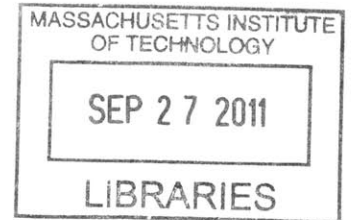Business Bridging Ethnicity:
How business transactions in Trinidad build trust and friendship but don't reduce
prejudice

By

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
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ABSTRACT

Do business transactions between individuals of different ethnicities lead to social spillovers, in terms of building trust, friendship, and reducing prejudice? In this dissertation I interrogate that research question through a study of business transactions in four industries in Trinidad—print & packaging, food & beverages, construction, and consumer retail. I employ a mixed methods research design, which places emphasis on qualitative analysis of interview data, supplemented with quantitative analysis of that data—obtained from approximately 200 interviews plus 180 surveys. I find that business transactions do build trust and friendship between individuals, but tend not to lead to changes in individuals' wider social attitudes, particularly in terms of ethnic prejudices and opposition to intermarriage.

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Non-technical Summary

This dissertation investigates how business can help improve ethnic relations—particularly the way that personal relationships can be built as people buy and sell from each other. It focuses on the content of these business relationships, in terms of trust, friendship, and their effects on ethnic prejudice. Through interviewing around 200 managers, owners, sales reps and other staff in four industries in Trinidad—print & packaging, food & beverages, construction, and retail—and supplementing these with 180 surveys conducted in northern, central, and southern Trinidad, I conclude that business transactions do build trust and friendship between individuals, but tend not to lead to changes in individuals' wider social attitudes, particularly in terms of ethnic prejudices and opposition to intermarriage.

The first section of my research findings highlights how important business transactions can be in _creating opportunities for interaction across ethnic boundaries_. I find that Trinidadians are highly racially-segregated in the areas they live and in their social lives; thus business is one of the main channels by which individuals come into contact with members of different ethnic groups. In fact, fully 81 percent of interviewees and 41 percent of survey respondents reported that their work life brings them into contact with people of a wider range of races than does their social life.

The second section explores several ways in which _ethnicity influences business transactions_. There are three main reasons for business transactions to concentrate within ethnic groups: (i) negative expectations of some races—particularly Afro-Trinidadians, (ii) a greater ease of doing business with one's own race because of a 'common culture', (iii) a feeling of solidarity towards one's own ethnic group. And, in the other direction, there are three main reasons for business transactions to bridge ethnic groups: (i) a profit motive which overrides ethnic preferences, (ii) professionalism and corporate branding which displace ethnic identities, and (iii) perceptions that some ethnic groups may be more competent than one's own for certain tasks.

Which reasons win out? Most interviewees reported that race was of very marginal importance in their business decisions—claiming that 'business is business' and is not subject to racial prejudices. However, that claim is belied by a belief that sales reps and sales staff will be more successful when they are trying to make sales to people sharing their own race. Several other factors help determine when ethnicity will be important in business decisions: group favoritism is stronger amongst Muslims, Syrians and Chinese than other ethnic groups, is stronger in more complex transactions, and is stronger when products are not differentiated in other ways (i.e. in highly competitive industries).

The third section of my research findings looks at three _wider impacts of business transactions: trust, friendship, and ethnic relations_. I find that most people try to build trust into their business relationships as a way of reducing the costs of doing business. These trust ties can span ethnic boundaries, even if such ties may be slower to form and more fragile than within one's own ethnic group. Similarly, most businesspeople in Trinidad also find that business transactions can lead to friendships, particularly in industries and transactions that involve prolonged and negotiated contact. These business-based friendships often span ethnic boundaries. But wider ethnic relations are more resistant to change: business transactions can improve some aspects of ethnic relations (particularly through better information about other ethnic groups, through more

diverse friendships, and through fostering a kind of multiculturalist outlook), but seem unable to change ethnic prejudices. This is the case particularly in Trinidad where ethnic stereotypes are formed predominantly through real experience rather than ignorance of other ethnic groups, but it is also because business relationships never quite seem to reach the intimacy of the social relationships that do have the power to change one's deeper social attitudes. In particular, individuals could remain hostile towards intermarriage with other races even as they had long, friendly dinners with business partners belonging to that race.

Finally I examine the policy implications of my research. I suggest that occupational niches are actually quite beneficial for ethnic relations, since they make it more likely that people will *have* to do business across ethnic boundaries (rather than being able to choose which ethnicity they do business with). Policymakers might focus instead on increasing the ethnic diversity in industries and supply chains rather than in specific occupations. Trade fairs and business networking events could help establish cross-ethnic business linkages in the first place.

These arguments are brought out evocatively in the quotes of some of my interviewees. Here are some of the highlights…

…on latent ethnic divisions and race stereotyping in Trinidad:

> *{Owner and manager of hardware store}*
> Everybody have a small reservation about another race. The Indos have a small thing with the Blacks. See carnival: all ah we is one in that situation. Easter, the same thing. But other times everyone stick to their own.

> *{Proprietor of small hardware shop}*
> [*In response to the question: 'How many times in the past twelve months have you been in the home of a friend of a different race, or had them in your home?'*]:
> Never. That would be embarrassing. … I feel uncomfortable because it's a different race an' t'ing.
> *versus..*
> *{General Manager of food & beverage manufacturer}*
> [*In response to the question: 'How many times in the past twelve months have you been in the home of a friend of a different race, or had them in your home?'*]:
> Are you sure this is applicable to us [Trinidadians]? We're so cosmopolitan.

> *{Entrepreneur}*
> Trinidad is not a harmonious society!—that is total crap. Right? We're kind of a rainbow society, but we're simply not harmonious. What we have learned is tolerance. We have learned to live with each other. We have learned to celebrate each other's festivals; we have learned to go to each other's prayers; we have learned to watch our neighbor put *ten flags up*. You know—we have learned that sort of stuff. Right? It was very divisive at one time, eh? But we have learned to accept that kind of thing. But in terms of harmony?—no, no, no, no, no.

> *{Manager of groceries distribution}*
> Remember, Afro-Trinidadians' and Indo-Trinidadians' way of life, and white Trinidadians, their way of life is very different. We have completely different cultures. From the time you wake up in the morning, to the way you spend your salary when you get it, to the way you court your girlfriend or your boyfriend, to the way that you set up or that you transcend a family life, is extremely different for these three entities.

> *{Manager of a government agency}*
> Africans are oriented towards academic jobs and being comfortable in a secure job in government with a white shirt. They want to retire in a three-bed house with a lawn and car. But the Black power revolution changed this. Blacks are typically risk-averse, and didn't have many role models of African success stories. Commercial banks had to open their doors to Black people. National Commercial Bank was Black-run too. Indians always wanted economic freedom—they sacrifice: it comes from their

perception of karma. But the 'emerging' East Indian, who's adopting Western values and so on, has abandoned that lifestyle: they're living for today, and have moved to cities and suburbs.

{Entrepreneur in construction industry}
We all know what we've been through, and we're all up against the same thing in society. … But he is absolutely testin' your arse!—and the first time you slip, he will say "that is de same thing!—nigger people are really something else!". I know I do it.

{Furniture store manager}
Out of one hundred [Afro-Trinidadians], maybe one can run a business well. If you get 100 dollars, you'll save 50 of it. If an Afro gets 100 dollars, he'll spend it all on partying tonight, and then come back and ask to borrow 10 dollars tomorrow!

{Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer}
A company with only Indians on board at your level, they all looking to cut your throat. I don't know why—that is the culture. It don't happen with the African people; the Indians always want to be better. You have a ten-storey house? Your neighbor puts up an eleven-storey house.

{Manufacturer of household goods}
East Indians prefer to trust a Black in that position over another East Indian. Because they say if a Black thiefs from you he will thief two sweets. If a East Indian goes to thief from you, you have to look for "eh where the whole supermarket gone?" because they go to start a business. So in some cases the East Indian prefer to trust the Black.

{Entrepreneur}
Now, as far as business goes, I particularly don't trust the Lebanese and Syrians. They are *fucking* difficult to work with. They're hardened to negotiate with. When you do give them credit you catch your fucking *arse* to get your money back. So if I can avoid them, I avoid them. A lot of times I would prefer to buy from somebody else. They run you *ragged*, man!—they give you so much stress.
I don't have a hard time with Chinese: Chinese are the easiest people to do business with because you agree, it's final, they get their merchandize, they cut you a check, they pay you cash—no argument. A Lebanese guy, *my God*, a Syrian guy—he come back, he say "I don't like de price.."—I say "What de fuck? Why you tellin' me this *now*?! I coulda sold it to somebody else!"—he say "It not sellin' in my store—you take it back.." And I still argue with him: six months later he doesn't want to pay me. Ah, fuck.

…on the potential of business and trade to breach ethnic boundaries:

{Entrepreneur}
Business is that great purveyor of diplomacy and equality and relationships, and business *can* bridge tremendous divides that have existed historically between different groups. It is to my discretion whom I buy paper bags from, but you could bet your bottom dollar that my first decision, or the first choice, is going to be based on efficiency and cost and reliability and quality of supplies.
Now, *all things being equal*, if I could give it to somebody that I knew or liked, I would. But the truth of it is, that the reason that business heals and it bonds and unites, is because it is based on performance first, and then comes factors of ethnicity and relationships and cultural heritage, friendship and so. … So it doesn't matter how closely related we are: if you can't produce paper bags efficiently you're going to hurt my business, so I'm sorry I'm going to have to give the order to somebody else. And that is why business works to create harmony, you see. … I think it is a formula for world peace myself.

{Driver at manufacturing firm}
Whereas in socializing you may rarely find an African socializing with an Indian, in business you don't have a choice—you have to deal with the people you need to deal with.

{Manufacturer of household goods)
In Trinidad, our biggest supplier—boxes would be [_____][1], which at one time I think would be a White South African-owned firm operating in Trinidad. Bottles will be [_____]—that's White Trinidadian or Syrian; resin is White Trinidadian; the one Negro supplier we have; but our labels would be [_____]— what's he boy?—he must be half Chinee-White or something. And our next largest supplier's out of Barbados, and that's a White Barbajan.

{Sales rep for construction contractor}

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[1] Names of firms are removed in order to retain confidentiality.

I can deal with anyone—they can be pink or coconuts for all I care. As long as they're paying us, that's good enough for me.

{Owner & manager of construction contractor}
The primary color everybody focuses on is green. In business I'd say it [race] affects ten to fifteen percent of decisions—where you can say 'that was a racial decision'.

{Contractor}
You have a common language; you can talk to each other very easily [in business].

{Sales manager at a print firm}
We've done jobs where people say "well this feels more like a family than work!". And this is a combination of Indians and Africans working together for one purpose.

{Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer}
If I wasn't in this job I might have only Indian friends or African friends. But now I have plenty, plenty friends. White friends in Mayaro. Chinese friends in Port-of-Spain. And real close. Closer than if you born with someone—your next-door neighbor. And that's why I wouldn't swap this job for anything else.

...but not always such a positive story—business can bring racial divisions to the fore, or reinforce not diminish racial stereotypes:

{Managing Director of furniture manufacturer}
We are cognizant when we do business of who we send to clients. We'll send an Indian rep to Indian firms. If it's a government job then we'll send someone of African descent. If it's a white firm, we'll send a white guy. That's the way the world works.

{Plant Manager & Director of a bottled water manufacturer}
The salesmen and women we hire to sell in central Trinidad will be Indians, and to sell in Laventille will be an African. An Indian will buy from an Indian—that's how it works. You're looking to get as much sold as possible, and it will make a difference. You're not going to lose sales from the people who don't care if you're black or Indian. But you'll gain them from the people who do. You don't get this [insight] from your sales reps—but just look at your figures: sales normally go up when you switch races of people working in the area.

{Owner of advertising agency}
If I'm going to a Muslim client, I can't go as a Hindu—I'll take my girl here who wears hijab. If I go to a Hindu organization I'd quote certain things (even though I'm a Christian).

{Manager of a personal goods manufacturer}
You feel a little more comfortable with Indian people. When it comes to trust, as Indian people, we may have more in common culturally—this brings in more commonality of interests in a conversation—and this leads to greater comfort. For example, I may prefer chutney music to reggae; with Indian people I can just assume this and it brings about that closeness. But I want to make sure you have the qualification: it does not hinder it [business] too—it doesn't mean other people have negative consequences—it's just a little plus for some people.

{Owner & manager of food & beverage manufacturer}
Yes, I deal with them [Afro-Trinidadians]—as employees, customers, and suppliers. As employees, they're sometimes very lazy; a few that rebel. Very bad work ethics. As suppliers: not very reliable— though there are a few exceptions. In terms of customers, they're not trustworthy, not reliable—bad payment [record]. In the islands [i.e. other Caribbean countries], even worse: very dishonest. There are genuine ones, but the majority spoil it for those. To compensate, customers have to pay cash. In the islands, I stopped dealing with them [Afro-Trinidadians] completely. I lost a lot of money, and now deal only with Syrians and Indians ... Almost all my employees are now Indo-Trinidadian. That's partly because of the area we're located in, but also because I've had threats, theft, and paid out a lot of money because of their [i.e. Afro-Trinidadians'] carelessness.

The rest of this dissertation weaves together these points of view, draws attention to areas of consensus and disagreement, and attempts to delimit where business can help or hinder race relations.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Overview

Do business transactions between individuals of different ethnicities lead to social spillovers, in terms of building trust, friendship, and reducing prejudice? In this dissertation I interrogate that research question through a study of business transactions in four industries in Trinidad—print & packaging, food & beverages, construction, and consumer retail. I employ a mixed methods research design, which places emphasis on qualitative analysis of interview data, supplemented with quantitative analysis of that data—obtained from approximately 200 interviews plus 180 surveys. I find that business transactions do build trust and friendship between individuals, but tend not to lead to changes in individuals' wider social attitudes, particularly in terms of ethnic prejudices and opposition to intermarriage.

1.   Introduction: Why is this research important?

The world's future will be one of multi-ethnic cities; but ethnic diversity may bring a number of economic and social problems. Beyond the most dramatic problems of interethnic violence, it seems from prior literature that the cohabitation of ethnic groups in cities may itself hinder the economic performance that attracts them to cities in the first place. Ethnic heterogeneity can encourage rent-seeking, increase transactions costs, and hinder the development of trust—factors which empirical research has found to be strongly detrimental to economic performance.

The premise underpinning this dissertation is that the links from ethnic diversity to low growth are not inevitable—if cross-ethnic trust can be built, ethnic prejudice can be reduced, and ethnic identities can become less salient. In this dissertation I investigate the power of business transactions themselves to build trust and friendship, diminish prejudice, and soften ethnic identities. In effect this is a positive feedback model, in which economic activity leads to beneficial social impacts that, in turn, lead to more economic activity. We will see that this model does function to some extent, but depends on several mediating factors, such as the size and familiarity of ethnic groups, complexity of transaction, and degree of market choice.

2.   Theoretical and Empirical Gaps: What do we not yet know?

Two schools of thought—on calculative trust and affective trust—describe reasons why businesspeople can expect their trading partners to deliver on their word: respectively, because of mutual interdependence, and because of social norms and personal sentiment. In my view, it is not necessary for us, as researchers, to choose dichotomously between these two mechanisms: the human action we study can be an amalgam of multiple motivations—calculative and affective. What I find more interesting is how these trust mechanisms can build bridging ties between trading partners, especially when those trading partners belong to ethnic outgroups in which we might otherwise place less trust.

Two additional bodies of theory provide foundations for my work: first, socio-psychological research on the 'Contact Hypothesis', where interethnic contact is deemed under certain conditions to lead to reduced prejudice; second, research on social identities, especially in industrial districts and other business contexts.

In the literature on trust, there is a rich body of evidence on trust-building processes in business, but relatively little on multi-ethnic business contexts. Do such mechanisms work in the same way when business partners belong to different ethnic groups, with different cultural backgrounds and higher transactions costs? **Additionally, there are several unanswered questions about the impacts of business transactions on wider ethnic relations:** (i) how robust is the mutual dependence hypothesis to the existence of principal-agent problems in firms, where employees might prefer contact with their own ethnicity regardless of the firm's rational interests? (ii) does the Contact Hypothesis stand up to scrutiny in real-world business contexts, rather than artificial social contexts? (iii) can industrial or entrepreneurial identities become strong enough to displace ethnic identities?

3. Research Design

On the basis of this introduction, my research question will be: 'Do business transactions between individuals of different ethnicities lead to social spillovers, in terms of building trust, friendship, and reducing prejudice?'.

I choose to investigate this question in Trinidad, owing to five characteristics: (i) a multi-ethnic country characterized by latent ethnic distrust, (ii) sufficient variation in the dependent variables that we can seek to explain that variation across individuals, (iii) sufficient variation in our explanatory variables owing to a sizeable population of 1.3 million, (iv) a large proportion of mono-ethnic firms, which should help us isolate the influence of inter-firm interactions, and (v) an English-speaking population, which makes it less likely I will lose nuance by having to work through a translator.

Four industries are selected on the basis that they vary by degree of product customization and by multi-ethnicity of supply chains—food & beverages, print & packaging, retail, and construction. These two variables are highlighted because they are common to several of my research hypotheses: they determine the types of negotiated transactions and the extent of interethnic contact which take place while doing business. I will find interviewees by sampling at least 120 firms systematically from Trinidad's Yellow Pages—focusing my interviews particularly on managers, sales, and purchasing staff—and will then create a quasi-control dataset by surveying a further 180 individuals from Trinidad's general population at random.

4. Setting the Context: Ethnic segmentation and a transition economy

Despite a general trend of social integration, Trinidadians remain relatively segmented—by race and, to some extent, by religion—in the places they live, in their social lives, and in their occupations. Indo-Trinidadians are more highly concentrated in the central and southern parts of the country, while Afro-Trinidadians are found mostly in Trinidad's main cities and in the north of the country. My interview and survey data indicates Trinidadians' friends also cluster by race: Afro-Trinidadians

have relatively few Indo-Trinidadian friends, and vice versa. **In this context, business is one of the main channels by which diverse ethnic groups come into contact with each other.** Fully 81 percent of interviewees and 41 percent of survey respondents reported that their work life brings them into contact with people of a wider range of races than does their social life.

5. *Ethnicity → Business:*
Stereotypes, Culture, and Tactical Business Behavior

I review two pathways by which ethnicity influences business transactions. First, because ethnicity conditions social contacts, which in turn condition business linkages. Second, via a more direct route from ethnic groupness to business preferences. Most of the analysis in this section focuses on the second of these pathways.

Why _would_ ethnic favoritism occur in business transactions?

- **First, because of negative expectations towards (some) outgroups.** Afro-Trinidadians, in particular, suffer from an assumption that they will be lazier in business than other Trinidadians, will not be competent at running businesses, and will spend their money on partying, clothes and cars rather than sacrificing those material possessions for their businesses. Indo-Trinidadians are generally deemed to be more competent and hardworking than Afro-Trinidadians, though less trustworthy.

- **Second, because of a greater ease of social transactions with ingroups.** In contrast to prior research literature, I found this preference for ingroup business is not predominantly because of 'reputational' mechanisms that encourage reliable behavior within ethnic groups, but instead is because it smoothes social transactions which are an intrinsic part of business. In particular, doing business with ingroups means lower transaction costs because of sharing a 'common culture', which helps establish trust. Indeed, of those interviewees who went into more detail about why it is easier to build a business relationship with co-ethnics, an overwhelming majority—25 out of 31 respondents—said it was through cultural familiarities, while only 7 of 31 people said it was because of access to reputational information[2]. Such cultural similarities aren't perceived as being *sufficient* to guide business choices, but rather are factors that can tip the balance.

- **Third, because of a vaguer, and perhaps irrational, notion of group solidarity.** Essentially this means a kind of obligation stemming only from technical commonalities, as one may feel towards members of one's family whom one does not necessarily have to actually feel affection for. This seems to apply particularly to Muslims, to Chinese-Trinidadians, to Syrian-Trinidadians and—only to some extent—to Indo-Trinidadians. Amongst Indo-Trinidadians, the phenomenon is a little more complex. On one hand, Indo-Trinidadians do seem to receive preferential treatment by other Indo-Trinidadians, but there are also divisions *within* the Indo-Trinidadian community, particularly along religious lines. For all groups, I was told by interviewees that the strength of ethnic solidarity is dying

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[2] The total number of responses adds up to more than 31 because respondents were permitted to subscribe to more than one reason.

over time. Afro-Trinidadians appear to be a special case: they may feel more comfortable doing business with fellow Afro-Trinidadians, *but* do not feel any particular solidarity to support Afro-Trinidadian businesses. Diverse explanations were given for this phenomenon. The most prevalent was in terms of historical legacy: that, in contrast to all other ethnic groups, Afro-Trinidadians were transported to Trinidad against their will and mostly in the absence of their families.

Why would ethnic favoritism *not* occur in business transactions?

- **First—and above all—because of the profit motive.** Buyers are concerned with price and quality: they want to buy the best quality good at a given price, or the lowest price good of a given quality. Sellers are concerned with price and volume: they want to sell the most goods, and/or a given quantity of goods at the highest prices. I found a compelling amount of evidence suggesting that the profit motive can override ethnic solidarities and commonalities.

- **Second, because business is something of a special social space, in which universal languages of business can eclipse ethnic affiliations and reduce transaction costs across ethnic boundaries.** By this I mean two things: a series of learned behaviors and terminologies that are specific to business transactions and are shared across ethnic groups, and also the power of corporate branding to displace ethnic identities: company uniforms, product names, and logos become more visible than the skin color and ethnic affiliation of the person purveying them. Paradoxically, one component of being 'professional' seems to be in learning how to deal with different business audiences, depending on their ethnicity. This insight renders the idea of 'professionalism' less like a standard set of behavior traits, and more like a '*virtuoso*' performance that varies according to the situation. However, this observation in turn means that perceptions of professionalism can be subject to an ethnic bias: i.e. professionalism may be perceived more readily in members of one's ingroup than in members of outgroups.   So, what may be termed 'professionalism' may, in some situations, may simply be the projection of ethnic favoritism.

- **Third, because ethnic stereotypes may actually *encourage* firms to trade across ethnic boundaries, if outgroups are perceived to be more adept than ingroups for particular goods or services.**

How much **does ethnicity matter in business transactions?**

Having established why race and religion might, or might not, feature in business decisions, I then turn to the question of to what extent they actually do. Overall, group favoritism seems to affect business decisions to varying extents in different people, but is on average relatively marginal. Of 43 interview respondents who answered the question on how they choose their suppliers, 60 percent said race was of zero importance in their supplier decisions, and of the other respondents, all but four people said it accounted for 10 percent or less of their decisions. **However—crucially— even race is of marginal importance for individual business decisions, it can still be a decisive component in the behavior of firms.** This is for two reasons.

- **First, because of a principal agent problem.** Most of the reasons to overcome ethnic boundaries in business are profit motives in the interests of the firm; by contrast, most of the reasons to maintain ethnic boundaries are affective mechanisms at the level of employees. Hence, unless the interests of the firm are somehow transmitted to employees too, employees will continue to act consistently with their own prejudices, regardless of company interests or company policy.

- **Second, because even when individual and company interests are aligned, race remains able to tip the balance of business decisions.** Ethnic affiliation can be a decisive factor in swinging a choice between firms that are identical in other respects, and thus appears often in markets that approach a perfectly competitive structure. Logically, even if race is of marginal importance, shrewd businesspeople—who are pursuing all avenues to generate business—should appeal to it. In other words, the ethnic allocation of sales reps around the country constitutes a kind of **'Pascal's Gambit'**: even though we do not know for sure that racism exists, we should behave as though it does when allocating our sales reps, since we have potentially something to gain, and nothing to lose.

When does ethnicity matter in business transactions?

The extent to which ethnic preferences are manifested in business is further conditioned by five mediating factors.

- **First, ethnic fixed effects: ethnic favoritism in business is manifested unequally across different ethnicities,** and seems to be strongest amongst Muslims, Syrians, and Chinese. Afro-Trinidadians appear to be something of a special case: they seem to be inherently less likely to stick together in business than other groups. Why not, if other ethnicities perceive such ethnic clustering to be beneficial? One reason may be *practical*: there may simply not be enough Afro-Trinidadian-owned businesses to permit a choice. A second reason may be *prudential:* Afro-Trinidadians seek competence and reliability in their suppliers and, like other ethnicities, have come to accept the generalization that those attributes will be found less often in Afro-Trinidadian businesses.

- **Second, geography.** According to a widespread and popular view, race matters more in Central and South areas of Trinidad than in the North. Hence, in business, I was frequently told that—for example—Afro-Trinidadian sales reps have a harder job making sales than Indo-Trinidadian sales reps in Central and South Trinidad. Two dynamics are at play here: the social hard-wiring of ethnic attitudes in childhood (Indo-Trinidadians from Central and South are usually deemed to be more conservative and community-oriented than when they hail from the North), and a lack of daily interaction (since Central and Southern areas are·far more ethnically segregated than the North, and so cross-ethnic interactions are less likely to occur). However, paradoxically, my survey and interview results show that people *perceive* ethnicity to matter *less* in Central and South Trinidad than they do in the north. I postulate this is because—similarly to the differences between 'lay' people and principal agents—Northern Trinidadians have more experience with cross-ethnic business transactions and therefore have seen in reality the impact that ethnicity can have.

- **Third, buyers seem to discriminate more than sellers.** Buyers seem more prone to make purchasing decisions on ethnic grounds than sellers (as long as there is a choice of suppliers similar in all other respects). The reason appears to be that greater degrees of trust are required by buyers than by sellers. For buyers, trust requirements (and therefore ethnic favoritism) also vary by product: where standardized products are sold to customers who pay cash on delivery, it does not matter and "the only color people study is green" (i.e. the color of money)—indeed Afro-Trinidadians may actually be *preferred* because of their spendthriftiness. But where competence and reliability are an integral part of the transaction—for example, in finding long-term clients, or in finding suppliers who must be reliable on delivery and quality—businesspeople are much more likely to draw on ethnic allegiances and stereotypes.

- **Fourth, ethnic favoritism is more likely in more complex transactions which require more trust.** If opportunities are not otherwise available to measure trustworthiness, then businesspeople are more likely to have recourse to ethnic favoritism in such transactions.

- **Fifth, ethnic favoritism is more likely where products are not otherwise differentiated,** since this means fewer other product characteristics exist to trump ethnic favoritism.

Can we use government procurement as a kind of 'natural experiment'? i.e. when the profit motive is removed, is business conducted more strongly according to ethnic favoritism?

The relative absence of a profit motive is rather clearly demonstrated by pervasive corruption in government contracting: government ministries and civil servants are not acting strictly in accordance with the best financial interests of the state. However, on closer examination we see that the profit motive is not simply absent: instead, the firm's profit motive is replaced by an individual profit motive. In other words, while in the private-sector the firm's profit motive displaces ethnic favoritism, in the public-sector the individual's (corrupt) profit motive can displace ethnic favoritism. This individual profit motive is (reportedly) supplemented—at higher levels of government—by a procurement bias towards firms which have donated funds, or offer other support, to the political party in power. In short, government procurement practices are a big problem in Trinidad, but cannot shed much light on the main topic of this dissertation, given that the incentive structures are so distinctive and distorted.

6. *Business → Ethnicity:*
   Trust Relations, Friendship, and the Limits of Business Contact

In this chapter of the dissertation I examine three social spillovers of business transactions: (i) trust, (ii) friendship, and (iii) changed ethnic relations. The first two operate at individual scales—i.e. they concern interpersonal relationships, and can thus constitute cross-ethnic bridging ties. The third operates at a social scale: it concerns the question of whether business experiences can change broader social attitudes.

Do business transactions build cross-ethnic _trust_ between individuals?

Trusted relationships are sought in the majority of business transactions, since they reduce transaction costs. 'Reliability' and 'being straight with me' emerged as key phrases in my interviews: these qualities are what businesspeople seek from all their trading partners, and I interpret these as synonyms for 'trustworthiness': the confidence an individual has that another will deliver on his or her word. My literature review identified three routes to building a trusting relationship: (i) calculative, (ii) affective, and (iii) common values. During my interviews, I detected elements of all three of these; but the repeated references of interviewees to reciprocal relationship-testing suggests that the calculative route is prime in building trust. How strong are business-based trust ties? My interview data indicates that trust ties with work contacts are weaker than those with fellow members of a religious community, but stronger than those with people living nearby. Looking particularly at trust ties with "people you trade with in other companies", these are significantly weaker than trust ties with people in one's own company, or with fellow members of one's religious community, but still stronger than with "people who work in the stores where you shop".

The key question here is how these routes to trust-ties are conditioned by ethnic affiliation. How do they work across ethnic boundaries?

- **First, with respect to calculative trust, ethnicity can be a crucial intermediating factor, for three reasons: (i) initial perceptions of trustworthiness** differ across ethnic groups, (ii) reputations of trustworthiness or not are **channeled through social and business networks, which in Trinidad are often ethnically constituted**, and (iii) once formed, **trust relationships can be more fragile for some ethnic groups** than others.

- **Second, with respect to affective trust, cultural familiarity is often reported to be a crucial lubricant of building co-ethnic business relationships.** The absence of these cultural commonalities between different ethnicities means that: (i) trust may be slower to arise across ethnic boundaries, and (ii) trust is more likely to be constituted rationally rather than affectively, if affective trust is to some extent contingent on such commonalities.

I observed this complex interplay between rational and affective trust manifested particularly vividly in the treatment of sales reps. Sales reps belonging to ethnic outgroups might be at an initial disadvantage (cf. 'rules of thumb'), might have a harder time building affective trust (cf. ethnic commonalities), but would set about building calculative trust and eventually affective trust (cf. reciprocal testing), facilitated by adhering to a bright, professional manner (cf. 'common values' and 'special social space').

Do business transactions build cross-ethnic _friendships_?

The first step in establishing this argument is to find out the conditions under which business transactions will _generally_ lead to personal friendships. The second part of this section then discusses the implications of these arguments for the formation of _interethnic_ personal friendships.

By grouping the responses I received when asking interviewees about their friendships in business, I discerned four distinct 'friendship models' according to which people do or do not mix their business and personal lives: 1) **'No Personal Friendships'**: individuals do not to mix their personal and business lives, and consciously 'draw the line' before business contacts become too familiar as friends. 2) **'Strategic Acquaintances'**: relationships are pursued with the ostensible qualities of friendship (e.g. socializing together, meeting each others' families), but founded either on obligation or on rational interests. And, crucially, such qualities never eclipse the business nature of the relationship: friendships will vanish rapidly if business trust is broken. 3) **'Familiarity'**: friendship 'happens if it happens': there is neither a deliberate effort to foster it, nor a deliberate effort to prevent it. 4) **'Affection'**: individuals in business casually and organically become friends if they get on particularly well and/or have other social interests in common.

Over 70 percent of interview respondents—and an even higher proportion of managers and owners—formed friends in business within one of the latter two models. And there are notable patterns across industries: using multivariate regression, I find that people working in the consumer retail and food & beverages industries are 22 to 26 percent less likely to form friendships in business than those in printing and construction industries. This result holds after controlling for occupation. I postulate—building on interviewee testimonies—this is because printing and construction industries involve more *negotiated* transactions (like for example, the mutual problem-solving which customarily pervades the path of a contract in either of those two industries). Such negotiated transactions involve a greater intimacy of contact and thus are more likely to lead to friendships. From my qualitative interviews, I got the impression, however, that this is conditioned also by how specialized the business is. Greater specialization may prompt closer relationships with specialist suppliers and customers.

How do these friendship mechanisms work across ethnic boundaries? During my interviews, I received a number of testimonies about business being a crucial channel for building cross-ethnic friendships, which would likely not have happened at all were it not for business contact. And of the respondents who said they had made friendships through business, fully 95 percent said these friendships included friendships with people of a different race. Some of those interracial friendships will be made according to the 'strategic acquaintances' model, but others will involve familiarity and affection, based on common outside interests or simply on 'hitting it off'. These individual relationships constitute cross-ethnic bridging relationships. Moreover, as we know, relationships count for much in business (see the first section of this dissertation), and I did receive some compelling accounts from interviewees that cross-ethnic relationships built in business would often be strong enough to outweigh ethnic favoritism.

Do business transactions improve _ethnic relations_?

In the final section of this chapter I explore the most consequential aspects of this dissertation: can business go beyond building individual relationships to impact wider aspects of ethnic relations? On one hand, my interviews provided a convincing number of testimonies about the ways in which interethnic business transactions can improve ethnic relations—particular through the social content of those transactions. I observed four mechanisms by which this happens. First, **'Information'**: interethnic business contact increases the information individuals hold on outgroups, with whom they may not otherwise come into contact. Second, **'Diverse Friendships'**: where

interethnic business transactions lead to trust relations and personal friendships—even if these are calculatively- rather than affectively-based—they can widen the social horizons of the individuals involved. Indeed, even the 'strategic acquaintances' model of doing business is sufficient to lead to cross-ethnic relationships. Third, **'Rational Multiculturalism'**: doing business with the diverse racial and religious populations represented in Trinidad trains individuals to be able to adapt their behavior to fit the exigencies of the situation. Fourth, **'Affective Multiculturalism'**: this multiculturalist outlook may grow into something not only based on instrumentalist motives. Cross-ethnic business transactions can lead to deeper, genuine changes in the way people behave in the world and in their social attitudes.

But this optimism about the potential of cross-ethnic business transactions has a number of limitations:

- **First, not every cross-ethnic experience in business is a positive one**, and it seems that business experiences can actually confirm or worsen stereotypes rather than improving them—so we must be clear that we are dealing with a subset of all cross-ethnic transactions.

- **Second**—and most importantly—even **positive cross-ethnic experiences are usually deemed to be 'exceptions'**. When attitudes do change positively, those changes seem to operate with respect to an individual, rather than being extrapolated to the ethnic group to which the individual belongs. Occasionally this is because the *content* of the stereotypes had little connection with business, and thus were less likely to be modified by experiences related to business. But even when stereotypes are related to business experiences—for example that Afro-Trinidadians tend to be lazy and are more likely to be criminals—I found that people seem to deal with contrary experiences by creating sub-categories within an ethnic group, rather than adjusting the whole stereotype. For example, sub-classifications of the Afro-Trinidadian ethnicity would be made on the basis of geographical origin, or socio-economic class. Why does this happen? Why would individuals respond to cognitive dissonance by sub-dividing their stereotypes rather than simply adjusting them? I believe there are two answers to this question. **First, stereotype sub-divisions are a more efficient way to reduce cognitive dissonance than stereotype adjustment.** The logic to this argument is simple: sub-divisions are more robust to ongoing experiences than are unitary stereotypes. Countervailing experiences of ethnic outgroups are likely to be ongoing, so rather than continually adjust stereotypes in one direction or another—and thus face a continual cognitive dissonance—it is more efficient to create sub-divisions in one's stereotypes in an attempt to resolve these apparently contradictory experiences. **Second, there is a reason more specific to Trinidad: initial stereotypes are formed mostly on the basis of true experience rather than erroneous preconceptions.** This situation is contrary to the normal literature on prejudice, where negative stereotypes are attributed through ignorance; by contrast, in Trinidad 'prejudice' appears often to reflect accurately the general characteristics of an ethnic group. This insight is most apparent from the copious number of testimonies given by *members* of stereotyped ethnic groups, who themselves *concur* about the characteristics attributed to them. Thus it seems justified to think of the behavioral characteristics attributed to ethnic groups not as erroneous stereotypes, but instead as *real tangible differences*. Even if I encounter an exceptional individual who doesn't conform to this stereotype, doing so makes no change to the general ethnic characteristics observed in many other individuals. The obvious exception to this phenomenon is for those minority ethnic outgroups who are not often encountered, or not

intimately encountered, apart from these business experiences—particularly Chinese, Syrians and Whites.

- **Third, there seems to be a psychological disconnect between the behavior one undertakes in one's business life and one's social life outside.** Thus business-based cross-ethnic friendships can be pursued even as prejudicial views continue to be held. I make this argument with reference to the attitudes of interviewees towards intermarriage. To explain this phenomena, I posit there are three possible reasons, two of which I have already discussed, and one of which I introduce here. **1) Trust relations and business 'friendships' can have strictly calculative** (rather than affective) roots; thus no cognitive dissonance is involved by having outgroup business friends but continuing to hold prejudicial social attitudes. **2) Even if affective trust or affective friendships *are* built through cross-ethnic business contacts, these are likely to involve relatively small numbers of individuals** compared to the daily reinforcement of racial stereotypes by the general outgroup population; thus positive experiences of outgroup friends are likely to be classified as 'exceptions' rather than causing stereotypes to be modified. **3) Business relationships, even at their most intimate and long-term, are still part of a separate social world and never quite reach the intimacy of relationships with family and close friends.** Attitudes on intermarriage are instead more likely to be formed according to upbringing, which seems to 'hard-wire' social attitudes, plus continual reinforcement by social and family relationships. If attitudes on intermarriage *had* changed during an interviewee's lifetime, the emphasis was placed on a change of religion rather than through enlightened business contact.

How do we know the preceding analysis of ethnicity isn't simply masking socio-economic 'class'?

Given that ethnicity is somewhat correlated with class and occupation, how can we be sure what we're labeling as effects on ethnic prejudice isn't actually effects on class prejudice? This argument does have some merit, but is contradicted by the finding that ethnic stereotypes are partly shared by civil servants or high-level managers as well as other workers. In other words, cultural differences between ethnic groups are manifested even amongst high socio-economic status individuals. Moreover, even if ethnic identities were to be determined entirely by socio-economic status—as a kind of extreme hypothetical case—they are still being ascribed as ethnic identities by Trinidadians and are thus 'real'. In other words, no matter what the root source of ethnic identities: even if there were no primordial ethnic differences between individuals, the fact that differences are perceived in the social world is sufficient for ethnic identities to exist.

7.   Policy Implications:
What does this research mean for policy on business and ethnicity?

Reviewing my research findings above, we can discern that business transactions can be a key vehicle for bridging ethnic boundaries, given that multi-ethnic cities may have a natural tendency for other types of interpersonal interactions to cluster by ethnicity. Business transactions can build cross-ethnic trust between individuals, build cross-ethnic friendships, and can even lead to modified social attitudes with respect to multiculturalism. That said, cross-ethnic business transactions will not be a panacea for ethnic tensions: they appear not to have the power to modify more deeply-held

components of ethnic prejudice—as evidenced by our examination of the effect of business relationships on intermarriage. This observation is embodied rather nicely by the two-sided implication of the catchphrase 'business is business': on one hand, 'business is business' is beneficial because it means people pursue cross-ethnic business relationships according to their rational interests and regardless of latent conflict or ethnic prejudice; but on the other hand, the same phrase 'business is business' alludes to the limitations of those relationships, since their roots in calculative interests renders them in a separate social world from that in which social attitudes are formed.

So how, and in what settings, can policymakers best harness the benefits of cross-ethnic business? I suggest five policy-relevant findings:

(1) **Occupational niches.** Contrary to received wisdom, it can actually be socially beneficial for ethnic groups to occupy specific occupational niches, since this means it is more likely that business transactions will be interethnic, and thus have the potential to lead to interethnic trust and friendship. **Thus rather than encouraging ethnic diversity in occupations, policymakers would do better to tolerate or even encourage ethnic *homogeneity* in occupations, but ethnic diversity in *industries and supply chains* in order to maximize the chances of individuals having to do business with ethnic outgroups.** In the supply chain structures I studied, sales reps would be the most logical target for promoting ethnic homogeneity as a means to improving ethnic relations. (Though of course this begs a secondary research question about whether the 'pigeonholing' of race groups into specialist occupations would itself perpetuate negative ethnic stereotypes).

(2) **Utility of branding and heterogeneous products.** Branding is a crucial part of increasing cross-ethnic transactions because it increases product differentiation on attributes other than ethnicity. This finding is potentially an important one for developing countries, where company brands tend to be developed only for the largest companies. Policymakers could consider the emergence of heterogeneous products and company brands as desirable developments to displace ethnic identities in economies.

(3) **Trade fairs and business networking events.** One role for government policy is to encourage the initial formation of business transactions between ethnic groups.

(4) **Changes in social attitudes are most likely with respect to smaller ethnic groups, or any ethnic group for which there is minimal other contact.** This helps set reasonable expectations for such policies.

(5) **Some industries are more likely to foster meaningful business relationships than others—*and* are more likely to involve interactions with individuals embodying positive behavioral characteristics.** Some occupations and industries involve more repeated and negotiated transactions and thus are more likely to lead to meaningful business relationships. This is a rather worrying observation, since minority immigrant businesses are often engaged in precisely those industries (like retailing, supermarkets, cafés) where trust-building is unlikely to occur. What follows from this observation is that policymakers should redouble their efforts to ensure ethnicity is not correlated with socio-economic class.

1. INTRODUCTION: WHY IS THIS RESEARCH IMPORTANT?

The world's future will be one of multi-ethnic cities; but ethnic diversity is likely to bring such cities a number of economic and social problems. Half the world's population already lives in cities (UN DESA 2009), and as cities further grow they attract migrants from other parts of the same country—or even internationally (e.g. Beauchemin and Bocquier 2004)—from populations whom may never have previously lived together. In many places this compounds an arbitrary ethnic mix created by colonialist rule, which brought diverse populations, sometimes even from different continents, together to the same cities. As can be seen from recent history in places such as Beirut, Lhasa, Baghdad, several Indian cities, Karachi, Los Angeles, Kabul, Paris, Burnley, or Nairobi, this proximity of different groups can involve serious violence. But on closer inspection, it turns out, first, that inter-ethnic violence is highly unusual—for example, Fearon & Laitin calculate that the ratio of actual ethnic violence incidents to the number of group cleavages in Africa is approximately 0.0005 (1996:Table 1)—and, second, that **interethnic divisions can be problematic** *even if they are not manifested in violence*: ethnic diversity is found robustly by prior research to be detrimental to economic development. Thus this research engages with an intrinsic friction in urban growth: *cities attract populations who desire to become part of urban economies, by starting small businesses, and by profiting from urban growth; but that cohabitation of ethnic groups may itself hinder the economic performance that attracts them.* The first chapter of this dissertation evaluates some of the literature on economic and social benefits of interethnic trust, decreased prejudice, and decreased salience of ethnic identities in non-violent situations.

1.1. From Ethnic Diversity to Poor Economic Performance, via Low Trust

1.1.1. **Empirical research has found that higher ethnic heterogeneity is associated, *ceteris paribus*, with poor economic performance** (W Easterly and Levine 1997; Collier 2000; Alberto Alesina and La Ferrara 2005; William Easterly, Ritzen, and Woolcock 2006). Several theories explain this general relationship, such as an increase in government consumption because of rent-seeking behavior and ethnic patronage (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005), low investment and spending on public goods because of an inability to agree on spending programs (W Easterly and Levine 1997; A Alesina, Baqir, and W Easterly 1999), lower productivity because of transaction costs entailed across different cultures or language (Lazear 1999), and the difficulty in building good quality institutions which span ethnic boundaries (William Easterly et al. 2006). The impact of ethnic diversity on economic performance is thought to be particularly large in less developed economies, because they will not have diversified enough to realize the productivity benefits of skill complementarities amongst co-ethnics (Alberto Alesina and La Ferrara 2005:763), and

because formal institutions (such as the legal system) are not strong enough to substitute for trust in enforcing contracts and facilitating cooperation without trust (Menkhoff 1992).

1.1.2.   **These mechanisms are underpinned by a lack of trust between ethnic groups, a degree of latent ethnic prejudice, and the salience of ethnic identities.**   For example, the phenomenon of ethnic patronage is contingent on ethnic identities existing in the first place; and the difficulty of agreeing on spending programs is exacerbated by distrust and prejudice against other ethnic groups.   The particular importance of trust is emphasized by a widely-cited study by Knack & Keefer (1997), which finds that (generalized) trust and civic cooperation are strongly associated with economic performance.   Indeed, a one-standard-deviation change in trust is associated with a change in annual economic growth of more than one-half a standard deviation, which is nearly as large as the standardized coefficient for primary education[3].   The relationship is even stronger in poorer countries: in countries with a per capita GDP of US$1000 in 1980, the impact of trust is more than double the average effect—presumably because trust becomes even more important where contracts are not reliably enforced by the legal system, and where property rights are insecure (1997:1284) and, implicitly, where the informal economy is predominant[4].   Unfortunately trust and civic cooperation tend to be particularly weak in ethnically diverse countries (or indeed even in *neighborhoods* which exhibit ethnic diversity—see Putnam 2007), and so trust and civic cooperation are demonstrated to be a major pathway by which ethnic diversity impedes economic performance.

1.1.3.   **The link between ethnicity, low trust, and economic performance is further dissected by qualitative research on the topic.**   This research focuses on how ethnic heterogeneity affects two levels of trust: *'specific trust'*—which is accorded to particular individuals, groups, or organizations—and *'generalized trust'*—which is placed in the system of exchange as a whole, and accorded to a wide range of individuals.   **First, with respect to 'specific trust', ethnic heterogeneity hinders the building of trust, because individuals prefer to trade with co-ethnics rather than those belonging to an outgroup** (Horowitz 1985:57; Fearon and Laitin 1996:718; Landa 1995; Greif 1993; Kennedy 1988).   Most bluntly this can be because of outgroup prejudice, but more rationally it is because transaction costs are reduced by common social norms, by the incentives for trustworthy behavior provided by reputation effects (i.e. those parties breaking trust may suffer sanctions by other members of the same ethnic group, who can more easily access information on their reliability in trading).   A lack of interethnic trust presents a crucial problem for economic development since, as Arrow has argued, "virtually every commercial transaction has within itself an element of trust, certainly any transaction conducted over a period of time.   It can plausibly be argued that much of the economic backwardness in the world can be explained by the lack of mutual confidence," (1972:357).   This is because trust is a mechanism that overcomes market failures that arise because of uncertainty (Ostrom 1990); it can reduce transaction costs such as search and information costs, policing and enforcement costs, and bargaining and decision costs (Nooteboom 1999); and it can be the basis for the transmission and exchange of knowledge, and for coordination and cooperation between firms (overview in

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[3] Note that the same study finds no significant impact of Putnam's widely-cited idea of 'social capital', as measured by associational membership, on economic growth.   Moreover, group memberships are found by Knack & Keefer to have no impact on generalized trust.

[4] There remains some criticism of this research—perhaps most persuasively concerning the point that generalized trust is virtually certain to be higher in more prosperous societies, since those are the societies characterized by more effective legal and judicial institutions, which may promote trust (Moore 1999:81).

Boschma 2005:151-152). If trust is not present, economic actors will want to shorten the time-horizons of their deals, and will probably treat business transactions as one-shot games, where they "inspect the goods on the spot, pay cash, and walk away with it," (M Fafchamps 1996:444). These types of transactions are less conducive to economic development than are trusting ones. Moreover, it appears that inter-ethnic links can be crucially important as 'weak ties' on which labor market efficiency depends (Granovetter 1973).

1.1.4. **Second, with respect to 'generalized trust', ethnically heterogeneous cities and neighborhoods are found to have lower 'social capital' (Putnam 2007)—which is measured by a (somewhat vague and ambiguous) question about generalized trust.** This diminished generalized trust may actually be even more problematic for economic development than a lack of specific trust ties: Maskell has argued it is "economically superior because it tends to lower investment costs and enhances flexibility. Breaking relations with partners when economic or other circumstances require such does not incur a heavy loss of sunk costs," (2000:112)[5]. In other words, where groups become closed off from each other, or individuals become locked in narrow networks, specific trust can actually *hinder* economic performance because it impinges on flexibility and excludes potential new entrants to a market—while general trust eases the process of forming new networks and trading partners.

1.1.5. **The premise which underpins this dissertation is that the links from ethnic diversity to low growth are not inevitable—*if* cross-ethnic trust can be built, ethnic prejudice can be reduced, and ethnic identities can become less salient.** The role of social ties and associations in mediating the link from ethnic diversity to low trust has been investigated by some innovative recent research (e.g. Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008). But the role of economic transactions in doing so has been investigated much more rarely (Moore 1994; International Alert 2006a). I will be investigating how these improvements in ethnic relations may result from transactions between entrepreneurs.

1.2. Domains of Ethnic Relations: will business-based trust lead to social spillovers?

1.2.1. **In essence, this dissertation examines whether business transactions can impact on ethnic relations *outside the business contexts in which they form*.** The term 'ethnic relations' is itself a rather indeterminate construct, but I will be rendering it in more concrete terms here as an amalgam of three variables: (i) a willingness (or not) to break interethnic contacts; (ii) the degree of ethnic prejudice; (iii) the salience of ethnic identities.

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[5] Some evidence on the link between generalized trust and economic performance is less reliable than others. Fukuyama's (1995) book is widely cited, but his evidence is somewhat arbitrary and is subject to some powerful critiques. For example, as Hardin points out (2002:188), Fukuyama's hypothesis about the importance of 'spontaneous sociability' and breaking the dependence on kin relations, was confirmed better in 1995 than it is now, where China (which Fukuyama cites as a strong case of kin relations) is doing rather better than Japan.

Conceivably—as I will describe in detail below—these effects could follow from the way business transactions are embedded in social ties, and are able to build common identities.

1.2.2. If these mechanisms sound a little hard to visualize, an evocative story from Kosovo might illustrate what happens when interethnic business transactions work best. Following the violent conflict in 1999, relations between Kosovar-Albanians and Kosovo-Serbs were generally very tense (if they had any contact whatsoever). In 2000, the NGO Mercy Corps initiated a project to foster business relations between Kosovar-Albanian dairies and Kosovo-Serb milk farmers. Independent evaluations have found not only that the dairy businesses and farmers wanted to continue economic cooperation after the project ended, but also that relationships between vendors and suppliers continued outside the auspices of the program (Chigas and Ganson 2003; Schlemmer 2005). The power of the market to displace ethnic divisions has been alluded to elsewhere too. For example:

> (Furnivall 1948:304-312):
> "In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples—European, Chinese, Indians, and native. It is, in the strictest sense, a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds to its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. **As individuals they meet…in the market place, in buying and selling.**"
>
> (Mazariegos-Vicente-Eiriz, 1985: 763, cited in (Briggs 2004:326):
> In ancient Cordoba, Spain, the marketplace represented **"the place of encounter over and above the gender, tribal, and faith divides** that constituted Islamic urbanization"
>
> (Economist 2000):
> In Sadakhlo market, next to the borders with Armenia and Azerbaijan, one does not hear the virulent expressions of mutual hatred one can hear a few miles away across the border. "They fight, we don't," says Mukhta, a trader from Azerbaijan, while putting his arm round his Armenian colleague Ashot.
>
> (VOA 2002):
> According to one of the stallholders at Ergneti market, on the disputed border between South Ossetia and mainland Georgia: "There are no political questions here. The market has one language, economic. That is it."
>
> (Spilsbury and Byrne 2007):
> In Guinea, members of the *Malinke* ethnic group are wholesalers in the groundnut market chain, while the primary producers of groundnuts tend to be *Guerse*. *Malinke* wholesalers and *Guerse* farmers are willing to trade with each other. This is helping overcome ethnic and religious tensions. … This willingness to trade is due to the mutually-recognized possibility of profit.

1.2.3. Inspired by such stories, some pioneering international development practitioners have started trying to harness business transactions to bridge ethnic divides (particularly International Alert 2006a). **However, the evidence base for such policies remains anecdotal until we do know *how* or *why* positive outcomes and social spillovers were obtained.** If cross-ethnic friendships were indeed created by business, what were the relative roles of identity salience, trust relations, lower prejudice, or simply rational interests? And what aspects of the business transactions themselves were able to create such positive social spillovers? Such questions are of crucial relevance not only for academic curiosity, but also for the practical issue of designing external interventions in conflict settings. **That is the knowledge gap I aim to narrow in this dissertation research.**

1.3. Scope of this Research: Firm-to-Firm Commerce in Supply Chains

1.3.1. Lastly, before commencing the main part of this literature review, it is important to understand the type of business transactions I will be studying. **The level of analysis throughout this research concerns firm-to-firm transactions.** Thus while there may be many other aspects of business life which impact on ethnic relations—especially, perhaps, close working relationships or other contact with ethnic outgroups in a shared workplace— it is the impact of firm-to-firm transactions on ethnic relations which is the focus of this research. In developing-world cities, it is likely that at least some of the firms on each supply chain will be 'informal' (i.e. not registered with, or paying taxes to, state authorities). The core concern of this research will be the social content and consequences of inter-firm trade along such supply chains.

2. THEORY AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE: WHAT DO WE NOT YET KNOW?

In this section I review existing literature on (1) the nature of trust relationships in business, (2) the pathways by which business-based trust can impact more widely on ethnic relations, and (3) the types of policy interventions which can facilitate these impacts. These three sections provide the foundations for my own research questions and hypotheses.

2.1. Trust Relations in Business

'Trust' exists when parties to a relationship can be expected to deliver on expectations in a situation where the other party is potentially vulnerable. Existing literature provides several competing theories to explain when trust will arise. I group them here into two schools of thought: calculative trust and affective trust.

Calculative Trust

2.1.1. **According to this school of thought, parties will deliver on expectations (even if they could have gained from the other party's vulnerability) when they do not want the party to withdraw from this and/or future interactions.** Hardin and Cook have called this the 'encapsulated interest' view of trust: in brief, if my interest in current and future interactions is encapsulated in yours, then I can trust you to do what I expect you to do (Hardin 2001; Hardin and Cook 2001). A similar account is given by literature on repeated games, of which Axelrod's (1984) model of reciprocity and the construction of trust between opposing sides in Second World War trenches is perhaps the seminal text. Such literature serves to remind us that mutually interdependent interests are not sufficient to generate trust unless participants become *aware* of that interdependence, probably after it has been demonstrated through repeated interactions. It also reminds us that interdependence need not exist in dyadic links alone: if reputational information can pass along network links then individuals face additional disincentives to violating expectations—they risk losing the trust not only of those whom they transgress, but also of others who receive information on their transgressions (Fearon and Laitin 1996; Greif 1993). Thus it has been argued that "the network design is an effective and efficient social structure in a particular situation where collective investment in mutual trust is called for. ... In short, networks generate trust and consequently reduce the transaction costs of interaction," (Linders, Groot, and Nijkamp 2005:119-120).

2.1.2. While some scholars have observed that real-life decisions about trust cannot realistically be made for every action in such detail, others have responded that rational calculations do not need to be meticulous, lengthy, or high-cost: often summary heuristics (i.e. 'rules-of-thumb') will be employed in judging whether there are rational grounds for trust in each transaction. For instance, "we can trust John and Co. to do the building extension because they have always done a good job in the past, value our custom, and are very likely to provide an estimate sufficiently low that it would not be worth the extra time and effort it would cost us to obtain and evaluate alternative estimates," (Levi 1996:47). Conceptually this means that rational trust is contingent on estimates of risk in dealing with the other party. This view is described most eloquently by James Coleman who argues that "the elements confronting the potential trustor are nothing more or less than then considerations a rational actor applies in deciding whether to place a bet," (1990:99)—i.e. actors consider the potential returns and losses to a transaction, weighted by the probability that their partner honors the commitment. Implicitly these calculations and rules-of-thumb are contingent on specifying the particular task(s) to which they apply: for instance, it makes less sense to say "I trust Mr. A [to perform any task under any circumstances]" than to say "I trust Mr. A to do X but not Y".

2.1.3. This calculative view is not without its critics, including Sabel, who thinks the continuous calculation of self-interest is more faithfully characterized as a *modus vivendi* than 'trust' (Charles F Sabel 1993). Likewise, Oliver Williamson (1993:463) argues that "calculative trust is a contradiction in terms" and that authors using the term 'trust' in this way actually mean the calculation of risk, in which actors may have confidence but not 'trust'. The alternative conceptions of trust proposed by sociologists and others are covered below in the subsequent section of this proposal.

Affective Trust

2.1.4. Like the rational conception of 'trust' described above, affective trust is deemed to exist when parties can rely on each other to deliver on expectations; but **in this alternative conception of 'trust', the motivation for delivering on expectations is not mutual interdependence but instead is social norms and personal sentiment.** 'Trust' according to this view is a type of social norm rather than a description of the configuration of interests, since it means parties can be expected to deliver on an agreement—regardless of their rational interests in doing so, but where "ordinary ethical rules" specify for that type of situation that they *ought* to do so, or where there exists a behavioral regularity which generates social expectations about what actions are obligatory, permitted, or forbidden (Hechter and Opp 2001; Ostrom 2000:117). This is the type of trust also described by Michael Storper, through the use of 'conventions', which are "taken-for-granted rules and routines between the partners in different kinds of relations defined by uncertainty," (1995:208). Indeed, according to this view of trust, individuals are recognized to receive a psychological, nonpecuniary benefit from fulfilling their commitments (multiple sources, as reviewed by Francois and Zabojnik 2005:61). Once again, it is more usual to specify particularly tasks with which trustees would be trusted ("I trust Mr. A to perform task X but not task Y"), but under conditions of affective trust we might expect the scope of such tasks to be somewhat wider: the trustee is acting because of sentiment rather than interest and

thus would be expected to try hard to fulfil expectations even on tasks which are outside her normal range of competences or experience.

2.1.5.   **To apply this model of trust to business contexts is to accept that market transactions are embedded in social relations, not a function of rational incentives alone.**   On occasion this is because business transactions are established inside preexisting social ties; in other cases it is because social ties grow up around business transactions. This fascinating phenomenon of socially-embedded economics has been well documented (see particularly Smelser & Swedberg 2005; Granovetter & Swedberg 2001; Piore & Sabel 1984; Sabel 1989, 1997)[6].   But it is controversial: it is contrary to the social atomization which early sociologists predicted would result from the division of labor into specialized occupations (e.g. Simmel 1950:411; Tönnies 1887:47; Marx 1906:708), and indeed it contradicts almost all mainstream Microeconomics, which views market transactions as taking place inside an impersonal vacuum, and market participants as rational utility-maximizers.   Here, instead, markets are "tangible social structures encompassing sets of producers that have evolved specific role behaviors toward one another and toward an accustomed set of buyers," (White 1988:231).   Returning to our initial argument about the economic benefits of trust, it has been argued that affective trust is superior to calculative trust because exactly because continuous calculations do not have to be made: information costs are lower and trustworthy behavior can be taken for granted (Luhmann 1979:25).

2.1.6.   Several models have been developed to explain how social attitudes and norms are formed:

- First, one of the most basic principles is that conventions or norms are built up over time; in this context, **affective trust can be built by repeated interactions which permit business partners to increase their mutual knowledge.** Often this will entail volunteering some service or favor above and beyond what is expected; if this favor is reciprocally returned, it may begin to be the foundation for affective trust.   According to one of the classic formulations, "by discharging their obligations for services rendered, *if only to provide inducements for the support of more assistance*, individuals demonstrate their trustworthiness, and the gradual expansion of mutual service is accompanied by a parallel growth of mutual trust," (Blau 1964:94, my emphasis).   Such reciprocal behavior will be particularly conducive to building affective trust if it is clear that it took place in a situation where the recipient was otherwise vulnerable to expropriation or exploitation.   Elinor Ostrom's version of this phenomenon is that humans are 'fallible cognizers' rather than strictly rational actors, who "learn norms, heuristics, and full analytical strategies from one another, from feedback from the world, and from their own capacity to engage in self-reflection and imagine a differently structured world. ... Over the course of frequently encountered, repetitive situations, individuals learn heuristics that are better tailored to the particular situation," (Ostrom 2003:25,40).

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[6] For example, Granovetter (1995:94) notes: "I suggest that parallel to Coase's 1937 question [i.e. 'Why do firms exist?'—since competitive market suggests the price system can perfectly coordinate the provision of goods and services between isolated individuals] is another of at least equal significance, which asks about firms what Coase asked about individual economic actors: Why do they coalesce into identifiable social structures? That is, why is it that in every known capitalist economy, firms do not conduct business as isolated units, but rather form cooperative relations with other firms? In no case do we observe an economy made up of atomized firms doing business at arm's length with other firms across a market boundary any more than we observe individuals trading with one another to the exclusion of firms. It is collections of cooperating firms that I refer to as 'business groups'. In daring this analogy between the original and the second 'Coasian' question, I imply that 'business group' is to firm as firm is to individual economic agent."

- Second, in some cases parties to a business transaction may attempt to expedite the norm-building and attitude-changing processes through consciously attempting to move their transactions into the realm of social norms rather than relying on rational interests alone—that means **deliberately embedding business transactions in personal contact and 'friendships'.** Friendships can be something which participants actively pursue during business transactions, with deliberate intent to benefit from the attitudinal changes that friendship entails. Thus market participants may *wittingly* seek to personalize their business transactions, in order to bond each other into a trusting relationship (e.g. Shapiro 1987:631). It is worth noting that these socially-reflexive intentions do not need to be shared by both parties: it would be possible for only one party wittingly to embed the transaction in social relations, while the other unwittingly succumbs to such social seduction into trust.

- Third, **affective trust can be ascribed to an individual simply by virtue of their social identity:** they will be expected to conform to particular social norms because that is a quality of belonging to group X. This phenomenon moves us closer to a notion of 'generalized trust' rather than the 'specific trust' implicit in our earlier descriptions of calculative and affective trust, since it is ascribed to parties even in the absence of personalized information about them (Brewer 1981). Such trust relies instead on a 'best guess' about others' likely behavior according to certain characteristics (Messick and Kramer 2001; Aguilar 1984:3; Weber and Carter 2003) (for example: "I trust my fellow Brits, but I do not trust these impulsive Americans").

2.1.7.   It should be clear by now that *cooperation* is central to these accounts of trust formation, usually in a kind of symbiotic relationship. **Cooperative behavior provides the vehicle within which trust relations can form; but cooperative behavior is itself unlikely to take place unless minimal trust relations can support it.** Thus, for instance, where Japanese automobile makers work closely with suppliers to develop new products and reduce costs are found to have built trusting relationships with many of them (Helper 1993:143-144). Meanwhile, in the US auto industry, where firms were linked together only by arms-length contractual relations—i.e. short-term contracts awarded predominantly on the criteria of lowest price, and policed by the threat of non-renewal—those firms built very few trusting relationships. Similarly, firms in Taiwan's IT sector that supply peripherals and 'passive' (i.e. non-customized) parts and components to buyers at arms length are "devoid of the 'trust-based' subcontractual relationships that supposedly characterized IT production within industrially advanced economies" (Amsden and Chu 2003:77).

2.1.8.   **My research will remain open to both motivations for trust—calculative and affective—on the basis that 'trust' between people in the real-world is likely to be an amalgam of both strands[7].** This view is perhaps best embodied by research from a non-Western setting, on *guanxi* in China, which is deemed to combine rational obligation (*yi*) with affective sentiment (*qing*)—see Bian 2005. Indeed, the two strands may interact by

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[7] See Zucker (1986:53) for a similar conception of three modes of trust production: process-based trust that is tied to a history of past or expected exchange; characteristic-based trust that is tied to family background, ethnicity, etc; and institution-based trust which is tied to formal societal structures.

reinforcing each other's effect on the dependent variables: one piece of prior research found that 'trust' is increased particularly strongly by transactions involving both interdependence and social contact (Uzzi 1997:43). One open question here is whether these strands of trust may differ over time with, for example, rational obligation preceding the development of affective sentiments and then common identities—do these components of trust become manifested sequentially?[8] A further question concerns the outcome of frictions between rational interests and affective norms and attitudes: behavior may sometimes be guided spontaneously or automatically by attitudes regardless of rational interests, while under other conditions behavior is guided by rational deliberation, even if the outcome of that deliberation is at odds with norms (see for example the review of Fazio's research in J. Cooper, Kelly, and Weaver 2001:263). In one recent experiment on Harvard undergraduates, it was found that friends were treated substantially better than non-friends only when the transactions were not anonymous—thus suggesting that the rational incentives channel dominates the affective channel in determining behavior (Mobius, Quoc-Anh, and Rosenblat 2006). But we still do not know enough about the situations in which rationality is preferred to norm-based behavior, and vice versa.

2.2. From Interethnic Business to Improved Ethnic Relations

2.2.1. The establishment of interethnic trust can be a useful first step to improving ethnic relations. But, as is apparent from our discussion of calculative and affective trust, there is no intrinsic reason why trust built between individuals in business contexts would have any impact on wider aspects of ethnic relations—since trust relations usually apply to the domain in which they are constructed, and describe expectations about specific tasks. **In this section, I interrogate the pathways leading from trust-based business transactions to three wider variables I posit as constituents of improved ethnic relations: (i) a rational unwillingness to break interethnic ties, (ii) lower interethnic prejudice, and (iii) shared identities.** I briefly describe the mechanisms theorized to bring each of these about: demonstrated interdependence, attitudinal change, and identity recategorization. Each mechanism is expected to function under certain economic and social conditions. Figure 1 gives a visual representation of the theoretical frameworks I will be presenting[9].

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[8] I am very grateful to Roger Petersen for raising this idea.
[9] Note meanwhile that I have not included political dynamics in this conceptualization of ethnic relations. While macro questions of political systems, social structure, and so on, are doubtless important determinants of ethnic relations, I am interested here in exploring the microdynamics of ethnic attitudes, identities and behavior. So my explanation of ethnic relations will by no means be complete; I will just be focusing on a part of them. My fieldwork in one geographic location should be able to hold these other factors constant.

Figure 1: Conceptualizing the impact of firm-to-firm transactions on ethnic relations

Explanatory Variables
(Attributes of Occupation, Firm, and Industry)

Mechanisms

Dependent Variables
(Attributes of Individual)

RATIONAL ACTOR THEORIES

- Mutual interdependence
- Relative equality of gains
- Stakeholding in firm

• Rational incentives

Unwillingness to break interethnic ties

VIS-À-VIS INDIVIDUALS

CONTACT HYPOTHESIS

Prolonged same-status personal contact, in pursuit of cooperative goals

• Attitudinal change

Reduced prejudice

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORIES

Industry- and occupational-specific social norms and common identities

• Construction / choice of social identity

Reduced salience of ethnic identity

VIS-À-VIS ETHNIC GROUPS

Rational Incentives: Mutual Interdependence

2.2.2. **If interethnic transactions lead to mutual gain, and intra-ethnic transactions involve an opportunity cost, participants will have a rational interest in continuing the relationship and will actively work to mitigate threats to that relationship.** This is the rationale by which mutual interdependence leads to improved relations—a hypothesis which is conventionally termed the 'liberal thesis' and has appeared in various versions since it was first proposed by Montesquieu in the 18th century (see Mansfield and Pollins 2003 for an authoritative overview). In concrete economic terms, the extent of interdependence will depend on the availability of substitute goods and buyers of goods, as well as adaptation costs associated with commencing transactions with new parties (Crescenzi 2005:20, 45). Conversely, if ethnic groups are in market competition with each other, ethnic relations would be expected to worsen. Customarily the 'liberal thesis' is posited at the scale of inter-state trade, but logically it can be transposed to a micro-economic scale, i.e. between individuals or between firms, as Durkheim did in formulating his idea of 'organic solidarity', where the division of labor in modern societies makes individuals more interdependent and thus binds them together (Shin and Schwartz 2005).

2.2.3. **This configuration of rational interests may sound familiar, since it was the basis for our conception of calculative trust—but here we explore whether the impacts of**

rational interests carry further: will they encourage individuals not only to deliver on expectations, but to work actively to mitigate threats to their continued relationships? A very compelling answer to this question is provided by Varshney's (2002) account of urban economies in India, in which the economic interdependence of Muslims and Hindus causes them to work together to avert ethnic violence. Varshney places most emphasis on the interethnic associations of 'civic engagement'—such as social clubs, festival organizations, political parties, labor unions, or business associations—which act as the *instruments* of violence prevention; but implicit in his analysis is a premise that such associations would not become activated for such purposes were it not for the *motivations* to prevent violence provided by their members' rational interests in continued interethnic engagement. Business contacts and trade links thus provide both the instruments *and* motivations for Hindu and Muslim businessmen to work together to avert violence. And though Varshney supplements his economic analysis with a description of social associations and ties, a closer examination of his evidence suggests it is the business dimensions which provide the best explanation of why some cities remained peaceful while others did not (Chandra 2001:115-118). Varshney's research has subsequently been supported by Jha's statistical analysis of a large number of cities in medieval India, which finds that port cities— where Muslims and Hindus were segmented by comparative advantage into mutually interdependent industries, with Muslims as traders, and Hindus as producers and financiers—were significantly more peaceful than others (Jha 2007, 2008)[10].

2.2.4. However, the interdependence hypothesis has not always been confirmed by empirical evidence. **In particular, it is contradicted by literature on 'middleman minorities'— where local populations are heavily dependent on minorities for staple foods and housing, but have still rioted against them (Bonacich 1973)—often because the gains to this relationship are distributed very unevenly (see also Light and Bonacich 1988).** In other words, mutually dependent interests are not sufficient to improve ethnic relations if there is great inequity in the gains to that relationship (e.g. Østby 2007; F. Stewart 2008). The response of most scholars of 'middleman minorities' has been to supplement interdependence with other explanatory variables such as resentment and future expectations (Horowitz 1985:117), though these variables have not been so well formalized. Some recent business literature is helpful in formalizing the types of power structure which can exist within a supply chain: buyers and suppliers can be independent (i.e. perfectly competitive with plenty of other substitutes), or there can be dominance of the trading relationship by the buyer or supplier owing to a lack of substitutes. That dominance can in turn be either transparent (where the other party is aware they are being exploited), or opaque (where owing to high information costs they are not aware of the extent of their exploitation)—see Cox et al. 2002.

2.2.5. So, in summary, what are the economic circumstances in which mutual interdependence can improve ethnic relations? We can discern a number of scope constraints:

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[10] Paul Brass has disputed Varshney's explanation, and argues that "the creation of institutionalized riot systems [i.e. a political and business coalition] overrides and displaces whatever forms of civic engagement and interethnic cooperation exist," (Brass 2003:27). However, Brass bases his conclusions on a case study of one of the cities Varshney believed did *not* have strong forms of civic engagement in any case; and indeed even Brass's own case study shows how Hindus and Muslims in the city's main industries are *not* interdependent, since substitutes exist for each of the inter-ethnic trade relationships (Brass 2003:215-216). Thus, despite Brass's own claims, a closer reading of his evidence reveals that Brass's findings do not contradict Varshney's argument.

(i) ***Inter-firm trade:*** the theory is posited for economies involving inter-firm trade, rather than for subsistence economies (Humphreys 2005:513) or where a large firm vertically-integrated its supply chain (Marcel Fafchamps 2001:115);

(ii) ***Interethnic trading,*** between firms which are constituted mainly or exclusively by members of one ethnic group, in order for members of those groups to become mutually interdependent;

(iii) **Broadly comparable *gains to trade*** for each party to the transaction, in order to avoid generating resentment;

(iv) ***No principal-agent problems.*** This issue is neglected by much literature to a surprising extent: presumably the mutual interdependence hypothesis can function only if the firm behaves as a rational actor. Otherwise the link between rational interests and firm action is broken, and employees may choose business partners simply because of their own preferences for dealing with ethnic in-groups. In practice, this probably means that employees deciding on business partners must have a financial stake in the firm—perhaps as shareholders, stakeholders, or joint-owners—or that there are other social incentives to act in the firm's interest, such as through shared organizational identities or because of strict performance monitoring.

Interethnic Contact: Generalized Trust and Reduced Prejudice

2.2.6. **A second body of theory draws a link between interethnic business transactions and improved ethnic relations by way of interpersonal contact.** This follows rather naturally from our previous discussion of the formulation of trust via reciprocal contact and cooperation. Now we examine whether its impacts can be extended further: if I build a trusting relationship with someone of a different ethnicity, will that trust be *specific* to that individual alone, or will I modify my *general* attitudes and norms with respect to the ethnic group to which they belong? The core question is when individuals move from viewing trusted business partners as 'exceptions' towards having a generally more trusting disposition.

2.2.7. **Trust literature does not carry us very far towards answering this question, since the relationship between specific trust and generalized trust has not been examined with much rigor.** In other words, we do not know whether the formation of trust relationships with some individuals will have any impact on trust with groups to which they belong, and whether individuals can go from being low-trusters to high-trusters (see K. S. Cook and R. M. Cooper 2002:214-215 for a fuller discussion) with regard to a whole ethnic group. Moreover, on my interpretation of these theories, the implications of calculative and affective models of trust actually contradict each other. According to models of calculative trust, individuals would not extrapolate their trust relationships with some individuals to other members of the same ethnic group, *unless* there exist additional interdependencies to oblige those other members to act in the interest of those whom are trusted. In other words,

if Mr. A trusts Mr. B to do task X, he will not automatically extrapolate that same trust to Ms. C just because she belongs to the same ethnic group as Mr. B—*unless* there exists some interdependency between Mr. B and Ms. C that obliges Ms. C to avoid violating Mr. A's trust because it would reflect badly on Mr. B. Meanwhile, according to models of affective trust, an increased number and strength of specific trust ties could increase generalized trust by socializing individuals into trusting norms and building a local climate of mutual trust (Maskell 2000:114).

2.2.8.   If trustworthy behavior *is* experienced from individuals belonging to an ethnic group who are usually distrusted—and thus specific trust ties are built amidst general distrust—individuals are likely to experience 'cognitive dissonance', which describes the unease felt by an individual who experiences trustworthy reciprocity when they did not expect it. It is not clear *a priori* whether individuals will attempt to reduce that cognitive dissonance by mollifying their existing distrust, or alternatively by bolstering their existing distrust and ignoring the foundations of trust (cf. Sherman and Gorkin 1980). **Better answers to this question are provided by literature on ethnic prejudice, to which we now turn.**

2.2.9.   'Ethnic prejudice' exists when an individual has a preconceived attitude, belief, or mode of behavior towards another individual by virtue of the other's membership of an ethnic group. The impact of interethnic contact on prejudice is complicated, since—as Yinger and Simpson observe—"prejudice is sometimes explained as a result of the *lack* of contact with members of a minority group and sometimes explained as the result of the *presence* of such contact," (1973:117--my emphasis). **The 'Contact Hypothesis' is a coherent and commonly-adopted formulation of the conditions under which prejudice is *reduced* by contact between members of different groups.** It has been proposed in a variety of formulations, both before and after the writings of its chief proponent, Gordon Allport (Allport 1954). Allport proposed that contact between members of different identity groups will reduce prejudice if four conditions are met: (i) 'perceived equal status of groups', (ii) 'common and superordinate goals', (iii) 'acquaintance potential rather than simply superficial contact', and (iv) 'support of authorities, law or custom for intergroup interaction'. Empirical studies have shown this hypothesis does not always function as expected (for an annotated bibliography, see Forbes 1997); but a meta-review of 515 empirical studies found that it does in general—and indeed that prejudice is reduced even by contact which does not satisfy the four criteria (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).

2.2.10.   **However, this empirical evidence is not conclusive:**

- **First, the external validity of these studies is in doubt**, since so many of them have used undergraduate students as subjects, in contrived experiments that are divorced from real-world situations of contact and prejudice.

- **Second,** Allport's hypothesis—and many other versions of the Contact Hypothesis—is premised on the idea that prejudice results from ignorance of outgroups; but **what if the groups have actually been living in the same city for some time and think they know each other rather well?** Perhaps prejudice results from a well-founded suspicion based on a lack of prior trustworthy behavior. In this case the Contact Hypothesis could still function, but the effect of contact on attitudes might be more because contact provides

the medium for trust-building through proven trustworthiness, rather than simply because it reduces ignorance.

- **Third, the Contact Hypothesis is challenged by a large amount of literature that shows how ethnic attitudes are formed through *social processes (not just individual contact)*:** "contact is not enough" to change such social norms (Hewstone and Brown 1986). For example, according to 'cascade theories' of ethnic polarization, if individuals believe ethnic hostility to be widely shared by others in their group, they will seek to conform to group norms by falsifying their own ethnic hostility upwards, even if they do not actually hold hostile views (Kuran 1995; Somer 2001). These theories make a distinction between publicly-declared and privately-held attitudes; *private* changes in attitude can occur through cognitive dissonance in individuals provoked by experiences which do not conform to their prior prejudices; but these attitudes will only be manifested *publicly* if they are perceived to be similar to the attitudes of other ingroup members (Moscovici 1976). A key point here is that a change in publicly-declared attitudes may not be a function of majority preferences alone: it can depend on a few special individuals if they have particular leverage over the rest of the group (see literature summarized most engagingly by Gladwell 2000). Thus there can be a 'tipping point' in ethnic attitudes if intergroup contact occurs between people who are powerful drivers of attitudinal change. In sum, attitude change is likely to be conditioned by four qualities of an entire social network (not just individual ties): (i) the frequency of interaction (i.e. strangers are less likely to influence attitudes), (ii) the multiplexity of interaction (i.e. the more varied types of relationships a dyad includes, the more relevant it is to different kinds of attitudes), (iii) the strength of ties (i.e. strong ties lead to more agreement), and (iv) the social position of the attitude-influencer and –recipient (Erickson 1988:101).

- **Fourth—and most importantly for my research—most studies of the effects of contact on prejudice have taken place in social settings (such as in schools, cultural exchanges, or community meetings); they have rarely examined the effects of inter-ethnic contact in the setting most people spend the majority of their waking hours: at work, doing business.** Indeed in Forbes's (1997:63-84) exhaustive literature review of observational, experimental and quasi-experimental studies of contact—in a book subtitled '*Commerce*, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis' [my emphasis]—he can find only a single study of contact in a commercial setting (of anti-Semitism amongst the customers, tenants, or employees of Jews in Los Angeles: Tsukashima and Montero 1976), and even that one deals with household-to-firm and within-firm transactions, rather than firm-to-firm transactions.

2.2.11. **So, how might the Contact Hypothesis be reflected in real-world firm-to-firm business transactions?** I will be responding to this question through my empirical research, but I make a rough theoretical transposition to business contexts here:

- Allport's first criterion is 'perceived equal status of groups': this will depend on relative market power, as described in the preceding section. For example, a landholding group will clearly not have equal status with their laborers.

- The second criterion is 'common and superordinate goals': superficially any participants in a market have common goals in doing business and making a profit, but conversely the negotiation of a market price means one party must gain at the other's expense—i.e. market transactions entail both cooperative and conflicting goals.

- The third criterion is 'perceived similarity of group members': on one hand, marketplaces have been places of encounter over and above gender, tribal and faith divides (Mazariegos-Vicente-Eiriz, in Briggs 2004:326); on the other hand, they may simply involve holding prejudice in temporary suspension while market transactions are carried out (without any genuinely perceived similarity).

- The fourth criterion is 'support of authorities, law or custom for intergroup interaction': this is context specific, and cannot be considered *a priori*. In summary, interethnic business contact may or may not fulfill the four criteria of the Contact Hypothesis; and we do not yet know whether prejudice is reduced by interethnic business contact even if those criteria are fulfilled.

2.2.12. **Moreover, while research on prejudice has conventionally focused on how it is *reduced*, we may also be interested in how it can be *increased*.** In particular, there is good reason to suspect the violation of trust will have a big impact on *increasing* prejudice. For example, Dore (1983:163) reports that a corollary of strong trust relations between Japanese firms is that the breaking of trust ties is painful and involves recrimination: firms cannot simply accept the opportunistic nature of business and move on (as perhaps they might do in the US). Likewise, when a cooperative endeavor between groups who have previously been in conflict ends in failure, the groups may begin looking for a scapegoat on which to blame the failure (Worchel et al. 1978), and this may involve the attribution of negative characteristics to an individual in connection with their ethnic identity (i.e. an increase in prejudice). Given that business ventures will—by their very entrepreneurial nature—not always succeed, an increase in prejudice is surely a potentially large hazard for interethnic business.

"He is We": Industrial Identities to displace Ethnic Identities

2.2.13. **In this third section, we relax an assumption which has been implicit in the discussion until now—namely that group identities are static.** This assumption underpinned our discussion of mutual interdependency, affective trust, and prejudice—since we were exploring how behaviors and attitudes change with respect to ethnic groups, without examining whether boundaries of those groups themselves can change. **We shall now**

confront the ways in which the salience of ethnic identities, and the boundaries of groups, can change through interethnic business.

2.2.14. Literature on 'industrial districts' inspires this discussion (where 'industrial districts' are defined as spatial agglomerations of firms in similar industrial sectors, engaged in frequent economic transactions with each other). Many of these inter-firm interactions take place formally—through cooperation in credit associations, producer services (such as marketing boards, trade associations), and vocational training institutions. There also commonly exist a number of informal trust-based interactions, particularly 'flexible specialization'—where firms respond flexibly to market-demand, engaging in joint problem-solving and innovation with other firms, and sometimes even taking autonomous decisions in the interests of other firms without the need for close behavioral monitoring. **In sum, these close trust-based relations (see e.g. Harrison 1992) are the basis for "a shared culture and implicit rules of common behavior" (Paniccia 2002:18), which can be tangible enough to constitute shared identities.** Sabel, for example, finds that economic actors were "reinterpreting their collective past, and especially their conflicts, in such a way that trusting cooperation comes to seem a natural feature, at once accidental and ineluctable, of their common heritage," (Charles F Sabel 1993). In the title of this section, I adopted the endearing phrase Trinidadians use to describe a relationship of shared identities: in the local lingo, it is a situation in which "he is we".

2.2.15. Trust relations—which are based on shared social norms—appear to be particularly important as a foundation for shared identities[11]. The sixty-four thousand dollar question here is *how* these thick trust relations can be created in the first place, since ethnic identities are amongst the factors that impede their formation. As I described earlier in this document, trust-based interactions are formed more easily inside ethnic boundaries than across them, predominantly because of the greater ease of detecting reputations within ethnic networks (Horowitz 1985:57; Fearon and Laitin 1996:718; Landa 1995; Greif 1993). This situation is self-perpetuating, especially if a lack of contact with outgroups will impinge on individuals' capability to detect and transmit trustworthy signals, thus preventing them from forming new bridging ties (Yamagishi 2001). Might these observations help us explain why many spatial agglomerations of firms—particularly in multi-ethnic cities in the developing world— have not been able to create a thicker quality of business transaction, or other institutions— both of which are associated with industrial districts in the developed world (Schmitz and Musyck 1994; McCormick 1999)? Almost all of the industrial districts documented by existing literature are in relatively mono-ethnic settings—as in Prato (Italy), Baden-Württemberg (Germany), West Jutland (Denmark), or the Pearl River Delta (China). One of the few examples of an industrial district in a multiethnic setting is found in Silicon Valley. There, it appears that mono-ethnic institutions are the first port of call for newcomers, but are used as stepping stones to other local institutions—including standard-setting forums, informal hobbyist groups, and professional associations—which create social ties across ethnic boundaries, and thereby lead to a readjustment of identity saliencies (Saxenian 2007:37,49). In general, however, there is a genuine gap in existing literature concerning ethnic dynamics in industrial districts.

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[11] Some authors propose that the relationship is the other way around: shared identities provide the basis for trust relations, rather than shared identities growing from trust relations. For example, "district identity explains at actor level the adoption of distinctive behaviors, such as commitment, trust, and cooperation, which represent the ultimate source of competitive advantage of Italian industrial districts," (Sammarra and Biggiero 2001:63). Where that is the case, industrial identities would be able to displace ethnic identities more easily than is suggested in the rest of this paragraph.

2.2.16. **Implicitly, the ability of industrial identities to displace or recategorize ethnic identities may depend on the nature of the industry and the nature of each individual's occupation.** This is because social identity is—at root—not a collection of fixed attributes but more like a socially conditioned means to an end: individuals choose what aspects of their identity to emphasize publicly in response to differing economic opportunities (e.g. Patterson 1975) and as a means to self-esteem (Brown 2000b)—and the boundaries of such identities may change over time through interaction with other groups (e.g. Barth 1969). Thus we might expect the culturally-determined status of each occupation and industry to influence each individual's readiness to adopt it in preference to their ethnic identity—as a function of the economic opportunities associated with those occupational and industrial identities, and the self-esteem they permit actors to receive. This phenomenon is theorized more extensively by Sammarra and Biggiero, who find in Emilia Romagna in Northern Italy that "the process of identification with the [industrial] district is more likely to occur in those districts which have an established market reputation [or other basis for high prestige]," (2001:70). They also point out, however, that such industrial identities may still carry the standard corollary of other social identities, namely that cohesion within the ingroup may lead to discrimination against outgroups (2001:79). Thus, in the context of my own research, even if industrial identities can displace ethnic ones, they may do so only with respect to other members of the same industry without being extrapolated to a general reduction in ethnic saliencies.

2.2.17. **Finally, we might remark, there is some cause for optimism that the beneficial social dynamics of industrial districts could find fertile soil in the cities of developing countries.** Many of the salient industrial characteristics of industrial districts are found in developing country urban economies too: a high proportion of firms which are Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs, of 50 employees or less); a degree of specialization in design-intensive, craft-based industries, such as clothing, footwear, leather goods, or furniture; and industries which are spatially concentrated in the city (see Boschma 2005 for a discussion of these characteristics in industrial districts).

2.3. Policy Interventions to Facilitate Interfirm Cooperation and Trust

2.3.1. **Finally, we might ask, what can policymakers do to facilitate these mechanisms, from business transactions to improved ethnic relations?**

2.3.2. As summarized above, we can think of cooperation and trust as being in a symbiotic relationship: cooperative behavior is necessary for trust to be established, but cooperative behavior itself will not occur without a minimum level of trust. **Policy interventions to encourage interfirm trust have therefore focused on encouraging cooperative behavior between firms. The most sophisticated instances of such policies are those aiming to promote 'industrial clusters'**—i.e. networks of firms buying and selling from

each other in a geographically concentrated area—**and so literature on these types of interventions will guide this section of the literature review.**

2.3.3. Industrial clusters are often distinguished by (up to) four types of cooperative institutions (Schmitz and Musyck 1994): cooperative financial institutions (such as mutual funds, loan guarantee funds, and so on); real services (such as testing facilities, provision of information on technical standards in foreign countries, or marketing boards); trade unions (since the success of these clusters is based not on cheap, non-unionized labor but instead on innovation and flexibility); and training institutions for common labor needs. These provide excellent vehicles for interfirm cooperation, and so policy interventions have generally focused on strengthening (or constructing) such institutions. **But in developing country contexts characterized by a high proportion of microenterprises, there may be some structural obstacles to encouraging interfirm cooperation** *per se.* First, a culture of imitation makes entrepreneurs reluctant to share any kind of information; and predatory behavior is deemed to pay off because the average life span of microenterprises is short, and so there is little incentive to invest in long-term commitments and a good reputation (Altenburg and Meyer-Stamer 1999:1697 reporting the results of their survey of shoe and garment producers in Latin America). Thus even simple initiatives, such as encouragement for firms to purchase inputs jointly and thus save money on purchases, may not succeed. Second—and even more fundamentally—in a situation of almost constant excess supply and underutilization of production capacities, firms receiving an order may prefer to produce everything in-house rather than subcontract to specialized firms (Altenburg and Meyer-Stamer 1999:1697). Thus industries in the most basic developing economies may not even have a complex supply chain in the first place—let alone the potential for cooperation between firms on that supply chain. It has been suggested that some of these obstacles can be overcome by providing financial incentives to firms engaging in cooperative behavior—such as providing financial services only to those firms subscribing to group-based guarantees (Rhyne and Otero 1992), or granting preferential tax rates and access to training programs for firms partaking in associations of small enterprises, or giving heavy subsidies for joint activities such as market surveys, feasibility studies or participation in trade fairs. Another route is to demonstrate to firms by example the benefits of cooperative behavior, perhaps by facilitating visits by SME owners to fairs in order to show how production can be improved, or by facilitating interfirm dialogue to focus on discerning common problems as the basis for joint action.

2.3.4. In summary, even the best cluster literature is still at the stage of creating hypotheses rather than rigorously testing them. And even if such policy interventions do work, the absence of literature on how these phenomena interact with multi-ethnic contexts means there is a large lacuna in current knowledge. Thus if my research brings some observations on the impacts of cluster policies in multi-ethnic contexts, this could be a helpful contribution to current literature.

2.4. Conclusion: What Do We Not Yet Know?

To summarize these prior discussions, what do we not yet know about the impact of interethnic business transactions on interethnic relations? These gaps in existing literature will help formulate our research hypotheses.

2.4.1. **First, we need to know whether the process of building business-based trust applies to multi-ethnic contexts too, especially those characterized by latent distrust between ethnic groups.** Will calculative trust be established between individuals belonging to mutually distrustful ethnic groups despite the 'cognitive dissonance' this would entail? And can affective trust and the common sentiments it carries be established between ethnicities who live culturally separate lives?

2.4.2. **Second, there are several unanswered questions about the impacts of business transactions on wider ethnic relations:** (i) an unwillingness to break interethnic ties, (ii) reduced ethnic prejudice, and (iii) a reduced salience of ethnic identities:

- The **mutual interdependence hypothesis** finds relatively strong support from empirical evidence, as long as market power between participants is not distributed so unevenly that it causes resentment. However, existing literature has focused on explaining variation at macro and meso scales (i.e. variation in ethnic relations at the state or city levels), but has not sought to explain variance at a micro scale—i.e. between individuals. Meanwhile, there has been an implicit assumption in such literature that firms are rational actors; but in reality, many firms may have principal-agent problems: so, will the employee's own interests coincide with the firm's rational interdependent interests, or will the employee prefer contact with own-ethnicities regardless of the firm's rational interests?

- Will business-based trust between two individuals of different ethnic groups be extrapolated to a **reduction in prejudice** more generally? The Contact Hypothesis has rarely if ever been tested in a real-world business context, rather than an artificial social context. Moreover, while the focus of such work has conventionally been on how prejudice is *reduced*, we may suspect the violation of trust to have a big impact on *increasing* prejudice if the transgressor is classified on his/her ethnicity.

- We know little about the ability of industrial or entrepreneurial identities to **displace ethnic identities**, since almost all research on industrial districts has been conducted in mono-ethnic settings or has not measured the salience of ethnic identities. We suspect that the industrial profile and type of occupation will be important in determining the potential of industrial and occupational identities to displace ethnic ones. Second, we suspect that the reduced importance of ethnic identities would apply only with reference to other coworkers in the industry, rather than to the rest of the population in general.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Building on the literature I reviewed above, and responding to the gaps and open questions I discerned in it, I propose the following research design. Here I describe my three research hypotheses, case selection methodology, research methodology, and research precautions.

3.1. Research Question

3.1.1. My research question will be the following: 'Do business transactions between individuals of different ethnicities lead to social spillovers, in terms of building trust, friendship, and reducing prejudice?'

3.2. Hypotheses

3.2.1. **H1: From Business Transactions to Specific Trust.**

Business transactions build interethnic trust through two channels, which occur sequentially:

(i) *Calculative trust* (i.e. rational incentives to deliver on expectations) is established once individuals become aware of mutually interdependencies in their business transactions.

(ii) *Affective trust* (i.e. 'friendship') is established once individuals foster friendships and common sentiment while transacting on successive occasions.

3.2.2. **H2: From Specific Trust to Improved Ethnic Relations.**

Trust-based business transactions lead to three components of improved ethnic relations:

(i) *Rational Multiculturalism.* Business-based trust leads to a rational unwillingness to break interethnic ties when employees with control over inter-firm relations have a stake in the firm and when there is no gross inequity in the gains to that business relationship.

(ii) *Affective Multiculturalism.* Ethnic prejudice is reduced when transactions involve prolonged same-status personal contact in pursuit of cooperative goals—either through joint product-based problem-solving and innovation, or through industrial associations and institutions that involve multi-ethnic members working towards industry-wide objectives.

(iii) *Diminished Ethnic Salience.* The salience of ethnic identities is decreased when transactions create industry-specific or occupational-specific social norms and common identities, especially when a critical mass of interacting firms operates as an industrial 'cluster'.

3.2.3. **In order to grant readers some instant gratification, I give a quick preview of my findings here:**

- **In this dissertation I confirm H1 (see particularly sections 6.1.21 to 6.1.25—indicating that, of the two routes to business-based trust, calculative trust is a necessary condition);**

- **I find only partial confirmation for H2: trust-based business transactions do build interethnic trust and friendship at the interpersonal level—particularly in industries with more negotiated transactions, sections 6.2.20-6.2.21 and 6.2.26—but do not have the power to reduce prejudice or diminish ethnic identities—see section 6.3.** This latter finding is nuanced by a discussion of the mechanisms generating this result, including:

  - the **large relative size of ethnic groups** in the Trinidadian context, which prompts cognitive dissonance to lead to subcategorization rather than to recategorization (see sections 6.3.16 to 6.3.23);

  - the **psychological cleavage** individuals maintain between their business dealing and their social attitudes (section 6.3.33).

3.3. Case Selection

My research will be conducted in Trinidad—a choice of site that I make for a number of methodological reasons:

3.3.1. First, Trinidad is a **multi-ethnic country characterized by latent distrust between its two major ethnic groups.** According to the most recent census, its population consists of approximately 38% Afro-Trinidadians, 40% Indo-Trinidadians, 21% mixed ethnicity, plus 1% or less in the categories Chinese, Syrian/Lebanese, Caucasian, and Other[12]. I will be focusing mainly on Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians because these groups are the ones with the most salient ethnic tensions[13], but my observations about those groups will be informed by contrasting them with the relations between smaller ethnic groups in Trinidad.

In choosing a research site in Trinidad, I had initially considered limiting my research to the capital city, Port-of-Spain; but on arrival in Trinidad realized that I needed to obtain more variation in my dependent variable—i.e. ethnic relations—than might be possible in the country's most cosmopolitan city. The enlargement of my study area does not cause serious problems to the 'urban' orientation of this research, since as I will discuss

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[12] Author's calculations for the Port-of-Spain metropolitan area, using data for the core city of Port-of-Spain, plus the regions of Diego Martin, San Juan-Laventille, and Tunapuna-Piarco, and borough of Arima, taken from the Trinidad and Tobago Housing and Population Census 2000, http://www.cso.gov.tt/census2000/
[13] Indeed this is what theory would have predicted: ethnic tensions are most likely to arise between groups who are perceived as competitors through being evenly matched in size, or are large enough relative to each other to be perceived as a threat (e.g. Posner 2004). This is probably why the main ethnic fault line in Trinidad is between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians (rather than with the Syrians/Lebanese, Chinese, and so on). Moreover, as several authors have recognized, the absolute and relative sizes of ethnic groups may reverse the function of the Contact Hypothesis by provoking ethnocentrism because of the threat of cultural encroachment (see literature reviewed in Forbes 1997:97-111).

in section 4.2.4 (on Trinidad's economy), the island is so compact, and population so dense, that 87 percent of the island's population can be considered functionally urban.

3.3.2. Second, using Trinidad as a study area means there is a large enough **variation in our dependent variables**: prejudice, distrust, and the salience of ethnic identities vary enough amongst Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians that we can seek to explain such variation. There has not recently been any outright rioting between the two ethnic groups, but prejudice and distrust are high amongst some individuals, and the salience of ethnic identities varies across the population.

3.3.3. Third, the country is large enough to provide **variation in our explanatory variables**: its population of 1.3 million supports a diversity of firms, occupations, and industries.

3.3.4. Fourth, my prior research indicated that firms in Trinidad have one extremely unusual characteristic that helps exclude a key confounding variable. Firms in Trinidad are starkly mono-ethnic in their employee composition: an astonishing 93 percent of Indo-Trinidadian owned firms have no Afro-Trinidadian employees whatsoever, and 89 percent of Afro-Trinidadian owned firms have no Indo-Trinidadian employees (Selwyn Ryan's research, cited in Premdas 2007:63-64)[14]. This pattern stems from deliberate British colonial policies to keep ethnic groups residentially, occupationally, and culturally apart (Premdas 1993:137). Such economic segregation is superlatively useful in this research because it makes it much easier to control for the confounding influence of interethnic interactions *within* the same firm, and thus to **isolate the impact of interethnic business transactions between firms**.

However, I will note early on that I sought to check the veracity of this prior research, and in fact found it not to correspond with the firms to whom I spoke. In my sample (of interviewees and survey respondents) 28 percent of firms were mono-racial and 22 percent were mono-religious.

3.3.5. Fifth, the daily **language** of social and business transactions in Trinidad is English, and while I considered doing this research in a number of cities elsewhere in the world (for example, in Ahmedabad, India; Kano, Nigeria; Vladikavkaz, Russia; Beirut, Lebanon; or Dushanbe, Tajikistan), I wanted to avoid the risk of losing much important detail and nuance if having to perform interviews through a translator.

3.3.6. It should be noted that the selection of Trinidad as a case has implications for the dependent variables we measure, since the manifestation of prejudice tends to be different across various cultural settings. For example, while prejudice against immigrants in Italy is most sensibly measured by questions about people being 'selfish', 'intrusive' or 'complainers' (Sniderman et al. 2002), in Trinidad the main axes of prejudice are laziness, incompetence, and deviousness. As prior literature has found:

> *(Yelvington 1993:106; Brereton 1974)*
> The discourse of ethnicity in Trinidad involves expressions of ethnic difference with reference to the supposed economic 'traits' of blacks as being 'generous' and 'lazy' and East Indians as being 'industrious' and 'unceasingly concerned with material acquisition'—stereotypes that have endured since the arrival of East Indians in the mid-1800s.

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[14] I need to double-check these statistics, since it is also reported that [only] "79 percent of [Afro-Trinidadian] firms had no Indian senior managers" (Premdas 2007:65), which would appear to contradict the higher proportions cited for employees in general.

(Brereton 1972:22)
The Indians were single-minded in saving their miserable wages and putting off present comforts for future goals. They hoarded money; they lent at scandalous rates of interest. All this contrasted with the lower class negro, famous for his love of spending money on clothes, drink, or feting.

The continuity of these stereotypes has been confirmed more recently by a number of authors, including (Ryan & Barclay 1992e:60; Ryan & Stewart 1994:209), and the following:

(Geer 2007:107, 113)
Trinidadians utilize primordial definitions of race in their everyday lives ... Stereotypes painting Indo-Trinidadians as greedy or thifty, hardworking, backwards, and traditional, and Afro-Trinidadians as lazy, foolish, Europeanized, and lacking 'family values' are common lenses through which individual and group membership are judged.

(Munasinghe 2001:128)
In Trinidad, as in Guyana, a generalized system of beliefs based on the notion of fundamental difference between Creoles [here referring to individuals of Afro-Trinidadian descent] and East Indians prevails and is expressed mainly in the form of stereotypes. ... It [rhetoric and stereotypes based on ethnicity] constitutes a legitimate part of popular discourse unlike, say in the United States, where the emphasis on speech control limits race rhetoric to the 'unmentionable'.

Thus I reflected these specific Trinidadian dimensions to prejudice in my interview and survey schedules (see Appendices).

Figure 2: Trinidad chosen not just because it's a Caribbean island
(Photo: by the author)

3.4. Methodology: How to Overcome Endogeneity?

3.4.1. **One absolutely crucial problem here is the likelihood of bi-directional causality between business transactions and ethnic relations.** We are interested in the impact of business transactions on ethnic relations; but interethnic business transactions are themselves more likely to arise between individuals who are relatively unprejudiced, trustful, have a rational interest in such transactions, or have less salient ethnic identities. **Researchers can overcome endogeneity using a number of methods, but unfortunately most of these are not available for my research.** First, I cannot use longitudinal methods, since there exists no panel dataset on ethnic relations and the extent of business transactions. Second, instrumental variables do not exist, since there is no deterministic mechanism by which our set of explanatory variables is caused by other factors. Third, randomized experiments are too expensive and impractical: I do not have the resources to employ individuals and assign them randomly to specific types of business transactions! And while a natural experiment is possible to some degree—since the Ministry of Trade & Industry in Trinidad & Tobago has developed a cluster initiative, which deliberately fosters interfirm links in specific industries—we cannot be sure that firms are being randomly assigned to the treated group.

3.4.2. **Two alternative methods are the use of laboratory games and the use of interviews.** One core dilemma in designing this research plan was which technique to use. There is compelling evidence in favor of using games, because of their perceived ability to reveal true behavior and preferences rather than simply report what interviewees claim in an interview. Indeed it has been found that interviewees' responses to the standard survey question on generalized trust—i.e. "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"—are not significantly correlated with trusting behavior as measured in experiments (Glaeser et al. 2000). Even if we accept that this question is notoriously badly formulated—particularly because it specifies neither what 'trust' means, nor whom the 'people' are, nor what the context for trusting is—the lack of correlation is still worrying for advocates of survey-based research methodologies. Similarly, Moore (1999) and others have observed that attitudes and beliefs are mental states which are rather difficult to detect with certainty, and in any case are of little consequence if they are not reflected in behavior. Indeed, individuals may delude even themselves about their attitudes, while behaving inconsistently with their declarations—and it is this behavior which is of real consequence to others, rather than inaccessible inner beliefs. These insights would encourage researchers to use experimental methods and games.

3.4.3. **However, after reading a substantial number of articles from recent experimental literature, I remain uncertain about the validity of experiments to measure the real-world variables I need to investigate.** The classic trust games—namely the ultimatum game measuring the strength of norms of reciprocity, the dictator game measuring altruism, and the voluntary contribution game measuring propensity to cooperate—can deliver fascinating results, but are heavily abstracted from real-world situations (see Carpenter 2002 for a good overview). Their validity for measuring cross-ethnic business-based trust,

and its social spillovers—which are the core aims of this research—would itself need to be demonstrated: we cannot simply presume the external validity of laboratory games in real-world contexts.

3.4.4.   **I argue instead that if we are investigating trust, prejudice, and identity in business transactions, the most reliable way to measure those variables is to observe them in their real contexts.** We do not require experiments in order to do this; we just need interviews that focus not on attitudes and beliefs but instead on real behaviors. Trust, prejudice, and identities are then *revealed* by those actions. So rather than asking people hypothetically how they *would* respond in an imaginary situation (as in many interviews), or observing how people *do* respond in an artificial situation (as in trust games and experiments), I will be asking people how they *do* respond in real situations. Inspiration for this approach comes from the work of Margaret Levi, who suggests measuring trust by measuring the degree to which individuals monitor each other (she writes: "a trusting individual is one who makes a low personal investment in monitoring and enforcing the compliance of the individuals with whom she has made a compact from which she believes she will benefit," 1996:47), and from Brian Uzzi, who focuses on very concrete firm behaviors as evidence of trust (or not) in his seminal study of the social structure of interfirm networks (Uzzi 1997). **To infer causality we must then:**

  (i)   **Select observations which vary on our explanatory variables (firm and industry characteristics) and vary on our dependent variables (trust, prejudice, and identity);**

  (ii)   **Calculate from observed data whether there is a quantitative association between particular explanatory variables and each dependent variable;**

  (iii)   **Use the narrative content of interviews to interrogate *how* and *why* that association exists.**

I describe each of these three steps in the final parts of this section.

3.5. **Selection of Observations**

3.5.1.   Ideally we would select observations to maximize heterogeneity on dependent variables and on explanatory variables. This means interviewing individuals who exhibit the largest variation in trust, prejudice, and identity salience, and who exhibit the largest variation in the firms and industrial structures to which they belong. Unfortunately we cannot know the levels of trust, prejudice, and identity salience before actually conducting the interviews, so we must simply hope that our interviewees do vary on these factors, and verify that they do so after having collected our data. So the emphasis of my selection tactics will be on firm and industry characteristics.

3.5.2.   **Using a simple 2x2 matrix, I have chosen four industries according to the criteria shown in** Table 1, **below—namely the degree of product customization, and the number of different firms part of a firm's supply and distribution chain which belong to different ethnic groups.** These two characteristics are chosen because they underpin

many elements of my three hypotheses: the former impacts on the degree of negotiation, collaboration and joint problem-solving required during the course of business, and the latter entails a wider array of business transactions with ethnic outgroups, thus making it more likely for common norms of affective trust and identities to be constructed. By maximizing heterogeneity on these dimensions, I will be ensuring enough variation in my independent variables, and may also move closer to external validity: if any causal mechanisms are found to function in all four industries then there is a much higher likelihood they will function in other less maximally-different industries too. Of many possible industries that may satisfy the two dimensions of the matrix, the industries below were chosen because they are large enough in Trinidad to yield a sufficient number of firms and employees. The oil & gas sector is very large in Trinidad, but was not chosen for this research because it involves a large number of non-Trinidadian firms.

3.5.3. **Confirmation for the correct placement of industries in this matrix was sought from my interviewees in Trinidad.** Unfortunately I do not have enough observations to estimate the mean percentages for suppliers, but for customers my interview data shows that 25% and 31% of food & beverage and print & packaging firms' customers are Afro-Trinidadian owned, whereas 36% and 43% of retail and construction firms' customers are Afro-Trinidadian owned. As for the horizontal axis of the table, confirmation of correct placement was implicit in many interviews, since the food & beverage and retail sectors deal—by their very nature—in mass-produced goods, while print & packaging and construction services are provided on a boutique basis according to the demands of each client.

Table 1: Maximizing heterogeneity across sampled industries

	Low product customization	High product customization
Few cross-ethnic firms in supply chain	Food & Beverages	Print & Packaging
Many cross-ethnic firms in supply chain	Retail	Construction

3.5.4. *In sum, my hypotheses would predict the Construction industry to be most effective at building cross-ethnic trust, reducing prejudice, and diminishing the salience of ethnic identities, the Food & Beverage industry to be least effective, with Print & Packaging and Retail to be somewhere in between. Within each of these industries, the impacts will differ according to other explanatory variables, such as the extent of interfirm competition between firms of different ethnicities.*

3.5.5. **Crucially I must gather a large enough number of observations in each cell to be able to undertake quantitative analysis on data codified from those interviews.** In order to conduct statistical analyses *within* each industry as well as across them, I propose to conduct interviews with at least 30 individuals in each of the four cells, giving a total number of at

least 120 interviews. These individuals will be selected randomly within each industry, by choosing 30 firms from alphabetical lists for each industry in Trinidad's Yellow Pages. This sample frame is chosen on the presumption that it will be a closer reflection of Trinidad's true population of businesses than would the Ministry of Trade & Industry's official register of firms. I will approach each firm personally to request an interview; if they are not willing, I will choose the next firm on the alphabetical list. See Figure 4 for some examples of the diversity of firms this method yielded: at a variety of sizes and standards of professionalism.

Figure 3: Example pages from Trinidad's Yellow Pages
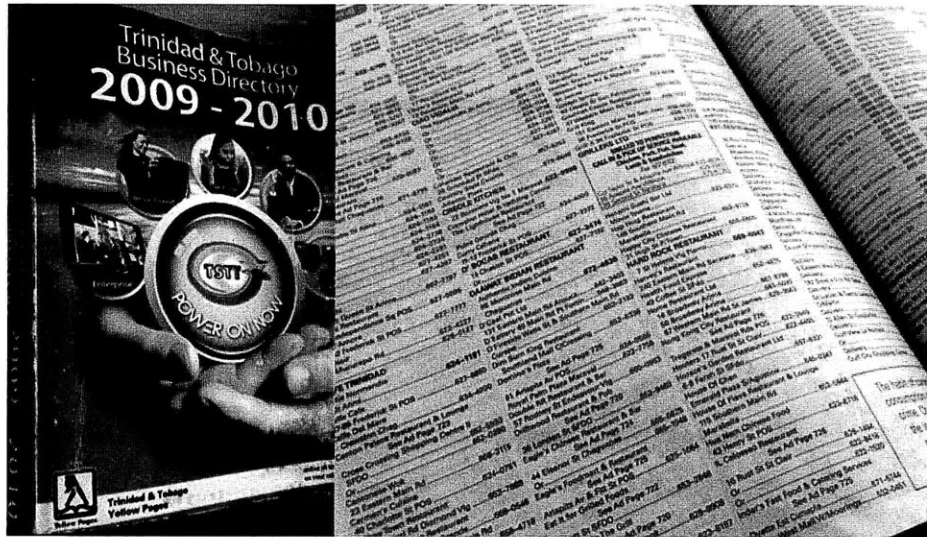
3.5.6. **This interview data is contextualized by data from a survey I administered in Trinidad's wider population.** I commissioned 180 surveys, divided equally between locations in northern Trinidad, central Trinidad, and southern Trinidad. Respondents were sampled by approaching people randomly on the street in Port-of-Spain (30 surveys), Tunapuna (30 surveys), Chaguanas (30 surveys), Cunupia (30 surveys), Debe (30 surveys), and Siparia/Penal (30 surveys).

Figure 4: Systematic sampling from the Yellow Pages reveals a diversity of businesses
(Source: Author's photographs)
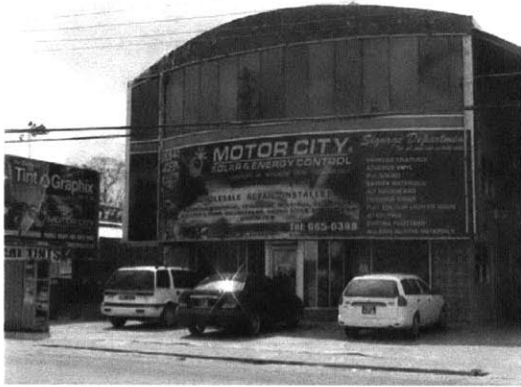
3.6. Data Collection and Analysis

3.6.1. My interview and survey schedules are shown in the Annexes to this document. They were designed to allow a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, as I describe in this section.

Quantitative Analysis

3.6.2. Most of my interview questions generate numerically codifiable responses from interviewees, to permit statistical analysis of the relationships I hypothesized between industry characteristics and ethnic relations. **The core part of this statistical analysis will be four multivariate regressions: one for each of four dependent variables (friendships, stereotyping, prejudice, and identity[15]).** I will be looking for significant coefficients on the variables measuring firm and industry characteristics. **I will also be making extensive use of descriptive statistics to provide context for my qualitative observations and to describe the general nature of Trinidadians' social lives, business lives, and business interactions.**

Qualitative Analysis

3.6.3. **Supplementing this quantitative approach is the qualitative data was generated from open-ended questions in my interviews, focusing on *how* and *why* any statistical relationships can be explained.** I will be asking interviewees conversationally to describe the nature of their interactions with suppliers and buyers, which should permit a richer understanding of the extent to which trust is a feature, and may reveal the process by which it evolves.

3.6.4. **The qualitative analysis contained in this dissertation was made by assembling interview responses into a narrative and then linking those insights back to my research hypotheses.** I constructed this narrative by starting with a blank sheet of paper, and typing out the most insightful quotes garnered from my first 86 interviews, which were conducted between October 19th and December 18th, 2009. Over the few days, I grouped together the quotes that made similar arguments, and slowly an overall argument emerged. I could then relate these insights back to my original research hypotheses. However, this analysis drew attention to several gaps and unresolved questions, for which I added several additional questions to my interview schedule. The second batch of 121 interviews were conducted after the Christmas break, between January 5th and March 9th, 2010.

3.6.5. In order to show the full richness of my data, and to illustrate arguments in the words of interviewees themselves rather than through my own interpretations, **I make very extensive use of direct quotes from interviewees in this dissertation. There are at least two potential critiques of this method of analysis and presentation.** First, it may implicitly assume all interviews provide fragments of a larger picture, and my job is simply

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[15] These are given in Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7, on pages 157, 161, 162, and 175 respectively.

to piece together those fragments to show the whole reality. In response to this critique, I explicitly highlight contradictions where they exist, and discuss ambiguities where they emerge. Furthermore, since I combine this qualitative data with quantitative analysis, I consolidate my qualitative arguments through grounding it in statistical evidence. Second, it assumes that the declared experiences and perceptions of interviewees do actually correspond to their real experiences and perceptions. While there is no conclusive response to this critique, I do feel confidence in my evidence from witnessing how tremendously forthcoming Trinidadians are with their opinions. For example, if an interviewee felt comfortable telling me a story like the following one, then I thought it relatively likely he was being honest with me in general:

> {Owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}
> We went on the boat to Holland [i.e the interviewee and his British business partner]. Oh goosh there was women! We went there, slept, bathed, came back in the morning. Jack Daniels and Red Bull on the way. But then afterwards I saw a documentary on CNN about these girls—how they bring them—young girls. Oh gawd. I never do that again. I tried to bring the Romanian girl here if she had papers. She only 19. I marry her to my nephew or something. Serious! I sent her parents £500 to Romania.

3.6.6. Finally, interview data is supplemented with observational data I gathered by observing intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic interactions taking place during my interviews, and also by placing myself with a sales rep during his day's driving and activities. These observations were useful to put interview quotes in context, to spur open-ended discussion on additional topics, and to witness how business transactions actually occur.

Adjustments during research

3.6.7. After arriving in Trinidad and beginning to pilot my interview schedule, I made a number of adjustments to the ways I was attempting to measure explanatory variables and to measure dependent variables. I describe these changes here, because they illuminate some of the methodological learning I did while conducting the research.

(i) Measurement of explanatory variables

3.6.8. **I had initially been planning to ask interviewees to list each of their suppliers and customers, in order to permit network analysis of the business transactions between firms.** This map of transactions between firms would be contoured according to the ethnic composition of each firm, and analyzed with some of the traditional tools of network analysis: to measure the centrality of each firm, the density of networks, the groupiness of the industries, and so on. The motivation for doing so was to extend my analysis beyond the investigation of dyadic links towards an analysis of the wider network structure, by building a picture of the whole social and economic system in each industry.

3.6.9. **However, on commencing the research it quickly became apparent to me that the collection of such data was not feasible: it relies on the provision of information that most firms deem to be confidential, and moreover most firms deal with so many other firms that the collection of such data was not realistic if I was to ask my other substantive questions during an interview.** One alternative would have been to ask firms

to list only their largest suppliers or customers; but that would have biased my investigation by presuming that only the strongest or most frequent business relationships will determine ethnic relations: in fact we do not know *a priori* if the largest relationships in supply chains are most important, or if a multitude of smaller suppliers (or even just one small interfirm linkage) can have a decisive causal effect on ethnic relations. Thus I removed this element from my interview schedule and focused instead on detecting the quality and content of relationships rather than sheer quantity. This change also meant dropping several other components I had originally included in my interview schedule. In particular, with reference to 'trust', I had planned to ask firms to rate the extent to which they require prepayment for goods and services (a variable which can be coded quantitatively, and has reliably been found to be negatively correlated with trust at a country level—Raiser et al. 2008:412-416)—along with several other quantitatively-coded dimensions of business-based trust based on Rempel & Holmes (1986) and Zaheer et al. (1998)'s measures of supplier trust, as reported in Manolova et al. (2007). But if I was no longer asking firms about *particular* interfirm relationships, I could no longer ask firms about the character of those particular relationships. Instead I adjusted my interview questions towards encouraging interviewees to give general reflections on the character of their interfirm relationships.

3.6.10. To put these changes in a positive light, I will note that some researchers have argued that network research is generally moving in this direction—i.e. to examine "why ties are created, how they are maintained, what resources flow across these linkages, and with what consequences" (Smith-Doerr and Powell 2005:394). Indeed, a more qualitative approach to network research is the agenda recommended by several experts of social and business networks (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Stinchcombe 1990:381 amongst others).

3.6.11. **I also adjusted my interview schedule from discursive and open-ended questions to focused and codifiable questions.** After piloting my initial interview schedule I realized it was proving impossible to get through all the questions in one interview; this was partly due to the open-ended nature of some of the questions. Additionally I had hoped the open-ended questions would yield interesting and unexpected answers, but in reality they mainly yielded vague responses that provided only limited traction for my research questions and hypotheses. So I decided to convert many questions to a more focused structure, and to render them a little more provocative in tone in order to yield more definite reactions from interviewees. This new structure also had the benefit that many more responses were codifiable, and thus could be subjected to quantitative analysis. For example, I replaced the questions 'Would you say you feel any differently doing business with Afro-Trinidadians versus Indo-Trinidadians?' and 'Can you tell me any situations in which interethnic transactions have been easier or more difficult than you expected?' with Questions 18 and 19: 'Thinking about all the people with whom you do business...Has it been easier to build a business relationship with people who have a similar race or religious background to you?' and 'Do you think sales reps or retail staff would be more successful when their race or religion is matched with the people they're trying to sell to?'. The multiple choice answers to those questions (e.g. interviewees had to specify if the ease was owing to trust, information, familiarity, or obligation) were grounded in the initial open-ended questions which helped to *generate* such hypotheses; then these codifiable questions were utilized to *test* those hypotheses.

(ii) Measurement of dependent variables

3.6.12. **Measurements of racial stereotypes.** I had initially sought to measure racial prejudice on a six-point scale of 0 to 5; but later adjusted this measurement to a five-point scale of 'Totally Untrue' to 'Always True', since these categories provided interviewees with more objective guidance to their ratings than does a numerical scale.

3.6.13. **Some questions removed.** After piloting the initial interview schedule, it became apparent that some questions made far more sense to me than to interviewees. This was particularly the case when I asked interviewees to score the strength of various facets of their personal identity (e.g. "part of my local community", "of mixed ethnicity", etc) on a scale of 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. I dropped that approach and instead concentrated on asking people to rate the extent to which they felt an ethnic identity compared with being simply Trinidadian (Question 46)—i.e. an explicitly comparative approach to identities—and also inserted an extensive question to measure the extent of trust in particular groups (Question 34).

3.7. **Research Precautions**

3.7.1. I will be asking interview questions that may expose my interviewees to personal danger unless their identities are impenetrably disguised. Ethnic hostility in Trinidad is now publicly frowned upon (even though it is still prevalent in private), and thus people may not feel comfortable in speaking frankly unless they know that their views will remain confidential.

3.7.2. In this dissertation I identify interviewees only by their occupation and industry—and, where it is directly relevant to the point being made, by their ethnicity. I have completely removed the names of individuals and firms. This process is aided also by my choice of field site: Trinidad is large enough that interviewees' identities will not be easily traceable simply from my description of their occupations and circumstances (as they would be in a small village or town).

3.7.3. My research received approval from MIT's Committee on the Use of Human Experimental Subjects.

3.8. **Practical applications**

3.8.1. **Finally, to address the question 'So What?', I would like to underscore that this research is being undertaken not simply to fill a gap in *academic* knowledge: it has a very practical application.** Development organizations such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), and NGOs such as MercyCorps and International Alert, are already pursuing initiatives which aim to change the dynamics of

ethnic conflicts through the actions of business and the private sector. Many of these projects have focused on sensitizing businesses to their impacts on the distribution of economic outcomes (e.g. jobs and income) between groups, but few have yet focused on how the *process* of doing business can be the vehicle for mollifying ethnic conflicts. **My research can inform and extend those projects, by answering the question 'what kinds of business transactions are best at improving ethnic relations?', as a foundation for policy interventions to promote such transactions.**

Moreover, the research findings should also be relevant to city and national governments, which will increasingly be dealing with multi-ethnic cities and may need to help their diverse populations live together.

Figure 5: Diverse faces of Trinidad's businesses
(Source: Author's photo, taken in a printing firm in Central Trinidad)

4. SETTING THE CONTEXT: ETHNIC SEGMENTATION AND A TRANSITION ECONOMY

What is the context in which business transactions take place? This section gives a brief overview of Trinidad's ethnic and economic environment.

4.1. Ethnicity in Trinidad: geographical and social segmentation

4.1.1. **In this section, I present a range of primary and secondary sources to show that, despite a general trend of social integration, Trinidadians remain relatively segmented—by race and, to some extent, by religion—in the places they live and in their social lives.** These observations motivate the dissertation's subsequent investigation of the importance of business in generating cross-ethnic contacts.

Box 1: Race categories in Trinidad

In this dissertation I will be using the long form of race categorizations used by Trinidadians themselves: Afro-Trinidadians, Indo-Trinidadians, Chinese-Trinidadians, Syrian-Trinidadians, White-Trinidadians, etc. In conversational use, these are often shortened to Afro-Trinis, or simply Afros, Indos, Chinee, Syrians, Whites. In written form I usually use the longer form since it is politically more correct.

These group boundaries are the ones predominantly used by Trinidadians themselves (including in Trinidad & Tobago's census), with two exceptions:

1) 'Syrian-Trinidadians' might term themselves 'Arab-Trinidadians', or differentiate between Syrian-descended and Lebanese-descended populations.

2) 'White-Trinidadians' (in the census 'Europeans') are usually termed 'Local Whites' by Trinidadians. They are descended from French Creoles, Portuguese Madeirans, immigrant Brits, or elsewhere.

It is important to note the additional complexity of the term 'Mixed-Trinidadian', which is a separate group in the census, but can denote any combination of heritages, or alternatively can simply be chosen by census respondents who do not wish to self-ascribe to one singular race. Amongst these 'Mixed-Trinidadians', the term 'dougla' denotes mixed Afro-Trinidadian and Indo-Trinidadian parentage. Meanwhile, 'douglas' themselves may often self-ascribe as Afro-Trinidadian or Indo-Trinidadian in order to gain greater social acceptance! Historically, the term 'dougla' has had negative connotations of impurity or illegitimacy (Hernandez-Ramdwar 1997, sec. II "Douglas"). Recently, according to my interviewees, it has almost lost its negative connotation, and has become simply a description.

Trinidadians are geographically segmented by race and by religion

4.1.2.   **Trinidadians are geographically segmented by race.** The country is relatively small, so such divisions might be just a few square miles in size. But even a quick glance at a map (Figure 6) shows that race is not smoothly distributed in Trinidad. Indo-Trinidadians are more highly concentrated in the central and southern parts of the country, while Afro-Trinidadians are found mostly in Trinidad's main cities and in the north of the country.

Figure 6: Geographical segregation of races in Trinidad
(Source: Author's GIS analysis of census data from http://www.cso.gov.tt/)
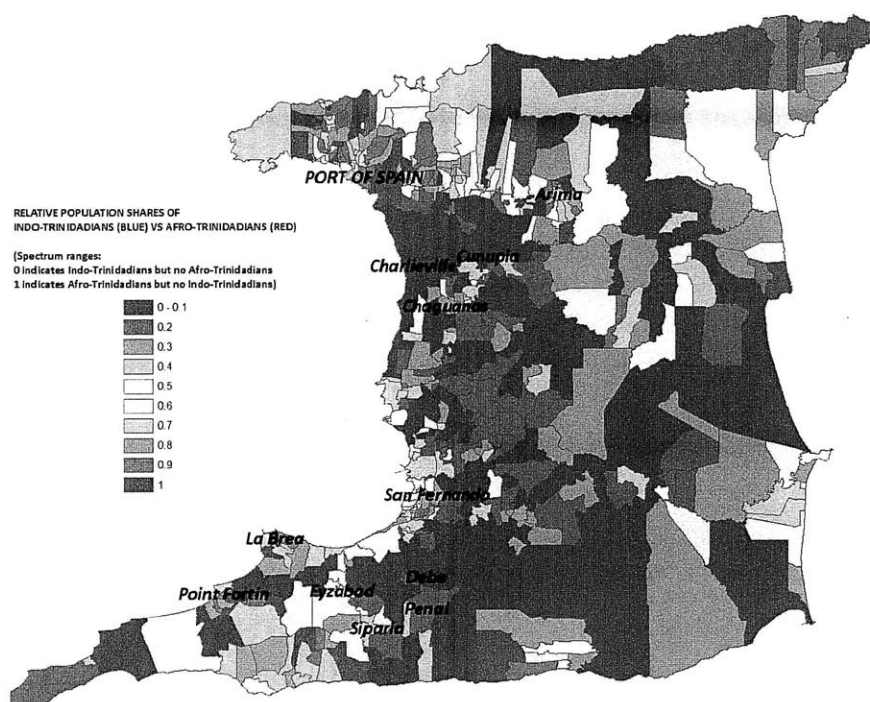
4.1.3.   **Indeed, calculating an index of dissimilarity, I find that an even distribution of Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians in Trinidad would entail 55.3% of one of those two groups having to move residence.** This index of dissimilarity is the most standard way of quantifying racial segregation[16], and measures the evenness with which two racial groups are distributed across census tracts. A value of 0 indicates perfect evenness in the distribution of races; a value of 100 indicates total segregation with no mixed census tracts. The value of 55.3 in Trinidad[17] indicates that Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians are as segregated residentially as—for example—Blacks and Whites in the U.S. states of Georgia or Louisiana (with values of 55 and 56 respectively). That value is higher than Mississippi (with a value of 48), but lower than New York or Illinois (79 and 75 respectively)[18]. For

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[16] The index is calculated as $\frac{1}{2}\sum_k \left| \frac{a_k}{A} - \frac{i_k}{I} \right|$, where a_k is the Afro-Trinidadian population in the kth area (i.e. census tract), i_k is the Indo-Trinidadian population in the kth area (i.e. census tract), A is the total Afro-Trinidadian population of Trinidad, and I is the total Indo-Trinidadian population of Trinidad—see Duncan & Duncan 1955 for the seminal paper on this measure.
[17] I calculated this value using data for all 568 census tracts in Trinidad, with data downloaded from http://www.cso.gov.tt/census2000/
[18] Data for the U.S. is downloadable from http://censusscope.org/ACS/Segregation.html

comparison, the dissimilarity index for Maghrebians and Africans to French in Paris is only 32 (Gobillon and Selod 2007:7), and for Blacks to Whites in London is only 41 to 49 (Peach 1996:222).

4.1.4.   **Of those areas that have a more racially balanced population, some have been mixed for longer than others.** The influx of new populations can itself cause racial frictions. For example, I chose to conduct one of the clusters of my interviews in Debe, which according to the 2000 Census has a population of 6,800, of whom fully 98.5% are Indo-Trinidadians. But in the last few years, a government housing development has been built on the edge of the town, which brings in a few hundred Afro-Trinidadians.

> {Indo-Trinidadian shopkeeper. [Interviewee #40]}
> People in Debe are not too happy with it [the HDC] growing. When the HDC is growing then people start to notice an increase in crime. Suddenly you have an influx of different people from other areas, who don't know the area. Everyone in Debe knows each other, though one or two of these people are beginning to integrate now. Socially we see a demarcation—the non-Indians tend to stay by themselves. It's only in the last year or so that schools here are experiencing non-Indians. Deep down people are resentful and stick to their own. ... Also there's the rumor that those coming in are PNM members and this is their reward. But some have little or no jobs and in the meantime get involved in petty crime. And this is what scares the local community.

4.1.5.   **Likewise, Trinidadians are geographically segmented by religion.** The first map in Figure 7 shows how Christians are distributed in relatively polarized proportions across the country: representing strong majorities in some areas, but barely represented at all in others. The second map in the Figure shows almost a 'mirror image' for the polarized geographic distribution of Hindu Trinidadians: they are concentrated in those areas where Christians are relatively absent. The third map shows how Muslims are barely represented in most of Trinidad, but then reach between 20% and 40% of the population in just a few census tracts.

Figure 7: Geographical segregation of religions in Trinidad
(Source: Author's GIS analysis of census data from http://www.cso.gov.tt/)
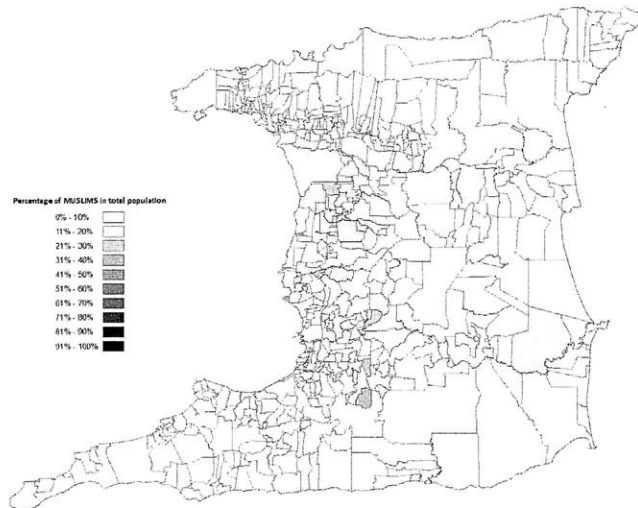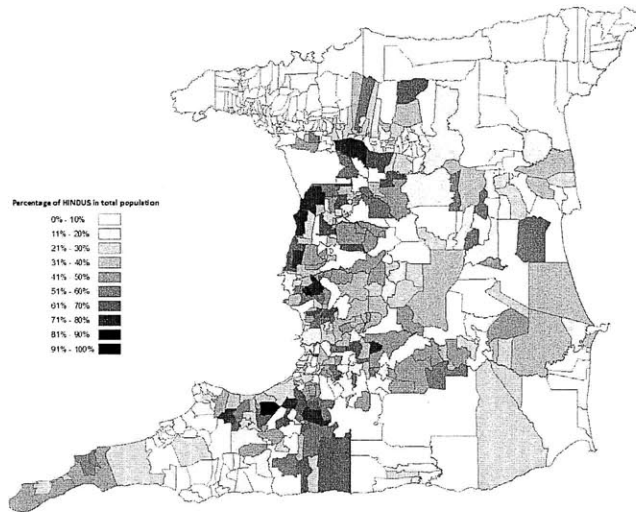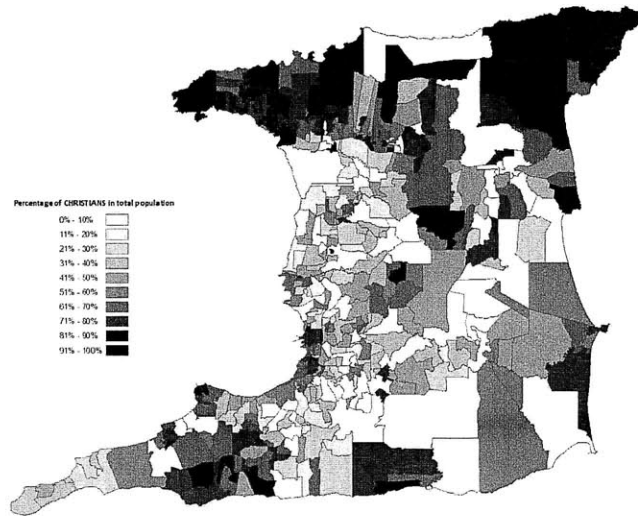
4.1.6. Trinidadians themselves may be surprised to read these observations, since Trinidadians of multiple races and religions do indeed live side-by-side in some parts of the island (see for example Figure 8). But the systematic analysis of census data above shows that such examples are—except for Muslims—more like an exception rather than a rule.

Figure 8: Next door neighbors in Charlieville, central Trinidad
(Source: Author's photograph).

Trinidadians are socially segmented by race and by religion

4.1.7. Not everyone thought that racial divisions are a feature of Trinidad's social life. For example one survey respondent exclaimed that "Trinidad is a multiracial paradise", another said that "race is a thing of the past", and another said "race relations in Trinidad & Tobago are excellent. Most people tolerate each other and don't discriminate." And some interviewees claimed they didn't even *notice* the race of people they dealt with in business. Indeed one survey respondent accused my research questionnaire of being symptomatic of a harmful approach to thinking about Trinidad's population: "The terms used in this questionnaire is causing disharmony in Trinidad and Tobago. We are all Trinidadians."

4.1.8. Hearing these emphatic opinions about race relations in Trinidad when I arrived in the country, I began to wonder if I was barking up the wrong tree with this research. But soon I

realized **interview respondents not only had no problem classifying by race their friends, their trading partners, and their employees**—i.e. suggesting that ethnic identities are, in practice, universally recognized—but also that **Trinidadians are strikingly segmented by ethnicity, as I will demonstrate in this section**.

4.1.9. Figure 9 **clearly shows that friends cluster by ethnic group.** Each ring of the doughnut shows the average breakdown of friends reported by survey respondents of each race. For example, Indo-Trinidadians reported an average of 57.6% of their friends to be Indo-Trinidadian but only 27.2% to be Afro-Trinidadian. Overall Indo-Trinidadians typically report around 40 percentage points more Indo-Trinidadian friends than do Afro-Trinidadians, and Afro-Trinidadians report around 40 percentage points more Afro-Trinidadian friends than do Indo-Trinidadians. Unfortunately there is insufficient data to report with statistical reliability the mean percentages of friends had by Chinese, Syrian[19] and White-Trinidadians.

Figure 9: Mean percentages of friends reported by Trinidad's three main races
[Source: 179 survey respondents: 97 Indo-Trinidadians; 42 Afro-Trinidadians; 40 Mixed Trinidadians.]

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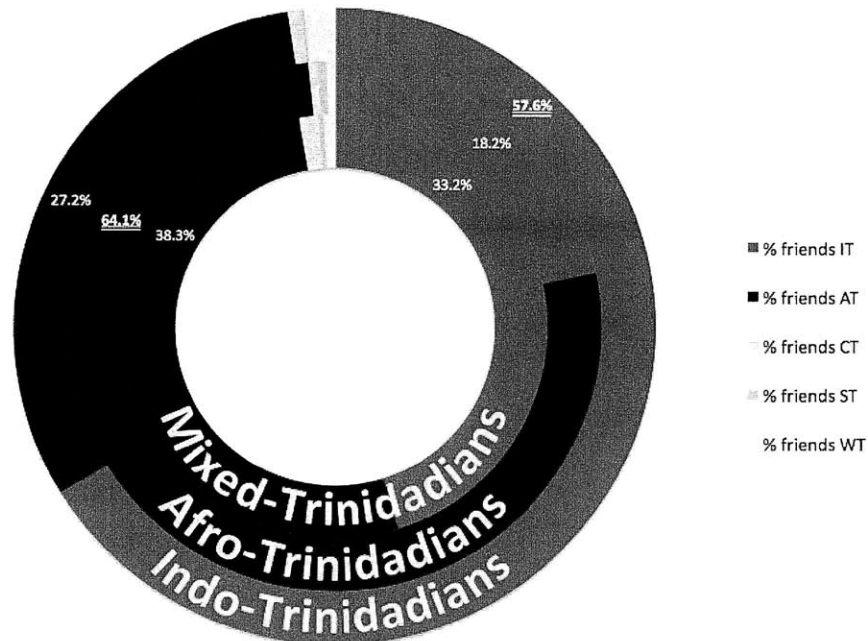
[19] N.B. In this dissertation I follow the Trinidadian convention of shortening Syrian-Trinidadian and Lebanese-Trinidadian descriptors to 'Syrian'. This is for two reasons: first, to save space; and second, because there are relatively few Trinidadians in each group, and thus grouping them as 'Syrians' is a better way of disguising identities.

4.1.10. Figure 10 below reports the percentages of respondents across my entire dataset (368 observations, including 180 from the survey, and 188 from interviews) who have at least one friend from the various ethnic groups. Despite the predominant clustering of friends by race, almost all Indo-Trinidadians do have at least one Indo-Trinidadian friend, and vice versa. But Chinese-, Syrian-, and White-Trinidadians are far more isolated: about half of all Indo-Trinidadians, Afro-Trinidadians and Mixed-Trinidadians do not have a Chinese-, Syrian-, or White-Trinidadian friend at all.

Figure 10: Percentage of respondents with at least one friend from each race
[Source: Survey and Interview responses. 205 Indo-Trinidadians; 73 Afro-Trinidadians; 61 Mixed Trinidadians.]
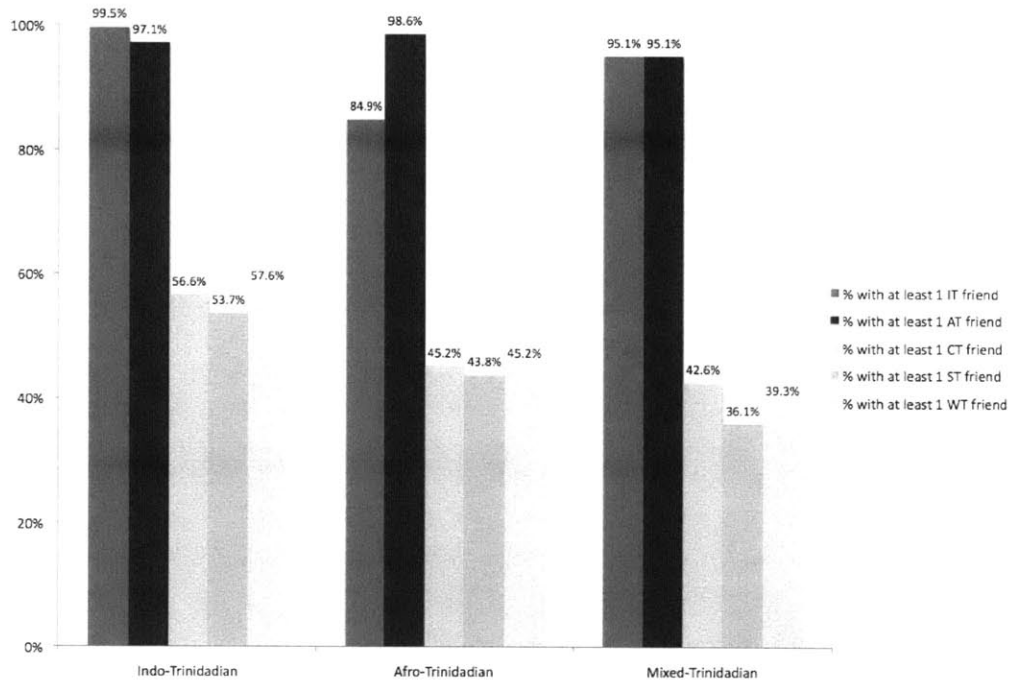
4.1.11. **With respect to religion, there is a similar degree of clustering in the friends people keep; but the vast majority of Trinidadians have at least one friend from each major religion.** Figure 11 shows that Trinidadians' friends exhibit a similar degree of clustering by religion as by race: for example, if one is Christian, one is likely to have mostly Christian friends. But Figure 12 shows a big contrast to the degree of racial isolation: most people have friends from all three main religions.

Figure 11: Mean percentages of friends reported by Trinidad's three main religions
[Source: 164 Survey responses: 87 Christians; 55 Hindus; 22 Muslims.]
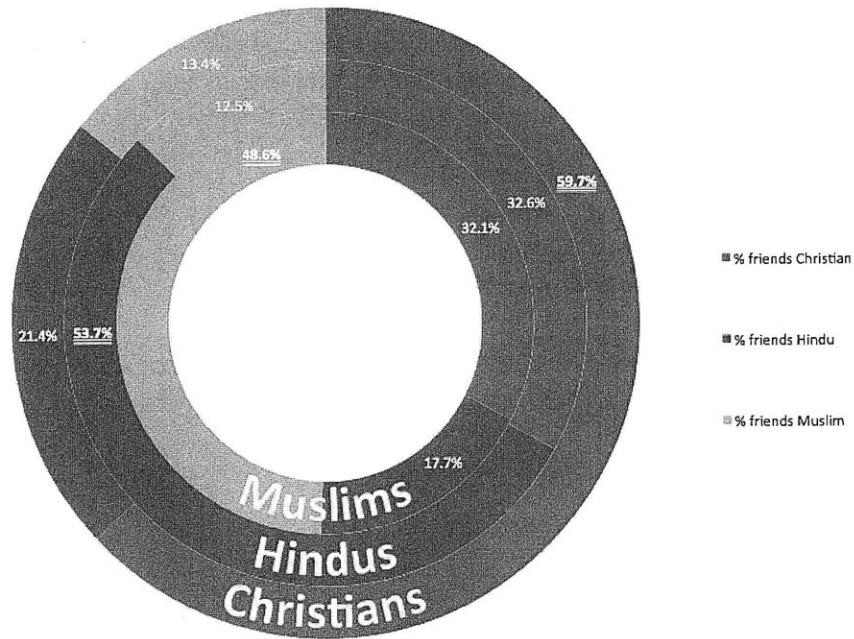
Figure 12: Percentage of respondents with at least one friend from each religion
[Source: Interview and Survey respondents: 116 Christians; 78 Hindus; 38 Muslims.]
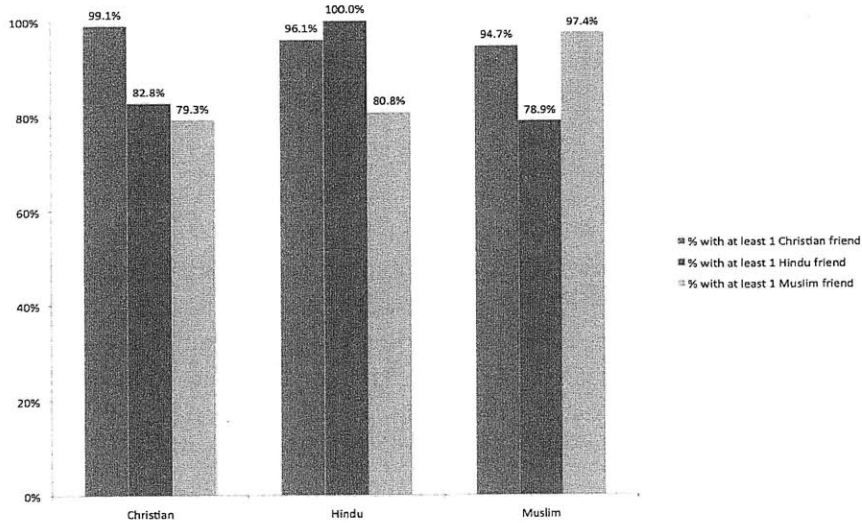
4.1.12. **Why does this social segmentation occur?** Part of the reason is a simple difference in culture and in the choice of social activities:

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian Marketing Officer for Plastics and Metal manufacturer. [Interviewee #125]}*
> For example, Afro-Trinidadians would tend to socialize in parties where there's only 5 percent Indians— or play football where there's only 2-3 percent Indians. That doesn't mean that you won't have friends from other races—you'd just hang out with them in other fora at other times.

Several interviewees also identified a preference for ingroup members, which is found by much prior literature to be a natural result of the simple *existence* of identity groups (the seminal paper is Tajfel and Turner 1979). In the succinct words of one of my interviewees:

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner and manager of hardware store. [Interviewee #172]}
Everybody have a small reservation about another race. The Indos have a small thing with the Blacks. **See carnival: all ah we is one in that situation. Easter, the same thing. But other times everyone stick to their own.**

In other words, there seems to be some kind of natural 'groupness' operating with respect to ethnicity. Furthermore, social segmentation may simply be partly a consequence of family ties. In the words of a different interviewee:

{Indo-Trinidadian purchasing manager for catering chain. [Interviewee #190]}
[While filling out questionnaire about ethnicity of friends being mostly Indo-Trinidadian]
Obviously!—because your family are Indian, and you're friends with your family's friends.

4.1.13. **But there are some more arbitrary determinants of social segregation too. In particular, residential segregation may itself partly determine social segregation.** As the following quotes suggest, growing up in the more racially-mixed areas of northern Trinidad may condition not only the type of friends one has, but also the general social attitudes one has to other races.

{Manager of construction supplies distributor. [Interviewee #137]}
Our next door neighbours were Hindu, Muslim, Chinese. I went to school with Syrians. We go to our neighbours for Divali and Eid, and they come to our house for Christmas. We all played together. Race just never came up. People from all races and classes went to any school.
Now, I think my generation grew up that way, but I don't think my parents did. They're scared about my sister marrying a very Muslim Egyptian guy.
I think we're all going to get watered down [racially] until we're one big mass.
[AK: 'And you'd be happy to see this?']
Of course.

{Supervisor at Construction firm. [Interviewee #149]}
I grew up in Valencia with more Spanish [i.e. mixed ethnicity] people, so never identified with either Indo or Afro. The only time it became noticeable is when I attended secondary school, and people started being Indian or African or Syrian. So I strongly think we shouldn't identify people by race.

{Sales Manager for Manufacturer of paints. [Interviewee #121]}
[AK: 'Is it fair to say you don't see race coming into business at all?']
I think so, yes. Maybe it's the way I was brought up, but I didn't even used to describe people *by their race*—more like 'the person with long hair', or 'curly hair' or whatever. It was only when I got to high school I heard people talk about "an Indian" and I thought "Oh, what's that?" So it doesn't make a difference to how much I trust people, or think they're lazier or more hard-working.

{Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}
I grew up in Port-of-Spain, where class was more of an issue than religion. Cipriani Boulevard to be exact. And I could've names from the bottom to the top [of the street] each family. Very diverse: Chinese, Indian, Whites.
I lived in the UK once—in Croydon. If a guy walks down the road—you'll immediately notice 'Ah, that's a Nigerian', or 'He's Chinese'. Here you don't notice. I played on a football team with a Chinese goalkeeper and a White and Negro guy playing up front. In the end, the race part you don't even see.

{Christian Manager of Construction firm. [Interviewee #138]}
[AK: 'Have any of the friendships you've made in business surprised you?']
No—I had so many friends growing up, from every race and religion. My wife is Hindu and one of my best friends is Muslim.

4.1.14. **Indeed, there was a striking range of racial attitudes expressed by different individuals in different parts of the country.** Compare these two answers to the same interview question—the first from northern Trinidad, and the second from central Trinidad:

> {*Indo-Trinidadian Manager of food & beverage manufacturer in Northern Trinidad. [Interviewee #127]*}
> [*In response to question #15: 'How many times in the past twelve months have you been in the home of a friend of a different race, or had them in your home?'*]:
> **Are you sure this is applicable to us [Trinidadians]? We're so cosmopolitan.**

> {*Indo-Trinidadian Proprietor of small hardware shop in Central Trinidad. [Interviewee #139]*}
> [*In response to question #15: 'How many times in the past twelve months have you been in the home of a friend of a different race, or had them in your home?'*]:
> **Never. That would be embarrassing.** ... I feel uncomfortable because it's a different race an' t'ing. We deal with everyone here [in the business], but when it come to your personal life it different.

As can be seen from the map, there are a few racially mixed areas in Central and Southern Trinidad too. These quotes were obtained in those areas:

> {*Indo-Trinidadian shopkeeper. [Interviewee #45]*}
> I was born here—I went to school here. Most of my friends are from here and they're mostly African. ... It's not a problem round here—race and religion doesn't come into things—it's too small.

> {*Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of construction supplier. [Interviewee #46]*}
> [*AK: 'Do you think race comes into business in Trinidad?'*]
> Not in La Brea: you never hear 'Oh, he's an Indian' and so on.

4.1.15. **However, as I examine in subsequent sections (5.3.96 to 5.3.98), residential and social segmentation are not always so linearly related.** Indeed, even residents of the Port-of-Spain metropolitan area—one of the most racially diverse areas in the country—can be rather segregated in their real social contacts:

> {*Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer, who grew up in Port-of-Spain and lives in Westmoorings. [Interviewee #128]*}
> I don't know that many Hindus and Muslims.

...and will recognize substantial divisions between races in Trinidad:

> {*Chinese-Trinidadian Office Manager for concrete blocks manufacturer. [Interviewee #99]*}
> I find people here speak more on the aspect of race: like 'I'm Indian', not 'I'm Indo-Trinidadian'. It's not like in American where it's African-*American* and so on. I think here the race factor is prominent. **We come together for sport but not elsewhere.**

4.1.16. Lastly, it should be noted that there is some degree of overlap between Trinidad's racial and religious boundaries. Religion provides a cross-cutting affiliation for racial groups, and vice versa, as indicated by Table 2. For example, while almost all Hindus are Indo-Trinidadians (98%), an Indo-Trinidadian is not necessarily a Hindu: fully 23% of Indo-Trinidadians are Christian and 13% are Muslim. Likewise, a Muslim is not necessarily an Indo-Trinidadian: 5% of Muslims in Trinidad are Afro-Trinidadian.

Table 2: Ethnicity and Religion in Trinidad
(Source: Trinidad & Tobago Census 2000, http://www.cso.gov.tt/)

	Afro-Trinidadian	Indo-Trinidadian	Chinese-Trinidadian	Syrian-Trinidadian	White-Trinidadian	Mixed	Other	Not Stated	ROW TOTALS
Anglican	66,201	3,035	485	12	726	15,524	120	689	86,792
Baptist	63,024	2,370	19	4	71	13,789	56	566	79,899
Jehovah Witness	9,504	3,372	35	9	39	4,852	25	112	17,948
Methodist	8,780	288	8	0	64	1,183	6	67	10,396
Pentecostal	33,494	24,559	66	9	62	17,563	70	504	76,327
Presbyterian	1,212	31,277	34	4	157	3,803	24	199	36,710
Roman Catholic	127,227	31,823	2,508	728	4,970	118,952	1,246	2,257	289,711
Seventh Day Adventist	29,253	3,902	8	2	47	10,599	30	306	44,147
Christian TOTAL	**338,695**	**100,626**	**3,163**	**768**	**6,136**	**186,265**	**1,577**	**4,700**	**641,930**
Hinduism (sat)	230	141,372	54	1	8	1,594	5	523	143,787
Hinduism (other)	295	104,087	71	0	18	1,858	3	641	106,973
Hindu TOTAL	**525**	**245,459**	**125**	**1**	**26**	**3,452**	**8**	**1,164**	**250,760**
Muslim (A.S.J.A.)	371	23,830	10	0	8	923	6	149	25,297
Muslim (other)	2,844	33,212	29	17	27	2,865	43	314	39,351
Muslim TOTAL	**3,215**	**57,042**	**39**	**17**	**35**	**3,788**	**49**	**463**	**64,648**
Other	56,795	35,540	228	38	447	26,579	201	838	120,666
None	11,754	4,108	166	11	312	4,954	86	207	21,598
Not Stated	7,284	3,498	79	14	78	3,051	51	1,115	15,170
GRAND TOTAL	**418,268**	**446,273**	**3,800**	**849**	**7,034**	**228,089**	**1,972**	**8,487**	**1,114,772**

4.1.17. We know from prior research that cross-cutting identities can be a vital reason for averting ethnic conflict: they make it more difficult for individuals to coalesce into mutually exclusive groups. **But how much does religion actually mollify racial boundaries in practice in Trinidad?** The Muslims with whom I spoke universally argued that their religion dissolve racial boundaries; for example:

> *{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of specialist paints shop. [Interviewee #49]}*
> You see, a Muslim is a totally different person from a Hindu. **Race doesn't exist for Muslims—we are all Muslims.** Islam gives you a sense of self. You cannot judge me—God will judge me one day, so everything I do should be used to do as much good as possible. **It's very different for Hindus—that's really just an Indian religion**.

...and Christians voiced divergent opinions on the topic:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Shop Assistant in hardware retailer. [Interviewee #154]}*

She [pointing to her colleague] meets a lot more Africans in church. You see a lot of Indians marrying Africans in church; it's not acceptable yet, but it does happen. **I think that's a really nice thing about Christianity: that they don't look at race.**

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
Within the church in San Fernando, I feel like I'm not part of the community—it's majority African and there are only a few East Indians. They don't call me by my first name like they do the others. I even offered free to do them an advertising campaign and they turned it down. I asked people 'Am I being treated like this because I'm Indian' and they said yes. **They think I'm there to get something from the Pastor, rather than to be a part of the community.**

And it should be noted that there is also a substantial degree of sub-categorization *within* Christianity: from the Table above, we can see that fully 84% of Afro-Trinidadian Christians are Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic, or Seventh Day Adventist—i.e. denominations in which they greatly outnumber Indo-Trinidadians. The only denomination with a slightly more even distribution of racial groups is Pentecostalism, which accounts for only 24% of Indo-Trinidadian Christians. Thus even though Christianity is nominally a cross-cutting religion, a closer look reveals the extent of actual mixing of racial groups may be limited.

Why does it matter? : business as a medium for cross-ethnic contact

4.1.18. **In the context of residential and social segregation, *business is one of the main channels by which diverse ethnic groups come into contact with each other.***

{Indo-Trinidadian shop assistant. [Interviewee #38]}
Within the area you don't really meet many Africans—only if they come into the shop to buy something.

{Manager of Furniture Retailer. [Interviewee #132]}
You have your business, your family, the mosque—there's not really much time for friends and anything else.

{Christian Indo-Trinidadian driver at manufacturing firm. [Interviewee #50]}
Whereas in socializing you may rarely find an African socializing with an Indian, in business you don't have a choice—you have to deal with the people you need to deal with.

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian manager of a print firm. [Interviewee #13]}
Nobody can build a business with one set of people [alone]. The business wouldn't run.

In short, business can involve a whole series of transactions with unexpected individuals:

{Manager of construction supplies distributor. [Interviewee #137]}
I've been in the President's bedroom, into Brian Lara's house; I decorated the Queen's suite before she came. **I've decorated temples, churches, mosques.**

4.1.19. **Overall, fully 41 percent of my survey respondents, and 81 percent of interviewees, reported that their work life brings them into contact with people of a wider range of races than does their social life (see** Figure 13**).** These figures lend motivation to the rest of this dissertation. If business is the medium for contact with a wide range of races, then what kinds of social spillovers does such contact have?

Figure 13: Responses to question 'If you compare your work life with your social life, would you say that your work life or your social life brings you into contact with people of a wider range of races?'

Interviewees (59 observations)

Survey respondents (173 observations)

- Work life
- Social life
- Both equally
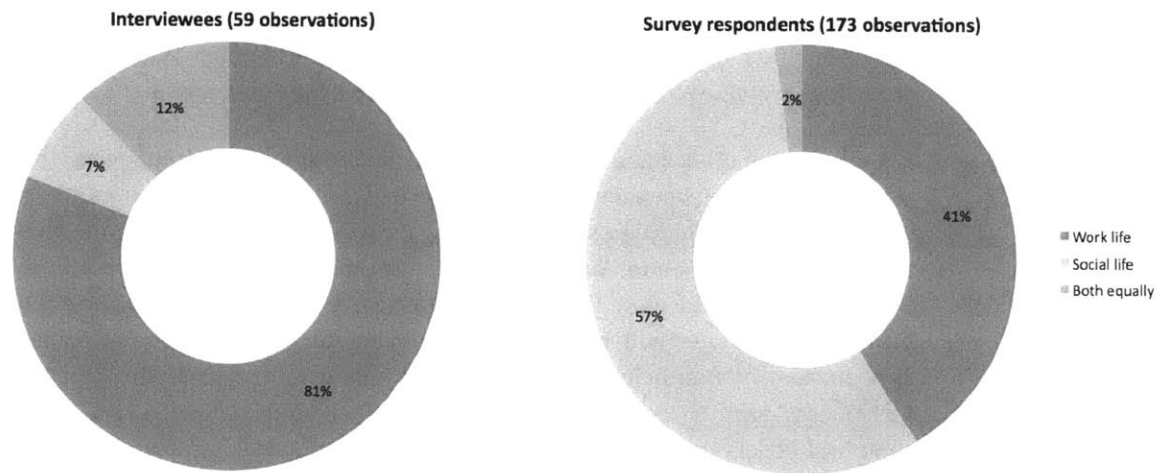
Incidentally, we might be curious as to why the responses from survey and interview respondents are so different; I would postulate it is because my interview respondents tended to be managers, sales staff, or customer service staff—i.e. jobs which bring them into contact with a greater number of people, compared with survey respondents who tended to be laborers or office staff.

4.1.20. **Indeed, the importance of work for interethnic contact may actually be increasing over time: increased incomes have led to the suburbanization of urban living and a preference for private transport.** As in the US, Latin America, and many other places, Trinidadians are manifesting a preference for single-family homes behind high walls, and for car ownership. Thus the urban community idyll described in section 4.1.13 may become increasingly rare, and Trinidadians' social life will, as in the US and elsewhere, become based on personal networks rather than geographical clusters.

> {Shopkeeper. [Interviewee #40]}
> Generally in Trinidad people have become a bit selfish [i.e. individualistic]. They live in their gated community—go to work, come back, don't talk to the neighbors and just stay in their house.
>
> {Market seller. [Interviewee #26]}
> Everyone keeps themselves to themselves—you got to go out of the [residential] area to talk to people. Most of my friends are from school.

4.1.21. Some of those non-geographical networks reinforce ethnic ties, while others add further layers of cross-cutting identities:

- *Political parties* in Trinidad are ethnically polarized (and polarizing): the ruling PNM party is commonly considered by Trinidadians to be an Afro-Trinidadian party, while the main opposition UNC party is commonly considered to be an Indo-Trinidadian party (for a comprehensive analysis, see Ryan 1991b). Recently a new COP party has emerged, which aims expressly to bridge racial divides in Trinidadian politics.

- *Social and sports clubs* may claim no overt racial or religious identity, but in practice their membership may be dominated by one ethnicity. For instance, while in Trinidad I

joined the Hash House Harriers—a running club well-known for its nighttime and cross-country routes, with 332 members on its email list, and approximately 60 regular attendees at its twice-fortnightly events. It gradually became clear to me, from socializing with the HHH's members, and from the number of Christian-oriented emails circulating on the email list, that Hashers are a predominantly Christian group. However, their membership does span various racial groups: Whites are represented most heavily, followed by Afro-Trinidadians, then by Indo-Trinidadians and others.

- *Schools*, on the other hand, are often racially and religiously mixed, even when they are ostensibly 'religious schools'. I was astonished, for example, by the number of Hindus who had been to Christian schools: amongst the interviewees for whom I have data on this topic, 25 had been to Christian schools. Of those 25 people, 7 were Hindu, 4 Muslim, 3 Other, and only 11 were Christian themselves. However, even 'mixed' schools do not mean that students will have racially or religiously heterogeneous friends, since it appears that human beings often cluster by race even in mixed situations (e.g. Tatum 1997). For example, sitting on a bench one morning in the University of West Indies campus, I observed 50 groups of two or more students walking to and from class. There were a total of 45 Afro-Trinidadians and 67 Indo-Trinidadians, but as Figure 14 shows below, these students were strongly clustered by race.

Figure 14: Even students at Trinidad's top university appear to cluster by race
(Source: 50 observations taken on University of West Indies main campus, March 10th, 2010)
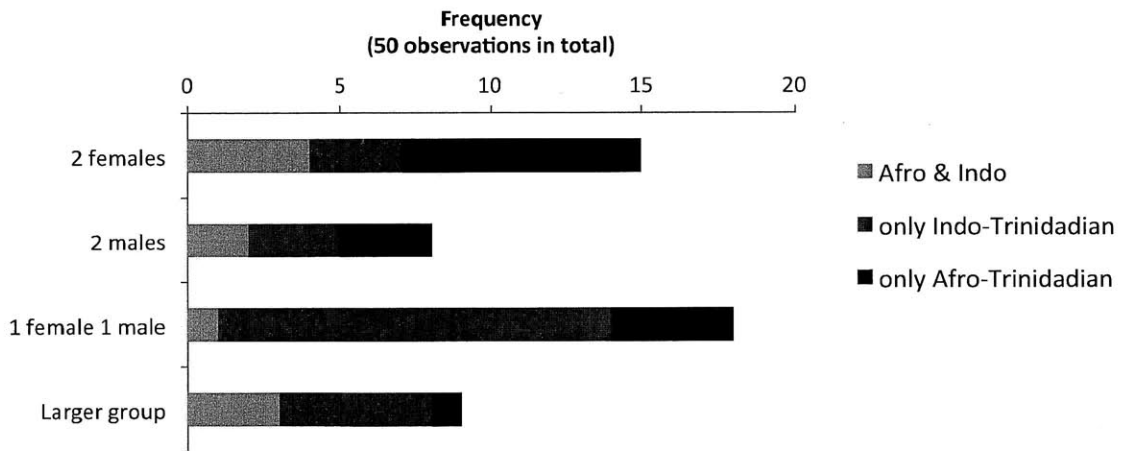
4.2. Trinidad's Transitional Economy

4.2.1. **In this section I describe how Trinidad's supply chains are dispersed across the island, and how the private sector is dominated particularly by Indo-Trinidadians.**

Geographic distribution of industries: a single market

4.2.2. **Trinidad's economy is dominated by a few sectors, but is surprisingly diversified for such a small population.** As can be seen from Figure 15, economic production is comprised by a wide spectrum of sectors, and within manufacturing too, a number of goods are produced on the islands.

Figure 15: Contribution of various industrial sectors to Trinidad & Tobago's GDP
Source: Author's presentation of figures for 2010, in 2010 prices, from http://www.cso.gov.tt/statistics/Pages/details.aspx?category=National%20Accounts
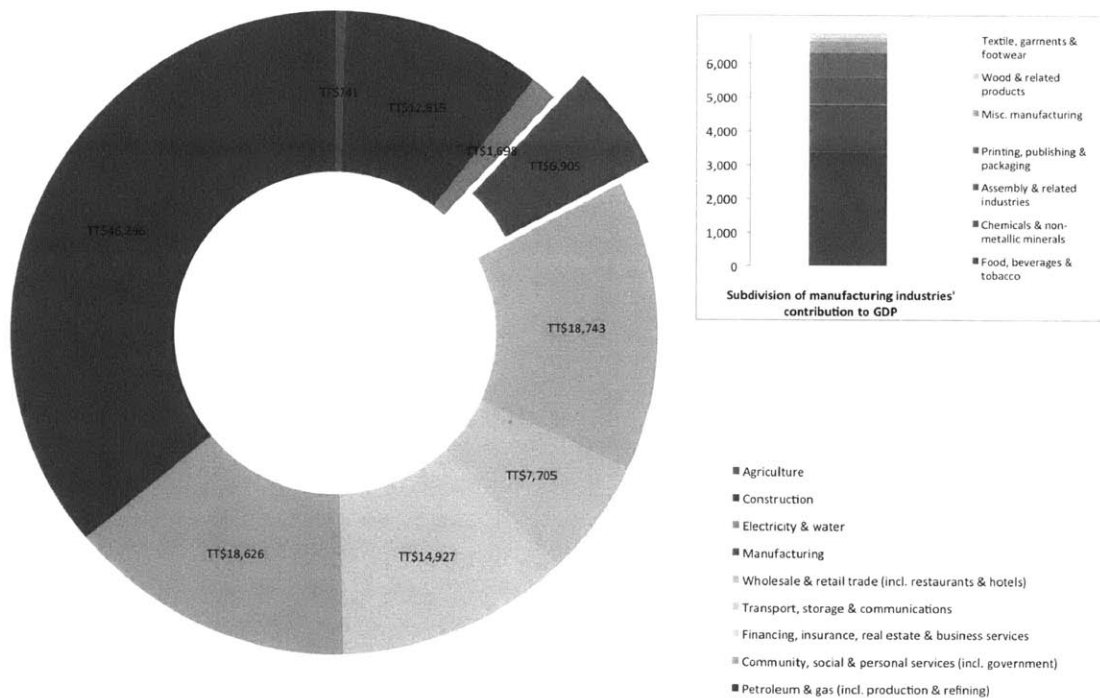
4.2.3. **Those industries are not particularly concentrated in space.** Owing to Trinidad's small total size, suppliers are chosen wherever they exist (or can be found), and customers of most industries (except retail stores) are found throughout the island.

> *{Owner of a print firm. [Interviewee #111]}*
> There are lots of other printers here—my competitors. But we're not like a supermarket: we don't get our business just from around here—it comes from all over [the island].

4.2.4. Such observations concur with the World Bank's classification of practically the whole island of Trinidad as being 'urban', on the basis that fully 87% of the entire island's population are within 60 minutes' travel time of a city of 100,000 or larger, and hence can be considered to be functionally part of a single urban economy (Uchida and Nelson 2010; World Bank 2008). That statistic makes Trinidad & Tobago one of the most urbanized countries in the world—almost on a par with city-states like Singapore or Monaco.

4.2.5. **Supply chains are typically relatively short, but each stage in the supply chain involves an inter-firm transaction.** For example (see Figure 16), a bottled water manufacturer would import raw materials (such as plastic resin), manufacture simple intermediate goods (such as plastic bottles and purified water), and then distribute the final product (bottled water) to retailers via its own fleet of trucks. More complicated final products would use imported intermediate goods or would simply involve importing the final product and then marketing and distributing it. Each arrow on the Figure represents an inter-firm transaction, unless indicated to the contrary with square brackets.

Figure 16: Two examples of supply chains, for bottled water, and for household goods
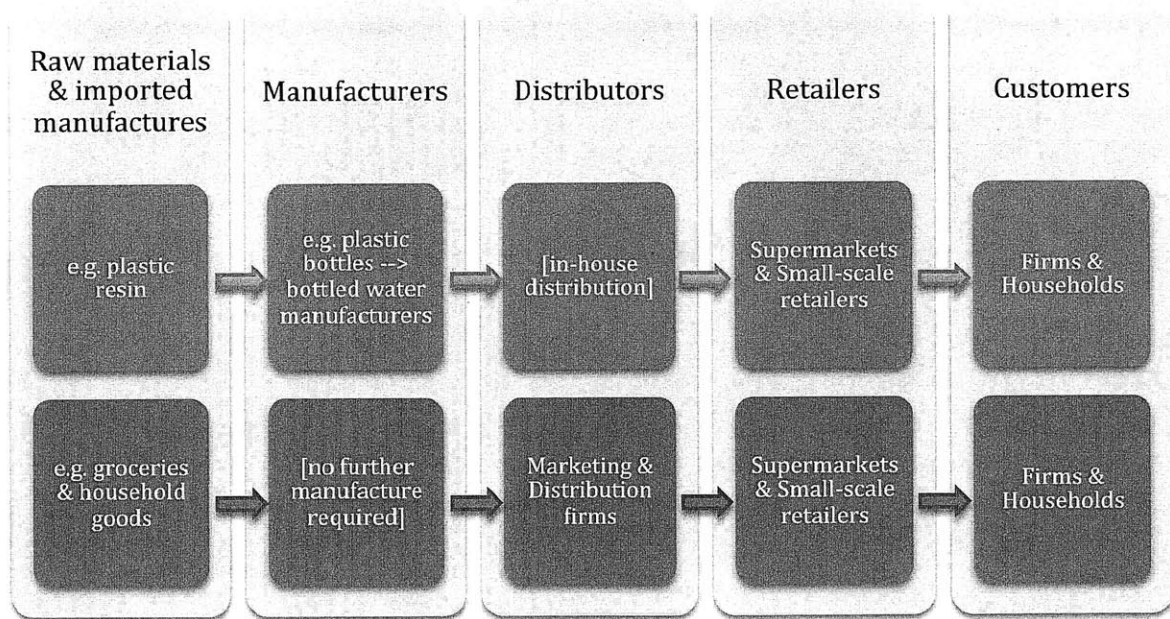
Ethnic segmentation of occupations & industries

4.2.6. **Popular wisdom has it that Indo-Trinidadians dominate the private sector, while Afro-Trinidadians are more frequently found in the public sector, and in the private sector as employees not owners.** One clearly sees this trend while in Trinidad: indeed even in neighborhoods and towns that are populated almost exclusively by Afro-Trinidadians, businesses will most likely be owned and managed by Indo-Trinidadians. I found this even in the most Afro-Trinidadian town in Trinidad (called La Brea): despite a population that is 85% Afro-Trinidadian, the groceries, hardware shops or general stores in the town are owned and run by Indo-Trinidadians. Afro-Trinidadian businesses consist only of a few modest food stalls, one-man barbershops, a nail salon, and a bar.

4.2.7. A statistical analysis of Trinidad & Tobago's census reveals that perception to be true:

- Figure 17 shows the raw data for **Industries,** and Figure 18 shows percentages, demonstrating that agricultural workers are more likely to be Indo-Trinidadian, and Public Administration, Construction Contractors, and Electricity & Gas workers are more likely to be Afro-Trinidadian.

- Figure 19 shows the raw data for **Occupations**, and Figure 20 shows percentages, demonstrating that Managing Directors & Chief Executives and Engineers are most likely to be Indo-Trinidadian, while (for example) Healthworkers, Hospitality Staff, or Electrical Workers are more likely to be Afro-Trinidadian.

The extent of this trend is very striking: indeed, only 13% of Trinidad's top public officials and legislators are Indo-Trinidadian (62% are Afro-Trinidadian), while only 17% of Trinidad's top private-sector Chief Executives and Managing Directors are Afro-Trinidadian[20].

Figure 17: Ethnic composition of Trinidad's INDUSTRIES, by employees
(Source: Author's database queries and analysis of Census 2000 data,
http://www.cso.gov.tt/statistics/Pages/census2000query.aspx)

	Afro-Trinidadian	Indo-Trinidadian	Chinese-Trinidadian	Syrian-Trinidadian	White-Trinidadian	Mixed-Trinidadian	Other	Not Stated	INDUSTRY TOTALS
Sugar Cultivation & Refining	1,078	11,056	4	0	5	602	2	49	12,796
Other Agriculture	4,782	10,886	30	8	44	3,846	20	98	19,714
Petroleum & Gas extraction & refining	5,549	5,092	44	1	182	2,511	26	65	13,470
Other Mining	345	309	1	0	3	197	3	3	861
Food & Beverages	5,573	6,969	89	11	88	3,222	38	88	16,078
Textiles & Apparel	1,248	1,225	11	13	33	508	8	19	3,065
All other manufacturing	9,222	12,327	120	18	227	5,506	40	158	27,618

[20] As a prior survey has found, such stark figures have not gone unnoticed by Trinidad's population. The survey found that 55 percent of Indo-Trinidadians felt that Afro-Trinidadians had preferred access to jobs in the public sector, while only 10 percent believed that Indo-Trinidadians had preferred access (survey from 1989, reported in Ryan 1991c:65). But remarkably, even with such stark figures, Afro-Trinidadians may still perceive themselves as suffering discrimination in the public sector. The same survey found that 46 percent of Afro-Trinidadians felt that Indo-Trinidadians had preferred access to jobs in the public sector, and only 12 percent believed that Afro-Trinidadians had preferred access. Similar findings were made in a later survey in 1998 (Ryan 1999:197).

Electricity & Gas	2,677	2,002	24	1	16	1,173	8	44	5,945
Construction	25,838	20,751	61	14	163	9,502	74	314	56,717
Wholesale & retail (including hotels & restaurants)	28,526	39,369	770	194	686	16,092	137	493	86,267
Transport & storage	12,264	13,080	114	11	266	5,938	60	182	31,915
Finance & insurance	15,559	10,148	299	45	622	9,269	88	276	36,306
Public Administration	18,587	11,351	47	2	45	6,352	37	244	36,665
Water & sanitation	2,631	2,531	4	0	19	791	3	42	6,021
Social & related services	21,328	15,935	194	40	441	9,355	116	354	47,763
Personal & household services	17,629	15,843	83	16	117	7,221	51	241	41,201
Not stated	11,860	7,761	79	35	143	5,113	53	311	25,355
EMPLOYED POPULATION TOTALS	**184,863**	**186,711**	**1,980**	**409**	**3,173**	**87,338**	**779**	**2,984**	**468,237**

Figure 18: Ethnic composition of Trinidad's INDUSTRIES, by employee percentages
(Source: Author's analysis of data from Census 2000,
http://www.cso.gov.tt/statistics/Pages/census2000query.aspx)
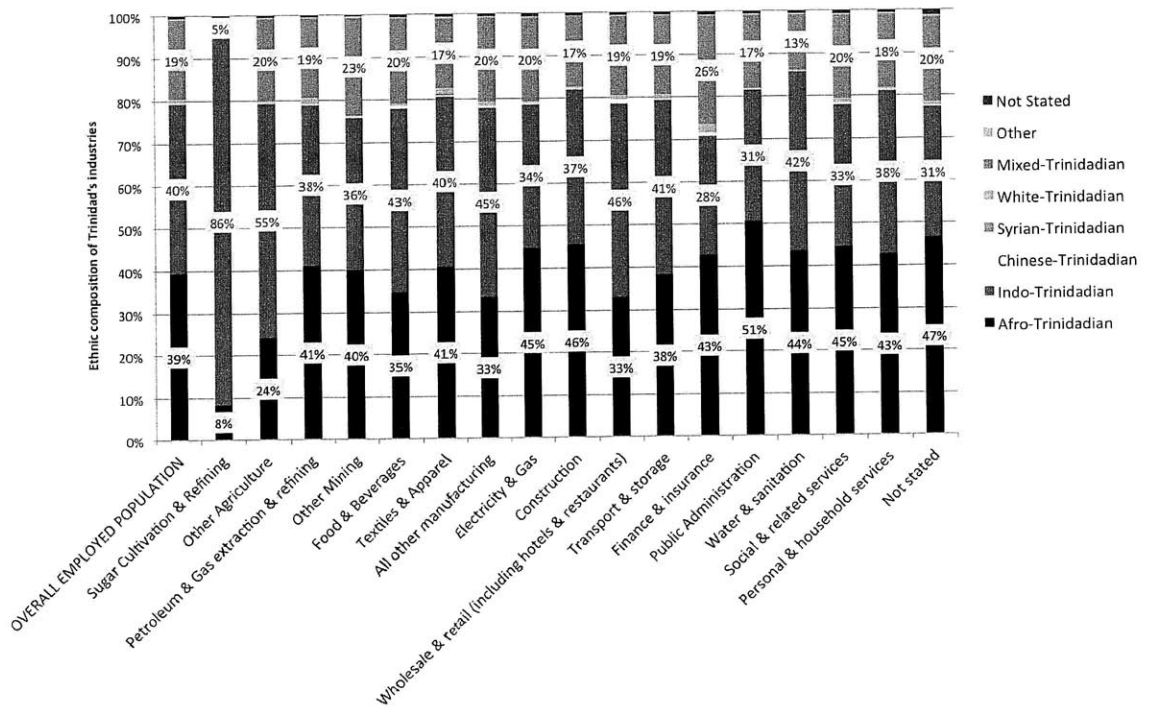
Figure 19: Ethnic composition of Trinidad's OCCUPATIONS, by employees

(Source: Author's database queries and analysis of Census 2000 data,
http://www.cso.gov.tt/statistics/Pages/census2000query.aspx)[21]

	Afro-Trinidadian	Indo-Trinidadian	Chinese-Trinidadian	Syrian-Trinidadian	White-Trinidadian	Mixed-Trinidadian	Other	Not Stated	ROW TOTALS
Legislators & Senior Public Officials (code 11)	1,599	344	7	0	23	555	8	36	2,572
Managing Directors & Chief Executives (code 121)	654	1,527	124	63	460	908	40	28	3,804
Administrative, Financial, PR, HR, or Sales Managers (codes 122 to 123)	1,962	2,160	106	38	324	1,639	45	43	6,317
Manufacturing, Construction & Specialized Services Managers (code 13)	4,937	9,390	422	115	271	3,139	57	115	18,446
Hotel, Restaurant & Retail Managers (code 14)	680	1,109	9	2	1	284	1	10	2,096
Technical Specialists, Engineers, Architects, Designers (code 21)	1,142	1,456	74	10	187	838	22	36	3,765
Medical Professionals (code 22)	464	874	60	9	60	373	18	16	1,874
Education and Training Techers & Professionals (code 23)	1,739	1,949	31	10	88	821	27	40	4,705
Business & Administration Professions (e.g. Accountants & Analysts) (code 241)	1,626	1,669	76	7	151	1,198	24	32	4,783
Legal, Social, Religious & Creative Professionals (code 242-247)	1,765	1,161	22	8	121	907	20	35	4,039
Science & Engineering Professionals (code 31)	3,036	3,419	45	5	132	1,859	27	58	8,581
Health Associates (e.g. Technicians & Nurses) (code 32)	2,072	1,301	19	0	21	712	7	29	4,161
Business Associate Professionals (e.g. Sales Reps, Buyers, Accounting) (code 33)	5,342	5,448	25	6	79	2,515	19	91	13,525
Legal, Social, Cultural & Related Associate Professionals (e.g. Social Workers, Sports Coaches) (code 34)	5,895	6,318	179	28	413	4,782	59	115	17,789
Clerical Support Workers (e.g. Accounts Clerks, Receptionists) (code	14,816	16,132	197	17	253	8,973	52	273	40,713

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[21] I am very grateful to Trinidad's Central Statistical Office for providing me with a key to Occupation Group Codes, which permitted me to perform this analysis.

|									
41)									
Customer Service Clerks (codes 42 & 43)	6,135	4,458	40	1	53	3,518	17	95	**14,317**
Hospitality Staff (e.g. Bartenders, Caterers, Waiters, Beauticians) (codes 51)	12,191	5,506	111	11	87	4,958	33	158	**23,055**
Salespersons & Cashiers (codes 52 to 53)	17,677	14,577	77	15	59	7,731	30	259	**40,425**
Agricultural, Forestry & Fishery Workers (codes 61 to 64)	3,539	9,183	18	8	27	2,930	20	70	**15,795**
Building Workers (code 71)	17,741	10,403	22	10	38	5,768	35	199	**34,216**
Metal & Machinery Workers (code 72)	11,676	14,083	50	6	71	5,290	46	180	**31,402**
Printing & Craft Workers (code 74)	1,736	1,793	25	1	20	919	6	21	**4,521**
Electrical & Garment Workers (code 74)	4,856	3,093	19	2	18	1,641	13	58	**9,700**
Plant & Machine Operators (code 81)	1,688	1,884	8	0	22	796	9	29	**4,436**
Assemblers (code 82)	2,803	3,784	17	0	11	1,417	9	40	**8,081**
Drivers & Mobile Plant Operators (code 83)	8,433	15,461	53	2	27	3,750	24	142	**27,892**
Cleaners & Helpers (code 91)	21,279	17,069	54	12	30	7,122	43	261	**45,870**
Agricultural Laborers (code 92)	2,550	9,159	7	2	7	1,512	9	58	**13,304**
Engineering & Manufacturing Laborers (code 93)	11,715	12,365	20	1	22	5,026	22	165	**29,336**
Food Preparation Assistants & Street Vendors	4,305	4,235	7	1	17	1,647	8	63	**10,283**
Other (code 99)	8,810	5,401	56	19	80	3,810	29	229	**18,434**
EMPLOYED POPULATION TOTALS	**184,863**	**186,711**	**1,980**	**409**	**3,173**	**87,338**	**779**	**2,984**	**468,237**

Figure 20: Ethnic composition of Trinidadians' OCCUPATIONS, by employee percentages

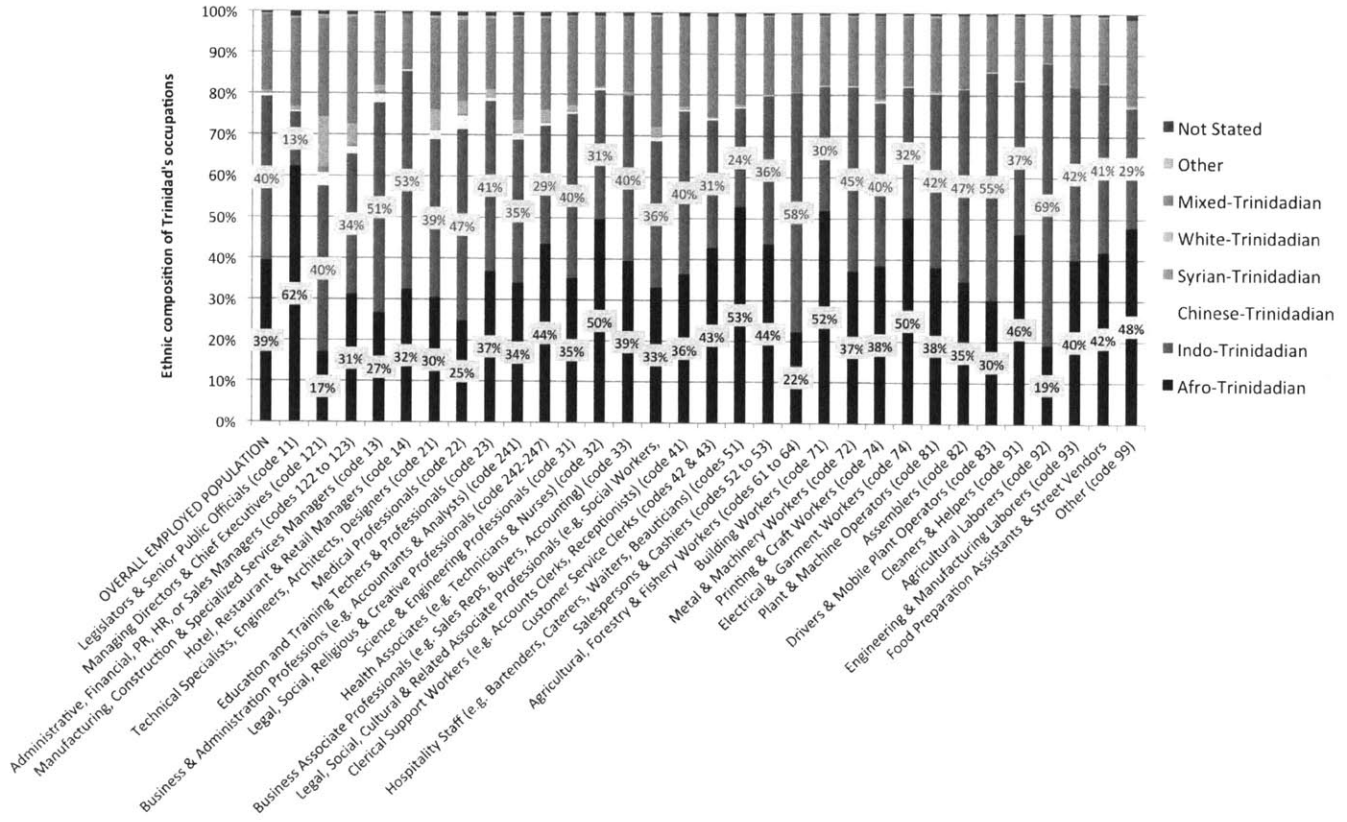*(Source: Author's database queries and analysis of Census 2000 data,*
http://www.cso.gov.tt/statistics/Pages/census2000query.aspx)[22]

4.2.8. **This is a legacy of the ethnic segmentation of occupations in Trinidad fostered under colonialism.** Following the abolition of slavery in 1834, Africans were predominantly employed as policemen, postmen, and low-level civil servants. During the same period, Indians were brought to Trinidad to work as indentured laborers in agriculture, especially in Trinidad's sugar cane industries, but then became farmers and private entrepreneurs when the colonial regime gave them the choice of ten acres of land instead of a return voyage back to India. Chinese were originally brought over as laborers, but soon transitioned into dry goods shops (the precursors of supermarkets) and restaurants. Syrians and Lebanese merchants arrived of their own volition, and began to trade especially in cloths and garments (for a very readable overview of the history of occupational stratification in Trinidad, see Ryan 1991a). The interview excerpt below is fairly representative of responses I got to questions about the ethnic composition of supply chains:

{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}
All our major suppliers for chemicals are foreign. Our biggest supplier for a number of years has been a
firm out of Miami, that's owned by a White German-American who's married to a Jamaican, a White

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[22] I am very grateful to Trinidad's Central Statistical Office for providing me with a key to Occupation Group Codes, which permitted me to perform this analysis.

Jamaican. And he's our biggest supplier. Our next biggest supplier, also from out of Miami; we needed somebody who speaks Spanish. Our next biggest supplier we have from somewhere in Sweden or Europe or somewhere. So, all our biggest suppliers are White.

In Trinidad, our biggest supplier—boxes would be [_____], which at one time I think would be a White South African-owned firm operating in Trinidad. **Bottles will be [_____]—that's White Trinidadian or Syrian; resin is White Trinidadian; the one Negro supplier we have; but our labels would be [_____]—what's he boy?—he must be half Chinee-White or something. And our next largest supplier's out of Barbados, and that's a White Barbajan. So we have one basically Black supplier. There aren't many Black suppliers in this business.**

[AK: 'And as for customers, you say they're mainly Indo-Trinidadian, right? The retailers, the grocers, the supermarkets.']

Certainly ninety percent.

[AK: '...and then some Afro-Trinidadian, some Chinese, and not many Syrian or White...']

No no no. We probably have more... We do government business. I don't know how you classify that in terms of race or ethnicity. **If you left out the government business, the Indians would be considered the largest portion, and then I think you'll get to, Chinese, Syrians,** I don't know. Because you see we do a lot of variety stores on Charlotte Street. And there's a Syrian-Chinese jostle for domination in that street. That's probably the most popular business street, strip, in Trinidad. Downmarket, downtown kinda 'ting. We do a lot of direct business sales now in terms of janitorial companies and companies buying their cleaning products and their dispensers, and their mops and their brooms and their buckets and so on. **But still I would say the largest cross-section would be Indian, because they're the ones that own the supermarkets.**

4.2.9. **But such occupational segregation does not mean a lack of interethnic contact in business—indeed, on the contrary, it means interethnic contact is *more* likely because most supply chains *necessitate* dealing with firms of another ethnic group.** Ethnic niches in particular occupations and industries are linked together by mutual economic dependencies. Trinidad is thus *a priori* a fertile ground for business transactions to arise between diverse populations, out of necessity.

4.2.10. **Some of that contact may occur between employees *within* firms, but a substantial proportion of Trinidadians work in mono-racial and mono-religious firms where such interethnic contacts will not happen with fellow workers.** On the basis of my survey and interview results, fully 28 percent work in mono-racial firms—i.e. those which employ only people of the same racial group as themselves; and 23 percent work in mono-religious firms—i.e. those firms which employ only people of the same religious group as themselves[23]. These findings are corroborated by a larger survey of ethnicity in Trinidadian business (Centre for Ethnic Studies 1994), which found that 88% of Indo-Trinidadian owned firms employed no Afro-Trinidadian staff at a senior level, and conversely 79% of Afro-Trinidadian owned firms employed no Indo-Trinidadian staff at senior levels. **In these cases of mono-ethnic firms, if interethnic contact is going to occur in business, it must do so with employees of other firms.**

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[23] The magnitude of this difference between the proportions of mono-racial and of mono-religious is not very large, but it is significant at the 1% level, indicating that Trinidadian firms tend to be mono-racial more often than they are mono-religious.

5. ETHNICITY IMPACTING ON BUSINESS:
STEREOTYPES, CULTURE, AND TACTICAL BUSINESS BEHAVIOR

Before examining the mechanisms by which business impacts on ethnic relations, we must know how ethnic relations impact on business, since business links are highly conditioned by ethnicity. **Hence this section of the dissertation examines the role of social dynamics in determining business links.**

The arguments I explore in this section hinge on the observation that business does not happen in a social vacuum: the choice of trade and commerce partners is not simply about price, product, and quality of service. Business choices are also conditioned by social contacts and social preferences, particularly when there is a choice between otherwise similar firms, or when a lack of information forces one to choose on the basis of preconceptions. Since those social links are partly determined by race and religion—i.e. because of extended families, or the geographic clustering of races in Trinidad—businesses too tend to cluster by race and religion. This process is shown graphically in Figure 21. We will be examining each of those stages in turn.

Figure 21: How does Ethnicity impact on Business?

Race & Religious Affiliation → Social Contacts → Business Linkages
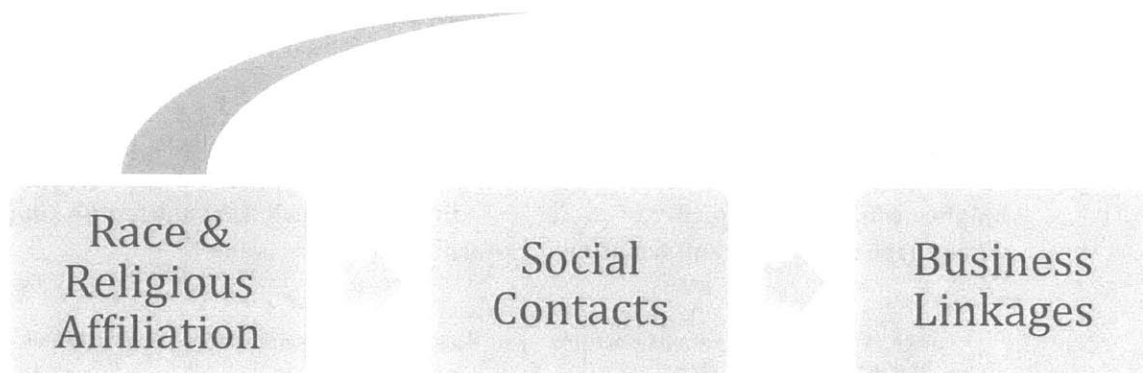
5.1. Social Contacts → Business Linkages

5.1.1. This sub-section explores how social links partly determine business links. On the schematic graphic, this means following the links between the rightmost two boxes.

Race & Religious Affiliation → Social Contacts → Business Linkages
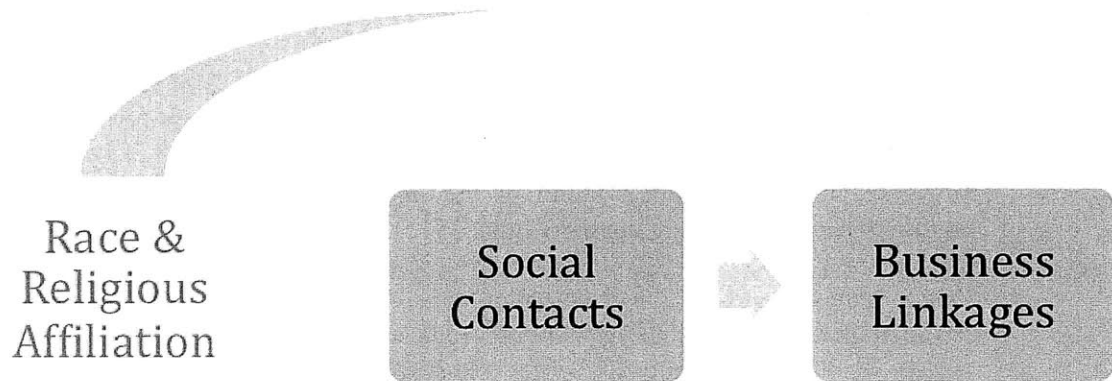
5.1.2. **A very large majority of interviewees cited price, product, and quality of service as the three key determinants of their own purchasing decisions, and the purchasing decisions of other firms and individuals.** Fully 77% of interviewees who answered the question about the determinants of their purchasing decisions said that price, quality and service accounted for 60% or more of each decision. Thus customers tend to shop wherever they can find the product they need at a good price; firms buy their supplies in the same manner.

5.1.3. **But these key determinants are supplemented by social dynamics between firms, and between the individuals who represent those firms.** Social contacts are important in **forming business links in the first place,** in **swinging big business deals,** in **tipping the balance when there is plenty of choice,** or in **providing quick information on suppliers when there is imperfect information on alternatives.** For example:

> *{Shop Assistant in hardware retailer. [Interviewee #154]}*
> **If he wants a bed build we send him to my uncle. If uncle finds someone who wants a cupboard built he'll send them back to us.**

> *{Customer service manager at paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #154]}*
> My husband's a part of TRA—the rifle association. A couple of his friends have construction companies. And once they find out I work for _____ [this company], I automatically get all the business. It's not like he gets a big discount, but I may make sure he gets all his goods on time. I think it has a lot to do with the friendship: you're my friend, I will support you.

> *{Owner of print firm. [Interviewee #128]}*
> There are some mavericks who choose suppliers just on price, but generally people like to stick with who they know.

> *{Sales manager of household goods wholesaler. [Interviewee #72]}*
> My neighbor buys from us because I give them a good deal here. Same for my family. But we can't go below the wholesale price.

{Owner of specialist paints shop. [Interviewee #49]}
I'm a very active member of my sports club. This mechanic has been a member of the sports club for the last two years. Now, *because* of socializing at the club, he switched from another supplier and now comes to me.

{General Manager of large printing firm. [Interviewee #98]}
Prestigious schools like Presentation College lead to networks in business too. Networks aren't useful so much in retail and wholesale. [It's more for the big players]. HiLo, TruValu, Club Zen, restaurants. More than likely, if he's got a business relationship with someone then they went to the same school or another prestigious one too. It's not necessarily because he likes him, but because he's likely to have a better code of business ethnics and know what he's doing—more reliable.

{Entrepreneur, in several industries. [Interviewee #181]}
If I'm looking for a contractor I'd look at my pool of friends first because that's people you know and can trust. Friendship comes from personality not from business. Then when you interact more with someone you build friendships with business too.

5.1.4. **Given such benefits to business, as one would expect, businesspeople will wittingly condition their social contacts to create business opportunities.** The following quotes give examples of such networking efforts:

{Sales Director of a large consumer products importer and distributor. [Interviewee #105]}
There's no question about it: you join these places [i.e. Lions clubs, Rotary clubs, Lodges] because you want to improve your lot. I'm a member, you're a member; hey, remember me when you get your next job. The new guy comes into the lodge and you find out he's into roofing. All other things being equal (price, quality, and so on), you'd probably go with him.

{Owner of a Chinese restaurant. [Interviewee #164]}
In T&T, social settings are business settings. You choose your social settings according to its business potential. Except for your friends from school, your public social life is based on business.

{Sales rep for Hardware Distributor. [Interviewee #97]}
I'll never forget the day one of my Hindu customers said they went to Coco Lounge to look for me! I was kinda taken aback—he's staunch Hindu [i.e. and therefore isn't supposed to drink].

{Owner & manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #69]}
Yes, that's important: playing golf and making business deals. Going to functions, religious ceremonies, and so on. They're all part of business. ...
Once you have that [social] relationship—because you go to the same mosque, church, or temple—you build a better [business] relationship and they tend to support the business.

{Entrepreneur. [Interviewee #188]}
The Rotary Club; I was a member of the Rotary Club. Um, and also in the Lodge. But the Lodge they tend to get drunk before they start talking business.. So, the Rotary Club—I used to pick up a lot of information there; a lot of opportunities being exchanged. Things that are happening here; a lot of **business came my way through the Rotary Club. You get a lotta exposure there.**
...And I drink every Friday night in Trotter's[24] and I meet a lot of customers in there too. I've met people that I now do business with there. My internet service provider—I met him there. [_____] Hardware—I met him there; now I buy a lot of lumber and steel from him; he buys a lot of my merchandise.

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[24] A popular bar amongst businessmen in Port-of-Spain.

5.2. Race&Religion → Social Contacts → Business Linkages

5.2.1. As might be apparent from some of the quotes above, social contacts are themselves not formed independently of race and religious affiliation. Indeed, as we saw in section 4.1.9, friendship networks are heavily conditioned by one's own ethnicity. And since business linkages are partly determined by social contacts, that means **we would expect businesses to cluster by race and religion.**

Race & Religious Affiliation	⇒	Social Contacts	⇒	Business Linkages

As examples:

> *{Chinese-Trinidadian publicity designer for entertainment industry. [Interviewee #143]}*
> **I don't get any work from Syrians and Indians because they just don't know me yet. Word of mouth is crucial and I'm just not on their network.**

> *{Chinese Proprietor of supermarket in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #142]}*
> If there's someone I know, I'd give him first preference. If it's the same price I'll go with him, but if I know the price is much higher I'll choose someone else. That's not just Chinese—it's any friend. **But since I might have more Chinese friends it's more likely to be Chinese.**

> *{White-Trinidadian Manager of large printing firm. [Interviewee #98]}*
> Ninety percent of business in Trinidad is family-owned. You have MNCs and Conglomerates like Neal & Massy, Ansa McCal etc, but then everything else is family-owned. Because Trinidad is an island you find people have very strong associations through extended families. **If my brother's wife is working for Unilever, then the chances are if a [print] job comes up we'd be first in line, so inevitably there's a degree of racial stratification in business.**
> .., If I needed a CFO and he's my friend's son and he's good I'd hire him—but not to the detriment of the company—whoever's the best. The Whites will deal with anyone—the door would be open wider for family contacts, but it's not the clincher.

> *{White-Trinidadian manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #146]}*
> There is a strong White-Trinidadian business community in Trinidad. Everyone knows one another—not that we meet in any one forum—but informally you just tend to know people.

5.2.2. To get some idea of the magnitude of this phenomenon, I inserted a question into my interview questionnaire that asked interviewees about the utility of their religious membership for their business transactions. In short, I found that **religious links are only useful to a minority of business people—and may be less useful than other types of social group membership—but that the utility of religious affiliation does exist.** Figure 22 summarizes these results.

Figure 22: *Responses to the questions*
'If you're a member of a group or association (for example, a Rotary Club, sports club, social club or other kind of society), would you say being a member of this group has been useful to your business life?'
and
'If you're a member of a local church, temple, mosque or other religious community, would you say that contacts from that community have been useful to your business life?'

Non-religious group or association (45 observations)   **Religious community (166 observations)**
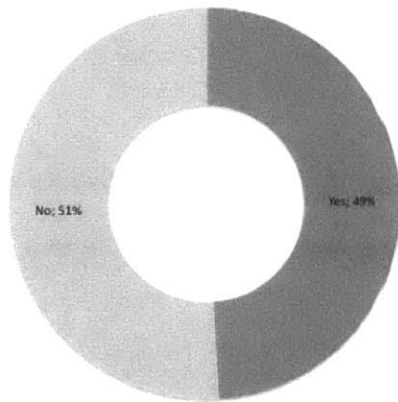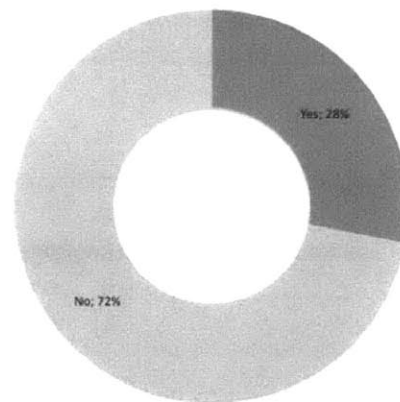
Within these results, it should be noted that religious links were more useful to interviewees than to survey respondents (50% versus 15%), which I interpret as a consequence of my interviewees being in more strategic roles (managers, sales reps, owners) than survey respondents.

5.2.3. **As we will see in subsequent sections of this dissertation** (particularly section 5.3.44), **some ethnic groups seem more likely to cluster in business than others—particularly Syrians, Chinese, and Muslim Indo-Trinidadians.** Indeed Syrian-Trinidadians tend to have a reputation in Trinidad as operating almost *dynastically*—with multiple members of the same large family running related businesses, and all colluding for common benefit. Syrians themselves often deny collusion and say there is a strong element of competition in their relations with other Syrians; but it did seem to me that Syrians seem to know enough other Syrians for the term 'Syrian business community' to be accurate. As I argue in section 5.3.49, this trend may be dying over time—for Chinese as well as Syrians—but currently it is still a feature of business life in Trinidad.

5.3. Race&Religion → Business Links

5.3.1. What about a more direct route from Racial and Religious affiliation to Business Links? **This sub-section examines a route from race and religious affiliation to business linkages that is *not* contingent on pre-existing social ties: it is instead a function of the intrinsic dynamics of ethnic groups.**

Race & Religious Affiliation → Social Contacts → Business Linkages
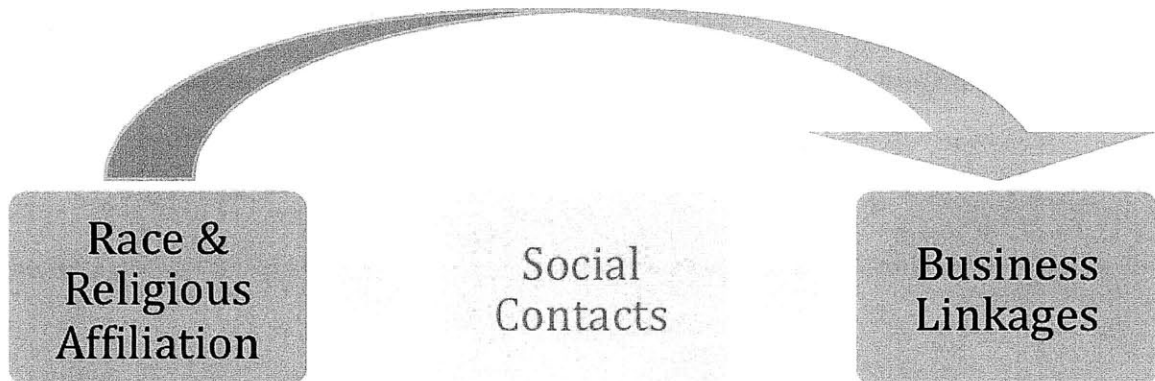
5.3.2. I conclude that three characteristics of identity groups determine the way race and religion impact on business:

   (i)   *prejudice* against outgroups,
   (ii)   *trust* of ingroups,
   (iii) *solidarity* amongst ingroups.

These three mechanisms are mediated by five variables:

   - *ethnicity* of businesspeople (ethnic favoritism is strongest amongst Muslims, Syrians, and Chinese),
   - *location* of firms (ethnicity may matter more in central and south Trinidad, though actually it is *perceived* to matter more in the north),
   - type of *market transaction* (buyers discriminate more than sellers),
   - *complexity of transaction* (more complex transactions resort to more ethnic favoritism),
   - *complexity of product* (undifferentiated products permit more recourse to ethnic favoritism).

I describe these mechanisms and variables in detail below.

Does Ethnicity matter in Business? Heterogeneous responses.

5.3.3. There was much variation in the responses of interviewees on this point. Some emphatically denied that ethnicity plays any role in business. Others emphatically claimed that ethnicity plays a central role in business. In the first part of this section I give examples of the contrasting viewpoints, before moving to an analysis of why this would be the case.

5.3.4. **Most interviewees estimated racial prejudice in business to be of marginal importance.** When asked the question: "Do you think sales reps or retail staff would be more successful when their race or religion is matched with the people they're trying to sell to?", 57% of interviewees and 82% of survey respondents answered "Not At All"[25]. 'Business is business' was the catchphrase which cropped up most often in my interviews on this topic. For example:

> {*Mixed-Trinidadian purchasing rep for groceries distributor. [Interviewee #86]*}
> Business is business. The background of someone doesn't matter once they have the service to offer. You'd hardly find Afro-Trinidadian owners of businesses, because of social issues. They have potential to grow but they don't save to grow it. **But this doesn't change who I'd buy from or sell to. It doesn't affect the business decisions at all.**

> {*Marketing manager for large processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #176]*}
> [AK: "Has it made any different to your business life that you're Muslim?"]
> No, only small business people think like that.

5.3.5. **But firms' actions seem to belie these claims that 'business is business' regardless of ethnicity. In fact, I encountered a number of firms that tactically allocate their sales reps according to the racial composition of their target markets.**

> {*White-Trinidadian Managing Director of furniture manufacturer. [Interviewee #59]*}
> **We are cognizant when we do business of who we send to clients. We'll send an Indian rep to Indian firms. If it's a government job then we'll send someone of African descent. If it's a white firm, we'll send a white guy. That's the way the world works.**

> {*Afro-Trinidadian manager of a commodities importer and distributor. [Interviewee #65]*}
> [AK: 'Do you think race plays a role in business in Trinidad?']
> It's definitely a factor even though you might not want it to be. People may or may not associate the African owner of this company with the brand. **Most of the salesmen operating in the south and east-west corridor are East Indians; the ones in Port-of-Spain are African. Also our receptionist is Indian—so if people call in they see that.**

> {*Afro-Trinidadian sales rep for food manufacturer. [Interviewee #57]*}
> African people aren't racial, but Indian people can be. Not everyone, but a few. **You go down to Debe or Penal and they want an Indian rep not an African one.** Or you just feel something's different. They want African people to come in and spend money, but not to talk to them.

5.3.6. **Occasionally this allocation would be justified on where the sales reps live or grow up, reasoning that people from the local area know it better** (as in the following quote):

> {*Sales supervisor for manufacturer of tissues, soaps, cleaning products. [Interviewee #95]*}
> We don't look at that....but it so happens that Indo-Trinidadians here do cover central and south; Chinese and Afro-Trinidadians for Port of Spain. It happens like this because they're from the area and so they know it better.

> {*Sales Manager for manufacturer of paints. [Interviewee #121]*}
> If I live in this community then I can identify with the needs of the people in that community.

...but mostly interviewees recognised the role of ethnic effects in shaping these decisions.

> {*Mixed ethnicity manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #171]*}
> Oh definitely: I think people doing hard door-to-door sales would face that kind of difficulty every day.

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[25] I discuss possible reasons for the disparity in these numbers below in Section 5.3.79.

{Indo-Trinidadian customer service manager at paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #134]}
It does come into it. **One time we had a guy come in and said he didn't "want to deal with any nigger." We still sent the African sales guy but in the end we had to change the sales rep.** It's the same with [name] Hardware [a hardware retailer], but he's still with us, probably because he knows the directors of the company.

5.3.7. Similarly, the racial identity of sales staff can be crucially important for retail stores…

{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager for Hardware retailer. [Interviewee #133]}
I would *choose* to send a Muslim guy to a Muslim client: it works! … **We have some African people on that [customer service] desk and we find that the Africans gravitate to those people. We also have a Syrian / White guy, and we find white and colored people gravitate towards him.**

…the racial identity of front-desk staff can be important in offices…

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
There's only one other Indian advertising firm, and for them to survive they have to put White people at the front—as receptionists and so on.

…and even the racial composition of a building contractor's team of construction workers is deemed to be important:

{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of construction contractor, south Trinidad. [Interviewee #151]}
I tell you something. In this country, if you go with a team of Indians into town [i.e. into Port-of-Spain] to work, they'll watch you carefully. But if you have six Indians and four Negroes it's OK.

5.3.8. And even when the races of sales reps and retail staff are matched to their customers, the race of a company's owner can prevent a sale:

{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}
But I remember getting feedback from one of my sales reps, who was East Indian. She goes into an East Indian store in Chaguanas. 15, 20 years ago. And she says "OK, hello, we have these products for sale." **And the owner says, "your boss is a Black man?". She says, "yes", very proudly. He says "I ent buyin' from you. When you're working for a East Indian company, I buy from you. I ent got nothin' against you. But I ent buyin' from a Black man."** Out in her face. And she came back here crazy, in tears: "Why this man say that?! All my East Indian family and people that I know have never given me the opportunities and the breaks that you have given me. I owe my success and my loyalty to *you*." Right? She was *cryin'*. So we have met that, but not to me directly: to my staff.

5.3.9. Religious affiliation can likewise be utilized instrumentally in order to garner business. For example:

{Foreign manager of a furniture store. [Interviewee #60]}
If Muslim people come [into the store], then they greet you Salaam Aleikum—I tell them my name's Ali or Mohammed and speak Urdu to them. This is the major part of success in business. … **I go to the mosque, church, and temple—all three—people will see you there and want to deal with you [in business].**

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
If I'm going to a Muslim client, I can't go as a Hindu—I'll take my girl here who wears hijab. If I go to a Hindu organization I'd quote certain things (even though I'm a Christian).

This instrumental usage can necessitate a number of chameleonic strategies. For instance, firms might supplement religious symbols of their owners with those of their employees. I visited a number of firms who had Hindu flags flying outside their premises, despite being owned by Christians. Or, alternatively, firms would disguise their religious affiliation where

possible in order to avoid alienating clients and therefore to appeal to the widest possible market.

> {*Indo-Trinidadian accounts manager for office supplies manufacturer. [Interviewee #62]*}
> Most firms in Trinidad would not like to be branded [as one race or religion or the other], because we want to attract everyone.

> {*Indo-Trinidadian shopkeeper in Port-of-Spain. [Interviewee #24]*}
> We don't show off that we're Hindu—just neutral: it's in the background.

> {*Manager of Construction firm, which has a large Islamic calligraphy motif in its corporate entrance hall. [Interviewee #138]*}
> For Muslims and Hindus—religion tends to become part of the organizations. Christians tend to secularize. It's not like in the US where they ban the cross from schools. We don't push it though, and the behavior of the firm doesn't demonstrate it [i.e. religiosity].

> {*Christian Indo-Trinidadian driver at manufacturing firm. [Interviewee #50]*}
> I'd rather not know something about you than know too much. You might be a thief and sell bananas— I'm just interested in the bananas. Same way, **if I buy a chicken I don't want to know it's halal and so on—I just want the chicken!** The Muslims display too much—put too much on show.

> {*Christian White-Trinidadian sales manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #68]*}
> We have no interest in what you believe in, where you come from. Our marketing makes a special effort to be overly inclusive: trying not to target any one group [in terms of race, religion, etc].

When firms play down their religious affiliation, the reason is usually because it is not particularly useful in their target sales markets. When I asked interviewees why their firms avoid trumpeting a religious affiliation, the justification was usually given in terms of maximizing sales by avoiding alienating clients. In other words, firms fear that their customers' purchasing decisions will be influenced by their religious affiliation.

5.3.10. **Incidentally, race and religion are by no means the only grounds by which personal characteristics can trump price, quality or service: political affiliation and sexual attraction were raised by interviewees too.** As examples:

> {*Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of specialist paints shop. [Interviewee #49]*}
> **Politics might have a bigger role [than race or religion] in influencing who buys from who. It's very common for contracts to be awarded according to what party people support.** Actually I do things deliberately to keep people guessing who I support.

> {*Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #188]*}
> One time I had a very sexy Venezuelan rep; and she'd make a lot of sales, she made some good money.. **I mean you hire sexy, attractive sales attendants—you'd be surprised—I mean your sales will double or triple.** Multiply your business phenomenally. But a good looking women will offend a female buyer. They don't like to see cleavage!

And, similarly to race and religion, firms may play up (or down) their political affiliation accordingly:

> {*Indo-Trinidadian owner of meats retailer. [Interviewee #35]*}
> Politics—we try not to discuss that at all—to discuss things for or against the incumbent—it's sensitive. We know people come here from all different political views, but they don't study[26] that when they come in to buy meat.

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[26] In Trinidad, the verb 'to study' means 'to be concerned about'.

However, we will not be pursuing those other topics further; the focus of this dissertation is specifically on the role of *ethnicity* in business.

5.3.11. **All in all, the evidence presented here suggests that, contrary to the claims of many interviewees, business is not just business. Businesspeople are cognizant of racial and religious affiliations while doing business.** The subsequent sub-sections examine: (i) *why* business decisions might be contingent on ethnicity, and (ii) *to what extent* business decisions might be contingent on ethnicity.

Ethnic Favoritism in Business Decisions: why <u>would</u> it happen?

5.3.12. **The phrase interviewees most readily utilized on this topic was to do business with "their own kind". The distinction between 'us' and 'them' was usually made using racial or religious categories. A number of reasons for ethnic preferences in business were given. I have grouped these for convenience into three categories, which will be explored in detail below: (1) Negative Expectations of (some) Outgroups, (2) Greater Ease of Transactions with Ingroups, and (3) Ideological Obligation to Ingroups.** To be clear, all three of these reflect not the *convenience* of racial and religious contacts but instead a *deliberate choice* to deal with businesses of some ethnicities rather than others. Of these three reasons for racially and religiously conditioned business transactions, the evidence from my interviews best supports the first two.

(1) Negative Expectations of (some) Outgroups

5.3.13. **Overall, Trinidadians generally seemed relatively comfortable in describing distinct behavioral traits that differentiate the country's various racial groups—i.e. stereotypes.** While interviewees did volunteer—as I will describe below—some nuances and sub-categories within each racial group, there was a fairly general trend to utilize race as one means of predicting and categorizing a person's behavior. In this section, I will detail what such expectations mean for businesspeople. As a prelude, Box 2 provides a lengthier transcript from one interviewee—notable mainly for his articulacy in representing the views of many other interviewees.

Afro-Trinidadians

5.3.14. **Afro-Trinidadians suffer from an assumption that they will be lazier in business than other Trinidadians, will not be competent at running businesses, and will spend their money on partying, clothes and cars rather than sacrificing those material possessions for their businesses as Indo-Trinidadians would do.** Interviewees gave a truly overwhelming number of testimonies like the following:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian furniture store manager. [Interviewee #60]}*
> **Out of one hundred [Afro-Trinidadians], maybe one can run a business well. If you get 100 dollars, you'll save 50 of it. If an Afro gets 100 dollars, he'll spend it all on partying tonight, and then come back and ask to borrow 10 dollars tomorrow!.**

{Indo-Trinidadian who has run a shop in an predominantly Afro-Trinidadian town all his life. [Interviewee #45]}

Everything goes wrong with African businesses. They don't know how to run them.

{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian Manager of Furniture Retailer in central Trinidad. [Interviewee #132]}
[On Afro-Trinidadians]:
They spend money they don't have—and prefer to spend money on a fancy car or $1500 on Beyonce[27]
rather than on a house.

{Indo-Trinidadian Muslim. [Interviewee #49]}
Talk to any young Indian lady or man and they're aspiring to build a house, buy a piece of land, a family, a business. **Talk to an Afro-Trinidadian, and the aspirations are different: a nice car, going travelling, on a cruise—the things that don't last.** Look at people who made money in the past—Afro-Trinidadians would go to Miami regularly, lime there; Indo-Trinidadians would build a house, buy land. That's all the cultural background—so deep and strong.

{Chinese-Trinidadian manager at bank. [Interviewee #174]}
[AK: 'Does race ever help inform your decisions about bank loans?']
The Africans rarely work. Their productivity is much lower. Additionally they're harder to manage. This is probably a legacy from slavery, feeling oppressed, and this is displayed in work. They're not the strongest analytical thinkers. That's why you find they don't really grow within the system: **they tend to be labelled as troublemakers.** ... The Indians [by contrast] tend to be followers rather than these aggressive people. With the Black man, everything's a celebration, so there's no money.

{Dougla interviewee. [Interviewee #19]}
For some reason Negro guys want people to know they [are] in business: they want to buy the best car then can afford—the best rims.

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of plastic bags manufacturer. [Interviewee #185]}
Their lifestyle is different. Indians are like the Chinese: they conserve a lot and invest that into the business. Africans don't think too much about the future. They don't save.

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #184]}
We come from different backgrounds: your parents would've inculcated different values in you. On the basis of education too, the Afro-Trinidadians are different. They're not so business-inclined and they're a free-operating society. They don't have that sense of business. The Indo-Trinidadian will have different allocations for different things, and recreation is low down the list.

{Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}
I wouldn't generally say all Afro-Trinidadians are lazy, but a lot of them are. Even at corporate level, the Afro-Trinidadians aren't able to keep the pace and they eventually left. It's sad that they don't get very high in management in many private companies.

As can be seen from the excerpts above, some interviewees were more emphatic than others—but overall, if any stereotypes were ascribed to Afro-Trinidadians, those stereotypes were very consistent across interviewees.

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[27] At the time of interviewing, the pop singer Beyonce was performing a concert in Trinidad, with wildly expensive ticket prices.

Box 2: A young Dougla entrepreneur describes behavior traits of Trinidad's main racial groups in business

"The Indian type businessman—they would want to throw money away to make you...I don't know: it's all about money at the end of the day—there's a lot of corruption going on and what not. The African businessman—they use more connections, and networks, and friends. Whereas the Indian businessman—they will take risks, they just jump *right* in: 'I don't know you, I'm going to be friends with you right on day one: I'm going to take you out, I'll take you to a restaurant. I'm going to even introduce you to my beautiful daughter—you understand?—to make sure you have a good time. And then you'll do anything for me'. It's a win-win. But you'll find the African businessman are more like, well, 'family and friends, they have those connections, I'll just talk to them, they get it done, I go through the normal way', as they say in the rule book, this is what you need to do as a businessman, you need to go through X, Y, Z, I'm gonna do it this way. So you find a lot of times African businessmen are considered *not* aggressive."

[AK: 'Is it easier for you to slot into either of those camps? Is there anything that you consciously switch on and off when you're dealing with different people? If you think, oh this one's a classic Indo-Trinidadian firm I've got to deal with here, so I'm going to use this strategy, play along with the whole daughter thing, pretend that I'm single...']

"Yeah yeah yeah, I do actually. You kinda know the approach: they're going to come, they know that **the Afro-Trinidadian, he's going to sit back, he's not going to talk much, he's going to try to come across intimidating, he's going to lay back, let you talk, let you do everything, he's going to assess, and then he'll call you when he feels the need to call you or he feels there's something going to happen. The Indo-Trinidadian's gonna do all de talkin', he's gonna make you feel like something's going to happen, and he probably doesn't want anything, but he's just going to talk to make himself be heard, to assert himself, to make himself look like he's the biggest businessman in Trinidad—he knows everybody, he knows everything—and sometimes at the end of the meeting with an Indo-Trinidadian you don't even know where you stand.** You don't know 'Are you really going to call me? Are you really going to cut this deal?'. It's kinda odd. **But I think you definitely have to have two different strategies for the two different ethnic groups, you know?** Either you know exactly what the Indo-Trinidadian wants, he looks for different things and you provide him with that and you get what you want; the Afro-Trinidadian is different, that's just how it goes.

"And there's the whole thing with women: Afro-Trindadian businesswomen, and Indo-Trinidadian businesswomen. **The Indo, from my experience, have had a lot of success in business with Indo-Trinidadian women: they're very motherly, they're chilled out, they're not aggressive at all, they're very good listeners, they want to help you achieve what you want to achieve, and they think about their interests as secondary sometimes.** I mean of course there's differences, but my experience has been good. **Like with my meeting with [large Trinidadian firm]: most of the women there were Indo-Trinidadian businesswomen, and they were the most supportive ones like whenever I'd talk they would lean forward, they were nodding favourably, you know—almost cheering me on. And you find the *Afro*-Trinidadian women in that meeting would be the aggressive ones. They were the ones trying to bury me under the sand, you know, they were asking me all the difficult questions, they were being difficult. It was almost like I'm supposed to go 'Oh my gosh—you know exactly what you're talking about, I'm so scared of you, I look like such an arse, I'm a 'lame-o', I don't deserve to be in this meeting', they would go all out and intimate you.**

"**And there was one White-Trinidadian businesswomen—and she was interesting because she would see things very logical.** You could tell there were no emotions attached to whatever she had to say. If I made a statement, she would look at it in a very logical way, she'd make a very logical comment back. She's like, 'What you say makes sense, what I'm going to say back to you is a very constructive, sensible thing.' Whereas you find with both sides there was some emotion attached to everything they said or did, but with that one White chick you find she was totally straight. Very educated responses she gave me, but she didn't let off on 'oh, I'm for you or I'm against you', she was just straight down de middle.

"... **I can't really comment on Chinese much: I don't know too much about Chinese to make a decent comment.** It's all probably riddled with stereotypes, if I were to mention something it would be very stereotypical, so I can't really comment on that.

"**But Syrians—yeah, I've seen Syrians all about getting that much bang for their buck. So if they're spending five dollars, they wanna make sure they're getting like fifty dollars worth out of that five—they milk it. I'm paying you five thousand dollars a month, I want to see every cent of that in work effort, you know what I mean? They don't mess around like other people do, and I've seen that. ... Very very aggressive. But their main thing is all about hard work at the end of the day. I think they hate slackers ... I think that's their main thing.** They don't stress money more so, as probably the Indian people do; they stress hard work. Once you give them hard work, you're honest, you probably would go far in a Syrian-run company. ... I'm not saying you would be rewarded handsomely for it; but you would get a smile and a pat on the back at least."

Interviewee #200.

5.3.15. Such stereotypes about the laziness or incompetence of Afro-Trinidadians in business were often conflated also with the opinion that Afro-Trinidadians have a higher propensity to be criminals than other ethnicities do:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of retail shop. [Interviewee #16]}*
> [For Indo-Trinidadians] there's a drive behind it: the challenge to make the most they can make. **Afro-Trinidadians just worry about today—that's true. That's why most criminals are Negro. I [as an Indo-Trinidadian] can't stay home and do nothing, whereas a Negro person would love to stay home and do nothing.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian father, who chimed in as I was interviewing the proprietor of a mini-supermarket. [Interviewee #104]}*
> I tell you: all the problems in this country: it's the Africans! **They always thievin', killin' an' ting. They don't know how to earn money, and if they do they go out on a spendin' spree.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of small hardware shop in Central Trinidad. [Interviewee #139]}*
> Be careful when you go over the other side [of the highway]. Here is mainly Indian, but over there it have more Africans—Cunupia, Montrose.

> *{Christian Indo-Trinidadian driver at manufacturing firm. [Interviewee #50]}*
> There was a breakthrough in the 1970s with Eric Williams, as first Prime Minister. So now more of them are working for tings. But while there's some of them working now, there's a lot ah them playing d fool. **Putting a gun to someone's head—that's not a business!**

Figure 23: Trinidad & Tobago's per capita murder rate is one of the highest in the world, and according to a prevalent view, Afro-Trinibagoans are mostly responsible.
(Photo: by the author, of the front page of one of Trinidad's three daily newspapers, December 2010)
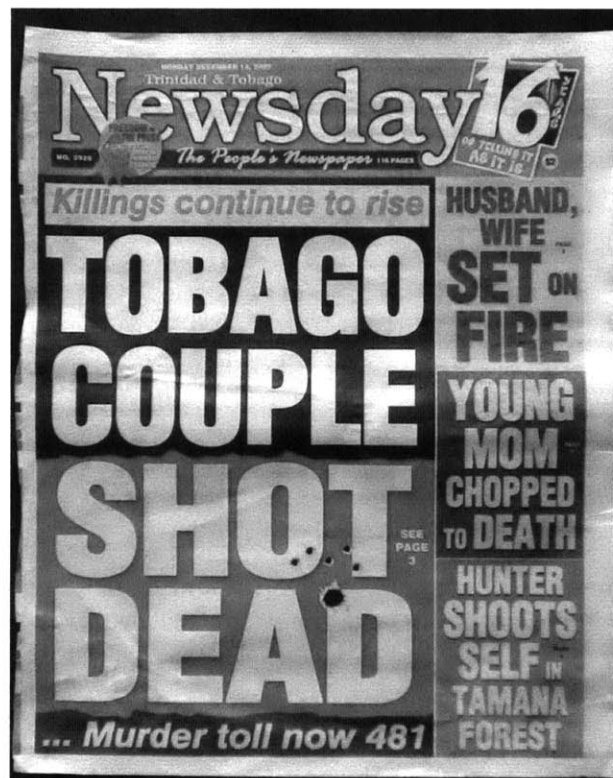
5.3.16. **Remarkably these stereotypes about Afro-Trinidadians—at least about a lack of work ethic and—are attributed not only by other ethnicities, but also by some Afro-Trinidadians themselves.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian manager of electrical shop. [Interviewee #173]}*
> **If you see a WASA truck or a T&TEC truck[28]—where dey? Under a tree, liming, or playin' cards! We don't work hard. Negro people don't work hard—at all, at all, at all.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian Sales Manager for household goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #85]}*
> Without a doubt it's true that Indians are more likely to save money, and sacrifice for the business. You don't see it so much from Africans. As for being lazy: [yes] I might say that too [about Afro-Trinidadians]—**everyone has the same opportunities [but Afro-Trinidadians make less out of them]**.

They have also been noted by other scholars of Trinidadian society:

> (Ryan & Stewart 1994:185)
> "I will even...argue that when Blacks achieve wealth by owning businesses they are more concerned with the production and reproduction of status rather than wealth. The desire to move into the 'correct' neighborhood, drive an expensive car and prematurely engage in a conspicuous consumption often characterizes his/her behavior. This type of behavior can often come into conflict with the demands of the reproduction of wealth or, simply put, prudent entrepreneurial activity."

> (Yelvington 1993:115)
> "Most of the comments that depreciate the 'business sense' of blacks given above come from East Indians. But I should point out that I regularly heard the same thing from blacks as well. As Martha, who is black, said: 'Negroes, I wouldn't have a place [be the owner of a business] with they at all—I might go bankrupt!'"

5.3.17. **Interestingly, the quotes above illustrate how different subjective spins are put on similar objective characteristics. For example, Afro-Trinidadians would tend to portray a weaker work ethic in a normatively acceptable manner, terming it "laid back" rather than "lazy".**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian owner of small clothing store. [Interviewee #21]}*
> Let me tell you about an East Indian person generally. They're into sacrifice: they eat dry bread and drink water. We wouldn't do that: we'd buy butter and put in sugar and lime. It helps them save money and this Indian would wear the same pants for four days whereas we'd want different ones every day! We are laid back. We love to party. We find a party to make out of anything. **I may take longer to come up with the capital but it doesn't mean my business won't be successful.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian accounts & purchasing officer in construction firm. [Interviewee #82]}*
> Indians and Syrians tend to be very strict and professional in business. There are some Africans like that, but in general they're **more laissez-faire about timescales, delivery, and so on. But those businesses still survive, and in fact recommend more clients to us.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian sales manager for food distributor. [Interviewee #163]}*
> As time goes on, the whole style of culture has been changing from when you'd get a particular style from different groups. So I wouldn't use the word 'lazier': it's a strong word and I wouldn't want to brand a culture 'lazy'. More like 'less hard-working'. There's a certain amount of truth to it, but I wouldn't want to use this word.

5.3.18. **It should be noted that the consensus about Afro-Trinidadians' work ethic was not universal; some exceptions to the general trend are given here:**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian owner and manager of construction contractors. [Interviewee #167]}*

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[28] i.e. Trinidad's public utility companies, staffed predominantly by Afro-Trinidadians: WASA is Trinidad & Tobago's Water and Sewerage Authority; T&TEC is Trinidad & Tobago Electricity Company.

It's crap! We work just as hard; we just don't get paid for it. And then when we don't get paid, we stop working hard. ... So we are struggling as Black men and Negros. **We have to be five times as good as them, to remain open; five times as good as them.**

{Indo-Trinidadian customer service manager at paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #134]}
[Comments, as ticking questionnaire boxes on stereotypes]:
People say this all the time. *All the time.* But I think this [Afro-Trinidadians being lazier] is totally untrue, and this is mostly true [Indo-Trinidadians being devious or opportunistic].

{Indo-Trinidadian Muslim manager of retail store. [Interviewee #52]}
To me that's their nature: they like to party and so on**. But now times are harder and some of them are setting up little clothing shops and so on. There are still some lazy ones, but others are working for themselves.** Before they were getting money from the government while we had to work for it. Now things are changing a bit.

{Afro-Trinidadian proprietor of agricultural supplies shop. [Interviewee #48]}
Well, Trinibagoans on the whole like to party. As regards to saving, it depends on priorities—you're saving on one aspect but spending on another. Africans might spend on clothes and parties; Indians might save on those things but spend on trips, travel and so on.

[Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}
I have Blacks who work with me and for me, and they work *extremely* hard. Right? It's the motivation, it's the loyalty, it's what you can pull—you know—in the person. So it works both ways. I don't think it's something general across the board.

5.3.19. **But overall I observed a remarkable degree of consensus on the underlying stereotypes of Afro-Trinidadians versus other race groups.** Indeed, even Afro-Trinidadians who had been successful in business recognized they were going against the trend:

{Mixed ethnicity manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #171]}
We made certain precautions—took advice and made sure we didn't go in underfinanced. Too often Afro-Trinidadians want to start companies and immediately buy a Mercedes Benz. **We were able to get financial support by showing a track record. I've found if you stick to the rules and you give the information then you get what you're looking for.**

The conscious connection interviewees made between laziness and Afro-Trinidadians is generally manifested even in colloquialisms in Trinidad. Perhaps the most notable example is the term 'Niggeritis' (or, more socially acceptable, 'ethnic fatigue'), which is used by many Trinidadians—including Afro-Trinidadians—to describe the lethargy one feels after eating large amounts of food: a direct allusion to the perceived laziness of Africans.

5.3.20. **Amongst interviewees who voiced negative opinions about Afro-Trinidadians— particularly those most emphatic about their penchant for spendthriftyness and criminality—a small number argued that the behavior of Afro-Trinidadians was entirely consistent with general world trends of incompetence, spendthriftyness and criminality amongst people of African descent.** For example:

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner and manager of hardware store. [Interviewee #172]}
[In answer to question 'What ethnicity do the owners of your suppliers tend to be?']:
Check worldwide and you can see how they operate. They're not too much in the commercial side: they're more consumers. **You give them $1 and they spend one-fifty.** ... If you're here [in Trinidad] so long, you'll realize who does do all the shootin' and the killing in this country. ... **I'm sure you see the same thing in America. Big chain, fancy cars, a lot of ladies, plenty of drugs.**
[AK: 'But some Afro-Trinidadians are running businesses, right?']
They're in the minority—it's very rare.

{White-Trinidadian Managing Director of furniture manufacturer. [Interviewee #59]}

Why are all the Chinese here entrepreneurs, while if you take Africans and put them in a different country they become laborers?—Why?

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}
I don't entertain any racism...But you cannot speak the truth without people saying you're a racist. Some people sit and wait for a handout—a certain type of people.
[AK: 'Is that Afro-Trinidadians?']
They're lazy! **If you can show me an African country led by an African that's doing well, show me! Pin-point it on the map! Don't write it down. Look at Zimbabwe, Haiti: they run it into the ground, and run everybody else out.**
[AK: 'What about Botswana?']
There's Chinese, Indians, Whites there too.

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #202]}
One of the most significant differences that exists in the country between all ethnicities and the Afro community is family life. Now, a lot has been made by Afro intellectuals here as to the meaninglessness of that difference. A lot of Afro-Trinidadians—so-called intellectuals—have argued strenuously that the failure of the Afro community to adopt the traditional family with a father and mother in the home has no impact, and is not the cause of their lagging behind the rest of the society. That's a big issue, and it's a relevant issue in the United Kingdom, and it's a relevant issue in the United States. **And it's equal as a common denominator in all societies in which the Afro citizen is a minority, as it is equal in the societies where the Afro citizen is a majority. Because that failure to adopt the model of a traditional family doesn't exist in Nigeria either.**

Only more occasionally was the opposite argument made—i.e. that Afro-Trinidadians stereotypes reflect local culture rather than global genetic trends:

{Indo-Trinidadian shop assistant. [Interviewee #38]}
My sister travels to L.A. and Miami and says they're so hardworking, no matter if they're African or whatever. It's the culture down here, not the people.

5.3.21. Needless to say, these attitudes put some handicap on the ability of Afro-Trinidadians to be successful in business, either as entrepreneurs or as employees. In the words of some entrepreneurs themselves:

{Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur in construction industry. [Interviewee #206]}
To be successful as a person of Afro descent is double the work. You have no-one helping you, and you have Afro-Trinidadians pulling you down.

{Afro-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #150]}
In terms of business, race *is* an issue. I'm very conscious of it. I try not to let it affect me, but it is. Although I'm qualified, as an African businessman I'm not successful in many cases, and I feel it's something to do with race, since other companies less qualified than me get the contracts. The few African contractors in this area share my view. This is my perception. If it's not to do with race, then it's to do with bribes, and that's more part of Indian culture to give the gifts, rather than in African firms. Even in the firm [i.e. his firm], Indian workers are more likely to wash my car, bring me fruits, give duck on my birthday—not the Africans.

And with respect to Afro-Trinidadian employees:

{Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur in construction industry. [Interviewee #206]}
So you find a lot of Afro-Trinidadian businesses employ only East Indians: at least you know what you're getting in terms of productivity...

Indo-Trinidadians

5.3.22. **Indo-Trinidadians, by contrast, are stereotyped as being more competent and hardworking than Afro-Trinidadians, but also a little disloyal.** Once again, I observed a surprising degree of consensus about such general traits. With respect to the competency, hard work, and entrepreneurial spirit of Indo-Trinidadians:

> *{Mixed ethnicity manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #171]}*
> I think there's a certain measure of truth in it. There's a higher percentage of people of an Indian orientation who are harder-working, more disciplined, better at time-keeping.

> *{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner and manager of hardware store. [Interviewee #172]}*
> The Indian people don't like to work for people—they like to work for themselves. The only thing we don't have is Chinese restaurants. The groceries: that's us. The hardwares: that's we.

> *{White-Trinidadian Managing Director of a large print firm. [Interviewee #98]}*
> **Look at how in every Indian village nothing is missing: you have a barber, a printer, everything. ... An East Indian—by their DNA—is a trader. You can't get away from that: it's in their DNA. ... Afro-Trinidadians have a parlor, a tire shop, construction. East Indians are in everything. So, if an East Indian comes by with hair shampoo to sell, I'd prefer to deal with him than an Afro-Trinidadian.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian owner & manager of specialist goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #61]}*
> Indo-Trinidadians take sacrifices from young. They're much more attuned to running businesses, and focus on education—even then with a turn towards business.
> *[AK: 'So you'd prefer dealing with Indo-Trinidadian firms even though you're Afro-Trinidadian yourself?']*
> It's kind of sad—but it's true.
> *[AK: 'How did you form these views—what kind of experiences have you had?']*
> Through setting up a water-blasting company and working with different types of people. Even employees here—there's a better tendency to sacrifice from the East Indians.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Proprietor of mini-supermarket. [Interviewee #100]}*
> I started the business with a table of vegetables and just encouraged it to grow. Now the Africans, out of one hundred, only about two percent might show their children how to save [i.e. save money for business and other prudent investments].

> *{Muslim Indo-Trinidad owner of a print firm. [Interviewee #111]}*
> Our parents teach us how to be thrifty. They teach us how to multiply our wealth. They teach us how to be disciplined. And I never drink alcohol in my life.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of car parts supplier. [Interviewee #131]}*
> They *both* work hard [i.e. Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians]. But the Indian guy saves a little more, for his family, his land. Dem into 'You go and work and you go and buy.' The Indian guy doh want to remain diggin hole all the time. The African guy like to work hard, but doesn't better his life.

And with respect to a lack of loyalty amongst Indo-Trinidadians compared to Afro-Trinidadians:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager for Hardware retailer. [Interviewee #133]}*
> What we've found is that relationships with the Afro are much better than with the Indo. ... I even had fights with my managers to get accounts for Afro-Trinidadians. They tend to stick to their word more than the Indo-Trinidadian.

> *{Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur in construction industry. [Interviewee #206]}*
> So you find a lot of Afro-Trinidadian businesses employ only East Indians: at least you know what you're getting in terms of productivity, **although they tend to work there for a couple of years until they know the business and then go and set up competition.**

> *{White-Trinidadian manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #146]}*
> **You have to watch East Indians though—they steal your clients. Afro-Trinis are a bit more loyal, but they're lazier.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #150]}*

I would trust East Indians less, because for whatever reason they find it hard to be truthful. If they bring something to you it's because they want something from you. Or if they treat you kindly they'll want something in return. Unlike the African person or Whites, who want nothing in return. This is my experience in business, and from living around here. … **If I employ an Indian, in about 2 to 3 years he'll have his own business or set up a parallel business. Africans are more loyal**.

{Douglas proprietor of personal goods wholesaler. [Interviewee #20]}
In business, the only bad experiences I've had are with Indian people: not paying, or ordering stuff and then when they realize who it's coming from then they cancel the order.

As for any stereotype, such views are not completely universal. For example, one White-Trinidadian told me:

{Sales Director of a large consumer products importer and distributor. [Interviewee #105]}
Actually I'd prefer not to deal with some of the White people. Once you get a loyal Indian customer, he's a friend for life.

…but there was certainly a general trend to subscribe to the views on disloyalty shown as example quotes above.

5.3.23. **Similarly to the distinction Afro-Trinidadians' made between "laid back" and "lazy", there was disagreement about whether Indo-Trinidadians were devious or simply crafty.** In the following quotes, we can detect consensus on the underlying characteristics in terms of ruthless competitiveness, but differences in normative interpretation:

{Indo-Trinidadian furniture store manager. [Interviewee #60]}
Sometimes Africans are better to deal with than Indians and Syrians: the Indians are too smart. If they catch you they'll pull down your pants. They'll dig out your eyes. In business you have to open your eyes: who you're dealing with and what you're telling them.

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of Indian clothing retail stores. [Interviewee #89]}
They can do business, but their downfall is they don't like to see the other do well.

{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #89]}
A company with only Indians on board at your level, they all looking to cut your throat. I don't know why—that is the culture. **It don't happen with the African people; the Indians always want to be better. You have a ten-storey house? Your neighbor puts up an eleven-storey house.**

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner of a food stall in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #158]}
[In answer to question about whether it's easier to work with people of similar ethnicity]
Africans are more down-to-earth people. Some of the Indians are pompous people—they always feel they're better than somebody.

{Mixed ethnicity distributor of paper products. [Interviewee #191]}
[Interviewee asks me to clarify question on 'Do you think Indo-Trinidadians tend to be more devious or opportunistic?']
[AK: "Well, in the sense that Indian employees might learn the business then go off and set up their own one"]
I don't call that devious—I call it entrepreneurial.

{Chinese-Trinidadian administrative manager, hardware retailer. [Interviewee #124]}
That's what makes good businessmen!—you bring cheap stuff down and tell people it's good! You *know* it's inferior material, but they'll convince you with their mouth. In a way I admire that: that's a good businessman.

5.3.24. A few other stereotyped character traits did crop up with respect to Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians—for example that Indo-Trinidadians would tend to be polite and respectful while Afro-Trinidadians would be more aggressive and loud. But the most common views were those on laziness, incompetence, entrepreneurship, and disloyalty, as in the interview excerpts selected above.

5.3.25. Figure 24 **below shows the results of my interviews and surveys, in which respondents were asked to rate, in their own experience, how true the stereotypes are.**

Figure 24: Belief in racial stereotypes
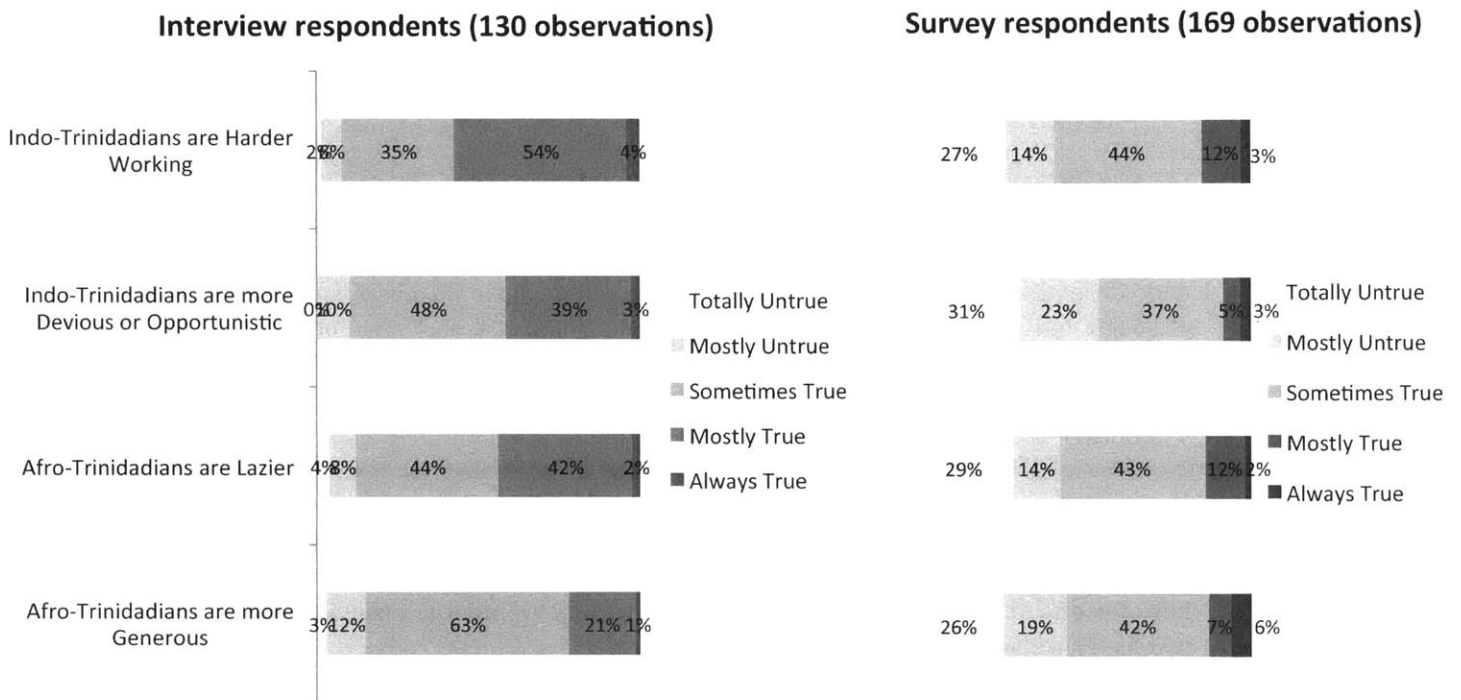
I checked this data for consistency by verifying that respondents were not simultaneously saying that Indo-Trinidadians are harder-working but Afro-Trinidadians were not lazier, or alternatively that Indo-Trinidadians are not harder-working but Afro-Trinidadians are lazier. Only 10 out of 281 respondents claimed these inconsistent views.

Generally, the stereotypes of Indo-Trinidadians as harder-working and Afro-Trinidadians are the most widely subscribed to. But we can immediately note some large differences between interview responses and survey responses: interviewees generally agree much more with racial stereotypes than survey respondents do. I discuss potential reasons for this disparity—particularly in terms of interview respondents being better acquainted than survey respondents with individuals' business behavior—in section 5.3.79.

Minority groups

5.3.26. Trinidad's Chinese and Syrian populations are also readily described through generalized character-traits. **The Chinese population is most often perceived as impartial though inward-looking:**

> {Indo-Trinidadian shopkeeper in southern Trinidad. [Interviewee #40]}
> The Chinese seem to have opened a grocery in almost every single community. **They're pioneers: they don't mind going to a place where are no other Chinese. They're reliable; they're fair-minded.** You'd find no animosity from Indo-Trinidadians or Afro-Trinidadians, because they're both going to a Chinese grocery. ... The Chinese believe they share a similar work ethnic with the Indo-Trinidadians. Look at Chinese takeaways—if the proprietors don't speak English then they employ an Indian girl.

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager of clothing store. [Interviewee #114]}
> The Chinese are the Gujaratis of Trinidad!—the Gujaratis are the best businessmen in India (I am Gujju[29] by the way)—they know how to negotiate. If they have 10 Mercedes-Benzes at home they'll come to see you in their Corolla. They won't show their wealth. You'll give them a good price because you think they can't pay more.

5.3.27. Incidentally, while Chinese-Trinidadians may be perceived by other Trinidadians as a single group, who "keep themselves to themselves", there are in fact several subgroups of Chinese—defined by the language of their ancestors in China, such as Hakka or Cantonese—and concomitantly several Chinese Associations where their members socialize. Indeed, although intra-Chinese relations have improved since the early- to mid-20th century, prejudice did exist even between groups of Chinese: as one Chinese-Trinidadian recalls, "Among the Hakkas we didn't like you to marry a Cantonese—that's why they called them 'Punti Lau'—it's derogatory," (Johnson, Kim 1999).

5.3.28. More contemporarily, Trinidad has seen a recent influx of Chinese immigrants. **There are a number of sharp differences between these recent immigrants—who may speak only a few words of English—and 'local Chinese' (i.e. Chinese-Trinidadians) who have been here for one or more generations and are culturally Trinidadian (or, more accurately, just as 'Trinidadian' as is any other race group).**

> {Chinese-Trinidadian proprietor of variety shop, Port-of-Spain. [Interviewee #123]}
> There's two different types of Chinese people here: legal ones and illegal ones. They come off a fishing ship and never return to the boat. We call them "jump ship". The illegitimate ones stay away from us [Chinese-Trinidadians]—they move together with their people. ... Sometimes that's because they trust them more than the locals [Chinese-Trinidadians]. But also it's communication: a lot of people don't speak English. And because they know they really want to work because they need the money.

5.3.29. **Syrians** are meanwhile sometimes resented for their prosperity and control of some of Trinidad's largest businesses, especially because they would tend to be relatively insular (or at least would tend to privilege other Syrians) in their business dealings.

> {Mixed-Trinidadian manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #127]}
> Having worked closely with Syrians I know that Syrians are a very close knit community, and don't really allow others into their comfort zone. So what you see is what they want you to see. But if they give you their word in business, you can count on it. ... They are very trustworthy at their word. If they tell you they're going to do something they'll do it.

> {Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of photography retailer. [Interviewee #87]}
> Syrians and Chinese—they're considered as well-to-do first class people; [but/and] they keep to themselves and marry amongst themselves.

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[29] 'Gujju' is slang for 'Gujarati'.

{Mixed-Trinidadian purchasing rep for groceries distributor. [Interviewee #86]}
The owner of this company is Syrian. **Syrians will help each other—they won't see other Syrian companies go down. Even if they're competing with each other they'll work together.** They might sell goods from each other's warehouse.

{White-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #79]}
Syrians have built businesses from walking the streets, selling cloth from a suitcase. But remember they're also self-selected: coming in with a mission to do that, not like the general population. So it's not a fair comparison [with, say, Afro-Trinidadians].
But they're not easy to get along with. They cuss you; they treat their staff badly. You come in, you pick up your pants, you give me your money, and you go on your way. I don't care who you are, and vice versa.

{Mixed-Trinidadian owner & manager of printing firm. [Interviewee #128]}
They're supposed to be wheelers and dealers. That's the image people have. But there are decent people who are Syrians.

{Chinese-Trinidadian owner of a Chinese restaurant. [Interviewee #164]}
The Syrians support each other in an organized way, even if they don't like each other. They're more adventurous: we still don't know how they got their money.
[AK: 'Some of them are pretty profitable though—like the fabric shops on Charlotte Street?']
Well, how profitable can it be?!

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of Indian clothing retail stores. [Interviewee #89]}
Syrians and Chinese are the best businesspeople—about 50 percent of businesses are run by them. They have business ethics, and "they know management".

What explains these stereotypes?

5.3.30. **Various reasons are suggested for these differences between Trinidad's races, mostly drawing on Trinidad's social history, and the path-dependent legacies that history has entailed.** Most prominent is the idea that Indo-Trinidadians were somewhat self-selected in coming to Trinidad, further self-selected themselves to stay, and hence were more entrepreneurial self-starters from the start. Likewise for the Syrians and Chinese. By contrast, Afro-Trinidadians were brought to Trinidad without deciding to come, and furthermore were settled as single slaves without their families: the lack of self-initiative, *and lack of supportive families*, that this vocation entailed is supposed to have lasted through generations. To give some examples of such views (and at more length in Box 3, Box 4 and Box 5):

{Indo-Trinidadian shopkeeper. [Interviewee #40]}
One of the reasons for this demarcation between Indians and Negroes is only because we as a society have not addressed a fundamental issue. There's a big difference between slavery and indentured labor—the Indians were granted land instead of a passage back to India at the end of their five years. **So the Africans never saw themselves as an entrepreneurial class to move forward: that's stayed with them until today. They see themselves just as a laboring class.** The only thing Indians don't have at the present time is political power: and the Afro-Trinidadians are desperate to hold on to that, because they think Indians have everything else.

{Mixed ethnicity distributor of paper products. [Interviewee #191]}
For two or three years, my two best workers were Creole. But that's a rarity—I'd normally pick an Indian over a Creole. I'm not talking about office staff but general workers. They're more hardworking; more loyal. I think it's because where the come from: their father got up early in the morning and they can still do that now. For the Black man, they have to be helped.

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]}
Afro-Trinidadians aren't such good businessmen because they get it too easy from the government. Indians had to work and have grown businesses from small, then pass it on between generations.

{Afro-Trinidadian property manager. [Interviewee #189]}
Afro-Trinidadians like to *look* like they making plenty money. They don't like the doubles model of business! [i.e. They prefer to sell few at a high price, than many low-priced goods at a low margin]. Especially because of where they come from [i.e. slavery]. We like to go to the extreme opposite.

{Afro-Trinidadian Sales Manager for household goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #85]}
It's a matter of socialization: Afro-Trinidadians are bred to get a degree then go and get a good job from someone else. Indians do it to start their own business. If Africans do that, their parents say 'You crazy?? You leaving your good job??'. Indians also have a better support structure.

{Afro-Trinidadian contractor. [Interviewee #183]}
You have to put the stereotypes in a historical context. Urbanization with Afro-Trinidadians started with the decline of cocoa: they became urbanized and wanted to go into the civil service. Indians remained on the cocoa plantations as workers and farmers. Then they were the first set of entrepreneurs. Also Indians were given land.
And what you don't have with Afro-Trinidadians is an identification of them as Black businesses: they don't have different names like Hindu Indians.

Box 3: A Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur's view on the roots of Afro-Trinidadians' weakness in business

"Those lessons [on doing business] are hard to learn from the get-go; those lessons are more easily learned in an environment where they are passed on from elders; and those lessons cannot be passed on from elders if there are *none* in a standing family unit! So that for instance, the habit of having three children with three different men does *not* encourage the teaching of those lessons in the home, particularly because: where is the grandfather and the grandmother, and where are the uncles and aunts? If you were my brother by a different father, who are my uncles? Who *are* they? And when I have a child, who are my children's uncles? And that is the problem.

"So for instance my grandparents on both sides would not wish me a Merry Christmas without first asking me to see my report card, ever. And would not actually proceed to wish me a Merry Christmas if they were dissatisfied with the report card; because education was a very principal feature of their plan for me, you see. And that puts me in a decidedly better position than the kid who never sees his father until Christmas Day. And I, I, I, I cannot convey that to these so-called intellectuals here, but I know it. I also know that my grandparents, and my uncles and my aunts, who were all keen about the devotion that we had to have to business, and that spending as much time in the business was crucial, and that the eyes of the master fatten the cow; I mean I have been taught since I was six years old! In fact I wanted to study medicine. I was very keenly interested in being a doctor; and my grandparents and my uncles and my father kept insisting that I would be far happier in business, just to give you an idea, you see. You know, that is an issue that demarcates the Indo, and Chinese, and Arab-Trinidadian citizens from the Afro-Trinidadian citizens, and that affects their values, and that affects the way they deal with problems.

"For instance, on the question of everyone being equal in business and having to adopt these attitudes, right? The traditional leadership has been based on the theory of victimhood among the Afro-Trinidadian people. And not only here as well; I mean, let's be very honest about it: a lot of the civil rights leaders in the United States outside of Martin Luther King up to today; to his credit, outside of Obama as well, up to today, will still say "the reason we're not making it is because we were victims, and we should be paid reparations," and that is still being pushed down their throats. Whereas when I came to my father or mother and told them that I had been taken advantage of, I was told that I didn't do as good a job. I was told it was *my* fault. I was never given the opportunity to blame anybody up until today. My grandparents never let me get away with that. Now, that puts me at a decidedly better advantage from the *get-go, from the get-go.* That puts me at a tremendous advantage over these guys. So those are issues—these are values—that help to solidify success and guarantee a certain format or a certain *model* of problem-solving and management. And the ultimate destructive element of that theory of victimhood is: that they never emulate successful people, but they want to be successful; as if *somehow* there is another formula.

"But you see the theory is this: I can tell you that my father educated himself, put himself through night school, and spent a lot of time studying the old English merchants of Port-of-Spain. Because he wanted to be a merchant. His father was a peddler; his father sold house-to-house. He spent a lot of his time on Frederick Street, which is where all the old English merchants were. And if they wore top hat he wore one; if they wore black tie he wore black tie; if they wore a navy tie he wore a navy tie. And everything that they did—on his lunchtime school hour he would come there and spend time; you know, he devoted himself to figuring out what successful people did. In this society, politically, we have a leadership which says that the businesspeople are living off the fat of the land—the remark that was recently made by a government Minister. And what impression does that give young, Black, would-be entrepreneurs?—that we are vultures, *not* that we are doing something that should be emulated, you know? And how does *that* guide them to become successful? And that creates another disadvantage, so that that original premise you have—of people having this reasonable equality—isn't really the case always. And a lot of them *feel*—we had a famous intellectual, a PhD as well, Lloyd Best, I don't know if you ever heard of him, a Professor at university—but he often said that Black people do not succeed in business and in professions because they never set out to. They never do. And they don't have the formula, or they don't understand that there is, or there should be, a common formula that everybody uses. I don't do anything that's unique to the Arab community: what talent I have, that is uniquely Middle Eastern, is not something that can be copied by anybody anyway."

Interviewee #202.

Box 4: An Indo-Trinidadian distribution manager's view on the roots of Afro-Trinidadians' weakness in business

I tell you something—this could be my preconception—but I'll tell you something. **I think the Afro community: the fathers have abandoned their roles two generations ago, and it's now the norm, and because the homes are fatherless and they only have their mothers and the kids. I think that model in itself is totally destructive to that community.**

Long ago, teenage pregnancy, it was something very shameful and you'd try and hide it away. Now kids are going to school pregnant and it's no big deal. **When there's no father figure in the home, or no head of the household that brings the income as what we would call the 'norm'.** The mother's not home; the mother has to go out to work, so who's taking care of the kids and who's actually inculcating the values and the principles that you want your kids to have? And making sure the kids stay on the straight and narrow and go to school and get them out of the cycle. They're not breaking the cycle, no matter how hard they try.

To add to that, to a large degree, when the mother is not around, the parent becomes the television and the music. And the kids on the block. The kids on the block become the new role models.

Let me tell you about one of our merchandisers. He grew up in Morvant, in an area that is real bad; people getting gunned down. When he turned 30, he had like the biggest celebration around: he spent like $10,000 on a birthday party; money that he'd been saving to buy a car. He never, never anticipated he'd make it to 30. And we didn't understand what was the big deal about turning 30, right? And he was like: 'you don't understand: I'm alive!'. And we're like: 'yeah...? And?'—because we didn't understand the thing until afterwards—'I came from Morvant and I'm alive, and I have a job, and I'm alive!', and he's just celebrating the fact that he's alive. I mean, you know? So, for them it's a big deal: it's a whole different deal. I mean, there's a lot of gang warfare. Coming from the slave—I mean: I did History [at school], so you can't blame them for that.

[AK: 'But there's different strands right?']

Yes, you can't have one thread for everyone. Same thing with Indo communities—there's a lot of Indo family behaviors which are different from one area to the next. I'd definitely agree with you on that. In my short life, I've been lucky enough to experience different communities in different parts of the country. We drive everywhere and we meet lots of people in our job. And we see people every day and we interact with people every day. **But even the communities are very different: the Indian traditional community as it was long ago is not the same community that there is now. And the same thing with Afro because some of them are really trying to get out of where they are.** And they're really trying their best. **I'll give you an example: this guy who's working for us.** He wants to get out of the community, he's working to get out of the mindset that he's from there. He wants to have a family of his own—a regular family, and build himself up. He doesn't have a father to depend on, because his father died. His mother had other children with another guy, so he can't depend on his mother. He's living in a rental apartment with his brother, who he's trying to help out to make sure he doesn't get into a life of gang warfare. But his salary isn't—he was never taught how to save money—or a simple thing like: if I take a loan—to add up: I have a loan, I have rent, I have food, I have to go to work, a being sick budget, and this has to add up to my salary. He doesn't understand that concept. He lives on a day to day—where I'll pawn my jewellery, I'll get money, I'll pay that bill—and I'll do this and I'll get money, and I'll borrow this and then I'll pay that—he doesn't understand how it actually works.

You learn from your parents and you learn from what you actually see. And you think that those basic things are inculcated to you as a child growing up. And you take it for granted, but it isn't. And having my own daughter I understand that. And whatever you see around your way of life, the way you spend money and the way you do things—that's what sticks with you. And he doesn't understand basic budgeting; we sat down with him to say, well you can't do this if this is happening. Let's try and budget, and help him out a bit. But you can tell **he's crying out for someone to help him out of the situation that he's put himself in, but he doesn't know how to get himself out of it.** And he wants to get married, but then he tells you "well, which girl?"—because every girl he knows is not the kind of girl he wants to settle down with. So, then you ask yourself, 'well where's he going to find a life partner? And how does he actually break the whole cycle that he has come from?' And that's what he's fighting really hard to do. **But without a father to support them, that's when these young boys are just giving up and saying 'well you know what, I'll just rescind back down to the Morvant/Laventille culture'.** Because it's just so hard, trying to get out of it. So you can't blame all of them: a lot of them are trying to get out of it by working hard. But because they don't have the role models, it's that much harder for them. These are big 30-year-old men, yeah?

Interviewee #182.

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Box 5: An Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur's view on the roots of Afro-Trinidadians' weakness in business

[AK: 'So, you were just saying that a lot of Afro-Trinidadian businessmen would employ Indo-Trinidadians for what they get in terms of productivity.']

They are a known quantity. They are *far* more productive. So we also subscribe to the view that people of our own ethnicity tend to try to take advantage of the fact that we're the same ethnicity, and therefore **you hire Chinese—because they are, or at least the perception is, that they're hard-working—you hire somebody of Indian descent because, as I said, they're a known quantity**. And in case you don't trust them because of the kind of mistrust that exists generally, then you know you need to look at them in a particular way, and so on and so on. They are something of a known quantity. So things are..the system is..stacked up against an Afro-Trinidadian, or Afro-Trinbagonian businessman.

[AK: 'Do you think people come to realise that over their lifetime—these kind of rules of thumb about different ethnicities—or is it something even while people are starting up, people will give them advice and say 'well, if I were you I'd probably go for...']

Well if I met somebody who was looking to start up and to get into business, I would tell them straight up what they needed to look out for, because I think these are pitfalls that cost you money. I have learnt from other people's experiences too. **The examples are right there. You look at all the failed businesses of the Afro-Trinbagonian, and you compare that to the business failures of other ethnicities, then you find that there's really a big disparity.** And again the question is, the system. **The family structure in an East Indian community is far different than in the Afro-Trinidadian, Afro-Trinbagonian community. Extended families have the tendency to help each other along, and move the entire family forward.** What happens, I find, in Afro-Trini, um, Afro-Trinbagonian society is that these people, although they're prepared to drink a rum with you, or give you a plate of food, as a rule of thumb, when it comes to actually gambling or participating in a business with you, or giving you a hand up if you start running through a little difficulty—cashflow-wise and so on—the volume of money isn't as available as in the East Indian community for example, because they always were land-owners, so they always could mortgage a piece of land or whatever it is to raise money to be able to help another family member. **Whereas you find in the Afro-Trinidadian community, those things didn't exist—the asset base was simply not there, and therefore the habit of doing that, or the tendency to do that is simply not there.**

So, this is why it's *much* easier in a family kind of environment—especially with people of East Indian origin—to get into business and into family-type businesses. They tend to pass their businesses far more easily onto their family. And the whole atmosphere for business is far different among them.

In the Caucasian community, almost the exact same thing happens. A lot of people that have children in the Caucasian race here in Trinidad & Tobago, and it's more again a rule of thumb, can do just about anything: "at the end of the day you're coming to work in the family business and we're going to organize to make sure you don't have to be a store clerk or whatever it is. **We would like you to do well at school and so on, but if you're a drop-out or whatever all that doesn't matter, I'm disappointed but anyway here is the key to the car, and, and, and, and..."**

So they have a much easier ride—I don't know if this is my perception, but they seem to have a much easier ride. And you see it in their behavior: they have the perception themselves that they can do anything and get away with it. They will tell you, for example, 'name one white person who is in prison!'. That don't mean that they don't do shit!—they do shit just like everybody else! And sometimes more shit! But they simply don't get to go to prison, because their father knows somebody who knows somebody and they can pay and all that. And you're getting all these perceptions. To what extent true?—I can't really tell you, because I don't pay too much attention to these things; I tend to focus on my own situation. But you see these tendencies throughout the society.

[AK: 'You see I found this fascinating, that no every one by any means, but a lot of businesses deliberately seem to choose their ethnic identity with respect to their sales staff and their sales reps—where they send their sales reps..who they have in the shop and so on.. I found that people are very conscious of that. Because they know customers will come in and say "eh, look at this!—", five Indian sales staff, it's clearly a racist owner..']

Nooo, no, no, no, no! Look, a Afro-, an Afro-Trinbagonian, he doesn't care who is in the place, unless he's in competition for a job there! As long as I get good service, I don't care of what ethnicity that person is.. It's nice—I just notice things eh?—it's nice to go into an Indian-owned business, and see someone in authority who is African, who is professional, who is performin' a function, and gettin' paid and so, on the assumption that they is performin'. **But you see, what you will find is that the receptionist, she will be of Afro descent, but everywhere else you go, especially up the food chain—all East Indians. Because Afro-Trinbagonians are difficult to work with! I mean in terms of employees: they seem to have more mental cycles than people of other ethnicities, and they tend to haemorrhage much more**, and—now I'm beginning to repeat things, because I have several very good East Indian business friends, and they talk very openly in front of me, and we explore all these things and so on, because they knew that I tried all kinds of things when I started out in business. I had my personal secretary, who was also an Afro-Trinidadian, and so on. I had Chinese. **And at the end of the day, all the salesmen that I had on the road, and provided vehicles for, went to Maracas[1], or tried to get in bed with the secretary of one of my clients, and so on and so on—maybe not understanding that maybe dat is the boss's girlfriend!** I mean, I had all kinds of rules, and nobody was taking me on. And one day, I fired *everybody*, and I reduced my business to what I can do; and I have two young ladies helping me, and both of them are East Indian. This happened a long long time ago—more than twenty years ago. And then I settled into something reasonable. Before then I had only headaches and only problems. That was my solution. ... The straw that broke the camel's back was one day, one of my biggest customers called me and said "I need to see you!". That was a new tone for me. So I went to visit him, and he says, "Let me tell you something. I have issued a memo today that this company is not doing any business with your company any longer. And we had a real good relationship. I got excellent service from you and so. So I thought before the directive went out to the staff, that I tell you about it, and explain to you why. Here's my explanation, real short. Your head salesman is screwing my secretary. So I fired her this morning." You know what I mean?

Do these race stereotypes impact on 'trust'?

5.3.31.   **We have already seen the extent to which people believe in racial stereotypes (section 5.3.25), but do these impact on trust?** I focus here on perceptions of trustworthiness because it is deemed to be such a crucial trait in people with whom one does business (I will be justifying this argument thoroughly in section 6.1.3). In order to estimate the magnitude of differences in expectations, I asked interviewees to rate their levels of trust for different racial groups. Figure 25 reports these results.

Figure 25: Responses to question 'How much would you say you can trust (i.e. have confidence in people keeping to their word)....' – on a scale of 1 to 4
[Source: 63 Interview respondents.]

Legend

4 = 'A Lot'

3 = 'Somewhat'

2 = 'Only a Little'

1 = 'Not At All'

...Afro-Trinidadians	...Indo-Trinidadians	...Chinese-Trinidadians	...Syrian-Trinidadians	...White-Trinidadians	...People in general
2.59	2.51	2.43	2.42	2.79	2.05
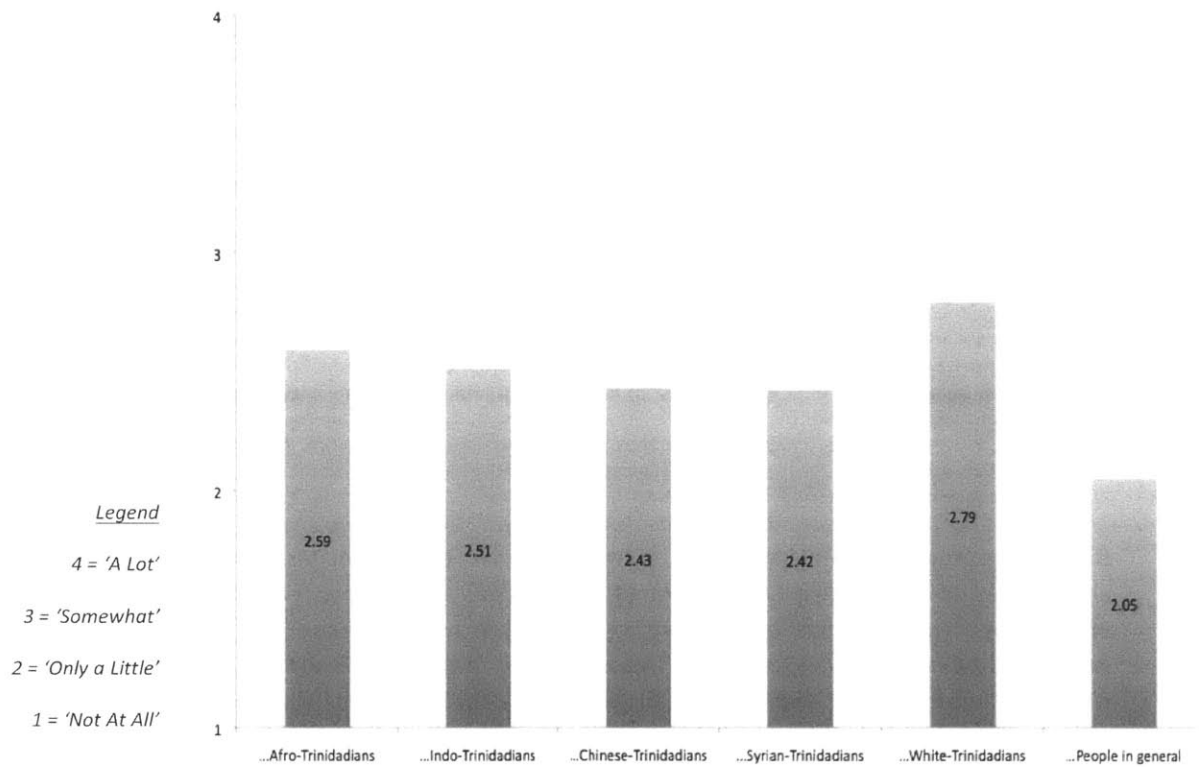
5.3.32.   **The first rather interesting thing we can notice is that interviewees consistently reported higher levels of trust in *all* of the various ethnic groups than they do in 'people in general'.** These differences between racial trust and general trust are significant at the 1% level. It should be apparent to the reader that these results are logically impossible—i.e. one cannot trust every single category of people above the average level of trust! I would suggest this result is found because questions about trust towards particular racial groups are a sensitive topic, and respondents may have felt an obligation to report higher levels of trust when my questions had a racial spin to them.

5.3.33.   **But even with this systematic upward bias in reported trust levels for racial groups, we can still validly compare trust scores *between* racial categories.** Chinese-

Trinidadians are trusted significantly less than non-Chinese (the difference is significant at the 5% level). Syrian-Trinidadians are trusted significantly less than non-Syrians (the difference is significant at the 1% level). White-Trinidadians are trusted significantly *more* than non-Whites (the difference is significant at the 5% level). Contrary to some expectations, Afro-Trinidadians are not trusted significantly less than other groups, and indeed are trusted more than Indo-Trinidadians. This result is consistent with a stereotype of Afro-Trinidadians being incompetent and lazy, but still loyal.

5.3.34. The differences between groups may appear relatively marginal, but they do seem to make a difference. In particular, despite a widespread preconception in Trinidad that Indo-Trinidadian businessmen operate on almost as much of a cartel-like basis as Syrians and Chinese, **I was told by a substantial number of Indo-Trinidadian businesspeople I interviewed that, given the choice, they would prefer *not* to do business with another Indo-Trinidadian, because of the degree of competition from fellow Indo-Trinidadians and a lack of trustworthiness.** In the words of an Afro-Trinidadian who recognized this pattern:

> {Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}
> I go to a Black supermarket, or I go to an Indian supermarket, and after the owner, the next most important person in the supermarket [might be] a young Black woman who can purchase millions of dollars and make deals without reference to the owner. She can negotiate, and sign, for over a hundred thousand dollars, without reference to the owner. A young Black woman. And *all* the employees in the supermarket must take instructions from her. She has the authority and the trust, has the authority to hire and fire employees—East Indian or whatever. ... **In fact, I understand that East Indians prefer to trust a Black in that position over another East Indian. Because they say if a Black thiefs from you he will thief two sweets. If a East Indian goes to thief from you, you have to look for "eh where the whole supermarket gone?" because they go to start a business. So in some cases the East Indian prefer to trust the Black.** The East Indians: they will work hard, they will suck up to you, they will *earn* your trust, and then they cheat. Because they want to learn *everything* they can about the business, and then go off and... They will give you hundred and twenty percent, and then they will cut the rope from under your foot.

5.3.35. **Before moving on from this topic, I want to note two observations. First, as my summaries of the nature of each set of stereotypes may imply, each racial group is stereotyped in a mixture of positive and negative ways. Hence it is possible—and indeed I observed so—for *some* members of *any* group to see themselves a disadvantaged in some way.** For example, despite the stereotype that Indo-Trinidadians are competent and entrepreneurial, they may also be pigeon-holed as being adept to run some types of business rather than others:

> {Indo-Trinidadian owner of advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
> If I use the name _____ [i.e. the interviewee's surname], no one will see me. Even East Indians will think "No East Indian will know what he's doing [in advertising]". ... When we established this company we went to the Royal Bank of Canada and waited for three hours for them to assist us. Then the officer told us 'Your kind of business is a White people business,' and we didn't get the loan. The same thing happened at Republic and Scotiabank. I had a bank manager who's the same color as me telling me I'm the wrong color! Finally I got it at an Indian bank.

5.3.36. **Second, it appears that racial stereotypes in Trinidad are changing over time, especially in becoming more qualified and less blunt.** For example:

> {Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #188]}
> The problem with African is I find they don't manage their money: if they run into a bit they buy a new car, find a couple new women. Though this is changing. I found it was a default [sic: read 'defect'?] in

their education, but now I see they're successful in security companies, services companies, janitorial companies.

{Indo-Trinidadian Purchasing and Accounts officer, who has been working for one year. [Interviewee #71]}
[With respect to negative stereotypes of Afro-Trinidadians], **probably it was like that before—but everyone now is striving to become better: people are just doing their best.**

{Afro-Trinidadian manager of a government agency. [Interviewee #110]}
Africans are oriented towards academic jobs and being comfortable in a secure job in government with a white shirt. They want to retire in a three-bed house with a lawn and car. But the Black power revolution changed this. Blacks are typically risk-averse, and didn't have many role models of African success stories. Commercial banks had to open their doors to Black people. National Commercial Bank was Black-run too.
Indians always wanted economic freedom—they sacrifice: it comes from their perception of karma. But the 'emerging' East Indian, who's adopting Western values and so on, has abandoned that lifestyle: they're living for today, and have moved to cities and suburbs.

5.3.37.   And perhaps most interestingly, through progressively more mixing of Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, there is some degree of convergence in stereotypes, perhaps towards a lowest common denominator.

{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of construction contractor, south Trinidad. [Interviewee #151]}
I had both Indians and Africans as laborers: the first week they'll work very hard and they'll feel out the situation. Then they'll start to delay on the job and work less hard—you'll have to pay them for an 8-hour shift when they only worked 5 or 3 hours. ... Would Indians be more disloyal? Both Indians and Africans. Maybe about 100 people did that to me: I trained them up, then they left and started their own company. So I stopped training people!

{White-Trinidadian Manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #146]}
The ethnic divide has reduced, though with crime things have changed—I don't trust anyone: you're always looking over your shoulder.

{Indo-Trinidadian Purchasing Manager for supermarket chain, while filling out the stereotyping questions on my questionnaire. [Interviewee #122]}
You can't say now, because times have changed. People are not as hardworking as they would've been back then. So you never know until you know who they are.

{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian Manager of Furniture Retailer. [Interviewee #132]}
The culture of the people has changed significantly. You find the elders sacrificed for the business, whereas the present-day generation—some of the Indian people are worse even than the Negro people [sic].
I shut down our factory this year because I just fed up: no-one works unless you're there the whole time. **The culture really change: people want to live fast and die young—they want it all now. Once they mix together [i.e. Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians] they become the same—one would see the other not working and stop work too. They just get wages like an "appearance fee" for turning up! People you assemble with are the ones you're going to resemble.**
The sad thing is they'll go to the US, the UK, and they'll arrive on time—but they come back here and play de fool because no-one can take their job off them.
Basically what's going on in Trinidad is ethnic cleansing: the Africans are chasing the Indians away.

{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of small hardware shop in Central Trinidad. [Interviewee #139]}
It's both sides now: both Indians and Africans want money but they don't want to work so they thief.

Figure 26: Convergence of Afro-Trinidadian and Indo-Trinidadian cultures?
(Photos: by the author. Above shows some Indo-Trinidadian friends in Port-of-Spain on a weekend night. Below shows a list of potential dress-code infractions at a school.)

(2) Ease of Social Transactions with Ingroups

5.3.38.   **The second rationale for preferring intraethnic business—the Ease of Social Transactions with Ingroups—stems from the perceived ease of doing business with partners who share a 'common culture'.** In short, common cultural references not only lower transaction costs, they also help establish trust.

{Mixed-Trinidadian sales manager at manufacturer of intermediate products. [Interviewee #80]}

People generally feel more comfortable dealing with others with similar value systems—and they can infer that even from how people look. For example at business meetings—you might both eat curry as you're accustomed to doing at home.

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]}
You feel a little more comfortable with Indian people. When it comes to trust, as Indian people, we may have more in common culturally—this brings in more commonality of interests in a conversation—and this leads to greater comfort. For example, I may prefer chutney music to reggae; with Indian people I can just assume this and it brings about that closeness.

{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian shipping coordinator for Tiling Distributor. [Interviewee #94]}
Some customers—like Muslims or Indo-Trinidadians—you'll tend to understand each other better, with similar preferences.

{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian manager of print firm. [Interviewee #162]}
Muslims would look to Muslim printers—particularly because **they're more likely to know what is needed**.

5.3.39. This clustering of individuals according to cultural similarities isn't specific to business transactions: it is found in many areas of life—from choices of friends to clusters of races in school canteens (see Tatum 1997). So if this effect of 'common culture' is found in business, it is most accurately described as a manifestation of a wider trend in the social world. For example:

{Indo-Trinidadian Manager of Furniture Manufacturer. [Interviewee #130]}
The Indo-Trinidadian [employees] in social function will sit as a group, or work better on the production line with each other. When we go to Tobago [for a company retreat] it works well with drinks an' ting, but when we come back here it's the same, and this always stays the same.

{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager for Hardware retailer. [Interviewee #133]}
Let me put it into perspective for you. **The Afro staff in this company will generally gravitate to each other.** There's a so-called clan.

5.3.40. **Cultural similarities do not seem to be *sufficient* to guide business choices, but are constituent factors in making a business decision,** according to the following interviewees:

{Chinese-Trinidadian manager of plastics manufacturing firm. [Interviewee #180]}
Race has never been an issue—a *deciding* factor—though I *would* say that subconsciously if I were to be dealing with a Chinese person then it would be an easier transition into a friendship. The relationship clicks more easily.

{Indo-Trinidadian sales manager for food & beverage wholesaler. [Interviewee #81]}
I think it [race] blends into the background because although you may think you know someone from how they look, you still have to get to know them. But then it does make it easier to deal with them if you have things in common.

{Muslim owner of Print firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #153]}
[Race] isn't a big part of it [business], but some things require another Muslim firm to understand what we need.

{Indo-Trinidadian secretary in construction firm, who indicated agreement with 3 out of 4 stereotypes. [Interviewee #145]}
[In answer to question on whether it is easier to build business relationships with people of a similar race or religious background]
Yes it is. Though we still have a very nice relationship with Africans we deal with. They trust us to do what they ask.

{Christian Indo-Trinidadian Purchasing Manager for supermarket chain. [Interviewee #122]}
Although religion may not play a [big] part [in business decisions], if you're of the same religion you're on common ground.

5.3.41.   **In contrast to prior literature** (see especially Fearon and Laitin 1996; Greif 1993 in section 2.1.1 above), **this preference for ingroup business is not necessarily because of 'reputational' mechanisms that encourage reliable behavior within ethnic groups;** instead it appears to be because doing business with one's own racial group smoothes social transactions that are an intrinsic part of business. Indeed, when I asked interviewees to respond to a question specifically on this topic, an overwhelming majority—25 out of 31 respondents—said building a business relationship with co-ethnics was easier because of cultural familiarities, while only 7 of 31 people said it was because of access to reputational information[30]. As discussed in section 6.1.30 onwards, the greater "ease" of doing business with co-ethnics may be not only because of these cultural commonalities, but also because of the facility of building calculative and affective trust with co-ethnics.

5.3.42.   **Lastly, it should be noted that only a minority (32 of 103 interviewees) expressed belief that it is indeed easier to build business relationships with co-ethnics.** This puts the foregoing discussion in perspective, and suggests ethnicity is not an overriding factor in building business relationships. But 30% of interviewees is still a substantial proportion. For those readers who expected it to be higher, we can refer for a possible explanation to sections 5.3.65 onwards, which discuss how business offers a professional vocabulary and set of social norms which can partly compensate for ethnic identities[31].

5.3.43.   **One final question on this topic is whether individuals of mixed Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian parentage (termed 'dougla' in Trinidad—pronounced 'doogla') have a common group identity of their own.** Such individuals might, on one hand, be presumed to have a finger in both pies—Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian—and be able to switch between Afro- and Indo- identities, thus making people of both ethnicities feel comfortable. Alternatively they might be considered by both Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians to be outsiders, as perhaps is suggested by an emergent term 'triouglas' to describe the children of two douglas. When I spoke to douglas themselves, the response often suggested the former hypothesis—of chameleonic identities—was correct:

> {Mixed-Trinidadian sales rep for household goods retailer. [Interviewee #72]}
> I grew up in deep south, in a predominantly Indian area. Now I live in a predominantly African area. So I can relate to both groups.

> {Proprietor of small hardware shop in Central Trinidad, who has mixed Hindu and Christian parentage. [Interviewee #139]}
> **That's how I know how to talk to people: because I mixed.**

And, depending on the specific ethnic mix, it appears the same phenomenon can be at work for individuals of other combinations of mixed parentage too:

> {Mixed-Trinidadian sales manager at manufacturer of intermediate products. [Interviewee #80]}
> I can't be pinned down demographically, and this can work in my favor, yes.

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[30] This question was asked of those 31 interviewees who had first said it was easier to build a business relationship with co-ethnics than with ethnic outgroups. The total number of responses adds up to more than 31 because respondents were permitted to subscribe to more than one reason.
[31] Incidentally, if I were to do this research again, I would include a comparative question about additional bases for common cultures—for example, a common age range, or the way gender does or does not ease social transactions. For example, I noticed even in my own behavior with interviewees that I often found it easier to build rapport with interviewees my age, regardless of their race. How widespread is that feeling, and how strong is it compared with the benefits of racial commonalities?

But I also received contrasting testimonies from dougla interviewees, suggesting they are considered to be outsiders in crucial aspects of social life. For example:

> {*Dougla proprietor of hairdressing salon. [Interviewee #27]*}
> With regard to race, I can converse with both sides because of my mixed background—I can relate to the people a little bit better. ... According to where I go, I use my Indian name or my middle name [which is African] to suit. I use it whenever it would work. My children too: I give them both names.
> [But in the experience of the same interviewee]:
> Years ago we were the only mixed kids around—so we were shunned a bit. I went out with an East Indian boy, but I didn't get to marry him because of race.

...and indeed feel some ingroup solidarity with other douglas, which is not present either with fellow Afro-Trinidadians or fellow Indo-Trinidadians:

> {*Dougla entrepreneur. [Interviewee #200]*}
> **Come to think of it, the people that I trust most in business are also mixed race. The guy that I've gone into business with—he's also Dougla—African and Indian.** I find that they're neither one thing or the other. They might be more patient. He's got an African associate but when I met him I found him too aggressive, so I said to my partner "I'm just going to go through you".
> [*AK: 'I'm going to play devil's advocate, but you could argue this is just individual characteristics rather than because of someone's race.'*]
> Yes, although there is something about having both sides in your parentage that makes you more patient. **Maybe not African and Indian but just mixed race in general, because it gives you more of a perspective on things: you don't get bound up one way or the other.**
> As for Dougla identities, it probably depends where you're brought up. If you're brought up somewhere where it's majority one way or the other, you're gonna associate much more with them.

In short, on the basis of limited evidence on this topic, it seems there is justification for both hypotheses: that douglas can benefit from their dual identities, but that they are also considered as a separate identity group.

(3) Ideological Obligation to Ingroups

5.3.44. **A third reason for preferring to do business with ingroups is constituted by a vaguer, and perhaps irrational, notion of group solidarity.** Essentially this means a kind of obligation stemming only from technical commonalities, as one may feel towards members of one's family whom one does not necessarily have to actually feel affection for. This seems to apply particularly to Muslims, to Chinese-Trinidadians, to Syrian-Trinidadians and—only to some extent—to Indo-Trinidadians. Such opinions feature in the following examples:

> {*Indo-Trinidadian manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]*}
> This [i.e. social contacts from religious congregations] is definitely one source of developing the business. Customers built that way almost feel obligated to deal with us. ... That sort of interaction encourages business, and we encourage it.

> {*Christian Indo-Trinidadian wholesaler of electrical equipment. [Interviewee #64]*}
> It's a matter of confidence: if the product doesn't work he [a Muslim] can carry it back and exchange it—that kind of thing. If you take it back they think you damaged it on the way. If the Muslim takes it back they believe him.

> {*Muslim sales supervisor of a tissues manufacturer. [Interviewee #95]*}
> People [Muslims] say 'Ah, you're a Muslim too: good!'

> {*Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of a print firm. [Interviewee #111]*}
> As a Muslim we are taught to wish for your brother that which you'd wish for yourself.

> {*Chinese-Trinidadian Office Manager for concrete blocks manufacturer. [Interviewee #99]*}

We do say that the Chinese people help each other. I remember hearing the Director say 'Buy from this person—they're Chinese and we help each other'. That applies to Muslims too: the Muslim people I know they buy from each other and recruit that way too.

{Chinese-Trinidadian Operational manager of corporate dry cleaners. [Interviewee #93]}
Within the Chinese community they'd support each other. Chinese firms would come to us first before others—they'd get first preference. And they might expect us to go to them first too.

{White-Trinidadian Sales Director of a large consumer products importer and distributor. [Interviewee #105]}
[Have just been talking about marginal preference given to members of social clubs or co-ethnics...]
But when you get to the Syrian community, you're talking a different language! If there's a new family member starting up a business, he's getting the contract for sure!

{Afro-Trinidadian General Manager of Construction Firm. [Interviewee #161]}
Yes, the 'group trust' thing does function: Muslims prefer to deal with Muslims; Hindus with Indo-Trinidadians. The reason is that familiarity, trust, family, and political system hasn't built national identity. It's not just whipped up during elections; when one group is in power, the other one feels cheated.

{Indo-Trinidadian Sales supervisor at a print firm in central Trinidad. [Interviewee #166]}
In Port-of-Spain, Whites will keep to Whites, Syrians go to Syrians, Chinese to Chinese.
[AK: 'Has that changed the way you do business?']
Yes—I'd be more likely to go to other Indians. Not necessarily customers, but we would know all our competitors, to know what they will do.

{Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}
What I can tell you from my experience: _____ [a Chinese-Trinidadian owned supermarket] you find that even though they're rational for having a product on their shelves, they need this margin, whatever the explanation is—for some reason, it didn't matter, they always supported _____ [Chinese-Trinidadian owned firm], and whatever brands they had—it doesn't matter if they were really slow-selling or bottom-of-the-barrel brands, they'd support those brands. In the Chinese community. And they hire Chinese people too. Chinese people like to be surrounded by other Chinese people, in the environment that they work in.
...
A lot of business people, whether they want to admit it to you or not, they purposefully try to keep the money within a particular group.
[AK: 'Are you talking just about the Syrians?']
No, the Muslim people are the same way. **The only people who don't do it are the Africans and the Hindus. Africans and Hindus don't do it.**
[AK: 'You think Christian Indo-Trinidadians would do?']
Er...no. It's really Muslims that are really close-knitted like that; they try to keep their business—they buy from other Muslims. And the Syrians do it.
[AK: 'And white Trinidadians as well, do you think you'd find a similar thing?']
Yeah. Local whites, yeah. But local whites are somehow integrated into the Syrian and French Creole community. What you need to do is to speak to somebody very high up. If you can get an interview with Norman Sabga and listen to his story. They are like a big part of the Syrian business community— they are maybe 80% of the Syrian business community.

5.3.45. This solidarity or mutual obligation is strong enough amongst one group—the 'Syrians'— that the treatment of individual Syrians is influenced by a fear of the group—as a kind of ethnic lobby.

{Chinese-Trinidadian bank manager. [Interviewee #174]}
[AK: "I've heard that Syrians often get treated more leniently by banks, since the banks are a little worried what happens if they call in a Syrian loan: the Syrian will get all his relatives to take their business out of the bank and go elsewhere. Do you think there's any truth in this?"]
That's a fact—because the Syrians are all closely related, and they bring in better bucks for us. So Syrian customers would hold more value for a bank than dealing with the Afros. The family is a support unit: if you don't get good service from us, then you'd pull out and your whole family would pull out.
[AK: "So has that actually happened in the past?"]
It *continues* to happen!

Syrians don't pass on business to persons of East Indian descent—because they are both populations oriented to commerce [and are therefore in ethnic competition]. I've waited for two hours in the office of Francis Fashions [i.e. a large, indeed probably Trinidad's largest, clothing chain, which is Syrian-owned] to offer my services and eventually I left.

5.3.46. Syrian-Trinidadians themselves, conversely, generally dispute the strength of any 'cartel', 'lobby' or 'collusion' amongst themselves, and tended to argue either (i) such collusion is actually stronger amongst other ethnic groups, and/or (ii) accusations of collusion are simply a function of envy or failure amongst other groups, and/or (iii) that there is actually a lot of competition and bad blood amongst Syrian-Trinidadians. I give examples of such opinions—in the same order—in the following quotes. (The quotes are a little longer than elsewhere, but I report them in full in order to give a richer sense of these views).

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #192]}
[AK: 'In the survey on trust, you were indicating you would be more cautious dealing with Chinese Trinidadians, right? Is that because of particular bad experiences in the past?']
Chinese people: we look at them as being probably the most tight-knit. We say 'Chinee for Chinee'.
[AK: 'So you think that's more than for Syrians in Trinidad?']
Yes, more than Syrians. Chinese are also a small community; they look out for each other. It's just a perception that—not that they can't be trusted but—be wary of them, you know?
[AK: 'Do you think there's a mutual distrust between Chinese and Syrians?']
No, no, I wouldn't say it's a mutual distrust with them, um, I'd say that it's the entire perception of anyone, certainly amongst business community people, is to be a little wary of them—they know, more than Syrians, that they do stick together. If a Chinese person owns a building and you agree to take a spot, if a Chinese person comes along and says he'll take the spot [instead], then [he'll get it].
[AK: 'That's another thing that I'm trying to understand: why that would happen. Especially because I get the impression when Chinese first came to Trinidad there was a lot of mutual solidarity, depending on the region of China they came from, and the Chinese Associations on Charlotte Street would be geared towards a specific region in China, whether you're from Fujian versus Guangdong or whatever. But that thing seems to have blended together a lot, though maybe there's still a mutual support going on?']
Yeah, they support each other … and they look out for one another. Though they may have the similar perception of us too. Generation to generation it happens.

{Syrian-Trinidadian store owner. [Interviewee #202]}
[AK: 'What I wanted to focus on with you is…to get a feel for what [the Syrian-Trinidadian business community] involves: whether it's in terms of information, help, advice, putting—as you said—younger relatives on the right track in business, or whether—well, often when I talk to people there's an implication that there's something more shadowy about it, the way that people cooperate, say within the Chinese business community, that they collaborate in order to keep other people out, a bit like a kind of cartel. And the same with Arab-Trinidadians]
That's the victimhood theory isn't it? That's the victimhood theory. That consigns them to the back of the class, and puts them under tremendous pressure to succeed. It never works. Because that starts off by saying I am doing something to hurt them, or they are failing because I did something to keep them out. I prefaced all these remarks by saying that that is one of their big burdens: the theory of victimhood isn't it?
[AK: 'Sure.']
So you're picking that up; you're being told that. Well that just makes my job more secure, as long as they think that. It's their weakness, it's not mine. I have nothing to do with that. If I keep anybody out of business, it's because I'm doing a good job. As a matter of fact, within this business, we have been shedding competitors *from within our own community*. Because this business is subsiding to a great degree. The whole [industry] business is subsiding.
[AK: 'And when you say 'our own community', that's close family, or extended family, or other Arab-Trinidadians?']
All Arab-Trinidadians. It's not just members of my extended family in the [industry specified here] business. … So for instance my grandmother taught my father who taught me that if the sun gets out of bed before you, then you shouldn't get out of bed for the rest of the day—that a successful man must be out of bed before the sun every morning, you know? **So the guy who is talking to you about me keeping him out of business because I have a semi-cartel or whatever—now listen, that same Minister, who made those remarks about businessmen living off the fat of the land, made remarks about cartels as well in the business community**—cartels who engineer food prices—**all that talk—it's a theory of victimhood.**

And I'm not telling you that there aren't cartels, but I know for a fact there aren't in our industry, and in many of the industries that our Arab-Trinidadian people are in. No cartels. There were cartels in some cases when they made their entry into the businesses, and they shook them up. As a matter of fact, to the right-thinking citizen of the country, the energy and enthusiasm of the merchant class of many of these ethnic minorities has helped to deliver a tremendous amount of value to this country. I mean, people would have been paying far more for a lot of what they buy. And in fact a lot of people come here from South America and from other Caribbean islands *to buy*, to buy shoes and pants and garments and fabric and car parts and everything else.

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #188]}
[AK: 'When you're dealing with Syrian-Trinidadians as opposed to other types of Trinidadians, do you think it's easier to build a business relationship with them?']
For me, I'm not a full Lebanese; I'm a kind of outsider in the community. In the sense that they keep the best girls for the boys inside. There's a picking—a real picking core of the best picks, and I was never in there. The Hadeed family, the Abouds, and the Sabgas, they're the true, true Syrian families—the cream of the crop of the Arab community in Trinidad. They stay within themselves; they marry within themselves; they keep their businesses within themselves. People like me—the small Lebanese families—the Saloums, the Nahous, and the Azars—we're outside that, in a sense. Elias maybe too. **Now, as far as business goes, I particularly don't trust the Lebanese and Syrians. They are *fucking* difficult to work with. They're hardened to negotiate with. When you do give them credit you catch your fucking arse to get your money back. So if I can avoid them I avoid them. A lot of times I would prefer to buy from somebody else. They run you ragged, man!—they give you so much stress.** I don't have a hard time with Chinese: Chinese are the easiest people to do business with because you agree, it's final, they get their merchandize, they cut you a check, they pay you cash—no argument. **A Lebanese guy, my God, a Syrian guy—he come back, he say "I don't like de price.."—I say "What de fuck? Why you tellin' me this now?! I coulda sold it to somebody else!"—he say "It not sellin' in my store—you take it back.." And I still argue with him: six months later he doesn't want to pay me. Ah, fuck.**

5.3.47. **One open question is what generates this sense of obligation towards ingroups.** Is it a sense of ethnic kinship, as some of the quotes above implied[32]? Or, alternatively, is it a function of preferring to do business with people one knows outside business too (which—as we explored in Sections 4.1.9 and 5.2—is clustered by race)? The following quote puts emphasis on the latter:

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #192]}
It's more a set of relationships, so if you know someone which you're more likely **you're gonna know someone within your community—it's so small, you know everyone, you're gonna use them as your first choice, because…you have a relationship with them.**
[AK: 'You're more likely to trust them?']
Correct. Well, trust is one thing, but it's just more of a relationship. I mean, if you [coming here] know someone in Trinidad you're more likely to stay by them than stay by a stranger. So it's more of a relationship—and just that comfort level.
[AK: 'And do you think there's any sense of obligation—that you should—like for Muslims to help their Muslim brothers and this kind of thing?']
Religion?—no. … **It's tied to the small communities, whereby if you do something, everyone else will know. So for example if you want to do a job, and Tom knows that I'm doing that job, he may feel a bit slighted that I didn't come by him. But at the end of the day, it goes back to the small network.**
[AK: 'So there would be an expectation then?']
It's an expectation, more socially—it has nothing to do with religion.

Plausibly the obligation is generated by both kinship and social obligation together.

5.3.48. Amongst Indo-Trinidadians, the phenomenon is a little more complex. On one hand, Indo-Trinidadians do seem to enjoy a decisive advantage in dealing with other Indo-Trinidadians,

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[32] ..and as has been detected by other researchers too, such as Dave Ramsaran's charming case studies of Indo-Trinidadian businesspeople (Ramsaran 1993:94). Ramsaran reports that Sarjard Muckmadeen—the founder of Solo Beverages, the large soft drinks manufacturer—"wrote several times to various soft drink producers in England to get information on how to improve his plant in Trinidad. He got no replies, presumably because his name exposed the fact that he was not an Englishman. Sarjard, recognizing this, changed his name to Joseph Charles on the advice of a friend. Why this particular name was chosen is not known, but as soon as he changed his name, all those who did not answer his previous letters started to communicate."

at the expense of other ethnic groups. In two stark examples (the latter from secondary literature):

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager of construction supplies distributor. [Interviewee #137]}
> My brother in law—who's Chinese—did some work with his partner—who's Afro-Trinidadian—in Central [Trinidad]. For an Indian company. It was to fix their cash registers or something. But **when he went to collect his money they didn't want to give it to him. They thought they could cheat him. Finally he asked me to go for him. And they gave it [the money] to me immediately. I just turned up and said 'I'm here to collect my brother-in-law's money.' and they said 'Oh, he's your brother-in-law? OK.' and let me take it for him.**
> **When I gave it to my brother-in-law he cried, because it was a racial thing.**

> {Interview with an East Indian female, in (Yelvington 1993:112-113)}
> I have a friend who went to the market and it have a negro man selling vegetables and it have a Indian man selling vegetables. The negro man's vegetables were better and they were cheaper; the Indian man, his own were dried up sort of. But she go to he and when I point it out to she that the other man have better, she say 'I buyin' from de Indian. You mad or what?'

But, as I was told repeatedly, there are divisions *within* the Indo-Trinidadian community, particularly along religious lines. For example, the following quotes support a common conclusion that religion subdivides Indo-Trinidadian businesspeople:

> {White-Trinidadian Manager of a large print firm. [Interviewee #98]}
> Religion only matters in business to the Indian community. You have very different relationships amongst the Christians, Hindus, and Muslims. I'd say that the Hindus are on their own—they do business amongst themselves. The Muslims are the same: if they never have to do business outside the Muslim community they'd be happy. Christians will do business with anyone.

> {Indo-Trinidadian owner of advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
> I went to a client who was Pentecostal and he didn't even return my email. Then I adjusted my approach: 'I met Pastor _____ in church yesterday and he suggested I come and meet you'. He emailed me back in 20 minutes and I arranged an appointment straightaway!

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #184]}
> In the business world, it does matter. **I know for a fact that people prefer to deal with others of their own religion.** It has never happened to me, but it's happened to others.

There was disagreement amongst my interviewees about the extent to which these intra-Indo-Trinidadian divisions exist. On one hand, some interviewees emphasized the commonalities between all Indo-Trinidadians—for example:

> {Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of a print shop. [Interviewee #111]}
> To understand why we're such a tolerant society, you have to look at the beginning. Our forefathers came on a journey of *hardship* together. They came here and they *worked* together in the fields. And then they bought land and they *lived* together.

...but, on the other hand, the divisions might be growing over time. For example, a Hindu businessman told me that Muslims are no longer in brotherhood with Hindus in Trinidad: they're being brainwashed by hardline radio[33].

5.3.49. **For all groups, I was told by interviewees that the strength of ethnic solidarity is dying over time.** For example, one Syrian entrepreneur voiced this opinion and reflected on the fact that of his kids' fifty friends, only perhaps two of them are Syrian; he added "I think it's dying with my generation." He continued:

> {Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #188]}

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[33] Interviewee #91.

A lot of my family are in business, and it's true I'd look to them before other people. But...[mutual assistance] probably existed a lot more in the older generation. They had a camaraderie amongst them that I don't see now. A loyalty between them. [By contrast] I'd buy wherever the price is best.

{Chinese-Trinidadian Marketing Manager for processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #194]}
[AK: 'Would you say there's any sense of community or belonging amongst fellow Chinese-Trinidadian businesspeople?']
Yes, but less over time. It still occurs because of a sense of security in dealing with your own. But for me, I only feel that with my relatives. I wouldn't trust a non-relative Chinese more than anyone else.

{Chinese-Trinidadian publicity designer for entertainment industry. [Interviewee #143]}
Working with Chinese people—it's like a clannish thing. **That's the more traditional way, though young people just look at who does the job best.**

{Syrian-Trinidadian shop owner. [Interviewee #202]}
But **that's all changing, it's all changing.** This is only the third or fourth generation here now. Didn't the Irish all marry each other in New York when they first came in? It changes, it moves on...

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #192]}
Well the truth about that perception [of a close-knit Syrian-Trinidadian business community] is that it's not an incorrect perception, but the Syrian and Lebanese community in Trinidad is probably the smallest. We're a lot smaller than the Whites and the Chinese or obviously the Indo and Africans. So by being a smaller community, everyone tends to know everyone. So there's that relationship because, from maybe third generation, you know, it was a small clique that came, and they stuck together in a foreign country. **Me being a third generation, I think things have changed: as each generation progressed there was more mixing with the other, er, with the outside communities—not only in business, but through marriage, and socially and so forth. So it's not as prevalent today as it was, say, a hundred years ago; things have changed.**

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #202]}
I'm third generation, and the perception that Syrians and Lebanese are a tight-knit community: it's not untrue, but in recent times that has changed, because once again from a small community, everyone has become more competitive and everyone wants an edge. **I mean, inevitably when everyone first arrived they would help each other, but as they grew it's almost human nature that they become more competitive.** So it's less likely now that they would use each other; they may confide in each other if something goes wrong, but they are not such a tight-knit group: you'll find they will give outside opportunities.

5.3.50.   Lastly, **Afro-Trinidadians appear to be a special case. According to almost all interviewees, Afro-Trinidadians may feel more comfortable doing business with fellow Afro-Trinidadians, but do not feel any particular** *solidarity* **to support Afro-Trinidadian businesses.** Interviewees generally claimed that Afro-Trinidadians tended to be 'in it for themselves', rather than helping each other out. This was a surprise to me, since it contradicts ideas of Black solidarity, and the Black power movement. There were a few exceptions, like the following interviewees:

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of furniture retailer. [Interviewee #23]}
Race is [sometimes] an issue. For example, people have come in here—the business was originally owned by an African fellow and Afro-Trinidadians want to support their own kind. I have managed that situation by employing a mix of staff. **Some of them actually say: 'I want to support my African brother'. The manager is an African lady, and so when Africans ask who is in charge I point to her.**

{Afro-Trinidadian shop assistant in butchers shop. [Interviewee #42]}
Say if I go to San Fernando—I go in a store and no African is working there then I go to the next shop. That's because I think they only want their own race working there.

{Indo-Trinidadian owner and manager of hardware store. [Interviewee #172]}
I have to make sure I have a mixture of staff—because the first thing people come and say is "Ah, you don't employ Black people o' wha'?"

{Afro-Trinidadian manager of print firm. [Interviewee #25]}

I know people who come [to this firm] because it's a black man who owns it and 'I help my brother'. The bulk of businesses in Tunapuna are owned by Indians. You can count on one hand the businesses owned by Africans, so people want to help them.

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of a print firm. [Interviewee #13]}
The Afro-Trinidadians never liked Indians: you would feel that they're your friends, but actually they care for their own more than you. Afro-Trinidadians—young ones—they help their people more—that is a fact.

{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}
[AK: 'And if you had the choice, would you like to do business with more Black suppliers?']
Yes, of course I would. In fact, **the reason why I've done a lot of business with [_____] over the years is because he's Black, it's not because he's a good supplier, it's not because he's the best supplier.**
[AK: 'So you feel that sense of solidarity then?']
Yes. I've supported him because he's Black. But since my son has taken over from me, he's much more concerned with the quality of service, rather than the relationship that I have built up over the years. So that since he's taken over as CEO, some of our supplier chains are changing. He's moving some of our suppliers into Barbados, where we're getting much higher quality, better service, but mostly it's quality, quality of service. So we're moving business away a bit from that Black supplier, because we get a better response and quality of service from there.

...but far more testimonies were given that ethnic solidarity is weakest for Afro-Trinidadians, with opinions like the following:

{Afro-Trinidadian proprietor of retail store. [Interviewee #32]}
East Indians are more open—they give you advice. **Black business owners tend to be more stand-offish—hard to approach—they keep certain things form you, like where to get a better deal.** [Why is that?] I always think it's maybe a mental block from slavery. Maybe if they want to be over someone else.

{Dougla market seller who self-identifies as Afro-Trinidadian. [Interviewee #26]}
It's easier to make friends with Indian people because African people want to fight one another. **With the Negro, it's everything for themself.** I find so. Indian people are more constructive. Africans sell weed, do thiefing. We don't find that with Indian people.

{White-Trinidadian food & beverage Plant Manager. [Interviewee #74]}
Indians have more business sense because their culture supports each other. Uncle Ali has money and then supports his nephew going into business. Maybe this is from the religion too—they're more supportive of each other. **Black culture is 'I'm for me, and I'm for me alone. I fought to get what I have, and you have to do the same'.**

{Mixed-Trinidadian purchasing rep for groceries distributor. [Interviewee #86]}
Afro-Trinidadians don't progress because they can't see others profess in life—they always have to pull each other down. Maybe it's something to do with greed.

{Afro-Trinidadian manager of electrical shop. [Interviewee #173]}
The Chinese are for Chinese; the Indians for Indians. But the Blacks don't really have that. Let us say you're going into a parts place. There's an Indian man and a Negro man. **All the Indians will go to an Indian. And next door we never had so many Indian customers as when they got an Indian barber. But it doesn't have like that for the Negros. We go to the closest place and where we get it cheaper.**

{Mixed ethnicity Manager of print firm. [Interviewee #170]}
In the African race, the sense of community isn't so tight, and they don't stick together. ... When it comes to taking your money, African people don't have discrepancies, but Indians like to keep it within their community.

{White-Trinidadian Manager of a large print firm. [Interviewee #98]}
It's not a matter of choice: they have to deal with Indians because they have the goods they want. **But even if they *did* have a choice, they'd gravitate less than other Trinidadian races do—*because they don't understand the family unit*.** There's tribalism instead: one head and a lot of followers. Black people, no matter where you find them in the world, are a dispersed people with a gang leader they unit around—not cohesive family units.

{Afro-Trinidadian proprietor of construction firm. [Interviewee #150]}

East Indians would be very successful with both major races. An African would not be successful with either—that's why in Trinidad you wouldn't notice a lot of African businesses. **Africans don't support African businesses, whereas Indians would support Indian ones**.

These findings have been corroborated by several other academic researchers. For example, Kevin Yelvington's interviews with manufacturing workers in the late-1980s included the following quote (Yelvington 1993:112):

> *{A 25-year-old Afro-Trinidadian}*
> They say Indians will stick together to bring each other up. Negroes don't do that—they're ignorant in that way. At least on a big scale.

And Selwyn Ryan has investigated the lack of community amongst Afro-Trinidadian businesses, and the absence of supportive kinship networks (Ryan and Barclay 1992:61, 78-79, 148). Perhaps it has been said most poetically in calypso verse as follows:

> "I will bet money by the thousands
> Nobody unite as the Indians
> It's hard for Negro to do
> But not the Indians, believe is true
> The people really have a mind
> I could prove it every election time"
> (Mighty Striker 1959)

5.3.51. **This finding about a lack of solidarity amongst Afro-Trinidadians was a surprise to me, because Afro-Trinidadians are as conscious of race—or perhaps even more conscious of race—than other groups in Trinidad.** Afro-Trinidadians are quick to attribute (with some good justification, given the abundant evidence on negative stereotypes towards Afro-Trinidadians) a racial reason for the treatment they receive in business and in daily life:

> *{Chinese-Trinidadian manager at bank. [Interviewee #174]}*
> **If an Indian appears to be getting served faster in the bank, the Negro man at the back of the queue will start shouting about race. If a Negro gets turned down for a loan they tend to put it down to race.**

5.3.52. **So, faced with such treatment, and being quick to attribute a racial reason for it, why don't Afro-Trinidadians stick together by race in response?** In short, it seems to be because their consciousness of race is manifested as a feeling of being *victimized* rather than as the basis for group *action* to counter such treatment. Box 6 provides a lengthy quote from an Afro-Trinidadian describing this phenomenon in detail. Why is such a path taken? Diverse explanations were given by interviewees, but the most prevalent was in terms of historical legacy: that, in contrast to all other ethnic groups, Afro-Trinidadians were transported to Trinidad against their will, and mostly in the absence of their families. Hence the tradition of group solidarity was simply broken.

> *{Afro-Trinidadian contractor. [Interviewee #183]}*
> I think it's fairly obvious why the Syrians are the most close-knit. The Syrians are the most recent arrivals, and their sense of community existed prior to their arrival. For Muslims and Hindus, it's religion that bonds them together. But for Africans what is their sense of community? Music and dance, but no internal core of religion. **There is nothing about their ordinary life that speaks to their Africanness: we were transplanted—we lost our mother tongue, language, and religion.** The other aspect that's very important is that our means of success is education; but that's competitive so it doesn't foster a sense of community. So there's a greater openness from Afro-Trinidadians [i.e. to dealing with other ethnicities] where business is concerned. The Black sense of community—to the extent that it does exist—has been created as a reaction to the dominance of Whites in society; but that has now passed.

Box 6: Afro-Trinidadians' group solidarity based on victimhood, leading to neediness rather than pro-active community spirit. *(Transcript from interview with Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur.)*

It is true that there's a real lack of community spirit amongst Afro-Trinbagonians. It is true. As for the reasons for it, they're as varied as...

[AK: 'But on the other hand you said if you had an employee they'd try to take advantage of the race thing.']

They try to. They try that. But after a while you start realizing that they simply want more than they're entitled to. **It's not community, they're trying to use you. They're trying to use their own ethnicity to gain much more than they're entitled to, or than they deserve. Just to elaborate on that: they would start skipping work, coming with the most lame-brain excuses, "ah he's a brother, he would understand".** That, for me, is a no-no. That is where I draw my line.

But as far as the other thing is concerned, when they are in an adversarial position, um, I find that there's a greater sense of community. If somebody of another ethnicity is giving trouble, you would find that temporarily they would be banding together— because at least they have something in common, just for that moment in time, that is anti-whatever ethnic group it is—you will find them banding together. And I think 1970 had more to do with opportunities, um, possibilities, rather than it had to do with ethnicity. ...Black people never worked in banks, or worked in insurance companies, or had managerial positions, or could get into universities, because of economic reasons and so on. So that movement was I think more of creating opportunities for Black people, rather than a Black movement per se, because people of East Indian origin were also having problems. As long as you were non-White, in the business environment that existed before, you had difficulties, so there was a mixture of races in 1970 trying to improve their possibilities or their lot in life. That was something completely different. And that it was led by an African man, OK, you know? **But in terms of community, as you say, among the Afro-Trinbagonians, that is where it's lowest, of all the ethnic groups in this country. They look at each other with suspicion, from the point of view that if you're progressing, if you get ahead, you must help them all. Every last one of them; you can't just go on by yourself, or you better just come back down here where we are.** As soon as they feel that you have a little bit higher status in life, then they start attacking it. Yeah, I find that you are talking down to me now—they learn that term—I says "no, I'm simply saying what I intend to tolerate and what not", and they say "well, there you go again!"—it's a never-ending story. So you best just leave it.

One of the first things I told you when I picked you up is that I hate waiting on people. Nine out of ten—you've been here for five months, you know about the lines here, for visas, whatever it is—you know how I've lived my life, I'll just give you one of my life experiences. **If I could be the first in line, before the first East Indian comes in that particular line, *now you're operatin'*. They're always first in line!** They will send a family member at 8 o'clock in the evening, when that door is open at 8 o'clock the next morning, to hold a space, and he will come there and sleep outside there *first in the line*, for his family group. And they will all get in first, and be outta there by 9 o'clock. And you would see, quarter past ten, Afro-Trinidadian comin', yawnin', "Boy, whatsa come on dis line— boy", grumble, mumble, and so on, to be told, "no, you have to come back tomorrow morning, because we have the first hundred in already and that is all we servin' today." [Puts on deep voice]: "But, but what is goin' on with all o' ya, boy? All o' ya against we or wha'?" They're not understandin', dat de Indian pay a price to be first in de line! Somebody was prepared to *sacrifice* something for the rest of the people, and they all come, they get attended to, and they go about their business. And they're going now to be productive when the day come. And you vexed all day now, you going to work, you're *vexed*! You go an' smoke a cigarette, and you're looking to see how quick you can..I'm sorry, I'm rambling now because..

[AK: 'No, no—perfect—it's so evocative of what actually happens!..']

Yes! That is *exactly* what happens! And then they say "Boy, dem Indians an' dem boy, dey is somet'ing else boy! I doh understand, it's only de _____-name people [i.e. Indians] who get in there!" But if you check it, that is not true!

[AK: 'The last thing I was going to ask you, thinking about different communities of ethnic groups, although you said there's no sense of solidarity amongst Afro-Trinidadians, do you find that in business it still makes any difference in terms of it being easier to deal with Afro-Trinidadians, to build up a business relationship with them, versus a Chinese, or a Syrian, or an Indian, or a local White? I mean, are there cultural characteristics which make you feel more familiar with them, or you know, more comfortable dealing with them?']

Where you find greater solidarity among Afro-Trinbagonian businessmen, among the successful ones—we all know what we've been through. And all we experiences are more or less identical. We're up against exactly the same thing in society. And with a few exceptions, as I said, the experience is identical. So, we have a talking point to start with. We have a talking point around which we can easily come together. Um, in Jamaica, for example, the commanding heights of the economy are really controlled by Afro-Jamaicans. And you can't do business at a middle-management level—I mean *really* do business—the only way that two businesses come together, is if the owners of those two companies suddenly decide "I now trust you, I can now deal with you on a very personal, but business, level", and you sit quietly over a drink or over a meal or something, and you say "OK, I'm going to do business with you. Tell me how you operate, and I will send somebody to interact with your corresponding person, to work out the details". But until that happens, you could beat your head against a wall talking to middle-management or upper-management people. As long as you don't get to the owner—and there's that interaction at the top—nothing happens! So I see that now as a peculiarity of the Jamaican-Afro businessman.

And there are *some* similarities to that here as well. It is less formal. You walk into a Afro's office, and he realizes that you own your own company, and he's seen a proposal from you, and he compares the proposal from other companies of different ethnicities and so on, and he realizes that you know what you're talking about, it's like a breath of fresh air for him as well. **So you have it there a little bit more than somebody else of other ethnicities. But he is *absolutely testin' your arse!*—and the first time you slip, he will say "that is de same thing!—nigger people are really something else!".** I know I do it.

Interviewee #206.

(Afro-Trinidadian customer service staff in a print firm. [Interviewee #1]}

The East Indians are very family-oriented and the Afro-Trinidadians are not, wherever you go. That was a legacy of slavery—they didn't come as families—they were snatched. Look at how you can tell an East Indian home by passing and seeing and open area with a hammock. **They leave space for family. Unfortunately it's not the same for the average Afro-Trinidadian.**

{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}

I've had some tough Black employees though. Lots of attitude. You see, it's a cultural thing; I think it comes with slavery. You tell a Black man to work hard, he say, "you tryin' to exploit me boy..", because he been exploited by slavery.

[AK: 'But not him, right? Several generations ago.']

That's how the attitude came. It pass down from generation to generation. Where does the Black parent work?—and the grandparent work? On the port. In a gang on the road, where productivity is not the biggest thing. Where does the East Indian parent or grandparent work?—in the cane fields for the private employer. Right?

This mindset amongst Afro-Trinidadians about a continuing legacy of slavery is generally felt to be suppressing their success, but may not prompt any pro-active response to it.

{Syrian-Trinidadian businessman. [Interviewee #202]}

The traditional leadership has been based on the theory of victimhood among the Afro-Trinidadian people. And not only here as well; I mean, let's be very honest about it: a lot of the civil rights leaders in the United States outside of Martin Luther King up to today; to his credit, outside of Obama as well, up to today, will still **say "the reason we're not making it is because we were victims, and we should be paid reparations,"** and that is still being pushed down their throats. Whereas when I came to my father or mother and told them that I had been taken advantage of, I was told that I didn't do as good a job. I was told it was my fault. I was never given the opportunity to blame anybody up until today. My grandparents never let me get away with that. Now, that puts me at a decidedly better advantage from the get-go, from the get-go. That puts me at a tremendous advantage over these guys. So those are issues—these are values—that help to solidify success and guarantee a certain format or a certain model of problem-solving and management. And **the ultimate destructive element of that theory of victimhood is: that they never emulate successful people, but they want to be successful; as if somehow there is another formula.**

{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}

Alright, what happens is this. The Blacks came here first, through slavery; they were the largest group of people. They had nothing to protect. They were...what tends to happen is that the smaller ethnic groups, that have come afterwards, that are in the minority: they tend to have a reason to cling together, for their own sake, for their own protection, for their own survival. The Chinese did it. The East Indians did it. They came after; they came in smaller groups; and they had to find protection in coming together.

So there's nothing strange about the fact that the Africans—which is the largest group—are more amorphous. They don't have that, in personal view, the sense of hardwork, and the sense of thrift, and the sense of business. Because I think a lot of it is because—part of it is from Africa, but part of it is what they've been through in slavery. It's amazing to think that what has happened in slavery is affecting us still, two hundred years after, or a hundred and fifty years after. It's really amazing. I mean in terms of cultures get passed down from father to son and mother to son, and if you look at it it's only three or four generations.

It may be utilized instrumentally to plead for leniency—

{Afro-Trinidadian General Manager of Construction Firm. [Interviewee #161]}

In a society such as ours you use any card you could to get ahead. If the police arrest me I say 'Aw Gawd I'm a poor Black man—give me a break!'. At the bottom level of society, it really doesn't matter about your race, eh? It's more at the middle and upper levels—**it's a card that you hold—a bargaining chip.**

...but is not thought to lead to much long-lasting benefit:

{Chinese-Trinidadian manager at bank. [Interviewee #174]}

The [Afro-Trinidadians] who are more successful are those who get out of the slave-oppression mindset and focus on what's really real.

5.3.53.   There is a strong parallel between my findings here and James Sidanius's 'Social Dominance Theory' (SDT) (e.g. Sidanius and Pratto 2001). According to SDT, low-status groups (such as Afro-Trinidadians) accept rather than dispute their low-status, and create legitimizing myths about why they are low status (for example, racism, sexism, classism). Rather than being inspired by their disadvantages to improve their lot, such groups actually buy-in to their low status, and thus their low-status becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. The only way of shedding that low status is to adopt some of the physical or behavioral traits of a higher-status group, rather than attempt to improve the perception of one's own group. For example, as astutely observed by another student of Trinidadian workplaces (Yelvington 1993:108):

> Carole, who is black, said "I ent seen a nigger supervisor yet. They all have straight hair. ... Race is important ... Whoever have straight hair think they higher than us..." *(But the very day before she had gone to the beauty shop to have her own hair straightened).*

V.S. Naipaul put it rather elegantly (2001:81):

> **...the Negro, while rejecting the guilt imposed on him by the white man, is not able to shake off the prejudices he has inherited from the white man,** a duality which is responsible for what the Jamaican novelist John Hearne, on a visit to British Guiana in 1957, described as "the pathetic nostalgia that corrupts so many Negroes. The retreat into apologies for their condition, their endless 'historical' explanations and their lack of any direction. The sentimental camaraderie of skin which provides the cheap thrill of being 'African'."

As noted by the calypsonian 'Explainer' (1976), the Afro-Trinidadians who succeed in business may disassociate themselves from other Afro-Trinidadians:

> *As a cosmopolitan nation with three races majority*
> *The people facing the most frustration is the black man like you and me*
> *We see the Indians prospering*
> *The Chinese capitalizing*
> *But the African man have this confused mind*
> *That is why the race is lagging behind*
>
> *When a black man get in position he runs to society*
> *Neglects his people, his race, his complexion because he finds they too poor for he*
> *Now he friend is the Chinese*
> *Gambling with the Syrians and Portuguese*
> *Bu the Indian man thinks differently*
> *Every Indian for he is he family*

5.3.54.   **There is one final question on this topic of ingroup solidarity and obligation: we might wonder if ingroup solidarity is always affective, or whether it may also be a rational choice—particularly as a defense tactic in response to discrimination.** For example, with respect to Muslims, it seems that some insularity is prompted in response to the practices of other businesspeople to combine networking efforts with alcoholic drinks, which of course alienates Muslims.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #184]}*
> Also, in socializing there's a certain amount of alcohol involved—you'll know that—but for Muslims that's not acceptable.

One can imagine, by extension, the same phenomenon applying to Afro-Trinidadians: alienation in business prompts the strengthening of ingroup preferences. However, I did not get presented with this point of view by interviewees, and impute it only by reading between

the lines of interviewees responses like the following, who had previously said he was on the receiving end of anti-Afro Trinidadian prejudice when trying to do business.

{Afro-Trinidadian proprietor of construction firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #150]}
[AK: 'So would you be more likely to be friends with other Afro-Trinidadian contractors than others? For example, I just drove here from talking to someone at [name of another Afro-Trinidadian contractor]'].
[Interviewee's face lights up] Ah, yes!!-- [name of manager at the other firm]: he's my friend! We sometimes go for the same contracts.
[AK: 'But you're friends even though you're competitors?']
Well, yes! If he's got a contract he can't do, he'll often pass it to me to see if I want it.

Evaluating the mechanisms of ethnic favoritism

5.3.55.   **How do these three diverse reasons for co-ethnic business compare with each other?** Figure 27 summarizes the responses I received to an interview question on this topic. The results should be treated with some caution, since the sample size is relatively small (only 31 respondents), but the reported importance of cultural commonalities in building a business relationship (i.e. the second section in our discussion above) is quite remarkable.

Figure 27: Responses to question 'If it has been easier to build business relationships with people of a similar race or religious background to you, is this because....'
[Source: 31 Interview respondents.]

■ "I'm able to Trust them more quickly."

"I get better Information on their reliability through my personal networks."

▨ "I feel more Familiar with them because of a similar cultural background."

■ "I prefer them because I should keep business within my own racial or religious community: it's like an Obligation."
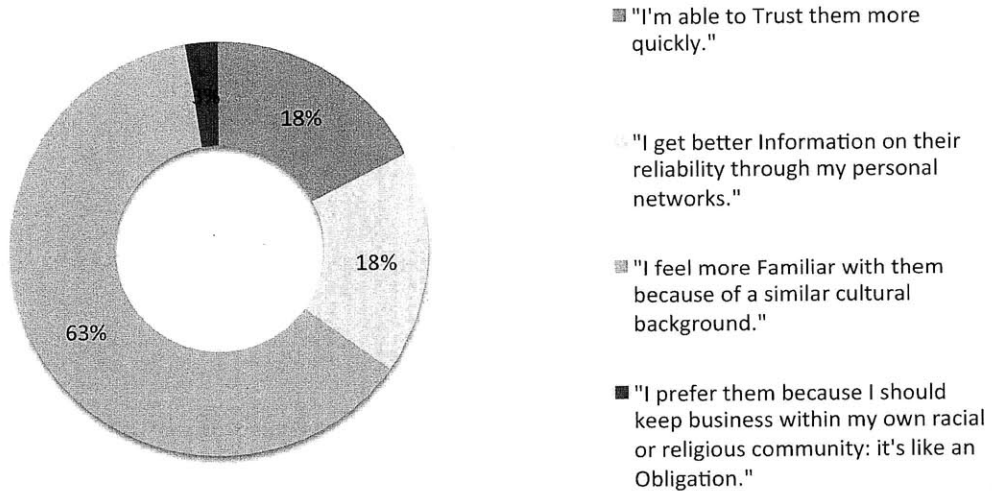
Ethnic Favoritism in Business Decisions: why would it <u>not</u> happen?

5.3.56.   Alongside the three preceding reasons for preferring business transactions with members of one's own ethnicity, I also observed three countervailing reasons for broaching ethnic boundaries in business. In the subsequent three sub-sections, I examine these three reasons.

(1) Profit Motive is King

5.3.57.   **Foremost amongst these reasons is the profit motive.** We would expect the profit motive to displace ethnic affiliation on all three dimensions of market transactions: on price, on volume, and on quality. Buyers are concerned with price and quality: they want to buy the best quality good at a given price, or the lowest price good of a given quality. Sellers are concerned with price and volume: they want to sell the most goods, and/or a given quantity of goods at the highest prices. **I received an overwhelming number of interview responses emphatically claiming these rational profit-motivated considerations always take precedence, regardless of ethnicity.**

5.3.58.   To give some interview excerpts on each of these topics, **buyers** would be irrational to choose a higher **priced** good on the basis of the seller's ethnicity:

> *{White-Trinidadian Managing Director of furniture manufacturer. [Interviewee #59]}*
> People don't think about race when they're buying something—look at the US deficit! They could solve that overnight if Americans decided they didn't want to buy from China or Japan. **People want what's best for them—they don't give a damn where it comes from.**

> *{Purchasing Manager for supermarket chain. [Interviewee #122]}*
> Race never gets into the conversation: I deal with *price*—that's what we go with. If you're a sales rep and we have a good relationship, that doesn't say the product will sell on the shelf.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian purchasing manager for retailer. [Interviewee #135]}*
> It's all about prices—that's what this business is all about.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Manager of Construction firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #148]}*
> In business, race doesn't really matter. You just have to finish the job on time, in budget. That's as a male. As a woman it might, but not as a man. There's no discrimination against Muslims in Trinidad. We've worked for Christians, Afro-Trinidadians, White Americans, and race has never caused a problem. We've worked for Seventh Day Adventists in Cocorite, and the only contractors they call is us. I asked if they don't know any Seventh Day Adventist contractors. They said they don't watch religion; they watch performance, honesty, integrity, and keeping to your budget.

...and would likewise be irrational to choose a lower **quality** good because of ethnicity:

> *{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian Manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #148]}*
> Our equipment—we rent a lot of it. **There are a lot of Muslim tool and equipment firms, but I go by someone called Pundit because he gives better service.**

> *{Chinese-Trinidadian entrepreneur, in several industries. [Interviewee #181]}*
> Yes you do feel more comfortable, but it's not even in the top three criteria. And there are a lot of mixed Chinese and Indian marriages. In my generation it makes no difference. _____ [a Chinese name] might do some work for _____ [this company name], but **it's not because he's Chinese, it's because he's good.**

> *{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian general manager of large construction company. [Interviewee #168]}*
> Race does affect everybody. **However at the end of the day, clients are looking for a certain finished product—somebody who can deliver.** In any case, it's really about who you know. Everybody has a

kind of knitted lifestyle: people respect each other's background, and if you go to a party everyone's going to be there.

(Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205)
But if you're taking something to them, and you can demonstrate to them that their customers need it, they'll buy it. It enhances their business. They will do business with you. Whether they like you or not. If they like, it's easier. But if you take something that says "here, if you buy from me, you can make a dollar", your Syrian partner doesn't have it, your Indian partner doesn't have it. Mine might be a different brand that's more acceptable, the price might be a little better, the margin might be superior, my delivery might be faster. It can be any of those things to deliver a better set of services: they'll buy from you. A'ight? They sell it; it makes money; it keep their business easier; you're straightforward with them. **It [race] doesn't play a part after that. You may get that *initial* resistance.** You know, one of the big business groups in this country that took me six years before I could sell—it's an Indian group—I hired an ex-Nestlé, Negro sales executive, who had left the job at Nestlé, who knew the guy personally. I hired her for six months to help me break into some of the things I couldn't get into. She went in, and she got him, she got me into the store. And since then—she's no longer with me—I've been doing business with the guy for maybe twenty years.

5.3.59.   And **sellers** would be irrational to restrict their market **volume** to ingroup customers alone.

{White-Trinidadian sales rep for clothing distributor. [Interviewee #55]}
You'd be stupid if you did [business] according to race because you'd be missing an opportunity.

{Christian Indo-Trinidadian driver at manufacturing firm. [Interviewee #50]}
You don't limit yourself in business—everyone's looking for the dollar. **If you let race or religion between you then you hinder your growth and prosperity.**

{Indo-Trinidadian sales rep for construction contractor. [Interviewee #75]}
I can deal with anyone—they can be pink or coconuts for all I care. As long as they're paying us, that's good enough for me.

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}
Who paying—I selling to you.

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of construction contractor, south Trinidad. [Interviewee #151]}
You'll meet a certain category of people from your area, so you're a bit limited. But in business I met all types of people from different backgrounds and religions. That's why I was successful—if I kept just in the local area I wouldn't have work.

To give one further example from a very articulate interviewee:

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #202]}
Do people of different ethnicities collaborate? Yes... this is one of the reasons why I said at the very outset that business is that great purveyor of diplomacy and equality and relationships, and business *can* bridge tremendous divides that have existed historically between different groups. **It is to my discretion who I buy paper bags from, but you could bet your bottom dollar that my first decision, or the first choice, is going to be based on efficiency and cost and reliability and quality of supplies.**
Now, *all things being equal*, if I could give it to somebody that I knew or liked, I would. **But the truth of it is, that the reason that business heals and it bonds and unites, is because it is based on performance first, and then comes factors of ethnicity and relationships and cultural heritage, friendship and so.** I mean, my grandfather used to always say that to make bread you need flour and water, and no matter how much flour you have, it's no good unless you have water. **So it doesn't matter how closely related we are: if you can't produce paper bags efficiently you're going to hurt my business, so I'm sorry I'm going to have to give the order to somebody else. And that is why business works to create harmony, you see.**
Yes relationships develop, but I don't want to pay you more for what I could get elsewhere: I'm not going to do it. ... I mean, **our printers are Muslim, our glass suppliers are Hindu, our door fabricators are Chinese,** I mean what can I tell you?

5.3.60.   Indeed, as I describe in section 5.3.103, sellers may actually *prefer* dealing with ethnic outgroups, especially if they are perceived to be 'better' buyers than members of ethnic ingroups (either in terms of paying higher prices or being less fussy). As prelude to that section, here's an excerpt from a Muslim Indo-Trinidadian construction contractor from

southern Trinidad who described how he finds it far easier to work Afro-Trinidadian Seventh Day Adventists in Cocorite (a relatively poor area of Port-of-Spain) than with some of his Muslim Indo-Trinidadian clients:

> *{Muslim Manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #148]}*
> We worked for ASJA[34] but after doing it once we said we'd never do it again. I'd prefer to work for the SDA [Seventh Day Adventist] hospital than ASJA.

5.3.61. **One of the more remarkable aspects of this phenomenon is the ability of rationality (in the form of the profit motive) to displace affective prejudice—even where the interviewee previously declared their prejudices to me.** The theme of such conversations was: "You can't look at color in business. You have to be flexible". Implicitly the interviewee hints that she would look at color normally, but just not in business. In other words, 'I don't like it, but I'll do it'.

The starkest example of this overriding rationality occurred in the middle of an interview with a Dougla wholesaler of beauty products, who had already told me she was the victim of racial discrimination by Indo-Trinidadians in her family. Mid-conversation, an Indo-Trinidadian customer walked into the shop. Would there be friction in the air, I wondered? But the customer was immediately greeted with a smile, and the interviewee proceeded to have a perfectly civil conversation with her. Once the customer exited, the interviewee returned to our discussion:

> For business, I don't care. When I pay the bank at the end of the month, they not interested in where the money came from. ... But personally, I don't want Indian friends. I have no Hindu friends. None none none. I personally don't want any as friends. That's my own prejudgement[35].

The way in which this businessperson moderated her behavior so as to disguise her attitudes while in business was most striking.

5.3.62. Likewise, religious affiliations can be trumped by the profit motive—apparently even for the groups most frequently identified as having strong religious solidarities:

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}*
> Religious people tend to follow the Bible or the Quran or whatever *when it suits them* ... **But if a deal comes up they will go for it.**

> *{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of window fitters. [Interviewee #77]}*
> *[AK: 'So would people in the mosque mind that you're not employing any Muslims apart from yourself?']*
> Well, they're not putting a dollar in my pocket!

Indeed, one interviewee justified this rational instinct, rather tenuously, in terms of religion itself:

> *{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner of hardware store. [Interviewee #156]}*
> **Religion teaches man that he must be adaptable**—it's like a survival kit. But religion shouldn't change your conduct in terms of changing suppliers. There are people who do, but I believe that's negative, it's fanatical, and it's dangerous.

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[34] ASJA stands for the Anjuman Sunnat ul Jamaat Association of Trinidad and Tobago, and is a Muslim organization established in 1935 to provide spiritual guidance for the Muslims of Trinidad & Tobago.
[35] Interviewee #20. This individual also described to me how her own anti-Indian feelings came about, particularly because she is of mixed parentage (Afro-Trinidadian and Indo-Trinidadian) but the Indian side of her family cold-shouldered her socially because she looked far less Indo-Trinidadian than her sisters. She elaborated: "I worked in the same bank as a Hindu cousin, but she never even said hello to me. Didn't want people to know we were related."

5.3.63. Incidentally, in one interview, I was told by the interviewee that the profit motive meant entrepreneurs would deliberately employ a mix of ethnicities in their staff, in order to reduce over-familiarity:

> {Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #187]}
> [AK: 'Are you likely to give members of your own ethnic group any additional breaks in business?']
> That be bad for business. Every single business I know about that have the same race working for them, they do not do good. Them be more thiefin', more gossipin', and more bacchanal[36].

But the high proportion of mono-ethnic firms in Trinidad suggests this is a fairly unusual view.

5.3.64. Finally, it appeared from my interviews that the particular conditions of Trinidad's economy also encourage firms to trade across ethnic boundaries, since **in several industries there are only a limited number of firms with whom one can deal.** Thus, even if one wanted to deal only with (for instance) Chinese-Trinidadians, it is possible that there are simply no Chinese-Trinidadian plastic bottle manufacturers or label printers (for example), so **scarcity of suppliers forces one to cross ethnic boundaries in a supply chain.**

> {Chinese-Trinidadian publicity designer for entertainment industry. [Interviewee #143]}
> I hardly lime with Chinese people—it's not an ethnic preference, just the business I'm in.

> {Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}
> [AK: 'if you're building a business relationship, is it still easier to build that relationship with someone of your own race than bridging across.']
> **I think it is, but I didn't have a choice! Because there are no Black supermarket owners out there for me to sell to. Or there aren't many Black store owners out there for me to sell to.** So I had to go across the ethnic lines to get my business. There are no Black suppliers of chemicals, and labels, and cartons and whatever. Right? Ninety-nine percent of my business relationships, on *both sides of the supply chain,* are either with East Indians, Chinese, Whites. ... I've had Black businesses I do business with, but I have not... I have one up the road there who's a good friend of mine, and one week he by from me and next week he buy from the company here. I said, "well boy, why you doing that? Support me now boy!", and he said, "boy I cah buy from you alone..".

In Trinidad's island economy, occasional problems of logistics and a consequent scarcity of supplies further conditions the freedom of choice that firms have in their trading partners. For example:

> {Sales rep for paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #179]}
> What you find in the paint industry: everybody can be out of one product at the same time. So if Trinity's got no stock you have to go to Sissons.

In the context of building cross-ethnic linkages, this scarcity of choice actually appears to be a good thing.

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[36] 'Bacchanal' is a key term in Trinidad's national lingo, meaning chaos, disorganization, or horse-play.

(2) Talking Business, Not Ethnicity

5.3.65.   The second reason ethnicity is deemed not to matter in business transactions is because they take place in a special social space, in which **universal languages of business can eclipse ethnic affiliations and reduce transaction costs across ethnic boundaries.** By this I mean two things: a series of learned behaviors and terminologies that are specific to business transactions and are shared across ethnic groups, and also the power of corporate branding to displace ethnic identities: company uniforms, product names, and logos become more visible than the skin color and ethnic affiliation of the person purveying them. Hence—according to this argument—ethnic commonalities are relevant to social life but not to business. The following view exemplifies this phenomenon:

> {Owner of specialist paints shop. [Interviewee #49]}
> I've seen it happen—and some proprietors even promote this kind of thing [i.e. racial discrimination in business]. **But look at this customer—this man's interest is *paint*, so let's talk to him about that.**

5.3.66.   I hope the following quotes can clarify this point. First, with respect to **notions of 'professionalism' and learned behaviors that are specific to business transactions:**

> {Afro-Trinidadian contractor. [Interviewee #183]}
> I personally have not had any difficulties in business resulting from ethnicity. In fact I would say it's been a unifying force not a dividing force. **You have a common language; you can talk to each other very easily** [in business].

> {White-Trinidadian Manager of large printing firm. [Interviewee #98]}
> **When you go to a business function it's totally diverse: you don't need to know where people grew up.** But you still might not invite them to your house. The home is not a place for doing business.

> {Christian Indo-Trinidadian driver at manufacturing firm. [Interviewee #50]}
> When you meet people in business of any religion, they're **kind, friendly and courteous**—that's what's expected of them.

> {Indo-Trinidadian Proprietor of car parts supplier. [Interviewee #131]}
> We don't study phat [i.e. race or religion]—we deal with everyone. ... **You do feel more comfortable with them [Indians], with your own kind. But across the board any one of them want to treat us nice because it business.**
> ...
> This business especially, we deal with plenty people. It's nice. **Everybody does deal nice in business.**

> {Mixed-Trinidadian Sales Manager for food distributor. [Interviewee #163]}
> If I'm aware of certain preferences or challenges we've faced in the past, then I'll send particular personnel to a particular area. But I've never actually seen this issue come up. Mainly it's to do with people's capacity to do the job effectively. Sending people who are more experienced to areas with bigger shops. **I think once you go and represent yourself in a professional manner then people will receive you as such. If you go displaying certain traits then it'll be a different matter. Once a sales rep is professional in their conduct, that's what will generally override ethnic preferences.** But also _____ [company name] is a well-known brand, so customers want to get the products and that works in our favor.

> {White-Trinidadian Manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #146]}
> **Business is a good medium** [for letting people of different backgrounds talk to each other].

> {Mixed-Trinidadian sales manager at manufacturer of intermediate products. [Interviewee #80]}
> Successful people in business have much in common—they're organized, focused, conscious of cost, and so on. **Their personal lives may be very different, but the way they go about business is very similar.**

> {Mixed-Trinidadian Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}
> The issues of race and religion doesn't come in at all: **it's how they [sales reps] present themselves.**

5.3.67. **Second, with respect to company brands and identities displace that ethnic identities,** company uniforms, product names, and logos become more visible than the skin color and ethnic affiliation of the person purveying them.

> *{Mixed ethnicity manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #171]}*
> **You don't really see the individual: you just see the company.** So you don't get the feeling "I got an Indian job"; you just think "I made a breakthrough with T&TEC" or "with Petrotrin".

> *{White-Trinidadian Manager for large processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #176]}*
> I used to hold that view, but actually I found once you have someone who's good at sales, you can sell to almost anyone. It's [i.e. ethnicity is] good for getting in the door, but it's not going to grow your business. That said, for [name of interviewee's firm], **everyone knows us and knows the brand anyway, so our foot's in the door anyway.**

5.3.68. **Paradoxically, one component of being 'professional' seems to be in learning how to deal with different business audiences, depending on their ethnicity. This insight renders the idea of 'professionalism' less like a standard set of behavior traits, and more like a '*virtuoso*' performance that varies according to the situation.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian construction contractor with five employees. [Interviewee #136]}*
> **You have to deal with all types of people—you have to know how to deal with them.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Rep for meats distributor. [Interviewee #144]}*
> [It doesn't make any difference to my business life that I'm Indo-Trinidadian.] It's just about the personality. **You just have to understand how the Muslims are and how the Christians are.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian administrative and sales assistant, in Distributor of Solvents and Caustic Chemicals. [Interviewee #92]}*
> In sales you're the ambassador for the company. And you have to be comfortable with the customer too.

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian Sales Manager for customized furniture manufacturer. [Interviewee #76]}*
> **What I do—and I'm being totally honest—is to manipulate.** You know Hindus go for more fancy stuff. **Muslims don't.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian sales manager of a cleaning products manufacturer. [Interviewee #83]}*
> **I had to program my mind to deal with every individual. ... Over the years I have changed a lot, because I have to be all things to all people.**

This argument evokes a number of prior sources in diverse literatures that emphasize the degree to which human beings are flexible in their tactics and behavior when performing at their best—as 'virtuosos' (two of my favorite texts are Machiavelli 1988: ch.XVIII, and Flyvbjerg 2001).

5.3.69. **However, these quotes beg an interesting observation: if 'professionalism' is not an objective set of behaviors, and is ascribed partly by the beholder, then perceptions of professionalism can themselves be subject to an ethnic bias.** In other words, professionalism may be perceived more readily in members of one's ingroup than in members of outgroups. So what may be termed 'professionalism' may, in some situations, simply be the projection of ethnic favoritism. A view that "Mr. X is more 'professional' than Mr. Y" could simply be a cover for "Mr. X shares more of the norms and behaviors which I, an Afro-Trinidadian, find desirable in business partners." For example:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Accountant with Plastic Bags manufacturer. [Interviewee #186]}*
> I think with face-to-face contact, if you're a similar ethnic group then you have an advantage, from the feedback that we've got. [This is from Afro-Trinidadian sales reps going to Indian areas.] **At first they [clients] would say it's price, product, quality, service. They're not going to come straight out and say**

> it's because of the color of your skin! But then when you have another person going, or you hear from another customer, that they feel uncomfortable dealing with Afro-Trinidadian sales reps.

Hence we must be rather careful in taking these quotes on professionalism at face value.

(3) Horses for Courses: some outgroups are more adept than ingroups

5.3.70. The third reason ethnicity may not be a boundary for business transactions is because **ethnic stereotypes may actually *encourage* firms to trade across ethnic boundaries, if outgroups are perceived to be more adept than ingroups for particular goods or services.** For instance, drawing on our prior discussion of perceived disloyalty amongst Indo-Trinidadians and/or Syrians, we might imagine that some businesspeople would prefer doing business with other ethnic groups, even if they themselves are Indo-Trinidadian or Syrian. As examples:

> *{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}*
> You know why White people don't hire Indians in Trinidad? Because they stay one year, learn the business and get up their own one. An African will stay, might not learn anything or work, but don't cheat you.

> *{Afro-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #150]}*
> I build the best relationship with Whites—they make you feel more comfortable.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of construction contractor, south Trinidad. [Interviewee #151]}*
> Generally speaking you don't trust unless you have a written document: even people I trusted so much, I have two bounced cheques from them. **White people, when they give you a job they write it all down, and they'll adhere to it, and you have to too.** But people around here, it's all spoken and they might not pay you at the end of it. ... The White people are more open too.

And as noted by a particularly famous Trinidadian native (Naipaul 2001:77):

> In money matters generally there is almost a superstition among both Indians and Negroes about the unreliability of their own race; there is scarcely a Trinidadian who has not at one time felt or said, 'I don't had any luck with my race'. It is an aspect of the multi-racial society to which sociologists pay little attention.

Indeed, a survey made in Trinidad in the mid-1970s shows that both Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians would rather work under a White-Trinidadian supervisor than for each other (Ryan, Greene, and Harewood 1979:46).

5.3.71. **Likewise, *within firms*, managers may utilize racial stereotypes when deciding on the allocation of specific jobs and tasks, according to their perceptions of the comparative advantages enjoyed by particular racial groups.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian owner & manager of specialist goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #61]}*
> **I'd personal prefer an Indian boss with African laborers, because Indians have more business sense, but African workers work harder.** Quality may be an issue though. If you want a quality job, you'd want guys that have worked in foreign countries. ... At the core of the company you always need financial prudence [which is more likely to be found in Indo-Trinidadian employees]; but then you also need different personalities in different areas: you might need someone who's more laid back or easygoing [i.e. a reference to Afro-Trinidadian stereotypes voiced earlier in the same interview] as a promoter.

> *{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}*
> We are predominantly Afro-Trinidadian. But where you get the Indian section of the population is on the administrative side: in our customer service side, that might be as much as 30 or 40 percent Indian.

This trend has been noted more widely in Trinidadian society by V.S. Naipaul (1967:167 & 145):

> It was a damn funny thing to see. The seller was a black feller. And you wouldn't know how funny this was, unless you know that every coconut seller in the island is Indian. They have this way of handling a cutlass that black people don't have. Coconut in left hand; with right hand bam, bam, bam with cutlass, and coconut is cut open, ready to drink. … And then I see that though Trinidad have every race and every color, every race have to do special things. … If a black man open a laundry, would you take your clothes to it? I wouldn't take my clothes there.

5.3.72.   Such racial stereotyping may look like prejudice, but more accurately it is the prudential use of differing characteristics in order to derive maximal benefit from one's staff. In the words of one interviewee, who admits the benefits of preferring Indo-Trinidadian workers but denies being 'discriminatory' almost in the same breath:

> *{Mixed ethnicity manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #171]}*
> We could not afford to be discriminatory. A lot of people working for us were East Indians. It was generally found they were better workers—more disciplined in terms of time-keeping and so on. … I would say that race and religion never came into our consciousness in terms of personnel.

5.3.73.   As we will in section 6.1.31 on the play off between rules-of-thumb and real experience, such rules-of-thumb are most accurately portrayed as establishing initial expectations rather than as predicting completely rigid behaviors. For instance, many construction firms of whatever ethnicity will choose Afro-Trinidadians as laborers:

> *{Muslim Manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #148]}*
> Most of my workers is Africans, from Chaguanas and Port-of-Spain.

…but will meanwhile be willing to test the capabilities of an Indo-Trinidadian to do the same job:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #187]}*
> I was down a construction site and a skinny guy turned up looking for a job—he probably only 80 pounds. He applying to be a cement mixer. The boss say 'What, *you* can mix cement and you like that?—only 80 pounds?!' Well, the man say 'I motivate myself when I mix cement.' The boss say 'Watch all ah dem big guys—you can work with them?' And the man say he can. OK, well the boss give him a chance. Four weeks later the boss call me up; he say, 'You remember that man looking for a job? He does do the work of *four* men! And think if I didn't give him a chance what a opportunity I would have lost!' So, you cyah judge a person by what they look like.

Ethnic Favoritism in Business Decisions: <u>to what extent does it happen?</u>

5.3.74.   Having established *why* race and religion may, and may not, feature in business decisions, we shall now turn to the question of *to what extent* they actually do. With three reasons for ethnicity to condition business decisions, and three reasons for it not to do so, the outcome is, *a priori*, indeterminate. We can sense some of the tension between these two contrary influences in the following interview excerpt:

> *{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #202]}*
> *[AK: 'Obviously there are a lot of different ethnicities around downtown Port-of-Spain—Syrians, Chinese, Indo-Trinidadians, a few Afro-Trinidadians. When do you see it going well, and when do you see racial background getting in the way of collaboration between businesses?']*

It always goes well when they are speaking specifically about the issues, because there is a commonality of interest regardless of your personal background or your industry. ... Where it doesn't go well always is in the respective value systems ... because different groups have different notions of strategy; they have different values about public persona. And there are also loyalties, politically, which extend outside of the business community and start becoming racial and political.

5.3.75. *A posteriori*, I observed a variety of responses about whether ethnicity matters in business; in aggregate it **affects business decisions to varying extents in different people, but is on average relatively marginal**.

> {*White-Trinidadian Managing Director of a furniture manufacturer. [Interviewee #59]*}
> Race or religion could be important sometimes—**but if someone's making a purchasing decision and has one hundred points to score different firms in making the decision, about five of those points will be to do with race or religion**. [The rest will be earned by price, product, and quality of service].

> {*White-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #79]*}
> **The primary color everybody focuses on is green.** In business I'd say it **[race] affects ten to fifteen percent of decisions**—where you can say 'that was a racial decision'. It features most in employment practices: you go into Indian-owned firms and most of the staff are Indian.

> {*Afro-Trinidadian owner of small clothing store. [Interviewee #21]*}
> [AK: *'Do you think any other firms in your sector prefer doing business with Indo-Trinidadians versus Afro-Trinidadians?'*]
> Ninety-five percent of them mix—it's only the really queer people that say 'I'll only socialize with Negroes', 'I'll only socialize with Indians'. We call them the out-of-timings. **In business, it happens too, but it's very rare—because if I could get something from you that could profit my business, it doesn't matter what's the hair on my head or what's the color of my skin.** It's only the shallow-minded people that do mind—and they probably don't know how to run a business.

These quotes, and my interviews in general, suggest that the profit motive trumps ethnic considerations in business.

5.3.76. **However—crucially—*even if race is of marginal importance for individual business decisions, it can still be a decisive component in the behavior of firms.* This is for two reasons. First, because of a principal agent problem. Most of the reasons to overcome ethnic boundaries in business are profit motives in the interests of the *firm*; but, by contrast, most of the reasons to maintain ethnic boundaries are affective mechanisms at the level of *employees*. Hence, unless the interests of the firm are somehow transmitted to employees too, employees will continue to act consistently with their own prejudices, regardless of company interests or company policy.**

> {*Sales Manager for wholesaler of household and commercial white goods. [Interviewee #72]*}
> There are instances of racism all over. **It may not be company policy, but if the workers have a preference then you'll see that.**

> {*Indo-Trinidadian manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]*}
> One major problem in Trinidad & Tobago is people not having the trustworthiness of employees. **So people may not act in the interests of their company, just making deals with their friends.** In my personal case, I've never been influenced by any relationship I've developed because I want to serve this company wholeheartedly and to the best of my ability. Managers find themselves in trouble when they don't have this code of ethics.

This point is illustrated rather nicely by the 'natural experiment' of professions in which cross-ethnic performance is rewarded (e.g. for sales reps) compared with professions in which it is not (e.g. for delivery drivers, who simply drive allocated routes):

> {*Indo-Trinidadian customer service manager at paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #134]*}

> **The Indian drivers don't want to go into Port-of-Spain [i.e. predominantly Afro-Trinidadian]. The African ones are ready to jump in the truck and go, but they don't want to go to Chaguanas** [i.e. and Indo-Trinidadian area]. **They cannot handle the music!** I tell them look there's such pretty girls in Chaguanas, but they're not interested in that. The Indians want to go to Chaguanas.
> That's the drivers. **But the *sales reps* will go—it's more about making the quota and so they'll go.**

In other words, firms will face a principal agent problem for occupations in which their employees don't have sufficient incentives to override their own ethnic favoritisms.

5.3.77.   **Second, even when individual and company interests are aligned, race remains able to tip the balance of business decisions.** Ethnic affiliation can be a decisive factor in swinging a choice between firms that are identical in other respects, and thus appears often in markets that approach a perfectly competitive structure. In the following quote, the interviewee plays down the importance of race, but does admit it can be pivotal.

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian purchasing rep for groceries distributor. [Interviewee #86]}*
> With two identical businesses and wondering which one to choose **it might swing the decision**—but generally it doesn't play a major part.

5.3.78.   **Hence, logically, even if race is of marginal importance, shrewd businesspeople—who are pursuing all avenues to generate business—should appeal to it.**

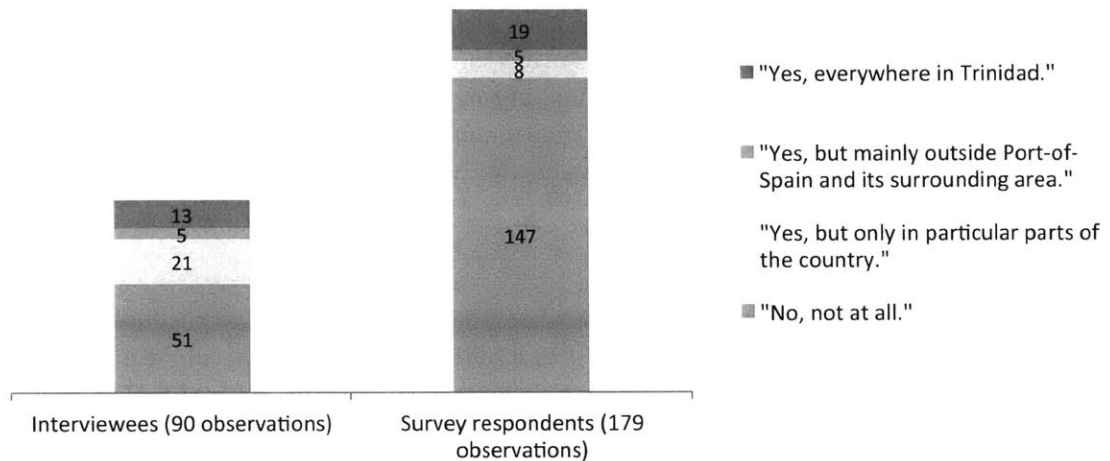> *{White-Trinidadian food & beverage Plant Manager. [Interviewee #74]}*
> The salesmen and women we hire to sell in central Trinidad will be Indians, and to sell in Laventille will be an African. An Indian will buy from an Indian—that's how it works. You're looking to get as much sold as possible, and it will make a difference. **You're not going to lose sales from the people who don't care if you're black or Indian. But you'll gain them from the people who do. You don't get this [insight] from your sales reps—but just look at your figures: sales normally go up when you switch races of people working in the area.**

In other words, **the ethnic allocation of sales reps around the country constitutes a kind of 'Pascal's Gambit': even though we do not know for sure that racism exists, we should behave as though it does when allocating our sales reps, since we have potentially something to gain, and nothing to lose.** Using ethnicity instrumentally is one of the avenues firms in competitive industries use to build with buyers where products are not otherwise differentiated and "so we have to interact a lot with the customers to encourage them to stay with us"[37].

5.3.79.   **I investigated this issue more formally by inserting a question into my interview questionnaire and survey sheet on the topic.** At the beginning of my fieldwork, I bluntly asked interviewees "Do you think any other firms in your sector prefer doing business with Afro-Trinidadians versus Indo-Trinidadians? If so, why you think that is?". But at the halfway point in my research I realized that a more tangible litmus test for the importance of race in business was specifically the extent to which people believed sales reps or retail staff would be more successful when selling to people with whom they shared a race or religious affiliation. That insight was suggested by interview quotes like those in sections 5.3.5 and 5.3.7, which show how firms allocate sales reps and retail staff as a direct response to customers' racial preferences.

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[37] Interviewee #185—the manager of a plastic bag manufacturer.

Figure 28: Responses to the question 'Do you think sales reps or retail staff would be MORE SUCCESSFUL when their race or religion is matched with the people they're trying to sell to?'

■ "Yes, everywhere in Trinidad."

■ "Yes, but mainly outside Port-of-Spain and its surrounding area."

"Yes, but only in particular parts of the country."

■ "No, not at all."

Interviewees (90 observations)   Survey respondents (179 observations)

5.3.80. **The results shown in** Figure 28 **illustrate that the majority of respondents think ethnicity would not impact on the success of sales reps and retail staff.** But perhaps the more interesting observation is the **difference between survey respondents** (who were mostly 'lay' people) **compared with interview respondents** (who were mostly managers, sales and customer service staff): only 18 percent of survey respondents thought ethnicity would matter in making sales, fully 43 percent of interview respondents thought it would do. This difference is significant at the 0.1% level. I tested this difference more rigorously by categorizing the occupations of all interviewee and survey respondents as either 'principal agents' (i.e. managers, owner-managers, or sole proprietors) or 'others'. Using those categories, I found that 41 percent of principal agents think ethnicity matters in making sales, while only 22 percent of people with other jobs think it does. This difference is significant at the 1% level. **Relating these results back to interview testimonies about the way race enters business, I would explain these results by inferring that people with more business experience have seen the true impact of race in business, while lay people customarily underestimate its impact.** For example:

> {Afro-Trinidadian sales manager at a print firm. [Interviewee #170]}
> **[AK: 'So has doing business changed your mind about race?']**
> **Not changed, but made me more aware, that things aren't all hunky dory.** It wakes you up to the reality that people are going to not like you because of your race, or your size.

5.3.81. **But the impact of ethnic preferences in business is not constant across individuals.** While some of that variation is simply due to differences in personalities, I observed five structural factors that seem to condition whether ethnic preferences will be manifested in business transactions. I examine each of these mediating factors in turn:

> (i) ethnic fixed effects;
> (ii) geographical location;
> (iii) a trend for buyers to discriminate more than sellers;
> (iv) complex transactions prompting more recourse to ethnic favoritism;
> (v) product differentiation diminishing buyers' recourse to ethnic favoritism.

(i) Ethnic fixed effects.

5.3.82. **Ethnic favoritism in business is manifested unequally across different ethnicities.** By 'ethnic favoritism', I mean both the **ethnic solidarity** discussed in section 5.3.44, and also the **ease of transactions with co-ethnics** discussed in section 5.3.38. As highlighted above in the first of these sections, ethnic solidarity seems to be strongest amongst Syrians, Muslims, and Chinese. With respect to ease of transactions, Figure 29 shows the results of my surveys and interviews. Unfortunately the number of observations is not large enough to test if the differences between race groups are statistically significant, but the interview testimonies I received on this topic were compellingly consistent.

Figure 29: Responses to question 'Thinking about all the people with whom you do business...is it easier to BUILD A BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP with people who have a similar race or background to you?'
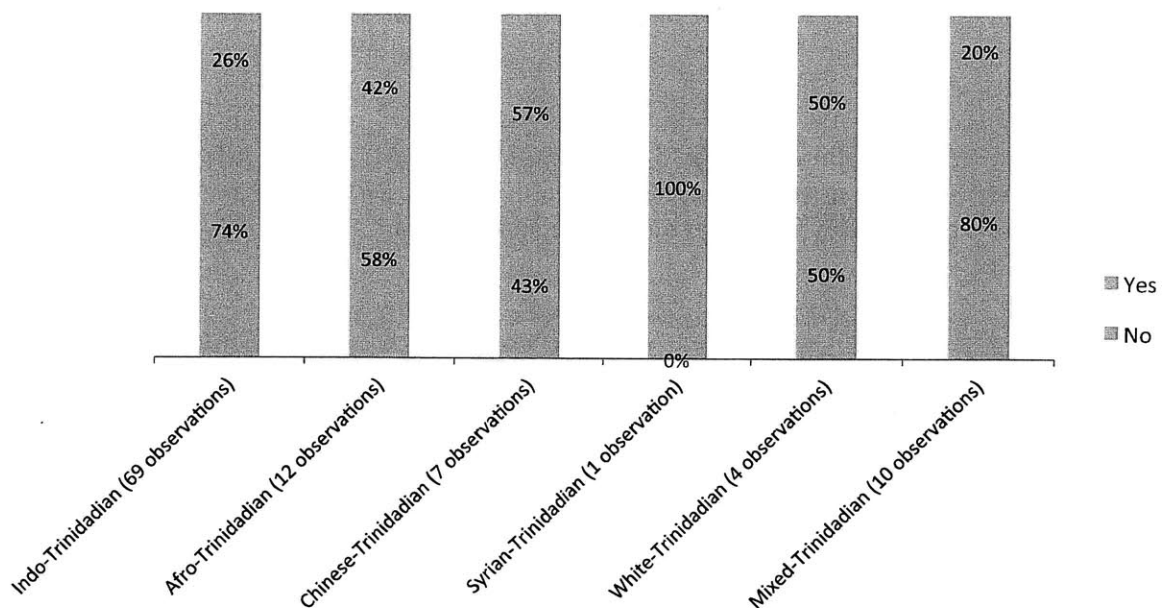
5.3.83. **The first thing to note about these results is that they may systematically underestimate the true impact of ethnicity on business.** Comparing the results shown in Figure 29 with those in Figure 28, we can see a general tendency for people to deem ethnicity to be more important for others than for themselves. Of 87 respondents who answered the two questions on sales reps and on doing cross-ethnic business, 43% thought that ethnicity was generally important in making sales, but only 28% admitted that they themselves found it easier to build business relationships with co-ethnics than cross-ethnics. The difference in these proportions is significant at the 1% level. My interest in this issue was sparked by reading a study of racism in Brazil, where it was found that a majority of people think they are less racist than 'average'—clearly this is statistically impossible.

5.3.84. But how do these results tally with interview testimonies? Some typical responses to the question 'Do you think racial discrimination occurs in business in Trinidad?' were:

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #175]}
> **The Syrians tend to be very much in a clique and support their own.** I've tried to get into the malls, but the rents are prohibitive to get anyone else in there. Instead they fill it with foreign brands because their families and their friends are the ones to import.

> {Indo-Trinidadian owner of print shop. [Interviewee #7]}
> I wouldn't say it's rampant—probably about five percent of people. They mainly look at price and quality. **But Muslims mostly do discriminate: they keep it in their community unless they *have* to go outside.**

> {Afro-Trinidadian manager of print firm. [Interviewee #25]}
> I know people in the Muslim community who are quicker to go to their Muslim brother than to here. I haven't found this in the Hindu or Christian communities. **The Muslims have this kind of cliquishness.**

> {Christian Indo-Trinidadian owner of electrical wholesaler. [Interviewee #64]}
> **They buy from Muslims first, and only if the Muslim doesn't have something they go elsewhere.** We're in the electrical industry—if a guy wants bulbs, he'll go to a Muslim wholesaler first and only come to me if he doesn't have it.

> {Hindu Indo-Trinidadian shopkeeper in southern Trinidad. [Interviewee #40]}
> **Particularly the Muslim faith: he would be patronized by Muslim people—his customers would make sure they patronize him.** Look at the doubles shed here called Hosein's—you'll see a lot of Afro-Muslims in Muslim garb. They'll go straight there as soon as they spot the name.

> {Muslim manager of construction firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #148]}
> My grandfather said "**Always go by a Muslim first**", but *now* there are a lot of non-Muslim businesses who supply Halal meats. Yes, for car parts, I'll go to a Muslim first—but if there's any problem I'll go to someone else. There's supposed to be a certain amount of brotherhood [between Muslims].

> {White-Trinidadian sales manager at printing firm. [Interviewee #14]}
> **The Indian race—they stick together. The older ones particularly. It's almost like a [masonic] lodge.** There are other powerful knits, like the **Syrian** community. They only give business to each other. As for the Chinese, they have absolutely no sort of partiality: they hire all sorts of people but will still support each other. And the Creoles [Afro-Trinidadians] really don't care about each other—they always have a chip on their shoulder.

> {Indo-Trinidadian Sales supervisor at a print firm. [Interviewee #166]}
> I don't think it have anything to do with race: it have a range of customers of different races, and a range of suppliers. People are concerned with quality and prices—though there are some businesses where **Chinese prefer to deal with other Chinese.**
> [AK: 'Why's that?']
> Because they want to keep the money within that race—like a clique.

> {Chinese-Trinidadian owner of a Chinese restaurant. [Interviewee #164]}
> The Chinese are not as close-knit as the Syrians: yes, they know each other, but at the end of the day it's all about financial gain. If you're Chinese I may help you, but I won't *necessarily* buy from you. You might however find that from the new Chinese landing now. Just like it used to be when my forefather

arrived and set up the regional associations you see on Charlotte Street, and they preferred dealing with them.

{*Muslim Manager of Furniture Manufacturer. [Interviewee #130]*}
They [Syrians] are a small community and because of that smallness they use it to develop the community—trust and so on. They're all intermarried, so one way or another they're always dealing with a family member. [For Muslims] Dr. S. M. Mohammed from S.M. Jaleel is a good friend of mine, but I wouldn't drink his products—I don't like them! But Syrians are different—they feel obliged to go to Syrian firms.

{*Chinese-Trinidadian publicity designer for entertainment industry. [Interviewee #143]*}
Syrians like to keep the money in the family.

These examples supplement those on the topic of ethnic solidarity in business (section 5.3.44).

5.3.85.   **Amongst all these groups, the strongest 'ethnic enclave' economy is probably amongst the recent immigrant Chinese, since transaction costs in dealing with other race groups are in a different class compared to any Trinidadian race group**: many Chinese do not even speak English and must often employ a local staff member to facilitate transactions for them. Thus even though most such Chinese have businesses in the consumer retail or restaurant sectors—and will be dealing with hundreds or thousands of customers each week—those transactions will be relatively narrow and predictable (e.g. taking orders from a menu, or cash at a supermarket checkout); by contrast their suppliers are often Chinese firms. For example:

{*Supervisor at Chinese supermarket on Charlotte St, Port-of-Spain*[38]}
I don't think there's one Chinese businessman in Trinidad that doesn't know Mr. Wong ... They all come here and ask him for advice.
[*AK: 'So what about Indo-Trinidadians or Afro-Trinidadians too?'*]
No, it's 99 percent Chinese. He imports goods from China and sells them on here. The 1% is doing things for local businesses.

5.3.86.   With regard to Indo-Trinidadians, opinions are polarized: outsiders perceive Indo-Trinidadians as being ethnic favoritists, but insiders (i.e. Indo-Trinidadians themselves) claim they suffer from intra-group divisions (particularly by religion) and general distrust. As examples of these polarized opinions:

{*Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #188]*}
You always find East Indian buyers give business to one of their own. I'd have to come in cheaper to get it.

{*Muslim Indo-Trinidadian Director of Furniture Manufacturer. [Interviewee #130]*}
I have found in Trinidad, **Indo business people don't coexist**—that's what I've found—I don't know if it's lack of trust or fear.

{*Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of specialist paints shop. [Interviewee #49]*}
It happens a lot in central Trinidad [i.e. the byword for Indo-Trinidadian populations]—people support their own—and they tell me that '**we have to support our own**'. But they wouldn't tell *you* that, and they wouldn't tell *him* that [pointing at an Afro-Trinidadian customer who happens to be in the shop].

5.3.87.   As mentioned in section 5.3.46, the differences in opinion about ethnic favoritism amongst Indo-Trinidadians seem to be particularly because religious divisions affect Indo-Trinidadians far more than non-Indo-Trinidadians perceive them to. The following quote

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[38] Informal interview—not catalogued.

shows how ethnic solidarity and lower transactions costs are considered two sides of the same coin:

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of an advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
Whites can get business with all races. **But Hindus, Christians, and Muslim East Indians can't get business from each other. It's a clannish thing, and there may be cultural things too**—he understand me because of cultural similarities and he may be more comfortable with me.

5.3.88. **Afro-Trinidadians appear to be something of a special case: they seem to be inherently less likely to stick together in business than other groups—even despite the Black Power movement of the 1970s.** As discussed above in section 5.3.51, most interviewees suggested the lack of ethnic solidarity amongst Afro-Trinidadians is a consequence of the way Afro-Trinidadians were brought to Trinidad without their families, and have evolved culturally without such strong corporate family structures. But there may be two other reasons also. **One reason is *pragmatic*: there may simply not be enough Afro-Trinidadian-owned businesses to permit a choice:**

{Indo-Trinidadian shopkeeper. [Interviewee #45]}
Even if they [Afro-Trinidadians] want to support the African businesses, they can't because it don't have what they want. ... Race is in politics in Trinidad, but not in business—because African people don't have the choice.

{White-Trinidadian manager of manufacturing company. [Interviewee #98]}
It's not a matter of choice: they have to deal with Indians because they have the goods they want.

A second reason may be *prudential*: Afro-Trinidadians seek competence and reliability in their suppliers and, like other ethnicities, have come to accept the generalization that those attributes will be found less often in Afro-Trinidadian businesses:

{Afro-Trinidadian proprietor of hardware store. [Interviewee #51]}
To be honest, Afro-Trinidadians have to put out a lot because even Black people will go to Indian businesses since they think Africans can't run businesses. ... Some [Indians] might be racial—like 'I want to support the Indian community'. To me, the Negroes are not like that: they spend their money anyhow ... they look for price.

5.3.89. **Finally,** to reiterate the point made earlier, it is important to remember that ethnic preferences generally **operate at the margin rather than the core of business decisions: race and religion can swing the balance when price, product, and service are otherwise relatively similar, but mostly do not override the profit motive.** For example:

{Mixed-Trinidadian Manager of Construction firm. [Interviewee #138]}
For me, I don't operate like that. But I do know in a large number of the companies I've worked for, Indian people do tend to give more work to Indian people *where they have a choice. Not* because they already know them. Not me, but there are people for whom this is important. Muslim people like to do business with Muslim people. **It's trust, and secondly their religion obliges them to help each other. They don't give it to the extent of losing money though.**

5.3.90. **It should be noted that these claims are based on hearsay as well as direct experience. We would expect hearsay to overestimate ethnic discrimination in business** (since a single occurrence is likely to be known about by several businesspeople); **and we might expect direct experience to underestimate ethnic discrimination** (since, as one interviewee said, "you never know exactly why someone decides not to buy from you"). This

is why another interviewee could declare that "racism does exist in Point Fortin, but we haven't seen it from our clients"[39].

(ii) Prejudice (and behavior itself?) varies with geographical location.

5.3.91. **In this sub-section I describe how ethnic favoritism is generally stronger in Central and Southern parts of Trinidad but, fascinatingly, interviewees' *perceptions* about how much ethnicity matters are strongest in the North.**

5.3.92. According to a widespread and popular view, race matters more in Central and South areas of Trinidad. For example:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian wholesaler of electrical equipment in southern Trinidad. [Interviewee #149]}*
> In south the Indians were all in the cane fields and so they didn't get to know Africans. Vice versa in Valencia, the Whites are mistrustful of Indians because they don't come into contact with them. St. James [a longstanding residential district in Port-of-Spain] is the only place I've noticed complete togetherness.

5.3.93. Hence, in business, I was frequently told that—for example—Afro-Trinidadian sales reps have a harder job making sales than Indo-Trinidadian sales reps in Central and South Trinidad:

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian Sales rep for paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #179]}*
> *[AK: 'Could an Afro-Trinidadian sales rep be successful here in south Trinidad?']*
> He would have to prove himself: he would have to gain their trust all over again. If he comes with me the first two weeks it might work, but if he turns out to be anything less than me he's out [in the eyes of the customers].

> *{Afro-Trinidadian Sales Manager for household goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #85]}*
> You get a lot of feedback from your purchasers and you get subtle complaints about sales reps, while you never get complaints in other areas.

Statistics for survey and interviewee responses on this topic are shown above in Figure 28 in section 5.3.79.

5.3.94. According to my interviewees, two dynamics appear to be responsible for this favoritism. **First, upbringing and social hard-wiring of ethnic attitudes.** Indo-Trinidadians in particular are brought-up and socialized to have stronger ethnic allegiances and prejudices in Central and South than in the North.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager of furniture manufacturer. [Interviewee #130]}*
> *[AK: 'Do you think sales reps would be more successful if they're matched with the ethnicity of those they're trying to sell to?']*
> Yes, south of Caroni bridge. They [Indo-Trinidadians] grew up among one race, so they feel more comfortable among those same people. Electing Jack Warner [i.e. a Black politician who is Chair of the UNC—a predominantly Indo-Trinidadian party] was a major breakthrough. **It's not something intentional—it's just how we grew up**.

> *{Christian Indo-Trinidadian manager of construction supplies distributor, who hesitated before she indicated she could trust Muslims as much as members of other religions. [Interviewee #137]}*
> I think it's a mindset thing: **something drilled into us from when I was little**—the Christians and Muslims have a little friction.

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[39] Interviewee #12.

5.3.95.   Indeed, these differences between Northern and other Indo-Trinidadians go beyond ethnic allegiance, into other areas of culture and behavior. Indo-Trinidadians from Central and South are generally deemed to be more conservative and community-oriented than when they hail from the North:

> *{Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}*
> The thing I find with Indian people—I don't know if it's religion—is that they tend to be very subservient. But Port-of-Spain Indians are different—you can't talk down to them: they're a lot more 'with it'.

5.3.96.   **Second, these ethnic biases are perpetuated by a lack of interaction, since Central and Southern areas are predominantly Indo-Trinidadian** (see Figure 6), and so cross-ethnic interactions are less likely to occur. The following quotes emphasize how an absence of cross-ethnic interactions can promote the formation of negative stereotypes, and vice versa:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}*
> An Afro-Trinidadian guy—very dark, with four gold teeth in his mouth—we interviewed him for a merchandizing job. **And he said that this is the closest that most of his friends would have ever come to Indian people.** I'm like—I was in *shock*. I was like—I will never forget what he said to me; I looked at him like 'What?! Where do you live?!'. **I was dumbfounded, because it was normal for us—I mean going to school, I went to school with mixed people—it didn't matter to me.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian Marketing officer for Plastics and Metal manufacturer, who indicated he trusts Afros, Indos and Whites 'Somewhat' but Chinese and Syrians 'Only A Little'. [Interviewee #125]}*
> [AK: *'Why do you think you might tend to trust those groups less?'*]
> **I don't ever come into contact with those people and that's probably the reason why.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Rep for meats distributor, who grew up in North Trinidad. [Interviewee #144]}*
> There are hardcore areas like Morvant, or the deep South. **But I went to school with Black people so I can mingle.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager at a Print firm, speaking about her move away from an Indo-Trinidadian area. [Interviewee #126]}*
> But remember from High School onwards—that was in San Juan for me—you'd already see people of different races too—and that continues through university. And I didn't really socialize much with people in St Helena [the predominantly Indo-Trinidadian area where I grew up] anyway.

> *{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}*
> **We have found that—this is interesting—that Indians don't stay. It's a Black company; sometimes they get pressure to leave.**
> [AK: *'From their families?'*]
> **From their families, from their peers, sometimes from their own selves, because they're not comfortable because they're working for a Black man.**
> [AK: *'Do you think...well, I've heard generally that Indians are more likely to move around, or they would learn a business and go off and set up their own one..'*]
> We have hired an Indian driver—we have hired several—and they'll stay a month or two months; maybe after a *week*. They don't feel comfortable working for a Black man.
> [AK: *'How do you think they'd feel if you called them in, and sat them down in the office and asked them to their face?'*]
> They'd say there was nothing in it. In our production we haven't had that kinda thing, because we're in a Black area and we pull our staff from there. Outside the wider community, **we've found it *very, very* difficult to recruit customer service people in the Chaguanas area[40]. Right? In the Debe area. There's certain areas of Trinidad, where I think racially the awareness is higher. Tunapuna, Princes Town, Sangre Grande—which are much more *mixed* communities, we have no problem pulling East Indians employees from those communities.** And retaining them! Because they're more comfortable working with Blacks. But certain communities we have found difficult. But it's not something I could say, well, it's *because* of this or because of that. It's just a feeling that you get the impression in that area.

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[40] A historically Indo-Trinidadian area in central Trinidad.

Greater geographical segregation in Central and Southern Trinidad may also help explain why there was a significant amongst my interviewees reporting work life rather than social life was bringing them into contact with people of a wider range of races. 44% of respondents in Northern Trinidad reported their work life brought them into wider racial contact than their social life, but fully 63% of respondents in Central and South Trinidad reported that same phenomenon. This difference is significant at the 1% level. I confirmed this result by controlling also for age and gender, and the results are shown below in Table 3, indicating Northern Trinidadians come into contact with a wider diversity of races in their social lives than elsewhere in Trinidad.

Table 3: Are Northern Trinidadians' social lives more racially diverse than elsewhere?

Dependent variable: 'Wider friends through social life?'	(coefficients)
Northern Trinidad (binary)	0.178**
Age	-0.004
Gender	-0.133*
[constant]	0.627***
N	201
R^2	0.06

Legend: * <0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

5.3.97.   **However, one puzzle to be explained is that levels of prejudice seemed to vary quite a lot at the village and neighborhood level even within Central and Southern Trinidad.** There seemed to be some islands of tolerance and multi-culturalism even in some of the most isolated and traditional villages. **At first I believed, as many interviewees said, that this was simply a function of the extent of ethnic mixing in the local communities:**

> *{Manager of Construction firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #148]}*
> There are places where you take a five minute drive, you see a certain bonding and togetherness—then another five minute drive and it's just Indos. Then another five minute drive and people are together again.

> *{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian manager of print firm. [Interviewee #153]}*
> I grew up in Rock Road and Siparia [two unusually racially diverse areas in south Trinidad], so you kind of get to know their side of the story [i.e. Afro-Trinidadians' side of the story]. And to distrust Indians—did you see I marked that on the questionnaire?

> *{Afro-Trinidadian purchasing manager for construction supplies firm in southern Trinidad. [Interviewee #204]}*
> I grew up in the village here—we don't have races. We just smiley, happy, warm people. You don't feel that?? ... I'm the only Negro in this company and I don't feel it affects me at all. I've been here 30 years.

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian supervisor at Afro-Trinidadian-owned Construction firm in south Trinidad, speaking about his boss. [Interviewee #149]}*
> This is one of the only Afro-owned contractors in Penal, and it's a unique place to work because most of your clients will be Indian. And there are no problems. **They just accept him for who he is and respect his word. Partly because he's grown up around here.**

5.3.98.   But the more I encountered this phenomenon, I realized it is too simplistic to attribute this variation only to whether a village or neighborhood is ethnically mixed or not—since sometimes (for example in Debe—as documented in section 4.1.4) an influx of Afro-Trinidadians seems to be hardening attitudes amongst Indo-Trinidadians. **Instead, the *origin* of Afro-Trinidadians in a traditionally Indo-Trinidadian area seemed to be the**

decisive factor in determining whether Afro-Trinidadians were perceived positively or not. For example, Afro-Trinidadians were deemed by Indo-Trinidadians to be aggressive and inclined to criminality when they hail from Laventille and Morvant (in the Port-of-Spain area), but diligent and civilized when they come from the South:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}*
> **The Afro-Trinidadian kids from South are much different to Morvant and Laventille: they want to move forward—they're ambitious.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Rep for meats distributor, who went to school more with Afro-Trinidadians. [Interviewee #144]}*
> **You wouldn't believe you get a different breed of Blacks in the West [e.g. Maraval] than in Morvant.** I wouldn't have seen this if I lived in the deep South. They probably do one bad thing to me and I hate them for the rest of my life.

Hence the hardening of views in Debe can be explained because many of the new Afro-Trinidadian residents hail from northern Trinidad.

Incidentally, there was some suggestion amongst interviewees that people in general are brought up with more integrity when they are born outside the bigger cities of Trinidad:

> *{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of a print firm. [Interviewee #111]}*
> Austin, that is another factor. Whether you're a Hindu or Muslim in this area, we teach our children to do good.

5.3.99. If these views are accurate—i.e. that Afro-Trinidadians growing up in southern Trinidad have a different character—the phenomenon deserves explanation. **One suggestion is the different histories of Afro-Trinidadians in south Trinidad, who supposedly had to work harder than Afro-Trinidadians elsewhere:**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}*
> **Blacks in South are very different, because their parents or grandparents were on the oil fields. And when it comes to punctuality—because they're a twenty-four hour business—so when it comes to punctuality, when it comes to productivity and so on, South Blacks are *very different* from North Blacks! Morvant-Laventille Blacks. Because *their* parents came from the ports. Or work with the city council or with government. Their time timekeeping is "no big 'ting". And they work till 2pm and then they go on home.** So when you hire somebody from this community up here, you have to recondition people. It takes a long time, but I've been able to do it successfully in some cases. They go to school and teachers don't show up, and get paid; so they think they can come on the job and don't show up, and get paid.

5.3.100. **A second factor is that Afro-Trinidadians are a minority in southern Trinidad, and thus are more likely to assimilate with Indo-Trinidadian behavioral characteristics, rather than reaching the critical population mass necessary to consolidate their own distinctive culture.** As examples of Indo-Trinidadians' views about Afro-Trinidadians originating in southern Trinidad:

> *{Shop Assistant in hardware retailer in the 'deep South'. [Interviewee #154]}*
> It have some Africans who come in here who are soft-spoken—they're not rowdy. In Barrackpore the few Negro people that have grown up with us aren't like the ones in Laventille. We have a good few loud customers too, but they're Indian.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of Hardware shop in central Trinidad. [Interviewee #140]}*
> Some of them [Afro-Trinidadians], especially those that grew up among the Indians, are very hardworking and very friendly. I know them in Felicity.

By contrast, Afro-Trinidadian behaviors may be more rigid in the North because Afro-Trinidadians **live in large enough numbers to feel self-confident in manifesting their own culture**.

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of an advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
An African who grew up in Central may be different, but sit down a Port-of-Spain African with an East Indian and they won't mesh.

On reflection, though I did not initially have the reference in mind, this argument tallies very closely with prior research literature suggesting that ethnic conflict is far more likely to arise between two 'evenly matched' ethnic groups than in situations where one group numerically dominates all others (Horowitz 1985; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005). In the latter situation, there is one clearly dominant group, but in the former situation the two groups can be in open competition.

5.3.101. **Meanwhile, the intriguing consequence of this phenomenon is that—contrary to expectations of ethnic division in Central and South Trinidad—people *perceive* ethnicity to matter more in North Trinidad than in Central and South.** Figure 30 shows striking differences in the percentages of people deeming ethnicity to matter in making sales, and in ethnicity to matter in building a business relationship. These differences are significant at the 5% level. I postulate this is because—similarly to the differences between 'lay' people and principal agents—Northern Trinidadians have more experience with cross-ethnic business transactions and therefore have seen in reality the impact that ethnicity can have.

Figure 30: Ethnicity is perceived to be more important to business by respondents in North Trinidad than elsewhere
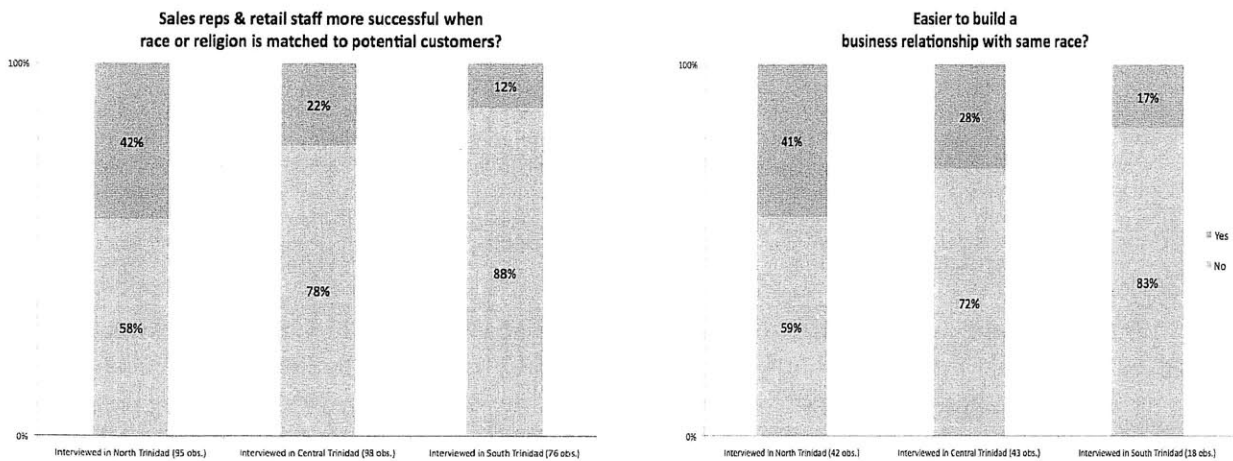
The phenomenon may also be because, while ethnic attitudes in the North are more tolerant, they may also be more rigid, *because* of the greater number of cross-ethnic interactions.

{Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur in construction industry. [Interviewee #206]}
They already have preconceived expectation of every ethnicity they're going to interact with.

...Hence, contrary to a notion of multi-ethnic cities being 'melting pots' where ethnicities blend together, it seems from evidence collected in Trinidad that ethnic boundaries may

have an *increased* saliency. **Moreover firms may, if acting cannily, may take advantage of that phenomenon by adopting practices which harness it, rather than attempting to trade across ethnic lines.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #187]}*
> People growing up in a rural society, African next to Indian—they close—they know how to deal with each other. **But Port-of-Spain is different. An African store manager gives more space to an Afro-Trinidadian merchandiser. So I send people out to deal with the same race.**

(iii) Sellers don't discriminate; Buyers do.

5.3.102.   As described above, there is a compelling economic logic which suggests neither sellers nor buyers should discriminate their market transactions on ethnic grounds, since that would be an irrational violation of their overriding profit motive. However, I found in general that such logic appears to be manifested far more often for sellers than for buyers. **Sellers do not artificially constrict their market by ethnicity; but buyers *do* seem more prone to make purchasing decisions on ethnic groups *if* there is a choice of suppliers similar in all other respects.** Hence, as discussed earlier in section 5.3.93, sales reps may face an uphill struggle in clinching sales to cross-ethnic clientele:

> *{Christian Indo-Trinidadian sales manager at a print firm. [Interviewee #169]}*
> You won't hire an African to sell ads for an East Indian station—because that's retarded: they wouldn't relate to the station or to the clients. They can't talk about a movie and so on [and therefore can't build comfort and trust].

...while suppliers and retailers often expressed rather positive endorsements of their cross-ethnic customers:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of car parts supplier. [Interviewee #131]}*
> Most of the customers are African. **We rely on them; they spending money.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #150]}*
> My relationship with the [Indo-Trinidadian] hardwares is a business relationship: **they don't see me as an African, they just see me as someone giving them good business.**

...and indeed suppliers might even express a willingness to deal even with customers they found alien or strange:

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}*
> Sometimes you'll see a guy come here in a long robe with a skullcap—the kind of person you don't see in Trinidad. **But if we wants to buy plastic, and he's got the money, I'll sell to him. That's business. Once they're paying, that's who I'm going for.**

5.3.103.   Indeed, in the opinions of suppliers and retailers, the (perceived) Afro-Trinidadian traits of a lack of business acumen—or even outright incompetence—actually render Afro-Trinidadians as the best customers, who are less stingy on bargaining than Indo-Trinidadians, and who keep coming back for more from the Indian shops!

> *{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}*
> **Most of my customers are Africans.** But they no good at running businesses. An Indian will buy one truck, pay the bank, come and buy another. **An African buys one truck, come back the next year to buy an engine, and then parts and rims for the truck because he mash it up.** I'm sorry to say, but it true.

... [Also] It easier to deal with Africans: you have more talking to do; you have to advise them into it. An Indian comes and he knows what he wants.

{Indo-Trinidadian furniture store manager. [Interviewee #60]}
Their brain's in their bottoms-- they can't run businesses. **We have no problem dealing with them [i.e. selling to them]; they have the problem running the business!**

{Dougla Sales Manager of household goods wholesaler. [Interviewee #72]}
Chinese customers are always looking for a good deal—they always want to bargain. Syrians give trouble: the more money they have the more reluctant they are to pay for it. **Afro-Trinidadians are mostly fine with any price with give them.**

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of retail store. [Interviewee #52]}
They [Afro-Trinidadians] shop a lot—they don't beat you down on price. Once they want it, they want it.

5.3.104. But even these observations on the unbiased approach of sellers need to be nuanced a little more. They are very relevant for simple transactions that require little or no trust, and where payment takes place on the spot. They are not so valid for more complex transactions, as I explain in the next part of this section.

(iv) Complex Transactions prompt recourse to ethnic favoritism.

5.3.105. **In short, the more trust is required by the type of transaction, the more businesspeople will prefer dealing with their own ethnicity, unless they have opportunities to measure the trustworthiness of potential business partners before transacting with them.**

5.3.106. **At one end of the trustworthiness spectrum, where standardized products are sold to customers who pay cash on delivery, ethnicity does not matter.** If money is available, then "the only color people study is green[41]" (i.e. the color of money), and indeed Afro-Trinidadians may actually be *preferred*, because of their spendthriftyness (see section 5.3.103). **But where competence and reliability are an integral part of the transaction—for example, in finding long-term clients, or in finding suppliers who must be reliable on delivery and quality—businesspeople are much more likely to draw on ethnic allegiances and stereotypes.**

5.3.107. As is implied by our previous discussions, this recourse to ethnic stereotypes may not always benefit one's own group. Afro-Trinidadians may suffer because they are commonly profiled as lacking competence, but Indo-Trinidadians may also suffer because they are often profiled as being untrustworthy or disloyal. In general, however Afro-Trinidadians may suffer the most from a lack of knowledge. They may be able to prove themselves over time, through reciprocal trust testing (as I will explain below, in section 6.1.31), but start off at a disadvantage. For example:

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]}
There's a perception that **Africans** would be **less reliable** because of the excessive liking for spending money, so **people think it'll hamper business**.

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[41] In Trinidad, the verb 'to study' means 'to be concerned about'.

By contrast, even if Indo-Trinidadians are concerned about untrustworthiness amongst Indo-Trinidadian partners, there is an element of 'better the devil you know'. **To put this point in the language of risk: dealing with ethnic outgroups may not *elevate* the level of risk, but instead renders it more unknown. And more complex transactions increase the exposure to that risk.**

(v) Product differentiation diminishes buyers' recourse to ethnic favoritism.

5.3.108.   This part of the section is brief, since we have already alluded to this mechanism in the section above on Buyers' discrimination, and earlier in this document with reference to company branding. In summary: where products are clearly different—either intrinsically, or owing to branding—ethnic favoritism amongst buyers is more likely to be displaced by these other qualities of the product. But where products are not clearly different—as, for example, when choosing bottled water or packaging suppliers—buyers will be more likely to draw on ethnic favoritism as a way of differentiating between products and suppliers.

5.3.109.   Hence I found the firms that deliberately utilize the ethnicity of sales reps to increase sales were **most often firms operating in the most competitive markets or with the simplest products which are otherwise hard to differentiate. One could reasonably say for those firms that the ethnicity of the sales reps became part of—or substituted for—a brand.**

> *{White-Trinidadian food & beverage Plant Manager. [Interviewee #74]}*
> **The salesmen and women we hire to sell in central Trinidad will be Indians, and to sell in Laventille will be an African. An Indian will buy from an Indian—that's how it works. You're looking to get as much sold as possible, and it will make a difference.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}*
> I think in the downtrade, that is a fact—by 'downtrade' we mean van sales to shop and parlor type businesses—**if we're looking at C-stores or what you call 'mom & pop'. I think on that level of trade it is very true: that if you keep the same ethnicity as people predominantly in the area, that you do get more business.** We didn't do it on purpose, it just happened that way: the Port-of-Spain rep is an Afro, the south and central ones are Indians, and the east one we had was mixed—'dougla'—you know what that means, right? And we did *extremely well*; we were extremely successful with those customer bases. We didn't purposely go out doing it that way, it just happened that way when we hired them. But they were extremely successful compared with prior sales people—so that is true.
> To put it another way, downtrade is literally personal: "if I like you, I'll buy from you. If I don't like you, I'll buy from the next guy that *sells the same thing that you sell.*" **Because remember that all the vans sell basically the same thing.** And then when you go to a supermarket—that's when you have more of a mix of people; a much higher tolerance, and level of understanding—you find that the boundary's crossed. … Though most of the supermarkets—the A and B stores—the larger ones—they're all predominantly owned by Indo-Trinidadians.

Interestingly—albeit on the basis of limited evidence—it seems this instrumental use of the ethnicity of sales reps can work even in situations where buyers might have an aversion to the ethnicity of a firm's owner. The following interviewee, who works for an Afro-Trinidadian owned firm, explains how sales reps can be chosen instrumentally to smooth transactions in Indo-Trinidadian areas:
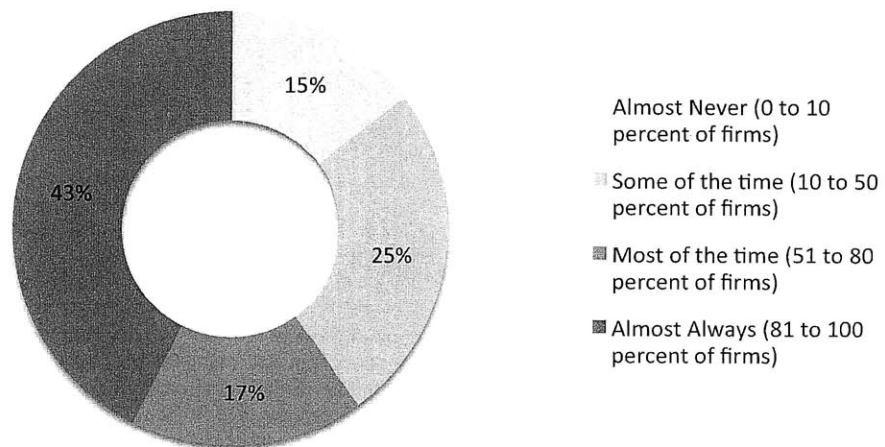
Indeed, firms can deal with the sales reps of other firms without even *knowing* who the owners of those firms are:

The interview data presented in Figure 31 shows the proportions of interviewees who knew who it is that owns or managers the firms with whom they trade.

Figure 31: How often do interviewees know the owners or managers of their trading partners?

Almost Never (0 to 10 percent of firms)

Some of the time (10 to 50 percent of firms)

Most of the time (51 to 80 percent of firms)

Almost Always (81 to 100 percent of firms)

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[42] Name disguised.

Government Procurement as a natural experiment: Does removing the profit motive prompt increased ethnic favoritism?

5.3.110.   **Government procurement in Trinidad has become somewhat notorious for its corruption. Hence the profit motive, which mitigates ethnic favoritism in the private sector, is clearly not present in government procurement decisions. Does government procurement thus permit us a clear view of the extent to which ethnic favoritism is manifested in the absence of a profit motive?**

5.3.111.   First, to give a few examples of the extent of corruption, one of the most visible is the 40-meter (130-ft) high ceremonial flagpole that stands in Trinidad's national sports stadium in Port-of-Spain. With some degree of controversy, it became public knowledge that the flag had cost fully TT$2 million (approx. US$315,000) to construct[43]. Even to the untrained eye, this seems rather expensive for a metal flagpole and flag—albeit a large one. But an investigative journalist giving the matter closer scrutiny exposed the true extent of this overspending: he estimated the whole project, including clearing the land, digging, buying the component parts, and erecting them, should have cost between TT$85,000 and TT$135,000. Hence perhaps TT$1.8 million had been funneled off somewhere in this single project.

5.3.112.   During my interviews, I found many other examples. Indeed, in talking to firms dealing with government contracts, most firms could provide a distinct example of corruption in procurement. It seemed pervasive: an everyday occurrence. For example, one of my interviewees bid on a contract to supply rainjackets to a government agency. He supplied a tender for the provision of high-quality rainjackets, made in the US, and would've cost the agency TT$ 475 a piece. But the agency instead they went for rainjackets for a price of TT$650 a piece, even though they were lower-quality rainjackets from the Far East. The contract was for 3,000 rainjackets, which equals a total of TT$25,000 of overspending. In most cases, the surplus funds are split between the bidder (who has agreed with a corrupt government staff member to take—unofficially—$500 per rainjacket) and the corrupt government staff member (who takes the other $150 per rainjacket).

5.3.113.   In another example, an importer and distributor of men's shirts bid on a government contract to supply a large number of shirts. It submitted some sample shirts, bid what it thought was a good price, but was surprised to learn it had not won the contract. However, the plot thickened when the firm went to pick up its samples: the shirts of the winning contract were also there, and turned out to be the same brand of shirts! Since no other company in Trinidad imported that brand of shirts, the winning contract must have procured the shirts from the original firm, then sold them on to the government at a higher price. So how was the bid won by a company supplying the same shirts at a higher price? My interviewee thought the only conceivable reason must be a middleman who—as with the rainjackets—strikes a deal to provide kickbacks to a government staff member in return for being awarded the higher price contract.

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[43] See articles in local press, e.g. 'Stadium flag costs $2m' in *Newsday*, 5th November 2009, http://www.newsday.co.tt/news/0,110409.html

{Manager of a corporate Hardware & Equipment supplier. [Interviewee #96]}
You'd wonder why most of the big construction firms in a Commonwealth country are French and Chinese. Well, the English ask too many questions, and the Americans have too many laws. The Chinese don't ask questions, and the French don't give a damn.

5.3.114. These examples suggest that government ministries and civil servants are not acting strictly in accordance with the best financial interests of the state. Hence we would expect to see ethnic favoritism come to the fore in government business, if individuals are acting in accordance with their own preferences, prejudices, and personal obligations. This view was held by a number of interviewees. For example:

{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian Manager of Construction firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #148]}
There's a lot of race in public servants. [His wife worked at the Ministry of Finance for a few years]. I don't think it's the politicians doing that—it's the civil servants—the people lower down—they're the racists. When they see more recruits are coming in, and they're Indian, the Africans would make wisecracks. I don't know if it's because they felt threatened or because they're racist. Or **you're having a conversation about someone letting you down for work, and the person would say 'And that person was an Indian or African?'—and I'd think 'Well why is that even relevant?'.**

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of advertising agency trying to get government business?. [Interviewee #109]}
The race thing is so strong that it really hampers business in this country. We're still not being given a fair opportunity in this country.

{Afro-Trinidadian contractor. [Interviewee #183]}
They [Indo-Trinidadians] do have, when they get into power, a totalizing approach to whatever they're doing: a total dominance.

And it has been detected in prior surveys of ethnic relations in Trinidad. For example, Selwyn Ryan's survey in 1998 found that fully 48 percent of Trinidadians believed that the UNC government was ethnically partisan in its awards of government contracts (28 percent believed it was non-partisan, and 24 percent did not know or refused to say) (Ryan 1999:198).

5.3.115. However, as might be implied by even the cursory description of corruption given above, the profit motive is not actually absent: instead, the *firm's* profit motive is replaced by an *individual* profit motive. **In other words, the firm's profit motive displaces ethnic favoritism in the private sector, and the individual's (corrupt) profit motive can displace ethnic favoritism in the public sector.**

{White-Trinidadian Manager of a corporate Hardware & Equipment supplier. [Interviewee #96]}
Race and religion doesn't count in government procurement. **Race in elections, yes—but once you get into government it's about money, not race. ... It's a dirty game to get in; but once in, it's an open game that works on money.**

Payments are not always made in cash: they can equally be payments in kind, or in favors.

{White-Trinidadian manager of manufacturing company. [Interviewee #98]}
Now the biggest corruption in terms of numbers of people involved is the civil service. Joe's in charge of procurement and goes with his family, schoolmates, friends—even if he has to go and buy it from somebody and sell it back. That's paid by cutbacks, dinners at home, cases of Johnnie Walker Black, using my beach house at the weekend. Somehow you never see any White people doing this because they never learn how to do it.

Incidentally, according to some interviewees, this tendency comes more naturally to Indo-Trinidadians than to other groups:

{Afro-Trinidadian contractor. [Interviewee #183]}
The Indians are much better 'facilitators'—to facilitate getting paid. Though the Africans are learning that side of the business too.

{Afro-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #150]}
It's very difficult for Africans to penetrate any business [i.e. industry] in Trinidad, be it government business or private clients. Sometimes it works by a recommendation from someone, but otherwise it's hard on your own. **But that's probably to do with who pays bribes.**

5.3.116. For deals at higher levels of government, the individual profit motive is (reportedly) supplemented by a procurement bias towards firms that have donated funds, or offered other support, to the political party in power.

{Managing Director of a large firm. [Interviewee #98]}
At the top it's totally corrupt—it's all contracts for the boys—purely to do with party membership. You really sweat the change of guard, hoping it'll never happen.

{Sales rep for construction contractor. [Interviewee #75]}
The big contracts are much more about who knows you. Also the political card is important—supporting firms which support the ruling party: transparency is lacking.

Owing to the coincidence of ethnicity with political party membership (i.e. of the two main political parties, the PNM is perceived almost exclusively as an Afro-Trinidadian party, and the UNC as a Indo-Trinidadian party), **these political biases towards certain firms can *look* like racial biases:**

{Managing Director of Manufacturer and Distributor in Construction Industry. [Interviewee #117]}
With the government, if you're in line with the party—and **in particular the racial makeup of the party**—then more gets passed your way. It's like: "It's the boys' turn".

{General Manager of Construction Firm. [Interviewee #161]}
State enterprises—they can still be racial: in particular **if departments are mainly Indo-Trinidadian then you get them looking to Indian firms.**

{White-Trinidadian manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #146]}
[AK: 'Would you say race comes into government business?']
Yes, that is a fact of life. [Company X][44] **has always done better under a PNM government than a UNC government.**

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of an advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
Before the last election I was doing a lot of government business. When the PNM cam into power I lost it. I'd have to say that's 80 percent a racial decision: politics in Trinidad is based on race.
[AK: 'So if you were an Afro-Trinidadian owner working for the UNC government, it would've been easier to stay on and work for the PNM?]
Absolutely.

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #202]}
Their only claim to political power is the color of their skin. I mean, if Jesus Christ came here and he wasn't Black he couldn't get elected!—no matter what he said, you know? And that's how these islands are run!

...but on closer scrutiny, it seems like *political* affiliation (plus the bribe-making, as described earlier) is prime in decision making on government contracts, rather than ethnic affiliation. For example, two of Trinidad's largest construction contractors—Seeram Brothers and Junior Sammy—are owned by Indo-Trinidadians. Under the UNC government, Seeram Brothers reportedly got the plum work. Then, under the PNM's tenure, it was

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[44] Name of his own company—removed to protect anonymity. It is a non-Indo-Trinidadian owned company, whereas the UNC has traditionally been associated with a predominantly Indo-Trinidadian membership.

apparently Junior Sammy—a company that offered support to the PNM—who got the best contracts. These decisions were reportedly taken at Ministerial level[45].

{Managing Director of a large print firm. [Interviewee #98]}
This isn't an Afro-Trinidadian phenomenon: there aren't enough Afro-Trinidadian firms to choose from! **It just depends on who knows you—government departments, civil service**—it doesn't change with government.

{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian Manager of Construction firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #148]}
[AK: 'So how do you demonstrate you're not UNC in order to get the contracts?']
Sponsorship, attending meetings—you have to make an appearance. I actually prefer to deal with the PNM than the UNC: now when I need a passport I get can it in a week because I know someone in the Ministry.

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian general manager of large construction company. [Interviewee #168]}
[AK: 'Do you think that Indo-Trinidadian firms resent you for doing business with the PNM government?']
The PNM government would outline jobs to do in their yearly budget—so we'd know there's a road improvement program: we need to meet with them and prequalify. **At that level, race fades into the background.** But the envy is to do with winning the contracts, not because we deal with a PNM government.

Likewise the government may give favorable treatment in other ways to political supporters:

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #202]}
I mean, if you go back to the Haiti model [of failure]—if you go back to the Haiti model—you allow certain families to flourish because they're supporters of the particular family in power. That's part of the poverty model!—**it has nothing to do with any *ethnic minority*—that's a political-governance model.** A particular family's very supportive of the government. They own a hotel that has gone bust, and the government buys it from them—you know that story? Ask about the Carlton Savannah hotel. It's owned by a particular guy, who's a big supporter of the government. The owners of the hotel are two prominent Trinidad families, and they did a bad job: the concept was wrong. And the model failed. And how do you think they survived? Because the government bought it! That's the poverty model. Now, should there be oversight?—and should there be good governance?—yes! There should be competition policy to forbid one company that sells beer from buying another company that sells beer, so that you don't end up with one company making all the beer in the country[46]. And that happens to be, that happens to be—the owner of that conglomerate is—a member of the Arab-Trinidadian community. **So that had nothing to do with that! [i.e. ethnic affiliation] It had to do with these islands being governed by people that have never owned anything.**

5.3.117. All in all, corruption and the importance of political affiliation contribute to a general wariness of government employees...

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}
The corruption in this place is amazing! Today I had to do four trucks [at the licensing office]. Everything there [i.e. all papers were present]. But the officer decided he didn't want to do it, unless I bribe him. So I decided not to bribe him. I know him since before he born, but he decide he don't want to do it. Because they put square peg in wrong hole: friends and family put them there and they don't know the first thing about trucks.

...and a wariness amongst firms of tendering for government business:

{White-Trinidadian Manager of a corporate Hardware & Equipment supplier. [Interviewee #96]}
Most firms don't like to do government business for three reasons: One, credit terms: the state takes between zero and 120 days to pay you. Two, **getting involved in kickbacks**: many firms won't do that. Three, **many people feel used by the state—they need three bids to buy something and your bid might just be the filler.** There's no auditing, so they can just choose the expensive one if they want.

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[45] According to interviewee #96. One interviewee (Sales Manager for Hardware retailer, Interviewee #133) did however voice the opinion that the reason was not only political, but was also based on the relative merit of Junior Sammy versus Seeram Brothers: "Seeram Brothers is an outdated company—they didn't move with the technology like Junior Sammy, and they've been left on the wayside because of that. But yes, like any part of the world, to get government business you need political connections. We [an Indo-Trinidadian company] tend to do more business with the PNM government than before under the UNC."
[46] This is a reference to Carib Brewery, which holds a monopoly on beer production in Trinidad.

{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of Construction contractor, south Trinidad. [Interviewee #151]}
With the private owners, they hear from other people, when people recommend you: "He's a good guy; he won't charge you too much", and you'll get the job. **With government jobs, you go to tender, but you have to know some of the guys up there, and 'go through different channels'. ... They always have kickbacks and you have to be prepared for that.**

...which of course has the unintended side-effect of maintaining a restricted cartel-like market for those firms who *are* tendering!

5.3.118. In short, government procurement practices are a big problem in Trinidad, but cannot shed much light on the main topic of this dissertation, given that the incentive structures are so distinctive and distorted.

5.4. Conclusion

5.4.1. Looking back over the preceding analysis, our conclusion is not very optimistic. **Racial and religious stereotypes are broadly accepted, including by those to whom they refer— and are utilized by businesspeople to inform their business decisions.**

5.4.2. However, there are grounds for optimism. As identified in the introduction, **business transactions do themselves offer a prominent channel for interethnic contact to take place. So, to the extent that cross-ethnic transactions occur, what effect do they have on ethnic attitudes and relations?** That question sets the agenda for the next chapter of this dissertation, to which I now turn.

6. BUSINESS IMPACTING ON ETHNICITY:
TRUST RELATIONS, FRIENDSHIP, AND THE LIMITS OF BUSINESS CONTACT

In chapter 5 we examined the extent to which business transactions are influenced by ethnicity. In chapter 6 we examine that relationship in the other direction: the social content and spillovers of business transactions, particularly for ethnicity.

Thus in this part of the dissertation I examine three social spillovers of business transactions: (i) trust, (ii) friendship, and (iii) changed ethnic relations. The first two operate at individual scales—i.e. they concern interpersonal relationships, and can thus constitute cross-ethnic bridging ties. The third operates at a social scale: it concerns the question of whether business experiences can change broader social attitudes.

In brief I argue that business transactions often help build trust, and even friendship, across ethnic boundaries—subject to some limiting conditions to do with the occupations and industries people work in. But ethnic prejudice is more resistant to change, and while cross-ethnic business transactions may build an appreciation of multiculturalism, it seems not to have the power to change core social attitudes which underpin ethnic prejudice.

6.1. Business → Trust: what, how, and with what ethnic conditioning?

6.1.1. **Business has the potential to generate impressively strong trust relationships.** Interpersonal relationships that begin as narrow buy-and-sell interactions can develop into rationally-based trust, and sometimes subsequently to affective relationships in which leniency is granted to trading partners based on sentiment rather than only on mutual interests. The ultimate potential of this phenomenon was demonstrated by quotes like the following:

> *{Main chef in Creole lunch café. [Interviewee #88]}*
> You build a relationship with them so you can trust them even to take stock and work out restock needs, even if you're not there. Our meat supplier even handles the cash for us. **You have to build reliability, then it becomes trustworthy, then it becomes friends, then it becomes associates.** [About the same meat supplier]: **He could just walk in here and be one of us.**

Indeed, the General Manager of a print firm[47] told me that the trusting relationship he has with some of his clients "is almost like a joint venture"—especially the ones he's been dealing with for ten years or more.

6.1.2.   This section examines three key questions in connection with trust ties: What is the nature of these relationships? How do they arise? And how do they interact with ethnicity?

What does Trust look like in practice?

6.1.3.   **While 'trust' does have an academic definition—i.e. the confidence I have in you to deliver on your word—the term is a little amorphous and confused in everyday usage.** Partly because we can 'trust' our lovers, or our family, or our friends, or our business partners—in myriad different contexts—I found the term could carry various different associations for different individuals. Hence even if the best academic term for this topic is 'trust', it was not particularly informative to use the term directly while carrying out the research. **Therefore in this section when I use the term 'trust', it is my conceptual label for the various synonyms used by interviewees themselves—particularly the term 'reliability'. The validity of applying the label 'trust' to interviewees' quotes will become apparent from the evidence I present here.**

6.1.4.   **The terms most frequently used by interviewees themselves were 'reliability' and 'being straight with me'.** I never introduced the words into conversations myself; they were used spontaneously by interviewees when discussing the nature of business relationships. The following excerpts demonstrate the validity of interpreting such phenomena as constituting trustworthiness, since the core quality in 'reliable' or 'straight' people is their ability to deliver on their word.

{Owner & manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #79]}
The key thing is reliability, and you get to know this over time. You tend to build business relationships with people **you feel comfortable with their word**.

{Sales manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #68]}
['Can you identify any patterns in which firms you trust the most? Are they the firms you've been doing business with the longest, or see the most frequently, or have worked together on solving problems, or those you both know you depend on each other?']
It's none of those. **It's the firms that deal with us in the most straightforward way. Those that stick to their word.** If people don't pay, we never go back. It doesn't matter how big you are.

6.1.5.   **The need for such trustworthiness was widespread; indeed businesspeople generally prefer that they can trust all their trading partners.** Indeed, some interviewees even felt *uncomfortable* doing business transactions which remained at the level of one-shot deals rather than building a longer term relationship based on trust:

{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of supermarket, who indicated he trusts Chinese-Trinidadians 'Only A Little' but all other ethnicities 'Somewhat'. [Interviewee #120]}
[AK: 'So, why might you be less inclined to trust Chinese-Trinidadians?']

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[47] Interviewee #196.

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Well it's partly because I don't have much interactions with them. But also because they're less flexible. They just see things in dollars and cents. They don't build up a relationship like other people. So I'd be less inclined to trust them.

The extent to which this is the case is likely to vary by industry: **trustworthiness is deemed *most* important in industries and transactions that are more complex.** In markets approaching conditions of perfect competition there is less need for trust: if a trading partner fails to deliver on his word, close substitutes are available from many alternative firms. An example of these 'thin' untrusting relationships is given by the following purchasing manager for a catering chain:

> {*Indo-Trinidadian purchasing manager for catering chain. [Interviewee #190]*}
> **I don't think it gets far enough in business to call it trust**—not from a supplier point of view or an employee point of view. ... **There's no personal relationship: it's a mutual understanding that whenever I need a particular product you can supply it. But there's no commitment,** since if you can get the same product at a more reasonable price then you switch. In the times we live in, price is what controls everything.

But this is unusual. On the whole, businesspeople in Trinidad usually attempt to develop an ongoing relationship with their buyers and suppliers, rather than leave the transactions as one-shot deals. Indeed, many interviewees told me that they habitually divide orders between different suppliers simply in order to maintain an ongoing connection with all of them—in case they have to switch at short notice. In short, relationships are important in business; and to have a relationship one needs some element of trust.

6.1.6. **But while trust is desired often, it is obtained more rarely.** Even though trust is something that businesspeople try to build into relationships, not all trading partners turn out to be trustworthy. **So, if trusting relationships are indeed built, they embody sunk costs and are worth preserving when possible:**

> {*Manager of print firm. [Interviewee #8]*}
> **You don't just drop suppliers like a hot potato: you go straight to management, you let them know what's wrong and try to work through it. It would take time to build up a new relationship [with another firm].**

> {*Office Manager for concrete blocks manufacturer. [Interviewee #99]*}
> If someone else offers a better price we would call our supplier and let them know to see if they can do better. [That's because] our companies have some good sales reps who let us know if there are problems with plant and so on.

> {*Proprietor of retail store. [Interviewee #19]*}
> **Once I deal with a supplier and he straight with me, I keep him for years: it hard to find good ones.**

> {*Manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #171]*}
> You can't afford to buy a crane to lift three times a year, so you need to find a crane company that when you need them they can deliver.

6.1.7. One distinction we must make clear at an early stage in this discussion is the difference between 'trust' and 'friendship' (the latter term will be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter). **Trust—as defined here—concerns only the ability to deliver on expectations; friendship, by contrast, may often be built on trust, but is manifested as a social relationship that goes beyond the domain in which it was originally formed.** In other words, throughout this discussion of trust, the domain of trust relations remains fixed in a business context; our subsequent discussion of friendship will be the occasion to explore how business relationships spill over into other areas of social life.

6.1.8. So, what do my results show about the role of business transactions in building trust? Figure 32 compares various vehicles for creating trust.

Figure 32: Average responses to question 'How much would you say you can trust (i.e. have confidence in people keeping to their word)....'
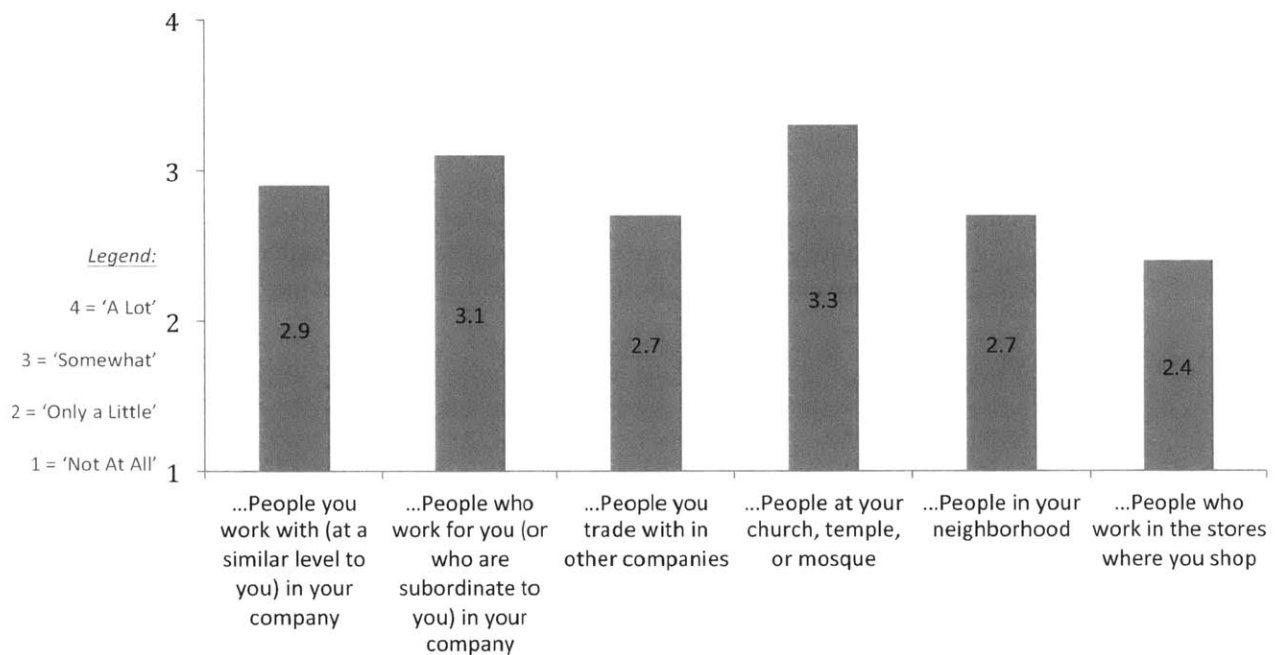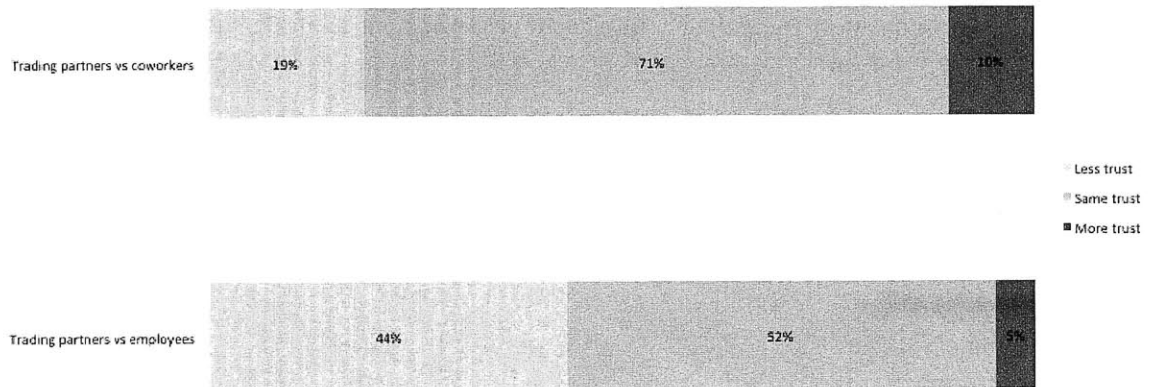

The results indicate that trust ties with work contacts are weaker than those with fellow members of a religious community, but stronger than those with people living nearby. **Looking particularly at trust ties with "people you trade with in other companies", these are significantly weaker than trust ties with people in one's own company, but still stronger than with "people who work in the stores where you shop".**

6.1.9. Looking more closely at these results in a business context, we can see that trust in trading partners is *stronger* than trust employees and coworkers in only 5% and 10% of cases respectively (see Figure 33). But the same data indicates that trust in trading partners is *equivalently strong* to trust in employees and coworkers in fully 52% and 71% of cases respectively. **These results indicate that trust ties with trading partners are surprisingly strong: often as strong as trust in coworkers in one's own company.**

Figure 33: How often is trust in trading partners higher than in coworkers or employees?

(Source: Analysis of interview question #33 and survey question #26)

Trading partners vs coworkers: 19% | 71% | 10%

Trading partners vs employees: 44% | 52% | 5%

Less trust
Same trust
More trust

6.1.10.   Two comments are necessary to put these scores in context. First, the higher trust placed in employees than in trading partners was not universal: there was some degree of variation, and several interviewees highlighted the limited trust they place in some or all employees:

> *{Managing Director of Food Manufacturer. [Interviewee #91]}*
> You can't even trust your closest associate. I learnt this in the police force. Out of 75 people [his employees], about ten actually care about the factory and growing the business. Only about ten turned up to work this week.

> *{Customer service manager at paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #134]}*
> [Comments, while filling out questionnaire on trust for employees]:
> I have to answer 'Not At All' here because we just fired eight people for stealing. The people we trusted are the ones working here 15 to 17 years, and they were the ones heading the thiefing ring. **The person heading the thiefing ring was Indian and the people following him were mixed and Africans. So I stopped trusting people in general**.

> *{Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}*
> **Now, he for example: I don't trust him one percent! He telling me now he going to drop his kid, but he probably doing something else at the same time. If he can cut a corner, he'll do it.** And he's a Christian!: he got married in church.
> The most honest employee I have has had very little education. But I would put my head on a block for her. She comes in the morning and opens up the factory—she has keys for the factory.

6.1.11.   Second, to contextualize those trust scores, and also to dilute the emphasis of the questions from being only about race, I also asked interviewees about the extent they trust other identifiable groups of Trinidadians: the police, and the media. Those two groups scored an average of 1.96 and 1.89 respectively, which rather puts in perspective the scores shown in Figure 32. As examples of interviewees' opinions which accompanied these scores:

> *{Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}*
> If there was a burglar in my house I'd call my neighbor before the police, because the police would come the next morning.

> *{Manager of Furniture Retailer in central Trinidad. [Interviewee #132]}*

6.1.12.   In subsequent parts of this section we examine *how* trusting relationships are actually built, and then subsequently the extent to which they are conditioned by ethnicity.

How are trusting relationships built?

6.1.13.   **I examine three modes for building trust-relationships: calculative, affective, and value-based.** These are chosen not because interviewees themselves compartmentalize their trust relationships into three categories, but because interviewees' descriptions of trust do seem to confirm these three categories as useful heuristics for thinking about the nature of such relationships—as described in my literature review.

Calculative Trust

6.1.14.   Crucially, trust must always have a precursor in the form of some kind of cooperative behavior—from something as simple as a market transaction (buying a product at a mutually-agreed price) through to something more complex like cooperation amongst firms for mutual gain. **Trust requires a vehicle in which it can be built, and business transactions provide such a vehicle.**

6.1.15.   **The reason transactions can build trust is because they provide an opportunity to test—over time, and through progressively more demanding transactions—the extent to which trading partners do indeed deliver on their word.** Each party to the relationship will be testing each other out, to see how reliable they are. This process doesn't happen instantly: each successful reciprocal transaction adds incrementally to a larger stock of trust.

> *{Sales rep for paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #179]}*
> **It takes years to build that kind of trust with these people. You must prove yourself and be honest and truthful.** You must take notes and say next time the van come you'll replace it. When you build up a relationships you find they telling you about their children an' ting. You don't get that just so—you have to get that over time.

...and, conversely, if trustworthy behavior is *not* observed then the stock of trust becomes depleted:

> *{Manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #184]}*
> Trust comes after a long, long relationship. For example, I started to get bounced cheques from a long-term client, then all the trust I had in him went through the window. And once that trust is lost it takes a long, long time to come back.

The final ingredient in the process of building calculative trust is mutual dependency. In business transactions this means that each partner has a rational interest in continuing the trading relationship. While calculative trust *can* be built where market power is distributed very unevenly, it means one party suffers relatively insignificant costs if the trust relationship is violated. For example:

> {Sole proprietor of a photo-supplies store. [Interviewee #87]}
> Once you're a millionaire, you make a phone call and it [i.e. the world] will come to you. But **if you're a small business they don't care.** [Then right on cue, his phone rings, and it's one of his suppliers who have finally called him back after he was trying to get them to respond 3 months ago. He gives them a hard time on the phone, since by now the need has passed. But he still needs to deal with them for his weekly stocks.] See?! **It don't matter how much they treat you bad—you have no redress.**

6.1.16. There is a strong reciprocal element to the process, since each party is encouraged to display trustworthy behavior themselves in response to trustworthy behavior being received from their partner. In the words of an interviewee:

> {Purchasing Officer for foods distributor. [Interviewee #86]}
> You want to be straight with people so they'll be straight with you.

6.1.17. **Reputations provide a shortcut to this process of trust-testing,** since they help parties establish an initial expected level of trustworthiness even without first-hand contact. These reputations are garnered from various indicators, such as the size and public reputation of the firm, plus private information provided by existing business contacts.

> {Indo-Trinidadian accounts manager for office supplies manufacturer. [Interviewee #62]}
> Remember that you also do background checks on any customer before dealing with them—you ask around to see if they pay on time, and what they're like to deal with.

6.1.18. **Perhaps this discussion is a little difficult to grasp without giving some real examples of trust actually being built. So, how is this process of trust-building really manifested? One key application of trust is to firms' decisions on credit terms for customers.** Credit terms—i.e. the length of time firms permit their customers to wait before paying for goods or services received—are perhaps the most palpable application of trust in business. Indeed the length of credit terms could be considered an accurate measure of the extent of trust: longer terms extended to firms who can be relied upon to keep their word on payment. For the firms with whom I spoke, new customers are mostly required to pay cash on delivery, while credit terms of varying lengths (up to 30-, 60-, or even 90-days) are offered to customers who have already proven their reliability to pay on time. Leniency within even those terms is granted to firms with whom the relationship is more personal (with some interviewees reporting late payment by up to 300 days!). Some readers may dispute my argument that credit terms are a proxy for trust—since credit terms are embodied in written contracts and are thus enforceable by formal legal means, rather than being 'pure' trust, which should be more informal—but as one interviewee put it: "we'd spend $50,000 to get back $20,000"[48]—i.e. legal means are simply too expensive, so one must rely on informal obligation. In other words, legal recourse is so costly that credit terms are not actually extended unless the firm can be relied upon to keep their word on payment, regardless of legal means.

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[48] Sales manager at manufacturer of intermediate products. [Interviewee #80].

Figure 34: Credit terms are a proxy for trust
(Photo: by the author, taken at an auto-repair shop in central Trinidad)
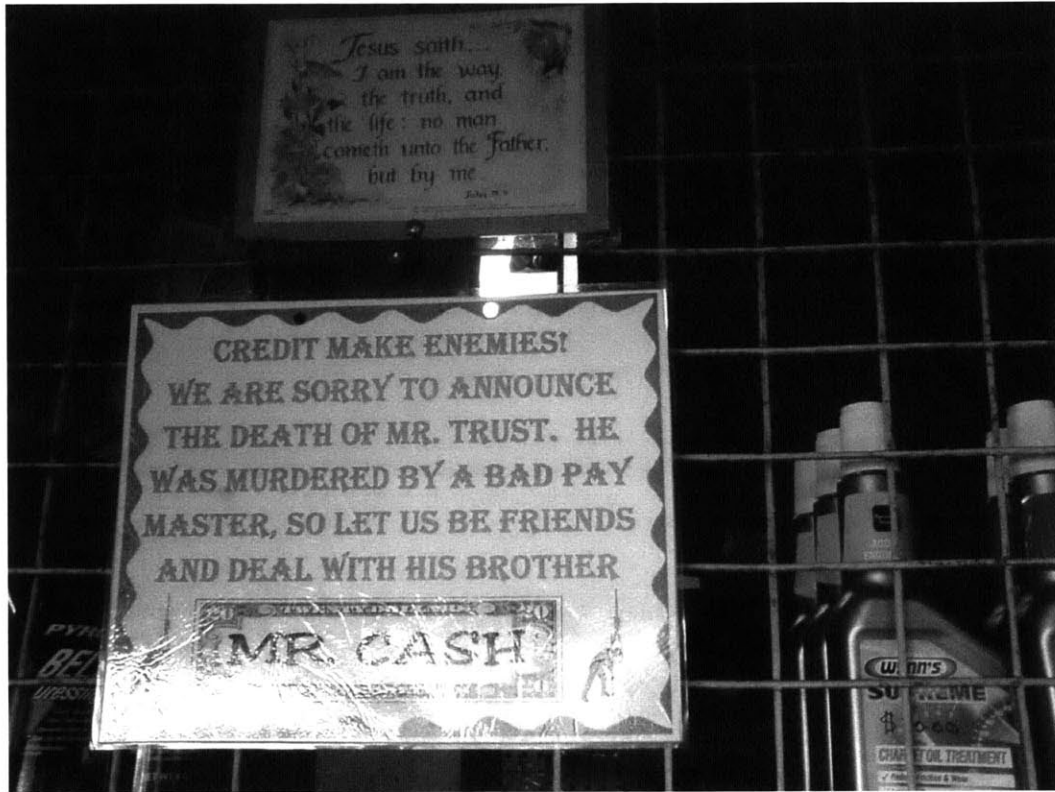
6.1.19. **The counterpart question to 'How are trusting relationships built?' is 'What causes trusting relationships to be broken?'.** Essentially the trust relationship is deemed to be broken if one party violates its promises. **But since business-based trust relationships are recognized by participants as being, at root, still about business, there is no *obligation* to continue transactions if one party finds a better deal elsewhere.**

> *{Managing Director of Manufacturer and Distributor in Construction Industry. [Interviewee #117]}*
> It depends what causes you to break off the relationship—a change in price: that's fine; but if you try to rob me or cheat me then you can't be my friend because I don't trust you.

6.1.20. **One of the puzzles of individuals responses on trust is why some individuals are systematically less likely to trust people than others.** For example, interviewees' responses the question shown in Figure 25 (on page 103) about how much they trust 'people in general' (a question which might be interpreted as measuring their 'default' level of trust) ranged from 'Not At All' all the way up to 'A Lot'. How can we explain these different default levels of trust? **Exposure to broken promises may be part of the reason, as suggested by the following rather evocative excerpt:**

> *{Proprietor of small hardware shop in Central Trinidad. [Interviewee #139]}*
> I might trust you first, then you take out my eye: the Indians try to outsmart you. Money is an evil thing. Even people close to you—even your wife. ... Where money comes in you trust no-one. Trust no-one—even the palm of your hand. You can't even trust yourself!

Affective Trust

6.1.21. **At this stage in the discussion, we should pause to consider the content of trust relationships resulting from these processes of trust-testing.** Readers will remember that my literature review preceding this research identified three types of trusting relationships: (i) calculative trust, (ii) affective trust, and (iii) common values and identities. **Did the evidence I collected suggest some of these models were manifested more widely than others?**

6.1.22. **One inference I would draw from the repeated references by interviewees to** *reciprocity* **in trust-building is that the calculative route is pivotal to building trust.** Furthermore, as would be predicted by calculative theorists of trust, mutual dependency is often implicit in relationships, and is sometimes even actively pursued in order to ensure reliability in trading partners. For example:

> *{Manager of print firm. [Interviewee #25]}*
> Once we have customers and they have a business then I'd get supplies from them too—you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. I would even switch from Office One to support the customer [if they can offer the same products] … [Moreover] if you're not getting your I.D. badges from me then we're not doing business.

6.1.23. **But personal relationships are also cited as the basis for trust—implying the affective route to trust supplements the rational one.**

> *{Sales rep of construction contractor. [Interviewee #75]}*
> Trust is a personality thing—it depends how you interact with your clients.
>
> *{Owner & manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #69]}*
> **If I build a personal friendship, it benefits the business—people become more reliable.**
>
> *{Manager of commodities importer and distributor. [Interviewee #65]}*
> **We see it as a good thing to be friendly—friendliness develops a kind of trust. If you develop a friendship with a supplier then they feel obligated to deliver on time.**
>
> *{Proprietor of car parts supplier, which imports used parts from Japan. [Interviewee #131]}*
> You have to know the brokers [at the port] real nice. **You have to be real nice to he. He's the one that goes in the port and makes it happen.**
> **[As for customers in general], when you build a relationship with dem dey come back to you.**
>
> *{Manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}*
> You have to be able to trust people. … But I can't trust you or know you or build a relationship with you unless I start talking to you and find out what are your interests and what you like doing.

This mechanism—from personal interactions to trust—functions within firms as well as between them:

> *{Manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #184]}*
> You have to trust your employees *more* because they contribute to the success of the business. Especially because we're small: **it's almost like a family: you have more family-type interactions.**

Such personal relationships are not always pursued instrumentally; they may often simply be a function of an individual's personal style of dealing with people (but are still likely to result in the benefits of affective trust):

> *{Owner of furniture store. [Interviewee #23]}*

People know the treatment they get here they won't get anywhere else. You give them a chair to sit, ask about the older ones' health because they always have a story to tell. **Not for repeat business but because that's how you're meant to treat human beings.** [But it does have benefits. The interviewee related to me one particularly proud moment when he shared an elevator with elderly Afro-Trinidadian lady who pointed him out to her grandson with the words "Look—this is the best man in Trinidad. He the store owner: he treat people good!"]

6.1.24. For building affective trust between firms, the venues for building affective trust are the conventional locations for business networking—i.e. on the golf course, or in bars and restaurants—as mentioned earlier in section 5.1.4. Not all venues are favored by all businesspeople:

{Proprietor of print shop in Port-of-Spain. [Interviewee #195]}
If a man invites a man for a drink after work [to develop business ties] there's nothing assumed. But I [as a woman] can't do that.

...and not all businesspeople thought that social interactions and affective trust were an important part of doing business:

{Sales Manager for Hardware retailer. [Interviewee #133]}
[AK: 'Do you find you build up social links with the firms you have strategic alliances with?'] Not really: the social interaction is not that strong. In the south you find that people offer lunches and social interactions more than here in Port-of-Spain—it's almost impossible to get out at lunch!

...but most people did. As further examples:

{Owner of hardware store. [Interviewee #156]}
You have to find ways to reach him [i.e. your customer]—to find a way to render service properly and earn his cash. ... If a doctor cannot relate to his patients, he'd have no patients. **Clientele anywhere needs to feel comfortable that they're spending their money by him.**

{Owner of a specialized shop. [Interviewee #49]}
That's who gets the sale—the one who cares about the relationship. So your frontline person is most important—that's one of the reasons I only expanded when my son got into the business.

6.1.25. **However, we should be clear on a caveat to this evidence: affective trust *supplements* calculative trust, but it does not eclipse it.** Leniency is granted to those with whom affective relationships are formed, but ties are usually cut if trade partners begin taking advantage of the relationship:

{Purchasing Officer for foods distributor. [Interviewee #86]}
You would give a little leeway for someone you're familiar with—but you'd have to draw the line sometimes: 'We's good friends, I know, but right now I need my goods'.

{Owner of a furniture retail store. [Interviewee #23]}
In my experience, friendship and business enhance each other. ... Generally people say friendships and business don't mix—but I have a different view because then you can rely on people. ... There's a man in Princes Town I met doing business and now every Thursday when I go down there he'll wait for me to have lunch—even if I get there only at 3pm. If he has a function, or his daughter's wedding, he won't even think of not inviting me. But I had another friend who didn't deliver on the business side of the relationship. So we stopped being friends too.

It is relatively unusual for affective trust to be strong enough to override short-term profit motives.

{Sales rep for a Hardware distributor. [Interviewee #97]}
75 percent will go for it from the other guy if he's cheaper; the other 25 will buy it from us because they have that relationship—or bargain to see if the price can come down.

6.1.26. In order to retain a clarity of terminology, this point can help us clarify the **distinction between 'affective trust' and 'strategic friendships'** (a term which will be introduced subsequently)—which otherwise may appear rather similar. While both affective trust and strategic friendships show the mixing of rational interests with friendly sentiment, the link between interests and sentiment runs in opposite directions for each of them. **Affective trust is the sentimental *manifestation* of mutual interests, whereas strategic friendships are the pursuit of sentimental relationships *motivated* by mutual interests.** Affective trust is achieved almost by accident, whereas strategic friendships are pursued deliberately.

Value-Based Trust from Industrial Identities?

6.1.27. **In preparing for this research, I also hypothesized a third route to trust relationships, which was grounded in literature on industrial districts—especially in the 'common values' and industrial identities which arise between firms.** In brief, that literature shows how trust and industrial identities can be created symbiotically amongst networks of firms (see section 2.2.14). But in contrast to industrial district literature, no industrial sector in Trinidad appears to have reached the stage of forming 'common values' and 'social norms'. Arguably this is because of the nature of goods in Trinidadian industries: while industrial districts are characterized by a continuous customization of products and negotiations between firms—phenomena that are thought to be crucial in moulding the kinds of close relationships which foster social norms—Trinidadian industries mostly produce (or often simply distribute imports of) standardized goods. So there is far less opportunity for intimate business relationships to grow between firms as custom orders are placed, negotiated, refined, and joint problems solved.

> *{Manager of Furniture Manufacturer. [Interviewee #130]}*
> **People in similar businesses in Trinidad don't coexist too well. I always found that's a major weakness in Trinidad—as opposed to box manufacturers in Canada for example.**

> *{Manager of Construction firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #148]}*
> I have a lot of friends who are contractors—you find out what jobs they're doing—but at the end of the day everyone's against each other really, as competitors.

> *{Proprietor of variety shop, Port-of-Spain. [Interviewee #123]}*
> We wouldn't talk very much [to other shops on this street] because of the competition—except my sister and brother [who own similar shops further down]. You see the people next door selling the same thing. So we really don't talk too much, except to say 'Hi'.

> *{Managing Director of Foods Manufacturer. [Interviewee #91]}*
> **[Would you say that working in your industry gives you any sense of community or belonging?] No, you don't find that in Trinidad.** Everybody thinks about themselves. Even in this estate, we formed a tenants' association when we first got here. But only ten people came; now the estate is thickly population but still only the same ten people come. We got the estate cleaned and street lights put in, but the new ones still don't want to join.

6.1.28. **The closest Trinidadian firms seem to come to establishing common values and social norms is the sharing of supplies between firms—which seems to be very common in Trinidad.** Competitors may lend each other raw materials when their supplier has a shortage, and may even borrow machines from each other.

> *{Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}*

Right now my [shipping] container is late, and I'm going to run out of material. So I'm going to get material from my competitors.

{General Manager of soft drinks manufacturer. [Interviewee #127]}
[AK: 'Do you think there's any sense of community amongst businesspeople in the Food & Beverage industry?']
You see people around—at various functions. Social functions, general manufacturers' meetings, Chambers of Commerce. You get to know them. **We even manufacture for our competitors.** [And] **if one of their machines isn't feeling well, they might borrow ours. For us, likewise.**

Furthermore, I did encounter one example of inter-firm cooperation for mutual gain. Speaking to the Indo-Trinidadian Manager of a chain of Indian clothing stores[49], he told me that most of his contact is with other businesses also selling Indian clothing. Their committee gets together to discuss the state of the economy, how to generate income, and will help each other out of short-term difficulties with mutual loans. 'What's the benefit of this mutual cooperation?', I asked him. Well, it helps especially at the time of trade fairs— they will link up with each other to get a bulk discount from the (mainland) Indian suppliers.

But in these examples of inter-firm collaboration, while some degree of trust must be necessary for them to take place, the overall the relationship is based on convenience and mutual interests rather than on common values.

6.1.29. **Lastly, it may occur to readers that mutually-developed notions of 'professionalism' (as discussed earlier in section 5.3.66) may constitute a set of common values.** Such a suite of expected behaviors and attitudes is tantamount to social norms arising through business transactions over time. But in contrast to social norms in industrial districts, 'professionalism' does not constitute trust in itself; rather, it is a catalyst for the creation of trust. 'Professionalism' simply helps lubricate business transactions through which trust is built.

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[49] Interviewee #89.

How is Trust conditioned by Ethnicity?

6.1.30. The final part of this section examines how the dynamics of trust-building discussed above are conditioned by ethnicity. How do they work across ethnic boundaries? I examine a number of ways in which ethnicity can both interrupt and facilitate the processes of trust-building described above: first for calculative trust and then for affective trust.

6.1.31. **First, with respect to calculative trust, ethnicity can be a crucial intermediating factor for three reasons:**

(i) **initial perceptions of trustworthiness** differ across ethnic groups;

(ii) reputations of trustworthiness are **channeled through social and business networks, which in Trinidad are often ethnically constituted**;

(iii) once formed, trust relationships can be more **fragile for some ethnic groups** than others.

We examine each of these in turn.

6.1.32. (i) The idea of 'differing perceptions of trustworthiness' requires some explanation, since most interviewees emphatically claimed that my questions about trusting some ethnic groups more than others were strange or non-sensical: the general consensus was that 'I can't tell if I trust someone unless I know them'. In this light we may wonder if it ever makes sense to ask people about 'General Trust' or trust towards particular groups, even though such a question has become a standard feature of major research on this topic[50]. To give a few examples:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Purchasing Manager for supermarket chain. [Interviewee #122]}*
> To trust people you have to know them.

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian Owner & Manager of Plastic Sheeting Manufacturer. [Interviewee #128]}*
> I go more on my personal assessment of the individual. You tend to go more on your gut feeling.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager for Print firm, about whether he would trust Chinese-Trinidadians more or less than other groups. [Interviewee #126]}*
> The Chinese that I *know* I trust a lot. But in general? That's different.

> *{Chinese-Trinidadian owner of a Chinese restaurant, about business relationships amongst Chinese-Trinidadians. [Interviewee #164]}*
> It doesn't have to be Chinese—it's all commercial decisions and trust. That's not limited to ethnicity. ... **You do share a common background, but that alone doesn't build trust.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian owner of paint shop in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #152]}*
> I'll give you an example: you explain to me 'what is a Christian?' [i.e. there is no single homogenous type]. It's the same with race.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]}*
> The race factor might have been important initially when I got into business. It would have been cause for concern. But [now] once he [i.e. a trading partner] has proven his word on credit—that he's an effective businessman—then we'll establish a relationship. ... In my case, credibility is not based on race. **It's based on how people prove themselves over time— once you know that a man's word is good—then race doesn't become a factor.**

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[50] Indeed, Glaeser et al (2000) found that the standard survey question on trust, stemming from Robert Putnam's work—i.e. "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"—was not actually significantly correlated with trusting behavior as measured in experiments.

There is a parallel here between the dynamics of trust formation and the dynamics of ethnic prejudice. General ethnic trends are noted, and may confer significant advantages or disadvantages, but the eventual outcome will usually be conditioned mostly on real (not prejudged) characteristics:

{White-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #79]}
Afro-Trinidadians have a culture of not working hard, as ex-slaves enjoying their liberation. By contrast, Indians focus on building property and education. So there's a general feeling that if you had to pick among the two then you'd go for the Indian—this isn't necessarily racial [prejudice]: **you'd look at someone's CV and make the choice.**

{Afro-Trinidadian marketing officer for Plastics and Metal manufacturer. [Interviewee #125]}
You don't see a White man or a Black man and decide whether to trust them. Trust is something that people have got to *earn*.

{White-Trinidadian manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #146]}
[AK: 'Would you say you're able to trust Syrians or Whites more than others?']
I know which ones to trust and which ones not to trust. In business you burn to learn—and some of them have burnt me.

For calculative trust (as with ethnic prejudice) even though trust relations are formed between individuals on a case-by-case basis, ethnic affiliation is still utilized as a rule of thumb to establish initial expectations of trustworthiness. In other words, they have a *predisposition* to trust or distrust members of particular ethnic groups. Strangers enjoy either an advantage (e.g. notably for White-Trinidadians or Chinese-Trinidadians)...

{White-Trinidadian Manager of printing firm. [Interviewee #98]}
The perception is that there are no poor White people—so you could almost say to yourself—he's likely to have come from a good upbringing and so on [and therefore be a safer bet to deal with: more reliable].

...or a handicap (e.g. notably for Afro-Trinidadians from Laventille or Morvant) when being encountered for the first time, before the reciprocal trust-building process has been initiated.

{Indo-Trinidadian Proprietor of lunch café in Central Trinidad. [Interviewee #141]}
Yes, if an Afro-Trinidadian came to an Indo-Trinidadian community they'd watch him a little funny, because of the crime in Trinidad.

Indeed these innate advantages and handicaps can continue far into the relationship, as described by this interviewee:

{White-Trinidadian manager of paint distributor. [Interviewee #53]}
[AK: 'Do you think that race plays a role in business in Trinidad?']
It matters. If there's a problem [with machinery in the factory], they [i.e. the parent company] are not going to listen to me [as the General Manager]—I'm a woman. They're not going to listen to my boss—he's Black. They'll import a white man—and whatever he says is gospel.

Religion, like race, may also be used to benchmark initial expectations of trustworthiness, as described by the following interviewee:

{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of a print firm. [Interviewee #111]}
The persons who don't practice religion—they're the people we have problems with. The person who has God in them—they're more trustworthy, because they have a fear of God. I

have good friends who are Seventh Day Adventist, Hindus, a Bahai. Though obviously being Muslim most of my friends are Muslims.

6.1.33. (ii) As discussed above in section 6.1.17, reputations provide a short-cut to the process of establishing trusting relationships, since they help parties establish expectations of trustworthiness prior to having first-hand experience. But **crucially, as we saw in our discussion of the way social contacts are formed in the first place (section 4.1.9 onwards), social contacts are themselves often bound up with ethnic affiliation, and so reputational information is likely to be more available for co-ethnics than for others.** Thus the extent to which firms can enjoy a reputational short-cut to trust depends on the extent to which they are keyed in to the relevant ethnic networks. For example, an Afro-Trinidadian shopkeeper explained to me the greater ease she had in establishing links with Indo-Trinidadian suppliers once she gained a good reputation with one of them:

> {Afro-Trinidadian proprietor of retail store. [Interviewee #32]}
> [Indo-Trinidadian suppliers] talk to each other: [they say] 'although she is Afro, she pays, so you can afford to do business with her'.

6.1.34. (iii) The extent to which trust relationships are fragile (i.e. vulnerable to being deemed broken) is partly contingent on ethnicity. **Trust violations are perceived more readily for those ethnic groups that were handicapped by lower trustworthiness expectations in the first place.** In other words, if anything goes wrong, some races get more chances than others. To use two rather evocative excerpts from my interviews:

> {Indo-Trinidadian owner of advertising agency, speaking about his difficulties in establishing a good reputation in what is a traditionally White-Trinidadian industry. [Interviewee #109]}
> Once you prove yourself and your worth, then people *do* adjust their expectations. **But if you slip up once, you're out.** You'll find there are some people within the organization who like you. This is common to all races in Trinidad.

> {Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur in construction industry. [Interviewee #206]}
> We all know what we've been through, and we're all up against the same thing in society. …
> **But he is absolutely testin' your arse!—and the first time you slip, he will say "that is de same thing!—nigger people are really something else!". I know I do it.**

6.1.35. **With respect to affective trust,** we saw in section 5.3.38 onwards (and in Figure 27) that cultural familiarity is often reported to be a crucial lubricant of building co-ethnic business relationships. The absence of these cultural commonalities between different ethnicities means that: (i) trust may be *slower* to arise across ethnic boundaries, and (ii) trust is more likely to be constituted *rationally* rather than affectively, if affective trust is to some extent contingent on such commonalities. For example:

> {Afro-Trinidadian Marketing officer for Plastics and Metal manufacturer. [Interviewee #125]}
> You don't see a White man or a Black man and decide whether to trust them. Trust is something that people have got to *earn*. **But if you grow up in an area that's predominantly one race, then you understand and share the values of that race more than others.**

6.1.36. *However*, for almost everyone, ethnicity is not a deal-breaker for building affective trust; it simply means—**in the words of one of my interviewees—a 'little plus' (or a 'little minus' in building the relationship.**

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]}
> You feel a little more comfortable with Indian people. **When it comes to trust, as Indian people, we may have more in common culturally—this brings in more commonality of interests in a conversation—and this leads to greater comfort.** For example, I may prefer chutney music to reggae;

with Indian people I can just assume this and it brings about that closeness. But I want to make sure you have the qualification: it does not hinder it [business] too—it doesn't mean other people have negative consequences—**it's just a little plus for some people**.

Indeed, businesspeople come to learn that even a common ethnic affiliation does not necessarily indicate a real basis for trust:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian owner & manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #69]}*
> Things come up in conversation that you can identify with—you talk about each other's family. But you may or may not actually do better business with someone of the same race. **Through having the same culture you might assume trustworthiness, when really it's not.**

6.1.37. **In my interviews, I was struck by the way ethnicity mediates the interplay between rational and affective trust particularly vividly in the treatment of sales reps.** Sales reps belonging to ethnic outgroups might be at an initial disadvantage (cf. rules of thumb—section 6.1.31), might have a harder time building affective trust (cf. ethnic commonalities—section 5.3.38 onwards), but would set about building calculative trust and eventually affective trust (cf. reciprocal testing—section 6.1.15), facilitated by adhering to a bright, professional manner (cf. 'common values'—section 5.3.66). For example:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #175]}*
> **I've had the experience of sending out [as sales reps] a Black person and sending out a local White. The reception was better—in hotel chains and so on—for the White guy.**

> *{Mixed-Trinidadian sales rep for Hardware Distributor. [Interviewee #97]}*
> I'm glad to say I haven't seen that in the seven years I've been here. I'm Catholic and I sell to Hindu and Muslim customers in the south of Trinidad. **In all honesty, I've seen [some] customers have stronger relationships because they're Hindu or Muslim.** It *does* help. **But I still have good relationships with them [so it's not *necessary*]. People just like to meet people who are genuine.**
> *[AK: 'So basically the personal relationship can compensate for a dissimilarity in background?']*
> Yes, that's what I'm saying.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}*
> The irony is that we actually have a mixed sales rep in Central and an African in South. **Once a salesperson is good you're able to broach any line and build a relationship of trust.** ... [But] to be honest with you it's not that we haven't seen some buyers don't prefer to deal with particular ethnicities, but we don't pander to it. Downtrade [i.e. small-scale shops] is literally personal: **"if I like you I'll buy from you."** ... That is a fact...for mom & pop stores.

> *{White-Trinidadian Sales Director for large consumer products distributor. [Interviewee #105]}*
> A Negro guy would encounter more resistance going into an Indian area. [So we would tend to allocate an Indo-Trinidadian there]. But it's never been a huge problem [if we don't do so].

> *{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #188]}*
> *[AK: 'One other question I had—do you think sales reps travelling out, trying to make sales around Trinidad—whether you thought race would matter to their success making a sale.']*
> Ah, not much. I don't think so. **They may have a slight advantage, but not nothing more—I mean, you can easily compensate with personality, with service.**

6.1.38. **Meanwhile, some ethnic boundaries are easier to bridge than others.** As discussed previously, religion can provide a cross-cutting identity across racial boundaries, and vice versa. Muslims and Hindus would tend to emphasize their common Indo-Trinidadian roots when building affective trust, and Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians might potentially be able to draw on Christian commonalities if they both share that religion.

But building business relationships with Muslims may be a little more complicated given the habitual use of alcohol as a lubricant for business deals: social drinking is not available as a means of building business relationships with Muslims. More dramatically, recent Chinese

immigrants to Trinidad may not yet have learnt English, and will conduct business transactions with Trinidadians either using very simple terms, or via other Chinese-Trinidadians or trusted staff who act as interpreters. In the absence of social interactions, business deals become more like one-shot transactions, or are grounded in rational trust alone without affective trust:

> {White-Trinidadian Manager for large processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #176]}
> Our sales to Chinese are growing fastest. There were 500 new Chinese restaurants just in the last year! [AK: 'So, how is it, dealing with those Chinese firms? Because it struck me how many of the proprietors can't speak any English. Does that have any impact on the way you do business with them?']
> Yes: **you can't entertain them—you can't wine and dine them—you can't even take them to a football match. And they have no friends—no loyalty, no history. You're at ground zero. It's all to do with what you can offer.** But service means a lot to them. Pricing, having a brand people want, and being trustworthy and reliable.

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}
> Most of the feedback we get [from sales reps going to Chinese stores] is "put it on de shelf, price is good, goodbye". But they won't have that level of mercy—there's no loyalty. ... **And you can't build relationships with them, because you can't speak to them—that's a fact.** There's a Chinese grocery store that opened up in my neighborhood, and you'd go in and they'd just stare at you. They don't speak at all. The guy, he had to put a case of bottled water in my car, and it was all yucky with stuff spilled all over it, so I said "'scuse me, um, can you wipe it off?" and I literally had—**he couldn't understand me.** When I was speaking to him, I realised he was looking at me, and when he looked at me in a particular way I said "wipe it off, clean it off" and then... so, **that is a huge barrier to developing that channel [of personalized interactions and business trust].** But you find the second and the third generation—there's a little more tolerance, because they're born here and they went to school.

Interestingly, as an indication of how natural businesspeople find the evolution of affective trust in business, some interviewees described how they are actually unnerved by dealing with people who don't partake in the affective side of doing business (see quote in section 6.1.5).

6.1.39. **One implicit consequence of this argument is that it partially reverses the observation made above (section 5.3.67) that company branding and identity can displace ethnic affiliation.** Here, it appears that the power of effective sales reps to build relationships can actually displace the *ethnic* identity of *companies*, **if the transaction is perceived as being between individuals rather than between firms.** For example, one of my interviewees was the sales manager for an Afro-Trinidadian household goods manufacturer (and the firm is widely known amongst its clients to be owned by an Afro-Trinidadian); she observed that her best sales reps were able to beat Indo-Trinidadian firms in Indo-Trinidadian areas of the country.

6.1.40. As mentioned in the prelude to this discussion on trust, we have been considering only the parts of an interpersonal relationship that relate to business transactions: that is the definition we utilized to delimit business-based trust. But interpersonal relationships may spill-over beyond the domain of a business transaction, and so we turn now to examine those aspects of a relationship, i.e. friendship.

6.2. Business → Friendships: personality types, occupation, and industry

In this section, I will explore the ability of business to build friendships, and the power of such friendships to bridge ethnic boundaries. The first step in establishing this argument is to find out the conditions under which business transactions will *generally* lead to personal friendships. The second part of this section then discusses the implications of these arguments for the formation of *interethnic* personal friendships.

When does Business lead to Personal Friendship?

6.2.1. **In brief I find that business transactions do sometimes lead to personal friendship, but that the formation of friendships is contingent on several individual and firm characteristics.** By grouping the responses I received when asking interviewees about their friendships in business, I discerned four distinct 'friendship models' according to which people do or do not mix their business and personal lives.

6.2.2. Two remarks are necessary at the beginning of this section: (i) to define 'friendship', and (ii) to delineate it from trust:

(i) **I defined 'friends' to my interviewees as those whom the interviewee "would meet in social contexts and would get to know their families".** This definition was necessary because the definition of 'friendship' turns out to be a conceptual minefield: almost all business people I interviewed asserted that an integral part of their business relied on being friend-*ly* during business transactions, and terms like 'relationship', 'personal', or 'friendship', are used inconsistently, and even contradictorily. Some interviewees classify as 'personal' the questions that most others would classify simply as politeness; other interviewees used the word 'friendship' to denote what is really just a strategic acquaintance. Some interviewees classify as 'personal' the questions that most others would classify simply as politeness:

> *{Shop assistant in butchers shop. [Interviewee #42]}*
> Seven out of ten times it's just business [with suppliers]. Three out of ten times it gets personal: 'How the family?', 'You ready for Christmas?', and so on.

Other interviewees used the word 'friendship' to denote what is really just a strategic acquaintance:

> *{Manager of hardware store. [Interviewee #47]}*
> You try to build up a relationship [with suppliers] as soon as possible. You have to develop a kind of friendship with them—to get them to treat you in a certain way.

Thus it was necessary to delineate 'friendship' for my interviewees, in order to minimize ambiguity in our discussions, and to detect if any ties of real friendship developed, above and beyond the everyday types of social interaction that are simply *de rigueur* in Trinidadian business. That definition was most easily given in terms of the way friendships are manifested, i.e. by meeting in social contexts and getting to know other aspects of each other's lives. To help illustrate this point, we would not consider those individuals in the following interviewee quotes as having

formed 'friends', even when they use the term themselves, since the relationship never extends beyond a business domain. At most, they indicate affective trust, which is manifested and sustained via friendly exchanges:

> {*Manager of print firm. [Interviewee #162]*}
> People would come in and sit down—we call it 'old talk'—they'd say they're in distress or get some relief. Even with sales reps.

> {*Sales Rep for meats distributor. [Interviewee #144]*}
> [Yes, I become friends with my customers, but not social friends]. They can call me any time and get a favour done, but we don't go to TGI [TGI Friday's, the restaurant/bar popular for socializing amongst some Trinidadians.]
> The only ones it doesn't happen with are the Chinese because they speak little English and we can't have a conversation so.

> {*Manager of construction firm. [Interviewee #171]*}
> [In answer to the question about liming with business friends and getting to know their families]:
> **Most of all business friends are not really 'friends' in that sense; they're people you can depend on.**

(ii) As mentioned above, 'trust' is constituted by the confidence I have in you to deliver on your word—i.e. confined to the domain of transactions, where there is something to be delivered. By contrast, the domain of 'friendship' lies outside business transactions. **But is there any relationship between trust and friendship? Is trust a prerequisite for friendship or are they independent of each other?** I found myself oscillating between thinking trust and friendship to be interrelated or not. On one hand there seems to be a natural progression from affective trust to friendship, where friendship constitutes a cementing of affective trust ties and their extension outside a business domain. On the other hand, as the subsequent discussion will illustrate, 'friendships' do not necessarily include any component of trust: I can like you and want to see you in a social context even if I would not trust you in a business context.

6.2.3. The following graphs provides some context for the subsequent discussion by showing *how often* friendships do arise from business transactions. Figure 35 shows the likelihood of forming friendships varies across individuals (we will discuss later why this may be the case). Figure 36 looks at how these responses varied by occupation: in particular, owners and managers make friends in business more often than average, but this difference is not actually statistically significant[51]. If we dissect the data a little more, it appears sales reps have the greatest likelihood of all occupations to form friends in business (8 out of 9 sales rep interviewees said they become friends with business contacts 'Quite Often' or 'Always')—but this conclusion is not truly reliable on such a small sample of interviewees.

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[51] Of 98 interviewees who answered this question, 53 were owners & managers and 45 had other occupations. On a scale of 0 to 4 (corresponding to the scale of 'Never' to 'Always', owners & managers had a mean score of 2.81 compared to 2.56 for other occupations. This difference has a t-value of 1.04 (i.e. not statistically significant).

Figure 35: Responses to question 'How often do business contacts become personal friends, in the sense that you'd lime with them or get to know their families?' *(Total 98 observations)*

Never (0% of business contacts)

Hardly At All (1% to 10% of business contacts)

Some of the Time (10% to 30% of business contacts)

Quite Often (30% to 90% of business contacts)

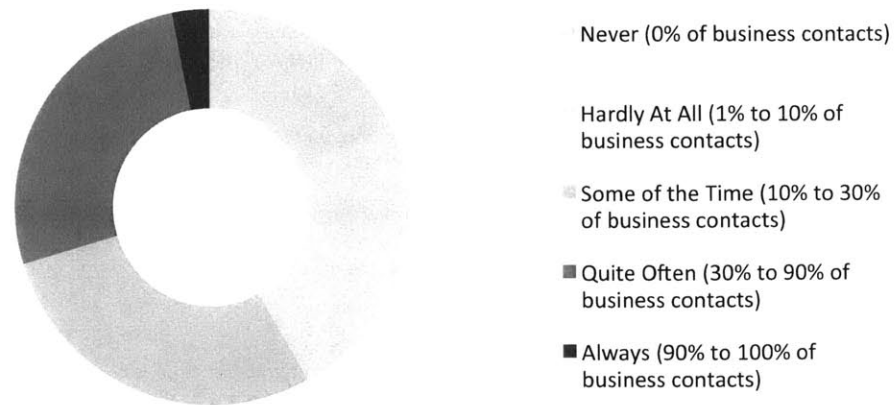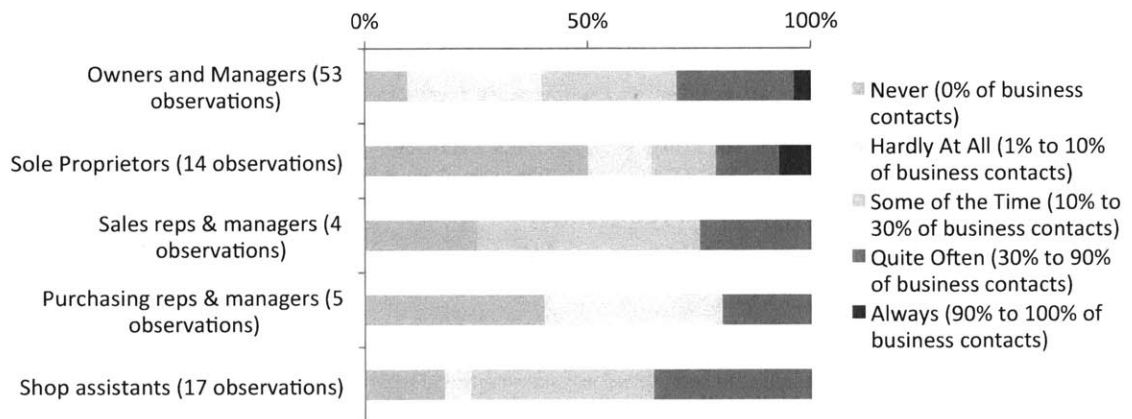Always (90% to 100% of business contacts)

Figure 36: Responses to question 'How often do business contacts become personal friends, in the sense that you'd lime with them or get to know their families?' *(Total 98 observations)*

6.2.4. We turn now to the four 'models' of friendship, according to which people do or don't mix the business and personal aspects of their relationships: (i) no personal friendships, (ii) strategic acquaintances, (iii) familiarity, (iv) affection.

(i) No Personal Friendships

6.2.5. **In this model of doing business, individuals do not mix their personal and business lives, and consciously 'draw the line' before business contacts become too familiar as friends.** The following interview excerpts illustrate how interviewees made this point, as well as their reasons for adopting this model of behavior. According to interviewees'

testimonies, this model is adopted by deliberate choice, not because the opportunities for friendship through business have not arisen.

{*General Manager of a furniture & doors manufacturer. [Interviewee #70]*}
As my uncle told me, **'familiarity breeds contempt'**. I don't get too involved. I will go to the customer and greet them at least on a monthly basis. I may invite them to dinner or lunch. But when you venture too far into someone's personal life that can become a problem. So I don't get too involved: 'How's your wife?', 'Not so good', 'Oh I'm sorry to hear that', full stop.

{*Manager of a furniture retailer. [Interviewee #60]*}
We try not to breed friendship because once you sit down with people for a drink or beer, the next time they'll want the chair on credit and then won't pay. So, business and friendship or family never go together.

{*General shop owner in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #157]*}
I *know* everyone in the development [i.e. the nearby HDC development—her main customer base], but you have to draw the line.

{*Shop Assistant in hardware retailer. [Interviewee #154]*}
Overseas, some of your business friends you might grab ten or get something to eat, but Trinidadians don't really do that—especially countryside people. It might be different in town. Countryside people are a bit more cultured, and in town there are more foreigners and they bring their ways in. Also it's closer to get a coffee—here we'd have to drive!

{*Customer service manager at paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #134]*}
Take Mr. _____—a Syrian guy who buys his paints [from us]. We bounce up with him in Chagaramas at the weekends.
[AK: *'So can you become friends with business contacts like that?'*]
No—**in my experience they can get to be very pesty**. I don't cross that line—going to people's homes and so.

{*Manager of print firm. [Interviewee #8]*}
I have never heard of anyone [becoming friends through business in the print sector]—even the neighborhood printers we have a good relationship with. We keep it to business—it's more professional, and if they know too much about your social life it would come back to haunt you. ... Friends want products made yesterday. **I've known a lot of managers bend over backwards to help a friend, but end up hurting the company and not pleasing their friend.**

{*Sole proprietor of stationary shop. [Interviewee #17]*}
I always say: there's no friends in business. You might see them for years, then they get credit and don't come back.

{*Proprietor of hairdressing salon. [Interviewee #27]*}
I try very hard to keep it [business and social lives] separate, because you can have problems—financial: they want better prices, or loans—some I've known for years then you cut their hair [interviewee is a hairdresser] and they don't come back with your money.

{*Shop assistant in clothing store. [Interviewee #30]*}
Customers could become friends, but we have to draw the line—there are certain things people want to know, but when you're running a business there are certain things you don't want to leave the business—information on suppliers, and so on. Some customers have businesses themselves and want to become your friends so they can get information. By contrast, friends already [i.e. friends who become customers, rather than the other way around] are more trustworthy.

{*Manager of commodities importer and distributor. [Interviewee #65]*}
We see it as a good thing to be friendly ... but it is very, very rare to see these people outside a business setting: you're on a first name basis but never in terms of knowing their families. ... **Business is always a good way to make acquaintances—but there's a difference between friends and acquaintances.** There are different levels of acquaintances, but friends are different, and you probably won't find them in business. **Any group of happy, laughing people might look like friends [to the outsider], but they still have a [business] objective.** My friends are from anywhere else apart from business.

Many of these quotes imply that this business model of 'no personal friendships' is chosen by individuals who have previously been burned by business 'friends' taking advantage of them

or expecting too much. As discussed in section 6.2.2, there is some conceptual overlap here with the concept of 'trust'—since for many interviewees trust was a prerequisite for friendship. For the following interviewee, being burnt by trust violations made him more wary of business friendships too:

{Entrepreneur. [Interviewee #192]}
[AK: 'One of the last questions I was going to ask you is if any experiences you've had in business—dealing with a lot of people everyday—have changed the way you think about different races in Trinidad? We talked about this already with respect to Chinese, right?']
To be honest, my perception of people has been ... **it's very difficult to trust anyone, I believe.** Trinidad is very, um, very money-hungry, and therefore, as the saying goes, they'll do anything for a dollar. **I don't believe people have morals any more. My father always taught me otherwise, but I've been burnt through the years.**
[AK: 'When you trusted someone too much?']
Correct, correct.

(ii) Strategic Acquaintances

6.2.6. **According to this second model of doing business, individuals consciously pursue friendships with those they wish to form reliable business relationships with, having discovered that business deals are often softened for such friends.**

{Manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]}
Behind business there is people. Behind people there is a conscience. ... If a bond is established—as you know in America, there are more contracts signed on the golf course than in a conference room.

{Sales manager at manufacturer of intermediate products. [Interviewee #80]}
Many of the people I'm dealing with today—they're not people I'd necessarily lime with and hang out with—but we all know each other: I'd consider them friends in that sense. It doesn't mean I'd get concessions in price—it still comes down to business—but **I'll get more opportunities to get a good price.**

{Owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}
If a customer's spending $1 million a month, you have to be friends with them.

{Shipping Coordinator for a Tiling Distributor. [Interviewee #94]}
They might have the same tile for $8 across the way that I have for $10. But **because of the personal relationship I have with people they will buy it here.**

{Customer service manager at paints manufacturer. [Interviewee #134]}
100 percent of the business depends on that [i.e regular customers]. So it's very important to build up relationships with customers. You kinda get to know them on a one-on-one basis—sometimes I'd pull small talk with them.

{Owner of a Chinese restaurant. [Interviewee #164]}
You build relationships for the convenience of not having to shop around. The person who's doing more business with me would get the order even if the price is higher—so I'd get more credit, better service, and so on.
... Relationships in business are highly valued: it's about who you know, since the bureaucracy dates from the 1950s [and you need some way to get it moving]. **So if you don't have the relationships—with your bankers, your suppliers—you won't build your business.**

{Manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}
...And most of these times to you find that, I might be speaking about this book for instance, but in talking about this book I might tell you so many other things that would allow you to know *who I am*. And the stories that you tell, about outsmarting someone; they will tell you "oh you can get a deal on this person" or "you can outsmart so and so", and they don't realise that when they tell you these things and they're part of these stories that **they're actually telling you about *themselves*—who they are. So from talking to people that long you can actually figure them out. ... All of this is about whether I can trust you as a businessperson, and whether you're honest and up front with me.**

And those are core values that we have in our business, and that's how management is structured, and how you get to senior management. That's what we look for in business partners as well—whether it is a supplier that we're dealing with for the first time, or a long-standing relationship with our older suppliers, that becomes very familiar with them. I guess that's how the family culture side of the business transcends down to this level—trust and loyalty and so on. Most of our suppliers we know on a personal basis. I mean we just met these guys from _____ [American household products firm]. They came down here—a new country manager. At the beginning of the meeting was very formal with handshakes, but at the end of two and a half hours they lent in and gave us a kiss when they left.

{Entrepreneur. [Interviewee #188]}
[AK: 'I wanted to ask if it ever happens that the people you meet people in business become friends outside?']
It happens all the time; it happens all the time. I meet people in business that become personal friends.
[AK: 'How often would it happen? Thinking about all the contact that you have with clients..']
It happens fairly regularly actually. I used to be a lot more mobile than I am now, but I would go to San Fernando, meet a customer—we'd talk for a little bit, then "let's go out for a beer, have a drink". A month later he's on my boat, we're going down the islands. **I kept it tight; I kept those relationships tight. Like I told yuh, it gives me certain advantages in business, and I try to maximise it where I could.**

One important condition for the 'strategic' friendship model to function is that—as for rational trust—parties to the relationship must usually be subject to some degree of mutual dependency. In other words, there would be no interest in forming an acquaintance outside business for strategic reasons if "we depend on them but they don't really mind about us"[52]. For instance:

{Manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #184]}
I deal with some big businesses, but in their social circles you're not wanted. They don't want to see you outside. They'll know you're a supplier but it stops there.

And moreover, the medium for such 'strategic acquaintances' to be formed—i.e. through pursuing business interests in social settings—may exclude some sections of the population. For example:

Manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #148]}
Since I'm married I can't go out and lime so. A lot of people get business like that, but I don't drink alcohol.

{Manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #184]}
In socializing there's a certain amount of alcohol involved—you'll know that—but for Muslims that's not acceptable.

6.2.7. Can such relationships accurately be called 'friendships'? Reading between the lines of the interview excerpts above, we might doubt if any of these relationships really qualify as 'friendship'. **More accurately, they are relationships pursued with the ostensible qualities of friendship (e.g. socializing together, meeting each others' families), but founded either on obligation or on rational interests:**

{Shop assistant in car supplies shop. [Interviewee #34]}
You have to have a good relationship, especially as a smaller business. **You have to stick close to them [suppliers], and then they'll do you favors on quick delivery and so on.** But then you still need to keep in with the more expensive guys in case the cheaper guy runs out. **Most of the suppliers we have a close relationship with—though I shouldn't say 'friend'.**

{Proprietor of personal goods wholesaler. [Interviewee #20]}
Yes, they [suppliers] will invite you to their house. But you both understand there's only so much— the friendship would not be as someone I went to primary school with. As for customers, I wouldn't

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[52] Interviewee #77, who is the manager of a small glass shop and thus cannot form strong relationships with his large suppliers.

say that I try to make them my friends—but I do invite them to dinner parties—do stuff to make them feel special. It makes them feel important even if they might not be important at all.

{Accounts manager for office supplies manufacturer. [Interviewee #62]}
At the end of the day, both of you know what's going on. That it's really just business. But I want to get you to like me so you buy my airconditioners [and not my competitor's]. You establish a kind of loyalty with that person.

{Sales rep of construction contractor, and entrepreneur of plants supplier. [Interviewee #75]}
There's a certain circle of people—VPs, Managing Directors, etc—who move in that circle—and many others trying to get into it. A lot of my friends have started playing golf for that reason. **It's not necessarily about being liked and friendship, but more about mutual favors.** And all before you know it you're in a circle.

{Owner of hardware store. [Interviewee #156]}
Sales reps do operate like that—they go to the beach or a river lime with clients. He'd take his family there. This exists about 25 percent of the time. Most sales reps, if there's a wedding they'll invite us; a function, they'll invite us; if there's an illness in the family then they'll inform you.

{Manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}
We consider our suppliers and clients as business *partners*. **We normally *try* to build a relationship with people somewhat on a personal level.** Part of building a business relationship is actually getting to know the person. So you'll ask how their son's doing and so on. **You have to get people into a mode where they're receptive to the products we're trying to push.** We don't sell anything that's unique, so we want their support in working with our company rather than another one. **For example, we went to SuperPharm and sat in a meeting with the buyer for about four hours and just talked about our kids.** That was the commonality. About 80 percent of the time's spent talking about what's going on in the country, about politics—or we talk about the newspapers, you talk about your kids, some project that you're working on, that they're working on. And then 20 percent of the time is to finish the order. ... But there's also an unwritten rule that you can only go so far—an ethical line—sometimes the conversations you have are not business-based, but once you get overly personal with someone it might help the business but it also might compromise it.

6.2.8. **And, crucially, these friendly aspects never eclipse the business nature of the relationship: friendships will vanish rapidly if business trust is broken:**

{Owner & manager of specialist goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #61]}
It starts off very cut and dry. You provide me with your service and I provide you with my money. But once you provide me with a *quality* service, **I will develop a personal relationship too. ... I respect them for the job they did. ... It lubricates the business of getting things done. ... [But] Once you start giving me nonsense from a business point of view then I'll end that very quickly.**

{Owner of hardware store. [Interviewee #156]}
[AK: 'What would happen to your personal friendships with business contacts if the business relationship ends? Do you think they might fall away?']:
Yes, because the friendship is based on business. It takes time, but it begins to simmer down.

6.2.9. This point was made rather well by an interviewee who sought to explain how his Indo-Trinidadian employees could take customers with them to another firm—not because of their relationship with the customers (as it might have appeared), but really because they could offer them a cheaper rate at the new firm:

{Entrepreneur. [Interviewee #206]}
An East Indian—they have this tendency towards loyalty, fierce loyalty. But that is up until they feel that they could do better. I have no problem with somebody wanting to advance themselves. If you feel that you need to go into your own business. You must be ambitious—they're *extremely ambitious* people. And very unlike most Afro-Trinidadians, I applaud ambition. You have to just try to improve your own lot. And if you come to me, I'm going to impart knowledge to you, so you can function properly. If you come a point where you figure with this knowledge you could do something on your own, then I applaud you. Go for it! But a lot of people absolutely resent that and say [..interviewee adopts deep Afro-Trinidadian voice..] "boy, after all that I did for dat boy..". **Now, where it gets nasty is that they will of course try to take all your customers that they interacted with.**

[AK: '…which shows that a relationship in business does count for something, right? The fact that they can take customers with them, because the customers appreciate—even though it's a new firm—but they like the relationship.']

No, they don't "like the relationship". No. You have it all wrong. The only way to carry that business with them is to offer it at a lower price. That is how they do it!

[AK: 'It's not because they like dealing with who they know—and if he's moving, or she's moving then..']

No. No. No. No. The average businessman wants to get the same service—what this guy will offer is the same service, at a cheaper price. He has no overheads. He's operating under his mother's or his father's house. So he undercuts my price, and he's going about his business. He develops his whole business based on that.

6.2.10. Thus such relationships may *look* to the outsider like friendships, but are at root based on strategic interests. We might we call them 'friendships' in the same way that 'fair-weather friends' are still termed friends, though many interviewees themselves recognized that 'strategic acquaintances' are almost too thin as relationships to constitute a 'friendship':

> *{Supervisor at Construction firm. [Interviewee #149]}*
> To do business with someone you need to build trust: giving them credit lines, relying on them to pay. And the only way you do that is by becoming friendly—so it really aids in developing a business relationship, that develops into **'almost-friendship'**.

> *{Chairman of household goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #205]}*
> **We have developed extremely strong relationships on both sides of the supply chain, though I wouldn't call them 'friends'.** It's based on mutual respect.

Indeed, the extent to which 'strategic acquaintances' are merely fair-weather friends was shown up starkly to one businessman whose office burnt down:

> *{Owner of advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}*
> I'm a member of 'Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowships'. **They never even came and talked to me about the fire. They only came to ask when I painted my office why I wasn't using his brand of paint!**

(iii) Familiarity

6.2.11. **According to this third model of doing business, friendship 'happens if it happens': there is neither a deliberate effort to foster it, nor a deliberate effort to prevent it.** For example:

> *{Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #187]}*
> Business is business, and friendship is friendship—but **over time you become real close to them: they got a problem, they ask you for advice, you start liming together.**

> *{Owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}*
> Also it's a small country: you know everybody [in your line of business] and everybody will know you. So **you're not real personal friends—'buddy buddy friends'—but still friends**.
> My personal friend is my wife and two children. Then my workers—I go out and lime with them. And then thirdly I go out with customers, though I don't go out to bars.

> *{Sales manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #68]}*
> Of course sales reps develop personal relationships with customers. **If you're seeing them every week, you're seeing them more often than you see most of your family!** You get to know their family. They know you for years.

> *{Shopkeeper. [Interviewee #24]}*
> Those suppliers that are really close you tend to build up a relationship with: you'd tend to invite them to celebrations. … And the same goes for customers too—**if they've been buying here for ten years and so on**.

{Purchasing manager for retailer. [Interviewee #135]}
[AK: 'Have any of the friendships you've made surprised you?']
Yes because you're dealing with them [i.e. people of various backgrounds] on a day-to-day basis.

6.2.12. **For some interviewees, such relationships are customary: they would expect business relationships to evolve into friendships of familiarity.** For example:

{Sales rep for Hardware Distributor. [Interviewee #97]}
I've actually had people arguing with me on the road saying 'We've been doing business all these years but we've never gone for a drink!'.

{Proprietor of Construction contractor, south Trinidad, who ticked 'Familiarity' on the Friendship question. [Interviewee #151]}
You do a job for the guy and he builds a good relationship with you, then he recommends a friend to you. **In return you have to do something for them, and invite them to dinner, or go for a beer.**

6.2.13. But, as with the 'strategic acquaintances' model of friendships, there are indications that friendships will diminish or vanish completely if the business transactions cease on which they are built:

{Manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}
In the beginning of this company, I really didn't know many of the players in the supermarket industry. I didn't know many of the players on the supply side, customs, though I knew a couple of people in the government. ... **What has happened more so, is that when I *do* meet somebody, and a relationship starts up like a cold call develops, we sit down and we speak about business, then a lot of our business is in a *repeat* fashion, because of the way in which we go about doing business with people— straight-talk, honest, upfront way—because of the way in which we *service* people, right?, a relationship tends to develop. And what has happened over the years—and we talkin' 20, 25 years in this company—we have developed *extremely* strong relationships on *both* sides of the supply chain. And that's basically because we have treated people above-board, fairly, honestly, in good times and in hard times, right? Same goes for bankers and other finance companies.**
So, to tell you that personal relationships *now* don't play a part in our business would not be true!— because they do play a *major* part now. It helps us keep the competition out of the stores, because of the relationship we have with some of the buyers and some of the owners. It helps us get good treatment from our suppliers because of the relationship with them over the years, right? Sometimes when I don't pay my accounts on time, they still send me goods. You understand?
We get information feedback from both sides of the supply chain as to who's doing what—our competitors. If one of our competitors goes to a buyer with a special, the buyer will say "Look, [_____], he give me a special. What you want to do? You want to match it? You want to this, you want to that?".
[AK: 'And these strong relationships that have developed over time, would you call any of them friendships, or is it more a kind of business thing?']
I, I have developed into a bit of a hermit. I have very few friends. Personal friends. When I was your age I used to lime and party hard; I had plenty friends. And a couple of things have happened along the way that made me realise that friends are, friends are not...well, I hardly go to parties now—I might meet up with one person or so.
But I have strong business relationships that turn into respect. If we meet one and other somewhere outside, that turn into "hello, how we going, let's take a drink together", whatever it is.
[AK: 'So, those relationships, if the business side of things died away—let's say if you switched suppliers—probably the personal component of that relationship would drop off too?']
It will drop off, it will die—because there's no other basis for that relationship to continue.

(iv) Affection

6.2.14. **According to this fourth model of doing business, individuals in business casually and organically become friends if they get on particularly well and/or have other social interests in common.** The content of friendships in this model may look rather similar to the 'familiarity' model, in that they are formed for social rather than strategic reasons; but the main distinction is that 'familiarity' friendships are rooted in frequent contact over a long

period of time, whereas 'affection' friendships are rooted in spontaneous connection between individuals. The following quotes should make this distinction clear.

> {Owner of small clothing store. [Interviewee #21]}
> **Would we become friends? It depends on the vibes—how well I get on with the person.**

> {Sales rep for Hardware Distributor. [Interviewee #97]}
> **Either I genuinely take to a guy or I don't—the business is besides the point.** But it does benefit the business too—I'll see to it that they get a fair deal.

> {Owner of meats retailer. [Interviewee #35]}
> Actually **the ones [customers] that come in every day won't necessarily be the ones you lime with on the weekend**—maybe because it's more like business to them.

> {Shop Assistant in hardware retailer. [Interviewee #154]}
> [On building up relationships with sales reps]:
> It have[53] some that we're very close to—for Valentine's Day they bring us stuff. **Not necessarily the reps we see the most. Sometime they just have to come here once.**

> {Sales rep for a meat wholesaler. [Interviewee #57]}
> [The company wants us to give good customer service] but **I go beyond that and make personal friends because that's the kind of person I am.** I surprised [myself that] some of them are managers—you realize no-one's higher than anyone else.

6.2.15. The contrast between these friendships and 'strategic acquaintances' should also be clear, as evidenced in the following quotes.

> {Purchasing Officer for a steel construction contractor. [Interviewee #82]}
> Yes, sales reps that come here—you hang out and get to know their families. I would call them friends. But still if we do meet outside [business] then it'd be once every three to four months. And **we wouldn't talk business if meeting outside.**

> {Managing Director of furniture manufacturer. [Interviewee #59]}
> When foreign companies come here people try to make friendships; but **for Trinidadian firms everyone knows each other anyway, so if people do become friends it's more genuine.**
> ... One thing you learn: after age 40, you stop making friends anyway! I just have the people I do business with and go for drinks with. And fortunately no more wives either!

> {Plant Manager & Director of a bottled water manufacturer. [Interviewee #74]}
> Business might be the way you met, but **becoming friends with someone isn't *because* of business—it depends on whether you hit it off.** Business is business, and friendship is friendship.

6.2.16. One caveat is necessary though. **Even though such friendships are built on 'affection' they predominantly appear to remain weaker than friendships built outside work.**

> {Managing Director of Manufacturer and Distributor in Construction Industry. [Interviewee #117]}
> **Most of my good friends are from *before* being in this business,** though a couple of them would be due to this business.

> {Purchasing manager for retailer. [Interviewee #203]}
> [Name] supplies us with paper products, but we become friends if we hit it off. **When the weekend come I call him up to find out how the fish are biting!**
> In general [business] would widen your social circle. **But they're acquaintances not friends.**

I cannot say with certainty why this be, but most plausibly it may be because some degree of formality is retained because of continued business interactions with the same person and the consequent risk such transactions entail. Parties to a friendship of 'affection' built through business are likely always to hold something back.
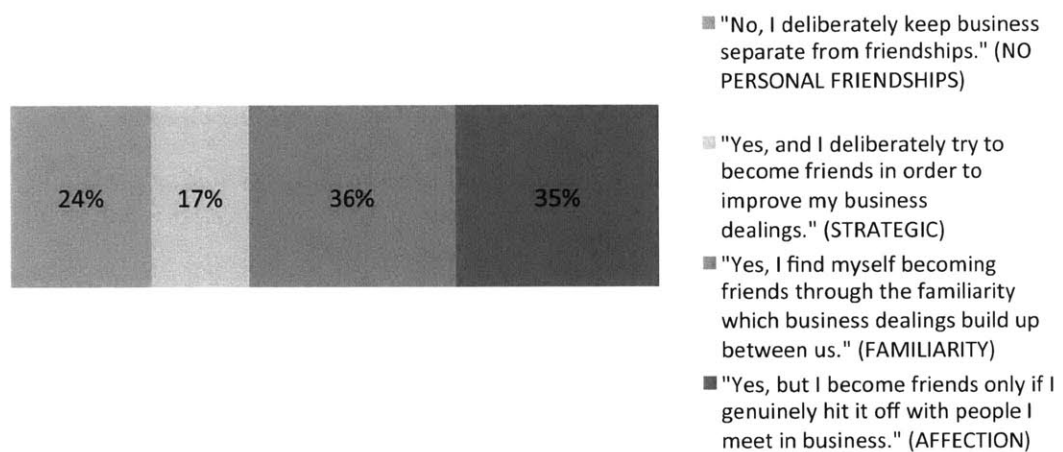
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[53] "It have" is Trinidadian for "There is" or "There are".

6.2.17. **So, how are these models of doing business distributed between individuals?** Figure 37 shows that most interviewees do form friendships through their business interactions, and moreover that most of those friendships are based on 'familiarity' and 'affection' rather than strategic interests.

Figure 37: Responses to question 'Most people I talk to say that it is important to be friendly with people you deal with in business. But can business contacts actually become PERSONAL FRIENDS, in the sense that you'd lime with them or get to know their families?'
(Total 96 observations)

■ "No, I deliberately keep business separate from friendships." (NO PERSONAL FRIENDSHIPS)

▨ "Yes, and I deliberately try to become friends in order to improve my business dealings." (STRATEGIC)

■ "Yes, I find myself becoming friends through the familiarity which business dealings build up between us." (FAMILIARITY)

■ "Yes, but I become friends only if I genuinely hit it off with people I meet in business." (AFFECTION)

Note that the total percentages do not sum to 100%, because interviewees were permitted to check more than one box. This decision was taken because it emerged in my conversations with interviewees that **businesspeople may draw on different models with different business partners.** For example, the following interviewee notes how his company encourages the 'strategic acquaintances' model, but he himself can subscribe to the 'affection' model:

{Plant Manager at food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #74]}
At the executive level, last Thursday we went to a reception held by the bank and some people go there expressly with the intention of meeting people and getting business. One of the reasons not to do this is because you want a sustained relationship not just a one-off—so there's no point in sycophancy since it won't pay off in the long-term. ... **Part of the managerial and executive strategy at the last company I worked for was deciding who was the best man to befriend a particular company.**

Moreover, **the type of friendship pursued can change even with the same person over time.** The following interviewee gives an account of his supplier relationships that began as 'strategic acquaintances' but turned into 'familiarity' (and perhaps even 'affection'):

{Owner & manager of a specialty paints shop. [Interviewee #49]}
My social life is part of my business. ... The owners of my biggest suppliers are four brothers. They will invite me sometimes to lime at the weekend. They introduce you to their friends who are boat owners [and hence will want to do business with my shop]. ... And, over the years, with a lot of customers—by

giving them close service they become close friends. One guy now lives one-and-a-half hours drive away from here. But once a month he'll come here, bypass about ten other suppliers and buy from me. We would also go to see him, with the entire staff in a minibus. He moved there six years ago and we still do business. We have about three to four such relationships—sometimes with the biggest buyers, but not all of them [are like that].

...and the following interviewees describes a friendship which is rooted in 'familiarity' but also produces the business benefits of 'strategic acquaintances':

{Sales rep for food & beverage wholesaler. [Interviewee #57]}
Yes, it can turn into a personal friendship too—once it's working hours it's working hours, but over time you'll build a relationship with that guy and go for a drink. For example, one of our customers in Point Lisas has a football club and that's been running for years. The nice thing is, if they do get a better offer but they're your friend, they still come to you to check if you can do better before going elsewhere.

{Owner & manager of a butcher's shop. [Interviewee #35]}
In small businesses, relationships are easier to build. The manager in a big business has no time. In this business, over fifty percent of our customers become our friends—we socialize with them, go out to dinner, a move house and so on. In a larger organization it's all about price and the commodity. But in a mom-and-pop business like this, you need personality—the owners have more one-on-one with our customers. We get to know their families. If a husband loses his job we know of it. So we're able because of our size to devote more or ourselves to our customers. ... So many large supermarkets sell the same thing that we do. So how do we survive? Because of the personal touch!

Some readers might respond critically to this last observation by exclaiming 'Well, if the models can mix then what use are they at all?!'. Indeed, the nature of a particular relationship may not even be clear to the parties involved:

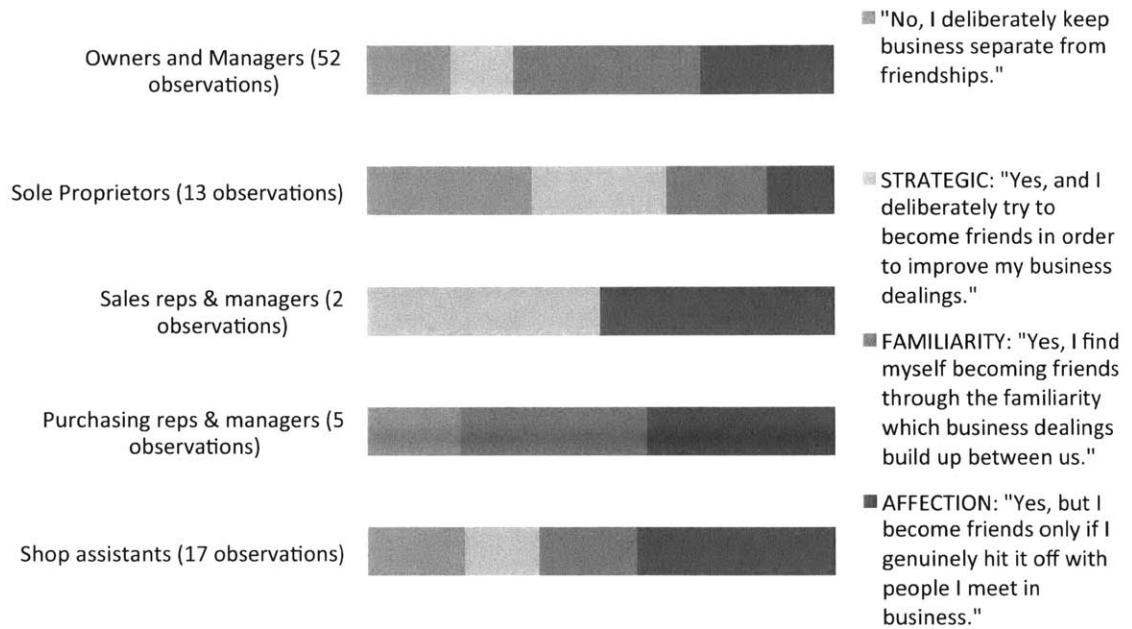{Sales rep for construction supplies firm. [Interviewee #58]}
You might have a weekend holiday where one person looks at it as a friendship and the other looks at it as a profit.

Do such observations invalidate the idea of distinctive 'models'? I would argue not: the models are useful as heuristics, recognizing that the boundaries between them will not always be impervious nor mutually agreed by the parties to that relationship.

Mediating factors: Occupation and Industry

6.2.18. One of the questions begged by the 'four models' of business friendships is what determines which model is followed. Is it merely a matter of individual choice, or are there some structural determinants? In this section we examine the influence of two structural determinants: occupation and industry.

6.2.19. **First, with respect to occupation, I found that company owners and managers were marginally more likely to form friends through business than other professions.** These results are shown in Figure 38. The same analysis shows also that **friendship models differ by occupation:** contrary to what might be expected by cynics—that managers' friendships are simply strategic—in fact, **owners & top managers seem more likely to form affectionate and familiar friends than strategic friends** (see Figure 38). However, these results must be treated with caution, given the very small sample sizes.

Figure 38: Responses to question 'Can business contacts actually become personal friends, in the sense that you'd lime with them or get to know their families?'

- "No, I deliberately keep business separate from friendships."
- STRATEGIC: "Yes, and I deliberately try to become friends in order to improve my business dealings."
- FAMILIARITY: "Yes, I find myself becoming friends through the familiarity which business dealings build up between us."
- AFFECTION: "Yes, but I become friends only if I genuinely hit it off with people I meet in business."

This pattern is illustrated rather nicely (albeit subtly) by the following excerpt, first for sales reps, and then for managers:

{Sales Manager for food distributor. [Interviewee #163]}
Previously I was a sales rep. For new customers, I'd introduce the company, the listing of products, and ask if there was any need for display equipment. But **you interact with *people*: not just as a salesman, but also as a person.** The smaller the customer you'd be more exposed to more avenues of associating with them. For larger customers you'd tend to be more a bit more professional. You go in as an ambassador of the company so you keep it professional. But as time goes on you realise you converse differently with different individuals. Some come across as very friendly, so you return in kind.

Some owners and managing directors reported to me they attempt to get employees to adopt the same approach of developing relationships through business interactions, though such behavior doesn't come as naturally as for sales and managerial jobs:

{Owner & manager of meats retailer. [Interviewee #35]}
We still try to get employees to understand that they depend on their customers—don't let them down otherwise you're letting yourself down. They don't get that yet. We even encourage our customers to talk more with staff.

6.2.20. **Second, with respect to industries, I found that some industries (i) *necessitate* relationships, and (ii) *facilitate* relationships more than others.** Regression analysis of my interview data (shown in Table 4) reveals that people working in the consumer retail and food & beverages industries are around 25 percent less likely to form friendships in business than those in printing and construction industries (model1). This result holds after controlling for occupation (model3).

Table 4: Regression analysis of the relationship between friendships, industry and occupation.

Dependent variable: Have business contacts turned into friendships?	(model 1)	(model 2)	(model 3)
Printing industry (binary)	0.00		0.00
Retail industry (binary)	-0.24**		-0.22**
Construction industry (binary)	-0.05		-0.03
Food & Beverage industry (binary)	-0.28**		-0.26*
Sales rep or Sales manager		0.26***	0.24*
Owner or General Manager		0.10	0.05
[constant]	0.94***	0.74***	0.89***
N	94	94	94
R²	0.08	0.02	0.09

Legend: * <0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

6.2.21. I postulate—building on interviewee testimonies—**this is because printing and construction industries involve more *negotiated* transactions (like for example, the mutual problem-solving which customarily pervades the path of a contract in either of those two industries).** Such negotiated transactions involve a greater intimacy of contact and thus are more likely to lead to friendships. For example:

> {Sales manager at a print firm. [Interviewee #170]}
> I think we get to know them [customers] pretty well, because **art is a personal thing so we have to work with them to get it to where they desire.** We may have to meet with them on several occasions. Over time you get to know their needs.

By contrast, consumer retailers tend to have fairly thin relationships with their suppliers, even despite repeated transactions with the same people over a number of years. For example:

> {Proprietor of lunch café. [Interviewee #100]}
> For years you will be seeing the same person [sales rep], driving the same truck, from the same company, for the same area. ... **There's no relation. You come, you sell, you buy. That is it. Nothing personal.** It's a small business, and I don't need to build a personal relationship to get credit.

This explains why, as observed by one particularly shrewd interviewee, not all business interactions lead to any real relationship:

> {Sales manager at manufacturer of intermediate products. [Interviewee #80]}
> **Remember that having opportunities for interaction doesn't necessarily mean that real links are formed.**

The nature of the transaction helps explain which interactions are more likely to foster these 'real links'.

6.2.22.   During my qualitative interviews, I began to wonder specialized businesses are more likely to have close buyer/supplier relationships, which develop into friendships. However, I observed evidence in both directions. On one hand, specialized businesses deal with fewer buyers and suppliers and need to sustain good relationships in order to keep their business. But on the other hand, mutual scarcity in the buyer/supplier relationship means both sides are mutually dependent even without the need for close personal relationships. And moreover, there was a *general trend* amongst many businesses I spoke with—even large and diverse ones—to maintain personal relationships with all potential suppliers in case their current ones break down. For example:

> {Proprietor of mini-supermarket. [Interviewee #104]}
> I always keep in contact with previous sales reps, in case I have a problem with the current one—I'll call him up to say 'What do I do to get service?'.

6.2.23.   As a final remark in this section, we should note that the mechanism I outline here—where individuals' choice of business friendship model is partly conditioned by occupation and industry—is **not a *deterministic* model. Individual agency is probably most important, even if occupation and industry do make some models more likely than others.** I found a prime instance of this point when interviewing the joint owners of a paper distribution firm: a married couple who are both General Managers of the firm. They have the same occupations, work in the same industry, and indeed in the same firm, doing the same job, but one of them customarily socializes with clients whereas the other doesn't at all, even when they're dealing with the same people. So the structure of occupations and industries is, in the end, trumped by agency of individuals.

How do these Friendship Mechanisms work Across Ethnic Boundaries?

6.2.24.   During my interviews, I received a number of testimonies about business being a crucial channel for building cross-ethnic friendships, which would likely not have happened at all were it not for business contact. For example:

> {Afro-Trinidadian sales manager at a print firm. [Interviewee #170]}
> **We've done jobs where people say "well this feels more like a family than work!". And this is a combination of Indians and Africans working together for one purpose.**

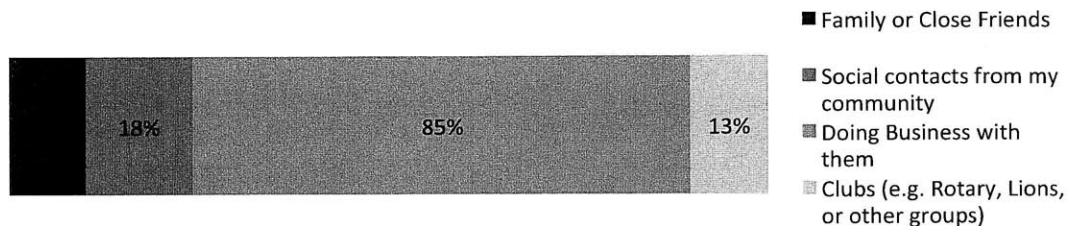> {Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #187]}
> **If I wasn't in this job I might have only Indian friends or African friends. But now I have plenty, plenty friends. White friends in Mayaro. Chinese friends in Port-of-Spain. And real close. Closer than if you born with someone—your next-door neighbor. And that's why I wouldn't swap this job for anything else.**

When I stopped for lunch one day in one of the more remote Indo-Trinidadian villages, and got talking to the café's Indo-Guyanese owner[54], I didn't anticipate he'd tell me—through a long thick beard, and sitting in traditional Muslim dress—about the wide-ranging spectrum of friends he'd picked up since moving to Trinidad. These friends stemmed particularly from business contacts: his Chinese-Trinidadian friend is the one who looks after his accounts, and he's friends with Afro-Trinidadians because he worked with them as a mechanic.

6.2.25. **Such cross-ethnic friendships appear actually to be the norm rather than an exception.** Of the respondents who said they had made friendships through business, fully 95 percent said these friendships included friendships with people of a different race. In other words, for those people who make friendships through business at all, almost all of them make *cross-ethnic* friendships through business too.

6.2.26. **So, business does lead to friendship across ethnic boundaries.** This is an important finding in the context of Trinidadians' ethnically-segmented residential areas and social lives, as highlighted above in sections 4.1.2 to 4.1.16: **indeed, business may be one of the few opportunities for cross-ethnic friendships to arise.** This crucial role for business was highlighted also by interviewees' responses about the people they ask for advice in business (relationships which surely must have an element of friendship in order to be able to ask advice as a favor). As shown in Figure 39, when such relationships are formed across ethnic boundaries, they are almost always formed through doing business.

Figure 39: Responses to question 'Thinking about the people you ask for advice in business, where did you originally meet the people of a different race to you?' (Note that the percentages of respondents do not sum to 100% because respondents were permitted to check more than one category)

■ Family or Close Friends

▨ Social contacts from my community

▨ Doing Business with them

▨ Clubs (e.g. Rotary, Lions, or other groups)

18%   85%   13%

6.2.27. This is not to say that the simple presence of interethnic business transactions is sufficient to generate interethnic friendships. For example:

{Indo-Trinidadian shopkeeper. [Interviewee #16]}
There's some Afro-Trinidadians here [in Debe] now because of the new government housing development. They have to come [to my business] whether they like me or not. But they don't lime like the others [i.e. Indo-Trinidadians]: they come and buy it and go.

Using the analysis above, we know that some occupations and industries are more likely to lead to friendships than others—particularly those involving contact over a long period of time (for the 'familiarity' model), those involving mutual interests (for the

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[54] Interviewee #141.

'strategic acquaintances' model), and those involving negotiated transactions (which permit relationships to develop). But where those 'ingredients' for friendships do exist, they appear to function efficiently across ethnic boundaries.

6.2.28. **But does ethnicity mediate the function of such friendship models and mechanisms?** On one hand, it appears all models of friendship *can* operate across ethnic boundaries. In the words of one interviewee who formed a lot of cross-ethnic affective ties through business:

> {Afro-Trinidadian sales rep for food & beverage wholesaler. [Interviewee #57]}
> I have plenty Chinese and Indian friends. Whoever thinks positive, I like. Most of my friends I have now are from business. I learn something from them.

...or another who observed the way his employees can surprise themselves by forming affective friendships across ethnic boundaries:

> {White-Trinidadian sales manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #68]}
> [AK: 'Do you find you interact with a greater diversity of people in business than those you choose to see in your social life?']
> Absolutely. I speak for myself and my sales reps. **It's very enriching—getting to know people from very far and wide backgrounds. Often you hire people and they have predispositions to particular races or religions. But then they meet people of other backgrounds [through doing business with them] who they like.** That's the attitude of the company too, to support that.
> [AK: 'How can you be sure there really is this kind of change in your staff?']
> You see it because you're very proximate to people.

But on the other hand, we can infer from preceding analysis that the 'affection' model of friendship will be less likely to function across ethnic boundaries than within them, since cultural commonalities appear to count for much in making people feel comfortable with each other (section 5.3.38 onwards on cultural commonalities, above). Some additional obstacles to cross-ethnic friendships are presented by the fact that socializing requires a particular setting (whether a bar, restaurant, home or elsewhere) and not all locations are suitable for all religions. Moreover some ethnic groups may simply be more comfortable having social relationships across ethnic boundaries than others; as discussed earlier:

> {Hindu Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager for Hardware retailer. [Interviewee #133]}
> ... **Also the Muslim guy will not tend to socialize with people outside his religion.**

6.2.29. **What about the impact of cross-ethnic friendships? When they do arise, what do they count for?** Returning to one of the first arguments of this document (section 5.1.3), one of the manifestations of 'friendship' in business is the kind of deals it gets you with your friends. This link from friendship to leniency in business transactions does seem to work efficiently across ethnic boundaries, and indeed can be strong enough to outweigh ethnic favoritism. For example:

> {White-Trinidadian Managing Director of construction materials manufacturer. [Interviewee #117]}
> [Thinks that favoritism happens mainly amongst Muslims, Syrians, and Chinese.] There is some favoritism among Whites: if you have three companies to choose from and they're the same price, if I know the White guy then I'd go with him. But if I knew the Indian guy and not the White guy I'd go with the Indian.

6.2.30. But what about the impact of cross-ethnic friendships on wider aspects of individuals' behavior? Despite all these optimistic indications about the power of cross-ethnic transactions to build cross-ethnic friendships, and the impact of those cross-ethnic friendships, the subsequent (and final) part of this section puts some limits on this optimism.

We examine a number of ways in which cross-ethnic business transactions can improve ethnic relations, and then highlight the limits on that power.

6.3. Business → Improved Ethnic Relations? Racial Stereotypes Die Hard

6.3.1. **In this final section, we push business relationships beyond trust and friendship: we ask 'How far can business relationships go, and under what circumstances?'. Can experiences in business be powerful enough to change wider social attitudes?**

6.3.2. **The evidence I collected suggests that business transactions do lead to some key social spillovers—including a rational form of multiculturalism—but that racial prejudice is remarkably resistant, even to a number of positive business experiences.** I argue this resistance is rooted in two factors inherent to business transactions. First, the **number of business contacts relative to the general population is small**—especially relative to Trinidad's large Afro-Trinidadian and Indo-Trinidadian populations—and so even if affective trust relations and personal friendships are built, those **positive experiences are likely to be classified as 'exceptions' or subcategories, rather than causing general stereotypes to be modified.** Second, there seems to be a **psychological disconnect between the way individuals approach business transactions**—even when leading to personal friendships—**and their latent prejudicial attitudes:** in particular, individuals could remain hostile towards intermarriage with other races even as they had long, friendly dinners with business partners belonging to that race.

6.3.3. **Overall, unfortunately, the quantitative evidence I collected cannot tell us much—as shown in Table 5 and Table 6, only age and gender are significant determinants of identity strength; and only being Indo-Trinidadian is a significant determinant of agreement with negative stereotypes about Afro-Trinidadians.**

6.3.4. **But as I show in the section below, qualitative evidence reveals quite a lot, and permits us to make some nuanced arguments and conclusions.** I begin this section by outlining some key social spillovers of business transactions, before moving to a discussion of their limitations, particularly with regard to racial prejudice.

Table 5: No systematic relationship between race stereotyping and industries or occupations

Dependent variable: 'From your own experience at work, how accurate do you think is the stereotype of Afro-Trinidadians being lazier than Indo-Trinidadians?'	(model 1)	(model 2)	(model 3)
Indo-Trinidadian respondent (binary)	0.43 ***	-0.15	0.74 **
Age	0.01		
Gender	0.13		
Education	0.05		
Income	-0.04		
Managerial job (binary)	0.44	0.17	0
Printing industry (binary)		0.54	
Retail industry (binary)		1.06 *	0.06
Construction industry (binary)		0.74	
Food & beverages industry (binary)		0.66	
Number of employees in firm		-0.00	
Percentage of Afro-Trinidadian friends			0.00
[constant]	2.01 ***	2.49 ***	2.23 **
N	192	119	49
R^2	0.07	0.09	0.13

Legend: * <0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table 6: No systematic relationship between ethnic identity strength and occupations or industries

Dependent variable: 'How strongly would you identify with being of your race (e.g. Indo-Trinidadians, Afro-Trinidadian, etc) as opposed to being simply Trinidadian?'	(model 1)	(model 2)	(model 3)
Age	.01 *		.01
Gender	.31 *		.18
Education	.13		.12
Income	.08		-.08
Muslim	.29		-.46
Managerial job (binary)	.10		-.10
Printing industry (binary)		-.03	-.30
Retail industry (binary)		0	0
Construction industry (binary)		.31	.00
Food & beverages industry (binary)		-.09	.04
[constant]	1.07 ***	2.69 ***	2.31 *
N	204	56	31
R^2	.07	.03	.09

Legend: * <0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Social Benefits of Inter-ethnic Commerce

6.3.5.   **My interviews provided a convincing number of testimonies about the ways in which interethnic business transactions can improve ethnic relations—particular through the social content of those transactions.** Here I briefly explore three mechanisms by which ethnic relations are improved.

(i) Information.

6.3.6.   **First, interethnic business contact increases the information individuals hold on outgroups, with whom they may not otherwise come into contact.** For example:

> *{Afro-Trinidadian Accounts Clerk & Purchasing Officer, after only two years in business. [Interviewee #82]}*
> **I've learned a lot from people, especially where culture is concerned.** For example, there's a lot of things I didn't know about the Hindu religion and the Muslim religion. Dealing with them it made me look at them a little differently. And it made me more sure of myself. There are a lot of things you hear people say about different religions but dealing with them I know more about it myself.

> *{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian supervisor for a Transport Contractor in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #159]}*
> **Getting to know people, you learn different things about them—their culture and their lifestyle.** And it's a nice experience.

(ii) Ethnically Diverse Social Lives.

6.3.7.   **Second, where interethnic business transactions lead to trust relations and personal friendships—even if these are calculatively- rather than affectively-based—they broaden the ethnic diversity of individuals' social lives.**

> *{Chinese-Trinidadian owner & manager of a bar. [Interviewee #90]}*
> The business bonds you with people out there—you get to know a lot of people.

> *{Afro-Trinidadian proprietor of retail store. [Interviewee #32]}*
> We started very small with a buffet in my brother's house, then went looking for wholesalers in downtown [Port-of-Spain]. **A lot of those people are East Indian—they give us advice.** They always give you tips. [Have any of them become your friends?] **We talk about everything: family, kids—not just because I rely on them, *but because I like them*. And they too: they open up to you more than you think of.** We built up a relationship and they started to give me credit. Actually one time my husband and I went to the beach and saw one of the suppliers on the beach and we went and limed with them. Also last week we were in Princes Town—we called one of our [Indo-Trinidadian] suppliers—we bought something from them but they also invited us to lunch.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian sales manager for food & beverage wholesaler. [Interviewee #81]}*
> It [i.e. cross-ethnic business links] will have an impact because you open your eyes to things you may not have seen before—it will have an impact on your personal life. Once you're not closed-minded—I had **all types of friends to begin with; but now they're probably more diverse.**

> *{White-Trinidadian Managing Director of furniture manufacturer. [Interviewee #59]}*
> Yes I think so: a business contact of a different race—**you end up inviting them to your house, then their son too, and he ends up having a relationship with your daughter.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]}*
> Take tonight: we're going to Port-of-Spain to have dinner with a Negro guy and his wife—and we'll sit down for two-and-a-half hours—doing what?—you don't eat for two-and-a-half-hours! We'll talk two

minutes of business, then some politics and so on—because you strike some nerve where everybody enjoys the evening out.

6.3.8. And even where such cross-ethnic relationships do not extend far enough to count as friendships (and remain as cross-ethnic trust ties), they still constitute cross-ethnic relationships that individuals would not have had were it not for doing business. For example:

> {Indo-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #73]}
> Getting an account with Bhagwansingh's [a large hardware supplier] is very difficult; but **one of the directors here met the owner of Bhagwansingh's socially, got on well with them—and the very next day an account was set up. And now we're installing their roofs too!**
> [N.B. the Director of the roof company is a 37-year old white man, and Bhagwansingh's owner is an Indo-Trinidadian in her 70s—not the most natural friends in either of their normal social lives.]

> {Indo-Trinidadian sales manager at print firm. [Interviewee #126]}
> [AK: 'Have any business links led to relationships with people of different races to you?']
> Yes it has. I've met a big group of people. Some of them are my friends. A Syrian guy. A White woman. Not to the extent of liming with them. But being friendly with them, yes.

> {Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of mini-supermarket in almost entirely Indo-Trinidadian village. [Interviewee #100]}
> The time I went to _____ [one of her major suppliers]—owned by two Syrian guys—they were very nice to us. They walked us through the warehouse and explained what they have.

> {Afro-Trinidadian shop assistant. [Interviewee #42]}
> Yeah, I do meet a lot of Indian sales reps, and dem be real nice and friendly—even more than me.

Thus business is a key medium for building cross-ethnic bridging ties.

(iii) Rational Multiculturalism.

6.3.9. **Third, as highlighted in section 5.3.69, doing business with the diverse racial and religious populations of Trinidad trains individuals to adapt their behavior to suit each of those various groups.**

These opinions were voiced with respect to race, given the cultural differences between races:

> {Indo-Trinidadian Sales Manager at processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #187]}
> **I can talk to any culture.** Them Africans downtown—they don't like to shake hands: they like to bounce[55]. What, you think because I Indian I not going to bounce?! I going to bounce!.

> {Indo-Trinidadian Executive Secretary of Furniture Manufacturer. [Interviewee #129]}
> **Yes it has changed me; business has changed me.** You find yourself going to places you wouldn't normally go—even places you don't want to go: **to be polite to people and because it's good for business. Different areas of the country, different cultures.**

> {Indo-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #73]}
> [With respect to customers and suppliers from different backgrounds], **we have grown accustomed to dealing with each other.**

> {Afro-Trinidadian sales manager of a cleaning products manufacturer. [Interviewee #83]}
> **I had to program my mind to deal with every individual.** I would say this made me a better person. I **handle things more maturely and look at life from a different perspective.**

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[55] 'To bounce' means to greet people by pressing the knuckles on your fist against someone else's.

...and also with respect to religion—for which businesses make special allowances for religiously-specific needs, by various groups, within the bounds of doing business effectively.

> *{Christian Indo-Trinidadian meats retailer. [Interviewee #35]}*
> When it comes to religion, we know which meats are Halal. Muslims trust us with buying Halal from us. We will take it seriously, not like the larger places. We won't even cut meat with the same saw as pork until we've sanitized it. The same with Hindus: not to cut beef. This isn't because these are particularly large markets for us—but it's all part of the personal touch. Then they get the trust in you.

> *{Christian Indo-Trinidadian accounts manager at air conditioning manufacturer. [Interviewee #62]}*
> For example, a Muslim guy came to purchase a unit. We'd try to deliver on a Friday morning not afternoon so that we don't interfere with Friday prayers.

> *{Christian White-Trinidadian sales manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #68]}*
> The only adjustment we make is to deliver to Muslim firms in the morning. But we do require that everyone must be able to work Monday to Saturday [which therefore excludes strict Muslims from working for us].

6.3.10. **In sum, business transactions bond diverse ethnic groups together for a common purpose, and hostility towards ethnic outgroups is likely to diminish once they are recognized as being potential customers, suppliers, or partners:**

> *{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian manager of furniture retailer. [Interviewee #23]}*
> **Business can help race relations because everyone becomes important to you—black, white, whatever.** These are people—potential customers, and you have to keep that in mind.

> *{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #202]}*
> **Business is a very reliable channel of diplomacy. It is a *formula* for harmony between communities. Trade is an extremely important tool because it does more than let people negotiate from a position of strength. If you treat your customer well there's a likelihood that he might treat you differently than if he just perceived you in terms of your ethnicity when he didn't know you. So business is crucial in that regard.**
> You see, what happens is this: a successful business creates value between people. In other words, I will value you as a person more if you are helping me to earn a living. So a successful business relationship creates value between people. Now if they happen to be—for instance—Shia and Sunni, let us take one current very extreme example; if they happen to be Shia and Sunni, it is very likely that they would never have even walked on the same side of the street—far less to even engage in a conversation—had it not been for the need to trade. And in the trade there is a certain voluntary willingness to enter the trade, because if you happen to be selling water for five dollars a bottle, and I am only willing to pay four dollars a bottle, or I reveal to you that I can buy water for four dollars, or I might tell you on a slow day that I'll take ten cases of water off you if you give me for four dollars, contact is starting to flourish between us—we're starting to exchange, talk to each other.

Some visitors to Trinidad are surprised to find Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants printing 'Happy Divali' on their napkins at the appropriate time of the year, or Afro-Trinidadian Seventh Day Adventists being invited to Muslim Indo-Trinidadian houses to celebrate Eid. Rational multiculturalism is likely to play a substantial part in explaining why such colorful phenomena occur.

(iv) Affective Multiculturalism?

6.3.11. **Fourth, this multiculturalist outlook may grow into something not only based on instrumentalist motives. Cross-ethnic business transactions can lead to deeper, genuine changes in the way people behave in the world and in their social attitudes.**

6.3.12. This argument should be contextualized by pointing out that religious tolerance in Trinidad seems generally to be high. Indeed, one of the most interesting social phenomena I witnessed in Trinidad was the trend for Trinidadians—particularly Indo-Trinidadians—to embrace more than one religion at once. Sometimes this stemmed from having been brought up by a mother adhering to one religion and a father adhering to another; but I also got the feeling there was a *social norm* of religious tolerance in Trinidad. The following quote is typical of this sentiment:

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}
> I believe God is one, and we just worship him in different ways. Just like we have different ways of communicating, we communicate with God in different ways. And I need to respect each way. I might beat drums, and you might jump up and down and you might spin in circles, but if that's what makes me grow in faith, I believe there is a God and there's a single entity that is one God.

6.3.13. One key question is: to what extent could business transactions be responsible for such tolerance—either of other religions, or of other races? According to the interviewees below, they can indeed play a substantial role:

> {Indo-Trinidadian owner of an advertising agency. [Interviewee #109]}
> When I came in this building it was a shell. **I had three African guys put it [i.e. the office partitions] up in a week. I told them they could never do it, but they did. So there are lazy guys in all races but it's not all of them.**

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #175]}
> Yes, it tells you about different groups of people. You look at a set of African people coming into the store with five children. You get an idea of people's disposable income by looking at their purchasing patterns. One woman came into the shop to buy one ice-cream cone for all her six children to share. **So you learn to understand a lot, about different races.**

> {Indo-Trinidadian accounts manager for office supplies manufacturer. [Interviewee #62]}
> Yes, people do think that [Afro-Trinidadians are lazier than Indo-Trinidadians], but there are a lot of exceptions. One of my customers is the manager of a home furnishings store with a number of successful branches—he's African.
> ['Would prejudiced people coming into contact with him change their mind about Afro-Trinidadians in general?']
> **Yes, they might be surprised, then be more open [to doing business with Afro-Trinidadians] the next time.**

> {Afro-Trinidadian Sales Manager for household goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #85]}
> **Definitely it's widened the way I look at things.** One of our biggest customers is a Sai Baba [i.e. a follower of the South Indian religious guru by that name]. I didn't know much about this religion before, but he'll tell you a lot of stuff. And other people will tell you 'You're a Creole, but [sic] I like you.' Even in that scenario people might say 'Ah, they have money' [i.e. with reference to Indo-Trinidadians], but now you know they started in the market selling goods and had to work really hard for it. **So it gives you a lot more respect for people and how they got there.**

> {Mixed-Trinidadian sales manager at manufacturer of intermediate products. [Interviewee #80]}
> Over the years I've met quite a number of people I consider personal friends who invite me to their festivals and who I now even enjoy going to their family events. **I may have adopted some of their cultural values from different religions and philosophies in my own life.**

> {Muslim Indo-Trinidadian Manager of Construction firm in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #148]}

When I started dealing with the government, there were two Africans who helped me. They gave me a chance to tender for the job. Not because of corruption. **And that's why I don't believe in race. I'm an Indian—a Muslim—and they're African and they helped me. So I had good experiences.**

{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #202]}
Don't forget that a constant relationship [of trade] will also create some, um, some new perceptions as well—perceptions that somebody works hard, perceptions that he's a nice guy, he's fair, he's kind, he's considerate—those things can develop which are more positive as well, which will tend to replace, you know, what more do you need! If I was seen as a cartel-wielding, mean-spirited drug-dealer who happened to be using [this industry] as a vehicle, then they wouldn't keep coming back and buying [my products]. But if I knew what finish and what construction of [products] are most in demand, then they'd keep coming back.

Limits to Inter-ethnic Commerce

6.3.14.   **As I will explain in the final two parts of this section, there are a number of caveats to this optimism about the potential of cross-ethnic business transactions to lead to changes in social attitudes.**

(i) Negative experiences confirm stereotypes.

6.3.15.   **First, not every cross-ethnic experience in business is a positive one; thus some business experiences can actually confirm or worsen stereotypes rather than improving them.** To give just a few examples:

{Indo-Trinidadian shop assistant in hardware retailer. [Interviewee #154]}
My dad who works in Port-of-Spain says that Africans who collect their Friday salary don't come to work the next three days. Then they come Tuesday morning, and they'll be asking my dad for five dollars to buy a drink! Now, it's not true for everyone. But people do say that "Indians live for tomorrow but Africans live for today."

{Indo-Trinidadian owner & manager of food & beverage manufacturer. [Interviewee #69]}
Yes, I deal with them [Afro-Trinidadians]—as employees, customers, and suppliers. **As employees, they're sometimes very lazy; a few that rebel. Very bad work ethics. As suppliers: not very reliable— though there are a few exceptions. In terms of customers, they're not trustworthy, not reliable—bad payment [record].** In the islands [i.e. other Caribbean countries], even worse: very dishonest. There are genuine ones, but the majority spoil it for those. To compensate, customers have to pay cash. In the islands, I stopped dealing with them [Afro-Trinidadians] completely. **I lost a lot of money, and now deal only with Syrians and Indians ... Almost all my employees are now Indo-Trinidadian.** That's partly because of the area we're located in, but also **because I've had threats, theft, and paid out a lot of money because of their [i.e. Afro-Trinidadians'] carelessness.**

{Afro-Trinidadian manager of electrical shop. [Interviewee #173]}
The experience I have with these **Chinese** here [in the neighboring restaurant]: they bought things from us, but the bigger stuff they went to another supplier. We gave them a discount too. But as soon as the restaurant's open, there's no laughter buddy-buddyness any more, and no discount for us!

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of a lunch café, who ticked 'Not At All' for Trust towards Syrians/Lebanese. [Interviewee #116]}
When they [i.e. **Syrian-Trinidadians**] come to sell you something, they give you something else, or they tell you something else.

{Chinese-Trinidadian administrative manager for a hardware retailer. [Interviewee #124]}
Well, there's one story in particular: my boss sent me to deliver an invitation to a **French Creole** in a nice part of town. I drove up to the man's house and he came out shouting "What are *you* doing here?! You have no right to be here!". I thought about turning around and going home, but I explained and gave

him the invitation. But he never said sorry, just "Oh, that's right, oh, OK". And I thought to myself: "Well, what kind of people are these!"

{Afro-Trinidadian manager of print firm. [Interviewee #25]}
I had two Negro girls working here and they were giving me beans. And I said 'this is the same thing people saying [about us]: lazy!'. I did use it [i.e. a stereotype about Afro-Trinidadians], I admit, when I went to Pennywise. There were three Negro girls in front and they kept on chit-chattering like I didn't exist. On another counter an East-Indian girl was going above and beyond. ... Sad to say, but I think that [i.e. the lack of work ethnic amongst Afro-Trinidadians] was a primary reason for the importation of Chinese [into Trinidad].

{Afro-Trinidadian manager of electrical shop. [Interviewee #173]}
[In answer to question about whether being in business has made you think about race differently]:
Afro-Trinidadians: you can't rely on them! They tend to call you—"I in Chaguanas" [i.e. 'I'm on my way']—but it turns out they in San Fernando. You can't trust them: they always have a story.
... Our Black people live today for today. I wouldn't blame them for that. But then we get vex [i.e. get angry / feel resentment] when all the Indians have the big houses.

Thus if we expect cross-ethnic business transactions to improve attitudes towards outgroups, we must be clear that such positive experiences are a subset of all business transactions. Some transactions may actually worsen ethnic prejudice.

(ii) Positive experiences are deemed 'exceptions'.

6.3.16. **Second—and most importantly—even positive cross-ethnic experiences are usually deemed to be 'exceptions'.** When attitudes do change positively, those changes seem to operate with respect to an individual, rather than being extrapolated to the ethnic group to which the individual belongs.

6.3.17. **Occasionally this is because the *content* of the stereotypes had little connection with business, and thus were less likely to be modified by experiences related to business.** For example, Indo-Trinidadians were associated by one interviewee as having "big bellies and small penises—low virility"[56]. It is unlikely that business experiences would provide the opportunity to disprove these presumptions. **But even focusing on the stereotypes which *can* be related to business experiences—for example that Afro-Trinidadians tend to be lazy and are more likely to be criminals—I found that these were not as fluid as expected.** For example, an Afro-Trinidadian construction contractor told me how his local reputation had changed owing to his success in business:

> *{Afro-Trinidadian Construction contractor with five employees. [Interviewee #136]}*
> People give you more respect if you're in business. Before they used to call me 'Junior' or 'Tall Man'; but now they call me by my name: Mr. Brown.[57]

...and an Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur told me how East Indian businessmen respected and admired him for his success:

> *{Afro-Trinidadian manufacturer of household goods. [Interviewee #205]}*
> Some of the strongest admirers I have in the business world are East Indians. And that's because they recognize I have travelled the same road that they have. I've travelled the road from nothing to achievement; I've travelled the road from, um, of hard work. I've sacrificed. And I've built a family firm, because you see my son's working with me. Now, the Indians, when they look at my company, and look at what I have done, can see a lot of what they have gone through themselves. They recognize it, they admire me for it, they respect me for it. In front of my face and behind my back. I mean, I can tell you some of the top Indian businessmen in this country who will speak very highly of me. And one of the reasons they do that is because there are very few Black businessmen who have done it. And they recognize it, and they respect it. Mutual respect and mutual admiration, for the results I've had.

Would their successes overturn onlookers' general negative stereotypes about Afro-Trinidadians in business? The following quotes suggest not: positive experiences tend to be treated as **exceptions to the rule**, rather than as reason to reassess one's prejudices.

> *{Afro-Trinidadian shop assistant at butchers shop. [Interviewee #42]}*
> Some African people don't like to sacrifice—it's hard to say but it's the truth—some is lazy and they don't put in the work. **But my boss is African and he put in the work.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager of clothing store. [Interviewee #114]}*
> [Africans] want money but they don't want to work. And secondly the crime situation in Trinidad. **I do have African friends, but if I don't know the background of these people I won't trust them.**

> *{Afro-Trinidadian manager of a commodity importer and distributor. [Interviewee #65]}*
> **People do think about Afro-Trinidadians in business in terms of exceptions.** For example, Rodney's [supermarket, owned by an Afro-Trinidadian] in Arima has done exceptionally well. But even I will tell you the hardest-working people in this country are East Indians. We all know that. We just hope that it will change.

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[56] Interviewee #87.
[57] Name changed to protect anonymity.

6.3.18. **What this suggests is that people are perfectly capable of coping with multiple experiences of ethnic outgroups without conflating them into a singular ethnic stereotype.**

{Indo-Trinidadian shop assistant in southern Trinidad. [Interviewee #28]}
People are very conscious of these [negative Afro-Trinidadian stereotypes]. **Yes, I think they're true, about sixty percent [of the time]. [But] when you go up North [in Trinidad] you see Negroes in business and that's when you think 'Ah, it's not quite like I thought'.**

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of hardware supplier. [Interviewee #46]}
There's some Africans who are like that—too keen to party—but **I know other African businessmen who know how to do things.**

{Indo-Trinidadian administrative staff in construction firm, who indicated agreement with 3 out of 4 stereotypes. [Interviewee #145]}
I know it from experience—growing up from small. Where I live it's mixed, so you see what's going on. ... **Some Africans are very helpful, but some have attitude.**

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #175]}
While Africans take their salary and go shopping, an Indian might go straight to the bar, and that's not good for his productivity either. **Indians are more frugal in general,** though there are exceptions.
...I have really had a mixed staff, but to be honest with you, that [i.e. stereotypes] has not been displayed. **Some of my best frontline people and sales staff have been African, and some of the most polite people are African.**

{White-Trinidadian purchasing manager for retailer. [Interviewee #203]}
[AK: 'Do you think there's any truth in the generalization that Indo-Trinidadians are harder-working and Afro-Trinidadians are lazier?']
That's true. I didn't employ them for that reason, but when you interview them and go through their CV you see the Indians are more educated. There are educated Negroes too, but the Indian people have worked harder. **But all my buyers are Negroes!—so overall the stereotypes hold, but here it happens to be this way.**

6.3.19. **Thus when confronted by experiences that are inconsistent with previously-held stereotypes, people seem to deal with those contrary experiences by creating sub-categories within an ethnic group, rather than adjusting the whole stereotype.** Each sub-category is assigned different stereotypes and expectations. For example, sub-classifications of the Afro-Trinidadian ethnicity could be made on the basis of geographical origin, or socio-economic class:

{Indo-Trinidadian owner of meats retailer. [Interviewee #35]}
The majority of Afro-Trinidadians are good stock. If you see these original Afro-Trinidadians [i.e. the Africans in Trinidad before the 1970s, when Eric Williams invited Afro-Caribbean populations from elsewhere to migrate to Trinidad], they're secretaries, attorneys, policemen, and so on. However, from the 1970s the Prime Minister Eric Williams allowed a lot of Grenadians, Vincentians and so on to live in the country. These people were placed in Laventille and so on. And those are the ones doing the crime—and not doing anything for themselves. **The crime comes from the imported stock.** They don't work: all they want to do is go party and screw. Then their children become the criminals. I would be able to know that [i.e. which 'brand' of Afro-Trinidadian] within two minutes of talking to someone.

{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Rep for meats distributor. [Interviewee #144]}
I know this because I'm in the field. ... **There are two classes [of Afro-Trinidadian]: those that want to work, and those that want to eat off of the country and work for two hours a day.**

{Indo-Trinidadian owner & manager of construction contractor. [Interviewee #73]}
These stereotypes do apply to a certain extent, but mainly to **middle or lower class Afro-Trinidadians.**

Further interview excerpts of this ilk are given below in sections 5.3.98 and 7.1.3, about interviewees' opinions on the differences between Afro-Trinidadians from northern and from southern Trinidad.

6.3.20. **Why does this happen? Why would individuals respond to cognitive dissonance[58] by sub-dividing their stereotypes rather than simply adjusting them?** I believe there are two answers to this question. **First, stereotype sub-divisions are a more efficient way to reduce cognitive dissonance than stereotype adjustment.** The logic to this argument is simple: sub-divisions are more robust to ongoing experiences than are unitary stereotypes. Countervailing experiences of ethnic outgroups are likely to be ongoing. Positive experiences in business (which can counteract stereotypes) are supplemented by ongoing negative experiences (which reinforce them). The outcome of these countervailing experiences is indeterminate, and so rather than continually adjust stereotypes in one direction or another—and thus face a continual cognitive dissonance—it is more efficient to create sub-divisions in one's stereotypes in an attempt to resolve these apparently contradictory experiences. As one example of these dual views:

> *{Chinese-Trinidadian manager of plastics manufacturing firm. [Interviewee #180]}*
> The Afro-Trinidadians: they don't think, even to the point where they *can't* think! For example, 'Should I buy this track shoe which costs $450 versus this one which is $50 and does the same job?' Driving on the road, a lot of the ill-mannered drivers or those with no consideration are those of the Afro-Trinidadian race.
> *[AK: 'So, from your experience in business, **how accurate are these Trinidadian stereotypes on the questionnaire?'**]*
> **Absolutely! 100-plus percent. That's what I see all around me: it's happening all around us.** The price of chicken goes up and Afro-Trinidadians buy more of it! They're a race that's not easily swayed.
> *[AK: 'But when you see successful Afro-Trinidadian businesspeople, they're exceptions to the rule?']*
> **Definitely. You realize that where Afro-Trinidadians are successful, they've changed their practices: more businesslike and more professional**—they spend money only when it's needed.

6.3.21. **Second, there is a reason more specific to Trinidad: initial stereotypes are formed mostly on the basis of true experience rather than erroneous preconceptions.** This situation is contrary to the normal literature on prejudice, where negative stereotypes are attributed through ignorance; by contrast, in Trinidad 'prejudice' appears often to reflect accurately the general characteristics of an ethnic group. This insight is most apparent from the copious number of testimonies given by *members* of stereotyped ethnic groups, who themselves *concur* about the characteristics attributed to them (see section 5.3.16). It is also apparent from census data, which shows that Indo-Trinidadians are systematically more likely than Afro-Trinidadians to be in business, and within businesses to be more likely to be managers (see sections 4.2.6 to 4.2.8 for a thorough presentation of census figures on this topic). And according to the perceptions of interviewees too:

> *{Syrian-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #192]}*
> I mean, my whole experience of race would be with employees. I mean, looking at your questions here, Afro-Trinidadians tend to be more lazy—that's absolutely true. Indian people are better workers—that's absolutely true.
> *[AK: 'Do you think that holds true at the professional level as well, or is it mainly, you know, shopworkers and so on?']*
> Well I think you can tell at the professional level because—**let's be honest—how many Afro-Trinidadians do you have in management, compared to how many Indians?** Afro people *spend* money; they live paycheck to paycheck. They buy. Whereas the Indos, they're looking towards the future, they believe in their children. An Afro may not do that; they like to live life.

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[58] This is the technical term for experiences that contradict expectations; see section 2.2.8 in my literature review.

It is exactly what you see happening, it's not just a matter of reputation. At the end of the day, yes, there's a few who may not be like that, but I think the vast majority is.

{Syrian-Trinidadian store owner. [Interviewee #202]}
If you go to any international trade show, a merchandise trade show, you will meet Arabs, Jews, Chinese and Indians. **90% of the participants that you will meet at any international merchandise trade show will be Arabs, Jews, Chinese and Indians. Now why does that happen? I don't know. How come Black people win the hundred metres race so often, I don't know. I can't explain those things to you. I'm not into this discrimination bullshit—I'm sorry to use that term.** I mean, Mother Nature discriminates, for God's sake. I mean Arab people have more heart attacks than Chinese people. Black people have more prostate cancer and diabetes than White people. Mother Nature is doing that, for God's sake.

Thus it seems justified to think of the behavioral characteristics attributed to ethnic groups not as erroneous stereotypes, but instead as *real tangible differences*. Even if I encounter an exceptional individual who doesn't conform to this stereotype, doing so makes no change to the general ethnic characteristics observed in many other individuals. This argument helps explain quotes like the following, where even very positive experiences have not led to any change in general ethnic stereotypes:

{Afro-Trinidadian sales manager at a print firm. [Interviewee #170]}
If you'd had experiences with (say) Negro people being this way, then you change their mind [if their experience with you is better]. *But* **some people don't even see it: they don't notice that it's different to what they expected.**

Most likely, it's not that people "don't notice it's different to what they expected", it's more that people do notice, but that a few positive experiences are not sufficient to change all the prior experiences on which they base their ethnic stereotypes.

6.3.22. **This last observation—that stereotypes seemed predominantly to be based on real experiences—prompts a difficult question. Many individuals I interviewed subscribed to ethnic stereotypes; so should those individuals be considered 'prejudiced'?** There are persuasive reasons to answer no and to answer yes. On one hand, 'prejudice' is usually defined as being based on ignorance; but in Trinidad it seems often to be based on real information and experience. This point is well illustrated by the following Indo-Trinidadian interviewee, who prefers Afro-Trinidadians to Indo-Trinidadians in his social and business lives, but still subscribes to general opinions about Afro-Trinidadians being spendthrifty and relatively poor at running businesses:

{Muslim Indo-Trinidadian owner of car decals business. [Interviewee #165]}
[In answer to the question on race of friends]:
I don't lime with no-one, [and] don't call no-one. It's just me—I have no friends. But **I mainly interact with Africans, and I find they're much cooler.** Indians pick up on every little thing while Africans are more laid back. **Indians are very difficult people to get along with:** they always want things to be perfect. Others will say "that's no problem", "we'll deal with it next time".
...
[In answer to question on stereotypes]:
That is fact: if you look around you'll find it's Indians owning most of the businesses. **Indians tend to save for the rainy day, send their children to school. African children are selling pies.**

But on the other hand, 'prejudice' in its most simple definition is constituted by 'prejudging' an individual before getting to know them as an individual. And as we have discussed at several points in this dissertation (sections 6.1.31 and 6.1.36), ethnicity is frequently used as a rule-of-thumb to establish expectations of trustworthiness. Such rules-of-thumb necessarily mean individuals are initially being judged on their skin color rather than on their character. Indeed, the rules-of-thumb are sometimes crude enough to rely on

observations about hair texture or the darkness of skin: the more African a person's features, the more a set of Afro-Trinidadian stereotyped characteristics would be expected from that person. For example:

> *{Afro-Trinidadian manager of electrical shop. [Interviewee #173]}*
> [Said to one employee as compared to another, albeit in a tongue-in-cheek, satirical kind of tone]:
> He hardcore Negro: your hair softer and better quality than he. And me, I have two children but one have more quality than the other.

6.3.23. Reading this section, we might feel rather pessimistic: even the most positive experiences of outgroups may not lead to any change in ethnic prejudice. That is true, but they also help us generate some helpful limiting conditions about the power of business transactions to change ethnic attitudes. In particular, they help us infer that **positive business experiences will be most influential for attitudes towards minority ethnic outgroups who are not often encountered, or not intimately encountered, other than in business.** From Figure 9 and Figure 10, we could see this means Chinese, Syrians and Whites, for whom Indo- and Afro-Trinidadians may not have much contact apart from through business (indeed, around 43 percent, 46 percent, and 42 percent of Indo-Trinidadians and 55 percent, 66 percent, and 55 percent of Afro-Trinidadians reported having *zero* Chinese, Syrian, or White friends respectively).

(iii) Racial attitudes die hard.

6.3.24. **A third reason why business transactions are not a panacea for ethnic prejudice draws on an examination of the nature of racist attitudes themselves. In brief, I find there seems to be a psychological disconnect between the behavior one undertakes in one's business life and one's social life outside.** Thus business-based cross-ethnic friendships can be pursued even as prejudicial views continue to be held. ***This disconnect seems not to involve any cognitive dissonance because business transactions are pursued as though they belong to a separate social world from the rest of social life.***

6.3.25. **To make this argument, I will be reporting the responses of my interviewees to questions about their attitudes to intermarriage.** I chose intermarriage attitudes as a tangible indicator of racial prejudice. Asking interviewees about their attitudes on intermarriage let me see how their racial preferences are manifested with respect to a tangible social institution, and moreover is a hot topic of controversy in Trinidad. For example, the following quote is one example of the harshness with which these views are sometimes volunteered:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of small hardware shop in Central Trinidad. [Interviewee #139]}*
> The race, the hair [of Afro-Trinidadians]—that would be a problem. **You'd feel a let down—an embarrassment.** It's not the person or the man, it's the hair of the man—it looks shameful. **Really it up to the person: if you love that man fine, but then stay away [from this family]—away, away!**

Views on intermarriage also have a very tangible and important consequence, since a lack of intermarriage is, by definition, the main reason for ethnic identities to persist. One survey respondent commented: "Until we all look the same, next thousand years, the situation will always be the same as it is right now. We need more interracial marriages."

6.3.26.   **Not much insight can be derived from quantitative analysis of these responses.** Using multivariate regression analysis (see Table 7), it appears that age and being Indo-Trinidadian are the only factors systematically associated with attitudes to intermarriage. Older people are slightly more prejudiced, when one holds constant the interviewee's gender, religion, and industry of employment. And Indo-Trinidadians are essentially the only group for whom race can matter more than religion in views on intermarriage. The industry of employment appears to have no systematic relationship with prejudices on intermarriage (this result is further disaggregated in Figure 42, indicating that race is far more important to Hindus than to Christian or Muslim Indo-Trinidadians: of the 18 percent of Indo-Trinidadians for whom race matters more than religion, fully 53 percent of those were Hindus[59]). **Thus I put the emphasis in this section on qualitative investigation: to ask interviewees about intermarriage and gain insight from their responses.**

Table 7: Correlates of discriminatory preferences about intermarriage

Dependent variable: 'How would you feel if one of your children or close family married someone of a different race?' (Interview question #32. Scale is 1 = 'No objection'; 4 = 'Absolutely opposed')	(model 1)	(model 2)	(model 3)
Indo-Trinidadian respondent (binary variable)	.32 **	.78 ***	.49 *
Muslim respondent (binary variable)	.12	-.04	-.40
Age	.01 **	.02 ***	.02
Gender	.06		-.36
Education	-.00		-.19
Income	-.01		
Printing industry (binary var)		0	0
Retail industry (binary var(		.22	.17
Construction industry (binary var)		.08	.18
Food & beverages industry (binary var)		.19	.25
[intercept]	.79 **	.22	1.33
N	135	95	46
R^2	.10	.24	.25

Legend: * <0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

6.3.27.   **It became apparent from my interview data that businesspeople could come into daily contact with ethnic outgroups, while still maintaining harshly prejudicial attitudes.** There was no necessary connection between business contact and liberal social attitudes. As

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[59] This calculation compensated for differing sample sizes amongst different religions. I took, for each religion amongst Indo-Trinidadians, the proportion who deemed race more important than religion as a barrier to intermarriage (11% of Christian Indo-Trinidadians, 25% of Hindu Indo-Trinidadians, and 11% of Muslim Indo-Trinidadians), and interpolated these proportions within the 18% of Indo-Trinidadians who deemed race more important.

examples, the following quotes are drawn from interviews with businesspeople who have many cross-ethnic interactions in the course of their work.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager of a retail shop in Debe, who has many Afro-Trinidadian customers and employs Afro-Trinidadians. [Interviewee #39]}*
> *[AK: 'As you've described to me, none of your suppliers are Afro-Trinidadian firms. Why do you think that is?']*
> **We're not a destructive race—we're like you [i.e. white people]—we build up the business. The Africans don't have that. Look at most of the criminals in this country is African. Then they come in and spend the money in my business.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian owner & manager of a shop in a predominantly Afro-Trinidadian area. [Interviewee #43]}*
> I know the mentality—the mind: seventy-five percent of them [i.e. Afro-Trinidadians] are not genuine. I live in an Afro community since I small, but I'm not like them. I have my own culture. Indians are more constructive.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian owner and manager of hardware store. [Interviewee #172]}*
> **Ninety-nine percent of my customers are Afro-Trinidadian. Regular customers.** We cuss them up; they cuss you up. I have twelve fellas with trucks in here at one time. It's convenient here because of transport.
> [But] ... **If you're here [in Trinidad] so long, you'll realize who does do all the shootin' and the killing in this country.** ...
> *[AK: 'But some Afro-Trinidadians are running businesses, right?']*
> They're in the minority—it's very rare.

The topic of intermarriage could elicit some particularly dramatic responses:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of car parts supplier. [Interviewee #131]}*
> If the girl's in love, I can't do anything—they the ones who have to live together. ... [But in general]: The son can do anything, but the daughter can't marry an African—I tell it to you straight. **Any other race fine, but Indians can mix with all of them except Africans.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of construction contractor, south Trinidad. [Interviewee #151]}*
> If he's Negro I'd be a little mad about it [i.e. if his daughter wanted to marry a Negro].

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of Hardware shop, who had expressed positive attitudes towards Afro-Trinidadians "especially those that grew up among the Indians, are very hardworking and very friendly. I know them.". [Interviewee #140]}*
> If it's a White that's fine—someone with straight hair—**but Negro, I one hundred percent against it.**

Particularly notable about these interviews was that they took place on the shop floor, with Afro-Trinidadians only a few steps away. And that such prejudicial views were so accessible and accepted by the interviewee that they were volunteered to me two or three minutes into the start of conversation.

6.3.28. **With respect to the translation of those views into opinions on intermarriage, a statistical analysis reveals that Trinidadians do not discriminate quite as much as these quotes suggest—*except amongst Indo-Trinidadians.* And as for views on religious intermarriage, Muslims are more strongly opposed than other religions.** These results are shown in Figure 40 and Figure 41.

Figure 40: Indo-Trinidadians are more strongly opposed to racial intermarriage than are Afro-Trinidadians and White-Trinidadians.

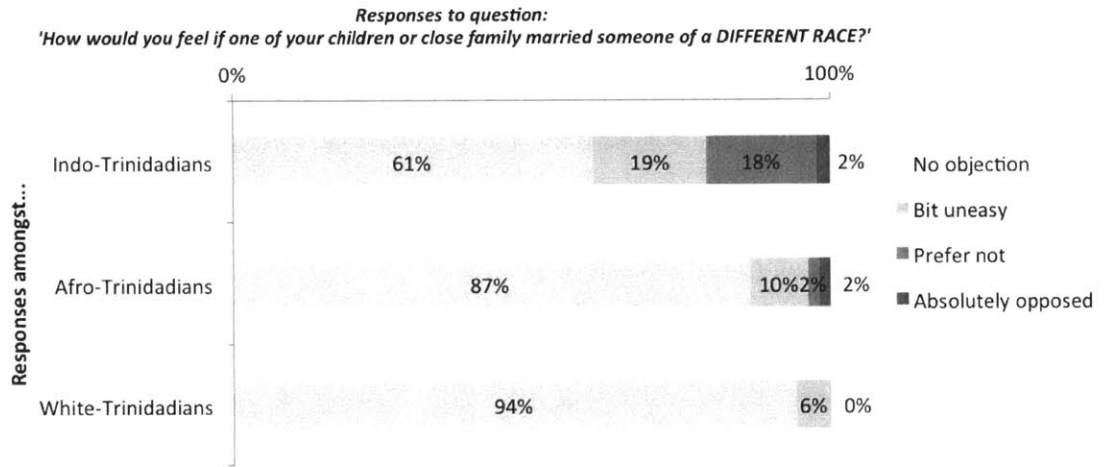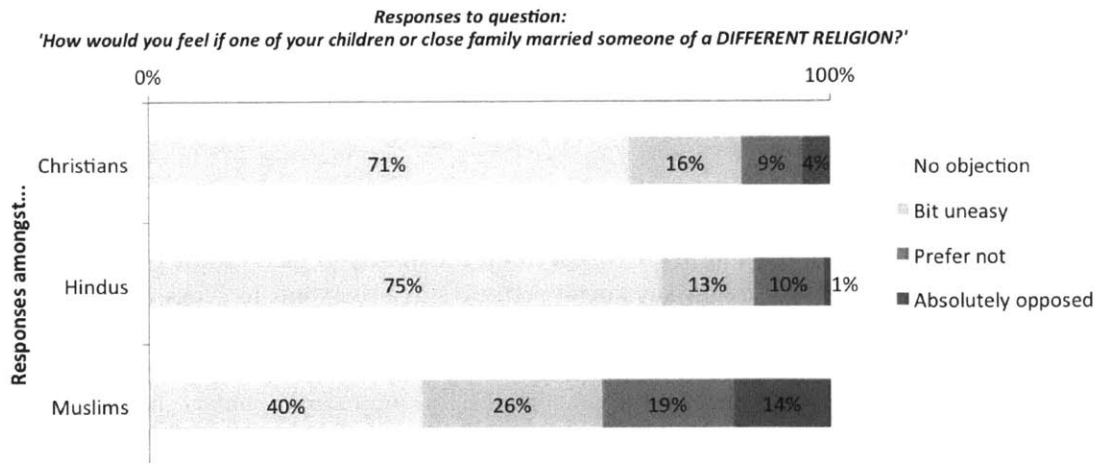*(Source: Analysis of amalgamated results from Interview question #32 & Survey question #21)*

Responses to question:
'How would you feel if one of your children or close family married someone of a DIFFERENT RACE?'

Indo-Trinidadians	61% 19% 18% 2%	No objection
		Bit uneasy
		Prefer not
Afro-Trinidadians	87% 10% 2% 2%	Absolutely opposed
White-Trinidadians	94% 6% 0%	

Figure 41: Muslims are more strongly opposed to religious intermarriage than are Christians and Hindus.

(Source: Analysis of amalgamated results from Interview question #32 & Survey question #21)

Responses to question:
'How would you feel if one of your children or close family married someone of a DIFFERENT RELIGION?'

Christians	71% 16% 9% 4%	No objection
		Bit uneasy
		Prefer not
Hindus	75% 13% 10% 1%	Absolutely opposed
Muslims	40% 26% 19% 14%	

Both of these findings mirror those made by Selwyn Ryan, a senior scholar of ethnic relations in Trinidad, whose survey in 1998 found that Indo-Christians were significantly more discriminatory on intermarriage than Afro-Christians, and that Muslims were more discriminatory than Christians (Ryan 1999:122-123).

6.3.29.   What about *comparing* views on racial intermarriage to views on religious intermarriage for each respondent?   Even if overall discrimination is not high, does race matter more? **Statistical analysis reveals that Trinidadians do *not* deem race to matter significantly more than religion for discrimination in intermarriage—*except amongst Indo-***

Trinidadians. Of 368 respondents answering questions about how they would feel if one of their children married someone of a different race or religion, 76% gave responses indicating they discriminated just as much or as little for race and for religion equally, 10% discriminate more on race, and 14% discriminate more on religion. But for Indo-Trinidadians, while 73% discriminate equally on race and religion, 18% discriminate more on race, and 10% more on religion. These differences may not seem large, until one notices that Indo-Trinidadians accounted for fully 36 of the 38 respondents in my interviews and surveys that discriminate more on race than on religion. Further analysis reveals that amongst Indo-Trinidadians, Hindus discriminate far more than Christians or Muslims (see Figure 42).

Figure 42: Percentage of respondents for whom race is a more important barrier than religion for interethnic marriage
(Source: Analysis of amalgamated results from Interview question #32 & Survey question #21)
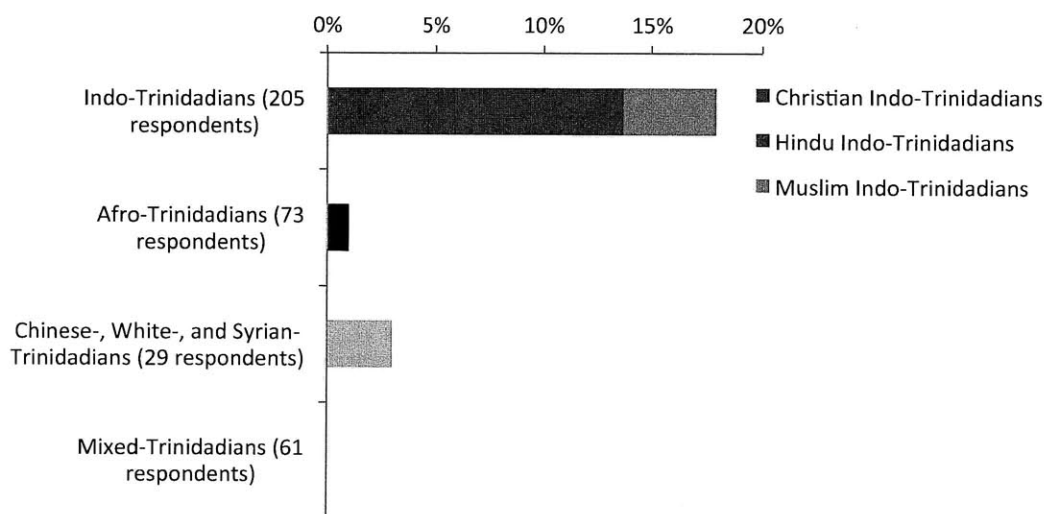
6.3.30. **If we look back at prior research on the ability of interethnic contact to change ethnic attitudes, we might say social attitudes are resistant to cross-ethnic business contact in Trinidad because that contact is failing to engage one of the four criteria of the contact hypothesis, since the type contact is too superficial.** This mirrors Varshney's (2002) insight about the importance of interethnic contact being 'associational' (i.e. involving institutionalized and objective-oriented contact over time) rather than merely 'everyday' one-shot transactions. **But apparently these prejudicial attitudes are maintained even where all four of the contact hypothesis criteria are fulfilled, *and* where contact is associational.** Remarkably, even the existence of interracial trust relations and personal friendships does not mean that prejudicial social attitudes will be modified. ***Business-based friendships can be formed independently of those prejudicial views continuing to be held.*** For instance, one of my most memorable interviews was with the Indo-Trinidadian General Manager of a personal goods manufacturer[60] who engaged thoughtfully and articulately with my questions for almost two hours. He described how friendships could be formed with business partners, and gave an evocative example about

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[60] Interviewee #84.

the intimate dinner with an Afro-Trinidadian business partner he would be attending with his wife that night (as cited above: the final quote in section 6.3.7). When it came to my question on intermarriage, it turned out that his two daughters had both married outside his own Hindu religion: one married a Catholic and the other married a Muslim.

> I initially had questions about this because I come a very stringent Hindu home. But now I understand that love precedes religion: religion is not the first criterion for enjoying life. **The character of the person takes precedent over religion.**

However, in his view, the same logic would not apply with respect to intermarriage between Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians:

> If the man was an Afro-Trinidadian, I'm being very honest with you: I'd have a problem with that. If he's Catholic, his culture is still Indian-based. We still see him as Indian. But a Negro boy, his culture is too different.
> [What kind of differences in culture do you mean?]
> The behavioral pattern of young Negroes—I wouldn't want to be near them. Young, aggressive, rude. We as Indian people think down the line: our children and our grandchildren. The Negro people don't. That is the biggest difference. It's almost an unwritten rule in this country. It's a different way of life. **There are some traits that are endemic to them which we don't tolerate.**

This observation corresponded with many other interviews I conducted, where the interviewees' views on intermarriage seemed to be independent of their business experiences. As examples of a range of views, which don't seem to correlate with business experiences:

> *{Indo-Trinidadian Hindu with very negative business experiences of Afro-Trinidadians. [Interviewee #69]}*
> **I personally feel it depends on the individual but usually doesn't work well:** unless one of you converts the other, you won't be able to bring up a family. **Especially with Black people,** because they bring you down. They depend on you more than you depend on them. That's why Black people cause problems: no religion, no culture—just robbing people.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian atheist with negative business experiences of Afro-Trinidadians but who has an Afro-Trinidadian boyfriend. [Interviewee #75]}*
> I've been on project sites where [Afro-Trinidadians] get paid on Friday and then call on Monday to say they've got not money to come to work! Negroes probably would drink it out, while the Indians would give it to their women. ...
> [In response to the question about intermarriage], **I've dated anyone except Indians—I'm just not attracted to them.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of a bar in rural Trinidad. [Interviewee #108]}*
> **I believe birds of a feather flock together. Culture [i.e. race] is most important;** religion is secondary.

> *{Dougla proprietor of retail store. [Interviewee #19]}*
> I like Indian girls, but I like rough sex an' everything. Negro girls like that. **Also it look nice [intermarriage between Afros and Indos]—like a peace.**

6.3.31.   To explain this phenomena, I posit there are three possible reasons, two of which I have already discussed, and one of which I introduce here. **First, as discussed in section 6.2.6 on 'strategic acquaintances', trust relations and business 'friendships' can have strictly calculative (rather than affective) roots; thus no cognitive dissonance is involved by having outgroup business friends but continuing to hold prejudicial social attitudes.** In other words, prejudice will not be reduced if there is a disjoint between the content of prejudice and the nature of business relationships. If prejudice is based on emotive sentiment, that hostility will not be reduced by calculative business relationships; and if prejudice is based on rational skepticism about the competence of Afro-Trinidadians, that stereotype will not be changed by a few positive experiences.

6.3.32.   **Second, as I discussed in the preceding section 6.3.21, even if affective trust or affective friendships *are* built through cross-ethnic business contacts, these are likely to involve relatively small numbers of individuals compared to the daily reinforcement of racial stereotypes by the general outgroup population**; thus positive experiences of outgroup friends are likely to be classified as 'exceptions' rather than causing stereotypes to be modified.

6.3.33.   **Third—this is the point which I have not raised before now—I began to detect that business relationships, even at their most intimate and long-term, were still part of a separate social world and never quite reach the intimacy of relationships with family and close friends.** Business relationships—even at their very best—remain distinct from the parts of social life where core beliefs and attitudes are most likely to be formed. To illustrate this point from several different angles:

> *{White-Trinidadian manager of paint distributor. [Interviewee #53]}*
> **Our accountants are Muslims. My salesmen are Hindus, or born-again Christians. … But** even though you deal with all these people, **when it comes to crunch time you'd shrink down to your own.**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian accounts manager of clothing distributor. [Interviewee #63]}*
> I think that business can get across those [racial] barriers—an African customer comes here and meets the Syrian owner; he embraces him and they get on well. **But being outside is different—you wouldn't want to walk in a street that only has Negro people on it because you wouldn't feel safe!**

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #184]}*
> …[But] let me tell you: business is buy & sell: **once you abide by that business relationship, I have no problem with you.**
> *[AK: 'So have any of those experiences changed your mind about other races?']*
> **No, it's a business relationship:** the bottom line is payment.

> *{Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #206]}*
> **As I said, business is adversarial, to start with. And I don't see that as being a real avenue for building bridges between various races, I don't see that. It's too adversarial.** Where we have human interaction, there can be building of trust, building of relationships, and so on—like in every other type of social interaction. But I would say, generally, the best places for building these bridges and getting rid of some of the oldest stereotypes is in schools: it starts in the primary school and it goes all the way up to tertiary education. That is where it really happens. And certain things are formed there, and by the time where they come to a point where they go to work, they already have preconceived ideas of every single ethnicity that they are going to interact with.

6.3.34.   **Thus attitudes on intermarriage just seemed to be outside the remit of business relationships to change.** Those attitudes were instead more likely to be formed according to upbringing, which seems to 'hard-wire' social attitudes:

> *{Shop Assistant in hardware retailer. [Interviewee #154]}*

It's something that we grew up with and was instilled in us from birth. Even if we like an African guy we have to put that at the back of our heads because our families would kill us. And I wouldn't like my daughter to marry an African either—although I would try to see the good in him.

[This sentiment is particularly striking because the interviewee had expressed positive views of local Afro-Trinidadians earlier in the interview, saying: "It have some Africans who come in here who are soft-spoken—they're not rowdy. In Barrackpore the few Negro people that have grown up with us aren't like the ones in Laventille. We have a good few loud customers too, but they're Indian."]

{Indo-Trinidadian manager of processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #175]}
Personally I was brought up in a very traditional Indian home. I don't have a problem with religion, but intermarriage [i.e. with Afro-Trinidadians] is different. **I sometimes sit and ask myself why, because it's the same blood running through our veins. I simply can't tell you—it's instilled in you as a child.** My uncle is married to an African girl, and the family are much more accepting of it than if an Indian *girl* married an Afro-Trinidadian.

...

I would love to say I just think of myself as a Trinidadian, but there is an element that kicks in to say you're Indian—especially when you see certain issues.

Family relationships seem to continually reinforce these attitudes:

{Afro-Trinidadian sales manager of household goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #85]}
It's so amazing: you see people with all different kinds of friends, but then intermarriage is the last thing to go—the families are still resistant.

And if attitudes on intermarriage *had* changed during an interviewee's lifetime, the emphasis was placed on a change of religion rather than through enlightened business contact. For example:

{Indo-Trinidadian wholesaler of electrical equipment. [Interviewee #64]}
I was a Hindu and I was against intermarriage—but on becoming a Christian and reading the bible I changed—I think we have to accept these people no matter what[61].

(iv) Even multiculturalism still means multiple cultures.

6.3.35.   Lastly, as will be apparent from all preceding arguments in section 6.3.5 onwards, even the most optimistic portrayals of the power of business to improve ethnic relations—i.e. (i) to disseminate information, (ii) to build diverse friendships, (iii) to create rational multiculturalism, and (iv) to engender affective multiculturalism—all those arguments imply the sustenance and modification of ethnic boundaries rather than any dissolution of such boundaries. **In other words, business transactions may help bridge ethnic divides, and may even build an appreciation of multiculturalism, but *there will still be multiple cultures.*** The existence of these multiple cultures does not exclude the existence of an overarching 'Trinidadian' identity, but that identity tended to be weaker than racial sub-identities. For example, in the following two excerpts, interviewees emphasize that Indo-Trinidadians are only superficially linked to India, Afro-Trinidadians are only superficially linked to Africa, and the same may go for other ethnicities too:

{Hindu Indo-Trinidadian owner of Truck and Heavy Equipment importers. [Interviewee #160]}
I'm a Trinidadian. I don't want to hear nothing about 'Indians'—I've got no roots in India.

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[61] Interestingly this quote suggests the change of attitude on intermarriage is more a matter of personal 'policy' being altered rationally because of official religious affiliation than a matter of personal 'attitude' being altered through genuinely changed affective feeling—there is an air of obligation to the interviewee's declaration.

Incidentally, we might note that the balance between the two components of these identities—the 'ethnic' and the 'Trinidadian'—seem to vary between different ethnicities: while Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians are large and visible groups in Trinidadian society, it seems that some of the smaller groups—particularly Syrian-Trinidadians—can sometimes be dismissed as 'outsiders'. This phenomenon underlies the following quotes from Syrian-Trinidadians:

6.3.36. **Overall, in the interviews I conducted, responses about the strength of ethnic identities indicated that ethnic identities are stronger than national ones.** On a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 indicates 'Very Strongly' and 4 indicates 'Not At All'—question 46 on the interview schedule), a score of less than 2.5 indicates interviewees feel a stronger ethnic identity than a national identity. The mean score for all survey and interview respondents was 2.23—a difference from 2.5 that is statistically significant at 0.1%.

Table 8: Ethnic identities in Trinidad tend to be stronger than national ones

	'How strongly would you identify with your own race (e.g. Indo-Trinidadian, Afro-Trinidadian), as opposed to being simply Trinidadian?'
Very Strongly (=1)	38%
Quite Strongly (=2)	20%
Not Much (=3)	23%
Not At All (=4)	19%

6.3.37. To make a similar argument, the following excerpt is taken from an interview with a man who believes very strongly in ethnic stereotypes, but who still appreciates rather evocatively the 'merits' of different groups:

When you see those big boobies and bottoms in the street, how does it look? They're all different colors—it look nice. But people [i.e. Afro-Trinidadians] must learn to help themselves.

In short, an appreciation of multiple cultures—on whatever level!—doesn't mean the differences between those cultures are perceived as being any less salient.

6.3.38. **When I was writing this dissertation, one of my working titles was 'Separately We Aspire; Together We Achieve'—as a corruption of Trinidad's national motto 'Together We Aspire; Together We Achieve'.** What I meant was that Trinidadians exhibit a remarkable ability to work (or 'achieve') together; but that it is unrealistic to portray all groups as sharing the same culture and aspirations. Trinidadians themselves are conscious of these differences, and have a finely tuned sense of what to expect from various racial groups. To quote a bit of black humor from one of my interviewees:

> *{Afro-Trinidadian General Manager of Construction Firm. [Interviewee #161]}*
> Look at crime. **An African will put a gun to your head. An Indian will come down and thief your car. A Syrian will buy some cheap cloth from China and sell it at a way-inflated price.**

Obviously such views draw on stereotypes, but Trinidadians know each other well enough that such stereotypes—mostly subtler than this—are often grounded in real experience.

6.3.39. An alternative way of making this point is provided by the way interviewees made a sharp distinction between multi-ethnic '*harmony*' and multi-ethnic '*tolerance*'. In the following examples, we hear a realist portrayal of what multiculturalism means in practice:

> *{Afro-Trinidadian entrepreneur. [Interviewee #205]}*
> **Trinidad is not a harmonious society!—that is total crap. Right? We're kind of a rainbow society, but we're simply not harmonious. What we have learned is tolerance.** We have learned to live with each other. We have learned to celebrate each other's festivals; we have learned to go to each other's prayers; we have learned to watch our neighbor put *ten flags up*. You know—we have learned that sort of stuff. Right? It was very divisive at one time, eh? But we have learned to accept that kind of thing. But in terms of harmony?—no, no, no, no, no.

> *{Indo-Trinidadian manager of groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}*
> **We're not actually harmonious; we're very *tolerant*.** In my parents' generation, and in my grandparents', they were harmonious. If you listen to the stories that my grandparents would tell, and the way that they lived when they were growing up—because I grew up with my grandmother—and the lady across the street was an Afro-Trinidadian—no, she was a St. Vincentian—and you know when you get older and you get more educated, and you try to analyze the relationships, they were more harmonious. **And our generation is tolerant, and the generation to come is becoming more intolerant. So ten years from now it's going to be a different scenario.**
> *[AK: 'So you think it's becoming more intolerant? Why's that?']*
> **Remember, Afro-Trinidadians' and Indo-Trinidadians' way of life, and white Trinidadians, their way of life is very different. We have completely different cultures. From the time you wake up in the morning, to the way you spend your salary when you get it, to the way you court your girlfriend or your boyfriend, to the way that you set up or that you transcend a family life, is extremely different for these three entities.**
> And the reason why we've been so harmonious is because Afro-Trinidadians occupy a certain predominant area, the Afro-Trinidadians from South—if you meet an Afro-Trinidadian from South and you speak to that person, it's very different than if you speak to someone who lives in Morvant-Laventille—extremely different. In the way and basic questions that you'd ask them.
> OK, I'll tell you this much: when I drive from here, where I work with local whites in my office, and then I drive and while I'm driving I see the difference in culture in my country every day. I drive from the heart of Port-of-Spain, out on the Beetham [Highway—i.e. a low-income Afro-Trinidadian area], to Chaguanas [Indo-Trinidadian area], down to Penal, and I see the stratas on the way. And what is mind-boggling is that in the vegetable stall at Debe Junction—you know when you get to Debe at the puri stands there—when you go to buy vegetables there, on an afternoon and stuff, they just started to fill those houses with people from La Brea which are Afro Trinidadians.
> *[AK: 'Are they people displaced by the smelter thing? And they put them in the HDC houses?']*

Correct. And when you see them there, right? **Now, Indian people: there's a particular unspoken respect that you have for elder people. So you don't walk outside...if you're in your house you can wear what I consider very short pants, and have your boobs hanging out, but if you go to Indian people's homes, and you look at Indian people...the young people when they're partying, yes. But funnily enough, the young people will not let their parents see them leaving home like that.** If you ask them, chances are their mother and father didn't see them leaving home looking like that. Well, we all did it at one point in time. But the thing is that when you go in the vegetable stall, you're walking down the street, where everybody knows everybody. **And when you see these people [i.e. Afro-Trinidadians] walking into the vegetable stall, and their boobs are outside, and they're wearing short pants, and they have one child on their hip, and one child walking, and they're dragging everything else in behind, you find people looking at them as if they're space aliens.** And the tolerance level is different too.

This phenomenon has been expressed eloquently by the ethnologist Munasinghe (2001) as a 'tossed salad' model of multiculturalism, where various ingredients are mixed with one another, but still remain distinct.

6.3.40.   So, drawing all this evidence together, how can we summarize our findings? The final section of this chapter provides a short overview of the preceding arguments, before moving to a discussion of the policy implications of this research.

6.4. Summary

6.4.1.   **In sum, the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that business transactions can often build trust and friendship across ethnic boundaries, but that ethnic prejudice is more resistant to change, and that ethnic boundaries are far more likely to be modified than to be dissolved. Business transactions may help bridge ethnic divides, and may even build an appreciation of multiculturalism, but *there will still be multiple cultures*.**

7. LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: WHAT DOES THIS RESEARCH MEAN FOR POLICY ON BUSINESS AND ETHNICITY?

In this final section, I evaluate the policy implications of my research—first by subjecting my research findings to an honest review of their limitations, and then by exploring a number of specific policy implications which follow from my findings.

7.1. Confidence and Limitations of this Research

I evaluate the strength of my findings by responding to three questions:

(i) How much confidence should we have in the findings reported here?

(ii) Might there be some alternative explanations for my findings?

(iii) What are the limitations to this research?

(i) Confidence

7.1.1.   In making the case for these research findings, I draw the reader's attention to two special features of my research.

> (1) **Findings built from the evidence upwards.** I have aimed to ensure that my interpretation of research data is not colored by preconceptions about what it 'should' show. After conducting, during 2008 and 2009, a thorough literature review to determine which research questions should be asked, I put the literature review on a metaphorical bookshelf and concentrated on my fieldwork 'in isolation' in late-2009 and early-2010. Then, as described in section 3.6.4, I wrote-up this dissertation by starting with a blank document and grouping the interview quotes into sections, so that an overall argument was constructed from the data. My research hypotheses could then be tested by taking the data out of 'isolation' and comparing the arguments I had constructed with my initial research hypotheses. I believe this method has, rather elegantly:

- *Confirmed* some key elements of the literature review (for example, the dichotomy between calculative and affective forms of trust, which I have found to be true amongst Trinidadian businesspeople);

- *Deepened* some of those elements (for example, in showing how calculative and affective forms of trust coexist with each other);

- Permitted some *innovations* I had not anticipated (for example, in revealing four implied models of business friendships—which emerged from a close inspection of my interview data).

(2) Mutual support from qualitative and quantitative findings. Throughout this dissertation, I have used qualitative evidence to provide a direction for quantitative testing of working hypotheses, and then returned to qualitative evidence to excavate the *reasons* for quantitative findings. This dual approach provides, I believe, excellent grounds for confidence in my conclusions, since it shows where:

- ..interview quotes are not arbitrary or anecdotal (since we know where they are widely shared through statistical analysis of my whole body of data);

- ..statistical relationships are grounded in causal mechanisms (since the subjects of this study describe to us the *reasons* for those statistical relationships).

On the basis of this methodology, I am willing to put my name to these research findings, subject to the caveats contained in the next two sections.

(ii) Alternative explanations: 'Is racism simply a proxy for classism?'

7.1.2. **A serious question has been raised about these research findings with respect to how we know our analysis of ethnicity isn't masking socio-economic 'class'.** In Trinidad, ethnicity is somewhat correlated with class and occupation, and thus without controlling for class and occupation, our findings may be subject to an omitted variable bias, leading us to overestimate the importance of ethnicity. And furthermore, how can we be sure what we're labeling as effects on ethnic prejudice isn't actually effects on class prejudice?

7.1.3. **This critique does have some substantive merit. Reading between the lines of the rest of this dissertation, we can observe that many of the negative and positive stereotypes attributed to Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians are also correlated with socio-economic status.** For example (in section 5.3.98):

{Indo-Trinidadian manager in groceries distribution. [Interviewee #182]}
The Afro-Trinidadian kids from South are much different to Morvant and Laventille: they want to move forward—they're ambitious.

{Indo-Trinidadian Sales Rep for meats distributor, who went to school more with Afro-Trinidadians. [Interviewee #144]}

You wouldn't believe you get a different breed of Blacks in the West [e.g. Maraval] than in Morvant. I wouldn't have seen this if I lived in the deep South. They probably do one bad thing to me and I hate them for the rest of my life.

{Mixed ethnicity Manager of print firm. [Interviewee #170]}
[In answer to question about ATs being lazier]:
... There is a strong element of truth to that: I find I get more done when I deal with certain ethnic groups than others. But I won't blame it on race—**it's the upbringing: where you're located, and where you grow up. It's more country and city background than race.**

And in section 5.3.36 we saw that Indo-Trinidadian laborers and factory workers were labeled as being 'just as bad' as Afro-Trinidadians.

7.1.4. What did interviewees themselves think of the argument that ethnic identities were simply masks for socio-economic status? On one hand, a few of my interviewees did themselves argue that ethnic stereotypes were simply functions of socio-economic class and upbringing:

{Indo-Trinidadian purchasing manager for catering chain. [Interviewee #190]}
I think it's true [i.e. racial stereotypes are true] for the working class level but not for professionals: they're just professionals—at a different level.

{Chinese-Trinidadian Marketing Manager for processed food manufacturer. [Interviewee #194]}
_____ [colleague's name] says you can't trust Indians and you can trust Blacks. But that's at a factory level. At a professional level it's different: you're more educated, more worldly. Then the deviousness is across the board!

...And some also argued that racial differences were insignificant compared to socio-economic differences:

{White-Trinidadian purchasing manager for retailer. [Interviewee #203]}
I really don't think we have a race problem in Trinidad—what we have is a class problem. I went to St. Mary's and they used to call me 'Honky'—but it was a joke.

{White-Trinidadian sales rep for clothing distributor. [Interviewee #55]}
You've come to the right place to do this study. It's so diverse—but so divided. **There are very, very clear lines socially and people won't go beyond those. Not necessarily by race or religion, but by socio-economic class.**

7.1.5. **But on examining census data, we find that the income distributions for Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians are actually remarkably similar.** Figure 43 summarizes my examination of census data as a box & whisker plot. The labeled points show 25th percentiles, medians, and 75th percentiles, and the whiskers show maximum and minimum values[62]. Indeed, the median and 75th percentile incomes for Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians are exactly the same; and there are only small differences in the 25th percentile incomes.

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[62] Please note that I removed unstated income, zero income and upper outliers (i.e. implausible values) in order to conduct this analysis. The reason for removing zero incomes is that some racial groups were disproportionately likely to declare zero incomes (e.g. over a quarter of Syrian-Trinidadians claimed they had no income—this is implausible) and thus heavily biased the percentile and median values downwards.

Figure 43: Income distribution by race category in Trinidad
(Source: Author's analysis of Census 2000 data, downloaded from http://www.cso.gov.tt/statistics/Pages/census2000query.aspx)
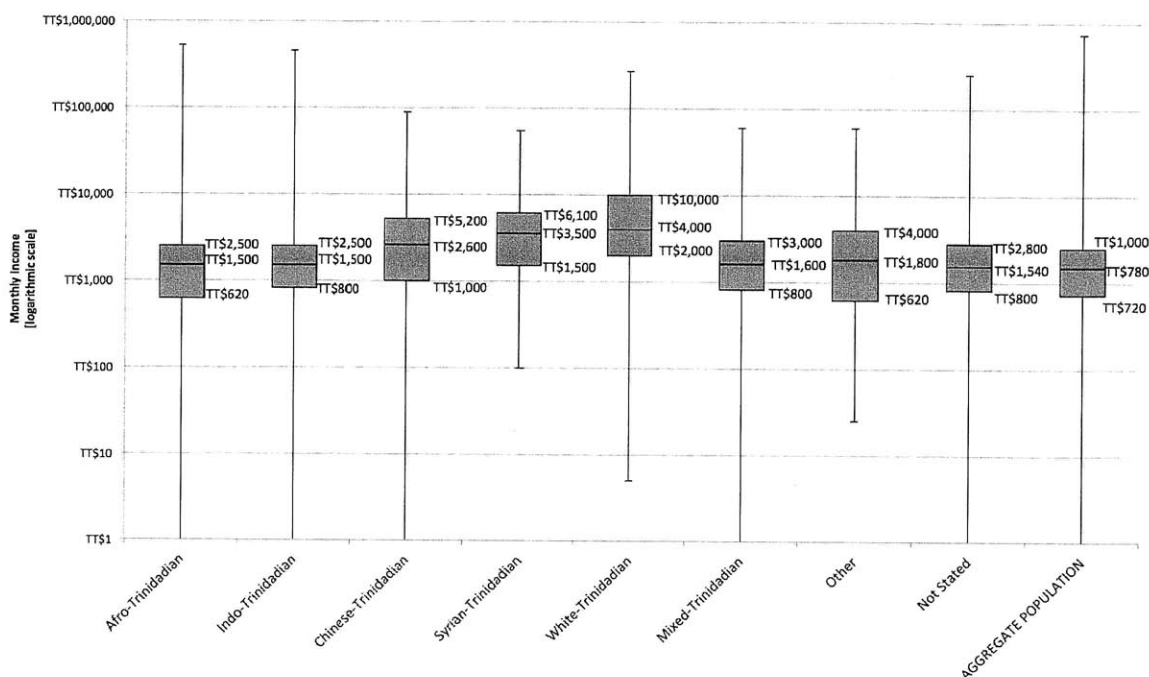
7.1.6. **Returning to the opinions of interviewees, we find that views on ethnic stereotypes seem, to some extent, to apply to civil servants or high-level managers as well as other workers.** For example, in the words of the author of a popular blog in Trinidad, who wrote of his experiences walking through the upscale neighborhood of Fairways in Port-of-Spain[63]:

> The houses hint at their owners: the everything-down-to-the-garden-hose-expensive (but good discount) Syrian here; no-jhandis-mounted-but-their-colours-displayed Indian next door; black professional there, the gansta rims on the Audi a dead giveaway; Presbyterian Indian across the street, with the sheer purple drapes; old-money white with the old slave copper drowning the postage-stamp lawn. But see how they have all come together to worship at the altar of Money.

In other words, cultural differences between ethnic groups are manifested even in this high socio-economic status neighborhood. Those differences are perhaps less salient, but they are still present.

7.1.7. **Moreover, *even if ethnic identities were to be determined entirely by socio-economic status—as a kind of extreme hypothetical case—they are still being ascribed as ethnic identities by Trinidadians and are thus 'real'.*** In other words, no matter what the root source of ethnic identities: even if there were no primordial ethnic differences between individuals, the fact that differences are perceived in the social world is sufficient for ethnic identities to exist. To quote one of my interviewees, who happened to be vehemently against the idea of ethnic stereotyping, the Indian-African division in Trinidad is a tangible "ting":

> *{Owner of paint shop in south Trinidad. [Interviewee #152]}*
> What do *you* think about the Indian-African ting [i.e. ethnic relations] in Trinidad? It's real stupidness.

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[63] http://www.bcraw.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=559:one-hour-anthropology&catid=6:tgif&Itemid=8

Thus while the link between ethnic identities and socio-economic status is certainly worthy of investigation—as would be the link between ethnic identities and schooling or residential diversity, for example—the fact that I do not focus on it here does not bias my findings, which examine the mechanisms of linkage between ethnic identities and business transactions.

7.1.8. In making this argument, I set myself at odds with the sociologist Orlando Patterson, who claims (as cited in Ryan 1999:233):

> Compared to what obtains elsewhere, we do not really have ethnic groups, only cultural differences which in themselves do not ethnicity make. Ethnicity is a way in which people define themselves as members of a group above any other kind of occupation, familial, geographic or class, identity. ... the myth of blood, the deeply held belief that an entire group has a common ancestry, common history, and common fate.
> (Drawn from articles in *Sunday Express*, Trinidad & Tobago, May 10th & 16th, 1993)

I argue instead that Patterson's criteria for ethnicity may be overly-strict, since the evidence presented in this dissertation demonstrates that ethnic disparities in Trinidad are large, and have profound effects on social and economic life in that country—no less than in other places in the world where 'ethnic' divisions are attributed.

(iii) Limitations and future research

7.1.9. This research is by no means the last word on these topics. In anticipating the reactions of some readers, I would identify the following four main shortcomings:

- **Breadth at the expense of depth?** I have deliberately sought to cover a lot of ground. This was mostly by design, since I identified a number of channels by which business could impact on ethnic relations—including trust, friendship, social attitudes, and identities—and have explored them in combination, rather than picking only one channel. This means that my dissertation would probably be deemed rather broad for the tastes of a political scientist or behavioral economist (who might have focused on only one causal mechanism, and then conducted exhaustive research on that single mechanism). But I believe this breadth—including my examination of both directions of the link between business and ethnic relations—is valuable in providing a fuller picture of the ethnic impact of business than would otherwise be the case.

- **Relatively small sample size.** With the benefit of research funding, I might have been able to spend longer in the field, in order to increase the number of interviewees, and to commission a larger baseline survey. In all my research findings, I report the number of observations on which they are based; and always wish that number was higher. This is especially the case for my quantitative analysis: with a small number of observations, we cannot be sure if the lack of statistical significance on some variables is genuine, or simply a result of a small sample size rendering the confidence intervals too large for the coefficients to be significantly different from zero. But I believe that 207 business interviewees, and a

baseline survey of a further 180 respondents from Trinidad's general population, does permit me to claim the conclusions made above.

- **No consideration of the relational bases for attitude formation and change.** This is a fair critique: I do not address the roles of opinion leaders, nor the way in which particular configurations of social and business network structures may influence the way in which prejudices are transmitted or altered (e.g. Moscovici 1976; Erickson 1988; Brown 2000a). A fascinating extension of this research could involve the use of social network analysis to find if prejudices are more likely to be changed by some agents rather than others.

- **Corroboration with cases outside Trinidad?** How do we know if the findings reported here would be reflected in other places outside Trinidad? I would definitely like to find out. I hope that the refinements I made to my research methodology during this research, and an identification of topics which need more work (particularly the desire to generate a larger sample size in order to permit more reliable quantitative analyses), provide a basis for subsequent research in multi-ethnic cities elsewhere in the world.

7.2. Policy implications

What kinds of policies? And how much can we expect from them?

7.2.1. A number of fundamental questions must precede our discussion of the policy implications of this research. First and foremost: **What is the objective of such policy?** If, broadly speaking, we are attempting to improve ethnic relations, what is a reasonable goal? When I began this research I had—perhaps naively—assumed that a desirable goal would be to reduce the salience of ethnic identities. But this is probably an undesirable and unrealistic goal: undesirable because ethnic identities are a rich manifestation of cultural development, and unrealistic because—as we saw in the literature review—human beings seem to require some means of differentiating themselves from others, and ethnicity is a very accessible way of doing so. Thus ethnic identities may simply be an inevitable feature of the social world. **Thus perhaps a more desirable and more realistic objective for policy is multiculturalism—i.e. the coexistence of, and mutual tolerance between, multiple ethnic identities—rather than the blending of ethnicities into a single national identity.**

7.2.2. Second, how much can we expect from business in achieving that objective? **What are the potential benefits and limitations of cross-ethnic business?**

- Potential benefits:

  - To remind readers of one stark finding from the early part of these research findings (see section 4.1.18 onwards), this research shows that **multi-ethnic**

cities and societies do not have any natural tendency for ethnic boundaries to be bridged through social interactions. Even when multiple ethnicities live in the same place, they may live relatively separate social lives, and have very segmented groups of friends. **In that context, business transactions can be a key vehicle for bridging ethnic boundaries.**

- o **Indeed, multi-ethnic cities can actually *catalyze* ethnic divisions, since they permit critical masses of ethnicities in a single location.** In contrast to a 'melting pot' theory of ethnic mixing in cities, my interview evidence suggests cities provide an environment in which ethnic groups may experience *more* intergroup friction, because there is enough choice of neighbors and friends that people may end up dealing *less* (not more) with ethnic outgroups than in the countryside. We saw this particularly in sections 5.3.98 to 5.3.99, which described how ethnic relations can be better in areas where Afro-Trinidadians grow up in majority Indo-Trinidadian areas.

- o Even though some businesspeople do choose their trading partners on the basis of ethnicity, and even though sales reps and retail staff may be allocated in such a way as to reinforce ethnic preferences rather than mollify them, **this research finds that business transactions across ethnic boundaries can build cross-ethnic trust between individuals, build cross-ethnic friendships, and can even lead to modified social attitudes with respect to multiculturalism.**

- ▪ Potential limitations:

  - o **Cross-ethnic business transactions will not be a panacea for ethnic tensions.** While they appear often to build trust and friendships between individuals, and may lead to a kind of rational multiculturalism with respect to wider social attitudes, they appear not to have the power to modify more deeply-held components of ethnic prejudice—as evidenced by our examination of the effect of business relationships on intermarriage (see section 6.3.24). **This observation is embodied rather nicely by the two-sided implication of the catchphrase 'business is business': on one hand, 'business is business' is beneficial because it means people pursue cross-ethnic business relationships according to their rational interests and regardless of latent conflict or ethnic prejudice; but on the other hand, the same phrase 'business is business' alludes to the limitations of those relationships: their roots in calculative interests renders them in a separate social world from that in which social attitudes are formed.**

Policy specifics

7.2.3. **So how, and in what settings, can policymakers best harness the benefits of cross-ethnic business?** Is there a role for policymakers to intervene in markets, or at least to maximize the chances that cross-ethnic business will occur? **What policy implications can we extrapolate from the research findings in the earlier sections of this dissertation?** I suggest five policy-relevant findings here:

(1) **Occupational niches.** Contrary to received wisdom, it can actually be socially beneficial for ethnic groups to occupy specific occupational niches, since this means it is more likely that business transactions will be interethnic, and thus have the potential to lead to interethnic trust and friendship. This is a basic structural implication of the research above: the predominance of (for example) Ethiopians as cab drivers in Washington DC, or South Asian corner shops in the UK, is a good thing since if one wants to obtain that good or service one almost *has* to deal with an ethnic outgroup. Whether such cross-ethnic interactions actually lead to cross-ethnic *relationships* is determined by several other factors we examined in the body of these research findings—such as the extent of negotiated and repeated interactions—but the phenomenon of occupational niches means such interactions are structurally more likely to occur. **Thus rather than encouraging ethnic diversity in occupations, policymakers would do better to tolerate or even encourage ethnic** *homogeneity* **in occupations, but ethnic diversity in** *industries and supply chains* **in order to maximize the chances of individuals having to do business with ethnic outgroups.**

In the supply chain structures I studied, sales reps would be the most logical target for promoting ethnic homogeneity as a means to improving ethnic relations. At many points in this dissertation, sales reps have emerged in discussion as a crucial membrane—or a conducting material—through which interracial business passes. While most interviewees did know the ethnic identity of the owners of firms with whom they deal (the mean response to question 8 on my interview schedule was 'Most of the Time'), they would come into first-hand contact far more frequently with sales reps than with the owners or indeed other staff.

(2) **Utility of branding and heterogeneous products.** Branding is a crucial part of increasing cross-ethnic transactions because it increases product differentiation on attributes other than ethnicity. As discussed in section 5.3.67, company branding is a crucial channel by which ethnic identities are displaced by company uniforms, product names, and logos; and in section 5.3.108 on 'product differentiation' we saw that heterogeneous products are less likely than homogeneous products to prompt a recourse to ethnic favoritism, since the need to obtain a particular product outweighs the tendency to differentiate products according to ethnicity. This finding is potentially an important one for developing countries, where company brands tend to be developed only for the largest companies. **Policymakers could consider the emergence of heterogeneous products and company brands as desirable developments to displace ethnic identities in economies.**

(3) **Trade fairs and business networking events.** As we saw in the early part of these research findings (section 5.2), residential and social segregation means businesspeople are far more likely to encounter businesspeople from their own ethnic groups than across ethnic groups. **So one role for government policy is to encourage the initial formation of business transactions between ethnic groups.** For example, I spoke with one of the civil servants in a government agency that provides assistance to small businesses, and at one point asked him about the ethnic dimension of the kinds of interactions he sees during their networking and events. The results sounded promising:

This finding tallies with those raised in the literature review on similar topics—for example about the benefits of a cross-ethnic business networking event in Sri Lanka: "There was a little friendship over tea, but we ate lunch separately. In those two days, we met many southerners. But soon after we became friends. It was a real experience for us and the first time we started moving with southerners." (International Alert 2006b:115).

(4) Changes in social attitudes are most likely with respect to smaller ethnic groups, or any ethnic group for which there is minimal other contact. In section 6.3.16 onwards, we discussed how positive business experiences with ethnic outgroups are often internalized as 'exceptions' rather than the basis for a change in wider social attitudes. The reason for this categorization as 'exceptions' is because positive experiences don't tally with ongoing contact with other members of the ethnic outgroup who do not share the same positive characteristics. This observation means that positive business experiences with ethnic outgroups for which there is *no* contact other than those positive experiences will be much more likely to prompt deeper changes in social attitudes. **In other words, the very scarcity of cross-ethnic interactions with some groups means that positive experiences are much more likely to be decisive in changing ethnic attitudes.** We raised this argument in section 6.3.23. In Trinidad, this mostly means that positive business experiences are more likely to impact individuals' opinions about Chinese and Syrians than to impact opinions about Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians. But even opinions about those largest demographic groups could be changed by business experiences for people who otherwise have little contact with ethnic outgroups. For example, a shop owner in a part of Trinidad which is predominantly Indo-Trinidadian modified his attitudes with respect to Afro-Trinidadians:

(5) Some industries are more likely to foster meaningful business relationships than others—*and* are more likely to involve interactions with individuals embodying positive behavioral characteristics. As discussed in the main body of research findings, some occupations and industries involve more repeated and negotiated transactions and thus are more likely to lead to meaningful business relationships. Of the four industries I covered in this research: construction and print & packaging industries embody these characteristics more than retail and food & beverage industries (see section 6.2.20 for the quantitative evidence to support this finding). But the type of *people* employed in those occupations and industries may matter too, particularly where some occupations and industries involve systematically more 'professional' staff than others—i.e. individuals who are more likely to constitute positive exceptions. For example, cross-ethnic contact with customers in a downmarket retailer would be less

likely to involve positive experiences than in, say, an expensive jeweller. In the following example, a Chinese-Trinidadian proprietor describes how contact with most of his clientele simply supports a negative impression of Afro-Trinidadians; the single 'exception' to this rule was a professional rather than the usual clientele:

> {Chinese-Trinidadian proprietor of variety shop, Port-of-Spain, who indicated he trusts Afro-Trinidadians 'Only A Little'. [Interviewee #123]}
> Most of them you can't trust. I've lent them money, or given credit, then you never see them again. Some people, they come in, tell you such a sad story about their child being ill, and I believe them: I give them money and then I never see them again. Others you get to know because they come in here often; one day they buy deodorant, toothpaste and things but they don't have money, so I give them credit, and never see them again. ... But another African guy—[who has become] my friend—came in here to buy things and told me he was a lawyer and gave me his calling card. Later I gave him a bit of business and we're friends. People like him I could put my head on a block for. But that's only about 20 percent of the Afro-Trinidadians I'm friends with. The others I don't trust.

...and in this next example, an Indo-Trinidadian car parts dealer told me that amongst his usual clientele of bargain-hunting Afro-Trinidadians, there was once an accountant, whom he then started doing business with:

> {Indo-Trinidadian proprietor of car parts supplier. [Interviewee #131]}
> He come in to buy parts, and he say he's an accountant.

This is a rather worrying observation, since minority immigrant businesses are often engaged in precisely those industries (like retailing, supermarkets, cafés) where trust-building is unlikely to occur.

What follows from this observation is that policymakers should redouble their efforts to ensure ethnicity is not correlated with socio-economic class. The more variation there is within each ethnic group, the less likely that stereotypes can be formed for the ethnic group as a whole. For example, in Trinidad the aim would be for all Trinidadians to be judged on factors other than race, since race would no longer correlate with education or income. As one of my interviewees claimed:

> {Indo-Trinidadian manager of a personal goods manufacturer. [Interviewee #84]}
> Education has replaced religion as the bonding factor for young people. Go to a fete and you see all races and religions, but people judge each other on educational background.

In Trinidad this conclusion is rather premature, but it does indicate the potential for ethnic stereotypes to fade away once they become too simplistic to capture the diverse characteristics of individuals.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Summary statistics have been inserted with red text & yellow highlights.

BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN TRINIDAD

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me!

Your answers to the questions below will help me understand how people do business with each other, particularly in multi-ethnic and multi-religious settings.

I will keep anything you say confidential, and will not use your name in conjunction with anything you tell me. So whatever views you write here will remain anonymous.

If any questions are not clear, please just ask me.

Finally, I hope you enjoy responding to these questions. They are a chance to reflect on, and think about, some of your daily experiences.

Firm location:	
Nature of business:	14% Print & packaging 31% Retail 29% Construction 19% Food & beverages

SUPPLIERS

1. Approximately **how many SUPPLIERS** (e.g. wholesalers, distributors, or manufacturers) do you *regularly* deal with directly in your work?

   Please TICK box:
   - ☐ 1 – 5   25%
   - ☐ 6 – 10   19%
   - ☐ 11 – 20   22%
   - ☐ 21 – 50   15%
   - ☐ 51 or more   19%

2. When you see your suppliers or talk to them on the phone, **how long would you typically spend talking to them** to negotiate each purchase?

   Please TICK box:
   - ☐ 5 mins or less   43%
   - ☐ 5 mins to 20 mins   53%
   - ☐ 20 mins to 1 hour   3%
   - ☐ 1 hour or more   0%

3. How easy is it to find **SUBSTITUTES** for your **suppliers** if you wanted to change suppliers?

   Please TICK box:
   - ☐ **Very Easy**: I have a big choice of alternatives, and they're interchangeable   27%
   - ☐ **Possible**: but I'd lose the relationship I've built up with existing ones   57%
   - ☐ **Not Easy**: I don't have many alternatives   17%

4. **What do you value in your suppliers?** Can you score the following characteristics as a percentage of your decision, when you're deciding between suppliers?

   For example:

   Pie chart example showing segments: 20, 10, 10, 50, 10. Total = 100%

   Pie chart with segments: Price, Quality, and Service 71%; Recommendations of my existing Business Contacts 10%; Finding Someone in the Supplier Firm who I personally Get Along With 11%; Owners or Salespeople share a similar Racial Background to me 4%; Owners or Salespeople share the Same Religion as me 3%

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CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS

5. Approximately **how many different CUSTOMERS or CLIENTS** do you *regularly* deal with directly in your work?

☐ 1 – 5	3%
☐ 6 – 10	3%
☐ 11 – 20	9%
☐ 21 – 50	34%
☐ 51 or more	51%

6. When you see your customers or talk to them on the phone, **how long would you typically spend talking to them** to negotiate each sale?

Please TICK box:

☐ 5 mins or less	24%
☐ 5 mins to 20 mins	65%
☐ 20 mins to 1 hour	9%
☐ 1 hour or more	3%

7. How easy is it to find **SUBSTITUTES** for your **customers** if you wanted to change customers?

☐ **Very Easy**: I have a big choice of alternatives, and they're interchangeable   26%

☐ **Possible**: but I'd lose the relationship I've built up with existing ones   47%

☐ **Not Easy**: I don't have many alternatives   26%

ETHNICITY IN BUSINESS

8. Thinking about all the firms you trade with (including suppliers and customers), **how often do you know who it is that OWNS OR MANAGES THE FIRMS?**

☐ **Almost Never** *(0% to 10% of firms)*	15%
☐ **Some** of the Time *(10% to 50% of firms)*	24%
☐ **Most of the time** *(51% to 80% of firms)*	17%
☐ **Almost Always** *(81% to 100% of firms)*	43%

9. What **ethnicity** do the **OWNERS** of your **suppliers** tend to belong to?

Please indicate approximate percentage:

Indo-Trinidadian	49 %
Afro-Trinidadian	12 %
Chinese-Trinidadian	7 %
Syrian/Lebanese-Trinidadian	14 %
White-Trinidadian	7 %
Mixed Ethnicity	10 %
TOTAL	100%

10. What about **SALES REPS** of your **suppliers**? What **ethnicity** do they tend to belong to?

Please indicate approximate percentage:

Indo-Trinidadian	52 %
Afro-Trinidadian	29 %
Chinese-Trinidadian	2 %
Syrian/Lebanese-Trinidadian	3 %
White-Trinidadian	3 %
Mixed Ethnicity	11 %
TOTAL	100%

11. What about your **CUSTOMERS**? What **ethnicity** do they tend to belong to?

Please indicate approximate percentage:

Indo-Trinidadian	45 %
Afro-Trinidadian	34 %
Chinese-Trinidadian	4 %
Syrian/Lebanese-Trinidadian	3 %
White-Trinidadian	3 %
Mixed Ethnicity	11 %
TOTAL	100%

FRIENDSHIPS

12. Most people I talk to say that it is important to be friendly with people you deal with in business. But **can business contacts actually become PERSONAL FRIENDS,** *in the sense that you'd lime with them or get to know their families?*

You can TICK MULTIPLE BOXES if necessary:

☐ No, I deliberately keep **business separate from friendships.**   24%

☐ Yes, and **I deliberately try to become friends in order to improve my business dealings.**   17%

☐ Yes, but I become friends only if I **genuinely hit it off with people I meet in business.**   35%

☐ Yes, I find myself becoming friends through the **familiarity** which business dealings build up between us.   36%

---

13. If you answered 'YES' to the last question, **how often** does this actually happen?

☐ **Never** *(0% of business contacts)*   19%
☐ **Hardly** At All *(1% to 10% of contacts)*   22%
☐ **Some** of the Time *(10% to 30% of contacts)* 29%
☐ **Quite Often** *(30% to 90% of contacts)*   27%
☐ **Always** *(90% to 100% of contacts)*   3%

---

14. Thinking about everyone that you would count as a **PERSONAL FRIEND** *(i.e. people that you see in a social context, and who you know well)....*

Please tick every box that corresponds to a category from which you have at least one personal friend:

☐ Chinese   99%
☐ Syrian/Lebanese   99%
☐ White   99%
☐ Indo-Trinidadian   100%
☐ Afro-Trinidadian   100%

☐ Hindu   96%
☐ Muslim   91%
☐ Christian   96%

---

15. How many times in the past twelve months have you been IN THE HOME OF A FRIEND of a **different race,** or had them in your home?

☐ Never   1%
☐ Once   10%
☐ A Few Times   8%
☐ About Once a Month   44%
☐ Twice a Month   30%
☐ About Once a week   6%
☐ A Few Times a Week   0%

---

16. From your experience in business, **how accurate do you think are the Trinidadian stereotypes** of Indo-Trinidadians as being hard-working but a bit devious, and Afro-Trinidadians as being generous but a bit lazy?

*Indo-Trinidadians are **harder-working:***

2% Totally Untrue	6% Mostly Untrue	35% Sometimes True	54% Mostly True	4% Always True

*Indo-Trinidadians are more **devious** or **opportunistic:***

0% Totally Untrue	10% Mostly Untrue	48% Sometimes True	39% Mostly True	3% Always True

*Afro-Trinidadians are **lazier:***

4% Totally Untrue	8% Mostly Untrue	44% Sometimes True	42% Mostly True	2% Always True

*Afro-Trinidadians are **more generous:***

3% Totally Untrue	12% Mostly Untrue	63% Sometimes True	21% Mostly True	1% Always True

BUSINESS & SOCIAL RELATIONS

17. Thinking about all the people with whom you do business...is it easier to BUILD A BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP with people who have a **similar race or religious background to you?**

☐ If Yes, why do you think that is? ⟶ 31%
☐ If No, continue to the next question. 69%

You can tick more than one of the following statements:

☐ "I'm able to **Trust** them more quickly." 23%

☐ "I get better **Information** on their reliability through my personal networks." 23%

☐ "I feel more **Familiar** with them because of a similar cultural background." 81%

☐ "I prefer them because I *should* keep business within my own racial or religious community: it's like an **Obligation**." 3%

---

18. Do you think **sales reps or retail staff** would be **MORE SUCCESSFUL** when their **race or religion is matched** with the people they're trying to sell to?

Please TICK ONLY ONE BOX:

☐ Yes, **everywhere** in Trinidad. 14%
☐ Yes, but mainly **outside Port-of-Spain** and its surrounding area. 6%
☐ Yes, but only in **particular parts of the country** [can you specify where?]: 23%
☐ **No**, not at all. 57%

---

19. Running a business, or doing business, can be a challenge. **Do you ever ask other people for their ADVICE?**

☐ Yes 15%
☐ If No, continue to Question 24. 85%

IF YES:

20. How many of these people share the same **religion** as you?

☐ None (0%) 3%
☐ A Few (1% to 20%) 38%
☐ Some (21 to 50%) 36%
☐ Most (51% to 90%) 23%
☐ Almost All, or All (91% to 100%) 0%

21. How many of these people share a similar **race** as you?

☐ None (0%) 6%
☐ A Few (1% to 20%) 33%
☐ Some (21 to 50%) 37%
☐ Most (51% to 90%) 22%
☐ Almost All, or All (91% to 100%) 2%

22. For those people of the *same* race as you, **where did you originally meet them?**

☐ **Family** or Close Friends 29%
☐ **Social contacts** from my community 24%
☐ Doing **Business** with them 69%
☐ **Clubs** (e.g. Rotary, Lions, or other groups) 4%
☐ Other [please specify]: 0%

23. For those people of a *different* race to you, **where did you originally meet them?**

☐ **Family** or Close Friends 13%
☐ **Social contacts** from my community 18%
☐ Doing **Business** with them 85%
☐ **Clubs** (e.g. Rotary, Lions, or other groups) 13%
☐ Other [please specify]: 0%

RELIGION & GROUPS

24. Are you a MEMBER of a local church, temple, mosque, or other **religious community**?

☐ Yes   85%
☐ If No, continue to Question 28.   15%

IF YES:

25. Not including weddings and funerals, **how often** do you attend religious services?

☐ Weekly   52%
☐ Fortnightly   10%
☐ Monthly   14%
☐ A few times a year   20%
☐ Almost Never   4%

26. In the past 12 months, have you taken part in any sort of **activity** with people at your place of worship other than attending services? (e.g. teaching Sunday school, serving on a committee, etc.)

☐ Yes   42%
☐ No   58%

If Yes, what was the activity:

27. Would you say that contacts from your church, temple or mosque have been **useful to your business life?**

☐ Yes [please specify how?]:   50%
☐ No   50%

28. **Are you a member of any other GROUPS OR ASSOCIATIONS?** For example, a Rotary Club, sports club, social club or other kind of society?

☐ Yes   33%
☐ If No, continue to Question 32.   67%

IF YES:

29. How many members of this group share the **same race** as you?

☐ None (0%)   3%
☐ A Few (1% to 20%)   36%
☐ Some (21 to 50%)   45%
☐ Most (51% to 90%)   15%
☐ Almost All, or All (91% to 100%)   0%

30. Within this group, how much do people form **MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS with a variety of members?**

☐ Members **mainly 'keep to their own'** in terms of race or religion.   83%

☐ Members **mix thoroughly across racial or religious backgrounds.**   17%

31. Would you say that being a member of this group has been **useful to your business life?**

☐ Yes [please specify how?]:   42%
☐ No   58%

32. Thinking about your general social attitudes, what is the best way to characterise your views on INTERMARRIAGE? **How would you feel if one of your children or close family married someone of a different ethnic group or different religion?**

Intermarriage with a DIFFERENT RACE:
☐ **No objection** whatsoever.   54%
☐ I feel a bit **uneasy**, but I'd be happy for them.   20%
☐ Would **prefer that they don't intermarry.**   24%
☐ **Absolutely opposed** to it.   0%

Intermarriage with a DIFFERENT RELIGION:
☐ **No objection** whatsoever.   62%
☐ I feel a bit **uneasy**, but I'd be happy for them.   14%
☐ Would **prefer that they don't intermarry.**   17%
☐ **Absolutely opposed** to it.   7%

33. One of the final parts of this study is about **TRUST** (i.e. the confidence that you have in people keeping to their word, even when they don't really have to).
How much would you say you can trust:

- People in your *neighbourhood* — 9% Not At All · 29% Only a Little · 47% Somewhat · 15% A Lot

- People *you work with* (at a similar level to you) in your company — 1% Not At All · 15% Only a Little · 39% Somewhat · 45% A Lot

- People *who work for you* (or who are subordinate to you) in your company — 3% Not At All · 17% Only a Little · 46% Somewhat · 34% A Lot

- People *you trade with* in other companies — 1% Not At All · 25% Only a Little · 57% Somewhat · 17% A Lot

- People at your *church, temple, or mosque* — 1% Not At All · 10% Only a Little · 50% Somewhat · 39% A Lot

- People who *work in the stores* where you shop — 9% Not At All · 45% Only a Little · 43% Somewhat · 3% A Lot

- *People in general*, when you meet for the first time — 27% Not At All · 44% Only a Little · 28% Somewhat · 1% A Lot

- What about different *ethnicities?* Let's start with *Chinese*? — 13% Not At All · 40% Only a Little · 37% Somewhat · 10% A Lot

- What about *Afro-Trinidadians*? — 2% Not At All · 43% Only a Little · 51% Somewhat · 5% A Lot

- What about *Indo-Trinidadians*? — 3% Not At All · 48% Only a Little · 45% Somewhat · 5% A Lot

- How about *Whites*? — 3% Not At All · 33% Only a Little · 47% Somewhat · 17% A Lot

- How about *Syrians/Lebanese*? — 11% Not At All · 44% Only a Little · 37% Somewhat · 8% A Lot

- The local *news media* — 30% Not At All · 52% Only a Little · 16% Somewhat · 1% A Lot

- The *police* in your local community — 34% Not At All · 39% Only a Little · 24% Somewhat · 3% A Lot

- What about different religious groups? **Do you trust members of any religions more than others?**
  - ☐ Christians — 24%
  - ☐ Hindus — 8%
  - ☐ Muslims — 12%
  - ☐ Others [please specify]:

34. For those groups (if any) that you can trust 'A Lot'...**what kinds of things would you trust them about?**

For example, would you trust them:
☐ To **pay you back** if you lent them money? 61%
☐ To **tell you the truth** about the condition of a used car they were selling you? 75%

35. For those groups (if any) that you do *not* trust at all...**what is the main reason for distrusting them?**

Is it because they:
☐ ..are **not COMPETENT** to carry out a task 56%
☐ ..would **DECEIVE you** about their intentions 78%

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36. What is your **occupation**?	
37. Approximately how long have **you** been working in this job?	12.6 years
38. Where do you **live** in Trinidad? (e.g. Tunapuna, Cunupia, Diego Martin, etc)	North: 42%. Central: 29%. South: 29%.
39. Where did you **grow up** in Trinidad? (e.g. Tunapuna, Cunupia, Diego Martin, etc)	North: 37%. Central: 21%. South: 40%.
40. What kind of **school** did you attend as a child? (e.g. Christian, Hindu, Muslim, government-run)	Christian: 49%. Govt: 29%. Hindu: 16%. Muslim & other: 6%.

41. What level of **education** have you reached so far?

9%	Primary school	23%	Undergraduate degree
52%	Secondary school	16%	Graduate degree

42. What is your **age**?   41.2 years

43. **Gender**   58% Male   42% Female

44. How would you describe your **own race** and **religion**?

☐ Christian	45%		☐ **Indo**-Trini	57%
☐ Hindu	31%		☐ **Afro**-Trini	17%
☐ Muslim	18%		☐ **Chinese**-Trini	7%
☐ Other	3%		☐ **Syrian/Lebanese**-Trini	1%
☐ None	3%		☐ **White**-Trini	7%
			☐ **Mixed** Ethnicity	11%

45. How strongly would you **identify with being of a particular racial heritage** (e.g. Indian, African, Chinese, Syrian, European) as opposed to being simply 'Trinidadian'?

☐ Very Strongly	14%
☐ Quite Strongly	25%
☐ Not Much	32%
☐ Not At All	29%

46. Approximately what is your household's **income per month**?

☐ TT$ 3,000 or less	7%
☐ TT$ 3,001 to $5,000	17%
☐ TT$ 5,001 to $10,000	13%
☐ TT$ 10,001 to $20,000	26%
☐ TT$ 20,000 or more	37%

47. Roughly **how many employees** work in the company where you work?	71 people

48. Roughly what percentage of the **employees** in the company where you work are....

Indo-Trini	_59_%
Afro-Trini	_30_%
Chinese-Trini	_2_%
Syrian/Lebanese-Trini	_0.4_%
White-Trini	_1_%
Mixed Ethnicity	_7_%
TOTAL	100%

49. Roughly what percentage of the **employees** in the company where you work are....

Christian	_43_%
Hindu	_37_%
Muslim	_17_%
Other/None	_3_%
TOTAL	100%

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Summary statistics have been inserted with red text & yellow highlights.

BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN TRINIDAD

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me!

This research is about Trinidadians' work lives and their social lives. It focuses particularly on race relations.

Whatever you tell me is treated anonymously: I will not be asking you for your name, and there will be no way of tracing you after we've finished talking. So I hope you feel comfortable in speaking frankly.

SECTION 1: A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOU

1. If you work, what is your **occupation**?

2. If you work, what **industry** do you work in? (e.g. retail, manufacturing, transport)

0% Print & packaging	7% Construction	39% Other industry
26% Retail	5% Food & beverages	23% No formal employment

3. Approximately how long have **you** been working in this job?

   8.6 years

4. Which part of Trinidad do you **live** in? (e.g. Tunapuna, Cunupia, Diego Martin, etc)

   North: 33%. Central: 28%. South: 39%.

5. Which part of Trinidad did you **grow up** in? (e.g. Tunapuna, Cunupia, Diego Martin, etc)

   North: 36%. Central: 17%. South: 47%.

6. What level of **education** have you reached so far?

9% Primary school	23% Undergraduate degree
52% Secondary school	16% Graduate degree

7. What is your **age**?

   34.1 years

8. **Gender**
   - 42% Male
   - 58% Female

9. How would you describe your **own race** and **religion**?

Christian	49%	Indo-Trini	54%
Hindu	31%	Afro-Trini	24%
Muslim	12%	Chinese-Trini	0%
Other	0%	Syrian/Lebanese-Trini	0%
None	7%	White-Trini	0%
		Mixed Ethnicity	23%

10. How strongly would you **identify with being of that race** (e.g. Indo-Trinidadian, Afro-Trinidadian, Chinese-Trinidadian, Syrian-Trinidadian, White-Trinidadian, etc) as opposed to being simply 'Trinidadian'?

    - Very Strongly 46%
    - Quite Strongly 18%
    - Not Much 20%
    - Not At All 16%

11. Approximately what is your household's **income per month**?

    - TT$ 3,000 or less — 11%
    - TT$ 3,001 to $5,000 — 36%
    - TT$ 5,001 to $10,000 — 40%
    - TT$ 10,001 to $20,000 — 11%
    - TT$ 20,000 or more — 2%

12. Roughly **how many people** work at the place where you work?

    99 people

13. Roughly what percentage of the **employees** at the place where you work are....	**Indo**-Trini	_49_%
	Afro-Trini	_33_%
	Chinese-Trini	_0.8_%
	Syrian/Lebanese-Trini	_0.7_%
	White-Trini	_0.8_%
	Mixed Ethnicity	_16_%
	TOTAL	100%
14. Roughly what percentage of the **employees** at the place where you work are....	**Christian**	_52_%
	Hindu	_28_%
	Muslim	_15_%
	Other/None	_4_%
	TOTAL	100%

SECTION 2: YOUR FRIENDS

15. Thinking about everyone that you would count as a **FRIEND** (*i.e. people that you see in a social context, and that you know well*), **roughly what proportion of your friends are....**

43% Indo-Trini
38% Afro-Trini
0.7% Chinese-Trini
0.2% Syrian/Lebanese-Trini
1.0% White-Trini
17% Other / Mixed
100% TOTAL

47% Christian
31% Hindu
17% Muslim
6% Other/None
100% TOTAL

16. Where have you met those **FRIENDS** who belong to **a different race to you?**
(*please tick all that apply*)

☐ **School** or University — 10%
☐ Your **Close Family** — 8%
☐ Your **Extended Family or Friends** — 44%
☐ **Work** or Business — 30%
☐ **Church, Temple, or Mosque** — 6%
☐ Somewhere else (please specify):

17. If you compare your work life with your social life, would you say that your **work life or your social life brings you into contact with people of a wider range of races?**

☐ Work life — 42%
☐ Social life — 58%

If you ticked 'work life', what kind of relationship do you have with those people?

18. Can you remember any particular **events or experiences—at work or elsewhere—which had a big impact on views about people of other races?** (For example, the kind of school you attended, or your experiences at work, or family intermarriages, or anything else in your life).

SECTION 3: YOUR VIEWS

19. From your own experience at work, **how accurate do you think are the Trinidadian stereotypes** of Indo-Trinidadians as being hard-working but a bit devious, and Afro-Trinidadians as being generous but a bit lazy?

*Indo-Trinidadians are **harder-working** than Afro-Trinidadians:*

27% Totally Untrue	14% Mostly Untrue	44% Sometimes True	12% Mostly True	3% Always True

*Indo-Trinidadians are less **loyal** than Afro-Trinidadians:*

31% Totally Untrue	23% Mostly Untrue	37% Sometimes True	5% Mostly True	3% Always True

*Afro-Trinidadians are **more generous** than Indo-Trinidadians:*

29% Totally Untrue	14% Mostly Untrue	43% Sometimes True	12% Mostly True	2% Always True

*Afro-Trinidadians are **lazier** than Indo-Trinidadians:*

26% Totally Untrue	19% Mostly Untrue	42% Sometimes True	7% Mostly True	6% Always True

20. Do you think **retail staff in shops** would be **MORE SUCCESSFUL at selling** when their **race or religion is the same** as the people they're trying to sell to?

Please TICK ONLY ONE BOX:
- ☐ Yes, **everywhere** in Trinidad. `12%`
- ☐ Yes, but mainly **outside Port-of-Spain** and its surrounding area. `3%`
- ☐ Yes, but only in **particular parts of the country** [can you specify where?]: `5%`
- ☐ **No**, not at all. `90%`

21. What is the best way to characterise your views on INTERMARRIAGE? **How would you feel if one of your children or close family marries someone of a different ethnic group or different religion?**

Intermarriage with a DIFFERENT RACE:
- ☐ **No objection** whatsoever. 82%
- ☐ I feel a bit **uneasy**, but I'd be happy for them. 12%
- ☐ Would **prefer that they don't intermarry**. 4%
- ☐ **Absolutely opposed** to it. 2%

Intermarriage with a DIFFERENT RELIGION:
- ☐ **No objection** whatsoever. 73%
- ☐ I feel a bit **uneasy**, but I'd be happy for them. 17%
- ☐ Would **prefer that they don't intermarry**. 6%
- ☐ **Absolutely opposed** to it. 3%

SECTION 4: BUSINESS & SOCIETY

22. Do you attend a **church, temple, or mosque?**
- ☐ Yes `72%`
- ☐ If No, continue to Question 24. `28%`

IF YES: **23.** Would you say that people from your church, temple or mosque have been **useful to your work life?**
- ☐ Yes [please specify how?]: 15%
- ☐ No 85%

24. **Are you a member of any other GROUPS OR ASSOCIATIONS?** For example, a Rotary Club, sports club, social club or other kind of society?
- ☐ Yes (please specify): `10%`
- ☐ If No, continue to Question 27. `90%`

IF YES: **25.** Would you say that being a member of this group has been **useful to your work life?**
- ☐ Yes [please specify how?]: 58%
- ☐ No 42%

26. One of the final parts of this study is about **TRUST** *(i.e. the confidence that you have in people keeping to their word, even when they don't really have to).* **How much would you say you can trust:**

- People *you work with* in your company   4% Not At All   40% Only a Little   43% Somewhat   13% A Lot

- People *you trade with* in other companies   5% Not At All   39% Only a Little   48% Somewhat   7% A Lot

- *People in general*, when you meet for the first time   16% Not At All   44% Only a Little   29% Somewhat   11% A Lot

- What about different religious groups? **Do you trust members of any religions _more_ than others?**

  YES: ☐ Christians   5%   NO: ☐   93%
        ☐ Hindus   1%
        ☐ Muslims   2%
        ☐ Others [please specify]:

  If so, why?

- What about different races? **Do you trust members of any races _less_ than others?**

  YES: ☐ **Afro**-Trinidadians   3%   NO: ☐   93%
        ☐ **Indo**-Trinidadians   3%
        ☐ **Syrian/Lebanese**-Trinidadians   1%
        ☐ **Chinese**-Trinidadians   1%
        ☐ **White**-Trinidadians   0%

  If so, why?

27. Is there anything you'd like to add to this survey on the issue of race relations in Trinidad?

Thank you very much for participating in this survey!