

**ABSTRACT**

Ethnicity and Economy: The Portuguese, Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese in  
Trinidad 1945-1981

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This thesis investigates the links between ethnicity and the economic progress of the Portuguese, Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese communities in Trinidad during the period 1945-1981. Business ownership provides an important avenue to mobility for immigrants worldwide who desire to achieve economic independence and prosperity in their lands of adoption. For the Portuguese, Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese immigrants who came to Trinidad during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this was also the case. This study argues that ethnic resources provided those factors necessary for the establishment businesses by the ethnic groups under examination such as human capital, labour and finances. These ethnic resources include ethnic associations and networks and family support systems. Furthermore, it posits that the favourable attitudes of these collectivities towards the religion, educational standards and language of the elite group in Trinidad also facilitated their economic and social mobility. It was also discovered that as the Portuguese, Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese grew in wealth and social standing they became

increasingly integrated into the wider community. Thus, in many ways their economic pursuits inadvertently precipitated the creolisation process.

Keywords: Culture; race; minorities; immigrant; ethnicity; entrepreneurship; business; prosperity, 20<sup>th</sup> century Trinidad.