to be able to modernise without Americanizing... (Interview, BVI 12, 2011).

One interviewee, who was not from the British Virgin Islands, suggested that while people may feel a connection with the United Kingdom, “the thing is, we are so close to the US and we also use the US dollar so most people align themselves to the US” (Interview, BVI

05, 2011). They also mentioned people living in BVI, originally from other Caribbean countries, whose feelings of connection “will perhaps be somewhere else, perhaps with their own country, rather than the UK or the US” (Interview, BVI 05, 2011). Another politician explained that he wouldn’t describe the connection with the UK as strong, asserting instead the tangible benefits and family ties with the US:

...you know I think people may enjoy having the best of both worlds; I think they enjoy being ‘British’ but knowing that Uncle Sam is close by and that we can go back and forth and don’t have any major problems... So I think, unlike probably some of the other Overseas Territories, we have a very unique and interesting relationship with the United States, especially through our relationship with the US Virgin Islands and, to some extent, Puerto Rico because we are so close (the Virgin Islands as a group) and our commerce and culture and family ties and relationships. It’s such a big part of most people’s everyday lives (Interview, BVI 14, 2011).

Benedict Anderson, in describing the emergence of colonies into independent statehood describes the similarity between the shape of new nations and the administrative areas of the old imperial powers and explains this phenomenon partly through the idea of the “geography of colonial pilgrimages” (Anderson, 1991, p.114). These were the journeys made to the administrative centre within the colony by local officials creating “a skein of journeys through which each state was experienced by its functionaries” (Anderson, 1991, p.115). Changes in technology and ease of travel are noted by Anderson as variables in the experience of pilgrimages across millennium. Anderson’s journeys, beyond initial training in the metropole are “inner pilgrimages” defining the imagined shape of the nation. However, there is no reason why the idea of pilgrimages in as yet non-independent islands cannot be applied to the journeys and continued connections beyond the islands. In St Helena the

concern over the closure of a sea route of ‘pilgrimage’ to the UK is noticeable while in BVI the comings and goings are US-orientated, suggesting a different locus of wider identification. In tiny islands where further or higher education is limited⁶², the state capital may not provide the administrative centre described by Anderson for higher education, and instead journeys are made to other places, particularly as described further below – the US.

One younger professional person interviewed, describing the relationship with Britain as “fragile”, partly because of a feeling of “distrust”, further emphasised the US connections. When asked if there was a strong feeling of connection with the UK, the interviewee answered: “No, there isn’t. More people: it’s ‘us and them’. It’s not in general ‘us’; it’s ‘us and them” (Interview, BVI 10, 2011). This extract articulates a feeling of separateness and division between BVI islanders and Britain. The interviewee went on to describe a sense of self-reliance of the British Virgin Islands coupled with a strong American influence that made the relationship with Britain feel symbolic rather than substantial:

Partially we have this feeling that we have been doing it by ourselves for so long that, you know, sometimes it is only because of the circumstances, you have to use the British or the UK symbolism that we even remember we are British. Our TV influence is American, radio influence is American, we use the US currency. Our close proximity to the US, all of our travelling is done through the US; our cars are from the US. Everything is just US. So it’s like we are more US than the US! (Interview, BVI 10, 2011).

While the excerpt above suggests a rejection of the connection with the UK, within the context of the interview, the participant also expresses regret at the lack of interaction

⁶² On BVI the H Lavity Stout Community College provides tertiary education up to associate degree level and the University of the West Indies has a small centre in Tortola but many students travel on to the United States and increasingly to the UK for further education.

between Britain and the Territory, describing this as “very, very sad”. They argue that: “...there should be more, more of a link. We do have an okay link but I think it should be more observed”.

As will be discussed further below, the speaker, in common with several others interviewed, argued for greater British input into what was described as “their [Britain’s] colony” in terms of assistance with education, law enforcement and healthcare and infrastructure. And yet, at the same time, throughout the interview there is an assertion of the value of self-reliance and economic independence of the BVI, which means that desire for greater engagement by the UK is also represented as problematic: “You don’t get anything for free” the interviewee claims, suggesting strings attached in terms of control or conditionality: “You’ve got to hold onto your birthright”. The relationship is described in terms of the parent-child relationship:

It’s like a child that has gone away to live and you don’t really communicate that much with your parents. That’s how it is. But you let your parent know: I’m okay, I’m surviving without you but I know you have got my back if I need something. So we are hoping the UK has our backs! (Interview, BVI 10, 2011).

The self-reliance mentioned above (and the implied doubts over UK financial commitment) represents a further reason given for the lack of strong feelings of connection with the UK. There is a sense expressed by some that BVI’s economic independence and separate tax regime may obviate claims to financial assistance from the British state. One senior educator argued that “there’s no money available to be sent in the case of these emergencies” and pondered Government response to flooding in the UK before undercutting this analogy through the differentiation of “tax-payers as opposed to us who are not tax-payers and who

one could argue possibly do not have a legitimate claim on the purse for assistance”

(Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

The above section has highlighted the way in which discussion of the connection with the UK is compared and contrasted with a stronger connection with the United States and in one case, identity with other Caribbean nations. While the connection with the UK is deemed to be valued, it is seen as something that has past resonance, and that without the economic underpinning is largely symbolic rather than substantial in terms of people’s everyday experience either economically, socially or culturally. The next section will address the extent to which the ongoing connection with Britain is seen as a positive or negative influence on local social and political identity, and to what extent closer links are welcomed or discouraged.

5.4.4 “We have our own identity”

Fieldwork in BVI took place in 2011 following the publication of British ministerial statements heralding an invigoration of Britain’s policy towards the Overseas Territories (Bellingham, 2010a; Duddridge, 2010). The territories, it was claimed, would be valued as ‘an important part of the British family’ and engagement by a wider gamut of British Government departments engendered (Bellingham, 2010a). While politicians interviewed in the BVI generally welcomed this intention as “a new, a fresh breeze” (Interview, BVI 17, 2011), wider research interviews also reveal ambivalence towards some forms of greater engagement in terms of possible impact upon the development of a separate and autonomous political community.

This tension between enthusiasm for greater assistance and recognition from the UK, and a desire to protect and develop political and cultural autonomy is expressed by one BVI politician, who argued that while the relationship with Britain is accepted, essential to islanders' concerns is the ability to develop themselves as "a people" in a way that is appropriate to their particular culture and history:

I don't think too many BVI islanders look at the United Kingdom as a negative and I believe the greater population will promote and encourage the relationship that we have with the United Kingdom. I think their only concern is how it is managed; up to what level of flexibility do we have as a people to develop ourselves. Because our cultures are so very different. Things that might work in the United Kingdom will not work here in a small community as our own where people have a culture of their own and one involved in different factions of things which happen within the country, which may not be the norm in a more developed country like the United Kingdom (Interview, BVI 09 2011).

Here an argument is made for pluralism; for the importance of a political community based on the foundations of a Walzerian "maximalist morality" where the political decisions are "particularist in...cultural reference" (Walzer, 1994, p.21). The interviewee stresses the divergence of cultures rather than their similarity or identity, and the importance of culture and the recognition of the importance of difference in the ability to "develop ourselves". The differences of culture and the particular history of development, in this view, need to be understood by the centre and may not readily be translated into institutions or policies considered appropriate in Britain.

This defence of particularity is expressed by other interviewees and establishes the value of a distinct cultural and political identity. One educator interviewed stated that:

It's a real challenge to maintain any sense of your own identity or even appreciation for anything local when everything is focused on facilitating entrance into the outside world... (Interview, BVI 14, 2011).

The interviewee firmly asserted the distinctiveness and value of BVI's own culture:

We do have a relationship with the UK and it has its advantages but I think from a cultural standpoint we should really maintain a separate identity from Britain... my personal view is that we have our own identity and we need to emphasise that through our institutions that we build here and everyone from the outside world should be able to recognise it and appreciate it for what it is (Interview, 2011).

Nonetheless, while cultural and political autonomy is defended by several interviewees, closer engagement by the UK is also welcomed by some; and the increasing numbers of students in the UK following the extension of Home Fees to the British Overseas Territories in 2006⁶³, is highlighted by several research participants. One politician commented:

What we are doing now, we are finding, in a sense, our relationship with the United Kingdom has now changed. There are more people studying in the United Kingdom than ever before so that in itself will help to bring back those ties with the United Kingdom as our ultimate, our superpower, our parent as people would refer to it (Interview, BV1 09, 2011).

Other areas where interviewees identified that they would welcome greater engagement were in areas of exchange, both educational and of technical experts. Recent initiatives mentioned and welcomed were a link with Hertfordshire County Council, which grew out of a sporting link in advance of the 2012 Olympics but has been extended to other areas of

⁶³ It was announced in 2006 by the British Government that students from the Overseas Territories would be eligible for Home Fees at British institutions. See: Department for children schools and families (2006) 'British Overseas Territories students to benefit from change to student fees'. [Online]. Available at: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2006_0165 (Accessed: 05.01.11).

engagement and exchange (HM Governor's Office Cayman Islands, 2011). One senior politician explained that the connection with Britain “wasn't a very strong feeling” but argued “what is happening now with more people from here going there, to the UK, is that feeling is growing; a better feeling towards Britain is now developing” (Interview, UK 17, 2011).

5.4.5 Summary

The preceding section has highlighted a strong sense of national identity in the British Virgin Islands. British cultural influences, while significant post-war, are now seen as predominantly in the past following greater economic independence. Instead the cultural flow is largely from the United States, due to the geographical proximity of US territory and close family ties. Recent British policy statements regarding closer engagement with the Overseas Territories have largely been welcomed, however, suggesting a possible desire for greater interaction between the Territory and Britain and a strengthening of connections. A recent announcement of a formal link with Hertfordshire and the decision of more BVI students to study in the UK are seen by several interviewees as evidence of a renewal of links with Britain. However, while strengthening associations and greater assistance from Britain were generally welcomed, this is not equated to greater levels of political association. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, the relative autonomy of political community is often defended and some further areas of devolved powers are sought.

Identity in the BVI, therefore, and its construction vis-à-vis Britain contrasts to that in St Helena where much closer identification with the British state is evidenced. There is also no sense that BVI Islanders see themselves as part of Britain as in the conception of the Overseas Territories as expressed by some British elites. Instead this is represented as a

largely autonomous, while non-sovereign, political community, which, although linked constitutionally with Britain (and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, enjoying various benefits from the ongoing link with Britain), is culturally and politically discrete and separate from the metropolitan state.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter set out to explore constructions of identity of the Overseas Territories in Britain and in the case study territories: firstly how elites in Britain see the Overseas Territories and secondly how the territories see themselves in relation to the state with which they remain constitutionally linked. The argument of this thesis is that in order to better understand states' behaviour towards each other on the international scene it is essential to first explore understandings of who are the people or peoples who make up the nation or the state; who are the "multitude of men" (Hobbes, 1914, p.227) who form the social contract which underlies the separation of the surface of the globe into largely separate political units? While rarely unproblematic even in independent states, this question becomes even more complicated in the case of Britain's Overseas Territories where political communities are linked constitutionally in a way rarely seen today in the dominant post-Westphalia system. The political, cultural and economic overlaps between state and territory mean that understandings of who is considered inside or outside the state in terms of claims to, or the rejection of, various benefits, rights and responsibilities, is complicated and often contested.

Analysis of interviews with a range of British elites identified a discourse which sees the Overseas Territories as more closely linked to the British state than hitherto. In this understanding the Territories are seen as similar, in some respects, to a distant part of Britain

and therefore entitled to a greater share in some of the political, social and economic benefits enjoyed traditionally by those within the state. These include, variously, some form of representation in the state Parliament; greater levels of financial assistance; and inclusion in the remit and oversight of Government departments other than the FCO and DFID. While greater engagement between a wider range of Government Departments is also a recent aim of an invigorated policy towards the Overseas Territories (FCO, 2012), it is argued that recent Government policy continues the status quo in terms of the territories being seen as political communities, which although remaining connected to the state, are largely politically and economically separate.

In St Helena a close identity with the British state was identified, suggesting that many citizens on the island see themselves very much as a part of Britain and it is argued that the forcefulness of claims to identification may lie partly in the sense of the island having been “let down” and fears around rejection by Britain and the ongoing viability of the island. Expressions of local identity were also evident, especially in terms of fears over a loss of way of life caused by the changes in advance of an airport. However, as will be seen in following chapters, the possibility of greater economic independence following the airport was seen by some as an opportunity for greater local political agency. While shared history and heritage are seen to form an important element of identity, economic insecurity can be seen to partly underpin claims to be considered more closely enmeshed with the state.

Economic factors also have a bearing on levels of identification with the UK in BVI, where financial independence over several decades has helped crystallize an already strong sense of national identity which is expressed in terms of political autonomy (as also noted by

Cohen, 2010). Links and connections with the UK are welcomed but, as will be seen in the chapter below, not at the expense of political autonomy based on the concept of the Virgin Islands as a unique cultural and social community. The differences in constructions of identity in the case study territories and the varied understandings of their link with Britain underscores the diversity of the Overseas Territories and the importance of the specific geography, history and economic development of each, in terms of the levels of identification with the UK. Furthermore it underscores how the Overseas Territories are in Hintjens and Hodge words “strangely ambiguous territorial entities” (Hintjens and Hodge, 2012), lying neither wholly within nor wholly outside of the domestic state.

The following chapter will examine how this ambiguity regarding the territories’ position in terms of being inside, or outside, the state affects the relationship with Britain in terms of the ethical obligations claimed by and accorded to the territories by the UK.

Chapter Six: Ethics in link between Britain and the Overseas Territories

As discussed in Chapter Two, where the academic literature on the Overseas Territories touches on ethical issues, it usually suggests that obligations of the former colonial power to its remaining small dependencies are, or should be, an important characteristic of this ongoing relationship (Drower, 1992; Hintjens, 1995; Taylor, 2000). The idea that a moral obligation motivates Britain to continue the link, often in the absence of obvious national interest, is intriguing as it suggests a much larger role for normative factors than are traditionally recognised within realist international relations theory, where deeper levels of responsibility are seen to be owed to those within, rather than outside the state (Brown, 2010)⁶⁴. The Overseas Territories, however, as actors lying neither wholly within not outside the British state, may be seen to disrupt the binary, critiqued by cosmopolitan thinkers (Linklater, 1998) which privileges responsibilities to those within the state.

This chapter will explore how the elite actors interviewed for the research understand and frame ethical issues in the relationship. It will identify two separate, but related issues: firstly, normative issues around retention of the link between Britain and the territories; and secondly how ethical issues are understood and constructed within Britain's dealings with the territories. The chapter will also explore the connection between ethics, power and identity as expressed through the discourse. For example, it will highlight whether territory claims for assistance from the UK are underpinned by foregrounding a shared British identity and, conversely, will ask how arguments for the

⁶⁴ For recent contributions on the normative motivations of European states towards former colonies see Brysk, A., Parsons, C. & Sandholtz, W. (2002) 'After Empire: National Identity and Post-Colonial Families of Nations'. *European Journal of International Relations*, 8 (2). pp 267-305. David McCourt's analysis of the reasons for British military intervention in the Falklands in 1982 also stresses Britain's identity and role as a responsible member of the international community acting to uphold international law: McCourt, D. (2011) 'Role-Playing and Identity affirmation in international politics: Britain's reinvasion of the Falklands, 1982'. *Review of International Studies*, 37 pp 1599-1621.

limitation of British responsibility may be articulated around notions of devolution or separation of Britain from its territories. The discussion will proceed by providing a brief overview of the legislation regarding Britain's legal obligations towards the Overseas Territories before discussing the perception of elites towards questions of ethics in the relationship.

Ethical issues surrounding the continuance and the management of Britain's relationship with the fourteen Overseas Territories, as discussed in Chapter Four, arise out of a range of international declarations, UK legislation, and broader international and domestic norms which shape expectations about the behaviour of actors in international society. These include Article 73 of Chapter XI of the UN Charter regarding the "sacred trust" of the administering powers to carry out obligations pertaining to the social, political and economic advancement of the territories (United Nations, 1945b); the 1999 White Paper (FCO, 1999); the International Development Act 2002 (Great Britain, 2002b); and the 2012 White Paper on the territories (FCO, 2012). Further ethical structure is given by a wide range of international treaties to which Britain is committed, such as those relating to human rights, the environment, good governance, and the reduction of international crime (see Chapter One). Hendry and Dickson (2011) note that treaties can be extended to the Territories and are then usually adopted into local legislation. However, the United Kingdom could be held responsible (Hendry & Dickson, 2011) and face reputational costs (Clegg & Gold, 2011) in the event of a territory violating treaty obligations. Britain is therefore responsible under international law, yet often over areas of government and policy which have been devolved to local territory governments.

6.1 Section One: The continued link with the Overseas Territories

6.1.1 “Colonies” in a post-colonial world?

The relationship between Britain and its Overseas Territories may be considered in the light of a widely accepted norm of disapprobation concerning the practice of colonialism. This conviction is expressed through various UN declarations, most notably the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People (United Nations General Assembly, 1960). The ongoing opprobrium regarding this practice may be seen in the recent war of words between Argentina and Britain over the Falkland Islands in which both parties used the term ‘colonialism’ as a highly-charged form of censure in an attempt to garner international (and domestic)⁶⁵ support for its position (Cameron, 2012b; The Telegraph, 2012). Stuart Croft, writing on British identity and security, argues that the construction of a contemporary British national identity is based largely on narratives about a heroic role in the Second War - partly because “prior claims” based on Britain’s imperial past “lack contemporary legitimacy”. Croft argues:

There can be no universal claim to the greatness of the British Empire at a time when freedom and self-determination seem to be such universal values (Croft, 2012, p.126).

The position of the Overseas Territories, however, could be interpreted in both domestic law⁶⁶ and international convention⁶⁷ as in some respects colonial, meaning that Britain remains open to the charge of colonialism, even if the principle of self-determination is a

⁶⁵ See Klaus Dodds for a recent analysis of the increasing tension between Argentina and Britain over the islands and the reactions of other international actors: Dodds, K. (2012) 'Stormy Waters: Britain, the Falkland Islands and UK Argentine Relations'. *International Affairs*, 88 (4). pp 683-700.

⁶⁶ Hendry and Dickson (2011) explain that the word ‘colony’, used in the Interpretation Act of 1978 to describe what are now known as the Overseas Territories, was not removed by the 2002 Overseas Territories Act and continues to have the same meaning, although in practice it is not used in documents or in legislation (page 4).

⁶⁷ The UN Decolonisation Committee describes Britain’s populated overseas territories as Non-Self-Governing Territories but their listing by a committee aimed at de-colonisation suggests they are considered by this body to be in some sense colonial.

pillar of British policy towards the territories (see the 1999 White Paper) and the association continues through the choice of the peoples of the Overseas Territories. Furthermore, Britain's colonial and imperial history can provide a framework through which any recent foreign policy actions may be read and interpreted. A posting on a recent forum run by the FCO in order to consult on a new Coalition Government strategy for the Overseas Territories is an example of this view of Britain's record. The comments form part of a debate on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands:

You did these kind of thinks [sic] all over the world. It's tipical [sic] of you. You're thieves, you're pirates. All the world hates you, including your neighbours irish and scotish [sic] and you try to convince de [sic] world you're gentlemen! You're awfull. Nobody believe you. You only have the reason of force and violence. Give our Malvinas back and stop lying [sic] (FCO online consultation, October 2, 2011).

This description of the UK's role on the world stage is a powerful reminder of one understanding of Britain's actions, in which the retention of sovereignty over distant islands is seen as an example of wider wrongdoing, both historical and contemporary, in the international realm. In this reading Britain's claim to moral probity, "you try to convince de world you are gentlemen", is exposed as the use of raw power through "force and violence".

While a few charges of colonialism appear in the research interviews, the discourse used by elites interviewed was more complicated and largely concurred with the majority of the literature on this issue, which sees Britain as continuing in the relationship in the absence of obvious material interest. However, while the retained link with Britain was generally perceived as supported, currently, by territory populations, the issue of the type of constitutional link was raised by several respondents in St Helena.

1.1.2 St Helena and British Island Status

Discussion over the constitutional link on St Helena emerged from the campaign for the restoration of citizenship in the 1990s. The Citizenship Commission argued that continued dependency for St Helena was not an option and proposed consideration of British Island status, similar but not identical to that of the Channel Islands or “an autonomous overseas territory” (Turner, 1997, p.33). However the 1999 White Paper concluded that:

...neither integration into the UK, nor Crown Dependency status, offer more appropriate alternatives to the present arrangements. But these arrangements need to be revisited, reviewed and where necessary, revised (FCO, 1999, p.13).

In 2000 the Citizenship Commission, with the assistance of two international law professors, submitted a brief to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation arguing that the status quo was unacceptable and calling for “formal British Island status and a political and constitutional association with the UK” (Janish, Morgan & Connell, 2000, p.12). It was argued that the document had the support of a majority of the Island’s Legislative Council and that the Citizenship Commission “is widely representative of all segments of St Helena society” (Janish, Morgan & Connell, 2000, p.1). Professor Hudson then argued:

self-determination requires the will of the people of St Helena to be put into effect, and does not allow the will of the Government of the United Kingdom as a colonial power to be imposed on the St Helenians (Janish, Morgan & Connell, 2000, p.4).

Interviews with elites on the Island in 2011 indicated some ongoing discussion of a change in status for the Island, although concerns over the recent duty and immigration reforms and the question of the airport tended to overshadow this issue. One interviewee, for example, talked about the difficulties of discussing change in terms of

constitutional status (Interview, St Helena 08, 2011). When asked whether most people on St Helena would share the desire for a new constitutional status, the interviewee pointed to the need for education and the difficulty of creating support when so many people work offshore:

But again, it is about education and letting people know that they do have a right to choose and self-determination isn't just, and de-colonisation isn't just, about independence. It is about the wishes of the people to remain British (Interview, St Helena 08, 2011).

Other interviewees also indicated that discussion of the Island's constitutional status continues to be on the agenda; and a review of St Helena's status forms one of the recommendations submitted by the Citizenship Commission to the 2011 FCO review (The Citizenship Commission of St Helena, 2011). One interviewee felt that "... there are times [that we send a delegate] to the C24, even though the British Government is reluctant to allow elected members to travel", giving the impression that discussion over decolonization is in some way discouraged. However, the recent White Paper stresses that the UK Government, "will continue to support" territory representation to the UN's Decolonisation Committee, even though it believes the Committee "no longer has a relevant role to play in respect of our territories" because of their level of self-government and choice to remain linked (FCO, 2012 p.84). The research suggests discussion continues within St Helena around the issue of decolonisation, even if this is defined as closer association or free association (United Nations, 2010) rather than independence.

1.1.2 BVI and continued British sovereignty

In British Virgin Islands, the question of independence was something raised by a few interviewees but spoken of hypothetically or as a future possibility. Nonetheless some

speakers expressed the sense that the relationship was outdated, through the employment of a discourse where national pride was juxtaposed with the indignity of dependence. In the following quotation, for example, British interests in retaining the link are questioned:

I really don't think there are significant benefits for the UK with the ongoing link. Some people around seem to think so but I don't tend to think so. Colonies are a relic of a bygone age and as such, even though a lot of the G8 countries and so on have colonies, they don't want to call us 'colonies'; it's not something to be proud about in the twenty-first century... and when you consider things like the UN Committee on Decolonization and all of these things, it certainly shows that this is not something that people ought to be proud of. So there's no glory in having some colonies. There's no economic benefit that the UK gains by having us. Even when you consider the offshore, I still don't think that there is any significant benefit that would derive by us being one of their colonies. So I really would tend to say I find it hard to see a strong motivation that would come from them as to why they would want to maintain the colonial relationship. It's only out of, well, that's what has been the case and it doesn't take an act for the status quo to continue; it takes an act to change; you have to now decide to change; you cannot decide, and the status quo continues. (Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

The speaker firstly undercuts any simple notion of the link with the BVI being in British interests and then describes the sensitivity of this type of relationship in a post-colonial era as “not something to be proud about”, suggesting ethical uncertainty. Instead the relationship is seen to continue through the lack of will to change; and the acquiescence of the United Kingdom. The interviewee uses the word “colonies” to describe the territories, repeating the word five times in this passage, and using the term “colonial relationship”, even though we are told that the G8 countries which have “colonies” don't wish them to be named as such. This hints at reservations about official discourse, which uses alternative words to talk of something which is now discredited. The speaker

suggests that they interpret the relationship as in some sense colonial, even if it is not in the economic interests of the UK.

Another interviewee also plays down the idea of UK interest in the continuation of the link:

The UK benefit from the relationship with BVI? That's really hard to say. That's really hard for me to fathom. I don't know. I think one would have to be reaching for, trying to reach to conjure up something in practical terms. It's an obligation and the UK can demonstrate, if you like, a sense of responsibility and probity and so on in the relationship but it's difficult for me now to think of a benefit (Interview, Elton Georges, 2011).

However the same interviewee when asked about challenges to the relationship going forward suggested the normative understanding in the international community that “this is an anachronistic relationship of having territories, colonies.” Again, Mr Georges uses the word “colonies” and mentions norms of self-determination and a growing feeling, “as the older generation moves on, that we should not be in this situation; it's not dignified or something” (Interview, 2011).

The above quote, therefore, suggests that the status quo could be seen as out of time, out of place, within modern normative frameworks and that as such it is an uncomfortable position for the BVI, suggesting a lack of fit with an acceptable self-image. Yet independence is also not on the agenda for the time being. The “talk comes up now and again” but “we have never had a political party or a candidate who has put that forward as a platform or a point in an election” (Interview Elton Georges, 2011). Here the lack of strong movement for independence, also noted by several academics (Clegg, 2011; Connell, 2001; Sanders, 2009a; Skinner, 2002) suggests ethical legitimacy through consent to the status quo.

6.1.2 Responsibility to retain

Furthermore, despite suggestions that the relationship is out of place within contemporary normative frameworks, many elites downplayed British interest in the retention of a link with the territories and instead foregrounded ethical considerations. In this discourse, Britain is seen to have a moral obligation to retain the link based largely on the principle of self-determination. Many interviewees describe the relationship as determined by historical obligation, a duty of care, self-determination or responsibility. For example, talking of Britain's responsibilities towards St Helena, Sir Bob Russell MP explained that he felt "the historic reasons for St Helena being of importance to the United Kingdom" had passed but that nonetheless "we have an empire legacy to maintain and sustain the island" (Interview, Bob Russell MP, 2011). British interests are no longer served by the retention of the link, it is suggested, but Britain's past role in the world continues to necessitate certain current obligations. This feeling is further expounded in the following statement:

I think there is a feeling within the British Parliament across all political parties, that we have a debt of gratitude to these last remaining 'pink bits' of the British Empire which realistically are not large enough to be independent but wish to remain part of the family of the United Kingdom – and in the case of St Helena, very loyal members of the British family (Interview, Sir Bob Russell, 2011).

In this analysis, Britain's past use of these places, coupled with their supposed lack of capacity for independence, engenders a "debt of gratitude" from Britain. While signalling to the principle of self-determination in the mention of "wish to remain part of the family of the United Kingdom", the idea of a "debt of gratitude" gestures not to something that is prescribed by international norms or conventions but may be thought of as an emotional or moral sentiment that goes beyond the responsibilities enshrined in

domestic or international law. This sense of a special, emotional obligation is evoked through familial metaphors (Brysk, Parsons & Sandholtz, 2002) used by several interviewees, and is seen in the extract above where the territories are envisaged as part of the “British family”. This term, used in recent official discourse on the territories, is evocative of closeness, warmth, and shared history, but is constitutionally and legally without meaning. It may be argued to express the ambiguity of the Overseas Territories’ position (Hintjens and Hodge, 2012) as neither wholly within nor wholly outside the British state, while suggesting an engagement and benevolence.

One former senior British official argued for ongoing responsibilities to be recognised on the basis of history and their identity as “part of Britain”:

And the fact is because of the past, we are in these territories. Getting out of them is next to impossible and the best thing that could come out of your research and talking about this, is a better understanding that the Dependent Territories are part of Britain, which, for various reasons, may or may not one day be allowed to detach themselves from Britain if they, probably by means of a referendum, think fit (Interview, Simon Gillett, 2011).

One interviewee linked the retention of the Overseas Territories directly to Britain’s international image but in a way that again, is additional to international legal norms and those on de-colonisation. Lord Jones of Cheltenham argued:

Well, I think it helps Britain’s reputation in the world that we don’t just abandon people ... (Interview, Lord Jones of Cheltenham, 2011).

This quotation imbues the continued relationship with ethical value rather than seeing it as an extension of the discredited practice of colonialism. The speaker goes on to contrast Britain’s actions with that of some other European powers which are alleged to have

walked away from their former colonies. Britain, while not above criticism, is portrayed as behaving with moral probity through the continued obligations of the link.

In St Helena, interviewees largely interpreted British responsibilities as deriving from three sources: historical British use of the Island; the British heritage of islanders; and the need for economic support from Britain due to extreme isolation and a poor economy. Asked whether they felt Britain still had responsibilities to St Helena, one person interviewed answered:

Oh. Most certainly so. That's our mother country you know. Because we are the child and that's our mother country I believe they will have responsibility until we are grown up and that's going to take a long, long, long time yet. And obviously they always say that you can become independent if you like, but Britain wouldn't allow independence unless they knew that the Territory could actually look after itself (Interview, St Helena 25, 2011).

The image of parental responsibility is one often referred to by interviewees in St Helena. Here the Island is cast as dependent and in need of aid until it is “grown up”, although whether this is economic or political development is not specified. The description of power contained within the phrase “Britain wouldn't allow” independence, is framed as that of a parent acting in the interests of its offspring. Another interviewee also linked current UK responsibilities to Britain's colonial past. Asked whether they felt Britain had ongoing responsibilities, they answered:

Oh, yes, without a question. They set the place up, put their own people there. Of course they have. Without a doubt. Sure (Interview, St Helena 11, 2011).

The historical link and British heritage of the population are also emphasised by another speaker who answered an emphatic “Absolutely!” to questions about British responsibility to the Island and explained:

Because this has always, since 1834, been a British Territory and the historic link, the cultural link and the population here, anyway, is made up of European settlers, mixed with the African, Indian and Chinese blood. So we don't speak French; we definitely don't know Chinese! I don't know who else would take us over. And I think too that the place was of strategic importance to Britain and I think by virtue of that as well, Britain sees it as a responsibility (Interview, St Helena 19, 2011).

Here, genealogy and British descent is mobilised to underscore ongoing responsibility to the Island. The prospect of independence is closed down by the speaker by the phrase “I don't know who else would take us over”, implying a need for ongoing association with a state. Another non-St Helenian interviewed, also suggested that responsibility derived from Britain's historic interest in the Island “when it was strategically useful”:

And now it's not [useful to Britain] but that doesn't change the fact that we are all here and we are British subjects and therefore there is responsibility. And I don't mean that they should pay out willy-nilly while we all sit with our feet up and do nothing, which is one of the things that is said, but I think we should be helped now to have a sustainable economy and to try to stand on our own two feet and reduce the burden to the UK – but I think they have a responsibility to help us do that (Interview, St Helena 21, 2011).

In this discourse, Britain's responsibility to St Helena is derived from the part the Island played in Britain's imperial expansion, and the fact of British citizenship. However, responsibility is circumscribed and limited to the input needed to help the island develop economically and thus reduce the need for assistance from the UK, suggesting the development of economically separate communities.

The question of lack of economic viability as providing the basis for British obligations towards the Island is taken up by another interviewee who argued:

So I believe whilst we are still in a period where our financial stability is still not how we would like it to be, I believe they have a responsibility to work with us. But then equally, St Helena has the responsibility to ensure that whatever kinds of programmes or projects that we want them to support us in, that we fulfil our end of the bargain (Interview, St Helena 13, 2011).

The argument for ongoing responsibility here is based on economic fragility and a responsibility to support development on the island (even though these responsibilities are seen as shared by St Helena). This argument is also advanced by another interviewee who, like the speaker above, echoed concerns of viability through similar language to that used by policy-makers after WWII:

Britain has great responsibilities for St Helena being a dependent of Britain. St Helena is in no position to stand on its own two feet in terms of generating growth... (Interview, St Helena 29, 2011).

Among elites interviewed in St Helena, therefore, Britain was generally seen to have an ongoing obligation to the Island. This responsibility is underpinned by Britain's colonial settlement and use of the island, the British heritage of the Islanders, and the current inability of the Island to support an economy without assistance.

In BVI, British responsibilities were also asserted, based on the constitutional connection and the mutual responsibilities outlined in the 1999 White Paper. One politician reflecting on the question of responsibilities echoed the language of the 1999 policy document and that of the BVI Constitution regarding the official distribution of responsibilities:

Well, yes, until we go independent, Britain has ongoing responsibility for these Virgin Islands in terms of the economy, good governance, order, peace, the environment and security (Interview, BVI 06, 2011).

Another interviewee argued:

Yes, we are still a colony, so yes, oh definitely. For defence, for natural disasters, suppose anything happens, we are still under the protection of Britain (Interview, BVI 18, 2011).

In response to a question about Britain's ongoing responsibilities to the BVI, another interviewee expressed their perception that the British Governor retained discretion over assistance:

They do. They know they do. If we were ever in a crisis, I'm sure we can lean on them, yes. The problem I have with that though is that it is at the discretion of the Governor. You know we might be dying and if the Governor doesn't feel it's sufficient then... (Interview, BVI 10, 2011).

Responsibility is therefore understood as based on the constitutional link and the ongoing relationship, but a question is raised about the extent to which British responsibilities might always be fulfilled, a theme which will be explored in the next section.

6.1.3 Section summary

The above section has argued that despite a widely-held norm of anti-colonialism, the retention of the link between Britain and the Territories is seen by many in, and involved with, the territories as the fulfilment of a necessary obligation deriving from past connections, the economic fragility of some territories, and the principle of self-determination, with the territories choosing to retain the link with Britain. The following section will examine the extent to which the responsibilities that are seen to derive from

the ongoing link between the former colonial state and its territories are fulfilled in practice.

6.2 Section Two Ethical issues

6.2.1 Britain's fulfilment of its responsibilities

One theme emerging from interviews, documentary analysis, and the academic literature is the extent to which Britain has lived up to its responsibilities towards the territories.

This discourse includes criticisms about the extent to which Britain has fulfilled its obligations under international conventions but also in areas where no explicit mandate or duties are agreed but where speakers feel Britain owes a moral obligation as the former colony or as a large power.⁶⁸

The idea that Britain has neglected its responsibilities to the territories is a significant discourse among the British elites interviewed and in some of the academic literature as discussed in Chapter Two. For example, Andrew Rosindell MP, Chair of the Overseas Territories All-Party Parliamentary Group, explained when interviewed by the researcher:

I think the main challenge and by far the biggest challenge is for Britain to take on its responsibilities to them...I think we have neglected them. I think we have treated them as second best. We have even forgotten they exist at times (Interview, Andrew Rosindell MP, 2010).

While this extract expresses the idea that Britain has neglected its ongoing responsibilities, the reference to treating the territories as 'second best' echoes discourses from St Helena reported in the previous chapter. The phrase reinforces an

⁶⁸ Hendry and Dickson note an assumed "moral or political contingent liability for the Overseas Territories" but they argue that "this is a matter of political choice" which has been exercised in various ways. They also point out that Article 73 of the United Nations Charter is not enforceable in UK courts as it is not included in UK legislation but that the "political or moral imperative is in practice rather dictated by the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government to Parliament" Hendry, I. & Dickson, S. (2011) *British Overseas Territories Law*. Oxford and Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing.

understanding of the peoples of the Overseas Territories as being treated as not fully part of the UK, while it also suggests and critiques the hierarchy and inequality of former colonial relations. It may be possible to suggest that here the conservative right has appropriated the language and ethics of anti-colonial discourse based on equality to, ironically, reinvigorate a modernised set of quasi-colonial relations in the twenty-first century. Yet the refrain is also repeated by an eclectic range of interest groups and politicians from different parties. So for example Liberal Democrat MP, Bob Russell, was critical during interview of the alleged neglect of St Helena over the years, which he saw as partly responsible for the Island's current situation:

Well, I think the infrastructure of St Helena had it been done better by successive British governments would not have seen such a huge depopulation of the island. If they had had their British citizenship restored a lot earlier than it was, and if the wealth that has been pumped into the Falklands had, even in a small measure, gone to St Helena, the situation of St Helena would have been transformed (Interview, Bob Russell MP, 2011).

Speaking in Parliament in 2009, Labour MP Megg Munn was scathing of DFID's treatment of the Island regarding a delay to the provision of air access (House of Commons Debate, 2009), and environmental organisations have expressed concern about the level of funding for stewardship of the environment in the Overseas Territories. In an article in *The Observer* in 2012, the RSPB argued the British Government needs to invest ten times the current £1.4 million spent on tackling extinctions of endemic species in the Overseas Territories. In the article, RSPB official Grahame Madge mentions Britain's responsibility for conservation in the Overseas Territories three times and argues:

Thanks to our Overseas Territories we outrank the US, Mexico, South Africa and other large nations when it comes to being responsible for saving endangered birds (McKie, 2012).

The link between Britain's international identity and the need to fulfil responsibilities is made by one representative of an NGO working in the Overseas Territories who argued:

Because under the CBD [Convention on Biological Diversity], I do think it would be incredibly embarrassing for the British Government if these things [endemic species] became extinct (Interview, UK 08, 2011).

Responsibility for the environment, although devolved to local territory Governments, is also seen to lie with the UK Government because: "there aren't the resources to actually look for them or look after them" within all of the territories (Interview, UK 08, 2011).

Another speaker also talked of the lack of resources within territories as underpinning British responsibility. Lord Jones of Cheltenham, after suggesting past UK Government neglect, explained:

St Helena is a particular example of that, where a lot of their historical buildings are falling down, the walls are collapsing and they need a lot of refurbishment but there is no economy on the island to generate the income to do that (Interview, Lord Jones of Cheltenham, 2011).

The engagement of Government Departments other than the FCO and DFID has also been problematic over recent years, according to some interviewees. One interviewee in St Helena explained their perception that "...actually until recently the Overseas Territories was not seen to be a remit of lots of UK Government Departments" (Interview, St Helena 7, 2011). The speaker, arguing for the need for representation in the UK Parliament for the Overseas Territories, added:

...I think it is right that every UK Government Department has a specific responsibility for the Overseas Territories because we are no

different from a county on the mainland (Interview, St Helena 7, 2011).

In this understanding St Helena is seen, counter to the current constitutional position, as equivalent to a county in Britain and this geopolitical status is used to invoke a widened engagement and responsibility by the UK Government⁶⁹. However, when the interviewee was asked whether they feel Britain adequately fulfils its responsibilities towards St Helena, they drew a distinction between taxpayers in the UK and the Overseas Territories suggesting a disconnect between expectations of wider responsibilities and an acknowledgment of the separation of tax systems which underscores the differentiation of the two communities:

The Island costs a lot to maintain for the UK tax-payer and I don't think in terms of money the British Government could reasonably be expected to give any more. But as I say, I think the way that expenditure gets prioritised could be better handled from the UK end (Interview, St Helena 07, 2011).

Thus while the island is seen at once as just like a county on the mainland, economic separation is inscribed though the image of the British taxpayer, again suggesting the ambivalence of overlapping political communities which are seen as inside the state for some functions but are separated in other respects.

6.2.2 Sweat, tears and British aid in St Helena

In St Helena participants were conflicted over whether Britain had fulfilled its responsibilities to the Island. While many extolled the amount of aid received over the years, others suggested that the extent of the Island's economic and social problems were not fully appreciated by the UK Government. One interviewee on the island said

⁶⁹ A commitment to the engagement of all UK Government Departments in the Overseas Territories has subsequently been stated in the 2012 White Paper (FCO, 2012, p.8).

they felt Britain is “absolutely remarkable in the way that it honours its obligations to remnants of Empire that it created” (Interview, St Helena 09, 2011), while another said they felt times were good compared to those in the past:

You know, right now, we are well looked after. I don't know what kind of benefit Britain gets out of it but you know we do quite well as a British colony. Well, you see for yourself the standard of living here (Interview, St Helena 15, 2011).

Another interviewee felt the extent to which British responsibilities toward the island were fulfilled depended “on the political situation in the UK; which party is in power and also the demands of the population in the UK, to a degree”. However, overall, they argued:

But I think they have the best of intentions towards their Overseas Territories. I mean this is demonstrated by the amount of funds they provide but they have their constraints in London as well (Interview, St Helena 19, 2011).

Several interviewees mentioned St Helenian responsibilities to Britain, echoing the reference to “responsibilities on both sides” (FCO, 1999, p.4) set out in the 1999 White Paper. For example, one interviewee said they felt “we [St Helena] have a responsibility to try and stand on our own two feet and do the things that we need to do to get the economy moving” (Interview, St Helena 21, 2011), while one Councillor felt that:

St Helena does have responsibilities to Britain and more especially of course as Britain is providing aid. That loyalty that St Helena has for the UK, well it's unshakeable. I can't say more than that really (Interview, St Helena 25, 2011).

Several interviewees also linked the Island's responsibilities to the potential investment in the airport by the British Government. For example, one interviewee explained:

Yes, I do believe we have responsibilities to Britain, because obviously we can't expect Britain to generate all the millions into an airport without trying to open the island up and develop it. So this is where the partnership approach comes in (Interview, St Helena 29, 2011).

However, despite many interviewees claiming that they felt Britain fulfilled its responsibilities to St Helena, dissatisfaction with the level and forms of assistance were also mentioned during interview. This was sometimes linked to the feeling that for the relationship to improve, Britain needed a more in-depth understanding of the island. So for example, one interviewee explained that they felt an airport would allow British officials to visit the Island more readily and to gain a better insight into local circumstances:

Because there are some concerns here that I feel unless we get people onboard and see or hear for themselves, they will never be able to understand due to our isolation (Interview, St Helena 6, 2011).

This question of appreciation of St Helena's particular situation is related to that of the transfer of skills and expertise to people on the island and the question of local empowerment as expressed by one interviewee:

I suppose where it works well is that the Island is able to access technical support from Britain, which is obviously something it is desperately short of in some areas... But where there is a weakness is that often the expertise is brought in on short-term contracts, which doesn't actually leave behind a long-term legacy on the island...(Interview, St Helena 07, 2011).

The lack of continuity and the high turnover of consultants are also highlighted by one interviewee who argues:

There seems to be no linked-up thinking in the Foreign and Commonwealth, DFID, in relation to future development of this Island. I mean you have an official comes out every three years or so. He has

some ideas; the Island gets on board with it; he goes back; then in another couple of years we have another guy comes out [laughing] and all that changes again. We have development plans, sustainable development plans, country policy plans, but no action, unfortunately (Interview, St Helena 26, 2011).

One interviewee, when asked to describe the relationship between Britain and St Helena characterised it as “dysfunctional” based on the lack of continuity of British officials both in DFID and on contract on the Island:

...the lack of continuity is frightening. People who are appointed on the Island all assume that they are going to make their mark and get the place sorted out...We get the re-invention of the wheel every three years. It's frustrating (Interview, St Helena 10, 2011).

This purported lack of continuity and knowledge is also related to claims regarding perceived inadequate financial assistance from Britain. The same interviewee argued that British aid had grown but had started from an artificially low point and that earlier increases might have boosted the economy, reducing the exodus of working age islanders. The speaker explained the view, reiterated by several other interlocutors, that when DFID visited the island to help plan aid assistance, their views could be distorted by images of four-wheel-drive cars and decent houses, but that these were paid for through the remittances from offshore working which had significant impacts on the island:

But it is not sustainable. It's not genuine. It's cardboard prosperity and we have British officials come out here sequentially every three years and see a snapshot of what they think is the Island and don't know any of this background – how cardboard it all is; how much people are really struggling... (Interview, St Helena 10, 2011).

One former St Helena Government official, while full of praise for DFID, also referred to the issue of offshore working as being extremely problematic. They praised the work and

staff of DFID, particularly in health provision, and compared St Helena's situation with other countries overseas:

...especially when you talk with Africans and hear about their life-style; you just shudder. I think we are fortunate, very fortunate (Interview, St Helena 16, 2011).

However, despite arguing that "they [the people of St Helena] don't blame the British Government" for recent economic hardship on the Island, and despite explaining that "... we are not asking for more money" only that it should be shared out and "used properly", the interviewee was concerned that that the economic situation on the island can be misunderstood by outsiders who see "loads of cars" and "a lot of nice houses":

But I think people are misguided by seeing this because most of these houses are empty and the people live abroad. So the money for these houses doesn't come from the British Government. That money comes, and I always say this: "through sweat and tears." "Sweat" because people have to go off-island to work and have to put up with working in a different climate; different people...I know all that, so this is why I say "sweat"; and when I say "tears" it is because they leave their family behind. They leave their children here with friends and grandparents and sometimes with grandparents who are far too old to cope. So what they see is these nice houses and that. Oh yes, everyone is wealthy but everybody is not wealthy. And thank God that we still have here the extended family.... So it is not all British taxpayers' money that makes the place like this: it is people who have had to give up home life (Interview, St Helena 16, 2011).

The theme running through the above interviews is that of the particularity of St Helena's situation, which, partly because of access issues, means visitors to the island may find it hard to appreciate in full. The implication is that decisions about the needs and future of the island would be better informed by greater local knowledge, problematizing the location of decision-making at a distance.

When asked about the extent to which the impacts of offshore working were taken into consideration when negotiating aid budgets, a DFID representative explained in an official email response:

DFID is critically aware of the social impact on families of offshore working. One of the main incentives for offshore employment is the wage level discrepancy between St Helena and the UK, the Falkland Islands and Ascension. Economic forecasting for the airport decision includes an expectation that the development of air access will help counter this disparity and provide employment opportunities and incentives for people to stay on the Island (Interview, DFID, 2011).

In summary, in St Helena, British responsibility to the island is understood primarily as based on the provision of budgetary aid and technical assistance to the island.

Perceptions around the fulfilment of this responsibility, however, are divided. Many interviewees expressed the view that growing aid budgets and the potential (now actual) substantial capital investment by Britain in an airport, meant Britain was discharging its obligations to the Island. Alongside expressions of appreciation for this level of commitment by Britain were assertions that responsibilities were mutual, with St Helena's primary responsibility to Britain lying in efforts to support economic development and to reduce economic dependency on Britain – further underscoring an individuation of St Helena as an economic entity. This discourse echoes British official policy regarding responsibilities on both sides and the development of St Helena as a potentially self-sufficient economic entity:

DFID is committed to meeting the reasonable assistance needs of the Territories but are also engaged in investment in the Overseas Territories aimed at reducing aid dependency...The UK Government has been very clear that substantial UK investments in the Territories need to be matched by the Territory Governments doing all they can to reduce and eventually eliminate their dependence on UK aid (Email Interview, DFID, 2011).

However, criticism was expressed about both the level and the mode of assistance provided by the British Government to the Island, primarily through DFID. Some respondents felt aid levels need to be increased; some mentioned a perceived lack of continuity in officials and strategy for the development of the Island; and others expressed the view that the level of economic and social hardship on the island was misunderstood, partly because of the isolation of the island creating constraints on visits by senior British officials.

6.2.3 BVI as a “rich country”

In British Virgin Islands, understandings of British responsibility are also largely constructed around economic assistance, but to a lesser degree than in St Helena as the Caribbean territory does not receive grant-in-aid and is financially independent. While many interviewees said they would welcome more engagement from Britain in various aspects of life, this was usually in terms of technical expertise or oversight and sometimes came with the explanation that BVI is a “rich country”.

One senior educator suggested a disjunction between local expectations of help from Britain and levels of assistance forthcoming. They explained: “...I do believe that Britain does have a sense of responsibility. I don’t think it bears itself out in as many ways as people might hope”. The interviewee made a comparison with close neighbours, the US Virgin Islands, where federal funds from the US Government are spent on infrastructure, public services and hurricane relief; “whereas over on this side we see nothing from the UK” (Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

Further areas where some interviewees felt the UK should have a responsibility to the BVI were in immigration policy and trade. One interviewee argued: “I think there

should be some way that the UK should be able to help the British Virgin Islands negotiate better pricing” (Interview, BVI 05, 2011). Another interviewee discussed in detail the need for the BVI “having to accept a deeper responsibility for their own governance”, including “financial responsibility” (Interview BVI 09, 2011). Here responsibility is rallied in support of greater self-governance and empowerment. However, the challenges posed by providing adequate services across the outer or “sister islands” means help from Britain is seen as desirable, mobilising the type of argument based on capacity and lack of resources as seen in St Helena:

...I don't think we have the level of capital to develop those islands, to provide that service that they need, that we believe now that every human being is entitled to. If there was a way that we can actually get the help to build that level of service in, I think that would be one of the first steps in reaching out to the United Kingdom for help (Interview, BVI 09, 2011).

Other interviewees expressed the desire for the UK to exert more pressure on the BVI Government to implement environmental policies that align with international treaties extended to BVI. One interviewee, for example, explained:

... I feel that the UK doesn't follow through on the laws and regulations that they are party to. They don't make sure that their Overseas Territories abide by those...and there is no support coming to fund things that would help alleviate those stresses on the environment (Interview, BVI 07, 2011).

Here responsibility is linked to the power and will to enforce obligations which are not necessarily generated locally. However, the ability to fulfil these externally-generated obligations is also crucially linked to lack of access to funding, an issue which was also raised as problematic by some interviewees in the UK and in St Helena. Several

interviewees pointed out that some international funding streams are inaccessible as the Overseas Territories are seen as a British responsibility:

One of the problems here is that as an Overseas Territory, we don't have access to like UNEP funding and the Global Environmental Programme funding because everyone, like the United Nations people, see us as an Overseas Territory, so they expect us to get our funding from England (Interview, BVI 07, 2011).

Some British funding streams are also closed to the Overseas Territories, such as the National Lottery. British expatriate Colin Bramble, of BVI Water Sports Centre, which provides training to many young and disabled people on the island and is affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association, explained:

...we have absolutely no way to tap into Lottery Funds. And I think we should have. We can't even get a Sailability grant from RYA Sailability UK (Interview, Colin Bramble, 2011).

Lottery funding was raised by several interviewees as potentially beneficial. However a recent document by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), made it clear that "National Lottery grants are restricted to recipients located in the UK or Isle of Man" (DCMS, 2012). Funding can be given to UK-based organisations for some projects in the Territories but Heritage Lottery Funding retains "an emphasis on funding the heritage of the UK for access by the people of the UK" (DCMS, 2012, p.12). Here is a case where the scope of responsibilities considered appropriate by one Department of the UK Government, is limited by an understanding of the Overseas Territories as positioned outside the UK.

However one expert interviewed praised the support from the UK in terms of funding for the environment, particularly through the OTEP project, an input which was described as of ongoing benefit:

I certainly would encourage the British Government to continue its support for the environment in the overseas territories and specifically its funding of biodiversity initiatives in the OTs, whether through OTEP or the Darwin Initiative. I don't know of similar initiatives in the US Virgin Islands, for example, although the USVI is also a territory... (Interview, Judith Towle, Island Resources Foundation, 2011).

Health is another area mentioned by one interviewee as possibly benefiting from UK intervention, despite it being a responsibility devolved to the BVI Government. The interviewee expressed their disappointment at the standard of health care in the territory and argued that responsibility for health should be one of the Governor's responsibilities:

I personally think, for example, that the police force is under the Governor and this is my own suggestion, which might be completely not realistic, but I think the health care system should be under the Governor as well. That simply will put us in direct connection and will help or make it easy for Britain to help British Virgin Islands (Interview, BVI 08, 2011).

The speaker also expressed the opinion that the UK Government should help with roads and health and safety:

...but I think apart from the fact that we have a Governor around us, there is nothing really much, there's not anything you feel you can say is direct care from Britain to the British Virgin Islands... (Interview, BVI 08, 2011).

Several of those interviewed also indicated a wish to see more technical assistance, exchanges and secondments from Britain. One senior politician mentioned help with technical expertise (Interview, BVI 17, 2011), again suggesting issues of capacity and

human resources. In British Virgin Islands, responsibility was less focused on economic aid and elicited, instead, a range of issues encompassing more oversight regarding environmental obligations; the sharing of technical expertise, and further access to specific UK funding streams.

6.3 Section Three: International responsibilities

British responsibility in respect of the Overseas Territories goes wider than providing assistance. It also encompasses responsibility, or liability for the actions of the territories over which it retains sovereignty. In recent years National Audit Office reports have highlighted the liability represented by the territories in respect of their potential impact on Britain's finances or reputation (National Audit Office, 1997; National Audit Office, 2007). A 2009 report also looked at the potential liabilities represented by the offshore financial sector, a significant economic pillar in many of the Overseas Territories (Foot, 2009). Liability for Britain is created because, as Henry and Dickson point out, the territories have "no international legal personality and no international legal treaty-making capacity separate from the United Kingdom" (Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.253). It is also argued that this responsibility has been mobilised by the UK to limit the devolution of power to the Territories during the recent process of constitutional reform (Clegg, 2009; Fergus, 2005). This section will proceed by discussing the issue of the financial services sector in the Overseas Territories before examining several instances where Britain is seen by some as falling short of obligations either under international law or wider moral standards in respect of its behaviour in or towards its territories.

6.3.1 Financial Services

The presence of the offshore financial services sector in several of the Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Cayman Islands, BVI, Bermuda, Gibraltar, Turks and Caicos Islands,

and Montserrat) is an area which potentially exposes the UK to ethical scrutiny.⁷⁰ While this element of the economy has helped some territories to be financially independent of the UK, it has also exposed the UK to questions about the probity of some activities within its territories (Clegg & Gold, 2011). This includes the ethics of low or no tax regimes, which, as Palan, Murphy and Chavagneux argue, undermine national tax regimes and shift the tax burden from companies and high value individuals, to workers (2010, p.5-7). Concerns have also been raised over the potential for financial crime in the offshore sector (see Foot, 2009 p.5 on the report by the Public Accounts Select Committee). There is no financial services sector in St Helena or Ascension Island but in BVI financial services form a mainstay of the economy and the territory was one of those reported on in the independent Review of British Offshore Financial Centres commissioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 2008 (Foot, 2009).

Concerns over the potential liabilities posed by the financial services industry were raised in the 1997 and 2007 National Audit Office Reports on the Overseas Territories (National Audit Office, 1997; National Audit Office, 2007) and in an enquiry by Michael Foot in 2009 (Foot, 2009). The past decade has seen a crackdown on money laundering by the Financial Action Task Force and on harmful tax practices by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Clegg & Gold, 2011; Sharman, 2007, p.46-47), which led to the development of a system of Tax Information Exchange Agreements. Nonetheless concern continues over some activities which might take place within Overseas Territories as evidenced by submissions to the FCO online consultation on the Overseas Territories. One joint post to the forum from fourteen organisations wrote of their concerns about the “Potential Processing of the Proceeds of Criminal

⁷⁰ For a discussion of the definitions of a tax haven and an offshore financial centre see: Tax Justice Network (2007) 'Identifying Tax Havens and Offshore Centres'. Tax Justice Network. [Online]. Available at: http://www.taxjustice.net/cms/upload/pdf/identifying_tax_havens_Jul_07.pdf (Accessed: 3.11.09).

Activity in the Natural Resource Sector” unbeknownst to some offshore jurisdictions (FCO Forum, December 29, 2011).

This and a similar submission, highlight ongoing concern over the ethical soundness of some financial activities which could take place within the Overseas Territories. Nicholas Shaxon has also written of what he calls the “London-centred web of half-British territories” which offer “lightly regulated and secretive bolt holes for money” as being part of a new British “overseas empire” following de-colonization (Shaxon, 2011, p.101). Shaxon suggests a hierarchy of responsibility by Britain in which the Overseas Territories may have received privileged British assistance, even if the tax bases of developing countries were undermined. This argument is echoed in the criticisms by the Tax Justice Network and other organisations concerned about the flow of money from developing states to tax havens, which it is argued, may help undermine development in some of the world’s poorest countries. Tax Justice Network is highly critical of tax havens which allow wealthy individuals and organisations to escape their responsibilities to the societies from which their wealth is created (Tax Justice Network, 2012).

In the British Virgin Islands, financial services have been a pillar of the economy since the early 1980s. The 2007 National Audit Office report stated that more than fifty per cent of Government income in the Territory derived from offshore company registration fees (NAO, 2007); and in 2011 more than 450,000 companies were incorporated within the BVI (BVI Financial Services Commission, 2011). While identifying financial services as a risk area, however, the NAO report is more concerned with the vulnerability of dependence on this sector (and tourism), and with the need for the Territory to:

maintain its competitive edge through high regulatory standards and modern legislation; balancing the demands of international private finance customers against increasingly demanding international standards (National Audit Office, 2007, p.45).

The concern in the report appears weighted towards the success of the industry, rather than contingent liability to Britain of any potential wrongdoing and the report warns that “there is little margin to support onerous regulation” (National Audit Office, 2007, p.45), while suggesting that BVI would welcome UK efforts to help deter and investigate financial crime, a function that was already better established in BVI than in other territories.

In 2011 Tax Justice Network placed BVI eleventh on their Financial Secrecy Index (Tax Justice Network, 2011). They measured the scale of the financial services industry in BVI as tiny compared to that established within larger jurisdictions, but argued that the territory “must still make major progress in offering satisfactory financial transparency” (Tax Justice Network, 2011, p.1), despite having some tax information sharing agreements and cooperating “with other states on money laundering and other criminal issues” (Tax Justice Network, 2011, p.4).

The BVI has, as of April 2012, signed bilateral Tax Information Exchange Agreements with twenty-one countries, including the UK and the US, ensuring the mutual provision of information regarding civil and criminal tax matters (British Virgin Islands International Finance Centre, 2012). The BVI Government’s International Financial Centre which is responsible for the promotion of the industry claims “all the security and stability that is traditionally associated with the British flag” and asserts:

The jurisdiction has a proud tradition of achieving balance and transparency in regulation; meeting and in many cases exceeding

international best practice standards (British Virgin Islands Financial Services Centre, 2012).

Financial Services in the BVI are regulated by the Financial Services Commission, which is responsible for registering companies in the BVI and for safeguarding against illicit activities. In 2009, BVI graduated from the OECD 'Gray List' to the OECD 'White List' of countries which have "substantially implemented" the internationally agreed tax standard as set by the OECD (Tax News, 2009).

The regulation of financial services was not a question put directly to interviewees but many raised the issue independently as relevant to the relationship between the UK and the Territory. Discussions on this topic were varied and complex. The importance of the "reputation" and "respectability" of the sector were mentioned, but of equal concern was both the health of the industry, which forms such a large proportion of BVI Government income, and the need for economic diversification, a theme echoed in a recent FCO consultation (Trufflenet, 2012). Linked to the theme of vulnerability of the sector, expressed in some interviews, is a sense of lack of local control in an industry enmeshed in global flows and fortunes. In several interviews, discomfort at a sense of external imposition of measures is contextualised within discussion of British governance. Mutual benefits whereby Britain gains from BVI's financial industry, while the BVI offshore sector receives credibility from links with Britain are also highlighted⁷¹, indicating the intersection of normative values, identity and power.

Analysis of interviews hints at a conflicted British position on the issue of financial services in the territory. One expatriate interviewed described how in the latter decades of the twentieth century the offshore financial sectors had "brought new wealth to these

⁷¹ This image of stability by being linked to the UK is also noted by Clegg (2009).

tiny British dependencies—all encouraged by Great Britain” (Interview, BVI 15, 2011).

They felt it was “a part of Great Britain’s plan to find a way for those Islands to be more viable and not just developed as tourism enclaves”. However, the interviewee described how, when increased oversight of offshore centres was called for, some felt Britain should have shown greater support to its territories on this issue.

Britain’s position on the issue may be gauged in part from an interview with BVI Governor, Boyd McCleary, who signalled the importance of the sector to the BVI economy but also underscored the importance of maintaining the reputation of the financial services industry:

Well, one of the challenges for the BVI is to ensure that the financial services sector remains intact and able to resist the pressures that have been coming from the international institutions. There has been pressure from various international bodies on the financial services centres which are off-shore, such as the BVI, such as the Caymans. And the BVI, the Caymans, Bermuda have all responded very well, I think, to those pressures. They have declared their determination to meet international standards, they have committed to tax information exchange, they have signed up to a series of Tax Information Exchange Agreements, and they are working with the various international fora to ensure that their standards are up to scratch. But that remains a challenge (Interview, Boyd McCleary, 2011).

The importance of the BVI’s reputation is discussed here not so much as a reflection on the UK, but in terms of securing on-going viability as an industry, underscoring the significance of the sector to the Territory’s finances. The pressure to conform, it is suggested in the above extract, derives from bodies external to the UK: “international institutions”, “international bodies”. This depiction of pressure emanating from wider international institutions is echoed by one interviewee who spoke of concern:

...that legislation, or enforcement of legislation, in major developed countries could practically eliminate the offshore financial services industries and that is something that we have little control over (BVI 02, 2011).

In this analysis Britain is not seen as dictating compliance but the possible divergence of interests on this issue are highlighted. The British:

...have issues of their own where the very thing that they may need to do to strengthen themselves up economically, the tax base and all of that, are the very things that might be detrimental to our offshore financial services sector (Interview, BVI, 02, 2011)

The interviewee exposes a conflict of interest underpinned by the separation (yet ongoing link) of these two political communities. The implied retention of British taxes – a key feature of the economic independence of a state – is a measure which potentially conflicts with BVI’s financial self-sufficiency – itself a key UK policy.

The issue of financial independence was also raised by one BVI politician who desired more consultation, particularly on issues of tourism and financial services. The speaker accepted that “we have to abide by international treaties and regulations” but argued that it sometimes felt “like we are being forced to make decisions that are going to be detrimental to our own survival” which could “retard our progress, then we might have to come beg you and I don’t think that is what the United Kingdom Government is looking for” (Interview, BVI 14, 2011). The suggestion of a return to economic dependency in the phrase: “we might have to come beg you”, defends against the implied pressure from Britain. The speaker avoids direct criticism of Britain, indicating international pressures, and also flagging up an acceptance by the BVI of the norm of international responsibility on financial matters. Nonetheless BVI is seen to be pressured by external influences - jeopardising “our own survival”. These sentiments were echoed

by another interviewee who emphasised the need for understanding from Britain of the dependence on tourism and financial services “to ensure that the economy survives and not make decisions that are to the detriment of our economic survival” (BVI 18, 2011).

Here again Britain’s concerns are recognised but balanced with the economic viability of the territory which is described in emotive terms of survival. This discourse echoes what JC Sharman calls “the weapons of the weak” in the struggle between the regulators and the territories (Sharman, 2007, p.45). He argues that small international actors have used normative values such as the importance of competition, trade liberalisation and anti-colonial rhetoric in a “mimetic challenge” to protect their industry (Sharman, 2007, p.48). While anti-colonial rhetoric is less evident in the discourse above, the value of financial independence, a key pillar of British policy towards the territories, is echoed against potential threats to the offshore industry, while the norm of international responsibility is articulated.

Other responses highlight the mutual benefits of the industry: Britain receiving remittances from UK financial experts based in the BVI; and the BVI’s reputation as a place to do business underpinned by the association internationally of Britain with qualities of stability (see also Clegg, 2005, p.125). One interviewee, for example, discussing independence, argued that:

With the financial sector and tourism yes, you can still have the industry but it won’t be the high quality, high end. The reason for that is because London, like France, or the US, is seen as being a stable democracy. The [BVI as an Overseas Territory] therefore gets respectability in the eyes of the world (BVI 20, 2011).

BVI in this description gains its international reputation partly from its continuing under British sovereignty, a feature also noted by Clegg (2009). Britain gains, meanwhile,

according to another senior politician in BVI, through the employment of British expatriates in the financial services sector, where “there are a lot of British and English people working” and through the fact that “remittances go back to Britain” (Interview, BVI 17, 2011).

The existence of the financial services sector highlights the ethical ambiguities inherent in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories, where areas of Government are devolved to the territories and yet where Britain remains responsible and liable for the territories on the international stage. The financial sector in BVI underpins the Territory’s economic independence - a key pillar of British policy towards its Overseas Territories and, as discussed in Chapter Five, a fundamental ingredient in the Territory’s sense of a distinct national identity. Regulation can be constructed as colonial-style interference in national economic affairs (Sharman, 2007). Yet the ongoing constitutional link means the UK may be associated with any potential deviation from international standards in the industry. Britain may also, by association, be subject to criticism regarding the detrimental effects of the offshore sector on national tax bases, particularly in developing countries.

6.3.2 Human rights

The final section of this chapter will examine questions of the extent to which British policy towards the Territories can expose Britain to ethical criticism, this time over questions of human rights, one of the most emotive issues within domestic and international politics.

6.3.3 The Chagos Islands

One of the most controversial examples of British Government action with regard to the Overseas Territories has been the treatment of the Chagos Islanders removed by the

British authorities from the islands in the early 1970s to make way for an American base on Diego Garcia (Curtis, 2003; Gifford, 2004; Snoxell, 2008; Vine, 2009). Despite campaigns and several court cases, the islanders have not been allowed to return to their homeland on the grounds, predominantly, of security. In 2010 FCO Minister at the time, Henry Bellingham stated:

Full immigration control over the entire of the British Indian Ocean Territory is necessary to ensure and maintain the availability and effective use of the territory for defence purposes of both the UK and the US with whom the UK has treaty obligations (Bellingham, 2010b).

This suggests a clear example of the privileging of perceived defence interests over the rights of the peoples of the Territory, supporting a realist understanding of the prominence of power and interest. The Chagossians' legal bid, dismissed by the European Court of Human Rights in December 2012, was supported by Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, 2009). The moral censure of the treatment of the islanders may be gauged by the title of a book on the subject by American anthropologist David Vine called *Island of Shame* (2009)⁷², an epithet echoed by one former British official interviewed who described the removal of the islanders as an "absolute scandal" and the UK record on human rights in this case as "shameful". In a similar vein, TV presenter Ben Fogle wrote, in a letter to *The Guardian*, that the expulsion of the islanders was described by some as "UK foreign policy's darkest day" (Fogle, 2010).

In 2010, then Foreign Secretary David Miliband announced that the British Government was creating the world's largest Marine Protected Area in the Chagos Islands to help conserve the extraordinary biodiversity in the relatively pristine natural

⁷² Although the book deals mainly with the American responsibility for the treatment of the islanders in the pursuit of strategic bases untroubled by the complications of local populations emerging from colonisation into independent statehood, the book also outlines British involvement in the affair.

environment of the archipelago (FCO, 2010). Writing in *The Independent*, Michael McCarthy wrote that this move, which signalled a ban on all fishing in the area and appeared to create further barriers to any return of the islanders:

raises the increasingly difficult question of how to weigh up the protection of the best remaining parts of nature, in a rapidly degrading world, against the needs and rights of people (McCarthy, 2010).

The new reserve, which was supported by some environment groups⁷³, particularly the American-based Pew Environment Group (Pew Environment Group, 2009), was described by David Miliband as “a further demonstration of how the UK takes its international environmental responsibilities seriously” (FCO, 2010), emphasizing the normative justification for the decision. The reserve, it was argued, would not only preserve globally important coral reefs but would also help regenerate fish stocks essential to livelihoods along the East African coast. However, subsequent reports alleged the Foreign Office was aware that creating an MPA could prejudice re-settlement of the Chagossians (Evans & Norton-Taylor, 2010). Commenting on these revelations, Fogle wrote that he was “horrified that the UK Government has used this to keep the islanders from returning to their rightful home” (Fogle, 2010).

The ethical dimensions of British policy in the British Indian Ocean Territory are referred to in a recent FCO online consultation where several commentators highlight the

⁷³ The plan was supported by groups under the Chagos Environment Network (FCO, 2010). Other environment groups expressed their reservations at the plan and called for the inclusion of the Chagos Islanders in the running of the Marine Protected Area. For example, in a letter to the Foreign Secretary, the Marine Education Trust stated that it supported efforts to protect the archipelago but wished to see an option which considered the possibility of future resettlement of the Chagos Islanders (Marine Education Trust (2010) 'Letter to Foreign Secretary David Miliband'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.marineeducationtrust.org/sites/default/files/option4petition.pdf> (Accessed: 17.3.2010).

unresolved issue of the Chagossians campaign to return to their homeland. One respondent, for example, comments:

The Queen's 60th jubilee year in 2012 would be an ideal time to announce a reversal of this injustice, one that would be welcomed not only by the Chagossians themselves, but also by the numerous Britons who have been embarrassed for so long by this cynical, outdated and undemocratic exercise of realpolitik (FCO forum, December 13, 2011)

The writer suggests that the episode is a stain on Britain's self-image and international identity as the use of realpolitik is seen as clashing with an image of Britain as modern and hence implicitly ethically responsible. In an analysis of the recent FCO consultation on the Overseas Territories, consultants Trufflenet reported that in response to a question about the main challenges facing territories in relation to politics and government, "the eviction of former Chagos Islanders was the second most mentioned issue" after corruption, with thirteen responses, two from NGOs (Trufflenet, 2012, p.15).

The above discussion has highlighted the extent to which British policy towards its territories may be seen by domestic organisations and individuals as ethically-charged and, in the case of the Chagos Islands, as failing in terms of the responsibilities owed to the people of the territories. Britain is judged by its adherence to human rights standards to which it has agreed and the privileging of security and military-strategic concerns are judged by some as harmful to Britain's reputation as a foreign policy actor. As the next section will show, these concerns also spill over into issues affecting another military-strategic territory: Ascension Island in the mid-Atlantic.

6.3.4 Ascension Island

As described in Chapter Four, Ascension Island is seen by the UK Government as an important strategic asset for Britain and is also used by the United States military. Indeed

it may be argued that the importance of Ascension as a military asset both to the UK and the US is such that the military interests influence other activities on the Island.

Following the 1997 election of a Labour Government, and linked to Robin Cook's promotion of an ethical dimension to foreign policy (Cook, 1997; Little & Wickham-Jones, 2000), a process was put in place to consider the possibilities for providing greater rights and political community for those working on Ascension Island. Following consultation, some democratic rights were given to those living on the Island in the form of elections to an Island Council. However, the locally known "U-turn" in 2005, when the British Government refused to allow the right of abode or the right to buy property on the Island, is seen by some observers as problematic. The UK Government claimed the decision was based on "the risk that a settled community might not be economically viable" and was consistent with the UK Government's need to minimize "the risk to UK taxpayers" and not "unnecessarily exposing the UK to contingent liabilities" (Lord Triesman, 2006), suggesting the privileging of British interests over those of the workers on the island, mostly British citizens from St Helena. One St Helena-based respondent told the researcher that the restriction of rights of people to move freely to Ascension might be due to the military presence. They explained that the new 2009 Constitution for St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha (Great Britain, 2009) did not provide for the right to freedom of movement to Ascension and asserted that there are some human rights concerns regarding Ascension.

While several interviewees who had spent time on Ascension expressed support for the lifestyle, work opportunities and income it had provided, some unease has been expressed, notably in Parliament, about decisions on the right of abode - underscoring a possible differentiation between the interests of Britain and some of the inhabitants of

Territories, one in which British interests are privileged. During a debate in the House of Lords in 2006, Lord Berkeley asked FCO Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Lord Triesman to:

assure the House that there is no hidden agenda in the medium or long term to kick all those people off the island and hand it over to the Americans as happened on Diego Garcia? (Lord Berkeley, 2006).

While Lord Triesman gave his assurance, it must be seen in the context of the fact that a lack of right of abode already exists. There is on-going unease among some at the lack of some rights for contract workers, mainly St Helenians, on the Island.

The emphasis of strategic imperatives over economic, social or political development on the Island highlights the way in which UK interests are here de-coupled from, and privileged over, the interests of those from the Overseas Territories and over normative principles. As seen from discussion in Chapter Five, the question of identity is central to whether certain groups may be seen to be included in the idea of the common good. In the case of Ascension, the status of workers on the Island as temporary means that their interests are seen to lie elsewhere, usually with St Helena, and British interests in the Island, whether in terms of ensuring its strategic use or limiting financial liability to the British tax-payer, largely take precedence.

The preceding section has outlined how British policy towards the Territories can expose the UK to criticism in terms of the ethics of its actions. The removal of the Chagos Islanders is historical and yet subsequent governments have, in challenging claims by the islanders to return, continued to privilege arguments of defence over that of the rights of the Chagossians. The creation of the MPA illustrated the conflict of environmental responsibility and that of the responsibility to the former inhabitants of the islands. The

right of abode is also a sensitive issue in Ascension Island where workers, mostly from St Helena, are not usually able to stay on the island beyond a work contract, where free movement to the island is strictly controlled, and where the further development of a settled political community remains limited.

6.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted the ethically charged discourse around the relationship of the Overseas Territories with Britain. In line with much of the academic literature on the Overseas Territories, most elites interviewed viewed the relationship largely in terms of the fulfilment of an inherited responsibility by Britain rather than the pursuit of power. How those responsibilities are discharged in practice, however, was sometimes subject to criticism, with allegations of neglect in both St Helena and in the BVI, although this was also countered with praise from many regarding the increasing aid budget to St Helena and investment in air access to the island. In both BVI and in St Helena, responsibilities were seen to be mutual, echoing the principles of the 1999 White Paper. The chapter also explored the ways in which the retention of the territories, and British policy towards the territories, can expose Britain to ethical criticism of its actions in respect of human rights, the development of political community, and the regulation of the offshore financial services sector.

Chapter Seven: Power

...there is a fundamental tension which sooner or later will come up and bite us: that these people have an element of self-government, but [also] an element of imposed government over which they have no say. And those of us who live in the UK don't have that; we do have the ability to 'throw the bastards out' (Interview, a former Governor, 2011).

As discussed in section 1.3, this thesis will employ a broadly constructivist definition of power (Guzzini, 2006, p.24) with which to explore contemporary relations between Britain and the Overseas Territories. This understanding of power goes beyond the “fairly narrow and usually materialist conception of power as capacities” and instead sees power as working through “intersubjective” social constructions of knowledge and social reality (Guzzini, 2006, p. 24). As with Lukes’ classic definition of power, this view gives weight to ideological influences which work to “get others to have the desires you want them to have” through shaping social norms (1974, p.23). However, realist emphasis on the “capabilities” (Stoessinger, 1973, p.23) and resources, of the various actors can also provide an important backdrop to understanding the relationship (Morgenthau, 1993; Stoessinger, 1973), particularly where the Territories are characterised by smallness and remoteness in comparison with the UK. Thus, following Barnett and Duvall (2005) and John Allen (2004), this thesis will remain alert to multiple understandings of power as both embedded in the material and institutional capacity to control the behaviour of others and ideological structures and practices which shape subjectivities and desires.

Much of the literature on the Overseas Territories stresses the benefits to the non-independent jurisdiction of the continued link and one scholar describes current relations as “upside-down de-colonization” where the small non-independent entities

extract significant advantage from the larger state through what Godfrey Baldacchino calls the “power of powerlessness” (Baldacchino, 2010, p.51). However, as Guzzini argues: “To say that a system benefits certain people does not mean that they caused that benefit or that they control it” (2006, p. 171). The balance of power and how it is distributed between these parties is clearly therefore a key issue for gaining a deeper understanding of contemporary relations between Britain and its Overseas Territories.

The chapter will proceed by exploring to what extent and in what ways the relationship with the Overseas Territories may be seen as of benefit to the UK or whether, as argued by some, the absence of interest represented by the Overseas Territories suggests a constraint on British power and the privileging instead of other factors such as identity or ethical norms. It will then turn to questions regarding the extent to which the anomalous position of the Territories as neither wholly within, nor entirely outside the British state means the location of interests are problematized. It will then examine power relations between Britain and the case study territories of St Helena, British Virgin Islands and Ascension Island. In particular, the analysis will focus on elite reactions to recent constitutional reform, recognising the central role of territory constitutions in the ongoing negotiation and re-distribution of power between the territories and Britain. The contrasting economic circumstances in BVI and St Helena will also be examined in order to gauge the relationship between economic resilience and perceptions of empowerment; and finally the analysis will explore networks of influence outside formal channels, which may also shape the relationship between Britain and the territories.

7.1 Section One: the ongoing link

7.1.1 The persistence of the colonial relationship

A significant trend within scholarship on non-independent jurisdictions stresses the benefits to the Overseas Territory, or similar entity, of maintaining a link with a larger, usually former colonial power. Godfrey Baldacchino, for example, emphasises the capacity of small non-state actors to use their jurisdictional powers to their advantage (Baldacchino, 2010, p.65). In this analysis the former colonial power “is often all too willing to accede to their [the island enclaves’] political agenda” (Baldacchino, 2010, p.19) and the relationship is characterised by “upside-down de-colonisation” where the former colony pursues a relatively benevolent central power and extracts advantages, often through the “power of powerlessness” (Baldacchino, 2010, p.150).

While Baldacchino does not claim this set of relations is universal (and acknowledges the larger state’s powers in several circumstances), the idea of the geographically small and economically insignificant Overseas Territories as exerting power over a reluctant former colonial state, is intriguing and, to an extent, confirmed by this research. Interviews with some elites in the UK suggest that until recently the territories were largely viewed officially as liabilities rather than as assets to Britain. Several UK-based participants questioned the material benefit to the UK of some Overseas Territories, which were instead framed as a responsibility. One former Overseas Territory Governor argued:

Quite frankly there is no particular benefit to the remaining dependent territories so far as the United Kingdom is concerned...The historical relationship means that we have a duty of care towards them (Interview, UK 11, 2011).

Another former Governor, when asked about the extent to which the relationship with the Overseas Territories benefitted Britain, answered emphatically: “Frankly, none whatsoever. I see no benefits to the UK” (Interview, 2011).

The perceived lack of material benefit to the UK highlighted above, and reiterated by other interviewees, suggests the limitations of realist notions of state behaviour in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of this particular set of international relations. A relatively powerful international actor, Britain, is seen to retain a link with territories from which the benefits are not obvious. Instead, the continuance of the relationship is endowed with an ethical explanation; “a duty of care” is given as the primary motive. Several interviewees pointed to strategic uses or the research potential of some territories but wider UK interests were generally downplayed.

The sense of UK responsibility predominating over interests, where strategic uses are absent, is summed up by an anecdote from a former BVI Deputy Governor:

You know back in '89 or thereabouts at a conference in Oxford, I remember ...saying that really the feeling we have is that Britain would like to get her independence from the Territories. The question is: will she fight for it? Would Britain fight for her independence? And that was a joke that I understood went around FCO. By which I meant that it seemed to us that the UK would really like to be rid of this responsibility as quickly as possible and as painlessly as possible but of course don't want to be seen as callous or heartless (Interview, Elton Georges, 2011).

The constraint on Britain in this analysis is the reluctance to use power, “will she fight for it?” in the face of potential ethical censure. Here both normative considerations and British national self-image are seen to override national interest and the vision of the relationship, therefore, conforms to that presented in much of the academic literature in

which Britain finds itself in an “enforced colonial condition” in terms of ongoing responsibility for its former territories (Skinner quoted in Baldacchino, 2010. P. 47).

This argument, however, does not emphasise territories which may still be of strategic importance to the UK⁷⁴. Furthermore, it implies that traditional power relations between colony and state have in some respects been reversed. That there may be advantages gained by the territories from the link does not necessarily mean they hold power over the British state. The next section will therefore explore the importance of some Overseas Territories as “state interests” (Clinton, 1993, p.51) for Britain, before turning to the question of power relations between Britain and the case study territories.

7.1.2 Strategic Interest

Recent UK Government statements on the Overseas Territories indicate a shift to a representation of these places as assets to Britain. This may be seen as part of a Coalition Government foreign policy which claims to champion “an enlightened vision of the national interest” (The Conservative Party, 2010) where the identity and interests of the state are bound up with influence beyond its borders. *A Resilient Nation: National Security – The Conservative Approach*⁷⁵ claimed that:

Britain is an outward-facing, trading nation, heavily engaged in the affairs of the world. We are a great country, with political, cultural and economic authority worldwide which far exceeds our size. It is in our national interest to preserve and extend this influence. Not out of a sense of nostalgia for past glories, but because we wish to cope with present challenges and seize future opportunities... (The Conservative Party, 2010).

⁷⁴ In a section entitled “Innovative Governance (Imposed) on Islands; The Empire Strikes Back” Baldacchino does discuss the use of subnational island jurisdictions by former colonial powers for specific purposes such as military uses and acknowledges that the ability of the mainland to exert its power is often enhanced where resident populations are de-populated or militarized (Baldacchino, 2010. P, 110-141).

⁷⁵ This document was later to become a Green Paper.

With what could be interpreted as a gesture towards the rehabilitation of a positive conception of empire through the reference (even as it is denied) to “past glories”, the statement indicates the importance given to the maintenance and expansion of Britain’s influence and authority worldwide. In the first of Foreign Secretary William Hague’s post-election speeches *‘Britain’s foreign policy in a networked world’*, he argues for “a distinctive British Foreign Policy that extends our global reach and influence” (Hague, 2010b). These statements point to a foreign policy influenced by realist notions of the state as a relatively discrete unit behaving predominantly in terms of a defined set of national interests - although an ethical dimension is also mentioned (Hague, 2010a). In Chapter Five it was argued that UK Government policy regards the Territories as partially separate from the British state and to some extent excluded from the “common good” (Clinton, 1993, p.50), which in realist IR thinking is protected during interaction with other units in the international system⁷⁶. However, if the territories are not entirely part of the state, they may be seen as what David Clinton (1993, p.50) calls “national interests” of benefit to the British state.

In emailed questions to the FCO’s Overseas Territories Directorate, the researcher was referred to a 2010 speech by then Overseas Territories Minister Henry Bellingham in which he described the Overseas Territories as: “a huge asset to Britain; they are part of the British family; they want to remain British and we should cherish that and respect that” (Interview, FCO OTD, 2011). The response continued:

- *The Territories contribute to the increase in potential that flows from the human and cultural diversity of the British family;*

⁷⁶ The constitutionally retained responsibility of the UK for the defence and foreign affairs of the Overseas Territories and recent commitments to their security in the 2012 White Paper suggest that in terms of security the Overseas Territories fall within the ambit of the state.

- *The Territories offer particular opportunities to UK investors, employment to UK specialists and, in the case of the financial centres, play a complementary role to the UK-based financial services industry;*
- *They offer a huge diversity of natural environments for research by UK and international scientists and specialists;*
- *The Territories include natural resources including environmental resources of global significance (fisheries, minerals and hydrocarbons, reefs, sea mounts, ocean, biodiversity) (Interview, FCO OTD, 2011).*

Strategic value was not mentioned but the affirmation of the value of the Overseas

Territories to the UK points to a new initiative to frame, particularly the permanently populated territories, as providing significant benefits to the UK. This discourse was reiterated by Bellingham in 2011:

There is a huge interest in our OTs, including in their fantastic environmental resources. The Government's policy is awakening interest in this little known but very valuable aspect of Britain (FCO, 2011a).

The use of the word “interest” suggests both active focus on, and perceived value in, the Overseas Territories, while the use of the term ‘aspect of Britain’ again emphasizes the territories’ indeterminate relation to the state.

Of the fourteen Overseas Territories, five have a permanent British military forces’ presence: British Indian Ocean Territory, Gibraltar, Ascension Island, the Falkland Islands and the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus. A British naval presence is also maintained in the South Atlantic and in the Caribbean. The commitment to the defence of the Overseas Territories was emphasised repeatedly throughout the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (United Kingdom HM Government, 2010), which contains seven references to the Overseas Territories, including “an independent ability to defend our Overseas Territories militarily” (p.12) and the “maritime defence of the UK and its South Atlantic Overseas Territories” (p.21). In Parliament British interests are sometimes evoked

in close proximity to discussion of the Overseas Territories, suggesting an association. For example, Leader of the Opposition, Ed Miliband MP, asked what the SDSR would mean for Britain's defence of "our interests around the world" and "for our ability to defend our overseas territories?" (Miliband, 2010). The importance of the Overseas Territories to Britain in strategic terms is supported, to some extent, by interviewees, some of whom identify the continued significance of several territories. A former Administrator of Ascension Island stated:

... this business that the British Government has been engaged in since 1945, more or less, of getting rid of overseas responsibility was always bogus – we weren't going to get rid of anything we really wanted. We were going to negotiate landing rights, military bases all over the place (Interview, Simon Gillett, 2011).

Another interviewee explained the ongoing importance strategically of Gibraltar. Albert Poggio, UK Representative of the Government of Gibraltar, explained:

We feel, as very proud Gibraltarians and British Gibraltarians, that we are very vital strategically, if nothing else, to the UK...I mean certainly Gibraltar still, even today with all the military cuts that have recently been announced, enjoys the presence of the three Armed Services...(Interview, Albert Poggio, 2011).

The above discussion has noted the perceived important strategic role of the Overseas Territories to Britain. What has not been established, however, is the extent to which the British state has power over these territories. This question underlines not only the ambiguity of the Territories' position with regard to the British state but also the difficulties of generalising across the Overseas Territories. The next section will look at how the balance of power between Britain and the Territories is perceived in the case study territories of Ascension Island, St Helena and the BVI. The discussion will proceed with an exploration of issues of power on Ascension Island, a mid-Atlantic base which has

been used for strategic purposes since 1815 when annexed as a precaution against Napoleon's escape from St Helena (Royle, 2004).

7.2 Section Two: Perceptions of power: three case studies

7.2.1 Case study one: Ascension Island

The central hypothesis of this study is that identity is fundamental to understanding the relationship between Britain and its Overseas Territories because how groups see themselves in relation to others impacts on the way power is used and ethical obligations are conceived. The previous chapter established that identity on Ascension is problematic, as while there are officially no Ascension Islanders, only contract workers, there is some identification with the island as a more permanent community.

Prior to 1999, Ascension Island had been used as a military outpost and as base for the Eastern Telegraphy Company (later Cable and Wireless) (Royle, 2004). Until 1921, the Island was "administered by the Admiralty" (Gosse, 1938). Stephen Royle, one of the few social scientists to have studied the island explains:

From 1815 until 1922 when the military withdrew, the island was "imperial" – a military base entirely at the service of the distant British state, which through its navy, exercised total control in deciding the island's population structure and settlement system (Royle, 2004, p.114).

This description suggests what Barnett and Duvall (2005) describe as compulsory power, emanating from the centre and impacting at a distance. After 1922, the administration of the Island was transferred to the colonial Government on St Helena, enacted by a representative of the Eastern Telegraph Company, which effectively ran the island (Royle, 2004, p.115). These arrangements suggest a far more diffuse, delegated arrangement of power sub-contracted to non-state agents with little direct oversight from London (Royle,

2004, p.116). In 1940 the military returned and from 1964 when a UK Government resident administrator was appointed (Royle, 2004), the Island was run in consultation with representatives of the main island users (FAC, 2008a, p.Ev 125). According to evidence submitted to the FAC in 2007 by a group of residents:

The senior managers of the main User organisations sat in various committees together with the Island Administrator (paid for by the Users) and they decided on local issues, from infrastructure to policy agreements. Workers did not pay any taxes and had no representation or rights enshrined in legislation (FAC, 2008a, p.Ev 125).

The Island was officially a dependency of St Helena and the Governor of St Helena held authority over the Administrator, as explained by Governor Hollamby in a letter to *The Islander Newspaper* in 2001: “In essence this makes me, as Governor of Ascension Island, the legally constituted Ascension Island Government” (Hollamby, 2001). This period may be characterised by the utilisation of the island for its strategic or communications function with power held either directly by the state, by agents of the state or jointly with the representatives of the Users.

Following the 1999 White Paper (FCO, 1999) and partly in response to Robin Cook’s ‘ethical foreign policy’, consultation began regarding introducing greater democratic rights to Ascension. Income tax was introduced and an Island Council set up to which the first elections were held in 2002 (Ev 125 FAC, 2008a). According to evidence given to the Foreign Affairs Committee, many on the Island hoped, and were given some reason to believe, that the Island economy would open for development and people would be able to buy properties on the Island, where previously all accommodation was owned by the user companies (Ev 125 FAC, 2008a). An executive was employed to “dispose of the former assets” of Ascension Island Services (The Ascension Island

Government, BBC and Cable and Wireless) “as a way of kick-starting a privatised commercial environment on the island” and he told a local newspaper:

“I would like to see people in Ascension get the first bite of any cherry. For instance people who have been here for decades might like to form co-operatives and so on”(The Islander Newspaper, 2001).

Therefore, although there was no official population on Ascension Island, and its function was primarily that of a strategic base, used both by a key ally, the United States, and the British military, an embryonic political community may be identified as represented by an elected Island Council and administered by AIG. The power to tax suggests a dispersal of some power to a local government rather than a direct extension of power from the UK state.

However in 2006 the British Government made it clear that people would not be able to buy property or remain on the Island beyond their work contract (Lord Triesman, 2006). Foreign Office Minister Douglas Alexander told the Commons in 2006 that the decision was based on the reluctance of Britain to take on “contingent liabilities” for a settled population (House of Commons Debate, 2006). He explained that “the Council’s establishment...resulted from the UK’s intervention to ensure that Ascension remained economically viable for the users” and “not part of a staged process that was intended to result in those living and working in Ascension being given the right of abode” (House of Commons debate, 2006). This statement suggests a return to an understanding of the Island on the part of the British Government as existing primarily to fulfil the needs of the Users, rather than those living and working on the Island. Power was exercised unilaterally (the decision was made by the British Government) and the voices of those who saw a different future for the island were not effective in changing the British

Government's decision, suggesting a relative powerlessness in the face of the UK Government.

Speaking in Parliament, Liberal Democrat MP Jeremy Browne argued that despite valid arguments to be made “against opening the island up”, nonetheless “the Government have shown a serious disregard for those based on Ascension Island, who were led to believe it would be opened up for residency...” (House of Commons debate, 2006). And referring to this so-called “U-turn” in Parliament in 2006, Vince Cable MP described the situation on Ascension as “an emerging controversy – indeed a scandal” (House of Commons debate, 2006). He also mentioned speculation “I have no proof whatever” that much of the change in policy was due to American influence on the Government (House of Commons debate, 2006). In the same debate Conservative MP Daniel Kawczynski expressed concern “about the lack of Government accountability” for Ascension and the other Overseas Territories (House of Commons debate, 2006).

In 2007 the Island Council resigned en masse, citing in a joint statement their belief that democratic representation needed to go hand in hand with opening the island up and accusing the Administration of ignoring elected representatives. They concluded:

...your elected representatives have been used as pawns by HMG to legitimise a regime that is questionable, discriminatory, dishonest and unfavourable to the taxpayers of this island and we are no longer prepared to continue this exercise in futility (Bennett et al., 2007).

Democracy, in this view, was superficial – a thin layer of consultation overlaying a power structure in which the Administration and the British Government held the lion's share of power. This understanding is reinforced by a statement by Government Spokesman Lord Triesman in 2006 who explained:

There is a council, and there is bound to be one because there is taxation. Taxation requires representation as we all know. That is the purpose of that Council even within its limited remit (Lord Triesman, 2006).

At the heart of this disagreement are two different views on the identity and function of the island, which underlie the basis on which power is distributed and used. In one view the island is seen as a place where people are employed temporarily to fulfil certain functions, largely in the service of British and American interests. Representation and some input into decision-making are accorded through an Island Council in order to fulfil the normative expectation of representation where there is taxation. In the second view, the Island is seen as more than a “work camp” and instead as a community of people and a greater engagement is desired. Debates over the future of Ascension suggest the importance of peoples’ feelings about place in terms of politics and power. As John Agnew explains:

Political interests and identities are thus the outcome of ensembles of power relations grounded in places even as they extend beyond any particular place (Agnew, 2009b, p.35).

In Ascension, identity with place is ambiguous; disrupted by the transience of work contracts; loyalties and identification with other places, and arguably by constraints upon the possibility of what Agnew calls “place-making” (Agnew, 2009b, p.35). The denial of the right of abode and the need for all those entering the island to gain permission from the FCO-appointed Administrator, underlines the power of the state through border control, even as it relies on the movement of workers from St Helena and other places to service the island’s strategic and communications functions.

The Island Council was re-established in 2008 and is currently made up of five elected members who serve a three-year term. The Governor of St Helena, who is also the Governor of Ascension Island and Tristan Da Cunha, is required to consult the elected Island Council on new laws, which do not fall under the Governor's reserved areas. In a recent press article the Administrator Colin Wells said:

I have clear instructions to seek the Council's approval of all laws and important developments on the island. Yes, technically the Governor can still overrule the Council but the UK Government and the Governor are clear in that they want such powers to be used very rarely, ideally never. Therefore the Council does have power to influence policy development and the drafting of ordinances – the current Council does just that. The Administrator does not “get his way” (Wells, 2012)

Events of the last decade indicate a tension between the desires of some to develop a more permanent settled community and the perceived interests of the British state, whether in terms of security concerns or limiting expenditure. Underlying this is an uncertainty about the nature of the community on the Island: whether it is a nascent political community or instead a strategic base where workers live temporarily in order to earn money for a life elsewhere. Documentary analysis and research suggest, however, that the strategic function of the Island may impact on the extent to which power is distributed.

7.2.2 Case study two: St Helena

The next section will focus on power relations between Britain and St Helena – a territory whose strategic function largely disappeared with the death of Napoleon in 1821 (Gosse, 1938, p.373) and where economic constraints have engendered ongoing economic dependence on the UK.

St Helena: Constitutional Background

The Crown is represented in St Helena by a Governor who chairs an Executive Council made up of five of twelve locally-elected Councillors plus the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General, the latter three being ex-officio (Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.334). According to the St Helena Constitution, the Governor must summon the Executive Council on the request of two elected members of the Executive Council and must include any agenda item requested by an elected member (Great Britain, 2009, p.23). The Governor retains powers over the areas of defence, external affairs, internal security and the police, the Civil Service, the administration of justice, finance, shipping and the disposal of Crown Land (Great Britain, 2009). Thus executive power over many areas of island life is held by the British Governor who reports back to the Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

However legislative power is also vested in an elected twelve member Legislative Council which includes a speaker, a deputy speaker and the Financial Secretary, Chief Secretary and Attorney General as ex-officio members (Great Britain, 2009, p.27). Nonetheless, as Hendry and Dickson also point out “Parliament has unlimited power to legislate for the Overseas Territories” and Parliament can “weigh the interests of the United Kingdom and the territories as it pleases” (Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.23). In the St Helena Constitution, in common with other Overseas Territories Constitutions, a clause reserves to Her Majesty the Queen “full power to make laws from time to time for the peace, order and good government of St Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha...” (Great Britain, 2009, p.4). Authority is thus retained by the UK and enacted through the Governor, and also devolved to the locally-elected legislature, which is represented on the Executive.

“Nothing but vast amounts of British aid...”

St Helena holds no discernible current strategic importance to Britain, nor does it provide economic benefit to the British state. Unlike Ascension Island, it currently has no airport and is not used as a military base. During fieldwork on the Island, many interviewees faltered when asked whether, or in what ways, St Helena benefited Britain. For example, one person answered:

That’s a good one! That is a good one. I’d have to think about that. I have never thought about that. I mean the Island was of strategic importance to Britain in past history with the number of exiles we have had here – not just Napoleon. So yes, it was of great importance to the UK then. It probably is of less importance to the UK now and this is probably why: my feeling is that they are injecting so much money into the place to try and get us to be more self-sufficient (Interview, St Helena 19, 2011).

Several interviewees answered the question of St Helena’s benefit to the UK by referring back to the Island’s historical role as a prison (for Napoleon, Dinizulu, and Boer prisoners of war⁷⁷), as a fortress, or as a re-victualing station in service of British vessels. Some interviewees, as in the extract above, instead highlighted the economic dependence of the Island on Britain.

As suggested in the interview extract quoted above, St Helena also lacks economic capacity and is heavily dependent on Britain to subsidise its economy. One former senior Government official explained:

...basically the economy collapsed when the East India Company left and the sailing ships stopped calling. Various attempts were made to develop sheep [farming] and so on but nothing worked (Interview, Simon Gillett, 2011).

⁷⁷ For a history of Napoleon’s imprisonment on the Island see Julia Blackburn’s (2000) *The Emperor’s Last Island* - Blackburn, J. (2000) *The Emperor’s Last Island: A Journey to St Helena*. London: Vintage. For a brief account of Dinizulu’s imprisonment on the Island from 1890 to 1897 see Gosse (1938) pages 335-336 and also for a description of the imprisonment of six thousand Boer prisoners of War 1900-1902 see Gosse (1938) pages 337-341.

Another interviewee described the island as having “nothing but vast amounts of British aid” (Interview, UK, 25, 2011). St Helena has few natural resources. Steep volcanic cliffs surround the Island and render more than fifty percent of the island unsuitable for agriculture (St Helena Government, 2010).



Plate 1.0: St Helena’s capital Jamestown nestles in a steep valley between barren cliffs. Photograph by the researcher.

Small-scale livestock, fruit and vegetable production does not even meet local consumption needs and fish exports are limited.⁷⁸ As one St Helenian explained:

We do not having anything to export. St Helena used to be a stop-over for vegetables, fruit and everything else for the ships from India via Cape Town but I am afraid we cannot even produce that at the moment (Interview, St Helena 24, 2011).

⁷⁸ In 2009, £320,000 worth of fish was exported according to the St Helena Development and Economic Planning Department’s (2009/2010) Statistical Yearbook.

Total exports of goods and services in 2009/2010 was just over £1 million, whereas imports, including shipping services, overseas training and technical co-operation, amounted to over £20 million (St Helena Government, 2010). Imports are largely from South Africa (52.9%) and from the UK (47.1%) (St Helena Government, 2010), further underscoring dependence on Britain. The isolated geographical position of the Island and associated transport costs means imports and exports are expensive. Average wages are low compared to earnings in the UK – just £4,761 a year in 2009/10 (St Helena Government, 2010) and many people work offshore.

A reliance on British aid over recent decades means that the territory can be seen as at a disadvantage with regard to power relations with the British state. British Government assistance, channelled largely through DFID, supports the local Government's recurrent budget, subsidises the RMS St Helena, and provides development aid and technical co-operation. The total UK aid commitment to St Helena has risen from less than £8 million in 1993/4 to more than £20 million in 2009/10 (St Helena Government, 2010) with an additional recent pledge of approximately £250 million for the funding of an airport on the island (Baroness Warsi, 2012). St Helena's status as an Overseas Territory means it is largely unable to seek funding from other sources (although access to EU funding and other sources is widening)⁷⁹. An email interview with a representative from DFID confirmed that the UK Government is the "core donor" for the British Overseas Territories in receipt of aid (Interview, DFID, 2011). St Helena is therefore in a position of economic dependency in respect of the British

⁷⁹ See The 2012 White Paper page 81-85 on assistance to the territories from the EU and the Commonwealth Foundation. According to the DFID Overseas Territories Department Operational Plan 2011-2015 (2011): "with the exception of the EU, the UK Government is the only source of grant funding for our OTs. OTs in the Caribbean region can borrow from the Caribbean Development Bank, but the OTs are not members of the IMF or World Bank and are ineligible for any other multilateral funding, such as UN climate funds" (p.2).

state, from which it must negotiate funding to supplement its annual budget. A DFID representative described the process for deciding aid allocations to territories in receipt of aid:

Economic projections, developed by Territory Governments, as well as macroeconomic and social statistics are examined and discussed and shortfalls identified...The onus is on the Territory Government to present a credible, evidence-based budget for the Territory. Discussions are then held regarding any deficit and how to agree a broad understanding of long-term needs (Email, 2011).

During research interviews, the Island's economic problems were highlighted as a major concern of Islanders and a key characteristic of the relationship with the United Kingdom. For example, asked about the main challenges facing St Helena, one interviewee stated emphatically: "Economic, of course. Economic challenges. I mean we have to find some way of earning some money" (Interview, St Helena 15, 2011). Another interviewee explained:

We are struggling. We are a population of no more than four thousand residents. That makes the cost of living in St Helena significant because all of the costs of living are being divided by such a small number and particularly when you look at the scale of the working population of that 4,000 figure (Interview, Robert Midwinter, 2011).

One former senior SHG official characterized the relationship in terms of the flow of financial support from the UK, emphasizing the centrality of aid to perceptions of the value of the link:

I would say we have a good relationship. And I say that, not everything will go smoothly all the time; and you look for hiccups and things like that. But I think with the aid money we get, you know it's grown. I can remember when the budget used to be a million pounds. Now it's thirty million. So over the years I think that we have done very well but as I say there are hiccups. There are things that I think

we could do here ourselves and we need to take responsibility for (Interview, St Helena 16, 2011).

The above extract suggests a desire for greater local agency through taking “responsibility” and further self-reliance. Implicit in the “we need to” is a local St Helenian community distinct from Britain. Thus a particularistic community anchored in place underpins the perceived necessity for agency and action.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the obligation on the UK to fund St Helena, conferred both by UN convention and by UK legislation, also suggests a constraint on the use of power of the former colonial state. This is a relationship from which, due to adherence to the principle of self-determination, Britain is unable to detach itself, and one to which it is obliged to commit significant (per head of population) resources.⁸⁰ This idea regarding the limitation of Britain’s options regarding the territories is underscored by the following extract from an Islander interviewed in Britain:

I am sure that Britain would like St Helena to go off somewhere. It is like an old age pensioner: what do you do with it? All efforts to make it self-sufficient have failed. The British tend to hang on to these old things. They moan about the costs but they do not really have a strategy for them...(Interview, UK 25, 2011).

The terminology here suggests that the territories serve no current purpose to Britain; being simply a vestige of colonialism; or as one interviewee stated: “something the British were stuck with” (UK 26, 2011). The belief that ideally the British would prefer the island “to go off somewhere” suggests an element of compulsion on the UK to retain this link. In

⁸⁰ In the financial year 2010-2011, St Helena and Tristan da Cunha together received the sum of £31,050,000 in budgetary aid from DFID and St Helena received £77,000 from the FCO Strategic Programme Funds see: House of Lords Debate (2012) 'Overseas Territories 24th September 2012'. *Hansard written answers and statements*, [Online]. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/120924w0008.htm> (Accessed: 26.9.2012).

this sense, the lack of power of the former colony conforms to Baldacchino's 'upside-down de-colonisation' where the former colonial power is pursued by the dependency, in this case for financial support (Baldacchino, 2010, p.46-56). Power is held by Britain but its use is circumscribed by international legal norms and the need to be seen both by domestic and international audiences, to act with responsibility, thus implicating ethics and identity.

However, while the extracts above suggest a situation where Britain is constrained, through responsibility and adherence to the principle of self-determination to continue a relationship with the Territory, the way in which the relationship is conducted needs further analysis to establish power relations at work. Interviews with island elites and UK experts suggest that while there may be advantages to the island in terms of continued aid, the relative powerlessness of St Helena caused by economic dependence is significant.

Identity and dependency: "We are not looking for handouts"

While some interviewees praise the UK for increased aid budgets over recent years, the language of some islanders when discussing the financial relationship with Britain, suggested the discomfort and feelings of powerlessness felt within a situation of dependency. Many interviewees construct the relationship with the UK as one in which St Helena represents "a burden" to the UK based on the community's economic dependency (Interview, St Helena 29, 2011). Asked about how St Helena might be of benefit to the UK, one interviewee answered:

My personal view is that the only way they would benefit would be for us to be self-sufficient and not be a burden on the British taxpayer, which we are trying to do now and are looking for investment to achieve that and the only one that can invest is HMG. And we are trying to do that when we have the negotiations for our annual

budget – we are asking not for handouts but for Britain to invest in St Helena (Interview, St Helena 24, 2011).

The construction of St Helena as “burden” and the repudiation of “handouts” suggest a normative framework in which financial dependency is understood as a negative. This discourse may be seen as conforming to current official British language and attitudes regarding the island, in which UK assistance is envisaged as leading eventually to “financial self-sustainability and an end to UK budgetary aid” (Mitchell, 2011) and where British policy aims at “getting the island off aid and the British taxpayer’s books, and looking after itself” (Mitchell, 2011).

This language of economic self-reliance was recognised and discussed by some interviewees during fieldwork who talked of their feeling that the UK Government wanted to “have St Helena off their books in terms of grant in aid...” (Interview, St Helena 24, 2011). Phrases such as getting us “out of their hair” (Interview, St Helena 25, 2011) were used to describe the perceived attitude of Britain towards the Island and its on-going financial dependence. The language of being “a burden”⁸¹ was, however, contextualised by St Helenian speakers in two different ways. Among some elites, concern about financial dependency is channelled into aspirations for economic development and an associated possibility of further local agency. However, a policy prioritising economic development and inward investment was also questioned by some on the basis of St Helena’s identity as a part of a Britain and thus entitled to a share in the common goods of the centre. In this second view, dependency and powerlessness is re-cast as asserting a right to a more equal share in the resources of the British state.

⁸¹ The references to St Helena as a “burden” have overtones of Kipling’s now infamous phrase included in the title and each verse of the poem “The White Man’s Burden” in which British imperialism is cast as sons of Britain sacrificing themselves for the good of the peoples of the colonies.

Economic empowerment: imagining a future of self-reliance

In the first of these understandings, increased agency (although not independence or separation from Britain) and economic independence are closely connected. Many of the island elites interviewed during fieldwork expressed their gratitude to the UK for financial input to the island, particularly the (at that stage potential) investment in an airport, which was seen by many as key to possible economic independence from Britain. For instance, one Councillor stated:

And I think there has been a write-up in the papers overseas, as to why should they spend £300 million on 4,000 people and it works out to some magnificent figure, but yet he [the minister] stood by it. And I would like to think that in the long run there will come a time when we will be very much less dependent on Britain for aid (Interview, St Helena 23, 2011).

The use of language which constructs the need for British aid as a negative and as something to be graduated from, is a strong refrain in many of the elite interviews carried out on the island:

Well I would say that by having the UK there as our mother country, we are heavily dependent on aid and it is hoped that with the airport coming on line that we should be less dependent on Britain for aid and it is hoped that eventually we would be less reliant on Britain as much as we are now. The aim is that we will eventually be independent.

Q: So independent economically?

A: Economically, self-financing. But that's a long, long way off yet (Interview, St Helena 23, 2011).

The extract links the familial metaphor of “mother country” with dependence on aid, while creating a vision of a future, heavily qualified by the use of “hoped” and “aim”, in which progress for the island is economically independent. The following quotation also

expresses a desire for a future which is less dependent on British financial assistance, but which, ironically, depends on British capital spending to achieve this:

Oh yes, most definitely there is an impact from the UK, mainly because the Island depends on the UK for aid and on the UK for its running costs. We are in that situation but we want to try and get out of that situation and we are hoping that Britain could probably help us to develop more so that we can raise our own funding within the Island rather than being dependent on Britain all the time (Interview, St Helena 27, 2011).

Here a better future includes not “being dependent” on Britain. This is represented as a teleological process in which dependence is overcome and progress achieved through economic self-reliance. However, while “we want to try and get out of that situation,” the power to achieve this is ultimately dependent on Britain’s willingness to “help us develop”. The ability to act and effect change is therefore constrained by the power of Britain to extend or restrict economic resources.

The fundamental link between economic development and political power is summarised by one former senior Government official who was posted on St Helena in the late seventies and early eighties:

If you hold political responsibility for a rock in the middle of the ocean on the other side of the world and you want to delegate that to the people who live on that rock, or most of the responsibility, you have got to give them real power and that can only be done by enabling them to earn their own living by exploiting their own resources in the rock and in its economic zone (Interview, Simon Gillett, 2011).

The ability to achieve economic empowerment of the Territory, itself a goal of the British state, is largely dependent in the case of tiny and isolated St Helena on the political will of the UK to provide funding to mitigate access problems.

The second response to economic powerlessness is less dependent on a vision of St Helena's eventual economic self-reliance and instead constructs a narrative based around entitlement to a more equitable share in the resources of the state based on St Helena's history, geography and sense of belonging to Britain. In this account, local responsibility for economic development, while accepted, is seen as constrained by the island's geography: "because we are very small, very limited in our natural resources, obviously there is a limit to what you can develop economically" (Interview, St Helena 08, 2011). The argument that St Helena had never been "geared towards self-sufficiency" and had been instead "intended to serve as a maritime base, rather than as a colony" (Schulenberg, 2003, p.538) is repeated by several commentators. One expatriate talking broadly about the link between the UK and St Helena raised doubts about the island's ability to be self-sufficient:

I think what the UK Government is trying to do is to increase the ability of the UK Overseas Territories to be able to stand on their own two feet and so I think their current policy is to invest in the short term so that in the longer term they can reduce their support for the Overseas Territories but whether that's actually feasible or achievable for a very remote Island like St Helena is open to question (Interview, St Helena 7, 2011).

Thus geography is seen to circumscribe potential for self-sufficiency. Instead, as discussed in the previous chapter, St Helena is seen by some to be a part of Britain and thus eligible for a greater share in the resources of the British state. One interviewee (St Helena 08, 2011), outlined this by explaining that despite British citizenship, other civilian rights accruing to those living in Britain were lacking in St Helena. These included the right to political representation in the British Parliament and also a wider range of social and economic rights:

...those are some of the issues you will lose when you come south to St Helena. So, it's like an ugly duckling situation. You are part of it but not a real part of it (Interview, St Helena 08, 2011).

The argument then runs that there will be “limitations” to economic development as the island was settled “for strategic purposes” but that “the relationship, the constitutional relationship, is based on the people’s right.” The interviewee explains: “It is about me being, and you being, equal British citizens, on British territory and benefitting from that” (Interview, St Helena 08, 2011). Here, it may be argued, empowerment is seen as occurring not exclusively through the development of St Helena as an independent economic entity but through acceptance by Britain of the Island as more closely associated.

The above discussion has described two responses to lack of economic power on St Helena. In the first, agency is expressed through the desire for greater local economic self-sufficiency. This suggests a concurrence with a UK Government narrative regarding the need for the island to support itself and reduce reliance on the UK taxpayer. At the heart of this is an understanding of St Helena as linked but separate from Britain; a bounded community, at arm’s length from Britain’s domestic body. In this account, however, empowerment is potentially limited by the UK’s provision of capital investment. Interviewees and informal conversations during fieldwork repeatedly expressed uncertainty over whether Britain would fund an airport, following earlier delays. This dependence on Britain’s willingness to provide funding suggests an imbalance of power in Britain’s favour; a situation underpinned by the extreme inequality in the economic capabilities of the two actors and Britain’s ability to define the narrative in terms of which constitutional model is pursued. The second account by some St Helenian elites re-casts the narrative in terms of limits on economic advancement due to geographical constraints

and claims (on the basis of a shared British identity) to a more equitable division of the resources of the British state.

The following section will examine the extent to which the differences in economic capacity of the two actors is seen to influence political agency on the island; before looking at the extent of the devolution of power to the local Government.

“A master-servant relationship”

During fieldwork on the island, the researcher was struck by the phrase “master and servant” used by one interviewee to describe the relationship between St Helena and the UK. The interviewee explained:

If the UK basically states: “I want this done”, then you don’t really have too much choice about doing it. As they say: ‘He who pays the piper calls the tune’ and basically until we get out of budgetary aid, it will never change (Interview, St Helena 26, 2011).

This phrase suggests a set of out-dated and discredited colonial relations which evoke the cruelties and discrimination of St Helena’s colonial past (Wilson, 2011). Power, in this understanding, flows directly from the centre (London) to St Helena where the required action is carried out. This is what John Allen characterises as “a centred view” of power radiating “from an identifiable central point, with a reach that appears almost effortless” (Allen, 2004, p.2) and differs from understandings of power as more diffuse as proposed by theorists such as Michel Foucault and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (Allen, 2004, p.2; Hardt & Negri, 2001).

Other commentators and interviewees also highlighted what was, until relatively recently, a hierarchical system, in which Saints were “kept down” (Interview St Helena 16, 2011) and Cohen noted that the ability for St Helenians to exercise democratic

representation has only existed since the Legislative Council was formed in 1968 (Cohen, 1983b, p.122). In the quotation above, the emotive binary of master and servant is transposed onto current relations where Britain is seen to “call the tune” politically. Economic powerlessness is seen as the cause and financial independence a possible solution. Unlike in BVI, where the phrase “he who pays the piper” serves to foreground local political decision making on the basis of the financial viability of the Territory, here the phrase explains, and to an extent rationalises, continued UK influence. The interviewee felt that the recent Constitution devolved further powers to the Legislative Council but nonetheless ultimate control is seen to lie with the UK:

But I think what the UK Government really needs to do is to let the control go over this Island. Everything they do, from my point of view, is to keep control over the Island and I suppose, as I said earlier on, because we are still in budgetary aid, I suppose it will always be the same until we get out and probably the only way we are going to get out of it is with the help of the airport and if we can get some other business besides tourism... (Interview, St Helena 26, 2011).

Progress and empowerment in this conceptualisation, is linked to economic self-sufficiency, which in turn, because of the island’s extreme access problems and lack of resources, is seen to rest on air access. This analysis is broadly confirmed by another interviewee who describes relations between Britain and St Helena as “very colonial” and again references the adage of the piper calling the tune:

I must say I still see forms of colonialism with the Governor and the level of power that he has got, although they have tried to devolve some to local councillors now. You know, he who pays the piper calls the tune and you know the FCO and DFID are still very much in control at a strategic level. So this is like a colonialism relationship, although not as much as it used to be in days gone by (Interview, St Helena 8, 2011).

Here again, power is seen to be largely held and used by the Departments of the British Government. There is some mediation in this account through local Councillors but the description is, in Barnett and Duval's typology, compulsory power or direct power of one actor over another (Barnett & Duvall, 2005). Another interviewee described the local democratic process largely as window-dressing:

The agenda comes down the pipe from London, as far as I can see. And it's a function of the Government and the Government officials to, certainly in the strategic terms, maybe not on the detail, but in terms of the general drift of policy, it is the function of the local British Officials to steer the Councillors into agreeing that in some way (Interview, St Helena 10, 2011).

In this view British power is seen as mediated to an extent though local British officials and local democratic representatives.

Air Access MOU: local empowerment or DFID agenda?

The level of empowerment of local democratic institutions on the Island may be examined through responses to a 2010 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the St Helena Government and DFID regarding air access to the island (DFID, 2010). The document states that "DFID is willing to finance an airport for St Helena, subject to a number of specific conditions being met" (DFID, 2010). These involved opening St Helena's economy to inward investment and tourism and included reform of land disposal, planning, immigration, tax, and public sector reduction. While some interviewees insisted the implementation of the MOU was St Helena-led, others described it as St Helena following a UK agenda.

One interviewee claimed that the MOU was "very close to bribery because if you don't agree to these things, then you won't get it [the airport]" (Interview, St Helena 8, 2011). Here the power of 'inducement' (Allen, 2004, p.14) is seen as being mobilised by

the British in order to effect change on the island. The interviewee insisted that “sensible economic development” was necessary but expressed concern about “just opening the island up to aggressive commercialism.” This type of development, it was feared, might not benefit the local community. The interviewee also discussed a protest which occurred in April 2011 (see St Helena Independent, 2011a) against reforms initiated to conform to the conditions of the MOU; and described the Immigration Bill, allowing outside investors to buy land, in terms of the island being “raped” as was discussed Chapter Six:

...Also there's another company who bought 400 acres of land, which is the equivalent of selling Cornwall to somebody from England and that is twelve percent of our arable land. And it is crazy and these are the people who we have to represent the views of the people (Interview, St Helena 8, 2011).

The use of the imagery of rape depicts an unequal set of power relations. St Helena is, in this view, overpowered and assaulted by outside forces. The changes are seen to herald a violation of the island's unique, bounded identity at the same time as the reference to “Cornwall” works to foster identification with the British listener. While the locally elected representatives are clearly the object of this critique, the speaker has already established the extent to which local government is hamstrung by its need for an airport in order to develop economically.

Several other interviewees described recent reforms as significant change in sensitive areas such as land reform and as being largely driven by the UK Government. One non-St Helenian interviewee described the protests around the MOU as caused by the local “Government trying to do DFID's bidding to balance the books before there is any sniff of economic recovery and investment here” (Interview, St Helena 10, 2011). While the speaker claimed that what “protestors are really riled up about” is any aspect

of reform “that wasn’t even required by the MOU”, it is clear from subsequent statements that the actions of the local government are seen as occurring within parameters set by British Government Departments:

DFID really runs the day-to-day policy on everything and since they started using the airport as a lever on this MOU business, I mean there’s no airport contract signed, there’s no guarantee it will happen and yet they have engineered wholesale upheaval on the Island to the point where people are rebelling and in dire straits with their taxes and so forth. And all this is predicated on there being an airport round the corner and it’s still conceivable, as happened in 2008 when the financial crisis struck the world, and DFID just pulled the plug on the airport (Interview, St Helena 10, 2011).

The reference to the possibility of the airport being cancelled is a reminder of the feeling of vulnerability, described in the previous chapter, of the island to changes in British priorities and policy.⁸² Interviews and informal conversations with some Saints during fieldwork suggested that the decision by the British Government in 2008 to reconsider air access following the financial crisis, created significant uncertainty on the island. Indeed DFID’s handling of the air access project was described in Parliament in 2009 by former FCO minister Meg Munn as “shameful” (House of Commons Debate, 2009). Emphasising the St Helenians’ identity as British, the MP argued DFID had:

... used delaying tactics and done everything it can to avoid settling the issue of St. Helena’s transport links with the outside world – links that could mean life and death for any one of the thousands of British citizens on the island. Those people are British citizens because St. Helena is a UK overseas territory. Just because it is situated in the south Atlantic does not make those people less British, although perhaps it makes them more forgettable for DFID (House of Commons Debate, 2009).

⁸² The pause in the negotiations for an airport contract for St Helena was announced by Douglas Alexander, Secretary of State for International Development in 2008. Alexander, D. (2008) 'International Development St Helena'. *House of Commons Debate, 8th December 2008*, [Online]. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm081208/wmstext/81208m0004.htm> (Accessed: 6.2.12).

Here again is the refrain of neglect of people whose identity is British. Geographical distance, it is argued, is not a valid basis for the restriction of resources. Territorial difference and distance, in other words, is seen to be less important than responsibility owed due to shared citizenship.

The above section has discussed the perception of some interviewed that a quasi-colonial power relationship persists between Britain and St Helena. In this view, although a democratic process exists on the island, real power remains with London, from where economic aid derives. Vital decisions concerning the island's future, such as air access, are made by the British Government and the parameters of the recent reform agenda on the island are seen as largely set by the UK. The differential in economic power between St Helena and Britain is perceived as significant by some elites, and the ability of islanders to determine the shape of their own future is seen as constrained, with instead Britain maintaining significant influence over the Island's future. Control is seen as direct – with some decisions made in London such as the pause in the airport; as mediated through achieving the agreement of local democratically elected politicians; and also through inducement in terms of the provision of opportunities and rewards in the form of economic development. The “master-servant” relationship described by some above provides a contrast to the creative “power of powerlessness” suggested by Baldacchino (Baldacchino, 2010). However, research interviews also revealed that many people felt the reform agenda to be largely locally-driven and embraced as a means of ending, or lessening, economic dependence and potentially securing greater local agency.

Constitutional reform and political empowerment on St Helena

During fieldwork on the Island, many elites expressed the view that significant levels of power had recently been devolved to locally elected representatives and that the two parties were “partners” as envisaged by the 1999 White Paper. This view was premised on the restoration of British citizenship in 2002, provisions contained in the new 2009 Constitution, and on access to and influence in the UK political system.

Following the 1999 White Paper, a process of constitutional reform was initiated, resulting in a new Constitution for St Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha in 2009 (Great Britain, 2009). Although the new constitution was contested by some and the process for its approval by members of the local legislature was seen as flawed by some, the new document was considered by many to have devolved significant powers from officials within the St Helena Government, to locally elected representatives. For example, speaking of reforms implemented to conform with UK conditions on the provision of air access to the island, one interviewee explained:

Well, I would say this Council has taken full responsibility for steering the Island's future forward. The Council has taken full responsibility. I would say, previously my understanding is that the decisions were led by the Administration, but now the decisions are being taken by the Council, being made by the Council, being led by the Council and only being supported by the Administration, not being led by the administration...(St Helena, 29, 2011).

Another interviewee described the Constitution as being “a good thing” which “brought us nearer to a Ministerial system”. They felt the new provisions gave:

...elected members more power since elected members now control more of the budget and other issues within Departments than used to happen before (Interview, St Helena 06, 2011).

This perception of a shift of power from the administration (which includes officers on contract from the UK), to the locally elected island councillors was supported by several interviewees. One interviewee felt the new Constitution “gave more responsibility to the Councillors”. While this is seen as positive, constraints on local autonomy by economic dependence on Britain were also noted:

...I do think the tools are there to be more responsible and accountable and to take things into their own hands. But again, that depends on finances because the finances are needed from Britain to be able to let the Island go forward (Interview, St Helena 27, 2011).

One interviewee described the relationship with the UK, both generally and in terms of the Constitution, as a “partnership” (St Helena, 25, 2011). Yet, this is a partnership circumscribed by economic dependence:

Well I think up until recently, we have been thinking that we are actually micro-managed by the UK. To a certain extent that sort of feeling is going away now and a partnership arrangement really is falling into place and St Helena really has influence over its own destiny, to a large extent. We can never, as I said earlier on, become self-sufficient so we will always be reliant in some way on the UK. The UK provides aid but they say to us: you handle it as you wish (St Helena, 25, 2011).

Here again, despite the perception of recent empowerment, the issue of economic dependence is seen as an ongoing constraint. The reference to St Helena’s ‘own destiny’ and the use of the language of partnership suggests an understanding of St Helena as distinct politically from the UK, despite its ongoing economic reliance. A similar ambivalence about the extent of local capacity is expressed by the same interviewee in discussing the new Constitution which is at once portrayed as “ours” an autochthonous, locally-owned document, yet subject to British approval:

Well the Constitution of 2009 is our own Constitution which we developed ourselves with the assistance of the lawyers from the UK, from the FCO, so it is ours. Of course the Constitution itself is really a part of the UK law and so you know, obviously, they had a look at it and they certainly wouldn't want anything put into the Constitution that they are not happy with (St Helena 25, 2011).

The extent to which economic dependency may be seen to constrain fuller autonomy for the local Government was hinted at during interview by the then Governor of St Helena, who explained that future constitutional change was probably needed “as time goes by” but added:

Whether there is a need now, I doubt. I think it would be very hard for the British Government to let go of the control that they operate at the moment without the Island being financially self-sustaining because then they would be abdicating their responsibility to the British taxpayer, and as long as the British taxpayer's money is actually responsible for the prosperity of the Island – difficult to see HMG letting go of the reins (Interview, Andrew Gurr, 2011).

These comments underscore the link between financial dependency and British political control but also highlight the tension inherent in a model in which two entities remain linked, but separate, both constitutionally and economically. The reference to “responsibility to the British taxpayer” suggests that St Helena is seen as outside the British state in terms of expenditure. In this model, while British public money is spent on territories, the British Government is seen to need retained powers.

The extent to which power was perceived to have been devolved recently to the local legislature may be gauged by the way in which the Legislative Council became the object of expressions of popular political discontent in 2011. This culminated in a protest march in the capital, Jamestown, in April 2011 and a petition to the Secretary of State in July. Protests concerned the effects of tax and customs reforms in response to the MOU

between SHG and the UK Government on air access. While the initial letter of protest was addressed to the Governor (St Helena Independent, 2011a), subsequent ire was directed largely at local elected representatives and a petition was sent to the FCO Secretary of State requesting the removal of the Legislative Council. The protest group described the Councillors' position on tax and duty changes as "intransigence" (St Helena Independent, 2011b) but the then Secretary of State, Henry Bellingham, refused to intervene in the local democratic process, describing it as "a sign of St Helena's political maturity that you have politicians prepared to make tough choices..." (St Helena Herald, 2011). The phrase "political maturity" suggests an understanding of a teleological process of political development similar to that discussed by British officials during decolonisation. This phraseology indicates the endorsement of the development of a more robust and self-confident local democracy.

Indeed, the MOU reforms were described by several elites interviewed as largely locally-driven and an example of the extent of the recent empowerment of local political institutions. One interviewee explained:

The relationship that Britain and the UK [have] now, I think it is encouraging because Britain has actually engaged St Helena as being partners (Interview, St Helena 29, 2011).

In terms of the MOU, the speaker argued that people might see it as a DFID led policy, however:

DFID hasn't told St Helena what they have to do – what they have said is that there are conditions to comply with in order to get the airport. So the Council has agreed in conjunction with DFID, the reforms that are to be undertaken. The detail of the reforms is a matter for St Helena... (Interview, St Helena 29, 2011).

Here again is a tension between presentation of the relationship as an equal partnership, and the qualification that there are conditions that have to be met on St Helena before Britain commits investment. This description of the MOU as having only its broad parameters set by DFID is shared by another islander interviewed who explained:

DFID are very much of the view now that they don't want to tell St Helena what to do. So for instance, under the Memorandum of Understanding, we were invited to lead in terms of how we were going to demonstrate to the Minister that we were creating an investment environment that would open St Helena up to tourism. Now they weren't specific about how we achieved that and I guess that's a welcomed approach (Interview, St Helena 13, 2011).

In both these accounts local choice over the details is noted and welcomed but these are acknowledged to take place within the context of the broader policy on investment and tourism. The development of the 2009 Constitution and the process for implementation of reforms in advance of air access are therefore seen by some to have created a greater sense of empowerment for local legislators and their electorate. This may also be linked to the return of British citizenship, which allowed more mobility for St Helenians, particularly to live and work in the UK and also left a legacy of empowerment of campaigners, political contacts and channels of influence in the British political system.

Following the 1981 Nationality Act, the island's Citizenship Commission, which garnered support among some MPs and Lords in the UK, may be seen to have expressed a strong St Helenian voice. As one interviewee mentioned, and Hendry and Dickson note (2011, p. 200-201), the 1999 White Paper recognised the campaign's role in the restoration of citizenship (FCO, 1999 p. 17). Building on this success, which had mustered support from British elites such as Lord Iveagh, Labour MP Dr John Marek, churchmen and others, St Helenians, despite the island's extreme issues of access, continue to gain

support from elites within the UK. The channels are various and include direct access to Ministers and senior officials by island elites and through various UK based St Helenian and non St Helenian individuals and organisations.

The first level of access is that of direct contact with ministers, primarily in the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. During the researcher's fieldwork on the island, councillors held a teleconference with DFID Minister Alan Duncan at which they discussed issues regarding air access and the MOU process. In May 2012 International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell met with Saints in Swindon, where approximately 800 St Helenians live, to discuss the airport construction and British policy towards the Island (DFID, 2012). One Councillor described this type of communication as increasingly frequent and welcomed by local politicians:

We are now at the stage where we have greater partnership with the UK Government, working very closely with the MOU process, for which we have met deadlines. We have regular teleconferences with the Ministers or whoever we want to contact in London. It's very open. If we wanted to set up a teleconference with a Minister, time would be of the essence but there is always the opportunity for that to happen (Interview, St Helena 14, 2011).

Direct contact with ministers and other elites with a specialist interest in the Overseas Territories is also facilitated during the annual Overseas Territories Consultative Committee (OTCC) where Territory representatives meet UK Government ministers as a group and in bilateral meetings⁸³. The Councillor quoted above explained how at an OTCC he made links with representatives from other Overseas Territories and with British MPs. He felt that:

⁸³ In the 2012 White Paper it was stated that the OTCC would be upgraded to a Joint Ministerial Council (FCO, 2012, p.7).

even today, if I were unhappy about a situation, I have strong links with the Members of Parliament who would ask any question that I would put forward, in the House of Commons; and that has happened very much in the past (Interview, 2011).

Furthermore, as noted by Hendry and Dickson (2011, p.52) “any officer in an overseas territory has the right to address the Secretary of State, and any person in an overseas territory may petition the Queen directly” (Hendry & Dickson, 2011). The July 2011 petition mentioned above, and subsequent correspondence between FCO Minister Henry Bellingham and the Petition Group on the island, is an example of this form of direct access to ministers, although not in that case successful in achieving change. One interviewee also welcomed opportunities to input to the 2011 FCO consultation on the Territories:

So the fact, just to be positive about Britain that... the Citizenship Commission, wrote to the DFID Minister and to have a minister actually reply to a small group - I think the practical things says things about the relationship (Interview, 2011).

Other avenues of influence include the St Helena All Party Parliamentary Group - though currently not registered (United Kingdom Parliament, 2012); the United Kingdom Overseas Territories All-Party Parliamentary Group; MPs in areas where many St Helenians live, such as Reading and Swindon; and the St Helena UK Representative who can raise issues with Government officials and Parliamentarians. There are also groups such as the Friends of St Helena and the St Helena Association representing St Helenians in the UK and a wide range of people with an interest in the island. This network was described by one interviewee when asked about the level of influence of Saints over British policy:

there are very strong links with Islanders who have made their homes in the UK. They have got an Association there. We have got a lot of support from British people themselves. I think there is an All-Party Parliamentary Group so we can ask questions in Parliament. There have been a lot of links and help from various UK charitable organisations. So there is more an informal influence than formal, I would say (Interview, St Helena 11, 2011).

Another interviewee felt that informal links and networks of influence in the UK might negate the need for formal electoral representation in the British Parliament:

There have been talks about whether we should actually have one MP representing us in the UK - I think that's similar to how the French do it. To be quite honest, I'm not convinced that that will prove any more successful than the members we have lobbying as part of the All-Party Parliamentary Group. I mean St Helena gets a lot of support from Members there... (Interview, St Helena 13, 2011).

However, some interviewees felt that representation in the British Parliament would be helpful and others expressed the view that informal routes of influence were not sufficient as they could not be relied upon. One interviewee described the use of individual MPs as “very ad hoc” and argued that it needed to be “more formalised” in terms of representation in Parliament (Interview, St Helena 8, 2011). Another explained:

I was wondering why the Territories couldn't have their own representation in higher circles over there. Because the councillors do meet up with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association but that is only at meetings. So probably we might gain if we had improved representation (Interview, St Helena 16, 2011).

One councillor explained that although constituents weren't “shouting out about it”:

That is the thing we could improve on; we don't have a voice in Parliament. All we have got in the UK is our St Helena Representative who attends various meetings but we don't have a voice in Parliament. We haven't really worked on that much but we were hoping that we could have seat in Parliament as you have an MP representing your constituency (Interview, St Helena 23, 2011).

Views on formal representation in the British parliamentary system may thus be characterised as mixed.

St Helena – summary

The preceding discussion explored the perception of elites in St Helena regarding the characterisation of power relations between the Territory and the British state. St Helena can be characterised as non-strategic and lacking in economic resources. It cannot be said to represent a British state interest and the continuation of the link with the Territory can instead be understood in terms of ongoing responsibility based on past colonial use and settlement of the island. In this sense Britain's retention of the island may be represented in terms of a restriction of British power and agency through the normative expectations of continued support and association with particular reference to the principle of self-determination. At one level, therefore, the relationship does indeed seem to approach Baldacchino's concept of "upside-down de-colonisation".

Yet in terms of the division and operation of power within the context of the ongoing link, a more complicated picture emerges in which economic disparities between the actors means significant power is retained by the British Government. Elites interviewed on the island tended to highlight the extent to which economic dependence on Britain influenced power relations, constraining local agency. However, elite responses tended to divide on the basis of differing conceptions of St Helena's status in relation to the UK - underlining the importance of identity in understanding perceptions of the distribution of power. One view stresses the need for economic development on the island as means to greater local agency; the other, while also seeing need for economic development, claims empowerment through greater access for St Helena in the resources

of the British state based on shared identity. However, both these accounts of agency are predicated on either the UK's economic investment or acceptance of an alternative constitutional status.

One view of power which emerges from the interviews and documentary analysis suggests that power relations between state and territory remain in many ways direct and unmediated. Britain decides on crucial issues affecting people's lives on the island such as funding for an airport or the shape of the constitutional arrangement and the decision is effected on the island. These decisions can also be mediated through locally elected representatives and the British-appointed Governor. However, as discussed in the final few paragraphs of this section, the flow of power is not as simple as the above account might suggest. While the UK can be seen to hold significant power over St Helena in terms of economic resources, St Helena has also recently exerted influence on the British state and continues, through various networks of support, to make its voice heard in Westminster. The campaign to restore citizenship in the 1990s was an example of a successful mustering of support in order to effect change. Support for St Helena's position whether it is in terms of citizenship, air access, or greater assistance, often mobilises around appeals to a shared identity and the normative expectations of provision of help to those in need in terms of extreme remoteness. However, despite these networks of influence and recent devolution of greater powers to elected representatives, significant capacity both to hold and use power is retained by the British state based largely on its size and economic resources.

7.2.3 Case study three: Virgin Islands (UK)

The following section will examine perceptions of power relations between Britain and the British Virgin Islands. Drawing on interviews with elites and on documentary analysis, it will explore how the division of power between Britain and the Territory is perceived and represented. Unlike St Helena, British Virgin Islands is not in receipt of budgetary aid. Power relations between Britain and the Territory may therefore be expected to differ from those with St Helena. Academic writing on the Territory has linked economic development with increasing devolution of power to local institutions (Cohen, 2010). Analysis of interview data will largely confirm this interpretation but will also highlight concern and conflicted responses over the extent of powers reserved by the British state, as noted regarding the Caribbean Overseas Territories in general by Clegg (2009) and Hintjens and Hodge (2012). It will also explore how this links to conceptions about the identity of local political community. This section will proceed by outlining the constitutional background to the relationship between British Virgin Islands and Britain before examining perceptions of the 2007 Constitution and of Britain's retained powers over particular areas of Territory life.

British Virgin Islands – Constitutional Development

Following a lengthy period of disenfranchisement from 1902 to 1950 when there was no local legislature in the islands (Dookham, 1975, p.218-221), local political autonomy moved forward from the 1950's through a series of constitutional reviews and amendments (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005)⁸⁴. A ministerial system was introduced in 1967 and in 1979 responsibility for finance was transferred from the Governor to a Minister. As one interviewee described it:

⁸⁴ The first Constitution was in 1735, followed by further Constitutions in 1773, 1774, 1867, 1871, 1956, 1950, 1967, 1976 and 2000 and 2007. Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission (2005) 'Report of the Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.dgo.gov.vg> (Accessed: 28 December 2011)..

... in my opinion, in each case the situation is made more in our favour every time there is a change in these areas. Because when you think in terms of, for example, many years ago, the Governor handled the finance of the Territory and for quite some time now, the Premier has handled the finance of the country. So that each time we make a step, it seems that it is more favourable to us (Interview, BVI 03, 2011).

Following the 1999 White Paper a locally-appointed commission was set up to examine areas for reform, in particular the possibility of further diminution of the Governor's powers. The appointment of a local commission represented, in itself, a delegation of power to the Territory as previously commissioners had been appointed from the UK. The Commission consisted of nine members "drawn from a cross-section of the Virgin Islands community" (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005, p.26) and consulted widely on issues relating to; 'Belongership', the possibility of "scaling down" the Governor's reserved powers, and the feasibility of establishing a cabinet system, among other issues (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005, p.27). While the report of the Commission stated there was no real call for independence (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005), the agenda included a transfer of powers from the Governor to elected Island politicians as well as more symbolic changes, which may be interpreted as assertions of independent national identity. For instance, the Commission recommended that the Chief Minister should see at least a shortlist of potential appointees to the post of Governor; that the title 'Governor' should be changed to "the Resident" and that the 'Chief Minister' should become 'Premier' (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005, p.121). "The big question," the Constitutional Commission report concluded:

"is how does a micro-territory position itself in a new global setting to continue to provide its people with an enhanced quality of life and at the same time maintain a posture of dignity and cultural identity" (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005, p.22).

This concern with “dignity” echoes comments by interviewees in Chapter Five discussing national identity within the context of the ongoing association with Britain and indicates the importance of image in this postcolonial context.

Substantive proposed changes included restricting the Governor’s responsibility to administering solely those areas that remained his special responsibilities; ending the Governor’s primary role of formulating Government policy, except where it related to the special responsibilities; transferring the Governor’s powers over the Civil Service to a Public Service Commission, reporting to the Chief Minister; more involvement for Territory representatives in external affairs; removing the Governor’s sole responsibility for the police to a shared responsibility with elected representatives; and that a National Security Council be formed, to whom the Chief of Police would be responsible. The role of the Governor as presiding over Executive Council and the provision of cabinet style Government were also recommended. These represented a significant claim to greater local authority over the running of the territory. The Governor of the Territory at the time of the review explained:

So in fact, when the negotiations to create a new constitution came up, the British Government didn’t agree to that significant a transfer of power but it did vest responsibility for management of Cabinet with a Cabinet Secretariat rather than the Governor’s Office... An informal arrangement whereby the Governor consulted informally the Premier on security and police matters has been formalised into a National Security Council...and generally the Governor is required to consult more (Interview, Tom Macan, 2011).

Reform also included the name change from ‘Chief Minister’ to ‘Premier’. While not achieving as significant a shift in power as recommended by the Commission, the new Constitution expresses national political identity based on the idea of the uniqueness of the islands’ culture (Cohen, 2010). Paragraph seven, for instance, states:

Affirming that the people of the Virgin Islands have generally expressed their desire to become a self-governing people and to exercise the highest degree of control over the affairs of their country at this stage of development...

suggesting an aspiration to a high degree of autonomy and political independence. Britain is referred to only once at the end of the Preamble and is described by way of the official terminology used by the UN when discussing decolonisation (United Nations, 2009) as “the administering power” (Great Britain, 2007). This suggests a sense of recognition of international discomfort regarding non-independence. The connection to Britain is also qualified by the reference to the link as being “for the time being”. This one mention of Britain in the preamble is included in a statement which reminds of Britain’s commitment to a “modern partnership”. The implication is that this is not to be seen as an entrenched colonial relationship but one based on “principles of mutual respect and self-determination”. The document may be seen to firmly assert BVI identity as a distinct national and political community, while the ongoing link with the UK is qualified as time specific and the need for Britain to respect the political autonomy of the Territory is asserted.

Under the 2007 Constitution, the Governor has “such powers and duties as are conferred or imposed on him or her by this Constitution or any other law and such other powers as Her Majesty may from time to time be pleased to assign to him or her” (Great Britain, 2007, p.23). The Governor must in most cases⁸⁵ consult with Cabinet or in some cases, the Premier (p25). Having consulted with the Cabinet the Governor must follow its advice unless it is an issue which comes under the Governor’s special responsibilities, in

⁸⁵ The Constitution states that the Governor does not have to consult with Cabinet or the Premier if in his or her judgement Her Majesty’s Service would sustain material prejudice, the matter is not sufficient to warrant consultation, or the matter is very urgent. (Virgin Islands Constitution, p 25)

which case he must justify his actions to a Secretary of State. The Governor also has powers to: dispose of Crown Land with prior approval of Cabinet; constitute offices for the Virgin Islands; and make appointments to the Civil Service and take disciplinary action as well as having powers of pardon (Great Britain, 2007).

The Cabinet, which consists of the Premier, four ministers and the ex-officio Attorney General, formulates and implements policy in all matters except those for which the Governor has direct responsibility (Great Britain, 2007, p.27). The Governor and the Premier may call a cabinet meeting which is generally presided over by the Governor. The agenda for Cabinet is set by a Cabinet steering group of the Governor, the Premier and the Cabinet Secretary and the Premier and the Governor can put items on the agenda. The Governor's Special Responsibilities include external affairs except where they are delegated to the Premier for specified inter-Caribbean relations, including relations with the US Virgin islands, tourism, taxation matters and European Union matters directly influencing the BVI. The Governor's powers also include defence, internal security, administration of the civil service and the courts, and the assent to legislation. The Governor also has powers in the event of an emergency. Finally, as in other Territory Constitutions: "There is reserved to Her Majesty full power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Virgin Islands" (Great Britain, 2007, p.54).

The 2007 Constitution - elite perceptions

As a legal embodiment and symbolic expression of the balance of power between the Territory and the UK, the Constitution is an important marker of the relationship and, as such, interviewees during fieldwork were asked how they felt about the new document. Many described the 2007 Constitution as a step forward in terms of a process of political empowerment for the territory. However, several interviewees also spoke of people's

desire to see the powers of the Governor reduced further in favour of locally elected representatives. Others also expressed the desire for continued oversight by Britain on the basis either of the small scale of the polity or the “political maturity” of local political institutions.

BVI Governor, Boyd McCleary, described the changes provided by the new Constitution as “part of a continuum of changes to constitutions over many years which had given increased responsibility to the elected BVI Government”. Now, he explained:

... instead of having a Chief Minister, you now have a Premier and a group of Ministers, who sit in Cabinet and it is the Cabinet that make the bulk of the decisions about the day-to-day running of the Territory. The Governor still chairs the Cabinet and has some special responsibilities, e.g. for internal security, but the executive authority for much of what happens in the BVI has passed to the elected Government. I think on the whole the new system has bedded down well (Interview, Governor McCleary, 2011).

These changes are acknowledged by one senior BVI politician whose comments during interview are typical of assertions which posit recent constitutional reform as part of an ongoing process of evolution of the power of local government in the Territory:

And as it is now, although I said that change is needed, the political directorate has a greater role to play in the running of the country and in the Constitution on the whole since we brought in the new Constitution in 2007 (Interview, BVI 17, 2011).

This is qualified, however, by the expressed need for greater change, underscoring the identity of the BVI as a political actor engaged in a process of negotiation for enhanced agency. Another interviewee also confirms the notion of the constitutional changes as part of an evolutionary process:

But the Territory as a whole seemed to recognise that this was an important political step in the direction in which the BVI had been moving for a long time. I think it's probably one of those steps along the road to greater autonomy that is inevitable (BVI 15, 2011).

However, another interviewee distinguished between symbolic and substantial changes and raised the issue of Orders in Council which are seen to represent limitations to the transfer of power:

...there were some obvious changes, of course, in the governance structure and even in nomenclature: to have now a Premier and a House of Assembly and a Cabinet instead of an Executive Council and so on. I think people hear these things and are perhaps proud of them but I don't know that people actually see it as making a real difference, even those changes that I just mentioned. To say that there was something that I could do before that I now can't do anymore or to say that there is something I couldn't do before that I can now do; I don't think that people really have that sense. They still have the sense that if there's a particular course of action that the mother country wants us to follow, they still have the capacity to put an Order in Council and mandate that we do x y z. So I don't know that there's that sense of great impact (Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

In this extract the juxtaposition of pride, suggesting a construction of self-image around aspirations for further political autonomy, is contrasted with constraints on agency. The description of power implies a direct form of compulsory power (Allen, 2004) in which one actor is able to effect action by another. Ambivalence regarding the extent of constitutional change achieved is also expressed by another interviewee below. When asked about whether the changes had been significant, they answered:

No. I mean what you see is that the Governor is the Queen's Representative here and the nature of that relationship has only changed to the extent that the Premier in Cabinet, it is co-chaired by the Premier and the Governor now. There is more parity in that relationship. So I think that is the biggest change. Before, the Governor would set the agenda (Interview, BVI 18, 2011).

While the quotation above remains descriptive and neutral, the reaction of one politician on the issue of further constitutional change indicated aspirations for further political empowerment. Asked if they saw the process of constitutional modernisation as complete, they answered:

No, it will never be complete until we have got full internal self-government, I don't think it will be completed. The responsibilities that still lie with the Governor is responsibility that I strongly believe that every BVIlander would one day like to see become the responsibility of the elected Government of this country (Interview, BVI 09, 2011).

While the comments are made forcefully and suggest a strong desire for further devolution of power, those which immediately follow, substantially qualify their impact.

The interviewee asks:

But when do we get there? This still means that we have to mature politically, we have to exercise the prudence that is necessary to exercise this responsibility, and it must be demonstrated that we are growing and maturing politically to carry out those responsibilities. And not only the responsibility that we might have internally but being able to affect and demonstrate those on an international scale (Interview, BVI 09, 2011).

Here the language of empowerment gives way to that of political maturity, and responsibility reminiscent of that identified in Chapter Four and used by post-war British policy-makers regarding the constraints on independence of smaller colonies. It may also echo discourses of good governance which form an important strand of concern in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories (See Dodds, 2009, p.232-235). The comments suggest that the probity and maturity of the political institutions must be projected domestically, and to the outside world, in order to gain endorsement. In this account, therefore, national image and identity are intimately bound up with claims to

further political empowerment. The politician stated that further discussion was needed over the role of the Governor as Head of the Civil Service in BVI. They noted the need for understanding “the dynamics of how the country functions and works”, indicating the weight given within this discourse to local knowledge as an important factor in decision-making. The common good, or the national interest is constructed locally in this view and needs to be implemented and expressed through locally-governed institutions, suggesting a Walzerian view of political community where decisions are informed by particularistic local values and norms (Walzer, 1983).

The Governor as an embodiment of British power

The Constitutional Commission was not successful in achieving a change of name from ‘Governor’ to the ‘Resident’ and the figure of the Governor continues to represent a potent and sometimes contested symbol of British power in the Territory. Several interviewees spoke of the need to reduce the Governor’s powers in some areas of public life, including the Police and the Civil Service. One senior BVI politician argued:

As I have said, we should continue the relationship but with a great deal of changes in the Constitution. The powers of the Governor need to be reduced in a good many ways (Interview, BVI 17, 2011).

The issues of internal security and the Civil Service were highlighted by some as areas of contention. One interviewee, explained:

The Governor is the one that is really responsible for security. You know, maybe local Representatives want some of that authority; also, in terms of appointing people in the Civil Service (Interview, BVI 12, 2011).

While another interviewee identified the powers of the Governor as areas for further negotiation:

The obvious thorny issue is the question of the responsibilities of the Governor. Clearly that's the big issue. I understand that the United Kingdom has to ensure that, from their point of view certain powers remain that gives them a certain level of comfort. I understand that, but that is the area where we have to continually review in order that the evolution of societies in the wider Overseas Territories continues to do just that: evolve. I think we made a major step forward with some of the powers of the Governor being reduced (Interview, BVI 14, 2011).

Another interviewee, while highlighting concerns over the role of the Governor, qualified these comments with expressed doubts about whether “we are ready”, suggesting, again, the idea of a process through time of political advancement and growth (Interview, BVI 03, 2011). One senior educator, asked about changes people might like to see in the relationship with Britain, immediately identified the role of the Governor and the desire “as a people” for “greater autonomy “and for “one who has sprung up from among us” to play that role (Interview, BVI 02 2011). The sensitivities of having an outsider imposed by Britain are expanded on in the following, lengthy, quotation from a BVI politician. While the speaker concedes requisites of British oversight, the expression of discomfort at the status quo, which is represented as outdated, is discernible:

I think the challenge is basically how we handle the issue of the Governor. That's the major issue: the symbolism of it; the functionality of it; and even the structure that exists right now. That is the big challenge. How much longer do we have to have a UK appointed Governor? How much longer is it necessary to have somebody appointed from the UK? You know the cultural sensitivities that it brings along; that is where I think the challenge lies. As I said, I am not unmindful of the fact that the UK has to maintain its concerns and to know that its concerns are being taken care of. But you know, we are not where we were twenty years ago, thirty years ago. So as we go forward ten years, twenty years, I mean we cannot continue along that road if we are going to make progress. Now I am not suggesting that there has to be a locally appointed Governor, or black versus white, or anything like that. I'm saying that as we move forward, that that is the one area where we need review.... I'm talking about as we go forward, how can we adjust that relationship to

reflect, you know, a more modern way of thinking and a more modern way of development (Interview, BVI 14, 2011).

This quotation echoes earlier comments on progress and evolution, “a more modern way of thinking”, and sets them against an outdated model, a hangover from colonialism which carries huge “cultural sensitivities”. The issue of cultural sensitivities suggests cultural difference and the importance of the recognition of and respect for particular cultural histories as a basis for shared and discrete political community.

However, it is also suggested that having an outsider in the role has benefits. The interviewee who mentioned the desire for “one who has sprung up among us” qualifies this in terms of a perception by some of the advantages of external oversight:

...a lot of people are very comfortable with having a Governor from somewhere else because of their concerns, even perhaps, that the polity is not mature enough to govern itself...I don't know that that is a strong leg to stand on but I believe it's a perception that many people have (Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

Questions over political maturity and good governance are here recognised as a powerful discourse, even if they are not endorsed by the speaker. Another interviewee cast the Governor in the role of “Big Brother”, suggesting a duality between benign filial protection and surveillance and control:

I'm kind of glad that we have the ever-looking eye of the Governor overlooking things; so it kind of keeps us from falling into certain instances (Interview, BVI 10, 2011).

The analysis above shows the scope of the Governor's role is seen by some interviewees as problematic as power over several sensitive areas of political life in the Territory is retained by Britain. Nonetheless attitudes to this ongoing reservation of

powers to Britain are not uniform as some people felt the need for the capacity for intervention in the event of any hypothetical abuse of power within the local political process. Concerns around this issue were amplified by Britain's use of reserved powers in the neighbouring Turks and Caicos Islands in 2010 (Lunn & Thompson, 2012).

Shockwaves from the Turks and Caicos Islands

Informal conversations and research interviews in BVI highlighted some anxiety caused by events in the Turks and Caicos Islands, where Orders in Council were used in 2010 to dissolve the elected Government and to suspend parts of the Territory's Constitution following allegations of high level corruption (Lunn & Thompson, 2012; O'Brien & Leslie, 2010). The use of Orders in Council can be seen in the context of the Caribbean Territories Criminal Law Order 2000, which legalised homosexual acts in private between consenting adults (Clegg, 2009; Clegg & Gold, 2011; Hendry & Dickson, 2011). Hendry and Dickson describe this as "one of the few examples in living memory of the United Kingdom legislating for a territory against the will of a Territory Government" and accept that it "coloured relations with the territories for some time afterwards" (Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.160).

Orders in Council (see Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.57-61) were mentioned by several interviewees in response to questions about the extent of influence of people in BVI on UK legislation which affected the Territory. In the absence of representation in the British Parliament, it was felt, political influence was limited. "In terms of policies that affect people here," explained one interviewee, "I don't see much input at all" (Interview, BVI 12, 2011). Another interviewee said it was "very little. I think it's basically nil" (Interview, BVI 09, 2011), and elaborated by explaining that people would be concerned

about the possibility of legislation that was considered culturally inappropriate or unpopular. Another interviewee explained:

So again, it wouldn't be until another piece of legislation that is unpopular, is seemingly forced upon us; that's when people think again about this relationship: whether or not it's really in our best interests; whether or not we, as a people, wish to yield this authority, sovereignty, to someone else (Interview, a senior educator, 2011).

The use of the “we, as a people” signals a defined political identity, with its own set of “interests”, against which external authority and power is calibrated. The description of power as being “forced upon us” suggests a direct compulsory power exerted from a distance over a separate and discreet political community.

Asked about the levels of influence BVIslanders have over relevant British policies, one interviewee answered “Absolutely none.” Asked how they felt about that, the person answered: “Well no one is happy about it; because if something is going to affect us, we would like to have a say in it” (Interview, BVI 10, 2011). Another interviewee claimed:

I don't know that it is very much. When you listen to the people who are in charge of the Overseas Territories, they are forever complaining about this, that, and the other. I think even in connection with the gay rights movement for instance...And the sort of input people would prefer to have, even as to the matter of hanging, you know, again we couldn't say anything about that...So that I think a lot of people would like a little bit more input into decisions of that type that are made (Interview, BVI 03, 2011)⁸⁶.

The enactment by Britain of legislation legalising homosexuality, provides the context for current anxiety over events in the TCI where the local Government was suspended by Britain in 2010. In the interview extract below, the speaker juxtaposes the

⁸⁶ See Cohen and Mascia-Lees (1993) for a discussion of the largely hostile reception within the British Virgin Islands of the British move to abolish the death penalty (p.143).

situation of the TCI with Bermuda, the one British Overseas Territory where “there is no general power to legislate by Order in Council” (Hendry & Dickson, 2011, p.61):

...my general outlook on how successful we were in terms of wresting any control, I would say is minimal. I think that the UK Government was uncomfortable with creating another situation like Bermuda where Bermuda has full self-autonomy but yet maintains itself as a Territory. And I think that is perhaps the direction that our representatives wanted to go. We don't want to be independent; we want to remain an Overseas Territory but we want full control of our local affairs and we didn't get that in any degree: full control. We have maintained control in the areas that we had control, and we may be much more involved in the process, in the Cabinet, but the UK still has the power to do what they did in the Turks and Caicos: which is at any point they can just dissolve the Council, dissolve Parliament, and take control in any area and all the authority really rests with the Governor at the end of the day. Or all the power rests with the UK through the Governor (Interview, BVI 12, 2011).

In the above analysis, ultimate power lies with Britain, evidenced through the example of the situation in TCI. A process of local empowerment is therefore circumscribed by powers reserved to the UK. The tone of the comments suggests a level of dissatisfaction with this arrangement but a feeling that change is not currently likely. The TCI factor was also mentioned by several other interviewees as influencing people's views on Britain. One interviewee mentioned “the talk on the street” was about fears that similar British action might occur locally and the ambiguity of feeling about the TCI intervention: “And some people welcome it and some people don't” (Interview, BVI 05, 2011). In the context of positive comments on British support to Montserrat following the volcano, one interviewee said:

I think some of the more recent examples of what people would see or hear on the news of the UK in the Caribbean though, in the Overseas Territories, are not as pretty. You are talking about Turks and Caicos and Anguilla...I guess again local people would say: here's the heavy-handed British seeking to rule these territories... If you come in and you are paying the piper, then you should have some opportunity to

call the tune. But if you are simply coming in and saying: this is what you are going to do - and you are not even bringing any money to help you out of this situation - then I don't know if the advances would seem to be as valid or just; if you can't lend assistance – just point and say what is to be done (Interview, a senior educator, 2011).

The expression “he who pays the piper” is here used differently from in St Helena where British control is rationalised by economic dependence. In BVI, financial independence helps underscore a claim to political autonomy and protection from interference by the UK⁸⁷.

Economic Independence – political empowerment

Economic capacity, as mentioned in discussions of identity, is an important element in the construction of identity in BVI where representations of nationhood are associated with economic development (Cohen, 2010). During fieldwork interviews in BVI, claims to greater political empowerment were also sometimes linked to financial self-sufficiency. Asked whether they felt the process of constitutional modernisation was complete, one interviewee explained:

No, it's like any constitution. It's growing; it will have to be modified as time passes and generations change. Especially since we are so self-sufficient, there are things that we feel we should have more control over (Interview, BVI 10, 2011).

This connection of greater local autonomy and lack of economic reliance on the UK is also argued by the politician quoted below:

...but the major issue is that the British Virgin Islands as an entity does not look to the UK for financial assistance in terms of balancing its budget. Of course, every country looks for aid where that aid is

⁸⁷ Bill Maurer quotes from the text of the manifesto of the 1949 Freedom March in BVI which called for the removal of the Commissioner and more representative Government. The document called for the end of the situation where “...we, the taxpayers, pay the piper” and stated that “...since we are always to pay the piper, we are resolved in future to call the tune” (see Maurer, 2000, p64).

available, where funding is available. But even in certain circumstances where we could be able to access funding but need the UK's assistance, it is difficult (Interview, BVI 14, 2011).

In this account, BVI is constructed as a responsible actor in that it does not seek assistance from the UK; while at the same time there is a hint of grievance that financial help, which it is felt might accrue to the BVI, is not always forthcoming. Yet the implication, earlier in the interview, is that claims for further empowerment are resisted by the UK, which is unwilling to relinquish further power within the context of the ongoing link.

A further area where some interviewees described outside pressure in Territory affairs is regulation of the offshore financial services industry. While regulation is acknowledged by several interviewees as necessary, some resentment may be discerned regarding the imposition of measures from the outside – a feature also noted by Clegg (2009, p.14) in relation to those British Caribbean Overseas Territories with financial services sectors. One interviewee explained:

I think some of the other challenges would be the uncertainty associated with the major industries and uncertainties associated with things that are not in our control, impacting us greatly; that legislation, or enforcement of legislation, in major developed countries could practically eliminate the offshore financial services industries and that is something that we have little control over (Interview, BVI 02, 2011).

Like concern over Orders in Council, anxiety over the “enforcement of legislation” emphasises the perceived vulnerability of BVI as a small actor whose economic viability, based on financial services and tourism, are enmeshed with and dependent on the world economy (Maurer, 1997) and decisions made by Britain (Clegg, 2009, p.14). One politician, referring to tourism and financial services, told the researcher:

Especially in the areas of our two major industries, there has to be more consultation as to exactly how the decisions taken are going to affect us. Because it is a reality that our economies are based on two events that are internationally driven and therefore we have to abide by international treaties and regulations... Because, if you understand the dynamics of that; we have achieved a certain level of economic development and if you make decisions that are going to retard our progress, then we might have to come beg you and I don't think that is what the United Kingdom Government is looking for (Interview, BVI 14, 2011).

Here again, the language of responsibility and good governance is acknowledged, but the impact of external policy developments is juxtaposed with the teleological process of development. A related discourse recognises and repeats the language of responsibility and compliance with the norms of the international community. In the extract below, the tension between ideas of good governance, the seeming acceptance of decisions made for the BVI by Britain, and the importance of control over one's own destiny are bundled together. Asked about local influence on British policies, the interviewee answered:

No. Britain signs these treaties and because we are a colony of Britain, you know they also sign on our behalf. I don't think we have any input into that.

But asked whether this was problematic, they answered:

I don't think people really mind, because so far it is not to our detriment. It becomes something else that we have to do; that we are required to do. It is always good when you have control over the decision-making but in these instances, where Britain is party to these treaties, conventions, and so on; we have no control over that at all (Interview, BVI 18, 2011).

Here is a seeming acceptance of the power of the UK acting in order to fulfil its own international responsibilities. However, later in the discussion, the vulnerability of BVI's

position is highlighted; revealing the sensitivities around the use of UK powers in areas in which BVI's financial independence is anchored:

...So being cognisant of the needs of its colonies to exist, you know colonies that have no natural resources except their natural beauty, because we don't produce anything. So, to ensure that the economy survives and not make decisions that are to the detriment of our economic survival (Interview, BVI 18, 2011).

As with St Helena, the discourse here surrounds survival in terms of economic viability. These concerns underscore the ambivalence inherent in a relationship of dependency: one which, as will be seen below, is valued, complex and shot through with sensitivities.

The balance of power

The discussion above has highlighted on-going debate and concerns over the powers of the Governor, the use of Orders in Council by Britain, and the impact of legislation on the financial services industry. These tensions identified within BVI extend and provide further detail to similar analysis regarding the Caribbean Territories as a whole by (Clegg, 2009). The retention of some powers by the UK may be seen as the ongoing subject of conversation and negotiation between the local and the UK Government. The centrality of this issue was described by one senior educator during interview as a "question of balance":

You know, as long as a Territory like the British Virgin Islands wants to remain associated with the United Kingdom, for whatever reason, there is going to be the question of balance between autonomy or how much we are going to be able to make our own decisions, or how much of our decision-making do we yield to another power? (Interview, 2011).

The issue, therefore, is a level of power that is not only effective in terms of development choices and the ability to shape materially the fortunes of the Territory, but also in terms

of fulfilling a self-image of progression towards autonomy, even if this is currently within the boundaries of the link with Britain. One politician explained:

...I see the British Virgin Islands having to accept a deeper responsibility for their own governance. Our own leaders can hardly look to the UK for guidance. We must be able to establish the guidelines in which we intend to be governed, where we want to be going to and how we are going to get there. It will mean we will have to exercise a lot more self-control; more in terms of financial responsibility. We must demonstrate that we are doing everything possible to utilise the resources that we have to the fullest potential (Interview, BVI 09, 2011).

Here the discourse of responsibility and good governance is appropriated to argue for greater political autonomy. The lessening of British control is seen as dependent on the demonstration of good governance and political maturity, particularly in terms of financial administration of the Territory.

The tension inherent within the paradigm of continued dependency on the UK is considered by another BVIlander interviewed. The description of the relationship here expresses the ongoing negotiation over power and authority between the UK Governor and the elected representatives within the umbrella of UK sovereignty. The interviewee identified a “paradox” in that there is currently “no tolerance for any discussion of independence” yet there are local assertions of autonomy (Interview, BVI 12, 2011).

Recent perceived changes in relations were also noted. One senior politician mentioned improvement in communication with the British Government since the election of the new Coalition Government:

There is consultation on the matters which will affect people as such. And with the present Government in England there is much greater consultation than before... there is definitely a change in the present Government to the way the Territories are dealt with (Interview, BVI 17, 2011).

Governor Boyd McCleary's interview also suggests a change in the tone in the relationship over the years:

As I say it is more a partnership of equals than was the case in the past. You have a Premier who goes and meets with UK Ministers and talks about the situation in which BVI finds itself. So it's not so much from on top to below; it's more a relationship of equals (Interview, Boyd McCleary, 2011).

The constraints on constitutional advancement within the present model are outlined, however, by former Governor Elton Georges who highlights perceived limits on further devolution of power while Britain still holds overall responsibility for the Territories:

I think the balance can hardly go very much further without going into independence. So that's why I don't see a lot of scope – there might be a little bit of tinkering here and there - but I don't see a lot of scope for much more advancement where that means diminishing the role of the Governor (Interview Elton Georges, 2011).

BVI – Summary

Analysis of interviews with elites in BVI suggest the level of power devolved to local politicians and the amount of power retained by Britain either through the Governor or through Orders in Council, is a key issue running through the relationship between Britain and the Territory – findings which broadly concur with much of the recent academic literature on the Caribbean Overseas Territories as a whole (Clegg, 2009; Clegg and Gold, 2011; Corbin 2009; Sutton, 2009). While most elites felt recent constitutional change had devolved some significant power to locally elected representatives, there was discomfort over some powers retained by Britain, particularly in the light of the situation in TCI and a former use of Orders in Council in the islands.

Claims to further empowerment were made on the basis of economic self-sufficiency and the discrete and particular political identity of the electorate represented, thus suggesting a broadly communitarian based view of political community as bounded and expressing the norms and values developed over time among the people in a particular place (Walzer, 1994). On the other hand concern is also raised by some interviewees about the need for continued oversight by Britain in relation to guaranteeing good governance, suggesting an endorsement of a more extended and differentiated concept of authority as divisible.

This characterisation of power relations between BVI and the UK suggests a view of power as having been devolved to the Territory but with ultimate authority over some areas held centrally and used at distance to effect change. This is a compulsory type of power, operating fairly directly through the figure of the Governor or through Orders in Council issued by the Privy Council. The desire expressed by some to wrest some of this power, or to limit its reach and instead hold that power locally, suggests an emphasis on the importance of the development and empowerment of a local political community underpinned by a recognised, bounded and self-consciously local identity. This articulation of power and its location suggests the endurance of a state-centred model based on the empowerment of people within a bounded space sharing a particular geography and 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991).

7.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the power relations between Britain and the Overseas Territories, focusing on the case study territories of Ascension Island, St Helena and British Virgin Islands. The first section assessed the extent to which the continuance of the relationship between the UK and the Overseas Territories might be seen as “upside-

down colonialism” as depicted by some academic literature on non-independent jurisdictions (Baldacchino, 2010). While this argument is compelling and supported to some extent by elite perceptions of the link, an alternative emerging discourse was identified in which the territories are described as important assets to Britain. This was particularly the case where territories provided military or strategic bases for the projection of power by Britain, but was also evident in respect of inhabited territories which were described as valued for the richness and diversity they are seen to bring to the “British family” – suggesting their growing importance to British identity.

In terms of the balance of power between the territories and Britain, in St Helena and in BVI, constitutional modernisation was seen to have brought some significant advances in terms of empowerment of local (territory-based) institutions under the new 2009 and 2007 constitutions respectively. However, in both territories further local autonomy was viewed by some as constrained by power – be it economic or constitutional – retained by Britain.

In St Helena economic dependency was seen to underpin relative disempowerment in relation to the British Government. Further political empowerment, it was implied, was related to economic development, which many hoped would follow British investment in an airport – underscoring the extent of dependence on British aid. A counter-discourse held that, as a British island, the Territory should be entitled to a greater share in British social, economic and political resources. Here empowerment is envisaged not solely through development of an independent economy, but rather through closer association with the British state. These two positions highlight different approaches to the constitutional model defining relations between territories and the state. The first, based on the status quo, envisages two distinct political communities,

overlapping but separate. The second imagines a closer association between state and territory based on common heritage, where difference is respected but the territory is able to benefit from equivalence with the British state in terms of social, economic and political goods. Both these positions highlight the importance of identity to the way in which power in the relationship between territory and state is experienced, understood and imagined.

In BVI, identity and economic viability were also at the heart of concerns around further empowerment of local territory institutions. The economic independence of the territory and the lack of aid from Britain underpinned arguments for the limitation of British power in the Territory where significant power was seen to be retained by the Governor and the potential to use Orders in Council. However some elites also expressed the view that retained powers were important in terms of overseeing good governance in a small territory. National identity, underpinned by the politics of difference, was also used to argue for greater empowerment.

In Ascension Island reforms, including the creation of an advisory Island Council, suggested the influences of normative expectations around representation, democracy and community development. While the Island Council remains, the decision not to allow residents on the island to buy land or homes suggests a privileging of British interests (either financial or strategic) over what could be cast as ethical considerations about the desires of some to settle and remain at the end of work contracts.

This analysis highlights two main issues. The first goes to the heart of the debate about statehood and sovereignty. Some theorists of the state and sovereignty discuss the creative potential of alternative forms of sovereignty. Laust Schouenborg, for example, writing in *Geopolitics*, claims that the idea of states as “independent political

communities” feeds into notions of “exclusive loyalties and indivisible authorities”. He argues instead for a vision of: “plural and overlapping political communities” where individuals have varied interests (Schouenborg, 2012, p.133) which may be realised across different points of authority. The Overseas Territories may be seen as excellent examples of overlapping political communities and, as Baldacchino (2010) argues, this situation can benefit the smaller non-independent entities, explaining the continuance of the link. However, the analysis above suggests that in the case of the Overseas Territories, where the intersection exists because of a past colonial relationship, and where ultimate power is retained by the former colonial power, the experience of the political space within the overlap can be difficult and uncomfortable as well as valued and creative.

Power as discussed above may be seen to be devolved to differing degrees across the different territory types. In Ascension Island the Council has a largely advisory role and some important decisions affecting life for workers on the island are ultimately decided by the British Government or its representatives in Ascension and St Helena, at times weighing British interests against those of the non-permanent island community. Here the privileging of state interests is suggestive of realist accounts of state behaviour where the maintenance or projection of state power is the driving imperative. The subordination of ethical concerns to power is here made on the basis of the ambiguous identity of the island’s population as non-permanent, suggesting a continuing powerful link between ideas of belonging to a particular place and the political rights that accrue from that association.

In St Helena, power is delegated to a greater extent than in Ascension with the power to legislate devolved to locally elected councillors. However, economic dependence means much direct power is retained by the British state, particularly over

budget deficits and capital investment. While identity here is also complex – consisting at once of a desire for local development and a closer association with Britain – British definitions of St Helenian identity as a separate economic entity dominate in terms of the development trajectory promoted for the island by the British Government. As with Ascension, identity is defined juridically by the British state, suggesting a powerful inscription of the terms of the debate and the agenda by Britain.

In BVI, while power is devolved to a greater extent than in St Helena, the retention of the power to legislate change in BVI is seen by several interviewees as problematic. Here again power is retained centrally and can be used directly if needed, although this is extremely rare. This is a direct, rather than mediated power, which flows outward from the centre to the Territory rather than being internalised through institutions or cultural practice.

The picture of power which emerges from the analysis suggests a complex model of power relations in which the capacity for direct power is available, while power networks are also more devolved and power may, at times, flow both ways. Within the context of a largely valued relationship, an ongoing debate over incremental degrees of local empowerment exists. As several authors argue, local autonomy is “jealously guarded” (Hintjens and Hodge, 2012 p. 206; Cohen, 1993, p.143). Devolution of power has been made under recent constitutional reforms but significant authority is retained by the British state.

Chapter Eight: Reflections and Conclusions

This research has provided new depth and insights into the character of the relationship between Britain and its remaining Overseas Territories. Drawing on extensive interview and documentary data it has explored the complex and multiple ways in which the ongoing link between Britain and the Territories is understood and expressed by those involved. Using an Identity, Ethics, Power framework (Daddow & Gaskarth, 2011a), the research highlights the central role played by identity in shaping relations between Britain and the Overseas Territories. The way in which the identity of the territories is viewed by the actors involved, it is argued, frames ideas about the ethical obligations owed to the territories and the extent of power devolved to the territories, or conversely retained, by the British state.

The following section will reflect on the findings outlined in the previous four chapters. It will detail the contribution of the study both to empirical and theoretical knowledge of the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories and it will discuss the key methodological issues arising from the research before turning to policy recommendations.

8.1. The importance of identity

The hypothesis explored during this research was that the question of identity, of how the actors in the study viewed each other, and view themselves in relation to the other party, would be fundamental to understanding the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. The concept of identity was approached as something that is constructed through a shared set of social meanings (Anderson, 1991) not as an essential, fixed or natural attribute (Guzzini, 2006; Walker, 1993). The question of how the actors view each other and how these views affect their image of themselves is of significance to

the ongoing relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. The identities ascribed to the other parties in the relationship, it is argued, influence the type of ethical claims that can be made of the other and affects the exercise, devolution and retention of power. Ethics and power, it is argued, are to a large extent conditioned by the identities adopted by or given to the actors in the relationship.

The importance of identity within the relationship between Britain and the territories was evident in the discourse of elites interviewed in the UK. Many interviewees, albeit those with an interest in, or past experience of the territories, envisaged them as in some respects more closely associated with the UK than the current constitutional position or official discourse suggest. The idea of the territories as part of the UK, or the UK in a wider sense, was at times expressed through language which drew parallels with islands in close proximity to the UK coast. This use of what Agnew terms “geographical analogy” (2009a) was used to invoke familiarity and create identification with territories which are physically distant and have, until recently, received varying or inconsistent attention from policymakers or the British public⁸⁸.

This discourse of inclusion has implications both for the identity ascribed by Britain to the territories and, less directly, for Britain’s own self-image. Firstly, a narrative in which the territories are represented as part of Britain, more domestic than foreign, challenges a trend described both within the academic literature (Drower, 1992; Hintjens, 1995; Hintjens & Hodge, 2012) and by some interviewees, as a history of neglect towards the territories. This idea of neglect encompasses the attention they have received historically within the Foreign Office and wider Government (Drower, 1992; FAC, 2008b); delayed reaction to serious problems such as allegations of corruption in Turks and Caicos

⁸⁸ The Falkland Islands and Gibraltar are notable exceptions to this general trend.

(Clegg & Gold, 2011; FAC, 2008b); serious economic and social hardship in St Helena; and insufficient resourcing of conservation work in the territories (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, 2007). By invoking an identity or status for the territories which is closer, although not identical to the domestic, this discourse usually made claims for greater access for the territories to some of the common goods of the British state, either financial or technical assistance.

The question of representation in the UK Parliament is also linked to that of their identity as inside or outside the body politic. The interview sample of politicians in the UK was not wide enough to ascertain if there are party political differences in the approach to the Overseas Territories, and particularly to the question of their inclusion within Parliament. This would be a fruitful area for further research, particularly in terms of a quantitative survey of Members of Parliament (and of electorates in the Territories) on this issue. A discourse of greater inclusion signifies a different emphasis from official British policy which, although suggesting closeness through the use of the term in the 2012 White Paper of “one undivided realm” (FCO, 2012) and through the promotion of the engagement of a wider range of Government Departments in territory affairs, retains the essential separation of the territories from the United Kingdom in terms of the autonomy of tax regimes and the lack of Parliamentary representation (Hintjens and Hodge, 2012).

One possible explanation for the spatial representation of the territories as similar to British islands or to English counties could be their mobilisation as part of a wider phenomenon of the rehabilitation of the idea and reputation of past empire. Pankaj Mishra, for example, has critiqued a:

righteous nostalgia for imperialism that has recently seized many prominent Anglo-American politicians and opinion-makers (Mishra, 2012).

The idea of the territories forming “part of our claim to eminence” (response to FCO consultation, 2011), gestures towards the possible use of the territories as an embodiment of an imperial past which is celebrated rather than remembered for its violence and exploitation. In the contemporary context, the relationship is attributed legitimacy through the linked concepts of consent and self-determination. The idea that the territories choose to retain the link with Britain is stressed. Constructed by some participants as “more British than the British”, the territories potentially provide a repository for essentialist ideas about national character, and past and ongoing prestige and influence around the world. David Lambert, for instance, has argued that Gibraltar, “has often been used to articulate British fantasies of nationalism, loyalty and imperial nostalgia” (Lambert, 2005, p.217).

However, while wistfulness regarding Britain’s former great power status may be discernible in some threads of discourse on the territories, the motivation for greater engagement in, and inclusion of, the territories within some functions of the British state is predominantly connected to a concern for the fulfilment of Britain’s ongoing responsibilities. This idea of responsibility is in turn underpinned by shared citizenship, in places where geography and scale mean human and economic resources are often limited. Thus many of the voices calling for greater engagement with the territories express experiences of, or echo local refrains about, the challenges of economic and social development or environmental protection in small and remote islands. In this discourse the territories are not represented primarily as emblems of British power and

influence overseas. Instead they are seen as an inherited commitment entailing substantial responsibility derived not only from international convention but from a shared wider British citizenship. Here identity is intimately connected with ethics in terms of the responsibilities due to others as a result of a sense of shared or connected identity or through historical connection. The desire to see an extension of rights and responsibilities to the territories, as will be discussed further below, points to a more inclusive conception of the recipients of rights than that of a traditional communitarian approach where rights are predominantly located within the immediate political community. However, here the territories derive their inclusion within the remit of some functions of the British state by virtue, not necessarily of a cosmopolitan conception of universal rights, but on the basis of their status as constitutionally linked with Britain. Thus this is a communitarian extension of a locally based “maximalist morality” (Walzer, 1994, p.21-39), rather than a cosmopolitan argument for the extension of rights to all on the basis of shared humanity. It is the extension of some aspects of those goods which derive from being a citizen of the British state, to others on the basis of the continuation of a former colonial link and their status as distant relations. Yet as Hintjens and Hodge (2012) also argue, this identity remains problematic and ambiguous. The territories are at once “a valued part of the realm” (Cameron, 2012a) expected to follow “the same high standards of governance as in the UK, including in the areas of human rights” (FCO, 2012, p.9), while a fundamental separation remains in terms of the economic and political institutions of the British state from the territories.

The idea of the territories as closely associated with the UK also raises questions about the geopolitical shape and constitution of the United Kingdom itself. As Lambert writes: “Although often distant from metropolitan geographical imaginations, they are

not absent and provide spaces for meditations on contemporary British identities...”

(Lambert, 2005, p.206). Spatial analogies which draw parallels between the territories and the islands of the British Isles serve, unintentionally perhaps, to disrupt an idea of the United Kingdom as a discrete geopolitical entity and offer ways of imagining the state as already constructed of multiple nations and identities and potentially open to other places, spaces and communities. This is notable where arguments are made for the inclusion of the territories within the British political system through some form of representation in Parliament. References to devolution within the UK, both in interviews and in the 2011 FCO consultation, suggest that a direct fit between representation, territory and governance in the UK is already complicated and that the inclusion of the Overseas Territories could therefore be seen by some as hypothetically possible within a re-imagined geopolitical outline of Britain. Ideas about the identity of the British polity are therefore complicated by links with the Overseas Territories, which can be seen to unsettle what William Wallace has described as “...the English national myth: Magna Carta, parliamentary sovereignty, the continuity of our 700-year-old parliamentary traditions, our island status, ‘the British people’, ‘the nation’” (Wallace, 1991, p.69). The discourse of inclusion regarding the Overseas Territories suggests flexibility in thinking about the make-up of the UK in terms of constituent nations and territorial coherence.

However, this discourse begs the question as to whether the idea of greater engagement and inclusion is recognised and welcomed by the territories themselves or whether it might be seen to conflict with the construction of local place-based identities. The answer is not straightforward and suggests a dualism in which some greater engagement by Britain in the territories is welcomed in some areas of life, alongside a respect for local identities and the empowerment of local political institutions.

In St Helena a shared British identity was readily evoked alongside a distinct St Helenian identity⁸⁹. This was often expressed through spatial metaphor and through the use of icons of Britishness such as monarchy and support for the armed forces. A sea voyage to the UK was also considered important by some people. Yet a close identification with Britain was also constructed in reaction to a perception of rejection by Britain and to alleged treatment as “second class citizens”. Commonality of British identity was connected to claims to a more equitable share in the social, political or economic goods of the state on the basis of connected heritage and history. Yet identity on the island was also constructed around ideas of local belonging, self-reliance, diversity and diaspora. The prospects of an improved economy through the potential British funding of an airport was linked to hopes for greater economic independence from Britain, while concurrently prompting anxiety about the potential loss of a unique island way of life. Thus there is a duality, noted by Hogenstijn and Middelkoop (2005), of an island identity and a wider British identity. The former is seen as exceptional and vulnerable to change imported or imposed from the outside, while islanders also see themselves as sharing a wider British heritage and identity which includes links to a diaspora based largely, but not exclusively, in the UK. This multiplicity of identities, and particularly the idea of an ongoing attachment to British identity, complicates communitarian notions of the congruence of people, territory and political institutions. Yet this sense of being part of something beyond the island is not identical to cosmopolitan ideas of belonging to a universal and undifferentiated international community. Instead it is a complicated balancing of identities which combines a core identification with the life of the island while also retaining an attachment, through

⁸⁹ Broadly confirming earlier research finding by Hogenstijn, M. & Van Middelkoop, D. (2005) 'Saint Helena: Citizenship and Spatial Identities on a Remote Island'. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 96 (1), pp. 96-104 [Online]. Available at: http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/socgeoplan/2006-0801-205916/Hogenstijn_04_sainthelenaesg.pdf (Accessed: 17.2.10).

historical association and ongoing 'pilgrimages' (Anderson, 1991, p.114), to a wider British identity.

In the British Virgin Islands, several decades of prosperity and economic independence from Britain, together with easier access and links to the US and to US territories, were highlighted by participants as leading to a weaker identification with Britain. Alongside the extensive network of links to the US and US Caribbean territories, a strong sense of local identity was expressed, based around economic self-reliance, historical association with place, and through local political institutions (Cohen, 2010). A discourse was identified in which locally-based, particularistic values were mobilised in support of claims for further autonomy and power over the decisions affecting some aspects of life on the island. This discourse suggested a communitarian understanding (Walzer, 1983) of the proper location of decision-making authority as within the local bounded polity. This did not, however, mean a rejection of the link with Britain. The current association with the UK was valued, but on the basis that local identity and political autonomy would be respected by the former colonial power. This view of the relationship is much closer to official British discourse regarding the territories where the territories are seen as separate but linked entities. The construction of identity in BVI, therefore, fits more easily with communitarian accounts of political community. While relations with the British state are largely valued, where British authority is seen to impinge on local particularistic values or livelihoods, it is resented. Thus within the context of the link with Britain, the inside/outside dichotomy of the bordered political community is constructed and defended even as British authority continues to overlap that of local institutions.

Envisaging nations as “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991), has helped to de-couple the idea of national identity from any uncomplicated connection to factors such as ethnicity, language, religion or shared territory. Yet a constructivist account, while exploring the ideational elements of identity, also pays close attention to the material and social circumstances from which narratives about belonging are woven (Guzzini, 2006). Constructions of identity in St Helena and in BVI suggest that, in different ways, economic and material circumstances inform the range and scope of versions of identity available to actors. This may be particularly so where territories are vulnerable in terms of economic fragility, a history of colonialism and a lack of representation, until fairly recently, in local political institutions (Cohen, 1983b). Thus, in St Helena the material exigencies of life on a remote island where livelihoods are to a large extent dependent on British aid, heavily influence the construction of identity, as noted by Royle (2012), particularly in relation to Britain. In BVI, economic independence allows different stories to be told, although narratives are also here influenced by economic circumstances. This is not to suggest a direct link between geography, economy and identity, nor to argue for a crude geopolitics based on economic resources (Ó'Tuathail & Agnew, 1992) but instead to argue that these elements are interconnected and that the material circumstances that shape the lives of communities also contribute to the kinds of stories from which the imagined community takes its shape.

8.2 Ethical obligations: maximalist and minimalist interpretations

Ethical issues also play a pivotal role in the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories. The question of what Britain ought to provide for the territories on the basis of their identity as former colonies, and now as United Kingdom Territories, is central to concerns of interviewees both within the territories and within the UK. The extent to

which the territories may be eligible to share in, or have extended to them, the social, economic and political goods of the centre is both a normative issue and one in which the construction of identity is deeply implicated. This may be seen in the provisions of the 2002 International Development Act which privileges the territories over other independent states. This special status is based on an understanding of the close connection of the territories to the British state, rather than a strictly needs-based criterion. Nonetheless the territories are not seen as equivalent to regions in the UK; standards of living and the services available in some territories are seen as below that which might be considered appropriate within the UK. A differentiation of “citizens of the state” and others in terms of rights (Linklater, 1998, p.1-2) is therefore complicated in the relationship between Britain and the territories. While the peoples of the territories are British citizens and entitled to all the rights of the state when in the UK, they are not entitled to a full share in all the common goods of the state when residing in the territories. The territories therefore occupy an intermediate position between independent states and the domestic polity in terms of the social and economic rights to which their residents are entitled. Furthermore there is a continuing negotiation and discussion over the extent to which social, economic or political rights should be extended to the territories. This was illustrated in the 2011 FCO consultation where contributors were asked about areas where they would like to see greater co-operation and engagement between territories and the UK; and to which the UK and individual UK Government Departments contributed accounts detailing their support of the Overseas Territories (FCO, 2012; FCO, 2011b).

The denial of rights to peoples in some Overseas Territories has also been based partly on their construction as peoples who do not belong to the territories in which they

live (Vine, 2009). For instance, the construction of an identity for the Chagossians in the 1960s and 1970s as temporary workers facilitated their expulsion from the Chagos Islands (Curtis, 2003; Vine, 2009). Similarly, the official identification of St Helenians and others living on Ascension as contract workers, rather than permanent inhabitants, enables the restriction of rights to live permanently on the island and relates to the further development of a settled or rooted political community. The fact that the territories are in a continued link with a former colonial power and are listed by the UN Decolonisation Committee, means that the relationship can be viewed by the international community as ethically problematic. This means that failings of responsibility or restriction of rights, as discussed above, are highly ethically charged and can be read through the lens of colonialism by the international community, by domestic audiences within the UK, and by the territories.

A further issue concerns activities which take place within the territories which may be subject to ethical scrutiny and the extent to which British standards may be extended, or imposed on the territories. As the 2012 White Paper recognises, this is a sensitive area (FCO, 2012, p.9). It is one in which, particularly within BVI, local cultural values may sometimes be seen as inconsistent with the British position on issues such as corporal punishment and the legalisation of homosexuality (as noted for the Caribbean British Overseas Territories in general by Clegg and Gold (2011. P.125)). The extension of some rights is seen here, to some extent, as an imposition of external values. Yet British official discourse re-frames the extension of rights to the territories as a necessary extension of universal human rights and consistent with its role as a responsible international actor. Here an argument is made by the British that the standards insisted upon are the minimum consistent with remaining linked to Britain. This can be read as a

Walzerian “moral minimalism” (Walzer, 1994) in which Britain, itself a party to certain universal principles, insists that these are also adhered to within its territories. Britain’s insistence on the respect of certain universal rights underscores Britain’s self-identity as an ethical actor internationally. Or it may be read as an extension of particularistic British ‘maximalist’ values to the territories on the basis of their shared UK citizenship. British concern over the potential for illicit financial activities could also be read as a desire to play the role and perpetuate an identity of Britain as a responsible international actor (McCourt, 2011). But this could also be interpreted as colonial interference into areas regarding distributive justice over which a maximalist morality should operate (Walzer, 1994). The question of which ethical issues are a matter of local concern or of wider universal expectation is thus an ongoing, and at times difficult, conversation, but one in which the self-identities of each party is central.

8.3 Power and powerlessness

As discussed above, and as proposed by much of the academic literature, ethical issues, particularly British responsibilities towards the Territories on the basis of their identity as distant relations, characterise, to a large extent, the continuation of the link. This ongoing relationship is constructed largely around a set of inherited obligations and feelings of association and shared identity rather than motivations of *realpolitik* where the retention of the territories is motivated predominantly by the extension of British power on the world stage.

However, the preponderance of normative issues is not the case in all the territories, most notably those which have a military or strategic function such as Ascension Island and BIOT. Here the territories themselves play a significant role in the ability of Britain or the United States to project power overseas. In Ascension Island, for

example, the restriction of the right of abode and the limitations of the further development of civil society is influenced by British interests. This is in terms of protecting the British taxpayer from the costs of a settled community and also, possibly, by defence and security concerns. Here realist conceptions of power and state interest may be seen to predominate in the relationship between the territories and the UK.

Furthermore, a new discourse aimed at reversing a view of the territories as liabilities and as a “nuisance”, has emerged in recent policy statements and the territories are now increasingly represented as assets to Britain (FCO, 2012). In this discourse the strategic role of some territories is highlighted; the environmental assets and potential for research and science in others, particularly in the uninhabited territories, is emphasised by the Coalition Government; and the territories are also seen as a market for British companies and experts (FCO, 2012). Their role in the offshore finance industry, which as several authors have argued has close links to the City of London (Palan, Murphy & Chavagneux, 2010; Shaxon, 2011), also suggests that the territories contribute to a wider network of economic power connected to the United Kingdom.

In the territories where there is no obvious strategic benefit to the UK, questions of power centre on the extent to which local institutions have control over decisions affecting the lives of their citizens. This inevitably concerns the range of powers over territory affairs retained by the UK. Questions over the balance of power are evident both in St Helena, where there is ongoing economic dependence on Britain and where DFID is seen to play a significant role in territory affairs, and in BVI where the islands are fiscally independent but where the Governor retains authority over some areas such as the police and the civil service. The different uses of the phrase “he who pays the piper” in both territories helps illustrate the way in which the varying economic circumstances of

the two territories affects understanding of the retention and use of British power. In St Helena this phrase underlines a rationalisation (though not necessarily concurrence) with the continued retention of considerable powers by the UK. In BVI the phrase is used to suggest that with economic independence, higher levels of autonomy should follow. Responses to the retention of powers by the UK also bifurcate in St Helena. One response was for a much closer association with the British state based on a shared identity, though not integration. This was not universal and for others economic self-reliance was the key to further local empowerment. The research also suggested that despite a lack of representation within the British Parliament and fairly significant reserve powers held by the British Government, extensive and active formal and informal networks provided access to and influence in the British political system, even when remote from Britain. These included official representatives and networks of supporters in the UK, many of whom form part of an extensive diaspora. These networks and points of entry into the British political system imply a much more complex conception of power than a one-way and direct imposition of authority from Britain to the Territories. Instead it represents a situation in which, while the power differential may be in Britain's favour, power does also flow from the territories, allowing them to shape policy and influence outcomes at times.

In BVI, as in St Helena, further power was seen to have been devolved to the territory under the new 2007 constitution. However the reserved powers of the Governor and the potential for the use of Orders in Council caused ongoing concern. The legitimisation of political power in BVI was represented as intimately connected with local identity, itself underpinned by strong narratives around financial self-sufficiency. The basis for claims to further empowerment in BVI may be seen in terms of Walzer's binary

of moral maximalism and moral minimalism (1994). What Walzer terms “distributive justice” or the ways in which social, political and economic goods are shared within the community (Walzer, 1994, p.21-39) are seen to be locally derived and locally independent. The idea which underpins the independence of local ownership of the political process can be seen, conversely, as a universal principle, upheld by the concept of self-determination.

The above discussion has demonstrated that identity plays the predominant role in shaping relations between Britain and its Overseas Territories. The identity ascribed to the territories by British Government policy as separate entities from the UK limits the extent to which the territories share in the resources of the state. Yet the embrace of the territories as closely connected to Britain through their historical association and British citizenship means that the territories are given privileged access to a range of benefits which are not as readily available to independent states. From the territories’ perspective, identity is also key to the ongoing relationship. In St Helena a shared British identity is mobilised to claim a greater inclusion within the British state; while a St Helenian identity is also seen as vulnerable to change from outside the island. In BVI a local, national identity built around economic resilience and evolving political institutions also resists agendas imposed from the outside while the current benefits of an ongoing link with the UK are recognised. Identity, whether local, whether complicated by wider associations, or whether indeterminate, is the collective in whose name empowerment is sought and the extension of rights is invoked.

8.4 Towards a characterisation of the relationship

The research found that despite tensions, the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories is in many ways valued on both sides. While the territories have in

the past been viewed as liabilities by the British Government (Hintjens & Hodge, 2012), recent policy statements by the new Coalition Government suggest a discourse in which the Overseas Territories are constructed as assets to Britain and in which the ongoing link is celebrated. Several research participants in both Britain and the Overseas Territories, interviewed before the 2012 White Paper was published, identified what they saw as a new commitment towards the Overseas Territories and numerous interviewees discussed the benefits that are seen to accrue to the territories through the ongoing association. As such the research findings concur with the analysis of other scholarship on the Overseas Territories, which notes the perceived benefits to the territories of the ongoing link (Baldacchino, 2010; Baldacchino & Milne, 2009; Clegg, 2009; McElroy & Parry, 2011; McElroy & Pearce, 2009).

Nonetheless, within some of the literature on the Overseas Territories there is a suggestion that the lack of full sovereignty in the territories enables creative adaptations of governance and that the territories may represent the embodiment of new approaches to the concept of sovereignty as differentiated (Aldrich & Connell, 1998, p.241-251; Baldacchino, 2010, p.27). While the fact of the ongoing relationship between these territories and Britain confirms the idea of the possibility of political communities existing with degrees of autonomy, the research also highlighted some of the tensions around a lack of full sovereignty. These difficulties were not seen to lie in the international sphere in terms of representation in international bodies but rather in terms of what Stephen Krasner terms 'domestic sovereignty' (Krasner, 1999, p.11-12). Domestic sovereignty embodies the legitimacy with which a government is endowed – usually deriving from its ability to represent and reflect the wishes of its citizens. The ability of political institutions to fairly represent the people is usually problematic even within established democracies,

as there is nearly always debate about the extent of the franchise and the mechanisms for translating the wishes of the people into policy. Debates over the extension of rights to more recent immigrants to BVI and other Caribbean territories is an example of the ongoing re-examination of the constituency of the political community and groups which may currently be excluded (Virgin Islands Constitutional Commission, 2005). Yet this research shows the lack of full domestic sovereignty in the case study territories is more deeply problematic than the upbeat suggestions about the possibilities of differentiated sovereignty may suggest. As Chris Brown argues, sovereignty still provides the primary container in which politics – the decisions about the direction and shape of life within the collective – are carried out:

...if publicly accountable agency is what we are interested in – then for all its inadequacies, the sovereign state remains the only game in town (from the foreword to Bickerton, Cunliffe & Gourevitch, 2007, p.xiii).

While the continuance of the link between the Overseas Territories and Britain suggests different games are being played on the international stage, difficult questions are raised about legitimacy and accountability where sovereignty is retained externally. Significant degrees of autonomy and local democracy do exist in the populated territories, yet the research highlighted tensions and sensitivities which remain regarding the powers held, and sometimes exercised, by the British state over some areas of territory life. These tensions were also noted, as discussed in Chapter Four section 2.2, by other authors. The findings in this thesis corroborate this earlier work and extend it by further emphasising the relationship between these tensions and discourses around particularistic local identities. In BVI in particular, the extension of British power can be viewed as an intrusion not only in terms of local political disempowerment but also in the

particularistic cultural and national identity that is so intimately caught up with political self-expression and desires for self-government.

8.4.1 Reverberations

Anxiety around powers retained externally is particularly evident where British power is seen to have been exerted in neighbouring territories or where parallels are drawn between territories. As discussed in earlier chapters, the way in which “critical situations” may disrupt ontological security (Croft, 2012, p.24) is highly relevant to the narratives of Britishness in St Helena following the withdrawal of citizenship in 1981. What emerged from the research was the way in which similar critical situations affecting those in one territory, can inform the fears of those in other territories regarding their relationship with Britain. The eviction of the Chagossians from their island home; the denial of right of abode to workers on Ascension Island, and fears over de-population in St Helena, feed into each other and reverberate across distant spaces and generations. The example of the imposition of direct rule from London in the Turks and Caicos in 2009 also caused anxiety within BVI about potential exertions of British power. This transmission of anxieties and “grievances” across territories and down the decades, a factor also noted by Dodds (2009, p.234), may be given extra resonance by the vulnerability of island populations where economic constraints and isolation create challenges for self-sufficiency and where local political institutions are relatively new and remain linked to the former colonial power. Lack of full sovereignty, therefore, can be seen to carry with it anxiety regarding degrees of domestic disempowerment and the retention of external control.

8.4.2 The problems of language

One further issue which arises from attempts to characterise the relationship is the difficulty of finding adequate and appropriate terms with which to describe the relational identities of the actors involved. The problem is akin to that described by John Ruggie in 1993 when he argued that “no shared vocabulary exists” regarding the shift from a state-based system to new forms of international organisation (Ruggie, 1993, p.140). David McCourt has also written recently of the “limited language of Britain in world politics” which falls back on a thin offering of the tropes including Britain as a hub, a bridge and a pivotal power (McCourt, 2011, p.151). Articulating the relationship between Britain and the Territories is challenging in that it falls outside the geopolitical focus of traditional foreign policy analysis and is not relevant to analogies of bridges and hubs, which are used to describe Britain’s relations with The United States and Europe (Daddow & Gaskarth, 2011b, p.13-16). The task is also fraught with the difficulties of finding language that does not of itself reproduce colonial stereotypes in terms of the binary divisions of self and other critiqued by David Campbell (1992); one which contrasts between “white and non-white, civilized and backward, Western and non-Western, adult and child”(Ó'Tuathail & Agnew, 1992).

Several interviewees used familial terms to describe the relationship, where Britain was given the role of parent “mother” or “motherland” and the territories assigned the role of infant, child, teenager or pensioner⁹⁰. The idea of the territories as being “an important part of the British family” (Bellingham, 2010a) was also used by the British Government in the run up to the 2012 White Paper, in which it was replaced by the term “an undivided realm” (FCO, 2012). However, the use of familial terms can

⁹⁰ Brysk, Parsons, Sandholtz (2002) argue that post-colonial relations between former European colonial powers and their former colonies, including Britain and the Commonwealth employ familial language and a foreign policy constructed around identities and norms.

suggest a hierarchy, dependence, and an infantilisation, which might be interpreted as perpetuating negative stereotypes as suggested above by Agnew and Ó'Tuathail. This is not to criticise the use of this language by participants but instead to suggest the sensitivities of familial metaphors by a British-based researcher in describing this ongoing relationship.

These difficulties are compounded by the lack of language for representing degrees of inclusion within the British state. There is no noun, such as the Commonwealth, which describes Britain and the Overseas Territories. As was argued throughout the thesis, the territories are in some ways seen as part of Britain (the people of the territories are mostly British citizens, for example) and yet they are not officially or legally part of the United Kingdom and in many respects robustly voice their desire for the respect of their national and cultural identity and their political autonomy. A recognised and shared vocabulary for this arms-length inclusion simply does not yet exist. As also noted by Hintjens and Hodge (2012), the 1999 White Paper employed the image of a “partnership”; a term suggesting differentiated, or separate international entities. And several interviewees, despite sensitivities about the use of the word ‘colonial’ (Hendry & Dickson, 2011), used the term ‘colony’ to describe their territory.

One possible way of imagining the relationship between the territories and Britain might be in terms of ‘devolution’ at distance. The employment of this term, which is more often used regarding the devolved nations of the UK, serves to capture the fact of shared citizenship while retaining the notion of separation of national or territory identities and the concept of the empowerment of local political communities within the umbrella of British sovereignty. While it is recognised that the situation of the nations of the United Kingdom is not equivalent to that of the Overseas Territories which have separate

constitutions and lack representation in the United Kingdom Parliament, the phrase helps in terms of conceptualising the territories on a continuum of inclusion or exclusion.

8.4.3 Summary

The above discussion has highlighted the importance within the ongoing relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories of the core concepts of identity, ethics and power. Through close analysis of the language used by elites in Britain and in the territories, the research gives new insights into the centrality of identity to the way in which ethical obligations and power relations between the British state and its territories are shaped. Through emphasising the link between identity and political community, the research demonstrates how complex constructions of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and particularism, shape discussions over rights, obligations and empowerment. Furthermore, the importance of identity, as highlighted in this analysis, strengthens the case for the productiveness of constructivist theories, which incorporate complex relational identities as well as material power in furthering the understanding of contemporary relations between distant peoples and places.

8.5 Reflections on the research methodology

The following section will reflect on the research methodology used in the project, highlighting challenges encountered and discuss learning points for future research. These include questions over the positionality of the researcher; the ability to draw conclusions from data pertaining to particular time periods; and the ability to generalise from the case study territories to British territories where fieldwork was not carried out.

8.5.1 Reconsidering positionality

This research project was embarked upon with an awareness of the extent to which scholarship may be implicated in what Edward Said has described as an orientalist agenda

- the political, social and cultural hegemony of the West over other parts of the world (Said, 1978). Furthermore, as outlined in section 3.6.2, much of the literature on carrying out fieldwork, particularly in developing or postcolonial countries, highlighted issues around the positionality and privileged position of the researcher. Questions of unequal power with regards to a British researcher, from a UK institution, researching in territories still constitutionally linked and thus subject to the authority of the British government, were recognised as potentially problematic in the research process. Every effort was therefore made by the researcher to be respectful of all research participants and to be open and transparent about the aims of the research. During the participant recruitment process and fieldwork, good relationships were established with participants and interviewees who indicated their willingness to take part and generously shared their time, their expertise and their opinions.

However, following analysis of the research interviews, several issues remained unresolved with regard to positionality. The first is an ongoing awareness of the problematic nature of an outsider spending a relatively short time in a territory before attempting to describe complex and highly-charged issues such as identity, ethics and power relations. Childcare commitments meant that fieldwork could not be extended and while it is acknowledged that time spent in each territory was accompanied by months of reading and documentary research, the aim of portraying, even as a sketch, the national identities of people in distant places, is necessarily problematic. This sense of ethical discomfort at the act of interpreting and publically portraying the lives of those who have shared their views and experiences is, as discussed by King and Horrocks (2010, p138-139), a difficult issue. For this reason, if similar work were to be carried out in the future, the researcher would make all efforts to work in collaboration with researchers or

practitioners from the country, territory or region involved. While any type of collaboration can engender challenges in terms of potential differences in agenda, or methodology, it is believed that by working with others from the territories, a more culturally informed research design might be achieved in the future (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003; Skelton, 2004).

8.5.2 Reflections on 'snapshots' in time

The research process also underlined the difficulty of trying to characterise a set of relations that are subject to change and flux. Relations between actors on the international stage are always evolving and any attempt at sketching a likeness can therefore only ever express a particular temporal moment. A good example of this is St Helena where fieldwork took place in July 2011, just months before the final decision on the provision of an airport in November 2011. The question of whether air access would be granted, the changes likely to derive from this development, and the reforms initiated in order to comply with British Government conditions for the airport, were all a key topic of concern for many interviewees during fieldwork. Furthermore uncertainty, disappointment and sense of disempowerment associated with earlier delays and reversals over air access, undoubtedly impacted on people's characterisation of the relationship. It is possible that had research been conducted after the airport funding had been confirmed, characterisation of the relationship may have had a different timbre - possibly one more positive towards the British Government. The provision of an airport on an island which has only ever been accessible by a long sea voyage and where significant economic and social challenges (as well as its unique and special character) are linked to its isolation is hugely significant in terms of the island's future and the experience of its link with the UK. As such the research findings may need to be considered as a 'snapshot' or a partial sketch of a particular historical moment (Yon,

2007b), which may have synergies but also disconnection with what follows. However, the analysis of a broad range of documents concerning St Helena, and cross-reference against the academic literature from previous decades, suggests a large measure of continuity across the broad themes and concerns expressed in earlier accounts of the relationship. It is argued, therefore, that the 'snapshot', while distinct in some respects, is likely to share similarities with those taken at other times both past and future. This also has potential as an area for future research to ascertain to what extent the new airport, scheduled for completion in 2015, may affect people's views and experiences of the relationship with the United Kingdom.

8.5.3 A web of references

A further methodological issue encountered by the researcher concerned the difficulty of tracing repeated and significant linguistic expressions used to represent the relationship between Britain and the territories. Norman Fairclough, in his discussion of intertextuality in discourse analysis, notes that there will be "a set of other texts and a set of voices" embedded in the data which are relevant but that these may be hard to identify "with great precision" and may also be "rather extensive and complex" (Fairclough, 2003, p.47). During the analysis of interview texts, documentary data and the literature, repeated phrases and patterns of speech were identified. For example in a Fabian Society Tract on the Falkland Islands written in 1977, the author asserts that "the Falkland Islanders consider themselves British in the same way as does anyone born and bred in Britain" and that "they quite genuinely see themselves as being just south of the Isle of Wight and a good deal north of the Channel Islands" (Phipps, 1977, p.6). This type of spatial analogy, as was discussed in Chapter Five, was identified in the language used by interviewees in St Helena and in the UK. However, while repetitions were noted and weight was given to particular interpretations of these tropes within the analysis, time and space prevented a

full-scale investigation of the genealogy of these phrases and ideas. Instead the researcher relied on achieving saturation in terms of levels of repeated references. A genealogical exploration, however, although likely to be complicated and time-consuming, might well reveal further insight into the history and processes of generation of many of the key ideas around belonging and identity, power and powerlessness expressed in the research. This represents a fruitful area for further research and for the exploration of inter-disciplinary links with Literature and Cultural Studies.

8.5.4 Generalising from case studies

The final and most significant challenge concerns the ability to generalise from the case study areas to other Overseas Territories where fieldwork was not carried out. The research methodology was underpinned by a commitment to provide detailed accounts of the three case study areas which were seen to be representative of their type.

Interviews with elites from other Overseas Territories were also undertaken in the UK and triangulated against the academic literature and documentary analysis. Many of the issues around oversight by the UK, the extent of rights extended to non-belongers, and types of assistance looked for from the UK were repeated across other Caribbean territories during the FCO Consultation in 2011 (Trufflenet, 2012). However it is not possible to assert with any confidence that the issues encountered in St Helena or in Ascension have wider resonance in similar territory types. The differences between territories, even within the groupings of the classification system, are so great as to make generalisations challenging. Pitcairn, St Helena and Montserrat, for example, share a reliance on the UK for their budgetary aid and issues such as de-population, difficulties of access, severe economic constraints and the fragility of unique ecosystems. Yet the disparity in geographical location, the history of settlement and of the colonial link; the unique challenges of the continuing eruption of Mount Soufriere on Montserrat and the

island's position within the wider Caribbean region, and St Helena's employment links with Ascension and the Falkland Islands make each case unique. Furthermore, because fieldwork was not carried out within the uninhabited territories of South Georgia and the British Antarctic Territory, these places received less attention within the study. While some interviews touched on this area, and documentary analysis and the literature also informed the study, in-depth research on these territories was beyond the scope of this research, despite their re-emphasis within recent UK Government policy statements (FCO, 2012; FCO Polar Regions Unit, 2010).

However, the research, while not able to provide an in-depth study of all of the territories, offers instead a broad interpretation of British policy towards the territories informed by historical context, and contemporary voices from the UK and the territories, shedding light on the key themes of identity, ethics and power. While concerns within St Helena, Ascension and British Virgin Islands may not map directly onto those of other territories, they raise wider questions about the development of political community in the absence of sovereignty, of the multiplicity of local and national identities and how they may connect with British citizenship, and the difficulties of differentiating between local cultural values and universal rights in a postcolonial setting. These are issues which, it is argued, have resonance across the territories, even as they may evolve and play out in different configurations in alternative settings.

8.6 Policy recommendations

The relationship with the Overseas Territories is increasingly becoming viewed by successive British Governments as significant to the United Kingdom (FCO, 1999; FCO, 2012). Recent policy documents (FCO, 2012; United Kingdom HM Government, 2010) have emphasised the importance accorded by the Government to the territories in terms

of their role in defence and security both for Britain and her allies. The Government has also recently re-emphasised its responsibilities to the territories and its desire to see a wider range of British Government departments and civil society organisations involved in Overseas Territories work (FCO, 2012). This commitment to re-engagement with the territories is likely to be welcomed within the Territories as long as it is non-intrusive and genuinely responsive to territory needs, rather than an agenda imposed from the outside – or as Hintjens and Hodge recommend, carried out “on the only possible legitimate basis, namely the views and wishes of the local population” (2012, p.218). The protests in St Helena in reaction to reforms associated with the airport MOU, which were seen by some to have been initiated by DFID, are an example of the sensitivities around the genuine local ownership of the process of change. While the relationship is described by the government as “a modern one based on partnership” (FCO, 2012, p.11), some territories remain aware of the preponderance of British power, political and economic. British Government actions can be perceived as colonial heavy-handedness and territory citizens can feel disempowered, particularly in Territories where economic dependence continues.

The violence, exploitation and cultural arrogance associated with much of Britain’s imperial past, some of which is only recently being revealed (Guardian, 2012), means Britain has a heightened responsibility to behave with high ethical standards internationally; particularly where territories remain linked to the British state. Britain’s promotion of its role as a sponsor of human rights on the international stage (Hague, 2010b) means the UK’s identity as an ethical actor cannot afford to be tarnished by allegations of heavy-handedness, or insensitivity in its relations with its own territories. While the importance of the human rights agenda, environmental protection, and the

regulation and further scrutiny of financial services is essential and acknowledged by elites in the territories, compliance can be best achieved through genuine local ownership. This process may be seen in St Helena where recent human rights work was funded by the FCO, implemented by the Commonwealth Foundation in association with local groups and then enthusiastically embraced and followed through by civil society on the island. As the 2012 White Paper on the Overseas Territories recognises, the insistence on British standards of governance and rights within the territories is a sensitive area. Identifying the line between local maximalist values and wider minimal universal values is challenging and territories can face difficulties in implementing change where human resources and funding are limited. Continued central funding of locally-identified areas for change which support the rights and governance agenda are likely to be welcomed.

Britain's role as promoter of human rights also suggests doing everything possible to uphold the rights of peoples who wish to remain linked and to identify with the British state, but within this context seek to develop further their local political institutions. In line with the broad recommendations of the FAC (2008a. p.39), the ongoing social, political and economic needs of the community on Ascension Island, needs careful and compassionate consideration. In addition, territories like St Helena require a level of support that ensures a fair standard of living and one which would reverse the island's decline in terms of population. It also means, in the current absence of any form of representation for the Overseas Territories in the British legislature, the opening of as many channels of communication between the British Government and the peoples of the territories as possible, whether through inter-governmental links or through civil society organisations, something which is proposed within the 2012 White Paper (p.7). While the 2012 White Paper underscores supporting economic development,

environmental protection, a wide range of socio-economic support for communities in the territories and the engagement of a wide range of government departments, civil society and others in assisting working with the territories (FCO, 2012) the next few years will see to what extent these expressed aims and ambitions are put into practice.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT Interview Schedule

St Helena

Section 1: Introductions and Warm up (5 mins)

- Check received participant form and consent form.
- Verbal reminder of right to withdraw and discussion of any potential risks.
- Reminder can refuse to answer any questions.
- Check if they have any questions.

Section 2: Relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories (20 mins)

1. Can you say a bit about your role/job etc
2. Are there ways in which the relationship with the UK impacts on your area of work/life?
3. Do you think there are ways in which St Helena benefits from the ongoing link with Britain?
4. Do you think there are ways in which Britain benefits from the link with St Helena?
5. How much influence do you think people in St Helena have into policies developed in the UK which affect St Helena?
6. To what extent is St Helena represented within the British political system?
7. Has the new Constitution of 2009 affected the relationship significantly?
8. Is the process of political modernisation complete or ongoing?
9. What, if anything, would you like to see coming out of the review of the relationship between Britain and its Overseas Territories that is currently ongoing?
10. Do you feel that Britain has responsibilities to St Helena?
11. Are these adequately fulfilled?
12. Does St Helena have responsibilities towards Britain?
13. Are these always fulfilled?
14. Is there a strong feeling of connection with Britain by St Helenians?
15. What features of life are influenced by the British connection?
16. How do you think the Britain views St Helena?
17. Are there any downsides to the continued link?
18. How would you broadly describe the relationship between Britain and St Helena?
19. What are the main challenges facing the relationship?
20. Do people in St Helena have enough say over their future?

21. In what ways does St Helena require a specific approach from the UK Government compared to that of other Overseas Territories?
22. How do you see the link developing in the future?
23. **Section 3: Issues** (10 mins)
24. What do you think will be the effect of the airport on St Helena if it is built?
25. Do you think it will change the relationship between Britain and St Helena?
26. Could you talk a bit about the background to the protests in April?
27. What are the main challenges facing St Helena and how can Britain help address these?
28. Is South Africa becoming a closer connection?

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

RESEARCH PROJECT: BRITAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

Name of researcher: Nichola Harmer.

Role of researcher: PhD research student from the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Plymouth, Devon, United Kingdom.

Title of research: Britain and the British Overseas Territories: an analysis of power, identity and responsibility.

Aim of research

The research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between Britain and the remaining fourteen British Overseas Territories through asking:

How the link between Britain and the Overseas Territories may be characterised?

How the relationship between Britain and the Overseas Territories is managed?

How the relationship is viewed on both sides: in Britain and in the Overseas Territories?

What this can tell us about British foreign policy and the importance of power, responsibility and identity in current international relations?

Why is this research being carried out?

It is hoped that the work will extend academic knowledge, identify strengths, weaknesses and trends in the relationship, and identify implications for future policy development.

Why have I been chosen?

The research is planned to take place in the United Kingdom, St Helena, Ascension Island and British Virgin Islands between 2010 and 2011. Participants have been chosen because they are actively involved, or have been involved, with the political, social or economic life of the Overseas Territories.

Do I have to take part?

No, participation is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any point until the results are submitted or published. Participants may also decline to answer any particular questions during the interview.

What is involved?

The interview will take approximately forty-five minutes and will include a wide range of questions about Britain and the Overseas Territories. With your permission I would very much like the interview to be tape-recorded.

What happens to the information I give at the interview?

The University and the researcher can offer you anonymity and confidentiality if requested. Following the interview the researcher can also send you a transcript for your comment. All participants in the study will also be sent a 2,000 word summary report of the findings for information and comment. The findings will be included in the researcher's PhD thesis which will be available on the internet and which can be emailed to participants on request. Reporting of the findings may also include talks, presentations, and published articles. All data will be destroyed after ten years and will not be shared with other researchers or institutions.

How is the study funded?

The research is a PhD project funded by the University of Plymouth and independent of Government.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSIDERING TAKING PART

Contact for Further Information
Nichola Harmer, PhD Research Student
School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences
University of Plymouth, 8 Kirkby Place
Devon PL4 8AA, United Kingdom
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Email: nichola.harmer@plymouth.ac.uk

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the way the research is conducted, please contact the researcher on the number above in the first instance. If you feel the problem has not been resolved, please contact the secretary to the Faculty of Science and Technology Human Ethics Committee: Mrs Paula Simpson on (0044) 1752 584503.

BRITAIN AND THE UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

University of Plymouth

Faculty of Science and Technology

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

Name of researcher: Nichola Harmer

Name of participant:

(Please tick the appropriate boxes)

1. I have read the Participant Information Sheet.

2. I understand I am free to withdraw from the research without having to give a reason at any stage before submission or publication and to ask for my data to be destroyed if I wish.

3. I agree that the interview will be tape recorded and give my consent for this recording to be made

4. I understand that a transcript of the interview will be forwarded for comment before use and that the interview transcript may be used in publications.

5. I understand my confidentiality will be protected unless I expressly state otherwise.

6. I agree to the use of code-named direct quotes from my interview to be used in publications and presentations arising from this study.

Under these circumstances, I agree to participate in the research.

Interview participant's name: Signature:

Date:

Researcher's name.....Signature.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX C

List of Abbreviations

BIOT	British Indian Ocean Territory
BVI	British Virgin Islands (also officially named the Virgin Islands (UK))
BVIlander	A person holding believer status in the British Virgin Islands
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
C24	Committee of 24 also known as the UN Special Committee on De- Decolonisation
DEFRA	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
RMS	Royal Mail Ship St Helena
TCI	Turks and Caicos Islands

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