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Racialisation in Trinidad and Tobago

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Introduction

This essay will use Dikotter's interactive model to explore the processes of racialisation between the two main ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago (2008). This approach will consider the ways in which racial discourses in Trinidad and Tobago have been influenced by the historical context of the nation state. In particular, the role of politics and global sciences in forming racisms in the country will be studied. The population, as documented in the 2000 census, comprises of two main ethnic groups of almost equal numbers: East Indian and African descent (National Census Report, 2000).

The role of colonial authority will be analysed to see whether racialisation stemmed from the European power or whether it was from the belief systems, such as the Indian caste system, which the populations brought with them. The European strand finds justification of racism in science and economic necessity, whereas the Indian caste system is grounded in ancient Hindu teachings. The essay will argue that both of these ideologies have contributed to the contemporary racial hierarchy which exists in Trinidad and Tobago.

Independence was granted in 1962, requiring a national identity to be forged. The nature of this identity and its makers held great influence over whether racial tensions were to become a feature of the politics of Trinidad and Tobago. The essay will consider the role of Trinidad and Tobago's first prime minister, Eric Williams, and his optimistic vision of a racial harmony. The extent to which this harmony has been successfully implemented shall be analysed. The implications politics have on the ethnic populations and dealings with racist practices will be noted.

Further tensions exist over what Trinidadian culture entails. Whilst Afro-Trinidadians are culturally more visible than Indo-Trinidadians, there seems to be discriminatory practices and discourses aimed at Afro-Trinidadians which keep them at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The processes involved in forming this tension will be considered; particularly focusing on the significance skin colour and inter-racial 'mixing' has in the country. The role of geographical factors in forming racial hierarchies based on culture shall also be considered.

The affluence of white people on the islands cannot be ignored. A significant pay gap exists between the white population and Afro and Indo-Trinidadians. The role of education in reproducing this hierarchy will be studied, for whilst legislation exists which limits discrimination on the grounds of race in education and the work place, a structure is clearly in place which allows for a racial hierarchy to function. The degree to which white domination has officially been removed from the industrial and economic sectors of the country shall be considered. The increasing economic influence being exerted by Indo-Trinidadians will also be examined. The politics and industry of Guyana shall be used as a site of comparison, as racist violence has become a feature of Guyanese social life.

Racialisation in a colonial context

Early European writers justified the slave trade by describing black people as animals to be owned and educated by the white man (Williams, 1962). Even the great philosopher of the eighteenth century, David Hume, believed it was "apt to suggest that the negroes be naturally inferior to whites" (1753). By the time slavery had been abolished in 1834 much of this European arrogance remained. It was aided

by the work of natural scientists such as George Cuvier who asserted that physical differences amongst the 'races' confirmed black people's inferiority and primitiveness (Sharpley-Whiting, 1999). Almost identical discourses were used to justify the use of East Indian indentured workers, who lived and worked in Trinidad in conditions similar to those endured by the previously enslaved Africans. Williams noted that "the West Indies must have been a very curious society which could have produced in 1512 against the Amerindians, in 1790 against the Africans, and in 1869 against the Indians exactly the same defamation of character of races" (1962, p. 112). Whilst the colonialists did group all non-whites as inferior beings, they drew on different tactics to maintain a divided population in Trinidad and Tobago during their rule.

The very nature in which the Indian indentured workers came to Trinidad ensured friction would occur between the two groups. They were largely regarded as strikebreakers as they worked for low wages on the plantations after the emancipation of the African slaves (Laguette, p. 292). Landis identified two types of racisms in Guyana that arose from this initial situation, which is almost identical to the Trinidadian context: superordinate and defensive racial attitudes (1973, p. 429). He found that in Guyana there exists a common discourse that Indians save money and are more ambitious. This can be traced back to their lower standard of living during their indentureship, and the need for them to save money in order to gain status. This led to Indians adopting a superordinate racism, believing they deserved a higher standard of living than Africans. As a result, the African population exerted a defensive racism, which was borne from the economic threat they felt from the indentured labourers (Landis, 1973, p. 430). Whilst this theory may not be directly applicable to Trinidad and Tobago, identical discourses were found to exist in a 1965 study of Trinidadian school children, suggesting superordinate and defensive racisms could be used to help explain the contemporary racial situation in Trinidad and Tobago (Bugenstose Green, 1965, p. 209).

These circumstances were exacerbated by plantation estate managers who would hire Africans as bodyguards to supervise the indentured workers, and even instilled segregated toilet facilities for Africans and Indians in 1890 (Laguette, 1976 and Williams, 1962). This segregation was later translated into the school environment, with the justification that neither race would trust the other in educating their children (Williams, 1962).

There was also geographical segregation of the two groups due to the African population mostly moving into urban areas upon their emancipation, whilst the Indian population was confined to agricultural work in rural areas. The social stratification of the different races in the colonial context placed huge importance on skin colour and hair texture. An Afro-Trinidadian with lighter skin was able to marry someone with lighter skin and therefore climb the social ladder (Lord Braithwaite, p. 48). For some time the indentured workers were excluded from this social hierarchy, occupying a position outside of mainstream society. This limited their involvement in mainstream Trinidadian life, and further stoked the animosity and difference felt between the ethnic groups. The role the colonial authority and context had in either instilling or supporting these racial tensions is undeniable.

However, whilst racism is often seen as a direct legacy of slavery in post-colonial contexts, others have argued that it would have been present without the European racial hierarchies (Palmer, 2006). The Indian caste system would have delegated Africans to be untouchables, the lowest members of society, due to the fact they ate beef and pork (Laguette, 1976). Whilst the ensuing hostility would not be based on lines of race, but rather on lines of cultural practices and religion, its combination with the racial discourses propagated by the colonialists most probably forged a stronger thread of racialisation between the two ethnic groups. This confirms Dikotter's argument that the role of indigenous belief systems cannot be ignored in the effort to understand processes of racialisation (2008). Indeed,

colonialism alone may not have produced the racialisation seen in contemporary Trinidad and Tobago.

Despite this, evidence exists of Afro and Indo-Trinidadians working together, as seen in the labour riots of 1937 where representatives of both populations worked together to advance constitutional reform (Palmer, 2006, p. 256). The government's report on the riots contributes the fact that members of the East Indian community were complaining that they had "inadequate representation on the Legislative Council and that provision was not made for teaching Hindustani in the schools" (Report of Commission, 1938). Therefore, in the labour riots movement both Africans and Indians worked alongside one another in protest against the colonial government, in spite of the fact they were at times demanding different rights.

Interestingly, the right to allow Hindustani to be taught in schools later became a point of contention between Williams' African-dominated government and the Indian population. It could be supposed that the two groups had seeds of distrust against one another, but these did not manifest themselves physically whilst the oppressed were united in a fight against the colonial government. It is only when Trinidad and Tobago gained independence that these suspicions began to dominate political discourses and cause friction within the country. Palmer succinctly states that "the proverbial massa remained imprinted on the psychology of many people" (2006, p. 257). With the withdrawal of British rule, the power relationships in the racial hierarchy shifted, though it was still based on the racial classifications used by European imperialism.

Rubin identifies three paths these new racisms can take as being: open race conflict, racism in reverse (i.e. black people become the superior race) or a national rhetoric which denies racism (1962, p. 434). In the case of Trinidad and Tobago the existence of racism is largely denied, and again this can also be traced back to the nature of colonial rule in the country. The government report on the labour riots of 1937 states "the evidence shows that racial feeling when, and to the extent to which, it arises is a secondary symptom of some primary form of discontent" (Report of Commission, 1938). Whilst this may be true in many cases, it also actively denies the need for any attention to be paid to racial tensions, as they are always a secondary result. This sentiment has continued into contemporary politics, with the government largely denying the presence of racism in Trinidad and Tobago.

Race as a political means towards an end

The constitution of Trinidad and Tobago sets out the right of citizens to live without discrimination on grounds of "race, origin, colour, religion or sex" (The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago with Reforms Through 2000, part 1.4). It therefore seems contradictory that the tactics political parties use to gain votes are based on lines of ethnicity. This political friction has been present since universal franchise was granted in 1946, when the Afro and Indo-Trinidadian populations were in direct competition to have their voices heard on the political scene (Rubin, 1962). This coincided with India's independence in 1947, which created a surge of nationalism in the Indo-Trinidadians, and drove other ethnic groups to feel intimidated by the potential political power within the Indian population (Laguette, 1976). These concerns are observable in the recall of the Indian Commissioner to the West Indies in 1955, who was stationed in Trinidad and Tobago, amid fears he was encouraging feelings of Indian nationality and separatism (Palmer, 2006, p. 269). These factors nurtured the necessary conditions for racial tensions to exist after independence.

The People's National Movement (PNM) and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) were formed in the late 1950s and quickly became opposing political parties. The PNM, founded by Afro-Trinidadian Eric Williams, entailed a political manifesto committed to non-racial politics in an effort to create a legitimate national identity in

the fight for independence (Palmer, 2006). However, the rhetoric of the PNM largely appealed to Afro-Trinidadians, and this led the opposing, and largely Indian-dominated party, the DLP, to stall for time in fighting for independence. The Indian community shared a fear that independence could leave the control of the country in purely Afro-Trinidadian hands (Cudjoe, 2010). This was a well-founded concern, as the Indo-Trinidadian population was struggling for fair representation in the public domain due to poor education facilities in rural areas, low voting practices and significant under-representation in the police force (Cudjoe, 2010 and Mills, 2004). Despite the slow entry of Indo-Trinidadians into the politics of Trinidad and Tobago, signs of their political potential were visible from the 1890s, as they increasingly moved from the plantations into villages, politically organising themselves at a grass-roots level (Cudjoe, 2010). In addition, a government scheme in 1869 offered those Indians eligible for repatriation ten acres of land in exchange for their ticket back to India. This scheme eventually created 2,500 Indian smallholders, a group that began to hold more influence in their communities (Ramesar, 1976, p. 195).

The political advancement of Indo-Trinidadians was ongoing in the 1960s, allowing the PNM to take political power at independence. This initial victory, by what was seen as an Afro-Trinidadian party, caused resentment amongst the Indo-Trinidadians, and set the scene for racial discourses to play a significant role in the government of the nation. Eric Williams' party bore the slogan "No Mother Africa, No Mother India, No Mother Who", and carried with it a strong determination to forge a national culture encompassing all the races of the islands (United Nations, 2004). However, Indo-Trinidadians argued that during the PNM's reign they were discriminated against in joining the army and police force (Mills, 2004).

Despite these grievances, Williams' government enjoyed eight years of peace until 1970 when protestors sympathetic with the Black Power movement in the USA took to the streets of Trinidad (Pasley, 2001). Resentment towards Williams' government was being felt across the population, who argued that colonial culture was maintained as the dominant norm and Trinidad and Tobago's economy was still in the hands of white-owned businesses (Pasley, 2001). Afro and Indo-Trinidadians were united in the Black Power effort, as the enemy was once again the old colonial rule. This pattern was seen previously in the labour riots of 1937, as the two ethnic groups united in protest. However, Selvon purported that the Black Power movement was divisive, in that it was about black men, not brown men (1979, p. 19). He stated this at a conference on *East Indians in the Caribbean*. The speech aimed to showcase Indo-Trinidadian's subordination, and it could be claimed that Selvon was attempting to find evidence of racial inequalities in events which were in fact racially neutral (Selvon, 1979). The widespread agreement and evidence solidly indicates that the Black Power movement in Trinidad and Tobago was a unifying force between the two dominant ethnic groups.

Since 1986 the national government has changed five times, demonstrating the extent of dissatisfaction in the country (Cudjoe, 2010). Significant political unrest occurred in July 1990 with members of a radical Islamist group, Jamaat-al-Muslimeen, holding parliament hostage. Twenty-four people were killed in the coup attempt and a state of emergency was imposed (BBC News, 2010). It is alleged that the roots of this tension were in economic injustices, though it has also been noted that most of the shops looted in Port of Spain were Indian-owned (Minority Rights Group International, 2008). Whilst there is no widespread agreement on whether racial elements were a factor in the coup, the fact that the members of Jamaat-al-Muslimeen were Afro-Trinidadian and the volatile nature of the island's politics due to racial divides, it seems probable that some racial element was involved in the coup attempt.

Regardless of the fact political parties use racial discourses to win elections, the government does take active steps to ensure racial discrimination does not occur. An organisation named Groups United Against Racism (GUARD) exposed

discriminatory practices in entering nightclubs in 1996 (UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2000). The government took swift action in introducing the Registration of Clubs Amendment Act 1997 and Liquor Licence Act 1997. Both of these prohibited discrimination in club and bar environments on grounds of race, colour, religion or sex (UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2000).

The current Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, stated in her swearing-in speech, "No more labels. No more prefixes of Afro and Indo nor North and South nor East West corridors. The election is over. It was a means towards an end" (Persad-Bissessar, 2010, p. 109). This quote alludes to the fact political parties unashamedly use race to their advantage, but once elections are over racism should not feature in Trinidadian society.

High visibility of Afro-Trinidadians on the cultural stage

African slaves had their culture stripped of them, meaning they had to adapt European culture to suit their own needs. When Indians arrived in Trinidad and Tobago with their cultural and religious identities intact, it was perceived as arrogant by the Afro-Trinidadians. In addition, Trinidad and Tobago's classification as a 'Third World' country led people to seek personal legitimation through their ancestral past (Selvon, 1979, p. 19). This exacerbated conflict as both populations aimed to have their traditions recognised as the nation's dominant culture. Eric Williams' sought to harmonise these differences by creating a national curriculum that taught West Indian history and English language (Palmer, 2006). This meant firmly rejecting the request for Hindustani to be taught in schools. Williams believed this would foster a population defined by difference, rather than similarities. Williams found enemies in the Indo-Trinidadian population with his firm line on a national culture, and his disdain for Indo-Trinidadians that remained 'Indian' in their ways (Palmer, 2006). This conflict fed into the political unrest and discourses still seen in today's politics.

These divisions were temporarily quelled by the Black Power movement (Pasley, 2001). This saw an increase in African and Indian fashions, along with a growing acceptability of traditional foods (Pasley, 2001). The cultural revolution was predominantly propelled by women, as evidenced in the establishment of groups such as the Housewives Association of Trinidad and Tobago in 1971 (Pasley 2001, p. 9). The membership of this group included African, Indian and white women. Again, the Black power movement can be seen as a unifying factor, as Afro and Indo-Trinidadians sought to create their own cultural identity, separate from the European model. Nevertheless, there was some suggestion that Afro-Trinidadian culture was to lead as the use of Afro-Trinidadian models in advertisements became the norm. Indo-Trinidadians would only be used if they looked "ethnically ambiguous" (Pasley, 2001, p. 13). This is potentially racism in reverse, with black people being placed at the top of the cultural hierarchy (Rubin, 1962). This cultural authority is possibly aided by the Afro-Trinidadian dominance in politics and the subsequent influence they can hold over cultural celebrations and organisations.

Afro-Trinidadian dominance is most visible in carnival which is celebrated every February. Since 1900 Indo-Trinidadians have become more involved in this expression (Liverpool, 1993). Whilst carnival is still dominated by Afro-Trinidadians, a preference for paler skinned beauty queens exists, providing some confusion as to whose beauty standards carnival works towards (Liverpool, 1993). The fact that Western tourists visit Trinidad and Tobago for carnival may explain the dominance of European beauty standards in the event. It seems that whilst Afro-Trinidadian culture is the more visible, there remains a European hierarchy of physical appearance which relegates Afro-Trinidadians to be inferior. This hierarchy, undoubtedly introduced by colonialism, is still in practice in the banning of Afro hairstyles in schools dominated by Indo-Trinidadians (United Nations, 2004). It seems that the

Indo-Trinidadian population have taken on the previous colonial role of rejecting African features as beautiful.

In support of this, Lord Braithwaite found there was some reluctance by lighter-skinned ethnic groups to 'mix' with Afro-Trinidadians (1953). When this finding is compared to a slightly more recent verdict in Guyana, it seems that this racial attitude could still be present. Landis found that four fifths of Indo-Guyanese people would object to their son or daughter marrying an Afro-Guyanese person (1973, p. 430). When this question was asked of Afro-Guyanese people, only sixteen percent of them believed they would object to their son or daughter marrying an Indo-Guyanese individual. This result can be seen as a combination of the value Indian's place on light skin, the presence of superordinate racisms and the adoption of the European beauty hierarchy. There are clear analogies with the situation in Trinidad and Tobago.

The extent to which racial 'mixing' is deemed acceptable in a society is indicative of the levels of racism (England, 2010). In Trinidad and Tobago the word 'dougla' exists to refer to individuals who are mixed Afro and Indo-Trinidadian. This word is a derogatory Hindi word for someone of illegitimate inter-caste mixing (England, 2010). Whilst it has lost some of its negative connotations, it came from an era when 'mixing' was taboo. In Trinidad and Tobago Indo-Trinidadians are thought to be racially 'pure' whereas Afro-Trinidadians form the melting pot that is referred to in dominant discourses (England, 2010). This helps to explain why Afro-Trinidadians are upheld as examples of racial harmony in popular culture, yet remain inferior in the arena of global beauty and racial mixing.

The political stance on culture conforms to the discourse of racial harmony. This can be evidenced in the Public Holidays and Festivals Act which recognises Diwali, Eid-ul-Fitr, Good Friday, Christmas, Emancipation Day and Indian Arrival Day as public celebrations (United Nations, 2004).

However, Indo-Trinidadians feel that the country's culture is seen to be entirely Afro-Trinidadian by outsiders (United Nations, 2004). Justification for this suspicion can be found in the perusal of the 'Caribbean' section of a large supermarket in the UK. Nearly all of the food products are typically Afro-Caribbean, neglecting to acknowledge the significance of other ethnicities in the Caribbean.

Mauritius, a country with similar demographics and colonial history, provides an interesting comparison to Trinidad and Tobago in that its culture is dominated by Indian cultural norms. Eriksen placed emphasis on the geographical location of Mauritius, citing that it is far removed from America and so did not take part in the movements that raised black self-consciousness (1992, p. 165). This process is ongoing in Trinidad and Tobago with the increasing popularity of typically African American sports, such as basketball, and music and film celebrities. Whilst the Afro-Trinidadians identify strongly with black America's popular culture, it has been purported that young Indo-Trinidadians seek alternative music genres, such as rock, to create spaces for their own identity to develop (Eriksen, 1992). With Mauritius' close proximity to India, the Indian population of Mauritius have developed a dominant culture to suit their needs with ease (Eriksen, 1992). It appears that geographical location is an influence in how culture is developed, though it is only one factor in how culture has been formed in Trinidad and Tobago. This serves as an apt example of Dikotter's theorising, providing evidence of further factors influencing the processes of racialisation aside from Western modernity.

Therefore, it can be deduced that Afro-Trinidadians are the most visible ethnic group within culture. This is due to the dominance of Afro-Trinidadians in the political arena, and through the adoption of racial ideologies introduced by the Black Power movement of the USA. However, it seems that Afro-Trinidadians are subject to more scrutiny as to their appearance and 'racial mixing' than any other ethnic group. This racialisation comes from within the Indo-Trinidadian population and external discourses on the inferiority of black racial features. This is partly a remnant

of the colonial racial hierarchy which allowed social mobility based on skin colour and hair texture.

Education and industry feeding white dominance and Afro-Trinidadian discontent

Education is a main factor in the reproduction of racisms. The school curriculum teaches racial tolerance and harmony throughout primary and secondary education (UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, p. 8). Whilst this may teach children the rhetoric of racial harmony that dominates so many Latin American and Caribbean countries, the education system in Trinidad and Tobago has historically reproduced economic inequalities. Whilst this situation may improve, it set the contemporary scene whereby “whites control the local economy and the East Indians dominate the agricultural sector, the blacks and the coloured control the political system” (Hitzen, 1984, p. 126).

Unemployment rates amongst Afro-Trinidadians are the highest of any ethnic group (UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, p. 21). Statistics from 1997 show that when Afro-Trinidadians are in employment they can expect to earn an average wage of \$4,151 a month, in comparison to a white person who on average earns \$14,135 (Household Budgetary Survey, 1997/8). These statistics are even more alarming when it is considered that only 0.63 per cent of the population of Trinidad and Tobago is white (National Census Report, 2000). These two figures combined imply that a white élite functions on the islands. This is further evidenced by the fact that over half of the white population lives in the district of Diego Martin, suggesting a geographical segregation of the white population (National Census Report, 2000, p. 27).

It was found in 1970 that white children overwhelmingly went to schools classed as having a ‘high’ socioeconomic position¹ (Schwartzbaum and Cross, p. 368). It can be deduced that white dominance is maintained through a cycle in which white children receive the best education due to their parent’s dominant position in society, and they therefore continue along this path of economic success. A further explanation for the predominance of white people in industry is the move from an agricultural to a petroleum-based economy (Camejo, 1971). This introduced multi-national companies to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, and these were commonly compiled of white individuals. Therefore, the presence of a high-achieving white population in Trinidad and Tobago can be partially explained by the global dominance of white economic power.

In comparison, it was found that schools with Hindu and Muslim religious affiliations were over-represented in the ‘low’ category (Schwartzbaum and Cross, 1970). These schools were typically found in rural areas, and would therefore have a high ratio of Indo-Trinidadian students. There existed some conflict over the fact that Afro-Trinidadians were over-represented in government schools, though this can be explained by the fact they were predominantly situated in urban areas and therefore drew their students from a population of mainly Afro-Trinidadians (Cross and Schwartzbaum, 1969). This also offers an explanation as to the high proportion of Afro-Trinidadians in politics.

Despite their predominance in government schools, Afro-Trinidadian students were similarly disadvantaged, and the study found that they had the “lowest average mastery orientation” (Schwartzbaum and Cross, 1970, p. 384). Schwartzbaum and Cross argued that Indo-Trinidadians are protected from this lack of self belief due to their strong cultural heritage and traditions, cushioning them from the effects of subordination (1970). Considering this study was conducted either before or during

¹ Classification was awarded depending on the proportion of student’s whose fathers had gone to university or who had an average monthly income above \$450.

the Black Power movement, it could be suggested that the situation for Afro-Trinidadians has improved.

However, it is becoming evident that businesses not owned by the white or Chinese population, are usually in the hands of Indo-Trinidadians (Hintzen, 1985). Allahaar states that the "indianization of state-owned enterprises" is becoming a fear in Trinidad and Tobago (2005, p. 295). The relative absence of economically influential Afro-Guyanese has become a real issue of contention in Guyana, which has seen racist violence become a typical event in its social landscape. This began in 1963, as Afro-Guyanese feared independence under Indo-Guyanese rule (Landis, 1973). Interestingly, Landis' study found that the presence of racial prejudices was low amongst both ethnic populations. This is potentially explained by the ideology of racial harmony fed into the education system (1973). However, black lower class discontent remains high in Guyana, which results in the high levels of racial violence (Hintzen, 1985 and United Nations, 2004). Even in the face of this open hostility, Guyanese academics and politicians maintain that race is not a factor in the violence, and instead it is merely a result of economic jealousy (Guyana: Criminal Violence and Police Response, 2003, p. 8). It could be argued that when economic inequalities exist along race lines, the separation of the motive as either racial or economic becomes blurred and problematic. The ruling party's failure to address or acknowledge racial issues in Guyana is a key point of difference to Trinidad and Tobago.

The reason why similar unrest has not formed in Trinidad and Tobago is often attributed to the contributions of Eric Williams. Palmer argues that Williams knew that "unscrupulous politicians could stimulate and exploit racial tensions to their advantage", as was seen in the violence in Guyana in 1963 (2006, p. 263). In addition, Williams fostered an intellectual climate in Trinidad and Tobago which taught that racism was a direct effect of colonialism, and was therefore intolerable in an independent nation state (Palmer, 2006). This government stance is continued today, with its commitment to the discourse of racial harmony. As it stands, this appears to be sufficient to hold back racial violence, though with increasingly affluent Indo-Trinidadians and increasingly impoverished Afro-Trinidadians it remains to be seen if these discourses will remain adequate.

Where does Trinidad and Tobago go from here?

In conclusion, this research largely supports Dikotter's interactive model in recognising many factors which contribute to processes of racialisation. The role of colonialism and science in fostering a society organised racially is undeniable. However, more recent factors have complicated the racial hierarchy so that ethnic groups seem to be able to simultaneously occupy opposite ends of the social stratification.

The government propagates the ideal of racial harmony, and this is woven into the education system and discourse of the nation. When racial tensions do occur the government takes swift action and denounces racism as a viable ideology. Somewhat perversely, the political parties of Trinidad and Tobago use racist discourses to win elections, though this appears to be relatively trivial in nature and has not seen any similarities with the racist violence in Guyana. Racism in Trinidad and Tobago has associations with colonial rule and due to the efforts of both Eric Williams and the Black Power movement, the principles of colonialism are wholly rejected.

Black self-consciousness has been strengthened to the point where Afro-Trinidadians now dominate culturally. This is aided by the geographical proximity to the USA and the popularity of African American culture. Whilst Indo-Trinidadians feel some unease about their subordination in this arena, they are excelling in the economic sector.

The Indo-Trinidadian population had a slow journey towards equality, but Afro-Trinidadians are now falling behind economically. The Afro-Trinidadian population remains exposed to the brunt of Western racisms which render them inferior, as well as Indo-Trinidadian prejudices. The Indo-Trinidadian population has formed racial opinions of Afro-Trinidadians based on their own religious hierarchies and the input of Western ideas. This tension is kept under check by the reluctance for open racisms to exist, though if the two ethnic groups continue to be polarised this situation could worsen.

The white elite of Trinidad and Tobago will increasingly live a precarious existence. With the growing strength of the Third World and the lessening influence of Western economy, they may lose their position of economic advantage in years to come. Whilst this would ensure any remnants of colonialism are officially removed from Trinidad and Tobago, its meaning on the racial processes in society would perhaps not be so celebratory. The least viable group to take an equal share in the economic wealth of the country is the Afro-Trinidadian population. This could increase discontent and racial tensions.

Further analysis of Trinidad and Tobago could look specifically at differences in racial experiences on either Trinidad or Tobago. Tobago is overwhelmingly populated with Afro-Trinidadians with only a very small number of Indo-Trinidadians and has a much lower crime rate than Trinidad. It would be of note to examine any relationship between crime and race considering the vastly different demographics of the two islands. In addition, the position of native Arawaks and Caribs on the islands has been largely neglected. There appears to be some confusion over whether they exist as a 'pure' race anymore, though the government has reportedly promised to give land to a small community of Caribs (United Nations, 2004). The native population faced discrimination during colonial rule and it would be sociologically useful to consider whether these discriminatory practices and discourses have passed onto Afro or Indo-Trinidadians. These areas of study could further strengthen Dikotter's view that racial processes are the result of multiple factors and are specific to their context.

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