

ABSTRACT

Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago:  
Ethnicity, Identification and The Political System  
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This research paper carries out an indepth examination of certain abstract and ambiguous concepts in International Relations literature. Concepts such as nationalism, state and ethnicity have become important concepts that are utilised in International Relations, especially by researchers and public officials who work in multi-ethnic states. Yet, these terms are steeped in conceptual chaos. Therefore it is necessary to consider how these terms are considered and utilised by, firstly, researchers in the field of International Relations and, secondly, opinion makers in the specific political environment of Trinidad and Tobago.

Two research perspectives are utilised in this examination. Firstly, there is an indepth analysis of the literature on the concepts of nationalism, identification, state and ethnicity. Secondly, a primary research technique was formulated, using an emic approach which examines the perceptions of the opinion makers within the political system to determine if they fully

grasp the importance and significance of these concepts in pursuance of a psychological link between a citizenry and the multi-ethnic state.

The conclusion notes that the concepts utilised both by academics and politicians are shrouded in ambiguity. Indeed even researchers of international repute have, at one time or the other, misrepresented and misused these concepts in their research and writings causing one author to write of terminological chaos. Politicians in Trinidad and Tobago do not grasp the conceptual underpinnings of these terms and, therefore, they also misrepresent and misuse these terms.

Of significance, here, is the impact this may have on the wider population, since these two groups may be considered as opinion makers and shapers in society.