This study concerns the Franco-Mauritians, the white elite of the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius. Present-day Franco-Mauritians are descendants of the European colonisers who settled the uninhabited island in the eighteenth century. This group can still be considered an elite although no longer in a political sense since their elite status now depends mainly on their socio-economic position and is more strongly contested than in the past.

The thesis examines how the Franco-Mauritians have dealt with the challenges facing them in order to retain their elite position. It looks at the way in which an elite makes sense of the world, how this impacts on its position and elite culture and how ambiguous relationships between Franco-Mauritians and other Mauritians affect continuity.