

ETHNIC MINORITY DOMINANCE IN A SMALL - ISLAND - DEVELOPING -
STATE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF
BARBADOS

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ETHNIC MINORITY DOMINANCE IN A SMALL-ISLAND - DEVELOPING -
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Compared to other Caribbean islands' heterogeneity, Barbados' population has historically consisted of a black, African descended majority, and a minority Caucasian European descended group. The discourse on inequality and the articulation of differences in Barbados have always centered on a black-white dichotomy, and the categorization system has thus almost always been one based on 'race' rather than 'ethnicity.'

A growing East Indian population that constitutes two distinct ethnic minority East Indian groups; the Sindhis and Gujratis, has lent an added cultural complexity to the Barbadian society. These minority groups' location and relative economic success within the wider society as commercial minorities has meant that the hitherto focus on binary racial categorizations and the perception of the white minority as the sole market dominant group needs to be amended.

The use of the term 'ethnic group' in this study does not direct research attention away from race, but instead demonstrates an interest in how groups, as self-conscious collective actors, define themselves in relation to others. This qualitative study seeks to examine the historically central role of racial categorization in Barbados, its relationship to ethnic-dominant minorities, and the perceptions that each group in Barbados has about race and ethnic dominance.

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DEDICATION

To my sisters, and all my nieces. And especially for Khalidah and Maymunah.

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Glossary

- Afro – Barbadian:** A Barbadian of African-descent. This term is used interchangeably in this study with the term ‘black.’¹
- Bajan (a):** Colloquial dialect spoken by people in Barbados. This dialect is a fusion of West African languages and English.
- Bajan (b):** The informal term used to refer to a citizen of Barbados.
- Commercial Minority:** In this study, the two Indian ethnic groups; the Sindhis and the Gujratis, are referred to as commercial minorities because of their overwhelming involvement in commercial and trading activity.
- Caucasian – Barbadian:** A Barbadian of European descent. This term is used interchangeably with ‘white’ in this study.

¹ It has to be noted that the use of the term ‘black’ and ‘white’ in Barbados are culturally acceptable terms for referring to the two main racial groups which have been historically present in the island.

Ethnic-dominant minority: an ethnic group which is a numerical minority vis - a
- vis the majority population, but which has a
disproportionate amount of control and power either
economically, or politically.

Gujratis: Ethnic group which derives its name from the geographical
location of origin; Gujarat in Western India. Gujratis in
Barbados are overwhelmingly Muslim.

Middle- man minority: A group whose location in the general society is essentially
in the middle, between the ruling elite at the top and
dominated group at the bottom. The middle group
sometimes occupies a special occupational niche and acts as
a buffer zone between the minority elite and the dominated
majority population.

Plantocracy: From the 1600s when the island was colonized, the
plantocracy constituted the ruling class in Barbados, and
was made up of a minority white slave-owning class, which
wielded absolute power over a predominantly West African

chattel slave population as well as a small group of indentured servants of European origin. The abolition of slavery in 1838 did not see the end to the power and domination of the plantocracy, but its power assumed new modalities in the post-emancipation society.

Sindhis:

An East- Indian group whose members trace their roots to the province of Sindh in contemporary Pakistan. After the 1944 separation of Pakistan from India, Sindh fell under the jurisdiction of Pakistan. Many of the Hindus of Sindh fled to India after the establishment of Pakistan as an Islamic state. Immigration to Barbados was just the extension of a long history of their involvement in commercial trade.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This research study is circumscribed by a qualitative research ontology and epistemology, and is therefore guided by an interpretive theoretical framework. The philosophical underpinnings of an interpretive ontology stresses that knowledge is socially constructed and meanings are therefore created through human interaction within the social and historical realms (Creswell, 2003).

Based on the interpretive paradigm's assertion that reality is socially constructed, complex and fluid, I conducted this study through an inductive process and proceeded through an understanding of theory based on interpretation, or the act of making sense out of a social interaction (Glesne, 2006). An understanding of theory based on the inductive paradigm allows for what anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1993) calls a 'thick description.' According to Geertz, this 'thick description' that qualitative research endorses, investigates the motives, meanings and contexts of situations and individuals, and allows the researcher to have a deep astute understanding of the issues or phenomena under study.

To this end therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe how individuals from four different ethnic groups within the Barbadian society make sense of their social realities, and to examine the ways in which they perceive and represent their selves and other ethnic groups. Additionally, this study aims to evaluate the perceptions that the

different ethnic groups in Barbados have about the economic success and dominance in the market sphere of the ethnic minority groups.

This study's research questions were all under girded by, and sought to describe and explain individuals' lived experiences of ethnic group affiliation. In a qualitative research study, the research problem or questions usually steer the method of data collection (Glesne, 2006; Brizuela et al, 2000). This study's research questions thus determined the data collection process which proceeded through taped in-depth open-ended interviews in a face-to-face setting. A purposive sample consisting of a total of twenty-four individuals from four different ethnic groups was utilized to gain data, and the sample consisted of six individuals from the black, Caucasian, Sindhi and Gujrati populations.

The use of a qualitative research design to answer the research questions in this study was necessary and justified since, according to Metz, (2000), the researcher who wants to understand a group's perceptions must try to comprehend its world view from its own perspective. Given that my aim is to study people's perceptions of themselves and of other groups, an understanding of depth and complexity in the accounts of people, rather than a surface comparability of large numbers of people was necessary. Qualitative in-depth interviewing was thus a necessary data collection strategy since the intricacies, nuances and ideologies underpinning individuals' standpoints are best discovered through qualitative interviewing. The participants in this study are members of different ethnic groups, and have to negotiate their realities in complex ways. The groups live in ethnically derived social systems and negotiate their lives to the wider society they live in;

they are simultaneously citizens of Barbados and also of other groups of the Indian and African diasporas, and thus their ideas and standpoints are determined by complex intricacies that only a qualitative research design can unearth.

In addition, proceeding from a qualitative ontology allowed me to utilize critical and interpretive theories to describe what I ‘found.’ Indeed, qualitative methodologists encourage researchers to make their theoretical preferences and personal values palpable. Furthermore, they advocate researcher reflexivity concerning how theory affects epistemology, interactions in the field, and even interpretations (Holliday, 2002; Schwandt, 1997; Glesne, 2006).

To this end therefore, I have utilized a critical theoretical framework to examine the varying perceptions of individuals from the different ethnic groups, especially since critical inquiry best explains the raced, classed and ethnic structures of contemporary societies (Carspecken & Apple, 1992; Denzin, 1998). Critical theory’s core principle and objective, which aims to improve social justice by challenging societal values (Crotty, 1998, p. 157), helps to highlight the historical trajectory of a society’s oppression and social struggles (Morrow & Brown, 1994). By examining historical forms of racism within the Barbadian society, and by analyzing the different ethnic groups’ perceptions about the existence of structural advantage Vis- a -Vis economic success, I was able to unearth the ideological and conceptual frameworks which framed the different ethnic groups’ images and categorizations of themselves and of other groups. As Merriam & Simpson (1995) state, critical theory “brings to focus the possibilities of how culture can sustain irrationality, unfulfilling lifestyles, and social injustice, revealing the degree

to which certain ways of life within a culture are strategically organized to preserve the interests of some members of society at the expense of others” (p. 132).

Critical theory also serves as a tool for analyzing information generated from this study. The findings reveal that the perceptions of ethnic groups vary according to their respective ethnic groups, thereby demonstrating that ideologies vary according to race and ethnicity. Bourdieu’s theory, and his concepts of ‘habitus,’ ‘field,’ and ‘doxa’ are particularly applicable to this analysis. Bourdieu’s (1977) ideas highlight the role that social systems play in shaping our thought processes and the consequent strengthening of the status quo and systems of domination. They illustrate the capacity of social actors to actively impose and engage their cultural productions and symbolic systems in the reproduction of social structures of domination.

Bourdieu’s analysis of society is centered on social classes. In this study, participants were not directly chosen on the basis of social class, but the social class position of the participants filtered into the responses they gave. Bourdieu is not just concerned with ‘habitus’ as a product of class experience alone. For him, each agent’s habitus is formed by their class, but also by their gender and their own occupational field. An assumption of this study is that we can reasonably speak of a working class ‘habitus,’ and also of an ethnic group or cultural ‘habitus.’

Habitus refers to the perceptions, judgments and value systems of a category of people. It represents their internalized social values stemming from their socialization. People are thus “externalizing their internality” (Garner, 2004). From Bourdieu’s perspective therefore, historical and social forces will determine the ways in which

people think and behave (Gledhill, 1994), and this in turn will influence their ideas and thought processes (the habitus).

In this regard, we can see that the perceptions of the participants represent their 'habitus,' since groups expressed ideas about other groups' character traits as they relate to economic success, demonstrating their socialized experiences within the Barbadian society. In Bourdieu's (1990) words, "it ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes and perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time" (p.54).

For Bourdieu, habitus is always embedded in a prior social field, which itself is structured by symbolic power, thus, habitus reproduces our social positions and reinforces systems of domination. The perceptions of the members of the various ethnic groups revealed the social differentiation of Barbadian society, and illustrated the idea that "the habitus defines the perception of the situation that determines it" (Bourdieu, 1993).

Similarly, Bourdieu, in showing how those who have power will be able to dominate institutions, discussed the concept of the 'field.' A field, according to Bourdieu's analysis, is a social arena structured in relation to power, and represents a struggle over certain species of capital. Capital is defined as anything that is significant for individuals in the social system, and maybe monetary, social or cultural.

Therefore, the categories of understanding and perception that constitute a habitus, being congruous with the objective organization of the field, tend to reproduce

the very structures of the field. Bourdieu thus sees habitus as the key to social reproduction because it is central to generating and regulating the practices that make up social life. In this light, in relation to the issue of economic dominance as highlighted in this study, we can say that the 'habitus' of the participants, as it relates to economic dominance, varied depending on the social position of the participants.

The findings of the study also illustrates Bourdieu's (1977) concept of 'doxa.' Bourdieu uses the concept of 'doxa' to describe the deeply-entrenched beliefs of people, which in some ways people interpret as axiomatic universal truths, and which inform an individual's actions and perceptions in a particular field. 'Doxa' reinforces the particular social arrangement of the field, thus privilege is maintained, and subordinate as well as dominant groups may take their respective positions of dominance as self-evident.

The Symbolic Interactionist perspective provides an additional theoretical framework for analyzing the findings of this study. This theoretical perspective, influenced by George Mead, W. I. Thomas (1928) and other sociologists from the Chicago School of Sociology, highlights the ways in which society shapes an individual's perceptions and judgments. The symbolic Interactionist concept of the definition of the situation also illustrates the various objective and subjective ways that people form perceptions and interpret their social realities. The concept of the definition of the situation, is best explained by W. I. Thomas (1928) when he stated that "when people define their situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (p. 572). The definition of the situation can be understood as a process that involves individuals' construction of social reality (Charon, 2004), and shows that each individual will define

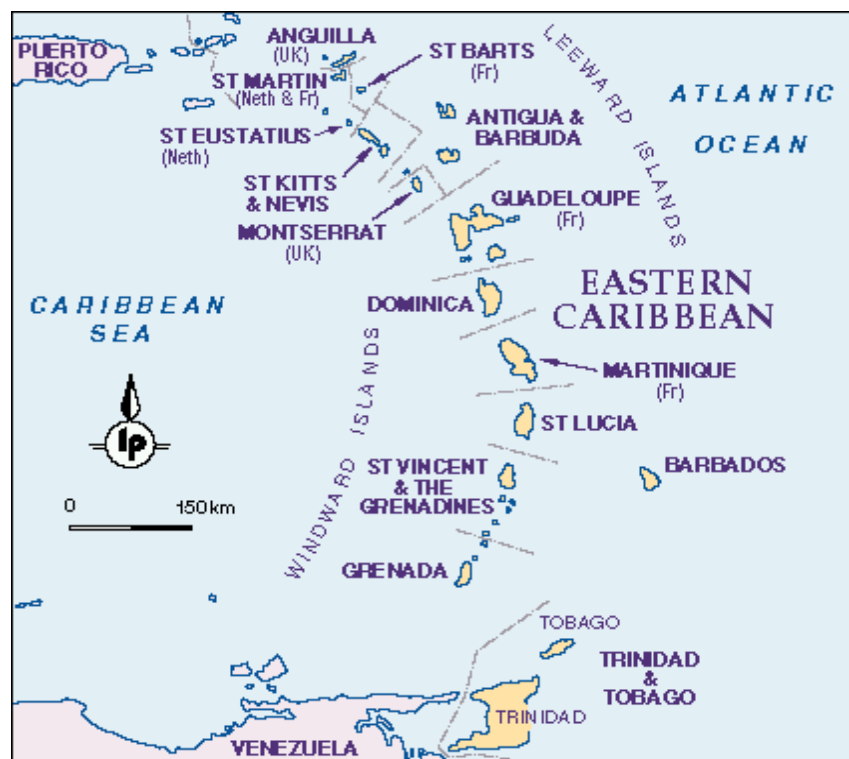
her/his reality according to a subjective rationalizing process. At the same time however, each individual's definition of the situation will be determined by her/his society. This concept, as well as the assumptions of the theory that individuals' perspectives are socially determined, allows us to understand the discourse which surrounds internal inequality in Barbados.

Background to the Study

Geographic Location of Barbados

Barbados, an independent small-island-developing state, is located in the North Atlantic Ocean, at approximately 13 N and 59 W. It is positioned close to South America, being to the north east of Venezuela. Barbados has a land area of 430 square kilometers, or 166 square miles, is a low-lying island, and is principally composed of limestone-coral.

Figure 1.1 - Map of the Caribbean



Source: www.geo.mtu.edu/.../images/carrib_map.gif

Demographic Information

The Barbados population census for the year 2000 confirms that Barbados' resident population at the end of 2000 was estimated to consist of 268, 792 persons. 93% of this population is of African descent, 3% is of European-descent, and the other 4% constitutes the mixed and Asian population. The East Indian population as a whole constitutes less than 1% of the total population.

Figure 1.2 – Map of Barbados



Source: <http://www.skyviews.com/barbados/map.html>

Development in Barbados

Since its independence from Britain in 1966, Barbados has been hailed as a regional and international example of an economically successful Small-Island- developing State (SID). Since 1966, the island has had a stable multi-party democracy, and its human development indicators have remained consistently high. Barbados ranks 30th on the United Nations' 2005 Human Development Report (UNDP, 2005), and has the demographic profile of a developed country, with a current Per Capita income of \$US 7 350 and a literacy rate of 97.6%. Life expectancy is 76.4 years, and infant mortality is 11 per 1000 births (Central Bank of Barbados, 2006).

Notwithstanding its status as a middle-income country, Barbados' development rests on very precarious grounds, with economic vulnerability heading the list of development woes that precludes a real sense of economic and political viability. A real understanding of the contemporary structure of the Barbadian economy and indeed its social structure cannot be gauged without an explanation of its historical context.

Historically, the essential relationships with which Caribbean economies have evolved have been those shaped by their integration into the international economy. Barbados for example, is described as a 'plantation – hinterland' by Best and Levitt (1996), meaning that the island existed as an 'appendage' to Britain, based on mono-crop production for export to the core and had no linkages outside of this bilateral relationship.

In the Caribbean, and in Barbados, the institutions of colonialism, plantation slavery, and international capitalism converged to produce contemporary Barbadian society. Indeed, so interconnected have been the three processes in the genealogy of

contemporary Barbadian society, that failure to understand the confluence of colonialism and the institution of the plantation would preclude any true exploration of the various socio-economic nuances of Barbadian society.

The plantation system in the Caribbean has been likened to a total institution, which created its own cultural, political and economic ethos. A clear-cut, well-defined hierarchical structure, based on race, class and caste flowed from the plantation system (Beckford, 1972). Plantations became total institutions because they imbibed a dichotomous relation of dominated and dominant, whereby just as in a prison or a mental institution the inmate is resocialized into a new set of values, so too the African slave was 'seasoned' to remove his culture and basic self. Therefore, modern Barbadian society is a direct consequence of the plantation system's all-encompassing value system which brought together several culturally and racially different groups of people, meant to coexist in order to satisfy Barbados' incorporation into the world capitalist system as a plantation hinterland.

Interestingly enough, the plantation society inadvertently produced the structural framework for a homogenous culture, albeit in a peculiar way. Thus, single group dominance typified the plantation slave society of Barbados where historically, the white minority exercised its monopoly and power to force the majority of blacks to conform or acquiesce to its rules. (Griffin, 1997). This asymmetric power distribution resulted in the creation of a conflict laden plantation society where the goals of the dominant white minority included wealth accumulation, but did not recognize any kind of endogenous development.

As a consequence, mono-crop production of raw sugar for export to Britain lasted from the 17th century until the 1980s, although efforts at diversification were initiated in the 1950s when the island embarked on the import-substitution strategy of Industrialization by Invitation. This strategy was underpinned by a modernization theoretical outlook, and modified the traditional core-periphery relations by emphasizing the role of multinational corporations (MNCs) for the provision of employment, skills and technology. The promotion of Tourism services was also seen as a necessary extension of this neo-liberal modernization paradigm. However, the import substitution model was not very successful since Barbadian firms faced many obstacles, and economies of scale were hardly attainable.

Ethnicity and Race

In Barbados, ideas and practices concerning race and skin pigmentation have historically circumscribed the social structure and the political economy. From the 17th century when African slavery served as a ready supply of labor for the sugar plantations, race and class were concomitant to each other with race determining class and caste (Beckford, 1972). The institutionalization of plantation slavery led to a social stratification system whereby black people were placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy, the white plantocracy was at the top, and those with varying skin shades were placed in the middle.

The presence of mixed races also complicated the social cultural and economic milieu, as they assumed a more privileged position in the Barbadian

society. The colored middle class therefore had already established their status through economic activities, education, and a consistent belief in their inherent right to power due to their mixed racial and cultural inheritance. Therefore, economic and social success was dependent on racial heritage, appearance, and color.

Rigid stratification led, over time to the white minority acquiring its own cultural ethos, although it is untoward to argue that the white minority ever represented a homogenous group. Indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century, cleavages of class, status, and identity served to divide the white minority in Barbados. Notwithstanding, due to the institutionalization of stratification based on race from as early as the 1600s, the white minority, in spite of its internal social differentiation mechanisms, presented a united racial front *Vis a vis* the black population (Johnson, & Watson, 1997). Furthermore, the white minority's practices of social exclusion led, over time, to the acquisition of socio cultural communications and racial mores which allows one to place it in the category of ethnic group. An ethnic group, according to Michael Gomez, refers "to the same network of socio-cultural communications and so at times can be used interchangeably with community" (p. 6).

Within the Barbadian context, the ethnic groups which are the focus of this study are sometimes colloquially referred to as 'communities.' However, the use of this categorization is problematic since the term community "does not imply conscious affinities; that is, those members of varying backgrounds who are

so described.....may not so view themselves (Gomez, p.6).” In Barbados, the various Indian groups are referred to by the monolithic term ‘community,’ and it is clear that this term does not take into account the heterogeneity of the Indian population within Barbados.

The interrelation of the concepts of ethnicity and race is clearly illustrated in the Barbadian context, especially since relations of inequality and power are tightly interwoven around conceptualizations of ethnicity and race. If we accept Stuart Hall’s (1992) analyses of race and ethnicity as social constructions of the historical, political and cultural contexts in which individuals construct their identities, then we can see that in Barbados, ideas about differences have been underpinned by the historical concurrence of slavery and colonialism, and the consequent reproduction of images of ‘us’ and ‘them.’ In this regard therefore, Africans who were brought to the Caribbean as slaves were forced, because of the totalizing influences of the plantation, to give up their individual African ethnicities in favor of a collective identity as a racial group (Gomez, 1998, p. 6).

According to Cornell and Hartmann (1998), race typically reflects power relations, and racial classification usually leads to the construction of identities by others (p. 35). The categorization of Africans as a racial group was linked to the white European Social Darwinist representations of Africans as atrophied specimens of humanity, and thus, ‘black’ as a category placed black people within a racial categorization system. The social construction of relations of power and images of representations in Barbados thus led to a discourse of ‘race’ which saw

a dichotomization of racial images and stereotypes surrounding the European-descended white minority and the African-descended majority population. Ethnicity's purpose is thus to "disassociate rather than associate, to engage in a reductionism enterprise as opposed to aggregation. Implicit in the concept of ethnicity is the determination of that which is unique about a group of people; it is an attempt to understand the essence of what distinguishes various collections of individuals" (Gomez, 1998, p. 6).

Gujratis and Sindhis

Gomez's understanding of ethnicity can be used to highlight the social location of the Gujratis and Sindhis within the Barbadian population. The Sindhi and Gujrati ethnic groups are relative newcomers to Barbados, and the two groups differ with respect to their language, religion, modes of economic participation, and furthermore, occupy different positions in the overall Barbadian class structure. The Gujratis of Barbados are overwhelmingly Muslim, tend to have a closer alliance with working class Barbadians, and are largely concentrated in the urban capital city of Bridgetown. The Sindhis on the other hand, within the context of Barbados, have more of an upper-class status, are Hindu, and tend to be concentrated in the middle and upper class suburban areas extending out of Bridgetown.

The Gujratis of Barbados all hail from the state of Gujarat in western India, and incipient Gujrati immigration to the island of Barbados began in the 1930s. The Sindhis can trace their roots to the province of Sindh in what is current day

Pakistan. These South Asian merchant groups are widely dispersed globally, and their presence in the small island nation of Barbados as commercial minorities (Hanoomansingh, 1996) evinces the reach of their transnational networks.

Due to the aforementioned complexities of race and class in Barbados at that time, the east Indians were able to assume a high position in the Barbadian social structure by virtue of their race. Arriving in an era when privilege and power accrued to those whose skin was closest to white, the Gujratis and Sindhis were able to establish themselves as traders and merchants and today, albeit constituting less than 1% of the total population, they have acquired wealth disproportionate to their numbers.

Therefore, there is a common perception by afro-Barbadians that ‘Indians’ and ‘whites’ control the economy of Barbados, and further, that these groups retain their wealth by circulating it among themselves. In this regard, we can agree with Amy Chua (2003) that market-dominant minorities manage to retain wealth because of the relative exclusiveness they maintain in relation to their religion, dress and language. The above description therefore informs the choice in this research to term an ethnic group a “self-perceived inclusion of those who hold in common, a set of traditions not shared by others with whom they are in contact, and that such traditions typically include religion, language, and a sense of historical continuity and common ancestry or origin” (De Vos, 1995).

Notwithstanding the above, since independence in 1966, the black majority has held political power, although by all accounts, the Marxian notion of

the state as a “committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie” rings true (Marx, Lewis, 2001; Beckles, 1985). Indeed, race and class remain particularly salient elements of social organization in Barbados. Of course, post-independence social-democratic policies have sought to create social mobility for the black majority and the overt implications that race and class hold in the overall social organization of Barbadian society have thus been reduced.

However, as Karch (1981) noted, political independence did not herald any kind of economic democracy for the black majority population, and intermarriage among white Barbadian families and expatriate whites, and the persistence of historical forms of interlocking directorships has allowed the Barbadian white minority to retain its economic hegemony in the retail and commercial sectors. The white minority has thus ceded political control of the island to the black majority, but makes concessions to the black elite as long as its interests are not compromised (Lewis, 2001, p. 146).

The state’s response to globalization is thus dependent on the interests of the economic elites, and according to Ramsaran (2004), while on the surface of it state resistance to globalization is underpinned by a nationalist discourse; the actual development policies implemented reinforce the market-dominant positions of the elites. In this regard, the neo-liberal model which promotes tourism has been accepted as a viable form of development by the white elite who has, in the post-independence era, benefited the most from tourism (Karch, 1981).

Figure 1.3 – Map of India Showing Gujarat



Source: http://www.nasa.gov/centers/goddard/images/content/93319main_indiam.jpg

Figure 1.4 - Map of Pakistan Showing Sindh



Statement of the Problem

The East-Indian population has grown since the first wave of immigration to Barbados in the 1960s and 1970s, thus lending to cultural, ethnic and religious complexity of this once relatively homogenous society. Indeed, it is clear that issues of race, class and ethnicity permeate the social structure of Barbadian society. However, large gaps remain in the areas of theory and primary research examining how ethnic group affiliation and the phenomenon of market-dominant minorities can preclude development. This applies especially to the case of the Gujratis and Sindhis, where hitherto, only one study (Hanoomansingh, 1996), an ethnography, has sought to understand their cultural practices.

The racial question has always been subsidiary to the class question in Barbados, but the immigration of east Indians has introduced the issue of ethnicity and also class, and this has compounded the social structure of Barbadian society. A reevaluation of the country's social dynamics with a greater focus on the historical role of race and the socio-political consequences of a long history of racial exploitation of black people was warranted given the emerging cultural complexities.

This is especially in light of the fact that the Gujratis and Sindhis have been able to achieve relative economic success, especially in the commercial sector. As members of the 'new' minorities of Barbados, they have turned to the resources of their own distinctive religious, cultural and moral traditions as a means of organizing mutual support. As a result, flourishing ethnic colonies, within which large parts of the social linguistic religious and cultural traditions have been reproduced, are now a very salient

feature of Barbados' urban landscape. Yet although these developments have now become a routine target of the black majority's hostility, the dynamics of cultural complexity and ethnic-dominance has gone largely unstudied.

Significance of the Study

There has been a general dearth of research studies which have examined the role of the Gujratis and the Sindhis in the social and political landscape of Barbadian society. The result of this lack of interest in ethnic-minorities has perpetuated the view among Barbadians and the academic community that Barbados is a homogeneous community with a white minority and a black majority.

However, the geography of Barbados lends another dimension to the notion of homogeneity since the small size of the island precludes any ignorance of the fact that ethnic groups are competing for a few resources. Additionally, globalization and its concomitant, trade liberalization, has plunged Barbados' economy and by extension, its society into considerable uncertainty, as the trade preferences which the island enjoyed under the LOME agreement with the European Union has dissolved.

Barbados has hitherto been the recipient of preferential treatment through trade, aid, and investment concessions, because of geo-political and historical factors. Having its genesis in the post-colonial era, international economists thought that the population size of a state was relevant to its internal and international capabilities and it was postulated that special political arrangements had to be made for small states. This

translated into the European Unions' (EU) preferential trading agreements with the Caribbean, Pacific, and African states as part of the Lome Agreement. The origins of the Lome agreement lie in England's decision during the late 1960s to join the European Community (EC). This raised fears all across postcolonial states that preferential prices for primary agricultural products would be phased out. The first negotiation for continued guaranteed market access resulted in the 1975 Lome (1) convention. Subsequent negotiations occurred every five years (Erisman, 1992).

It was clear that in the bipolar world in which the US and the Soviet Union vied for satellite states, small Caribbean countries played a significant role in international affairs (Sutton, 1999). In the 1980s therefore, the US granted non-reciprocal duty-free concessions to Caribbean goods through the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). These arrangements allowed Barbados to maintain a place in the world sugar export market.

In the post-Cold War era however, successive rounds of multilateral trade negotiations have eroded these trade preferences while opening up the Caribbean domestic market to external competition. Barbados has to operate in a climate of reciprocity by reducing trade barriers and therefore the concept of 'special and differential treatment' is becoming irrelevant in the new global economic system. While globalization has undoubtedly aggravated the problems of the island, it is not solely responsible. The policy responses of these countries have been inadequate in dealing with the challenges of the process (Niyakan-Safy, 2004). In the words of Best (1998, cited by Niyakan-Safy), a Caribbean economist:

We rationalize it in terms of islands small and open. However, many small countries show that what is decisive are not God-given size and resources but human agency and business management.

The sugar industry was the first casualty of the increased liberalization of the Barbadian economy, although the sugar industry's viability has long been precluded by rigidity and high production costs (Ramesar, 2002). Since the 1990s, prices of sugar have dropped by 10% in the EU market while in 1997; sugar quotas reached a sixty year low of 64, 600 tons.

Furthermore, given that the ideology of free market capitalism which underpins globalization is being promoted with much vigor, Barbados' leaders now have to grapple with redefining the social democratic ideology by which most of the contemporary black middle class became socially mobile. Since independence in 1966, Barbadian governments have all adhered to a social democratic ideology which emphasizes the government's role in providing social services to the population. The social democratic model has allowed many people to gain an education which has led to a consequent upward social mobility. In an age of globalization however, the social democratic underpinnings of the Barbadian political economy is being eroded.

Although globalization does promise developmental potential for Barbados, a realistic assessment of globalization as it is being manifested worldwide points to the fact that the returns of globalization accrue to only some groups in a society. More often than not, the mantra of free market capitalism, individual competition, can only be practiced by those groups which already are privileged economically.

That globalization aids the aggrandizement of privileged groups, presents disturbing implications for the overall social stability and inter-ethnic relations in developing countries. Indeed, internationally, many societies are witnessing the outbreak of ethnic conflict and violence which in some cases can be traced to the fact that free market competition has allowed extant market-dominant ethnic minorities to build on their economic power (Chua, 2003). At the same time, as Aubrey (2002, p. 197) notes, many do not question the neo-liberal market-dominated development paradigm which hastens unequal relations in many developing societies. As she notes, the discourse on international development tends not to include the issue of the link between extant international development paradigms and racial inequalities. Moreover, she notes that globalization highlights the stark unequal economic and political conditions of African peoples both on the continent and in the Diaspora.

It is clear that the immigration of the Sindhis and the Gujratis in an era when race and skin pigmentation denoted one's position in the social hierarchy allowed them to acquire a privileged position, which contributed to their relative economic success. Indeed, the addition of the East Indian groups to the Barbadian population has led to contradictions and collaborations with respect intra-group and inter-group relations which have not caught the attention of social scientists.

Although some studies have discussed the role of the white minority in perpetuating a particular kind of dependent-development which assures that the benefits of development accrues to themselves, to date, only one study, an ethnography by Peter Hanomansingh (1996), has sought to explore the ways in which these groups have sought

to establish themselves within the dominant Creole culture of Barbados. To this end therefore, this research study is particularly important because it will transcend prior research studies. Hitherto, most studies have discussed race relations in Barbados purely in relation to the black and white populations, but have never explored the ethnic market dominance of the East Indian population.

Additionally, in light of the increased economic vulnerabilities which confront the region, Barbados' Prime Minister has initiated the creation of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) which will see 15 participating economies including Belize in Central America and Suriname and Guyana in South America existing as a single market with the free movement of people, skills and labor. Integration and economic viability are recurrent themes in post-colonial reflections on the survival and future prospects for Caribbean societies. A more persuasive and defensible argument for regionalism is thus advanced in the light of globalization, and one cannot help agreeing with Andres Serbin (1998) in *Sunset Over The Islands*, that “ individual options are ever more limited in a world of global economic political and cultural change.”

However, the integration movement has fuelled an accelerated movement of workers and long term migrants from Guyana to Barbados. Many of these Guyanese are the Indian descendants of indentured laborers whose migration from India began in the post-emancipation era after 1838. That these migrant workers are of Indian descent has added to the racial tensions in the island, especially since many groups are now competing in an island which has a dearth of resources. Moreover, the black population interprets the influx of indo-Guyanese as an imminent ‘Indian takeover,’ and much public

debate in Barbados surrounds the issue of the increasing marginalization of black working class Barbadians. However, it has to be noted that the focus of this study will not include the racial implications of this Indo-Guyanese immigration.

Within the urban context of Barbados, an accelerated gentrification process brings affluent Indian Gujratis into poor black neighborhoods, provoking frustration among lower-class Blacks. The Gujratis are thus implicated in economic, social and cultural relations of complex forms of dominance. Thus, similar to a notion mentioned by Monterescu (2005) in a study on ethnic relations in Jewish-Arab mixed towns, there is a somewhat contradictory process which Monterescu refers to as 'interpermeation' between the two groups.

Purpose of the Study

The research study took as a theoretical guideline, the interpretive approach to social inquiry. This approach explores how human beings make sense of experiences, both individually and as shared meaning (Patton, 2002). The purpose of this research study was to describe people's lived experiences of ethnic group affiliation, how people perceive their ethnic group, how they judge it, and make sense of their realities. In addition I was interested in learning how the members of each ethnic group in Barbados perceived and thought about other ethnic groups. This study aimed to evaluate what perceptions the different ethnic groups in Barbados had about the market dominance of minority groups.

Research Questions

1. What perceptions do white Barbadians, black Barbadians and East Indians have about the issue of ethnic-dominance?
2. Do individuals from each of these groups believe that the minority ethnic groups control the wealth and economy of the island?
3. What does each group think about the ways in which this wealth has been gained?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The Caribbean

Although this study focuses on the eastern Caribbean society of Barbados, it has to be noted that the historical socio-political and economic trajectory of Barbados has to be located within the wider Caribbean since the institution of slavery and colonialism created similar social structures and economic processes across the Caribbean. Indeed, spectacular arrays of sociological issues; race, class, and ethnicity, have collided on Caribbean shores and have been weaved into an intricate pattern, making the Caribbean a haven for sociological enquiry.

The societies of the archipelago known as the Caribbean have been cast in the pattern of colonialism, and have evolved in peculiar ways as its largely migrant populations have found ways of adapting and adjusting to its surroundings. The archipelago known as the Caribbean has been defined in many ways, but more often than not, it is been defined from 'outside,' and thus, most definitions have overlooked the socio-cultural diversity which bonds many of the peoples of the archipelago. Notwithstanding, it is a given that geography and history have intersected significantly to produce the region known as the Caribbean.

The region referred to as the Caribbean consists of many islands, and as Cuban writer Antonio Benitez-Rojo (1992) has noted, one is tempted, on the surface of it, to

believe that all the islands resemble each other. However, as he states, each island is unique and exhibits subtle differences in social structures and language. Indeed, rather than a monolithic Caribbean, there are many Caribbeans (Serbin, 1998). To this end, the definitions of the region, have, in different historical epochs, served their own purposes (Knight and Palmer, 1989). The Caribbean has been variously defined as a 'geo-political' sphere, as an 'ethno-historical Caribbean, an economic region, or as a plantation cultural sphere, identified with afro-central America and with the plantation economy (Wageley, 1960).

Indeed, the term 'Caribbean', is perceived by some to be a 20th century invention, and this trend of thinking is located in the process of the transition from European colonialism to the hegemony of the USA (Gaztambide-Geigel, 1995, cited by Serbin, 1998). For the USA, the Caribbean was confused with Latin America, and the coinage of the term Caribbean Basin became linked to the US geo-strategic security issues in line with US national interests during the cold war.

For the purposes of this study, the Caribbean is defined in ethno-historic terms to denote the process of decolonization and post-colonial consolidation of the non-Hispanic Caribbean. This definition acknowledges the common historical experiences that the people of this geographic region have undergone, and encompasses the effects of the processes of the plantation economy, slavery, and the incorporation of migrant and diasporic populations into the region. It is for that reason that an ethno-historic definition of the Caribbean includes the societies of Guyana in South America, and Belize in Central America. This definition is the one used by the analysts of the regional grouping,

the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) (Thompson, 1997). However, this definition serves organizational purposes for this paper and should therefore not be viewed as a definition *sui generis*. Indeed, the heterogeneous character of the region is most evident in its cultural, linguistic, and ethnic characteristics, and in the diversity of political systems

In geographic terms, and consistent with the ethno-historic definition, the Caribbean refers to the long narrow chain consisting of thousands of islands, and spreading from the tip of the Florida peninsula to the northern coast of South America. It also includes the mainland territories of Belize, Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname, and the island of Bermuda in the far north (Thompson, 1997).

The Importance of History

In the Caribbean, the phrase “the past is a living presence” (Lowental, 1972, p. 68) captures the lingering historical legacies of slavery and racial segregation produced by European colonialism. For most people outside the region, the archipelago which is defined as ‘the Caribbean’ is often associated with stereotypical images of beaches, perpetual sunshine, and easy-going ‘natives,’ whose lives are governed by the philosophy of ‘no problem.’ These North Americans and European schemas seek to reduce the Caribbean to a monolithic place, devoid of any eclecticism, and ultimately, as Bayer & Deutsch Lynch (2006) state, the archipelago of French, Dutch, Spanish, and English-speaking islands, are reduced to a single place.

Today, the myth that the region is a tourist paradise, a place where dreams come true, is fostered and perpetuated, and the region is sold to the world as a place of fantasy.

Barbados is thus marketed as “just beyond your imagination” in the tourist brochures and advertisements which target wealthy American and Europeans. Tourism sells a commodified ‘other’ - be it a physical environment, a wilderness, or a foreign culture. In the advertisements, a paradise is awaiting the tourist: “here according to the brochures, was Eden resurrected; an island world devoid of blizzards or snow, or worry, or hurry; here was a province of pleasure, leisure, laughter and love everywhere” (Taylor, 1993).

However, these images of a paradise belie the brutal and exploitative history of the region. Indeed, the contemporary representation of the islands as paradises essentially serves as a “rewriting of Columbus” (Rodriguez, 2004, p. 70). The civilizing missions of colonialism were prompted by dreams of virgin territory and abundant gold to make even the poorest man rich. Thus, when Columbus, suffused with greed and dreaming of riches landed on Caribbean soil and encountered the gentle indigenous Taino people, his response to their hospitality was: “No take me to your gold” (Strachan, 2002). The native populations of the Caribbean and Barbados, the Taino-Arawak, were subjected to immense brutality by European colonizers, and were totally decimated in Barbados and most other Caribbean islands very soon after their contact with the European colonizers (Hintzen, 2000).

This history cannot be erased by the waves of the Caribbean Sea, or of the Atlantic Ocean, so illustriously advertised in international travel literature about the region. Indeed, these waterways have been the scene of so much violence and bloodshed, that the natural process of cleansing which one expects to occur with the incoming waves may never occur (Courtman, 2004). As Caribbean poet Derek Walcott (1998) tells us:

It is not that history is obliterated by this sunrise. It is there in Antillean geography, in the vegetation itself. The sea signs with the drowned from the Middle passage..... Carib and Aruac and Taino, bleeds in the scarlet of the immortelle, and even the actions of surf on sand cannot erase the African memory or the lances of canes as a green prison where indentured Asians.....are still serving time.

An examination of the trajectory of historical antecedents is therefore vital if we are to understand the underlying colonial continuities associated with contemporary development. It is to this end that the Caribbean scholar CLR James (1963) stated that: “the past of mankind and the future of mankind are historically and logically linked.”

The history of the Caribbean is undoubtedly one of exclusive brutality and exploitation. According to Thompson (1997), Caribbean societies have been established as, and have consequently developed as plantation societies, and have been carved around the institution of slavery. Moreover, the Caribbean’s incorporation into the international capitalist system as a ‘hinterland,’ (that is, as an economic appendage of the ‘mother country’) during the 17th century led, according to the Plantation Society paradigm, to the creation of a ‘total institution.’

According to this paradigm, the economic organization that governs production determined the social relations on the plantation, and therefore, the social relations on the plantation reflected a caste-like rigid stratification based on skin color (Beckford, 1972). Thus, the black slaves, those who worked in the sugar cane fields, were at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, while the plantocracy were placed at the very top. Raymond Smith (1967) describes a total institution as:

Organized groups with well-defined boundaries and with a marked internal hierarchical structure approaching an internal caste system....people enter them as already socially formed human beings with a culture and a set of attitudes which need to be reformed so that the inmate can be 'handled' as a prisoner, a monk, a slave.....”

It is the institutionalization of race and class relations on the slave plantation, and the perpetuation of these relations that has allowed issues of race, class, and ethnicity to endure. It has to be noted however, that since 1966 when Barbados gained independence, race and class relations have shifted in significant ways, and race stratification exists in more subtle ways than in the past.

Indeed, dependence on sugar cane as a cash crop for export to the 'mother country' created the historical basis of the Caribbean economy and social relations, and the slave plantation, a core institution of Atlantic capitalism, became the social microcosm through which societies became differentiated by inequalities in the distribution of economic and social benefits (Beckles, 2002).

It should be reiterated that in most Caribbean societies, as in Barbados, race was the defining category through which people were placed in the social hierarchy. A dichotomous vernacular and ideology underpinned these social relations and enforced separations between groups. Thus, if the black was defined as 'savage,' then the white was defined as 'civilized.' This bifurcated thinking was manifested in what Latour (1993, cited by Wiener, pp. 140-141) refers to as 'purification.' Purification was necessary to consolidate the colonial ambition, therefore, in order to render hybrid forms of association between the native and the European ineffective, colonialists reinforced, at decisive moments, the divisions between the native and the European. This cleansing was

all-encompassing, according to Wiener, and occurred in all realms, from child rearing practices, to the codification of customary laws (p. 141).

At the same time, the mediation between the native and the colonialist which was a necessary element of the colonial project created ‘disconcerting hybridities’ (Wiener, p. 149). These hybridities precluded the Europeans’ quest for ‘purity,’ and thus, the colonialists, as Wiener states: “entangled themselves in contradictions” (p. 149). These contradictions were played out in the Caribbean as interactions between blacks and whites produced a hybrid race, whose skin color was lighter. This hybridization can be located in the discourse on ‘creolisation.’ What the Creolisation discourses have done is to promote a shift in theorizing away from the Plural Society model (Smith, 1965) and the Plantation Society model (as discussed above). These paradigms or models, in that they postulated the view that the social structures of the Caribbean were essentially that of differential cultures, did not acknowledge any dynamism or acts of agency on the part of the dominated within the colonial system.

In this regard, the word creolization is a work which conjures up ideas of acculturation. However, a deeper analysis of the Creole Society paradigm promoted by Kamau Brathwaite (1971) reveals a more dialectical process whereby the process of creolisation is seen as cultural change. It is:

based upon the stimulus/response of individuals within the society to their environment and - as white/Black, culturally discrete groups - to each other. (p. 296).

The Creole society paradigm stresses the active role of Caribbean peoples in creating their culture, and the importance of African cultural traditions. In addition, it serves as an

antithesis to the imperialist view whereby the African is perceived as the passive recipient of European culture (Bolland, 2002).

Additionally, proponents of creolisation state that it was a dynamic process which worked both ways, but the most obvious sign of the intercultural creolization was in sexual relations and the consequent hybrid races which developed. Indeed, Edward Brathwaite (1974), who conceptualized the Creole society paradigm, does distinguish between two aspects of creolisation:

Acculturation, which is the yoking (by force and example, deriving from power/prestige) of one culture to another...and *inter/culturation*, which is an unplanned, unstructured but osmotic relationship, proceeding from this yoke. The *creolisation* which results (and it is a process not a product), becomes the tentative cultural norm of the society. (p.6).

Creolisation is a term which has been co-opted by different groups in the Caribbean to justify their ends, and as a result, the process of creolisation has meant different things to different groups. In this regard, the sociology and anthropology of the Caribbean, according to Yelvington (2001), illustrates Bordieu's (1999) concept of a 'field,' and "is a discrete and integrated activity with its own 'logic' within which the imposition of one group's set of taxonomies results in the production of a 'natural order' that tends to uphold certain structured 'ways of seeing'" (p. 232).

Thus, the Jamaican sociologist Orlando Patterson (1975) argues that creolisation occurred in two phases, and that an understanding of this development is crucial for any analysis of the class structure and cultural hegemony of some groups in Caribbean society. Patterson states that in the first phase, creolisation was 'segmentary' in nature,

and this led to the creation of two kinds of cultures; a Euro-West Indian, and an Afro-West Indian Creole culture. On the other hand, there was a *synthetic creolisation*, which he argues only occurred in the 1950s. Synthetic Creole culture: “draws heavily on Euro-West-Indian culture for its instrumental components and on Afro-West-Indian segmentary Creole for its expressive institutions and symbols. The political, economic, educational, and legal institutions of synthetic Creole are, essentially, slightly modified versions of Euro-West-Indian segmentary Creole; whereas its language, theater, music, dances, art, and literature are actively drawn from Afro-West-Indian segmentary Creole sources” (1975, p. 319). In this regard, Colonial and Creole are two aspects of the same things, where the phenomena of colonial domination and the Creole responses to this domination are similar.

Furthermore, while acknowledging that one group has power over the other, Brathwaite tries to demonstrate the intercultural evolution which arises from this miscegenation. He states that:

the large and growing colored population of the island, which... acted as a bridge, a kind of social cement, between the two main colors of the island's structure, thus further helping to integrate the society. (p. 350).

Therefore, the acculturation process led, to what Hall (1990) refers to as inferential racism. He states that: “inferential racism describes apparently naturalized or allegedly neutral representations of race based on the premise of unquestioned assumptions.” Therefore, the acculturation process, led, especially after the 1960s, to a situation whereby the genetic makeup of features evidently influenced the perception of race. As Hoetink (1982) states: “social prejudice against the black was, and is...phrased

in terms of aesthetic aversion.” In the Caribbean therefore, a light skin color has continued to be the social and aesthetic ideal, as defined by society (Howard, 2001).

Immigration of the East Indians

It is in this social environment that the East Indians migrated to Barbados. In the Caribbean, the legacy of race has always had significance where racial differences were manipulated to assign people a status in the social hierarchy. Therefore, due to the aforementioned aesthetic ideal, the East Indian groups were able to carve out a social and economic space for themselves, establishing themselves as a merchant class, and their race accorded them a relatively high status in the Barbadian society. They were thus able to serve as middle-men in the economic sphere. However, the social location of Indians remains strictly confined to a position outside Creole nationalist space (Hintzen, 2002), since they have managed to retain a strict ethnic identity with norms of endogamy and exclusiveness. In this regard, Horowitz’s (1985) idea that ethnic identity arises from feelings of community and belonging, becomes very applicable. This is so especially since according to Ballard (1996), ethnic groups may make little attempt to hide alternative existence, forming kin-based residential clusters with their own places of worship and education. Thus, it is safe to assert that in Caribbean societies, social divisions can be explained largely through economic processes, and that race and ethnicity are the modalities through which class relations are experienced. As Hall (1992) noted, race is not reducible to class but social struggles are articulated through race.

The Indian Diaspora

The Indian Diaspora is composed of more than 11 million people who were, or whose ancestors were from India. According to Levinson (1994), the Indian Diaspora is the most widespread of all and the most extensive in human history, and Indians maintain extensive ties with India or with the homeland region (p. 57). Although Gujratis constitute only 5 % of the population of India, they represent a disproportionate percentage of this diasporic community. Indeed, Gujratis are overwhelmingly represented in the East Indian Diaspora communities in Kenya and in South Africa, and constituted the bulk of those who were expelled from Uganda by the Idi Amin regime during the 1970s. Similarly, Sindhis can be found in the Canary Islands, in Hong Kong, Singapore, and in Nigeria, and in the United Kingdom, comprise some of the wealthiest business families (Markovits, 2000). The Sindhis represent what Curtin (1984) and Cohen (1971, cited by Hanoomansingh, 1996) referred to as ‘trade diasporas,’ and have a long history of being part of a global commercial network in which merchants moved between towns in an interrelated set of commercial communities.

Perhaps the most essential defining feature of the Indian diaspora is “its collective imaginings of India; of emotions, links, traditions, feelings, and attachments that together continue to nourish a psychological appeal among successive generations of emigrants for the ‘mother’ country” (Singh, 2003, p. 4). In the case of Barbados this is very true, and additionally, India becomes a major source of spouses with some Indians returning home to find spouses to take with

them to the Diaspora home. The Indian community in Barbados manifests what Levinson (1994) refers to as a ‘persistent identity system.’ A ‘persistent identity system’ is a culture that has survived in a cultural environment where it successfully resisted economic, political and religious assimilation (Levinson, 1994, p. 78). This identity is generally based on the real or symbolic notion of an ethnic homeland and the use of the indigenous language. In this regard, the Indian communities seem to have assimilated only partially, what Levinson refers to as ‘partial assimilation.’

Indians in the diaspora have, according to Roger Ballard, (1994), created a ‘desh pardesh’ (p. 5). This phrase, which has commonalities in many South Asian languages, can be translated as “home from home” and/or “at home abroad” (Ballard, 1994). In this regard, immigration takes place as a result of transnational kinship networks which also serve to strengthen economic ties of business in the diaspora home. As Ballard (2003) notes with regard to South Asian migration to the United Kingdom,

in the immediate aftermath of migration, most migrants’ marriage strategies are quite straightforward: they continue to make ‘reistes’ (arranged marriages) for their children on exactly the same basis, and with just the same kind of status-inspired objective in mind, as they would have deployed had they stayed at home.doing so not only enabled these pioneer entrepreneurs to cash in their global achievements for local prestige, but also facilitated the entry of ever-grateful sons and daughters in law into the UK (p. 210).

The Representation of Race and Ethnicity Among Indians

Some of the literature written about east Indians in the twin republic Caribbean country Trinidad and Tobago speaks to the idea that creolisation is a distasteful term to many Indians. Although the history and context of the East Indians in Trinidad varies in significant ways from that of the Indians in Barbados, I will utilize the research studies done on East Indians in Trinidad and Tobago for analytical purposes. At the same time however, those studies which refer to the cosmology and cultural practices of East Indians are very much applicable to the East Indian population in Barbados.

Hernandez- Ramdwar (1997) postulated that Indians see mixing with the black population as part of an attempt by the African population to secure sexual and cultural political conquest. Furthermore, Reddock (2001) argues that the Indian notion of Indian culture and identity is based on a sense of traditional purity while the African notion of African culture and identity is one that is open, malleable and mixed. She proposes that the Indian social structure as it prevails in India preordains hierarchy, and when Indians immigrated to the Caribbean, they reconstructed hierarchy in relation to race and ethnicity.

To this end, caste-based structures coexist with hierarchical structures based on race and color stratification, and thus there appears to be a 'white bias' entrenched in the social order. These hierarchical structures thus produce linguistic categorizations in which 'fair skin' becomes coterminous with 'beautiful.' When Indian people came to the Caribbean therefore, they transposed their ideas about color to the Caribbean, and their

racial and color categorizations were in fact very similar to the racial categorizations which prevailed at the time of their immigration.

The construction of hierarchy by various groups bodes an introduction of the topic of class and ethnicity. Donald Horowitz (1985) states that the coincidence of class with ethnic origins leads to the possibility of speaking of 'ranked' and 'unranked' ethnic groups. In Barbados the system is more of an unranked one whereby "the groups are not definitively ranked in relation to each other, certainly not across the board" (p. 23). Therefore, there are middle-class blacks and others who are members of the working class. Similarly, there are high-status Indians among the descendants of the early traders. What is clear is that each group has separate criteria for rank and prestige among the groups.

At the same time however, Horowitz tells us that unranked groups develop elaborate ways of reaffirming the superiority of its own culture, even while "conceding limited spheres of cultural superiority to other groups." Thus blacks will grant the greater solidarity, thrift and shrewdness of east Indians; yet Indians are sometimes referred to by the pejorative term *coolie* and are denied possession of certain traits that are highly valued in Creole society; such as education, and European or western cultural traits (Skinner, 1960). Similarly, Indians concede the physical strength of blacks, but do not admire the moral behavioral codes of blacks (Klass, 1961).

Patterns of Inequality

Notwithstanding the above, since independence in 1966, the black majority has held political power, although by all accounts, the Marxian notion of

the state as a “committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie” rings true (Marx, 1955; Lewis, 2001; Beckles, 1985). Indeed, race and class remains a particularly salient element of social organization in Barbados. Of course, post-independence social-democratic policies have sought to create social mobility for the black majority and have thus decreased the overt implications that race and class hold in the overall social organization of Barbadian society.

However, Lewis (2001) argues that the dominant white minority, which constitutes the old plantocracy, has retained its power but makes concessions to the dominated black majority class as long as its interests are not compromised (p. 146). Furthermore, Lewis states that intermarriage among white Barbadian families and expatriate whites has allowed the Barbadian white minority to accumulate capital which it then circulates among itself.

Additionally, in a study which explored the role of race and class in promoting globalization, Ramsaran (2004) states that, consistent with their historic role, the market-dominant white minority of Barbados promotes neo-liberal policies when their interests are served. In this regard, MacAfee (1993) argues that the white capitalist elite of the Caribbean collaborate with the Multinational Corporations in promoting tourism and neo-liberal projects, because the benefits accrue to them and are not widely dispersed.

The dominant modernist paradigm has viewed ethnicity as an atavistic leftover form the past and predicted that ethnicity will disappear with national education, universalistic values and industrialization. In this regard, ethnic

differences were understood in narrow terms, and were believed to disappear with the implementation of the neo-liberal paradigm. (Malesevic, 2004). However, history has not proved this thesis right and as Amy Chua in *World on Fire* (2003) tells us, the promotion of free-market capitalism in developing societies has exacerbated ethnic conflicts.

In this regard, Barbados is a small-island developing state whose vulnerability has increased since the 1990s with the worldwide promotion of globalization and trade liberalization. In a geographically challenged environment with little or no resources, social instability is imminent as ethnic groups compete with each other to maintain power and privilege.

Indeed, Trade Liberalization presents particular challenges to Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Foremost among these challenges is economic vulnerability. This concept refers to 'the risks faced by economies from exogenous shocks to the systems of production, distribution and consumption' (UWICED, 2003, p. 53). Vulnerability is measured through the Vulnerability Index (VI) and, according to Sutton, (2002), was first proposed by the Commonwealth Secretariat which first commissioned work on a VI in 1996. As a consequence, several studies were undertaken and in 1997 a decision was taken to complete an index based on the findings. Therefore, the creation of a VI explained the vulnerability of SIDS in terms of output volatility related to the lack of diversification, the extent of export dependence, and the impact of natural disasters. According to Atkins's et al's (2000, cited by Sutton, 2002) classification, Barbados ranks

37th on the VI, more vulnerable than Trinidad and Tobago (62) and Jamaica (53), but less vulnerable than most of the Eastern Caribbean islands.

Ferranti et al (2003), state that race and ethnicity continue to underpin inequality in Caribbean and Latin America. The team found that the unequal distribution of resources that characterizes the region today follows a pattern set with European colonization in the region. The richest one-tenth of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean earn 48 percent of total income, while the poorest tenth earn only 1.6 percent, the research team found. In industrialized countries, by contrast, the top tenth receive 29.1 percent, while the bottom tenth earns 2.5 percent. Using the "Gini Index" of inequality in the distribution of income and consumption, the researchers found that Latin America and the Caribbean, from the 1970s through the 1990s, measured nearly 10 points more unequal than Asia, 17.5 points more unequal than the 30 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and 20.4 points more unequal than Eastern Europe (Ferranti et al, 2003)

Rational choice theory views individuals as actors who are in a state of permanent competition over limited resources, economic advantages, wealth, power and status. Ethnicity in this process of competition assumes a functional significance and individuals will cleave to the ethnic groups depending on the rewards that will accrue to them. "Changing relative price leads to corresponding changes in behavior: the more costly it is for people to choose a traditional course of action to achieve a given benefit, the more likely it is that they will consider an innovative alternative to reach the same end." (Hechter, 1986, p. 27). Therefore, when resources are distributed unequally, interethnic

competition will be the result since groups may interpret the occurrences of the international political economy as economic injustice.

Theorizing Ethnicity

The work of anthropologist Frederick Barth (1969) represented a harbinger in the social sciences in terms of bringing the concept of ethnicity to the fore. He redefined extant understandings of culture, arguing that it is not the possession of cultural characteristics that makes social groups distinct, but rather it is the social interaction with other groups that makes that difference possible, visible and socially meaningful. He states that: “the critical focus of investigation from this point becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses” (1969, p. 15).

Therefore cultural differences do not create ethnic collectivities it is the social contact with others that leads to the dichotomous categorization of ‘us’ and ‘them’. As Eriksen (1993) states: “group identities must always be defined in relation to that which they are not; in other words, in relation to non-members.”

Self-ethnic identification system points to another aspect of ethnic identity. Levinson states that every ethnic group has its own classification system, and the place where the individual situates himself in the social system will vary depending on the individual’s relationship to the person with whom he or she is communication and the context in which the issue arises. Thus East Indians would identify themselves as Indian to the black and as Gujrati, or Indo- Guyanese, or Sindhi to each other.

Issues of ethnicity are relatively new to the Caribbean since race and skin color have been the defining categories thorough which people have constructed the discourses

on differences. Issues of ethnicity are relatively new to the Caribbean since race and skin color have been the defining categories through which people have constructed the discourses on differences. Manning Marable's (1994) discussion of the ways in which 'ethnicity' and 'race' have been used to represent the African-American experience is useful to this discussion. He notes that 'whiteness' has historically been the prevailing national identity in North America, and Americans therefore do not distinguish between 'ethnicity' and 'race', preferring to use the two terms synonymously. He states however, that for African-Americans, the discourse on 'ethnicity' and 'race' underlines contrastingly different processes of their historical experiences in North America. African-Americans therefore define themselves as a distinct 'ethnic' group, but are represented in racial terms by the dominant white society. According to Marable, this fine distinction has largely been overlooked, and "since so many Americans view the world through the prism of permanent racial categories, it is difficult to convey the idea that radically different ethnic groups may have a roughly identical 'racial identity' imposed upon them" (p. 114).

While there are differences between the North American and Caribbean contexts, Marable's insights are applicable to this discussion mainly because it shows why questions about ethnic affiliation necessarily have very different implications from those about racial origin. This is so especially since heightened levels of ethnic affiliation can give rise to active and overt social mobilization (Ballard, 1996).

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to describe the perspectives and perceptions of ethnic dominance and ethnic affiliation among the various groups in Barbados. The nature of the research, in that it sought to explore sensitive issues of race and ethnicity, justified the use of qualitative research. This is so especially since qualitative methods provide a deeper analysis, allows for a more through description of the situation, and help us to understand how people make meaning or interpret phenomena (Merriam, 1998).

Moreover, a thick description places the data of an observation within the rich interconnected milieu of social life. I think however, that given that a thick description facilitates interpretation of data, it is considerably challenging to maintain validity. As Bailey et al (1999) state, validity is a fundamental element which is facilitated by the researcher who has to manage the analytical movement between fieldwork and theory. (p. 172). Thus, trustworthiness becomes the responsibility of the researcher, and as Geertz (1993, p. 5) suggests, it is the researcher's intent that makes it all work, in that: "it is not ... techniques and received procedures, that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort, and it is thus an elaborate venture.

Given that the researcher is a central and important element of the research process, reflexivity is an important mechanism that the researcher has to employ to obviate untrustworthiness. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) buttress this point by noting

that examining how one's own subjectivity influences one's research is known as reflexivity and is a goal of qualitative research (p. 27). Moreover, many scholars who write about qualitative research advocate that the researcher makes her personal values palpable in order to preclude untrustworthiness and to ensure validity. These writers also stress the importance of elucidating researcher reflexivity concerning the motivations for the study and the possible ways that the researcher's subjectivity may affect interactions in the field (Holliday, 2002; Glesne, 2006).

My motivations for this study derive from my experiences growing up as a first generation female of Gujarati immigrant parents. From a young age I was made aware of the many dynamics surrounding my race, class and gender. In many ways, Indian racial characteristics as opposed to African racial characteristics, in particular hair texture and brown skin were to some extent venerated, and hence had the ability to extend certain privileges.

However, paradoxically, the black population's perception of me as having a privileged position in the Barbadian society because of my race also meant that I was on the receiving end of hostility at times. As I negotiated my way through mainstream Barbadian society as an Indian (most non-Indian Barbadians tend to essentialize Indian groups and view 'Indians' as a monolithic and homogenous group) woman, I was made constantly aware of the contradictions underpinning my position both within the Gujarati community and within the Creole Barbadian society.

While a majority of the immigrant Gujarati community is well-off and in many cases, wealthy, my family was one of the few that were not. This also meant that in

addition to the perceptions that Afro-Barbadians had about me, my relationship with the Gujarati community was constantly defined by my class. One of the enduring beliefs held by most of the community is that of ‘taking your place’ in society, and thus, the idea persists that people from less well off backgrounds must not attempt to elevate themselves economically or intellectually. Indeed, many stumbling blocks are placed in the path of those who dare to do so.

My gender added another dimension to this relationship. As a female in an immigrant sub-culture which held very firmly to its belief that women should not benefit from an education, my attempts to educate myself beyond high school level were met with stiff resistance. Intelligence, persistence, tenacity and hard work, qualities which would normally be the subject of admiration in other societies, had the opposite effect on the Gujarati community and instead drew their ire.

Research Site

The research site was Barbados, and no specific geographic location within the island was relied on for data collection. The issue of establishing rapport during the interview process is a ubiquitous theme in all the literature that has been written on qualitative research. Rapport is fundamentally about conveying empathy and “understanding without judgment” (Patton, 2002, p. 366). Furthermore, the interview setting is important for facilitating rapport, and indeed, Seidman (1984) maintains that the interviewer should establish equality in the interview by conducting the conversation in a neutral non-threatening place. Similarly, Glesne (1999) states that the interview should

take place in a relaxing physically comfortable place, and further, that the researcher should be subservient to the respondent's needs.

To this end, the research site varied and I met participants in places which they proposed. I met with some participants in their homes and with others in cafes and restaurants. One interview was conducted in a public park. Data collection took place over a period of three months, from November 2006 to January 2007.

Sample

I purposefully selected participants from a pool of volunteers in order to include a range of diverse variables including gender, class, first and second generation East Indian Barbadians, and age. I contacted the initial pool of volunteers through an informal network of friends and work colleagues and then I chose participants based on the initial pool of volunteers.

I purposefully selected participants from this pool of volunteers in order to have a varying range of characteristics including gender, age and class status. The justification for this is that prior research has shown that peoples' perceptions vary along dimensions of age, gender and class, and I wanted to discover these differences for analytical purposes.

My final sample included a total of twenty-four (24) participants, and represented six people from four ethnic groups, the criteria for selection in the sample being ethnicity, gender, age and class. Therefore, I interviewed 6 people from each of the four ethnic groups; Gujrati, Sindhi, Caucasian and black groups, males and females, who were between the ages of 35-65 years.

Data Collection

Data collection took place through audio taped and transcribed open-ended in-depth interviews. Before the fieldwork stage of the research process, I obtained permission to conduct this study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Ohio University in Athens Ohio. Any study which seeks to study human subjects has to fulfill the requirements of the IRB with the ultimate objective of safeguarding against unethical procedures.

Prior to each interview, I read the informed consent form to the participants. This form described the research study, ensured that participants understood that there were no risks involved, and sought the permission of each participant. Additionally the form made it clear to the participants that only pseudonyms would be used in the final research study.

I interviewed each participant using in- depth open-ended interviews in a face-to-face setting. At the same time, I had a list of questions that acted as an interview guide (See Appendix A). This was to increase the comparability of responses between groups, and also to permit facilitation and organization of the data.

I tape recorded each interview, and immediately following each interview, I recorded field notes. At the same time, keeping in mind that one of the themes of qualitative research is leaving room for fluidity, the decision to tape record was based on what the participant felt comfortable with, and agreed to. In some cases, I both tape recorded and took field notes in my notebook. At other times, some participants noted that they felt uncomfortable being taped, and in situations like these, I only took field notes.

The interview was conducted in English while conducting the interview. However, in Barbados, the colloquial language is an African-vernacular dialect (Bajan), and thus, I used Standard English or Bajan based on the interviewer's intimation of the participants' familiarity with either language. While conducting the interview with Gujrati participants, I used some Gujrati words in order to clarify some points or to offer some explanation.

The Interviews

The interviews which I conducted for this study can be located under what Patton (2002) refer to as the Interview Guide Approach. According to Patton, the interview guide lists the questions or topics that are to be discussed during the interview. Before I conducted the interview, and after I read the informed consent form to the participants, I briefly described some of the broad areas that I was interested in discussing with the participants.

I also relied on the interview guide during the course of each interview to ensure that all the issues were being discussed. However, the interview guide does not preclude dynamism in the face of exigencies that may arise during the interview. Rather, the onus is on the researcher, who can exercise spontaneity in establishing a conversation, but can also guide the topics of conversation. In this regard, Lofland and Lofland (1984) aptly state that interviews are actually: "guided conversations" (p. 59).

It must be noted however, that given that Lofland & Lofland (1984) and Patton (2002) argue that interview strategies are flexible and do not exist on polar extremes, I combined approaches and utilized the interview guide approach in combination with what Patton calls a 'conversational strategy' (p. 347). Berg (1998) refers to this kind of

interview as an unstandardised interview. To this end, I let the conversation flow from the incipient questions that I had asked, and the conversation thus revealed new topics that participants preferred to divulge. In this regard, Schwartz and Jacobs (1979) propose that unstandardised interviews facilitate the generation of appropriate and relevant questions that emerge from the interactive process of the interview.

Data Processing and Analysis

Analysis in qualitative research flows continuously from the moment that the researcher enters the field, and data analysis therefore “does not refer to a stage in the research process” (Glesne, 1999, p. 84), but is on-going. Conducting the interviews thus helped me, as Glesne states, to: “consider relationships, salience, meanings, and explanations- analytic acts that not only lead to new questions, but also prepare you for the more concentrated period of analysis that follows the completion of data collection” (Ibid, p. 84). When conducting the interviews, I took field notes even if I tape recorded the interviews, noting any reflections or other remarks. As soon as possible after each interview, I transcribed each interview and analyzed the material, sorting through to identify similar patterns or themes and/ or distinct differences between groups. Isolating these patterns and processes allowed me to restructure some of the interview questions that I took to subsequent field visits in the next wave of data collection (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

I began coding data from interview transcripts and field notes using coding strategies proposed by Patton (2002, p. 463) and Miles and Huberman (1994). I thus worked at the level of the text itself, noting similarities and differences between

interviews and then used pattern coding to identify common themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The codes I developed were derived from the data themselves, and these codes were arrived at firstly through an analysis of the interview transcripts from individual participants, and then through a consideration of the wider matter of cross case analysis. I also noted similarities and differences across participants' interview responses.

I then developed themes to make the text more manageable. According to Auerbach & Silverstein (2003), a theme is an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas, and which makes the text more manageable. Ultimately, the codes and themes were derived from relevant text in the transcript which expressed a distinct idea related to my research concern (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 46).

Chapter 4

Discussion of Findings

This section of the study will discuss the findings from the data which I collected, coded and organized into themes. The Interviews that I conducted with participants highlighted the ways that members of the four groups perceived themselves, as well as their perceptions of other groups. These varying perceptions were demonstrated in the thoughts that different group members expressed in relation to the economic success of the immigrant Indian ethnic groups, and the comparably low level of economic success of the black group. More often than not, the perceptions and perspectives of members of these ethnic groups demonstrated that they were making links between groups' internal characteristics and their position in the economic hierarchy within the Barbadian society.

By perceiving themselves in one way or the other, there was a tendency to portray the other groups in dichotomous terms. Therefore, the non-black groups all saw themselves as possessing certain cultural and personality characteristics which contributed to their economic success. The black group, on the contrary, were perceived as lacking these same cultural traits which, as articulated by many of the non-black groups, were viewed as significant factors leading to achievements in the economic realm.

It seems as if differences between the groups are often exaggerated or distorted with a consequent mutual production of negative images and categorizations, in-group-out-group distinctions and stereotypes. Below is a discussion of the perceptions of the various ethnic groups in relation to economic success and the characteristics of groups.

Perceptions of Economic Success According to the Characteristics of Groups

Caucasians' Perceptions

The ideological fabric of Barbadian society is conceived of in terms of race and ethnicity, although it may not be something that people consciously think about. The ways in which race and ethnicity operate in the society was revealed through the responses to the interview questions I posed to Caucasian Barbadians. When asked what they thought were some of the reasons for the general failures of many black businesses and the reasons for the low rates of black economic success, the Caucasian participants mentioned certain personality and cultural traits of black Barbadians as attributing factors.

The lack of thrift of black Barbadians was pointed to as one reason why many black people's businesses failed. One hundred percent of the Caucasian participants agreed that black people were not thrifty people and that it is this quality that led to their failed businesses and their low participation in self-employment. In conversations with these participants, many of them seemed to be attributing the lack of thrift of black people to inherent tendencies.

This was something that 100 % of the non-black groups agreed upon. They all were of the opinion that the black culture promoted a value system which led to black people not being able to defer gratification. Instead, they noted, black people spent all their wages/salaries on consumer products. All of these participants mentioned that whereas a person from another race would defer gratification and save either to invest in a business or a home, blacks bought expensive cars and jeeps as a show of their

wealth/status. Moreover, 100% of the Caucasian participants agreed that blacks were considerably more materialistic than other ethnic groups.

They argued that this is one of the things that kept black people from succeeding in business since to be successful, you need to reinvest profits. As one of the interviewees, Chris noted:

Blacks like to flaunt their wealth in visible things like SUV and fancy cars –hence live beyond their means because of life-style and the need to impress others. No so much whites.

They also all made a link between black ‘immediate gratification’ habits and the paltry numbers of black businesses in operation, noting that it was this habit of not being able to put off their needs for tomorrow which led to them failing time and time again.

In the perceptions of the Caucasian interviewees, there was an implicit suggestion that black Barbadians were inherently prone to possess the value system that they did. There was no questioning of the origins of this perceived inability to defer gratification, and during the course of conversations with these participants, there was the constant implication that there was something ‘wrong’ with black people which led to their perceived ‘bad’ habits of not being able to save, and wanting to spend all their money the moment they were paid.

The Caucasians tended to compare the Indian and black groups, ultimately dichotomizing the two groups. Therefore, Indians were portrayed as being thrifty and hardworking, while blacks were portrayed as lazy and materialistic. Also Caucasians compared the black and Indian community solidarity and mentioned black divisiveness. They seemed not to know the source of this divisiveness, but as one white participant

noted, black people were their own worst enemies and should stop blaming other people and the legacy of slavery. As Sara stated:

the black business person practices prejudice at every level; colour, class, religion, economics. This has been the practice since the days of slavery. I have heard people ask, if there were so many black people during the days of slavery and so few whites, why couldn't the blacks kill off the whites and live happily ever after. That didn't happen because the blacks were too busy fighting amongst themselves and to this day the fight continues.

These interviewees made mention of Indian community solidarity, and they saw Indians as being united, stating that they believed that the family and community networks in the Indian communities had contributed to their economic success.

Another set of internal characteristics that the white participants pointed to was the perceived immorality of black people, and their 'unstable' families. There was also the promotion of a functionalist kind of ideology and this was seen when they pointed to the structure of the black family as a source of black economic failures. For the white participants, a nuclear family seemed to be the ideal family and thus they criticized the mother centered black families, and perceived them as being 'unstable,' of a low moral standard, and as the source of all of black people's woes. One Caucasian participant pointed to the 'slack' morals of black people, and stated and that they were not setting a good example for their children and it led to a cycle whereby the blacks continued to lack in certain skills. Again there was the tendency to point to the Indians' family structures as positive. As Chris said: "I think Indians are more disciplined and families stick together."

Similarly, 5 out of 6 of the interviewees pointed to certain 'black' behaviors which they linked to black failures in the economic sphere. Foremost among these behaviors mentioned were the 'Womanizing' tendencies of black males. Participants noted that because black males had so many 'girlfriends,' or were engaging in sexual relations with more than one woman, they spent all their money on material items to woo these sexual partners and/or girlfriends. This took away from their economic ventures and thus led to business failures. About themselves, they saw themselves as managing their businesses and wealth efficiently, and they compared themselves to the black populations.

Black Perceptions

During the course of the interviews, there was a tendency for black people to compare themselves not necessarily to the white minority group, but to the Indian group. In response to my questions as to why they thought that immigrant Indian groups had been able to achieve high levels of business success and to amass wealth, the black participants compared black behavior with that of the Indians, and pointed to what they perceived as Indian solidarity and cohesiveness. They were all of the view that the Indian population helped each other in setting up businesses and in buying homes. These participants seemed pretty aware of the social and business network ties that Indians employed in their economic activities. These black participants pointed to a sense of cohesiveness that they perceived linked people in the Indian community, and clearly made a link between this perceived community solidarity and Indians' economic success.

They compared this unity to the black population' unwillingness to help fellow members, and most of them noted that the black population's behaviors were very individualistic. When questioned on the source of this individuality and divisiveness, only 3 of the black participants discussed the psychological mechanisms used during slavery to divide black people and which persisted into the present. One participant, a small business owner from the working class, made mention of the 'Willie Lynch'² syndrome which he said prevailed up to contemporary times. Another participant from the middle class also said that the mechanisms of control and oppression used by the plantocracy during slavery were being seen in contemporary times.

Interestingly enough, one Afro-Barbadian from the working class who lived in close proximity to some Indian families showed a very clear understanding of the processes of change at work in the Gujrati community. He noted that the Gujrati (although he was not aware of the differences between the various Indian groups) people had in some ways accepted some of the norms of the wider Barbadian society, and that they too were aspiring to attain middle class status and live in the middle class neighborhoods. He noted that the Indian was no longer satisfied with being just a 'coolie man,' and that differing statuses within the groups caused rifts and jealousies. Having lived next door to a large extended Gujrati family (who lived opposite another large extended family); he had witnessed first hand the intra-family and inter-family rows, rifts and jealousies that occurred. He was also very aware of the social dynamics which resulted when some of the younger members of these extended families broke with the norm of the joint family household and moved out into middle class

² Willie Lynch was a slave owner who over 300 years ago devised a plan to help keep Black people divided

neighborhoods in nuclear units. Most importantly, this participant did not agree that Indians worked as a total cohesive unit. He said that it was really a myth that black Barbadians had about Indians, but he and other blacks that live in the neighborhood understood that Indians were 'normal' people with the same kinds of family conflicts, and they were very aware that there was endemic jealousy and envy between community members.

Four out of 6 of the Afro-Barbadian participants agreed that black people did not save their money and that they were more interested in buying material consumer items as a way to show off their position or wealth. Three of these participants came from the middle class, and one was from the working class.

The two from the working class who disagreed that it was lack of black thrift that contributed to the low participation of Blacks in business ownership pointed to structural and institutional forces which obviated Black success in the economic sphere. They pointed to the lack of any efficient microfinance programs to help poor people set up businesses. They also noted that the 'system' (and this word is used by working class people to denote the entire social political and economic system) functions in ways that makes some people fail and some benefit.

Three of the Afro-Barbadian participants disagreed that black people were unable to defer gratification, and noted that how you treated your money and how you spent it depended on what kind of socialization you received and what kind of family you came from. They also pointed to the fact that Indians and Caucasians had problems of not being able to defer gratification but that these habits were not exposed since the strong

community support of the Indians and the wealth position of the whites led to spendthrifts being protected by their respective communities. Of these 3 Afro-Barbadians, 2 were from the working class and 1 was from the middle class. These 2 from the working class noted that it was practically impossible for poor people to come out of their poverty, and that sometimes poor people give up and just decide to live for the present, since no amount of saving would help them to circumvent the system which was inherently biased against them.

Those Afro-Barbadians who agreed that black people were unable to defer gratification were from the middle class and they expressed similar sentiments to the non-white groups, blaming poor people for being poor and not examining the structural causes of the poor people's situation. Here you see the role that class plays in how you see the world. She found that poor people were poor people all over the world

Three out of 6 participants agreed that blacks were more materialistic than other groups. Out of these 3, one was from the working class and 2 were from the middle class. The other 3 who did not agree with the labeling of blacks as materialistic, stated that there were materialistic people to be found in all societies and in all races.

Those Afro-Barbadians who agreed that black people were unable to defer gratification were from the middle class and they expressed similar sentiments to the non-white groups, blaming poor people for being poor and not examining the structural causes of the poor people's situation.

There was the perception that Indians had some inherent trait which led to them having knowledge of business practices, resulting in economic success. Some pointed to

socialization and talked about how Indian children were taught from very early to help out in the business and were taught the importance of owning your own business. Black interviewees actually indulged in criticism of their own communities, and in some cases, provided objective analyses of their own society. In this regard, Michelle stated that

we (blacks) have to make children understand the value of a dollar and work and get them from young to work in the family business on weekdays. This is what de indians do. They makde the children work with them from young, teaching them the businness. I whole heartly agree,black middleclass kids don't appreciate the hard work they parents and grand parents had to do to afford the college and suvs!! i have seen seale's grand work cashregistar in R. L. Selae meat shop and look at Carters & Co that is over 100yrs and Cave Shepherd is now 100 too.³

In response to my question as to why Indians had achieved considerable economic success despite their recent immigration, all of the Afro-Barbadians expressed the opinion that Indians had a cunning trait in them and were able to trick their way through life. Some of the black interviewees talked about this trait in a somewhat admiring fashion and noted that Indians knew how to get by in life. Interviewees from the non-Indian ethnic groups seemed on the one hand to admire the cunning trait that they perceived to be an inherent trait in Indians, and on the other hand to be critical of it. The Afro-Barbadians especially seemed to be more critical, but they were the ones who also seemed to be the most admiring of this trait and more than one black participant said that 'de Indian is smart' (in the Barbadian context, 'smart' means 'cunning' or 'tricky').

One hundred percent of all the people interviewed were under the impression that Indians were thrifty and that it was this trait (coupled with other traits) that resulted in

³ R.L Seale and Cave Shepherd are white owned companies.

their success. That non-Indian groups (blacks and whites) essentialized Indians groups was very clear from this perception of Indian thrift. For among the Gujratis, there is a perception that Sindhis' wealth is not 'real,' and that they have to take out heavy bank loans to finance their conspicuous consumption, needing to demonstrate outward signs of wealth (such as having mansions and driving BMWs).

Surprisingly, while the Afro-Barbadian participants did agree that Indians tended to be passive, they made the point that Indians were not necessarily law-abiding. These participants mentioned the 'cunning' nature of the Indian and pointed to the many 'shady' mechanisms Indian businessmen used to get rich. The Gujrai 'coolie men' were implicated in many of these schemes, and interviewees stated that they knew of instances where 'coolie men' placed high markups on the goods that they sold. Also, they noted that when a customer bought an item on credit from a 'coolie man,' and did not keep an accurate record of what s/he owed, then the 'coolie man' tricked the customer by never cancelling the debt, no matter how long the customer was paying for the item. Alternatively, the coolie man would add an extra charge onto the bill of the customer. The 3 interviewees who did agree that Indians were docile were those from the middle class who had little interaction with Indian salesmen or 'coolie men.' Those who disagreed that Indians were docile were from the working class and had had first hand interaction with salesmen who they might have been obliged to buy from since these salesmen offered goods on credit.

The Sindhi store owners were also seen as being dishonest, racist, and as being mean to their black employees. Basically the perceptions of the Indian were not

necessarily kind ones, and while the Afro-Barbadian interviewees conceded that Indians did not indulge in criminal activity such as burglaries and murders, they were still 'criminals' because they tricked the working class Barbadians with their many scheming ways.

While 4 out of 6 black participants alluded to the whole issue of black crime, the other 2 participants pointed to the feelings of apathy which prevailed among the young black people. Based on what these 2 participants said, the young black people of Barbados were aware of the contradictions of the capitalist system and unlike their forefathers, were unwilling to just exist as passive members of the working class. They were aware that they had no stake in the island's wealth or land, and had in some ways, given up trying. Based on what these 2 participants said, the young black people of Barbados were aware of the contradictions of the capitalist system and unlike their forefathers, were unwilling to just exist as passive members of the working class. They were aware that they had no stake in the island's wealth or land, and had in some ways, given up trying.

For the black participants, the family structure had nothing to do with success or lack of economic success. Instead they pointed to structural constraints such as the difficulties that black people faced in acquiring loans for businesses. For the black participants, their family structures were not aberrations from the norm and they actually made sense and created meanings from the types of family systems that they had.

The black participants were of the opinion that white people helped their own. They alluded to the idea that there was some primordial tie that linked them together and

made them more liable to help members of their own race. There was also the perception that whites wanted to retain their historical power and privilege and therefore that was one reason for helping their own.

Gujrati Perceptions

Gujratis compared themselves to the black majority population, ultimately defining themselves in relation to other groups, but mostly in relation to the black group. It's very interesting to note that the participants from the non-black ethnic groups were all of the opinion that black people's moral standards left a lot to be desired. Implicit in these suggestions was the idea that their (non-black ethnic groups) moral standards were the desired ones.

The Gujrati participants, similar to the the Cuacuasians, mentioned 'black' behaviors which they linked to black failures in the economic sphere. Foremost among these behaviors mentioned were the 'womanizing' tendencies of black males. Participants noted that because black males had so many 'girlfriends,' or were engaging in sexual relations with more than one woman, they spent all their money on material items to woo these sexual partners and/or girlfriends. This took away from their economic ventures and thus led to business failures.

These interviewees also mentioned the structure of the black family as a source of black economic failures, and noted that 'immoral' behavior shown by adults was learnt by children who then carried on the immoral trend. They pointed to the norms of the black Barbadian society which did not encourage marriage, and which encouraged 'visiting' type unions. They stated that this instability was extended to the economic

sphere where black people did not show consistency in business dealings. Moreover, they argued, black men expended a lot of energy having many girlfriends and trying to impress them with material possessions.

One hundred percent of the participants from the Gujrati ethnic group agreed that black people were not thrifty people and that it is this quality that led to their failed businesses and their low participation in self-employment. They stated that the black business person, instead of saving and reinvesting profit in his/her business, preferred to buy fancy clothes and cars to show off wealth or to adopt pretensions of wealth. Because of this, they argued, black people spent all their wages/salaries on consumer products, trying to compete with their neighbors in materialism.

One hundred percent of the Gujratis agreed that blacks were considerably more materialistic than other ethnic groups. In order to demonstrate black materialism, the non-white participants all noted that blacks might not have a 'proper' house to live in (by this they mean the house might be old) but that they will still buy extremely fancy cars which leave them indebted. Almost all of the non-white participants also mentioned that blacks liked jeeps and SUVs and would buy them to just 'show off' and to gain respect from their peers.

Some of them also pointed to the black 'love for credit,' and stated that easy credit schemes offered by the furniture and other department stores fueled black materialism since black people could get practically any consumer item without having to make initial large payments. Comparing their actions to those of black people, they

argued that an Indian would defer gratification, save, and then purchase an item s/he wanted, whereas a black person would buy consumer items in order to present an image.

Gujrati participants also pointed to the black inability to unite as a people, but did not seem to be aware of the source of this divisiveness and in some ways implied that it was an inherent tendency in black populations. Interestingly enough, the Gujrati population is not as united as it is perceived to be and it is also rent with divisiveness and disunity. Two of the Gujrati participants discussed the differences between the Gujrati community of the 1970s and the Gujrati community of today, making mention of the creeping individuality, materialism, and consumerism which kept people disunited and unwilling to help others in the community. The Gujrati community has not been left untouched by the forces of globalization and neoliberalism which are at work in the Barbadian community. There seems to be a shift from what classical thinker Tonnies described as *gemeinschaft-lich* (community) relations to, to *gesellschaft-lich* relations (more individualistic).

When I questioned interviewees about the reasons behind the Indian and white groups' economic success and about their status in the stratification system, most of the non-white participants said that Indians and whites were law-abiding and were not involved in criminal activity as were the blacks.

There was the perception that blacks were the only people involved in crime and that was the reason for their low social status and lack of economic success. Non-black participants mentioned that it was black young people who preferred to spend all their

days just hanging out, smoking marijuana and doing nothing while the other groups worked hard and looked for opportunities to increase their social and economic mobility.

Indians described themselves as law abiding and noted that none of their members were ever incarcerated, were involved in crime, or were ever hauled before the law courts. Members of both Indian ethnic groups defined themselves not necessarily as 'docile,' but as always living within the framework of the laws of Barbados. They stated that they preferred to obey than to get into trouble with the law. They also noted that the white minority while sometimes vilified by the black majority population, were law-abiding and are never incarcerated.

The Indian groups definitely saw themselves as being good businesspeople. Again, there was the tendency to compare themselves with the black population, and time and again, views about black peoples' lack of business knowledge were expressed. On the other hand, the Indian groups seemed to think that white people were good business people as well. The white and black participants did agree as well, that Indian people seemed to have a natural affinity for business.

Three out of the Gujrati participants although agreeing with the idea that Indians had strong community solidarity, discussed the intense rivalries, jealousies and tactics of undercutting which prevailed within the Gujrati community. The Sindhis discussed similar things but were not as explicit in discussing the things which divided the Sindhi community. The Gujrati community, although perceived by the non-Indian groups (and even by Sindhis) as not being assimilated and are not put into the Creole category, have nonetheless been affected by Creole values, and are aspiring to enter the middle class.

This middle class is one that is defined by the Creole culture and would constitute things like living in certain Neighborhoods and possessing certain Creole middle class traits such as speaking Standard English as opposed to the colloquial dialect. When members of the Gujrati community enter the middle or upper classes, the class divisions in the community become apparent.

Therefore, it is clear that non-Indian groups are not aware that the Indian ethnic groups are not as cohesive as they are perceived to be. This pertains as well to the Sindhi population. Two of the Sindhi participants did discuss the rivalries, jealousies, and intense competition which prevailed among Sindhi families.

Sindhi Perceptions

Sindhis tended to share the same ideas as the Gujratis. However, because Gujratis live in close proximity to blacks and in some instances live in black neighborhoods, they have a clearer understanding of black culture and values.

Five out of 6 of the Sindhi participants mentioned the morals of black people as in some way precluding black economic success. Sindhis' contact with black people is mostly in the economic sphere since they own most of the stores in Bridgetown. This researcher noticed that whereas many of these stores once employed black young women as clerks, the past two years has seen them being replaced by Indo-Guyanese employees. When I enquired about this trend with some of the participants, they pointed to the poor work ethic of black people, and said that these Indian women were not lazy, worked hard,

and were less sullen. The Sindhi participants' perceptions of black people were that they had a poor work ethic and sometimes expressed sullenness.

Many of the Sindhis also tended to perceive black people's morality as less than desirable, pointing to black criminal activities and black peoples' sexual practices as some of the cultural habits which they perceived as in some ways obviating the overall economic success of black people.

Perceptions of Structural Advantages and Disadvantages in Barbadian society

That black Barbadians do not make up a significant part of the business elite of Barbados, and are poorly represented in entrepreneurial businesses is a well known perception in Barbados which is shared by members of all racial and ethnic groups. This pervasive belief was shared by the participants in the study although the perceptions of the causes and reasons for the dearth in black businesses varied among groups.

One significant realm of analysis that was derived from the data was that of the perceptions of participants relating to the structural impediments which constrained the effective functioning of black businesses, or which hampered incipient black entrepreneurship. The perceptions and views of participants varied across ethnic groups, and therefore, while some groups spoke of the structural disadvantages which obviated black entrepreneurial activities, others repudiated all notions of a link between structural disadvantages and the dearth in existence of black businesses. Similarly, perceptions of participants concerning the structural advantages that were either available or not available to certain 'favored' ethnic groups varied across ethnic groups.

The subsequent section presents the perceptions of the research participants on structural advantages and disadvantages as it relates to economic success. The perceptions of the participants are discussed and grouped according to their respective ethnic groups.

Afro-Barbadian Perceptions

For the Afro-Barbadians, ideas about structural advantages and disadvantages were underpinned by perceptions about control of the economy by the traditional white minority elite, and the resentment they faced from the white minority businessmen. Moreover, many of the views advanced by the black participants spoke to the various institutional and informal mechanisms and strategies utilized by the traditional white business class to undermine black business people. Ultimately, those participants who discussed the tactics used by the white minority to undermine black businesses saw these perceived actions of the white commercial class as being underlined by resentment and as a device to maintain their historically strategic economic dominance.

When I questioned the black participants, 5 out of the 6 stated that Black business people had many obstacles put in their paths. These obstacles, they believed, were deliberate mechanisms put in place by the white minority to obviate black business success and to maintain its economic power. One participant, Michael, a business owner, noted that anytime black people tried to come together to form a business group, their activities were undermined by white strategies. He talked to me at length about the ways in which the white conglomerate sought to undercut black businesses, and also any attempts made by black people to form cooperatives.

To this end, 6 out of 6 Afro-Barbadians expressed the view that the minority white population still controlled the economy in spite of the fact that a black government has been in place since 1966. However, 2 of these 6 participants did make the point that they believed that in contemporary times, Indians and whites together controlled the

economy as compared to the past when economic control was solely in the hands of the whites.

Some interviewees pointed to the historically entrenched political and social habits of the planter and merchant class, and noted that the contemporary white minority operated in almost the same way. Historically, the white population's existence within the plantation society context of Barbados was in some ways tied to its continual struggles to maintain the status quo. Its survival therefore was based on the ownership of land and productive resources (sugar cane and other agriculture crops). After independence, perhaps perceiving that some of their traditional social and economic structures were in danger of collapsing, many prominent white families emigrated to Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Those who stayed sought to consolidate their position and economic wealth by merging with other companies. Black business people have always pointed to the many impediments they face in the incipient stages of their businesses' development, or even after years of being established. When I questioned the black participants, 5 out of the 6 stated that black business people had many obstacles put in their paths. These obstacles, they believed, were deliberate mechanisms put in place by the white minority to obviate black business success and to maintain its economic power.

Four out of six Afro-Barbadians agreed with the commonly held belief in Barbados that the white minority controlled the economy. They all used the example of the BS&T conglomerate, concurring that this conglomerate owned many of the key sectors of the Barbadian economy, such as retail industries, importation of key food products, and agriculture. All of the afro-Barbadian participants knew that BS&T was a

very powerful conglomerate which 'controlled' Barbados. BS&T is the Barbados Shipping and Trading Company Limited which was formed in the 1900s from an alliance of sugar merchants. It is one of the strongest and largest commercial entities in Barbados. After independence, and after the decline of sugar production, BS&T has grown through mergers and acquisitions, and its activities stretch to the retail, distribution, agriculture and shipping sectors. All the black participants were aware that the majority of the big businesses in Barbados are either owned by Bajan whites or Trinidadian whites.

Four of the interviewees noted that the descendants of the old oligarchy were still in control, and were concerned about retaining this economic power. Two of these interviewees are black businesses men, although their class position varies. One of the business men, Michael, is from a traditional black middle class family, and is the director of a fairly large local company. The other businessman, Randy, has a working class background and is the owner of a small business which specializes in computer and electronics repairs. Both of these interviewees agreed that white conglomerates were indeed very powerful but in relation to the view that the white minority resented and undermined black business people, they both disagreed. Michael said that he has knowledge of the ways in which the white commercial elite try to retain their power by destabilizing black business peoples' efforts to come together as a business group. He said that some of the black business people who have been affected by the white commercial minority's actions are his friends. He related an incident in which he said that some acquaintances of his decided to form a group to import reconditioned vehicles from an overseas car manufacturer. The venture was a success, but Simpson Motors, which is

one of Barbados' most efficient auto dealers and sole local agent for many vehicles, decided to take over the automotive deal. This, for Michael, proved that the white conglomerates were very powerful. As he stated:

A few major agents import cars into Barbados, but you know all of them are white. And they have a lot of control. BS&T and Simpson Motors have a lot of control. They have a monopoly on the imports, and they indulge in a lot of price gouging.

However, for Randy, the white commercial minority definitely has, as he put it, more economic "clout," but, he argued, black people liked to focus on white conglomerates as the source of their troubles, and this to him, was just a perpetuation of the victim-syndrome. He argued that institutionalized slavery had divided black people for over 300 years, and that the effects of this were seen in contemporary times when black people were unable to join together as a group for business purposes, furthermore in the personal sphere. He and 3 of the participants noted that in spite of the structural obstacles that they believed were put in place historically by the white minority, there was still a tremendous amount of jealousy that prevailed among black people. This divisiveness and jealousy, they argued, presented the single most obviating factor to black economic success. The phrase 'black people are their worst enemies,' which is a phrase commonly articulated by Barbadians from all ethnic groups, was enunciated by many participants whom I interviewed.

In some ways, although the government of Barbados is the largest employer in Barbados, the white group employs many Barbadians as well, and the perception that whites control the economy was underscored by the understanding that the white

businesses were needed since they are the mainstay of the Barbadian economy, and can therefore make or break the economy.

One structural factor that is very controversial in the Barbadian context is the topic of slavery and its effects on the contemporary socio-economic context. Three of the black interviewees noted that the institution of slavery had done so much damage to the psyches of black people that they believed that black people were still enslaved. Randy, for example, referred to the Willie Lynch syndrome, and said that black people had been so divided (he talked about the phenomenon of the 'house slave' vs. the 'field slave') during slavery, that jealousy and competition witnessed among black people in contemporary times was hard to erase.

The response to the slavery question by the Afro-Barbadians was interesting since only 3 out of the 6 participants agreed that slavery had affected present day relations between the races. One of these was from the middle class and the others were from the working class. Michel, the middle class participant who noted that slavery had affected contemporary relations between the races made mention of the fact that BS&T and the white big businesses always tried to sabotage black businesses and undermine them.

This participant is himself a black businessman and he related his personal experiences of going to school at Harrison College and facing racism in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴ This participant talked about this and about his experiences with racism at Harrison College and his analysis of the racial situation in Barbados. He has made many visits to Africa and Nigeria in particular and argues that black economic success and

⁴ An elite secondary school in Barbados.

black disunity have to be understood within the context of slavery and the divorcing of the identities of Africans from their true selves.

The other 2 Afro-Barbadians were from the working class and were very aware of how the institutionalization of plantation slavery affected black people and the relations between the races. They pointed to black disunity, a lack of identity among some black people, and the hatred of things African, and linked it to slavery.

In the past, being white meant that a person would be privileged in all spheres. Also, in the past class and race were coterminous and a person's race and color determined his/her class position. Those members of the white working class, referred to in Barbados as 'poor whites,' were able to attain a certain level of social mobility based solely on their position within the racial hierarchy.

Four out of 6 of the Afro-Barbadian participants agreed that being white granted a certain degree of privilege to an individual. Moreover, s/he would have access to jobs, networking, access to loans and money. They noted that because whites had control over the commanding heights of the Barbadian economy, it meant that being born white granted a certain degree of privilege since they were given jobs by other whites.

However, 2 of the participants stated that Barbados was a black country and therefore no white person was privileged at the expense of other groups. They disagreed that there was a pervasive tendency to venerate the European value system to the detriment of the African identity system, and spoke about the 'level playing field.'

The black participants from the working class talked at length about the difficulties of emerging from poverty, and said that they did not believe in meritocracy or

in equal opportunity. One interviewee, discussing the ways in which Indians (but he was referring to Gujratis in particular) became wealthy, pointed to the community and social networks which prevailed in the Indian community and which aided the establishment of successful businesses. Most of the black participants compared black community ties (or lack of) to the Indian and white business and community ties, attributing Indian and white business success to the (perceived) elaborate ties and social networks which prevailed in these communities.

Other participants pointed to the difficulties faced by black people when they went for loans to open businesses. Jerry said that “whites are perceived as having more money,” and therefore, they are granted loans readily, whereas blacks are questioned for far longer when they want to have loans.

Caucasian Perceptions

The Caucasian participants demonstrated a different and almost polar perspective to that of the Afro-Barbadians. 4 out of 6 of the Caucasian participants were of the opinion that a myth of white control of the economy of Barbados was being perpetuated by black academics in the university. They argued that blacks made up the majority of the population and that the government and the public service were controlled by the black population.

They pointed to the fact that there was a large black middle class and that blacks appeared wealthy since the middle class blacks lived in big fancy houses and drove fancy cars. This perspective is contradictory since most of the Caucasian and Indian

participants (Gujratis and Sindhis), in the course of the interviews, pointed to black materialism, the black value system which stressed immediate gratification, lack of thrift and a tendency for ostentatious demonstrations of wealth as the downfall and limitation to black economic success.

Notwithstanding, the Caucasians said that the white domination of the economy was a thing of the past and that blacks had made considerable progress since the 1960s when the white population was overwhelmingly a hegemonic power. They all pointed to the fact that political power rested in the hands of the black majority, and that the black government still had the last say on economic and social policy matters. This in some ways constitutes denial since it is clear that BS&T does control the majority of businesses on the island.

Six out of 6 of the Caucasian Barbadians disagreed that white privilege existed and said that there existed a level playing field in Barbados, and that there was no such thing as white privilege and that the very idea of white privilege was nonsensical. They said that opportunities were there and that hard work could lead to economic success. These participants denied that their race led to automatic privileges in the Barbadian society.

Slavery is always a controversial topic in Barbados. 300 years of the suppression of Africans and their descendants and the promotion of the inferiority of the black and his culture has made the topic of slavery a very contentious one. Only 2 out of 6 Caucasians said that slavery affected present day relations between blacks and white. The other 4 participants evinced the views that slavery had nothing to do with the present, and that

Blacks needed to stop harking back to the past. They acknowledged no blame or responsibility of their ancestors' actions, and stated that *they* had nothing to do with slavery. They pointed to black disunity and all of them alluded to the statement that "blacks were their own worst enemies," and should stop blaming whites and Indians for their mishaps and laziness. They noted that black people could not work together for the common good and their disunity was the cause of their lack of economic success. In this regard, according to Rachael, all the talk in the Barbadian media about slavery and its effects only perpetuated myths and untruths about white control and the legacy of slavery. She noted that blacks were their own slaves since some of the black intellectuals continued to mislead the black population on the so-called effects of slavery. She said that slavery had happened a long time ago and that to her mind, the way she saw black people operating, they "enslaved themselves" by not working to come out of their situation.

Caucasian interviewees inevitable compared the black society to that of the Indians, and noted that Indians more often than not had arrived in Barbados with very little resources, but were nevertheless able to become wealthy, and were able to better their material and social standing.

The two Caucasian participants who stated that slavery did affect present day black-white relations stated that slavery had affected good relations between the races, but they still noted that blacks needed to forget and move on, and stop using slavery as a justification for their lack of success. Dawn stated that the way she analyzed the social dynamics of Barbados was through the lens of class and not necessarily through race or

ethnicity. She noted that in contemporary Barbados, people were judged on their class and not race.

None of the Caucasian participants agreed that there were any structural obstacles placed in the paths of black businesspeople. These participants pointed to the black value system which did not encourage saving and thrift, and which promoted materialism and immediate gratification. They said that black people were their own obstacles.

It is clear that there is the belief by the Caucasian population that Barbados is a meritocratic society. All of them made mention of the value of hard work and determination as the sources of economic success, and the way to come out of poverty. One participant, Dean, who traces his ancestry to the 'poor white' group of St John, noted that his ancestors, through hard work, family unity, and determination, managed to rise from his poor status. He noted that while life may be harder for some people than others, he believed that sheer determination, "hard work, education and family unity," is the formula for success.

Four out of 6 Caucasian Barbadians expressed the view that racism in contemporary Barbados was not really a reality and that relations between the races had improved considerably in the past thirty years. They said that people who pronounce that racism is well and alive in contemporary Barbados were perpetuating a myth, and were projecting negative ideas. Also, they said that blacks use the excuse of racism to justify their inability to seize the economic and educational opportunities available to all groups.

The Caucasian participants said that they did not like it when Black people harped on and on about slavery. They stated that the past was gone, and furthermore, it was this

dwelling on the past that precluded economic success and led to blacks not willing to seize economic opportunities. Only one of the Caucasian participants acknowledged the effects of slavery and agreed that racism today was a legacy of the past. At the same time however, she stated that black people used this as an excuse for their lack of social mobility.

Gujrati Perceptions

The Gujratis' perceptions of structural advantage varied to some extent from that of the Caucasians and the Afro-Barbadians. The Gujrati population, as an immigrant group, represents, in some ways, a middle group between the white minority and the black majority. They are at once admired by the whites, and also face hostility from the black majority, especially since they are overwhelmingly geographically concentrated in urban neighborhoods, either living in black neighborhoods or in 'Indian' residential enclaves that are in close proximity to black neighborhoods. Gujratis' perceptions about structural advantages which may have resulted in their success were, in some ways similar to that of the Caucasians.

As it relates to the issue of white privilege, Guajarati participants noted that there was the existence of not only white privilege, but also black privilege. They stated that Barbados was a black dominated country and therefore black people were privileged in the public service and were not made to feel like 'aliens.' They acknowledged that white people were to a certain extent also privileged, but noted that white people were also

faced with racism from the black population, especially when white people were made to feel responsible for slavery.

Some participants noted that the constant harping back to the days of slavery and white hegemony were examples of racism, since to them, black people would rather blame someone else for their own inadequacies. To them, slavery happened a long time ago and they stated that they saw no reason for harping back to the past.

Gujratis also stated that blacks had to forget the past and move on, and stop using slavery as a justification for individual failures. The one Gujrati participant who agreed that slavery had affected present day black-white relations, unlike the other Gujrati participants, was aware of Barbados' history and the role that slavery had played in relations between the races. This participant had friends who were from the Rastafarian faith and therefore, similar to Rastafarians, spoke about the system as 'Babylon.' This is a word that while used by Rastafarians, is also used by other members of the working class and constitutes in a way a counter hegemonic discourse. It is variously used and can refer to the capitalist system, or to western culture, or Christianity. Basically it is a word that can be located in a counter hegemonic discourse, and connotes a rejection of the hegemonic culture.

Gujratis, because of their religion, have also, due to the trajectory of international political economic occurrences, in some ways seen themselves as a 'dominated' minority. This perception of themselves as being dominated is linked to the global Islamic revival and the identification with what they consider to be their oppressed muslim brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.

In the Gujarati enunciation of black and white privilege, there is the link to the whole issue of creolisation and Creole culture. Within the Barbadian society, the social location of Indians remains strictly confined to a position outside Creole nationalist space (Hintzen, 2002), and they have managed to retain a strict ethnic identity with norms of endogamy and exclusiveness.

The residential enclaves that Gujratis have created have exacerbated their segregation and had in some ways, reinforced their status and position as existing outside the Creole cultural sphere. They thus feel as if the creole has more privilege than them.

However, some of the Gujrati participants were of the opinion that the racism that they faced came from the black population who resented them for their wealth. They talked about how blacks called them ‘coolie’ and ‘Indian’ to their faces.

It has to be noted though that the words ‘coolie’ and ‘Indian’ are used in different contexts and their meanings vary depending on the context in which they are used. The word ‘coolie’ derives from the Hindi and Gujrati language, and simply means ‘worker.’ However, as a result of the process of British colonialism in India, ‘coolie’ became a pejorative term which the British initially used to describe unskilled workers. Indian indentured laborers who were recruited to work in British overseas territories of Trinidad and Guyana were thus referred to by this term by both the black and the European descended populations.

In Barbados, because of the links with Trinidad, early Gujrati itinerant traders were called ‘coolie men’ by the black population. In time, the word ‘coolie man’ has come to designate a trade (that of itinerant trading) and does not have the pejorative

connotations that the word 'coolie' has. Today, both Indians and blacks use the word 'coolie man' to describe an itinerant trader.

Shaliza, one of the Gujrati interviewees, was aware that a lot of the contemporary hostility that she saw levelled against Indians was due to the perceived threat of Indians entering the civil service and/or jobs not traditionally filled by Indians. She stated that "dem would like if we would stay as 'coolie men'."

Gujrati participants noted that they were discriminated against by all groups because of their religion, and by virtue of the fact that they dressed and visibly looked different. They were of the view that they needed to be self-employed because they did not envision any 'space' for themselves in the Barbadian public service since the public service was overwhelmingly black dominated.

Gujrati participants were aware of black/white tensions but seemed more concerned with the alleged racism leveled against them by Black Barbadians. They noted that blacks seemed to be jealous of their 'success.' 3 Gujrati participants talked about the discrimination their children faced in the public schools. They noted that the teachers targeted their children and subjected them to ill-treatment and name-calling. These participants' children were not necessarily obvious in their religious practice (that is, none of these participants' children wore the hijab to school), and so these participants were of the opinion that they were being racially discriminated against.

Only 2 of the Gujrati participants agreed with the idea that there were impediments in the way of black economic success. However, they did note that these obstacles could be overcome through hard work. The other 4 interviewees disagreed that

black people faced problems when trying to secure loans. They also disagreed with the notion of white hostility to the black business class, and basically espoused ideas and beliefs about meritocracy. They stated that they in fact believed that white people and Indians faced racism from blacks, since Barbados was a majority black society, and whites and Indians were discriminated against in the public sphere.

4 Gujratis agreed that the economy was controlled by the white minority. They also discussed the conglomerate BS&T, and said that the white minority controlled key sectors of the economy. At the same time, they still did not agree with the idea espoused by the black population that black business people faced formidable structural problems in achieving any level of success.

Sindhi perceptions

The Sindhi perceptions mirrored those of the caucasian group's, and negated all acknowledgment of any structural problems that may face some groups. 6 out of 6 Sindhis also disagreed with the idea of white privilege and stated that the situation in Barbados differed greatly from what it was 50 years ago and that the system was free and fair and that to talk about white privilege was an excuse for laziness. These participants were all of the opinion that there was a system of meritocracy in place and that every individual, regardless of race or ethnic group, could transcend their social position if they were willing to work hard and demonstrate determination.

These participants were not in agreement with the idea that certain obstacles precluded black business economic success. They pointed to themselves and argued that,

in many cases, many members of their ethnic group had started modest businesses and they did not see why the black businesses could not do the same. They put forward the view that blacks should focus on their internal inadequacies and blame themselves instead of pointing to perceived or imagined obstacles which obviated their success. Two interviewees did note that there were some problems that black people may face since the conglomerates were controlled by the white minority. However, at the same time, they noted that these obstacles were not formidable ones that could not be overcome.

With regards to the notion of the structural obstacles which face black people as a result of the legacy of slavery, the Sindhi participants seemed pretty ignorant of the damage that slavery had done or the effects of slavery. None of them agreed that there were any obstacles placed in the paths of black businesspeople. They disagreed with the link between the past and the present, and said that if people perceived that there were obstacles in place, then these obstacles were imagined ones and did not really exist.

Most of these participants did agree that the conglomerates which were operated by the white minority had significant influence. They disagreed however, with the idea that the white minority controlled the wealth of the island, pointing to the large black middle class. They also stated that both Indians and whites had significant wealth, but so too did blacks.

Chapter 5

Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

The analysis of the research results highlights the similarities among people among particular ethnic groups. It also emphasizes the role of privilege in shaping ethnic groups' perceptions. This study assumes that people construct and make sense of their social realities, and the perceptions of the participants, which varied and converged among the different ethnic groups, highlight the influence of social structures on individuals' perspectives. That our schemas and perceptions represent the internalization of our societies' perspectives and ideologies is illustrated by the Symbolic Interactionist theory which proposes that our reference groups determine and shape the ways in which we construct reality (Shibutani, 1955).

That social systems shape our thought processes is also corroborated by Bourdieu in his explanation of the concepts of 'habitus,' 'field,' and 'doxa.' The Symbolic Interactionist theory, as well as Bourdieu's elaborations of the role of societal structures in the construction of ideologies which reinforce systems of domination shape the analysis of the findings of this study. From the wide range of findings discussed in the previous chapter, I have chosen to analyze three findings. These are:

- The phenomenon of denying racism among privileged groups in Barbadian society
- The consistency in the views of minority groups within Barbadian society about particular features of the majority black population
- The self-perceptions of the Caucasian group which absent them from privilege

The Phenomenon of Denying Racism among Privileged Groups in Barbadian Society

People in groups that have enjoyed economically privileged positions: Caucasians, East Indians and middle-class blacks generally denied that there were any structural disadvantages related to race that precluded black individuals' economic success. The participants from the privileged groups also disagreed with the idea that racism was still a defining albeit subtle social stratification mechanism in the Barbadian society. They tended to couch contemporary patterns of stratification in class rather than race terms, evidenced through an analysis of the perceptions of the participants in this study, discussed in the previous chapter. More often than not, it was the privileged groups within the Barbadian society who were more prone to deny the influence of race and ethnicity, preferring to identify class divisions rather than those related to race and color.

While the discourse on race in Barbados is not as officially controlled and policed by the state as it was during the 1970s and 1980s, it is still one that is 'contested' (Lewis, 2001, p. 189). In contemporary Barbados, the leading political party has articulated discourses on black consciousness and identity, and has initiated a Pan-African Commission which acts as an arm of government. Notwithstanding, many privileged Barbadians, namely the middle class blacks, members of the white minority and the Indian groups expressed the opinion that the focus on plantation slavery, racism and black economic enfranchisement is one that is unnecessary and only seeks to cause unrest. To this end, one of the black middle class participants in this study noted that she thought

those black people who evoked the past and spoke of forging ties with Africa were 'racist.'

It is possible to understand these research results through an examination of the political economy of the plantation economy. The Barbadian society is one in which the political economy and social structure has been historically undergirded by plantation slavery and its concomitant ideological conceptualizations of race and class stratification. That the particular social structural configuration of the plantation, with its attendant rigid race, ethnic, and color hierarchies produced deeply entrenched and complex racial representation systems is not to be denied (Alleyne, 2002). At the same time, as Lewis (2001) has noted, the evolution of Barbados' political economy in the post independence period, and the consequent management of the state by the black elite has led many a casual observer to decide that the black-white divide of the past has all but eroded. Therefore, in Barbados, the discourse on race remains a contested one.

To this end therefore, the socio-economic and political mobility of black people in Barbados since 1966 lends a certain dubiousness to the validity of the interpretation of Barbadian society in racial and ethnic terms. As Alleyne (2002) states in relation to Jamaica, the supposed progress of blacks challenges the traditional dichotomous analytic link that was made between race and color, and socio-economic position. Within the context of Barbados, the discourse on contemporary stratification patterns are enunciated in class terms rather than the conventional race paradigm of forty years ago. Therefore, "class, with its own forms of cultural content, has become a salient category of

experience joining with and sometimes superseding the experience of racialized relations” (Carl Stone, p. 193).

In Barbados, any analysis of the denial of racism by privileged and unprivileged groups has to be located within the context of the particular modality of socio-political arrangements which took place under the colonial system. Barbados’ socio-structural and economic configurations, developed as early as 1660, and based on the institution of the plantation, served as a harbinger for other colonies in the region. To this end therefore, white Barbadian planters’ expertise in managing a slave colony was sought all over the region, and the 1661 Barbadian slave code which established white economic and political domination was applied in other islands (Welch, 2003). In this regard, “Barbados.....showed the rest of the English Caribbean not only how to manage profitable sugar plantations, but also how to legally control their slaves” (Beckles, 1990, p.31).

Notwithstanding, the social, economic and political arrangements produced by the colonial plantation system led, over time, to forms of domination and control that were not overtly oppressive. Rather, the colonial plantation system produced a psychic dulling of consciousness which is explained by Barbadian author George Lamming as “a total alienation of man” (p.xi). In the 1983 Introduction to *In the Castle of my Skin*, Lamming examines the legacies of colonialism, stating that:

.....the result was a fractured consciousness, a deep split in its sensibility which now raised difficult problems of language and values; the whole issue of cultural allegiance between imposed norms of White Power, represented by a small numerical minority, and the fragmented memory of the African masses: between white instruction and Black imagination. The totalitarian demands of White supremacy, in a British colony, the

psychological injury inflicted by the sacred rule that all forms of social status would be determined by the degrees of skin complexion; the ambiguities among Blacks themselves about the credibility of their own spiritual history (p. xi).

In the West Indies and certainly in Barbados, oppressive racist regimes with institutionalized forms of racism did not exist during the 1950s. Rather, as Ngugi (1972) states, through education which valorized a British value system, the British had “lulled the serpent of race to sleep” (p. 97). Similarly, CLR James in *Beyond the Boundary* writes:

...I understood the limitation on the spirit, vision and self-respect which was imposed on us by the fact that our masters, our curriculum, our code of morals. Everything began from the basis that Britain was the source of all light and leading, and our business was to admire, wonder, imitate, learn; our criterion of success was to have succeeded in approaching that distant ideal- to attain it was, of course, impossible. Both masters and boys accepted it as in the very nature of things. The masters could not be offensive about it because they thought it was their function to do this, if they thought about it at all; and as for me, it was the beacon that beckoned me on. The race question did not have to be agitated. It was there, but in our little Eden, it never troubled us (p. 38-39).

While the racism of the past was more blatant than it is today, it was certainly more subtle in nature than that which prevailed in the USA. Certainly, in Barbados, the black population was not a minority group and this influenced the mechanisms used by the white minority to dominate. It is the historical precedent concerning the peculiar nature of past economic domination by the white minority which has influenced the ways in which people in the Barbadian society view issues of race and racism. In George Lamming’s book, one of the characters named Trumper only becomes conscious of his racial categorization after he returns from a visit to the USA where white racialism is

particularly brutal. As Ngugi (1972) observed about the British administration in colonial territories, the British administration cleverly manipulated any incipient tendencies for race consciousness. Trumper states:

.....tis a great thing bout the English, the know-how. If ever there was a nation in creation that know how to do an get thing do, tis the English.we can talk here where we like if this a public place, an you've white teachers, an we speak with white people at all times and in all places. My people here go to their homes an all that. An take the clubs, for example. There be clubs which you an me can't go to. An none o my people here, no matter who they be, but they don't tell us we can't. They put up a sign, "members only", knowing full well you aint got no chance o becoming a member. An although we know from the start why we can't go, we got the consolation we can't cause we aren't members. In America, they don't worry with that kind of scating bout the bush (p. 303).

This historical precedent explains much of the contemporary trajectory of social relations which prevails in Barbados, especially in black-white relations and between black people themselves. Significant to the contemporary nature of black middle class attitudes and its role in relation to that of the ethnic dominant groups is its unique creation and subsequent position in history. The Barbadian middle class' growth and development is not unlike that discussed by Sowell (1981), who traced its beginning to the free colored population in slave societies. This free colored population, who more often than not constituted the miscegenated offspring of white slave masters and black slave women, were historically located in a middle position between the dominant planter class and the dominated black slave population. This middle class, who assumed the reigns of political power in the Caribbean in the post-colonial era, has historically aspired to become like the white elite. In this regard, Ngugi (1972) states "the professionals and intellectuals

aspire to acquire the trappings of the white bourgeoisie even when they most hate that world. They are seen as exiles from history, from race, ultimately from class” (p. 131).

Given the subtle nature of race that is present in Barbados, and illustrated by the participants’ views about structural advantage and disadvantage, we can say that race in Barbados is a discourse. It is “a complex societal system of ethnically or ‘racially’ based domination and its resulting inequality” (Van Dijk, 2002). Moreover, the perceptions of the interviewees about the nature of structural inequalities within the Barbadian society demonstrate that in accordance with the trajectory of contemporary racial and ethnic relations and economic dominance in Barbados, racism in Barbados has to be located in a ‘field of discourse’ (Goldberg, 1993; cited in Lewis, 2001). Goldberg’s analysis of contemporary structures of inequality and power argues against monolithic and a historical conceptualizations of race and ‘racisms,’ and emphasizes that discussions on race acquire more significant meanings when they are comprehended as a ‘field of discourse.’ In this regard therefore, he argues for a flexible theory which takes into consideration the historical amendments in the ways that we conceptualize race (Goldberg, 1993).

The denial of racism in contemporary Barbados therefore represents a different modality of racism, one that is circumscribed by a discourse of denial but which nevertheless is “a part of dominant commonsense discourses, effects of which taint the everyday lives of groups who continue to struggle against racial injustices” (Razack 1998, cited in Essed, 2002). The perpetuation of the ideology of denial is achieved through the education system and the promotion of a consensual ideology. Althusser’s (1972) theory,

since it is located in critical theory, extends the theoretical explanation of the denial of racism since he states that the dominant ideological apparatus functions to integrate the system in order to prove some kind of consensus system integration. In addition, both the church and the educational system in Barbados work together to stem any discourse on racism.

From an understanding of the symbolic interactionist perspective, we can say that individuals' definition of the situation is gained through social interaction (Charon, 2004). In the case of Barbados, the racial order is maintained by the state, and furthermore, the denial of racism is circumscribed by a discourse of 'stability' (Lewis, 2001). To this end, the state apparatus and the media are quick to interpret any counter-hegemonic discourse of race and ethnicity in Barbados as an upsetting of a centuries old stability. As Lewis (2001) says, acceptance of white domination represents the deeply entrenched socialized experiences of the various groups in Barbadian society. This entails a process whereby the dominated participate in their own domination.

The symbolic Interactionist concept of the definition of the situation, discussed in the theoretical introduction, can be understood as a process that involves actors' construction of social reality (Charon, 2004), and it also highlights the various subjective and objective ways that people form perceptions and judgments. This concept allows us to understand the discourse which surrounds the denial of racism and the discussions about internal inequality in Barbados. Charles Mills (1994) explained this phenomenon by stating that race is both everywhere and nowhere (p. 76). Mills contends while it was once denied that nonwhites were equal persons, today a great deal of pretence surrounds

the promotion of the idea that nonwhites are equal abstract persons (Mills, p. 75). As such, racial equality is taken for granted and as a consequence, it is more difficult to challenge, both domestically and internationally.

The Consistency in the Views of Minority Groups within Barbadian Society about Certain Characteristics of the Majority Black Population

The perceptions of the ethnic minority groups within the Barbadian society about the characteristics of black people, and the perceptions of the role that these characteristics played in the obviation of black economic success all converged. Non-black participants linked groups' internal characteristics to their position in the economic hierarchy within the Barbadian society, referring to the personality characteristics, cultural attributes and attitudes of black people as being in some related to their participation in commercial enterprises.

People in each ethnic minority group compared themselves to the black population, and they engaged in dichotomized explanations for what they perceived to be black economic failures and even a disdain for engagement in commercial activity. The non-black groups all saw themselves as possessing certain cultural and personality characteristics which contributed to their economic success. The black group, on the contrary, was perceived as lacking these same cultural traits which, as articulated by many of the non-black groups, were viewed as significant factors to success in the economic realm.

When comparing themselves to the blacks, the Indian groups saw themselves as being more 'moral,' 'thrifty,' and 'industrious,' than the black population. Low levels of black involvement in the commercial sector, compared with high Indian and white involvement in commercial businesses was interpreted by both Indian groups as being the result of the possession of not only certain character traits, but also as the result of the

lack of certain perceived cultural attributes. Those cultural attributes that were mentioned by Indian groups were the materialism and value system of black people, and these were seen as obviating black entrepreneurial success.

The Caucasian group similarly defined itself in relation to the black group, ultimately perceiving itself as more efficient, business oriented, and fit to indulge in commercial activities. The Caucasians tended to compare the Indian and black groups, ultimately dichotomizing the two groups. Therefore, while Indians were portrayed as being thrifty, hardworking, and law-abiding, blacks were perceived as being lazy, materialistic and more prone to indulge in criminal activity. Ultimately, the ideological constructions of the ethnic minorities reinforced a centuries old “promotion of negative views about the market capabilities of blacks” (Beckles, 2004).

In order to explain the Indians groups’ perceptions about black people and the similarities of their views to that of the white group, one has to examine both the white group’s historical position of dominance within the social and economic hierarchy of Barbadian society, as well as the ‘middle-man’ role that the Indian groups have come to play within the stratified society.

An examination of the historical contestation between the black population and the white minority in the arena of commercial activity would discredit the historical ideological constructions of non-black Barbadians about the stymied market capabilities of black people. Historically, racial tensions between the white elite and the black masses were centered on commercial activity (Hanoomansingh, 1996) as the white commercial minority’s very survival in a country with a majority black population

depended on many elaborate race based strategies to obviate black commercial activity. Ahistorical perceptions for the low levels of black Barbadian commercial enterprises elide the use of legislation and various other strategies that were utilized by the white minority to truncate black commercial activities, both during slavery and after emancipation in 1838. Indeed, the discourse on black economic activity is sometimes underpinned by the assertion that it is the totalizing and dehumanizing effects of plantation slavery which created the contemporary characteristics (which the ethnic minority participants discussed) leading to black people's market incapacities. This discourse is in line with E. Franklin Frazier's (1964) views that the plantation slavery experience reduced Africa to a 'forgotten memory', for the descendants of African slaves.

However, historical data prove that the Africans and their descendants in Barbados brought the tradition of commercial trading with them from West Africa, and in spite of slavery, sought every opportunity to indulge in commercial activity of agricultural produce. The Barbadian historian Hilary Beckles (2004) notes that during the 1700s, the plantocracy criminalized black trade, and legislation was passed in 1708 and 1733 to prohibit black traders from operating in the market place. Moreover, a 1784 law "provided a penalty of up to three months imprisonment for white persons convicted of buying cotton or ginger from Blacks." Therefore, this exemplified "the seriousness of the white legislature in removing the black economic threat." After the abolition of slavery in 1838, the plantocracy, constituting the agri-business bourgeoisie, continued to exert economic control over access to credit through insurance companies, banks and

institutions, and were able to use their racial discretionary powers to decide who to advance credit to (Sleeman, 1986).

Notwithstanding the policing of black economic activity, the black tradition of commercial trade continued to thrive in Bridgetown in particular enclaves, such as Roebuck Street and Tudor Street. Therefore, it is clear that a more nuanced examination of the phenomenon of black commercial activity is warranted, especially since monolithic perceptions of black economic success elide the thriving black commercial activity which took place in inner city Bridgetown up to about the 1980s when increased globalization affected the ways in which small business people operated. Indeed, this helps to explain some of the perceptions of the afro-Barbadian participants in this study. One of the afro-Barbadian participants in this study, one of the participants, in discrediting the notion of black market incapability, vehemently denying what she referred to as 'false' notions of black failures. She stated that her grandparents owned a business in Roebuck Street when she was growing up, and she noted that the supposed failures of black businesses were in no way related to any personality or character traits of black people. She noted that the internalization of the value system which valorized education and social mobility was one of the main reasons why many black businesses in Bridgetown eventually closed since the businesspeople used their wealth to educate their children. The social construction of ideas of what constitutes success within Barbadian society, which inevitably surround gaining an education as a means of upward social mobility, can be said to be some of the reasons for the decline in black business activity, since these educated children of black business people in some ways devalued the experience of owning a business at the

expense of working in the professions or in the public sector. A Gramscian (1988) analysis points to the role of hegemonic value systems in the creation of values and life choices.

The Indian groups' ideological constructions of black commercial failures and/or market incapacities, as stated before, is very much a concomitant of their position within mainstream Barbadian society as a 'middle man minority.' According to Sowell (1994), the economic role that this 'middle' group plays vis a vis other dominant and dominated groups in some ways determine the attitudes and perceptions of the various groups who are situated within the complex social matrix. Thus, in Barbados, one of the important roles played by Gujrati 'coolie men' has been making credit available to the black population, who especially at the incipient stage of Indian immigration, were considered as credit risks by white business owners. However, the word 'clannish,' used to describe middle man minorities in other parts of the world (Koreans in the USA, Chinese in South east Asia, Lebanese in West Africa) has also been used by black and Caucasians to describe Indians in Barbados. Sowell notes that "in so far as middleman minorities live surrounded by people with very different values and lifestyles many of which would be economically fatal to them it is important to insulate their culture and especially their children from such influences, in a word, be 'clannish'" (p 49). What Kim (1981) states about Korean businesspeople in New York are applicable to Indian groups' attitudes to the black population. Kim stated that Korean business men were "contemptuous of the extravagant life styles of blacks and Puerto Ricans, from whom they want to maintain a social distance."

However, clannishness can invite a sense of superiority in the minority group, although in the case of ethnic minority dominance in most parts of the world, the demonstration of superiority is often muted by politeness. The socio-economic circumstances surrounding the situation of ethnic minority dominance and/or success also depends on the existence of differential norms and values between the ethnic market dominant minority and the majority group. Indeed, based on Sowell's examination of the social circumstances which circumscribe the operation of middle man minority businesses around the world, it can be said that if the black population shared the same values as the Indians, they would be of no economic use to the Indians, since "it is precisely their differences which create economic complementarity."

Thus, the very same Sindhi, Gujrati and Caucasian stereotyped perceptions relating to black materialism and black immediate gratification habits actually are the very characteristics which aid their economic success. These non-black participants, while accusing black people of materialism, did not take responsibility for some of this perceived materialism. The itinerant trade, which is mainly a Gujrati dominated trade, is based solely on a credit system. Similarly, the big department stores that allow customers to own consumer items like washing machines, living room suites etc on hire purchase schemes are owned by whites. What is being demonstrated here, is a relation of economic domination whereby those who have power have managed to manipulate and control society by means of a false consciousness. Blacks are not questioning their domination through the use of consumer capitalism. This is similar to a Gramscian analysis whereby

the way society is controlled and manipulated is a direct consequence of the practice of a 'false consciousness.'

The creation of ethnic cultural enclaves away from the business areas also strengthens the perceptions of the majority population that the middle-man groups are 'clannish.' Sowell (1986) notes that when middleman minorities live surrounded by people with differing values which are "economically fatal" to them, there is a tendency for the minorities to insulate their culture and their children from such influences. While the Gujratis initially resided alongside blacks in urban neighborhoods, many of these neighborhoods have been turned into ethnic enclaves. Even when Gujratis may have black neighbours, the interaction is more often than not limited. In this regard, Hanoomansing (1996) states

A child could grow up in Barbados and not really "live as the Bajans do." With this control and ordering of activity, the child has less competing interests; there is already a routine and order of life oriented toward the community and family. Children may grow up in the same neighbourhood with children of other races and yet never really get to know them; socialization only takes place at a later stage. But this situation contributes no doubt, to the image held by the wider society of Indians being largely isolated and inward-looking.

The white and Sindhi minorities tend also to be concentrated in certain geographical areas.

The ideological portraits of the different ethnic groups, based on their respective views about the characteristics of 'other' groups, highlighted a phenomena which Van Dijk (1984) referred to as 'cognitive racism.' Certainly, the perceptions of the various groups demonstrated that the different groups "presupposed socially shared and negatively oriented mental representations of US and Them" (Van Dijk, 2002, p. 147).

Discourse, in this regard, is essential to the cognitive understanding of racism since ethnic prejudices and ideologies are acquired and learned through communication. Moreover, such racist mental representations are “typically expressed, formulated, defended, and legitimated in discourse and may thus be reproduced and shared within the dominant group” (Van Dijk, 2002, p. 145). Discourse has many structures, and according to Van Dijk, one form of racialized discourse can be that of the “local” whereby some individuals from a particular group would be vague or indirect about ‘our’ racism,’ while being detailed and precise about ‘their’ crimes or misbehavior.

This ‘local’ form of racialized discourse was illustrated by the participants from the ethnic minorities who expressed fairly strong views about black racism towards their respective groups. Gujratis, for example, stated that Barbados was a black dominated country and black people therefore were privileged, especially in appointments to the public service. They did not perceive black people as facing much racism, but were specific about the many ways in which they had become the targets of black racism. They acknowledged that the Caucasian minority were to a certain extent also privileged, but noted that white people in Barbados faced racism from the black population, especially when white people were made to feel responsible for slavery.

The ethnic minority participants’ views about other groups’ personality characteristics show the kind of group polarization that forms underlying prejudices, namely the overall tendency of in-group favoritism or positive self-presentation, and out-group derogation or negative Other-presentation. Goldberg’s (1993) use of the term ‘racisms,’ is thus appropriate to this analysis since, as Essed (2002, p. 203) notes,

'racisms' encompass ideological and social processes which leads to social differentiation based on racial or ethnic group membership.

These ideological and social processes which lead groups to engage in dichotomous representations of themselves and of others were illustrated by minority group participants' ideas about their perceived positive traits as opposed to the black population's negative personality and cultural traits. Thrift, for example, was perceived by the minorities as something that they possessed, but that black people did not. However, the perception that the Gujratis are thriftier is too general a designation since the younger people are being influenced by all the trappings of the American influenced Black culture, and in some ways demonstrates the same conspicuous consumption that is seen among black youth. Also, I have observed that circumstances, events, and social problems in Gujrati families influence the degree of economic success of Gujrati individuals (same as in the black population). There are many individuals in the Gujrati community who have not been successful.

The Self-Perceptions of the Caucasian Group which Absent them from Privilege

Perhaps the easiest way to get off the hook is to deny that it exists in the first
place

Allan Johnson (2006, p. 108).

Many of the perceptions of the Caucasian minority can be placed on the polar extreme to those of the blacks. While the black participants agreed that there were structural disadvantages which precluded their economic success, the Caucasians showed all denial of privilege and advantage as being linked to their economic successes. Similarly, while the working class black participants admitted freely of racism within the Barbadian society albeit agreeing that it was more of a subtle nature, the Caucasians tended to disagree that racism existed. Moreover, even when some of the participants admitted that racism existed, they shrugged it off as not a main defining category of social inequality within the Barbadian society. Furthermore, there was the tendency to venerate the value of achievement with a consequent devaluation of any historical causal factors for the relatively low level of economic success of the black population.

Bourdieu's theoretical concept of 'doxa' can be applied to the findings concerning privilege. The findings reveal that privilege is in some ways naturalized, and subordination is taken for granted. According to Bourdieu's theory, the deeply-entrenched beliefs of people, which are interpreted as axiomatic universal truths, and which inform

an individual's actions and perceptions in a particular field is 'doxa.' 'Doxa' reinforces the particular social arrangement of the field, thus privilege is maintained, and subordinate as well as dominant groups may take their respective positions of dominance as self-evident. In this regard, Gledhill (1994) notes that "the importance of taken-for-grantedness is that there are some subjects which are never discussed and certain questions which are never raised in social discourses relevant to power and domination" (p. 137).

In the Barbadian context, and illustrated by the findings on Caucasian views about structural advantages and disadvantages, white Barbadians deny that their current economic situation, rather than being gained through 300 years of privilege, has been gained through hard work and achievement. Slavery is always a controversial topic in Barbados, and 300 years of the suppression of Africans and their descendants and the promotion of the inferiority of the black and his culture has made the topic of slavery a very contentious one. Only 2 out of 6 Caucasians said that slavery affected present day relations between blacks and white. The other 4 participants evinced the views that slavery had nothing to do with the present, and that Blacks needed to stop harking back to the past. They acknowledged no blame or responsibility of their ancestors' actions, and stated that they had nothing to do with slavery. They pointed to black disunity and all of them alluded to the statement that "blacks were their own worst enemies," and should stop blaming whites and Indians for their mishaps and laziness. They noted that black people could not work together for the common good and their disunity was the cause of their lack of economic success. The two Caucasian participants who stated that slavery

did affect present day black-white relations stated that slavery had affected good relations between the races, but they still noted that blacks needed to forget and move on, and stop using slavery as a justification for their lack of success. The Caucasian participants' denial of the effects of slavery and privilege highlight what Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) refer to as 'supreme privilege.' They argue that the "the supreme privilege" of the privileged is "not seeing themselves as privileged," which in turn "manages the more easily to convince, the disinherited that they owe their scholastic and social destiny to their lack of gifts and merits, because in matters of culture absolute dispossession excludes awareness of being dispossessed" (p. 210).

The perceptions of the participants also demonstrated that there was a tendency to blame black people for their own socio-economic situation. In this regard, Johnson (2006) states that "the result of such thinking is that oppression is blamed on the people who suffer most from it, while privilege and those who benefit remain invisible and relatively untouched. And off the hook" (p. 111). What was also clear from the ideological portraits that were produced by Caucasian participants, is that the privileged groups in society were in some ways supporting and perpetuating the status quo by not acknowledging or critically analyzing the situation of white privilege and Indian economic dominance. Moreover, black people were accused of creating the divisions which they saw as pertinent in Barbadian society. In this light, Johnson states that "when people of color call attention to the divisions caused by white privilege, for example, they are often accused of creating those divisions, as if racism isn't a problem unless you talk about it. Talking about privilege rather than privilege itself gets defined as the problem" (p. 112). As

Bourdieu stated, social power is thus not organized physically but is altered into 'symbolic power' and 'symbolic violence' whereby the subaltern groups define as legitimate and come to perceive the actions of the dominant class as attempts to help them.

There is however a paradoxical situation with regards to the relations between the black population and the white minority. While the white minority has a substantial amount of wealth, they often argue that they are on the receiving end of black racism. As a minority group, they are 'othered,' and thus dispute the label of 'privilege' which is used by other groups to represent the white minority in Barbadian society. A caveat is thus warranted in the discussion of the categorization of privilege since to have privilege is to "be allowed to move through your life without being marked in ways that identify you as an outsider, as exceptional or 'other,' to be excluded by others with conditions" (Johnson, p. 33). The Caucasian participants in this study did note that they were often the victims of racism from the black population, and in this way they felt that they were identified as outsiders and were excluded. In the Barbadian context however, Caucasians still have social authority (Watson, 1997) and whiteness is still the ideal aesthetic standard.

Conclusion

This study illuminates the ways in which social inequality in Barbados is constructed and maintained through discursive practices that deny the existence of privilege. The analysis of the data highlights the similarities among the perceptions of individuals from different ethnic groups and emphasizes the role of privilege in shaping ethnic groups' perceptions.

This study utilizes a Symbolic Interactionist perspective to underline its assumption that individuals construct and make sense of their social realities through the influence of their societies and their subjective reasoning processes. The perceptions of the participants, which varied and converged among the different ethnic groups, illustrates the influence of social structures on individuals' perspectives. Moreover, the participants' exaggerated and bifurcated mutual productions of negative images and categorizations, and their categorization of in-group vs. -out-group distinctions and stereotypes illustrated the socially constructed nature of ethnicity. Indeed, subjective perceptions of identity are reliant on stereotyped traits assigned to individuals based on their perceived differences (Chua, 2003). Moreover, as Abubakar (2001) notes, the construction of a group's ethnic identity becomes significant only when they it is defined in relation to the identity of the 'other' group. This dichotomization means that "ethnicity does not exist or make sense outside inter and intra-ethnic relations," and furthermore, "it

is usually activated, mobilized, and deployed as a resource for the pursuit of political and economic power...” (p. 32).

To this end therefore, this study illustrates that the different ethnic groups in Barbados tend to produce exaggerated and dichotomized images, categorizations, and stereotypes about other groups, and use these to provide reasons for economic achievements and failures. Given the historical lessons of violence and conflict that this kind of socially constructed ethnicity has led to in many ethnically plural societies, and given Chua’s assertions that current global implementation of neo-liberal policies leads to “extraordinary economic dominance of certain ‘outsider’ minorities” which drives “virulent ethnic envy and hatred among impoverished majorities around them,” it is important that in the Barbadian context, social policies to address the economic grievances of the black majority population be addressed. As Barbadian historian Hilary Beckles has noted, the legacies of the past which perpetuated black economic subordination need to be “uprooted and removed.” In this regard, he argues that democratization, initiated during the 1950s and 1960s after the attainment of black political power needs to be extended to include ‘economic democratization’ (Beckles, 2002, p. 110). The democratization process, he notes, has hitherto been concerned only with surface level wealth generating mechanisms for the black population to redress the historically racialized inequalities on the island. ‘Economic democracy,’ he argues, would include the economic mobilization of the black population as commodity producers, innovators, and market creators. This, he argues, would transcend the black population’s current role as mere consumers and political representatives (p. 109).

The role that the political economy of slavery played in creating perceptions of the contemporary economic inequalities is also illustrated in this study. Indeed, capitalism's role in creating and exacerbating racial inequalities is well demonstrated by Barbados' historical socio-economic and political historical trajectory. Barbados' integration into the international capitalist system as a sugar producing appendage to Britain in the 1600s served as a harbinger for many of the contemporary socio-political and economic relations. The current discourses in Barbados on the economic dominance of 'outsider' minorities evince the point that the economic impact of globalization has strengthened the privileged positions of minority groups (Chua, 2003, p. 21). That capitalism strengthens inequalities is also illustrated by Johnson (2006) who stated that "capitalism provides an important social context for the trouble that surrounds privilege."

This study illustrates that in Barbados there is a discourse which devalues Afro-Barbadian entrepreneurial activities, and which surrounds the belief that Afro-Barbadians' "ideas about finance and employment are fundamentally different from those of other ethnic groupsand things have been historically this way" (Ellis, 2006, p. 243). However, this discourse elides the fact that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, aspirations among the black population for economic freedom led them to engage in various entrepreneurial activities to free themselves from white economic domination (Ellis, 2006, p. 242). However, as was discussed in chapter 5, the acquisition of education which led to the inculcation of a value system that devalued entrepreneurial activities led to a decline in the number of black businesses. In this regard therefore, development plans in Barbados, as Beckles notes, need to:

put our economy under the microscope and find antidotes for the viruses that are responsible for the high mortality of black enterprises. In tourism, on the equity market, in manufacturing, agriculture, and construction, Blacks have always expected the State to promote openness, fairness and justice. This is a prerequisite for the proliferation of entrepreneurs. Economic environments are not acts of God, but social constructs that can be adjusted, refashioned and honed to accommodate any social group targeted by macro-policy initiatives. Access to market institutions, corporate information and skills, affirmative action with respect to the land question and the promotion of value-creating education are the basic requirements of an economic democratic order (p. 113).

It is hoped that future development planning in Barbados will acknowledge the perceptions such as the ones revealed in this study about economic success and the existence of structural advantages and disadvantages.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Neutral Face Sheet Questions

How old are you?

Were you born in Barbados? How long have you lived in Barbados?

What is your occupation?

Questions to Establish Rapport

The ensuing questions tried to address issues to do with Barbados' development, and sought to gain an understanding of what people thought about Barbados' developmental path. This served two purposes:

1. To elicit thoughts and opinions about issues such as tourism and agricultural development.
2. To cultivate the rapport so that later questions which are of a more sensitive nature may be more easily received.

Probing Questions

1. What do you think has led to the success of Indian community in Barbados??
2. What have been your experiences with Indians in Barbados?
3. There is a perception by all groups in Barbados (including blacks) that black people do not make good business people. What are your views on this?
4. Is Barbados still racially separated or have things changed in the past 20 years?
5. In the past, in Barbados, shades of skin color determined the success and prestige of people. Do you think that still prevails?

Appendix B

The codes and categories that I derived were drawn from the data. The numbers indicate how many people mentioned the topic.

Ethnic Group	Ethnic Group	Ethnic Group	Ethnic Group	Themes	Interview Questions
Afro-Barbadians	Caucasian-Barbadians	Sindhis	Gujratis	Theme	Interview question
Subtle racism 6	Myths of 4 racism	Myths of 5 racism	Racism 6	The existence of racism in contemporary Barbados	40 years ago racism was blatant. Do you think that today racism is less?
Class divisions 6	Class divisions 6	Class divisions 6	Class division 4	Stratification today is based on class	Some people have told me that today in B'dos, the divisions between people are more to do with class than race. Do you think that that is so?
White control of economy 6	Myths of white control of economy 4	White control of economy 4	White control of economy 4	Dominance over economy by minority white population	There is a widespread view in B'dos that a minority white group controls the economy. Is that just an assumption, what do you think?
White privilege 4	Meritocracy 6	Meritocracy 6	White and black privilege 6	Historical continuity based on white privilege	Do you think that being white means that you will have automatic access to jobs, and to wealth?
hard work and achievement 5	hard work and achievement 6	hard work and achievement 6	Hard work and achievement 6	The stress on the value of achievement to escape poverty	
Lack of black thrift 4	Lack of black thrift 6	Lack of black thrift 6	Lack of black thrift 6	Black inability to save hindering economic success	

Afro-Barbadians	Caucasian-Barbadians	Gujratis	Sindhis	Theme	Interview question
Immediate gratification of blacks 3	Immediate gratification of blacks 6	Immediate gratification of blacks 6	Immediate gratification of blacks 6	Value system which leads to immediate fulfillment of needs	
Materialism of blacks 3	Materialism of blacks 6	Materialism of blacks 6	Materialism of blacks 6	Black preoccupation with consumer goods	
Slavery 3	Slavery 2	Slavery 2	Slavery 2	The role that slavery plays in present day black-white relations	Has the past history of slavery affected race relations today? Are the relations of domination being repeated today?
Black divisiveness 6	Black divisiveness 6	Black divisiveness 6	Black divisiveness 6	Black group's reluctance to help fellow members achieve social mobility	Why is there a wide held view by all groups that black people are not as successful as the other groups?
Morals/ Family instability of blacks 1	Morals/ Family instability of blacks 5	Morals/ Family instability of blacks 6	Morals/ Family instability of blacks 6	1. The stereotypes which pertain to black males' sexuality.2The image of the black family as a distortion	Can you point to things such as the value system of various groups which contributes to their success?
Indians as cunning 6	Indians as cunning 4	Indians as cunning 4	Indians as cunning 3	Reasons for Indian success	
Indian business skills 6	Indian business skills 6	Indian business skills 6	Indian business skills 6	Inherent business acumen of Indians	
Indian solidarity 6	Indian solidarity 6	Indian solidarity 4	Indian solidarity 4	Indian community spirit	