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# Trini to de Bone: The Impact of Migration on the Cultural Identities of Trinidadian Immigrants in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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TRINI TO DE BONE:  
THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON THE CULTURAL IDENTITIES OF  
TRINIDADIAN IMMIGRANTS IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

by

Stephanie Zukerman

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Graduate School  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
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Intercultural Relations

University of the Pacific  
Stockton, CA

in collaboration with

The Intercultural Communication Institute  
Portland, Oregon

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TRINI TO DE BONE:  
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by

Stephanie Zukerman

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my stepfather, Edwin Roberts, who has surrounded me with Trinidadian culture since I was a child, and to all of my extended Trinidadian family who inspired my love for their country. I also dedicate it to my sweet cat, Sarabi, for the many hours that she sat on my lap while I wrote, who passed away in May 2017.

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Trini to de Bone:  
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Abstract

by Stephanie Zukerman

University of the Pacific  
2018

This study examined the impact of migration and the resulting intercultural interactions on the cultural identities of first-generation immigrant Trinidadians living in the Philadelphia area of the United States. It focused on four identities: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality. The goal of the study was to determine how Trinidadian immigrants define and reconceptualize these four dimensions of their identities as they make new lives in American society. Another goal was to determine whether identities shift and, if so, how, for Trinidadian immigrants when they move across cultures to a society where they are no longer in the racial, ethnic, or cultural majority. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research included an initial online survey followed by qualitative interviews with a few selected participants. Survey results showed that for three of the identities (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality), more than half of respondents indicated no change in saliency. Survey respondents rated their shift in racial identity as almost equal between more salient and no change in saliency upon moving to the United States. However, qualitative findings showed that, of

the four identities, race became most salient in the United States, even for those who showed no shift in this identity after resettling here. The racial identity of interviewees was influenced by three main factors: the racial identity they were ascribed in the United States, their experiences with racial discrimination, and being made to feel “othered” in a society that does not recognize their Trinidadian racial and ethnic categories. Findings also showed that immigrants in this study who are ascribed a Black identity in the United States acculturate to both African American and European American cultures in multicultural Philadelphia, while maintaining a strong connection to their Trinidadian national identity. This research has practical implications for intercultural researchers and trainers who work with Trinidadian or West Indian populations.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Immigrants arriving in the United States are faced with a host of challenges as they are forced to define and reconceptualize their cultural identities in a new society that is starkly different from that of their home country. Waters (1999) stressed the salience of the question of identity for immigrants:

Arriving as a stranger in a new society, the immigrant must decide how he or she self-identifies, and the people in the host society must decide how they will categorize or identify the immigrant. This is a dynamic and ongoing process as the newcomers fit into their new environment ... the social identities the immigrants adopt or are assigned can have enormous consequences for the individuals. (p. 44)

This study explored the impact of migration and the resulting intercultural interactions on the cultural identities of first-generation immigrant Trinidadians living in the Philadelphia area of the United States. It focused on four elements of cultural identity salient to Trinidadians in the United States: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality. “Trinidad ... is a society in which ethnic and racial diversity and modes of classification are complex and related to historical layers of forced immigration, indentured labor, and ‘voluntary’ immigration” (Vale de Almeida, 2004, p. 1). Martin and Nakayama (2013) supported the significance of providing historical context for understanding the identities that Trinidadian immigrants bring with them to the United States, writing, “The development of cultural identity is influenced largely by history” (p. 133). To better understand how Trinidadians in the study population conceived their cultural identities before immigration and how they reconceptualize them in the United



States, it is essential to understand the historical, demographic, and social contexts from which they come.

### **Trinidadian Historical, Demographic, and Social Contexts**

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, two separate islands under one government, gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1962 and became a republic within the Commonwealth in 1976. The islands are located in the southernmost region of the Caribbean, 7 miles off of the northeast coast of Venezuela, with a population of about 1.35 million people (Watts, Brereton, & Robinson, 2017). Each island has its own history, having been colonized by different European nations, creating different understandings of racial, ethnic, and cultural identity. This study focused solely on people from the larger, more cosmopolitan island of Trinidad.

Trinidadian identities have been shaped by the mixing of British, Spanish, and French colonial legacies, along with African, East Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Middle Eastern, and the indigenous Carib and Arawak cultures. The population of the island of Trinidad is approximately 32% African descent, 37% East Indian descent, 8% mixed ethnicities (African and East Indian), and 16% mixed other ethnicities, with the remaining 7% being of Syrian, Lebanese, Chinese, indigenous, or European descent (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 2012).

Despite this ethnic heterogeneity, structurally there is a bipolar dominance of persons of East Indian and African descent, similar in the Caribbean region only to Guyana. This creates a unique context around ethnic, racial, and cultural identities that differs from many other West Indian countries, whose populations more homogeneously consist of people of African descent. The history of these two most populous ethnic

groups is one of African slavery, which ceased in 1838, followed by East Indian indentured labor until 1917 (Brereton, 1981); both ethnic groups were brought to the island to work as agricultural laborers, mainly working in sugar cane fields. Yelvington (1993) referred to Trinidad as “one of the most economically-developed and possibly the most ethnically-diverse and religiously heterogeneous Caribbean territory” (p. 1). Carlin (2009) discussed how the diverse composition of ethnic groups helped develop the cosmopolitan character of the nation’s culture and noted that the term *cosmopolitan* has been used to describe the country and its people since 1962, upon independence from Great Britain. This ideology was articulated in the inauguration speech of the first elected prime minister, Dr. Eric Williams, to replace the social and cultural divisions and stereotypes that resulted from British colonialism. Carlin noted, “This cosmopolitanism was described as the foundation of a raceless society, where everyone would be viewed as equal, and unity would replace the division of races” (p. 3). This cosmopolitan interpretation of society in Trinidad impacts Trinidadians’ interpretations of cultural, ethnic, and racial identity, which are understood very differently from how they are understood in the United States.

Trinidad understands itself as a mixed society. The presence of many different cultural and ethnic groups has resulted in a Creole identity for many individuals and the nation as a whole that manifests in food, music, language, identities, and other elements of Trinidadian society and culture. In writing about Creolization in Trinidad, Stewart (1989) noted:

Culture-bearers from various countries in Europe, Africa, and The Americas, as well as from China and India, were brought into everyday contact with each other. In this complex situation, cultural competition became a fundamental

characteristic of the society, as did the mediating process of creolization- a pattern in which new combinations in culture, language, and personality emerge. (p. 156)

This Creolization manifests in everyday Trinidadian modes of expression that include words such as *Dougla*, meaning someone who is of mixed African and East Indian descent, or *Cocoa Panyol*, someone who is a mix of Spanish, Amerindian, and African descent (Moodie-Kublalsingh, 1994). Given the history of Trinidad, the presence of many different ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic groups has remained until now, and “this notion of mixing holds central importance in forming interpretations of identity and self-worth” (Khan, 2004, p. 3). Carlin (2009) noted, “Present day Trinidad has only known a blended society of historical components whose descendants are now known only as Trinidadian” (p. 22).

However, what might appear to be a utopian mix of ethnicities and cultures living together is, of course, a far more complicated matter. Cosmopolitanism exists simultaneously with societal divisions that manifest between ethnic groups and along class lines and with stereotypes that each group has about the other. These are in part the remnants of British colonialism, a complex topic that is beyond the breadth of this thesis. It manifests most visibly in politics. The two major political parties began and are still mostly divided by race: The People’s National Movement appeals to Afro Trinidadians, and the United National Congress seeks support from Indo Trinidadians.

### **Trinidadian Immigrants in the United States and Philadelphia**

Migration to the United States from Trinidad and other nations from the British West Indies increased in the mid-1960s due to immigration restrictions set by Great Britain and the simultaneous recruitment of English-speaking workers by the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2016). Much of the literature on Trinidadian immigrants is

engulfed in research focused on Caribbean and West Indian immigrants. The U.S. Census Bureau divides the population of people from Caribbean countries in the United States into two major categories: Caribbean and West Indian. The Caribbean population includes all people who can trace their heritage to the Caribbean region, including those of Hispanic and Latino origin groups, such as Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican. Those of West Indian ancestry come from countries in the Caribbean region, excluding those of Hispanic or Latino origin. The estimated U.S. population of West Indian ancestry is 2.7 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). The largest West Indian ancestral groups in the United States in order of population size are Haitian, Jamaican, Trinbagonian, and Guyanese (Tsuji, 2011).

The largest populations of West Indian immigrants reside in New York and Florida, at 835,722–836,810 per state, with West Indian immigrants living in Pennsylvania, which has 65,882–68,106 West Indian immigrants, many of whom reside in Philadelphia and its suburbs, where this research is taking place. As of 2013, there were 30,260 people of West Indian ancestry living in Philadelphia, representing about 1.6% of the city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). This number greatly increases when including those who are undocumented and including other areas in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, not just the city itself. According to the Migration Policy Institute, there are an estimated 220,000 Trinidadian Americans living in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2014 American Community Survey as cited in Zong & Batalova, 2016). Based on the 2000 U.S. Census, 68.6% of Trinbagonian-born U.S. residents were African-descended, and those of Asian heritage (South Asian and Chinese) made up only

9% (Tsuji, 2011). According to the International Organization for Migration (2014), 65.9% of Trinidadian migrants live in the United States.

Trinidadian immigrants in Philadelphia are diverse in terms of age, length of time in the United States, education and occupation, migration experiences and status, and socioeconomic level. Because of various factors that influenced years when emigration rates from Trinidad were high, Trinidadians are slightly older than other major West Indian ancestry groups residing in the United States (Tsuji, 2011), which was reflected in the participant pool of this study. There are several reasons regarding push and pull factors for Trinidadian immigrants in Philadelphia. A study by the International Organization for Migration (2014) found that Trinidadians tend to move to countries in the North (United States, Great Britain, and Canada) to improve their standard of living and gain qualifications. In fact, 57.7% of Trinidadian migrants obtained certifications and qualifications while living abroad. The study also stated that the flow of remittances to Trinidad was found to be a significant reason for emigrating.

Some Trinidadians who are motivated by economic gain are sponsored by a family member or employer, some are undocumented, and some become dual citizens. Families do not necessarily arrive together; instead, after one family member attains citizenship, he or she sends for children, spouses, and parents. Some Trinidadians live a transnational life, coming to the United States for work to send money home, and often remain separated from their families. Some come to advance their educations at colleges and universities, others come as student-athletes on scholarships, and many live in fear of losing their status after graduation. Many, such as those who participated in this study,

have settled in the United States for the majority of their adult lives and have become dual citizens.

Most West Indians in Philadelphia live in the west and southwest parts of the city; however, the Cedar Park section of West Philadelphia is the only neighborhood predominately made up of West Indian/Caribbean and African immigrants. Many Trinidadians also settle in various locations throughout the city and surrounding suburbs. Many congregate at churches and Trinidadian restaurants, which are often in the West Philadelphia, Olney, and Germantown sections of the city. Many recent Black immigrants from the Caribbean, including Trinidadians, settle in majority–African American neighborhoods, along with African immigrants (Singer, Vitiello, Katz, & Park, 2008).

West Indian immigrants in Philadelphia, including Trinidadians, have formed cultural associations such as The Greater Philadelphia Caribbean Culture Association, whose primary task is to organize a Philadelphia Carnival based on Trinidad’s famous Carnival; The Trinidad and Tobago Association in Philadelphia, which organizes events and works in support of the city’s Trinidadian population; and The African and Caribbean Business Council in Philadelphia, which supports entrepreneurs.

### **Rationale for Study**

Waters’s (1999) study of West Indian immigrants in New York has significant data on the identity choices and acculturative challenges they face. She stated, “It appears that the identities adopted by the first generation are in part a learned response to American categories and ways of defining people” (Waters, 1999, p. 53). She also noted that individuals may describe themselves as Black, Caribbean, West Indian, or by their

national origin such as Trinidadian or Jamaican. However, “for all the respondents, identity was socially constructed and situational: it mattered who they were with, what the circumstances were, and who was doing the asking and defining of identities and labels” (Waters, 1999, p. 49).

In her research about Trinidadian immigrants in the United States, Carlin (2009) noted, “When they arrive to the United States and are assigned the ‘minority’ status, to which they are unaccustomed, they are also labeled as immigrants which appear to be another subordinate grouping” (p. 74). Carlin discussed several factors that intersect for Trinidadian immigrants, leading to complex identity formation:

Some of these factors include the cross-cultural psychology of racial identity formation within the Trinidadian immigrant that is compounded by the clashes with their integration into society through acculturation. This along with the historical identification of some Trinidadians with African Americans and the assumption of that belonging, the neglect of East Indian Trinidadian immigrants that cannot be labeled as African American and are grouped with East Indians from India adds to the complexity (Ishmael, 2002; Waters, 1999). In addition, the mixed Trinidadian immigrant population is yet another issue. (p. 28)

Philadelphia is a large, ethnically and racially diverse city. Trinidadians, like all immigrants who come to live there, face two primary intercultural challenges. First, their “learned and shared beliefs” about who they are will face different beliefs about who they are in dissimilar cultural communities in the host society. Second, they will need to renegotiate their personal and cultural identities within a different set of options and constraints.

To date, there has been little research on English-speaking Caribbean populations, and Trinidadians in particular, in the field of intercultural relations. It is hoped that this exploratory study will generate a sense of productive questions and avenues for study in the intercultural field, based on a particular population. In this way, it may be possible to

encourage further understanding of Trinidadian immigrants in the United States, as they renegotiate their cultural identities in a different milieu, while simultaneously contributing to the body of knowledge regarding the process of identity shifts for immigrants who become a minority when they move to the United States.

**Justification for addressing race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality.** Because this study focused on cultural identity shifts impacted by migration, this paper will include a discussion of the concept of cultural identity and the four dimensions of cultural identity focused on in this study: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality. These concepts will be further explored in Chapter 2, the literature review.

Both Trinidad and the United States are multicultural societies. When people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds live together, whether for historical reasons by force, or by choice through migration, there will often be tensions around ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and culture, making these salient concerns for people's identities. Because race, ethnicity, and class in Trinidad are shaped by its colonial history, it is likely that these three dimensions of cultural identity will be impacted by migration to another multicultural society, the United States, with its own history, systemic issues, and modes of discrimination, values, and power struggles regarding race, ethnicity, and class. The social construction of race in Trinidad is not based on a simple binary distinction between Black and White as it is in the United States, with its history of the "one drop of Black blood" rule, which determined whether an individual was Black.

Additionally, Trinidadians of East Indian and African descent are represented in the cultural and ethnic majority, as well as the political power structures in their home



country. Previous research (Waters, 1999; Carlin, 2009) has shown that one of the potential problems for Trinidadian immigrants coming to the United States is that they are no longer in the racial, ethnic, or cultural majority and face being labeled immigrants for the first time.

There is a common perception among Trinidadians that class is an important marker of someone's status in Trinidadian society and that race is closely tied to socioeconomic status. An article by Stewart (2004) on TrinidadandTobagoNews.com posited, "Race permeates every aspect of social life in Trinidad. Race can determine one's access to wealth, status, political power and prestige." According to Waters (1999), "In the Caribbean, race is a continuum in which shade and other physical characteristics, as well as social characteristics such as class position, are taken into account in the social process of categorization" (p. 29). This study was intended to give voice to Trinidadian immigrants on these issues and to provide information on whether migration to the United States has impacted the subjects' understanding of themselves and, if so, how.

### **Central Questions and Research Objectives**

The central question asked in this study was: "How do Trinidadian immigrants define and reconceptualize four dimensions of their cultural identities (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality) as they make new lives in American society?" A secondary question addressed was: "Do identities shift and, if so, how, for Trinidadian immigrants when they move across cultures and nations to a society where they are no longer in the racial, ethnic, or cultural majority?"

The study had three objectives: (a) to discover which among four dimensions of cultural identity were most salient (important) for a small group of Trinidadians when

they lived in Trinidad; (b) to discover which among these four dimensions of cultural identity are most salient for this group after they have lived in the Philadelphia area of the United States for a minimum of 2 years; and (c) to apply an intercultural framework, with emphasis on acculturation theory, to understand if, how, and why these Trinidadian immigrants reconceptualized their identities when making their homes in the United States.

These objectives were explored through an initial online survey designed to gather information on the salience of the four dimensions of the participant's cultural identity. The survey was followed by in-person interviews with a few selected survey participants, designed to validate and dig deeper into the survey findings by asking for clarification on their answers and getting interpretations in their own words. The interviews provided a more in-depth understanding of their identity and acculturation process. This study was not intended to generalize to the whole Trinidadian population in the United States but instead to provide insight into the worlds of a small group of Trinidadian immigrants in the Philadelphia region. The goal is modest: to begin the conversation on Trinidadian immigrant identities. As such, it should be regarded as one more piece of the puzzle of immigrant identity research.

### **Benefits of Study**

In today's social and political climate surrounding immigrants in the United States, it is important to understand the experiences and perspectives of immigrants in order to promote a more accepting society and understand how the United States can become a more welcoming nation to our country's immigrants. We need to hear the voice of immigrant experiences from immigrants themselves.

This study will benefit Philadelphia's Trinidadian community, and anyone who works with Trinidadians, to assist with awareness of their acculturation. It has the potential to generate questions that will encourage further investigation of the acculturative and identity experiences of Trinidadian immigrants living in Philadelphia and other areas of the United States. The insights gained will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the process of acculturation and the impact of intercultural interactions on the cultural identity of immigrants who become a minority when they move to the United States.

### **Thesis Overview**

Chapter 2 is a review of literature in three key areas: (a) intercultural literature describing the meaning of cultural identity and its fluid and contextual nature; (b) acculturation literature describing the impact of immigration on cultural identities; and (c) literature describing the issues faced by West Indian and Trinidadian immigrants in the United States, including cultural, racial, and ethnic identity concerns, as well as discrimination and its impact on identity-based acculturation. Chapter 3 outlines the research methods employed, participant selection criteria, validation strategies, ethical considerations, and data analysis methods. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research. Chapter 5 analyzes the results of the research, offers implications, reviews the limitations of the study, and makes suggestions for future research. The informed consent forms, research tools, and additional findings are included in the appendices.

### **Researcher Statement**

This research stems from personal connections between me (the researcher) and Trinidadians. I am a White, U.S. American stepdaughter of an Afro-Trinidadian immigrant for over 40 years. I grew up surrounded by Trinidadian friends and family

who immigrated to Philadelphia and other parts of the United States, and I have been traveling frequently to Trinidad and Tobago since 1980. This research stems from my observations and curiosity about the differences I see between our two cultures and the challenges and successes that Trinidadians face as they acculturate after migration to the United States.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

This literature review focuses on three key areas that will help illuminate issues pertinent to the cultural identity renegotiation of first-generation Trinidadian immigrants in the United States. The first section, “Cultural Identity in Intercultural Relations,” will review intercultural literature describing the meaning, nature, and components of cultural identity, including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality. The second section, “Acculturation: The Impact of Migration on Identities,” examines acculturation literature describing the impact of immigration on cultural identities, with attention paid specifically to migration to heterogeneous societies, the impact of globalization on acculturation, and gaps in acculturation literature. The final section, “West Indian and Trinidadian Immigrant Identity Choices,” presents an overview of literature describing identity issues faced specifically by West Indian and Trinidadian immigrants as they become a racial and ethnic minority in the United States, as well the impact of racism and discrimination on identity-based acculturation.

### **Cultural Identity in Intercultural Relations**

The concept of cultural identity as developed in the intercultural relations field has become intricate and complex. This section is a review of the literature on the language and concepts used by various intercultural relations scholars to describe the nature of cultural identity and its characteristics, such as its fluid and contextual nature, and the elements of personal and social identities and how they relate to one another. I will also discuss how theorists understand the four dimensions of identity pertinent to this

study—race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality—as well as ethnic and cultural identity development and cultural identity theory as they relate to the central question of this study.

**What is cultural identity?** To understand what cultural identity is, it is first important to understand what identity is. A common theme among theorists who address identity formation is that identity is complex and develops and changes over time (Erickson, 1959; Tatum, 1997; Huang, 2006). Moreover, when describing identity formation, these theorists uniformly asked the question, “Who am I?” Erik Erikson, the psychoanalytic theorist, introduced the notion that the social, cultural, and historical context is the ground in which individual identity is embedded (Tatum, 1997). Theorists who work with intercultural issues built on Erikson’s ideas. Intercultural communication scholar Yep (1998) defined identity as “a person’s conception of self within a particular social, geographical, cultural, and political context” (p. 79). Psychologist and racial identity theorist Beverly Tatum’s (1997) discussion of the nature of identity was consistent with Yep’s, and she added that identity is shaped by individual characteristics and family dynamics as well as historical context. Furthermore, salience is an important attribute of identity. Tatum stated, “The salience of particular aspects of our identity varies at different moments in our lives. The process of integrating the component parts of our self-definition is indeed a lifelong journey” (p. 20).

Scholars differ in their approach and interpretation of cultural identity. Because immigrant identity-based acculturation, the central theme of this study, refers to cultural change, it is essential to specify how *culture* is defined. Orbe and Harris (2007) defined culture as “learned and shared values, beliefs, and behaviors common to a particular

group of people; culture forges a group's identity and assists in its survival" (p. 6). Adler (1998) defined *cultural identity* as the essence of one's self, comprising beliefs, values, and worldviews of a group within which such knowledge is shared. Fong (2004) expanded this definition further, defining cultural identity as "the identification of communications of a shared system of symbolic verbal and nonverbal behavior that are meaningful to group members who have a sense of belonging and who share traditions, heritage, language, and similar norms of appropriate behavior." (p. 6). Cultural identities have been conceptualized differently within the theoretical frameworks used in the intercultural field: social scientific, interpretive, and critical. This study will use an interpretive approach that views cultural identity as "a social and cultural construction that is not solely created by the self but dynamically co-created, negotiated, and reinforced through interactions with other group members and non-group members" (Chen and Lin, 2016). The interpretive approach is particularly pertinent to this study because it acknowledges that identity is created in interaction with others, a key element of identity (re)negotiation in Trinidadian immigrants, which is shaped, in part, by interactions with members of the receiving society, as well as other Trinidadian and Caribbean immigrants.

In the field of intercultural relations, cultural identity is often used as an umbrella term that encompasses race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, ethnolinguistic identity, regional identity, and other related group or social identities (Ibrahim, 1993; Chen and Lin, 2016; Fong, 2004). Contrary to that approach, Ting-Toomey (1999) differentiated between cultural and ethnic identity. In her identity negotiation theory, she defined cultural identity as "the emotional significance that we attach to our sense of

belonging or affiliation with the larger culture ... the extent to which our culture influences our behavior is dependent in part on how strongly we identify with that culture” (Ting-Toomey, 1999, pp. 30–31). She stated:

Salience of cultural identity can operate on a conscious or an unconscious level. Salience of cultural identity is often a taken-for-granted phenomenon: we live within our own culture as a habitual way of life; we do not need to “justify” or explain its impact unless outsiders inquire about it. (Ting-Toomey, p. 31)

She differentiated this from ethnic identity, which she related to ancestry. Ting-Toomey defined ethnic identity salience as “the subjective allegiance to a group—large or small, socially dominant or subordinate—with which one has ancestral links” (p. 32). For this study, I applied the use of cultural identity as an umbrella term that encompasses the four identities described in Chapter 1. From Ting-Toomey’s discussion of cultural and ethnic identity, the phenomenon of cultural and ethnic identity salience was applied to further understand the potentially shifting nature of the participants’ four cultural identities.

In their entry “Cultural Identities” in the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, Chen and Lin (2016) summarized reviews of literature on cultural identity research within the communication discipline in the United States. They indicated that over time, throughout various decades, scholars have prioritized different cultural identities. During the 1970s, various cultural identities were examined, such as social class, race, nation-state, and gender (Moon, 1996). In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, national identities, ethnicities from intergroup lenses, and cross-cultural comparisons were examined (Moon, 1996; Shin & Jackson, 2003). Chen and Lin indicated that after the 1980s, emphasis shifted toward ethnicity, ethnolinguistic identity, and racial identities. This trend toward prioritizing ethnicity and racial identities aligns with the focus of this study.



Many scholars agree that an important characteristic of cultural identity, including racial and ethnic identity, is that it is dynamic, fluid, and socially constructed, meaning that the prominence of our identities rises and falls relationally within various social, cultural, and situational contexts, and that these identities are shaped by the meanings given to them by the society around us (Hecht, Collier, and Ribeau, 1993; Hedge, 1998; Tajfel, 1981). Chen and Lin (2016) provided a more intricate description of cultural identity:

The experience, enactment, and negotiation of dynamic social identifications by group members within particular settings. As an individual identifies with—or desires acceptance into—multiple groups, people tend to experience, enact, or negotiate not just one cultural identity at a time but often multiple cultural identities at once. Further, how one experiences her/his intersecting cultural identities with others can vary from context to context depending on the setting, the issue at hand, the people involved, etc. (p. 1)

This concept of intersectionality, as defined by Orbe and Harris (2007), is of particular relevance to this study; it refers to “efforts that examine the combined impact of different cultural identities. Embracing this concept helps us generate deeper, more complex understanding of people’s lives; it also assists in avoiding more superficial explanations of behavior based on one aspect of culture” (p. 104). Because the Trinidadians in this study come from varied backgrounds and have a multiplicity of identities that intersect to shape their perceptions and experiences, the concept of intersectionality is key in avoiding superficial explanations of behavior based on one aspect of their culture or one element of a participant’s identity. In discussing ethnic categories and identity, Phinney (1996) asserted, “Even within an ethnic group whose members share a relatively precise ethnic label there is tremendous heterogeneity. Many writers have pointed out that there is greater variation within than between groups” (p.

919). Further, Waters (1999), in her study regarding ethnic options for immigrants to the United States, noted:

The recognition of the multiplicity and situationality of social identities does not mean that people are free to choose any identity they want or to attach any meaning they want to any particular identity. History and current power relations create and shape the opportunities people face in their day-to-day lives, giving some people “ethnic options” and others “racial labels.” (p. 47)

She found that immigrants of European descent have more ethnic options than Black West Indian immigrants.

**Personal and social identities.** Cultural identity is impacted by how individuals perceive themselves (personal identities), as well as how others perceive them (social identities). Fong and Chuang (2004) defined *personal identity* as “unique qualities of ourselves such as personality and relationships, whereas cultural identities are aspects we share with other individuals such as gender, national culture, religion, and ethnicity” (p.

219). Orbe and Harris (2007) wrote:

A person’s cultural identity develops through interaction with others—and that identity is continuously negotiated, not developed toward a particular goal. As such, identity negotiation is a function of the individual and his or her relations to a particular cultural reference group and that group’s place in larger society ... we argue that identity development simultaneously involves personal and individual characteristics (e.g., personality characteristics) and cultural identities associated with particular roles, reference groups, and cultural categories. (p. 69)

One of the most frequently used conceptual frameworks for exploring identity and intergroup relations in immigrants is Tajfel’s social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978, 1981). The theory defines three defining features of social identity. Social identity (a) is part of self-concept, (b) requires awareness of membership in a group, and (c) has evaluative and emotional significance (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Social identification rests on the

recognition that various in-groups and out-groups exist, that they may be compared, and that favorable and unfavorable comparisons have consequences for self-esteem ... a relationship between ethnic or cultural identity and self-esteem only occurs in cases when an individual consciously perceives ethnicity or culture as a central, salient feature of identity.” (Ward et al., 2001, pp. 103–104)

Chen and Lin (2016) noted that in the field of intercultural communication, “cultural identities are understood to be multiple, intersecting, and simultaneously personal and social” (p. 2). Fong and Chuang (2004) suggested that for an individual, cultural identity can be fragmented and ambiguous or problematic. Fong and Chaung added, “In resolving these challenges, individuals undergo self and cultural identity transformation in order to achieve understanding, harmony, and balance within themselves, their environment, and their connection with others” (p. ix). This concept is particularly relevant to the study of how immigrants transform identities as they adapt to their new cultural environment over time. Additionally, in a discussion of Trinidadian cultural identity, ideas about personal and social identity are closely related; therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the study participant’s personal/individual characteristics will influence how they perceive their cultural identities and vice versa.

**Ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and nationality.** The intercultural relations field understands the four elements of cultural identity as follows.

***Ethnicity.*** Martin and Nakayama (2013) defined ethnic identity as:

A set of ideas about one’s own ethnic group membership. It typically includes several dimensions: self-identification, knowledge about the ethnic culture (traditions, customs, values, and behaviors), and feelings about belonging to a particular ethnic group. Ethnic identity often involves a shared sense of origin and history. (p. 192)

Waters (1999) expanded on this definition, noting that ethnic groups “share practices, languages, behaviors, or ancestral origins” and noted that “the word ‘ethnic’ has

generally referred to groups defined by cultural attributes, while ‘racial’ groups have been defined by physical attributes” (p. 45). Phinney (1996) added the important notion that ethnic identity “is a complex, multidimensional construct that, like culture, varies across members of a group” (p. 922). As conceptualized by Phinney (1990), ethnic identity refers to the extent to which the person (a) has explored what her or his ethnic group means to her or him (*exploration*) and (b) values and feelings attached to her or his ethnic group (*affirmation*).

In Ting-Toomey et al.’s (2000) discussion of ethnic identity, the authors stated that ethnic identity comprises two key aspects: ethnic identity salience and ethnic identity content. Ethnic identity salience refers to the degree of importance of ethnic identity, whereas ethnic identity content involves the values and core issues to which individuals subscribe and practice. Ethnic identity salience varies on a continuum from strong to weak (Phinney, 1991). Individuals with a strong ethnic identity evaluate their group positively, enjoy their membership in the group, and are involved in ethnic practices. Individuals with a weak ethnic identity have little ethnic interest, tend to identify with the larger national culture, and have little involvement in ethnic practices (Phinney, 1991).

Fong (2004) noted that labels and names for ethnicity and race, and the meanings associated with them by the ethnic members, have been extensively researched. “Labels and names are communicative devices to express a dimension of our own identity or another’s social identity” (Carbaugh, 1996). As the renowned scholar of ethnicity, Phinney (1996), argued, “Labels are not consistent indicators of group membership; rather, they vary over time and situations, carry different connotations among individuals and groups, and gloss over within group variation” (p. 920). According to Fong (2004),

“Difficulties arise when names and labels are used inappropriately in a social context or we feel they do not accurately describe who we are” (p. 12). The labels and names for ethnicity and race for Trinidadians who migrate to the United States will most likely be different from the labels and names for ethnicity and race that are assigned by members of the host culture post-immigration.

Additionally, *panethnicity* is an important concept for West Indians in the United States. Espiritu (1992) defined it as “larger-scale affiliations, where groups previously unrelated in culture and descent submerge their differences and assume a common identity” (p. 3). *West Indian* and *Caribbean* are panethnic labels in the United States. Trinidadian immigrants often identify with immigrants from other Caribbean or West Indian countries after moving to the United States. Prior to migration, they typically identify with their own national identity. There may be several reasons for this: (a) the similarities in colonial histories that shaped the islands and their cultures, (b) settling in largely West Indian communities, and (c) how Americans view them, often lumping all West Indian island cultures together, or confusing a Jamaican identity for other West Indian nationalities. Waters (1999), in her study with West Indians in New York, found that in communities where people from the different island nations live and work together, while they continue to see differences in cultural behaviors and personalities among those from different islands, they primarily see more similarities than differences and so call themselves West Indian.

***Racial identity.*** The *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* (Costello, 1995) indicated that race includes “an arbitrary selection of physical characteristics such as skin color, facial form, or eye shape” (p. 1,110). Orbe and Harris (2007) defined race

as “a largely social—yet powerful—construction of human difference that has been used to classify human beings into separate value-based categories” (p. 8). Martin and Nakayama (2013) supported this idea, stating, “Rather than adhere to the rather outdated notion of a biological basis for racial categorization, most scholars hold a social science viewpoint—agreeing that racial categories like white and black are constructed in social and historical contexts” (p. 191). Racial identity can be understood as a sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common heritage with a particular racial group. Although race has been proved to be socially constructed and to have no basis in biology, race and racial identity are salient in many people’s lives and society as a whole, as it can have deep implications for how people are treated; therefore, racial identity was included in this study to see how salient it was for my participants.

***Socioeconomic status (class identity).*** Socioeconomic status is often referred to as *class*. Martin and Nakayama (2013) defined class identity as “a sense of belonging to a group that shares similar economic, occupational, or social status” (p. 200). Class can influence communication with and perceptions of others. In his discussion of race, class, and gender, Langston (1995) referred to class as “your understanding of the world and where you fit in; it’s composed of ideas, behaviors, attitudes, values, and languages; class is how you think, feel, act, look, dress, talk, move, walk” (p. 101).

***National identity.*** National identity refers to national citizenship and is connected to one’s legal status in relation to a nation. People who immigrate and gain citizenship in their new home country may develop a national identity connected to their new home;

however, they often retain a sense of national identity connected to their country of ethnic or cultural origin (Fong, 2004).

**Cultural and ethnic identity development.** There are multiple racial and ethnic identity development models, and while I do not have the space to address all of these models here, I have identified Phinney's (1992) model of ethnic identity development as relevant to this study. Phinney explained, "Differences among individuals in the quality of their ethnic identity are related to developmental changes over time, as people explore and evaluate the meaning and implications of their group membership" (1996, p. 923). Phinney conceptualized ethnic identity development as a continuing process in which individuals progress (not necessarily linearly) from an early stage in which one's ethnicity is unexamined or taken for granted on the basis of attitudes and opinions of others or of society, through a period of exploration into the meaning and implications of one's group membership, to an achieved ethnic identity that reflects a secure, confident sense of oneself as a member of a group. Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, and Vedder (2001) noted, "The stages of this process are not inevitable, but rather depend on socialization experiences in the family, the ethnic community, and the larger setting, and not all individuals reach the stage of ethnic identity achievement" (p. 496). Fong and Chuang (2004) adapted Phinney's model to the development of cultural identity.

These concepts apply to first-generation Trinidadian immigrants as they arrive in Philadelphia in various stages of cultural and ethnic identity development. Their cultural identity may or may not be strongly developed at the time of migration. In addition to the influence of migration on cultural identities, the participants in this study will be impacted by factors that influence cultural identities as people mature.

**Cultural identity theory.** Collier and Thomas's (1988) cultural identity theory framed the properties of cultural identity; these properties refer to the manner in which members of a group communicate their identities. These properties will provide a framework for understanding the factors that influence how study participants experience their cultural, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic statuses and their national identities.

***Avowal and ascription.*** Avowal is how one articulates or expresses his or her views about group identity. It is how one presents oneself to another. Ascription is how others perceive an individual; it is how one refers to others. Because identity is constructed as a result of how we view ourselves and how others view us, these two concepts are important. Members of a cultural group describe their culture differently from how others perceive it. Avowed qualities versus ascribed qualities can lead to conflicts, and resolution of these conflicts depends on the status position of group members.

***Modes of expression.*** Modes of expression include expressions of a group's cultural beliefs and interpretations of society, names and labels, and norms that show belonging to a particular group and shared identity. Collier found that there were some similarities in cultural norms for members of various ethnic groups and that there are within-group differences as well.

***Individual, relational, and communal identity.*** *Individual identity* refers to how an individual interprets his or her cultural identity based on his or her experiences. *Relational identity* refers to how individuals interact with one another (what is considered appropriate behavior for various contexts and relationships), and *communal identity* is maintained by observing a group's communal activities, rituals, rites, and holidays.



***Enduring and changing aspects of identity.*** Cultural identities have both enduring and changing aspects. They may change because of several factors, which are social, political, economic, and contextual, such as globalization, social media, and changing labor markets.

***Affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of identity.*** All of these terms refer to the emotions fully attached to cultural identity in particular situations.

***Content and relationship levels.*** These levels come into play in interactions between two or more individuals for whom the message exchange carries information. The participants interpret the choice and meanings of the words based on their experiences. The message implies a cultural interpretation of who is in control and how they feel about each other.

***Salience and intensity.*** Cultural identities differ in the salience (i.e., importance) of particular identities relative to other potential identities across situational contexts, time, and interaction. This is influenced by the extent of similarity or difference between two individuals. The intensity, or the degree to which an identity is performed, also differs depending on context, situation, topic, and relationship, and provides markers of strong involvement in an identity.

Each one of these seven properties of cultural identity is integrated into the survey and interview question design of this study. For example, there are questions directly assessing identity salience, as well as how the participants maintain and express their Trinidadian identity in the United States, which identities they have been ascribed and which they have avowed, and how this has impacted them. I will be referring to many of these concepts as I organize and analyze the collected data. In the next section of this

chapter, I will review literature that explores how migration and acculturation impact cultural identities.

### **Acculturation: The Impact of Migration on Identities**

Broadly defined, acculturation refers to “changes that take place as a result of continuous first-hand contact between individuals of different cultural origins” (Ward et al., 2001, p. 99). One important component of acculturation relates to changes in cultural identity. This section will introduce two models that are primary in research that investigates immigrant identity reconceptualization. One of these is Berry’s bidimensional acculturation model. There are several critiques of Berry’s model, which will be explored in this section. One critique is that it is not nuanced enough to apply to immigrant acculturation into modern heterogeneous societies. Because Philadelphia is a city with a highly heterogeneous population, I will discuss the tridimensional and proximal host models of acculturation that apply to Black Caribbean immigrants in a multicultural setting such as Philadelphia. I will also address the impact of globalization on immigrant identities and gaps in acculturation research.

**Theoretical perspectives.** Two conceptual frameworks predominate explanations of identity reconceptualization among nondominant ethno-cultural immigrant groups: social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978, 1981) and acculturation models and measurements (Ward et al., 2001; Schimelle and Wu, 2015). Social identity theory (as discussed above) explains identity formation, persistence, and change, and therefore is particularly helpful in understanding how immigrants’ social identities may change as a result of living in a new country. In Schimelle and Wu’s (2015) literature review of acculturation and social identities in post-1965 non-European immigrants, the authors

summarized the relevance of this theory, stating it “is a general approach for understanding how identities are created and recreated within the context of intergroup relations and the stereotypes that categorize people into different social groups” (p. 15).

Berry’s bidimensional fourfold acculturation model is the most widely used model of acculturation in the study of sojourners, including immigrants (Ward & Kus, 2012). According to Ward (2008), in this model, Berry claims that immigrants from nondominant ethno-cultural groups are faced with two fundamental questions arising from intercultural contact: (a) To what extent are my cultural identity and characteristics considered important and their maintenance strived for? and (b) Is it of value to engage in intercultural relations with other groups, including members of the dominant culture? When the answers to both questions are considered simultaneously, four acculturation strategies may be distinguished for members of nondominant groups:

- Integration: It is important to both maintain cultural identity and have positive relations with the host society (also referred to as *biculturalism*; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).
- Assimilation: The focus is on adopting receiving-culture practices, values, and identifications while discarding those from the culture of origin.
- Separation: Only maintaining cultural heritage is important.
- Marginalization: Neither outcome is important, often due to discrimination rather than choice.

The four acculturation strategies are not discrete, static strategies, as individuals may switch from one strategy to another, and the host culture may consist of several cultures rather than a single majority culture (Berry, 1997). In 1974, Berry argued that

members of nondominant groups do not always have a choice regarding their acculturation strategy (Berry, 1997). In 1995, Berry and Kalin argued that “integration” can be chosen only when the host society is explicitly open and inclusive to cultural diversity (cited in Berry, 1997). Berry also stated that individuals may have different acculturation strategy preferences for public and private spheres of life and that the length of time in the host country, as well as the age of the immigrant, may play a role in the preferred strategies.

These models, especially Berry’s, have been highly criticized on several fronts. Schimmele and Wu (2015) noted, “The assimilation or integration of immigrants has become more irregular and problematic as the composition of immigrants and their children has shifted from European to non-European countries. The racial background of post-1965 immigrants complicates the acculturation process” (p. 2). Bhatia and Ram (2009) responded to Berry’s assertion that integration is the optimal acculturation strategy for immigrants, stating it “does not account for the specific culturally distinct and politically entrenched experiences of newer, non-European, transnational immigrants” (p. 141). Bhatia and Ram argued that people living in contemporary diasporas can feel simultaneously assimilated, separated, and marginalized:

Their negotiation with multiple cultural sites is fluid, dynamic, interminable and often unstable. Achieving integration may simply not be an option and/or may be achieved temporarily only to be lost at some point and so on. The acculturation journey ... has to be continuously negotiated. Thus there are several conceptual problems with describing the integration strategy as the developmental end point in the immigrant’s acculturation process. (p. 148)

In their perspective, Berry’s model assumes equal status and power between minority and majority cultures and does not consider systemic influences. They also argued that Berry does not explain the process by which someone reaches the end goal of integration.

Ward (2008) concurred with this final point when she noted that the emergence of acculturation strategies has most often been examined as a static outcome in itself, and that the process elements have largely been overlooked. In her article “Thinking Outside the Berry Boxes: New Perspectives on Identity, Acculturation and Intercultural Relations,” Ward (2008) argued that people’s identities are situational, and that there are different ways to conceptualize orientations to traditional culture and the broader host society. “For some individuals traditional and new identities may be perceived as incompatible ... family, developmental and intergroup factors can reduce or enhance the perceived compatibility of identity orientations” (Ward, 2008, p. 112). As with all immigrants, the identities of Trinidadians living in Philadelphia are situational and influenced by family, developmental, and intergroup factors. Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones (2006) argued that, “(a) social and cultural identity underlie acculturation and (b) personal identity can help to ‘anchor’ the immigrant person during cultural transition and adaptation” (p. 2).

Weinreich (2009) argued that Berry’s model is not nuanced enough to capture the actual process of identity formation, in which acculturation strategies often take place without conscious awareness. Weinreich also argued that Berry’s model does not apply to multicultural contexts because of its simplistic suggestion that an individual wholly accepts and/or rejects mainstream and heritage cultures. He stated:

In multicultural contexts, the possibility of identification across a mix of multicultural manifestations is thereby possible, with elements of different cultures co-existing as elemental identifications. Coexistence of mixed cultural elements within the person’s identity is the likely outcome in many instances of people’s reformulation of their identities, in contrast to the notion of whole-culture acceptance or rejection. (p. 128)

Weinreich critiqued Berry's model for its assumption that "culture and identity are inextricably related, so that for people to reject their heritage culture would be to reject the cultural aspects of their identity heritage" (p. 125). Van Oudenhoven, Ward, and Masgoret (2006) concurred:

Immigrants may easily adopt the language, the dress code and the working habits of the new country and even love the new food—all the external trappings of culture—but they may still identify strongly with their nation of origin. This means that immigrants may give up parts of their cultural heritage without giving up their cultural identity. (p. 647)

There are many reasons Trinidadians in the United States may identify strongly with their national cultural identity but give up parts of their cultural heritage. Some examples include the need to adapt to U.S. norms of work habits and to modify their Creole English language to standardized and vernacular American English.

**Immigrant acculturation in heterogeneous societies.** Much of the literature insists that Berry's model does not hold up in complex heterogeneous host societies. Van de Vijver, Blommaert, and Gkoumasi (2015) stressed the importance of accounting for the cultural context of where the immigrant is living. They asserted that future research must study both context and the individual; otherwise it is inadequate. Traditional models are often highly decontextualized, and context is important in understanding identities in highly culturally diverse neighborhoods and cities that are subject to change. As of the 2010 U.S. Census, Philadelphia is the fifth-largest metropolitan area in the United States, with a highly heterogeneous population. With a total population of 1,526,006, the racial breakdown consists of 44.1% Black, 35.3% White, 13.6% Hispanic and Latino, 7.2% Asian, 2.3% from other races, 2.4% Mixed Race, and 0.8% Native American. While some Trinidadians in Philadelphia live in culturally diverse

neighborhoods, others live in ethnic enclaves. This is a complexity that old acculturation models, such as Berry's, did not take into account.

Weinreich (2009) asserted that people who made choices as in Berry's model would be unable to relinquish their biographical history and stated that many of them would "generate creative expressions of newly formulated identities" (p. 130), based on the diversity of the cultures around them. Van Oudenhoven et al. (2006) concurred, suggesting that with today's multicultural societies, new acculturation strategies and outcomes are likely, and they suggested two strategies: Creolization and pluralism. They provided examples of Creolization, such as spontaneous forms of youth language or music and food "in which elements from different ethnic groups are adopted" (p. 648). They defined pluralism as encouraging "both cultural maintenance and intergroup contact; however, the cultural mixing as seen in creolization does not occur" (p. 648). They noted that Berry's strategies of marginalization and separation may occur in plural societies "but will do so relatively infrequently because these societies embrace cultural diversity" (p. 649).

Mittleberg and Waters's (1992) "proximal host" model described a process of possible identity formation following migration to heterogeneous societies. Warner and Wittner (1998) described the model as follows: "It suggests that the identity of recent immigrants in the host country can be determined by the existence of a proximal host group—that is, the group to which the natives of the host country assign them" (pp. 83–84). Mittleberg and Waters (1992) clarified that "the proximal host is the group that the wider society would define as the immigrant's co-ethnics" (p. 416). Immigrant groups might (a) reject their identification with the proximal host, (b) integrate into American

society through assimilation into the proximal host group, or (c) choose to hold both their ascribed racial identity and their personal ethnic identity at the same time. In a 2005 study with recent (5 years or less) middle-class Haitian immigrants to the United States, Mittleberg and Waters found this third option to be the most commonly used strategy.

Van de Vijver et al. (2015) argued that traditional models of identity, such as Tajfel's and Berry's, fall short because they are based on a distinction of two identities (host/mainstream and ethnic). These scholars asserted that this dichotomy does not describe the identity of groups in highly culturally diverse areas, and they argued for a new and better approach, such as the tridimensional model of acculturation. Ferguson, Bornstein, and Pottinger (2012) introduced this tridimensional model in a study conducted with Black Jamaican immigrants in the United States, concluding that they orient to at least three cultures: mainstream European American (as presumed by bidimensional models such as Berry's), African American, and their heritage Caribbean culture. In their 2012 study with Black Jamaican immigrants in New York and Illinois, they found that integration was favored (70%), particularly tricultural integration (i.e., strongly oriented toward all three target cultures) more than bicultural. Separation and assimilation were found to be less common and about equal in frequency, whereas marginalization was practically nonexistent. Additionally, consistent with Waters' (1999) findings, assimilation never occurred with European American culture as the sole destination culture. Ferguson et al. asserted that Black immigrants to the United States are more oriented toward African American than European American culture. Assimilation may be even more complex for Trinidadians of mixed descent who are labeled Black in the United States but not in Trinidad. Ferguson, Iturbide, and Gordon



(2014) suggested that this model adds depth to perspectives on acculturation, particularly for minority immigrants settled in multicultural societies, and she particularly cited this model as relevant to Black immigrants from the Caribbean. This tridimensional framework is needed to bring acculturation theory in better accord with the reality of multicultural sending and receiving societies.

**Globalization and immigrant identities.** The literature identifies worldwide trends in globalization as a key reason Berry's model is not adequate for considering in acculturation and intergroup relations. Specifically, transnationalism and the impact of social media are identified as having a major impact on immigrant identities in today's world. Van Oudenhoven et al. (2006) stated, "An essential element of transnationalism is the great number and variety of involvements that immigrants sustain in both home and host societies" (p. 647). Examples of transnationalism in Trinidadians in Philadelphia include the frequent mutual travel to Trinidad, thanks to its proximity to the U.S. East Coast, money remittances, and increased contact and news updates from Trinidad via social media. These scholars suggested adding "wish to be engaged in transnational contact" to the dimensions of Berry's model. Van de Vijver et al. (2015) suggested that mobility and social media have reshaped social life around the world, "generating identities and social relationships far more complex than what was hitherto observed (or assumed) in social research" (p. 37).

**Gaps in immigrant identity research.** As recently as 2013, Ward stated that relatively little was known about how integration is understood and experienced by immigrants themselves and how it unfolds for them over time. She conducted research with Muslim immigrants in New Zealand that combined several methodologies,

including interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Ward noted that “this bottom-up approach provides a fresh perspective and increases the ecological validity of acculturation research as it examines the ‘lived experiences’ of acculturating individuals from an immigrant perspective” (p. 393). Van de Vijver et al. (2015) also noted the predominance of quantitative methods in immigrant acculturation research, which they suggested insufficiently addresses “the continuities and changes over time and the ramifications of contextual factors for individual functioning” (p. 37). Taking these gaps into consideration, I designed this study to include a mixed-method approach, to capture not only quantitative data but also the lived experiences of first-generation Trinidadian immigrants in the Philadelphia region.

Trinidadians come from a heterogeneous West Indian society that differs from other more homogeneous West Indian countries. Although the proximal host and tridimensional acculturation models are specifically deemed appropriate for Black Caribbean immigrants to heterogeneous cities in the United States, the acculturation literature I reviewed within the intercultural relations field did not address this specific population with its unique history and social construction of identities within the Caribbean region. However, I did find one study (Carlin, 2009) that is external to the intercultural relations field that examined the change in the interpretation of race through the cosmopolitan eyes of Trinidadian immigrants in Baltimore. While my study was influenced by Carlin’s research regarding racial identity in Trinidadian immigrants, I added an intercultural framework with a focus on the saliency of the four identities: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality. Carlin’s study will be reviewed in the

next section of this literature review, which will focus on the identity concerns of acculturating West Indian and Trinidadian immigrants in the United States.

### **West Indian and Trinidadian Immigrant Identity Choices**

A review of the literature on West Indian and Trinidadian immigrants shows that researchers frequently focus on race among people of African descent. While this study includes Trinidadians of East Indian descent as well, there is a much smaller population of them who migrated to the United States, which might account for the literature's large focus on those of African descent. This section will describe the process of becoming a racial and ethnic minority following migration to the United States through reviewing literature of two major studies—one that examined the racial and ethnic identity choices of West Indians in New York City (Waters, 1999) and one that examined the changes in perception of race among Trinidadian immigrants in Baltimore (Carlin, 2009)—as well as a third study comparing identity acculturation between different Black immigrant groups in the United States (Benson, 2006). This will be followed by a review of literature addressing the impact of racism and discrimination on the identities of Black immigrants in the United States.

**Race and ethnicity: becoming a minority in America.** Song (2009), in his article “Finding One’s Place: Shifting Ethnic Identities of Recent Immigrant Children from China, Haiti and Mexico in the United States,” noted the following:

Through “ethnic identification,” Suárez-Orozco (2004) posits that immigrants undergo a social process in which ethnic membership is *ascribed* to the individual based on a set of phenotypic and cultural traits. This imposed ethnic group membership comes mainly from two outside sources: the co-ethnics (“You are a member of *our* group”) and the majority group (“You are a member of *that* group” (DeVos 1980; Suárez-Orozco 2000). (p. 1,009)

In other words, it is through the influences of both those within and outside of their ethnic/racial community that individuals come to form their ethnic/racial self-identity. Trinidadians of East Indian descent are often ascribed an East Indian rather than a West Indian identity upon migration to the United States—that is, they are seen as people from India rather than from the Caribbean. West Indian immigrants of African and mixed descent, including Trinidadians, are often ascribed a Black racial identity upon migrating to the United States.

Race is an important element of the whole picture that addresses the impact of migration on Trinidadians' identity. Research by both Waters (1999) and Carlin (2009), two studies that influenced this thesis, confirms this. Waters (2009) delved deep into the racial and ethnic identity choices made by Black West Indian immigrants and how American race relations influenced these choices. Her book, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*, is based on a landmark study in which she conducted 202 interviews with immigrants to New York City from the English-speaking islands of the West Indies, as well as their American coworkers and the children of immigrants. Waters found that for her respondents, finding themselves in the minority, called forth a racial identity for them. She noted:

The very definition of being black is sometimes different because of the more complex classification schemes in the Caribbean that take into account color and class. Especially for light-skinned, middle-class immigrants, it can literally be true that they only “became black” when they arrived on American soil. (p. 34)

Additionally, Waters found that many respondents “thought of themselves as black when they felt threatened by whites” (p. 63). An important finding was that although

the situation determined whether their race or national identity was most salient at any one time, this did not mean that people were choosing between race and ethnicity ... there was no contradiction in their mind between being a proud and

strongly identified black person and a proud and strongly identified ... West Indian. (p. 64)

Additionally, Waters (1999) found that the immigrants “did not regard having a strong racial identity as meaning that they identified with black Americans” (p. 64), because they considered themselves of a different culture. Her study found that 41% of West Indians (first and second generation) identified with Black Americans, 31% admitted to distancing themselves from Black Americans, and 27% did not particularly care about how they were viewed, as they were recent immigrants who still identified strongly with their home country (Waters, 1999).

In a 2006 study, Benson explored the racial identities of Black immigrants in the United States, including West Indians and specifically Trinidadians. She compared several Black migrant groups to investigate whether they experienced the process of racialization in the same way, or whether there was a variance across native origin. Her results showed that, “while most black migrants develop a shared racial group identity with native-born blacks over time, how they interpret their American racial identity varies by native origin” (p. 238). Additionally, she found that duration in the United States seems to be a key factor in the development of a shared racial group identity. She noted, “In line with the assimilation model of incorporation, black migrants living in the United States for longer periods of time had greater odds of identifying with other blacks than more recent immigrants” (p. 238). This is due to greater exposure to racial discrimination over time.

Carlin’s (2009) dissertation, *Exploring the Interpretation of Race in the United States through the Cosmopolitan Eyes of Trinidadian Immigrants*, influenced and shaped the central question of this study. She conducted a qualitative study using interviews to

assess the impact of migration on the interpretation of race for 18 Trinidadian immigrants to the United States in Baltimore. Carlin's research confirmed that Trinidadian identities are impacted by racial and ethnic ideology in the United States:

Concepts of race and ethnicity were mainly used for census data purposes in Trinidad, hence surfacing once every ten years. Upon arriving in the U.S., Trinidadian immigrants see race surfacing in everything like applications for school, employment, driver's licenses and organization affiliation. They plummet into an interactive, reactive racial ideology in America that demands an understanding of race and results in an understanding of the identity that one may suddenly be assigned. (pp. 3–4)

Some of Carlin's (2009) research questions addressed how her respondents had seen themselves in Trinidad compared to how they currently saw themselves in the United States "and any in-between selves they may remember creating" (p. 153). The results of Carlin's study showed that "aspects of identity renegotiation, dual identity, fluid identity and transnational identity" (p. 153) arose for her respondents. For most respondents, racial identity had not changed since moving to the United States; however, most respondents did express the newness of needing to explain their identity to curious Americans, as well as on official business documents. Carlin noted:

The fluidity of Trinidadian immigrants' identity was influenced by who was asking for the explanation; where they were; the purpose of the question, be it business or pleasure; the options provided, if any, as well as the expectation of the asker. (p. 201)

Carlin's data revealed that her respondents' identities were grounded in being Trinidadian rather than in their ethnicity, and some "demonstrated confusion and uncertainty with racial identity" (p. 202). The respondents believed race and racial discrimination impacted the quality of all areas of their lives, and that "racial diversity was barely tolerated in America compared to the Trinidadian society that not only tolerated these difference but celebrated them, too" (Carlin, 2009, p. 203). Additionally, participants

said that “the racial categorizations used in the United States were limiting and insufficient to accommodate the ethnic uniqueness of Trinidadian immigrants” (Carlin, 2009, p. 204).

Carlin (2009) stated that she was not able to confirm whether the Trinidadian immigrants in her study had fully integrated or assimilated into their new society or had adapted to their new way of life for everyday survival while maintaining as many aspects of their old culture as they could. Carlin did note, “The different American racial ideologies to which they have now been exposed prevented them from integrating into the dominant society, especially for participants who did not conform to the racial categorization used in the United States” (p. 207). Carlin stated that the U.S. culture

places them in a minority status that they are unwilling to accept. The negative images of being Black are rejected and although they are unable to avoid unfair treatment because of the racial categories in which they are placed, they avoid the internalized racism by believing in their inherited cosmopolitan beliefs. (p. 208)

None of Carlin’s (2009) participants rejected their Trinidadian or Caribbean identity, and those who had become U.S. citizens asserted that their Trinidadian selves “were not impacted by this citizenship and would never be altered by anything in life” (p. 208). Carlin noted, “Regardless of the participant’s descent, assumed American racial identity, their Trinidadian ethnic category, or their experiences, all of the participants were proud to be Trinidadian” (p. 208).

Finally, Carlin (2009) described the difference between Trinidadian immigrants to the United States and others who do not come from a home country built on the ideology of cosmopolitanism. While there is the similarity of becoming a minority in the United States, Trinidadians do not use a racial lens to rationalize experiences:

Because Trinidadian immigrants come from a home that minimizes the significance of race in everyday life and brings concerted focus on living in racial harmony, the American experience is an unusual one for them ... They go from a multitude of heritage combinations that are traced and accepted to a binary system. Trinidadians in the United States battle with accepting a status of inferiority or limits imposed upon them by racial categorization. (Carlin, 2009, p. 209)

In summary, both Waters' (1999) study on West Indians and Carlin's (2009) study on Trinidadians concluded that these immigrants interacted with a more binary racial and ethnic classification system and that racial/ethnic categories in the United States are insufficient to capture their identities. Both studies indicated that whether or not their respondents developed a strong Black identity, they did maintain a strong and proud national identity. Additionally, they both found that as immigrants, their respondents' identities are fluid and renegotiated based on situations and contexts and that racism significantly impacted their lives in the United States. Benson's (2006) study adds to this discussion, indicating that Black migrants living in the United States for longer periods have greater odds of identifying with Black Americans due to greater exposure to racial discrimination over time.

**Racism and discrimination.** Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that migrants from ethnic minority groups who come to the United States are more likely than White migrants to experience or perceive discrimination. Mainous (as cited in Ward et al., 2001) added, "Negative consequences can ensue if members of an immigrant community are held in low regard by the dominant ethno-cultural group. Perceived discrimination has been associated with less willingness to adopt host culture identity" (p. 15). Rumbaut (2008) expanded this idea, noting that discrimination may result in resistance to adopting the practices, values, and identifications of the receiving culture. Perceived



discrimination has also been related to identity conflict (Leong & Ward, as cited in Ward et al., 2001), which was found to be true for Trinidadians in Carlin's (2009) study.

Migrants from non-European backgrounds must come to terms with their own ethnicities after arriving in the United States or other Western countries. Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, and Szapocznik (2010) stated that migrants of color are challenged with and must adapt to their new status as minority group members:

Experiences of discrimination introduce the migrant to her or his role as a minority group member and to the reality that her or his ethnic group is regarded as unwanted, inferior, or unfairly stereotyped in the receiving society. Migrants of color therefore face the task of integrating themselves into a society that may never fully accept them. ("Focus on the United States," para. 4).

Schimmele and Wu (2015) discussed two implications of ethnicity functioning as a basis of social stratification in the United States for the social identities of non-European immigrants. First, the immigrants' choices of self-identification are constrained because the dominant group places them into ethno-racial categories. Society perceives them as Black regardless of their personal identity, and "this can discourage the use of unhyphenated labels and promote a preference for pan-ethnic identities" (Schimmele & Wu, 2015, p. 5). Second, Schimmele and Wu wrote:

The experience of racism can foster the development of in-group identities. Similarly, it can lead to a rejection of a national label such as "American" ... and alienation from the mainstream. These represent politicized identities that emerge in context of social exclusion and socio-economic deprivation. (p. 5)

Importantly, Schimmele and Wu further noted that, on the other hand, integration is the expected outcome for immigrants with prospects for socioeconomic mobility and few encounters with discrimination.

Vickerman (2001), in his book chapter, "Tweaking a Monolith: The West Indian Immigrant Encounter with 'Blackness,'" wrote:

West Indians are socialized not to see race as important in their daily lives or to their aspirations. Although on some levels race remains important in the West Indies, anti-racial socialization has proven effective. Consequently, West Indian immigrants experience difficulty coping with blatant racism in the United States. (p. 254)

Waters (1999) noted that race and everyday race relations are more of a problem in day-to-day life in the United States: “The struggle against racism in the Caribbean is less personal than in the U.S. and more about anti-colonialism and nationalism. The permeation of race in everyday culture in the U.S. is hard for the immigrants to cope with” (p. 34).

In my study, I asked participants whether they experienced discrimination in Trinidad and then again in the United States, in order to assess whether this had an impact on the renegotiation of their identities. The information in the literature presented above helped me analyze and understand their responses.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided a review of literature intended to present a scholarly foundation to explore the factors that impact the two questions addressed in this study: (a) How do Trinidadian immigrants define and reconceptualize four dimensions of their cultural identities (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality) as they make new lives in American society? and (b) Do identities shift and, if so, how, for Trinidadian immigrants when they move across cultures and nations to a society where they are no longer in the racial, ethnic, or cultural majority?

This exploration of the literature revealed some common themes and key implications. As defined by intercultural relations theorists, cultural identity is fluid, situational, and negotiated, a theme that repeatedly arose for researchers of West Indian

and Trinidadian immigrant identity choices. Personal and social identities combine to impact cultural identity, a key implication for this study as I assess the responses of the participants regarding the four dimensions. A model of ethnic identity development was explored to help frame potential responses of study participants. Some of the elements of cultural identity as described in cultural identity theory, such as enduring and changing aspects of identity, salience, and ascription/avowel, appeared throughout the literature on acculturation.

A review of the literature on acculturation and immigration revealed many critiques of traditional bidimensional acculturation models. For post-1965 non-European immigrants in heterogeneous societies, new more nuanced acculturation models—the tridimensional model, and the proximal host model—are more relevant. Black immigrants from the West Indies, and Trinidadians specifically, are faced with being labeled an ethnic/racial minority in the United States. According to the literature, the experiences of discrimination and racism may lead to identity conflict for these immigrants, but it may not necessarily cause a shift in their racial/ethnic identity, as most Trinidadians take great pride in their national culture. Additionally, integration is the expected outcome for immigrants with prospects for socioeconomic mobility and few encounters with discrimination.

The following chapter outlines the methods used to explore the experiences and perspectives of Trinidadians in Philadelphia to determine the impact of migration on the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and national dimensions of their cultural identities.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Overview**

This study used a mixed-methods approach: A quantitative analysis of an online survey was used to examine the identity-based acculturative experiences of the participants, and qualitative interviews were used to expand on the surveys and provide a more in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of a few participants. In this chapter, I will define mixed-methods research and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative research, as well as why I decided to use a mixed-methods approach. I will also describe the research participants and selection criteria, sampling methods used, the research instruments and validation strategies, ethics, and data analysis processes.

### **Mixed-Methods Research Design**

Mixed methodology is an approach to research that combines both qualitative and quantitative forms of inquiry. Creswell (2015) defined mixed-methods research as:

An approach to research in the social, behavioral, and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (close-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems. (p. 2)

Creswell noted that a core assumption of this approach is that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods provides a better understanding of, and more insight into, the central research question than either method alone.

There are several features of mixed methodology that prompted me to select this approach to this study. Quantitative data draw conclusions for larger numbers of people, thereby providing a broader, more general understanding. Quantitative research also analyzes data efficiently, investigates relationships within data, and controls bias (Creswell, 2015). However, quantitative research is impersonal, providing a limited understanding of context, which is critically important to research on acculturation and identity. Qualitative research, on the other hand, allows understanding of context through greater depth. Because of the small sample size, qualitative data are not generalizable; however, they provide detailed perspectives of a few people by capturing the voices of participants in their own words (Creswell, 2015), a key element of this study. Mertler (2016) noted:

Quantitative data can be used to provide numerical expressions of the relationships among variables or differences between groups, but detailed understanding of what those relationships mean (i.e., the meanings *behind* the results of the statistical tests), or from where the differences came can be provided only by qualitative data collections and analysis as a follow-up to the initial collection of quantitative data. (p. 145)

In selecting a mixed-methods approach, I determined that one data source might be insufficient to capture the complexity of this study's central question. A mixed-method approach is appropriate for the study of immigrant identity acculturation. Chirkov (2009b) recommended studying immigrant experiences through multimethod and qualitative approaches, such as open-ended interviews. As noted in the "Gaps in immigrant identity research" section of Chapter 2, much of the research on this topic is quantitative. Chirkov (2009a) argued that the ultimate goal of including qualitative approaches is "to gain a deep description of immigrants' experiences and the dynamics of their negotiation of their old and new identities, which should lead to the understanding

of the meanings that immigrants construct for their functioning in a new society” (p. 102).

This study employed what Creswell (2015) defined as a sequential explanatory research design, in which quantitative methods are used first, followed by qualitative methods to help explain and interpret the quantitative results in more depth. The study began with an initial online survey of 23 participants designed to gather data on the salience of the four dimensions of each participant’s cultural identity, both in Trinidad and the United States, and to present a numerical expression of the impact of migration on these identities. The online survey served five purposes. The survey: (a) gathered demographic data, (b) assisted in selection of participants for the interview portion of the research, (c) informed the content of the interview questions, (d) provided me with knowledge about my interviewees prior to the interview, and (e) provided me with a broader understanding of the central question based on patterns discovered from analyzing the responses of a larger group.

The survey was followed by in-person interviews with five selected survey participants, designed to validate and dig deeper into the survey findings by asking for clarification on their answers and getting interpretations in their own words. The interviews were semi-structured, consisting of open-ended questions; the small sample size provided an opportunity to gain insight into the worlds of the few participants and understand their identity and acculturation processes, allowing for deeper, richer layers on a complicated topic.

### **Selection Criteria and Research Participants**

The initial criteria for selecting participants in the study were the following:

- born in Trinidad and lived there until at least the age of 17;
- a minimum of 2 years living in the United States;
- currently living in Philadelphia or the surrounding suburbs;
- aged 21 years or older;
- ethnically African, Indian, or mixed descent; and
- legal immigration status (U.S. citizen or permanent resident).

As the survey results came in, I found that four of the participants did not meet the original criterion for number of years living in Trinidad, having lived there for fewer than 17 years. My original intent for including this criterion was to address two concerns: first, participants would not have clear memories of their time in Trinidad, and second, they may not have been old enough during their time in Trinidad for their ethnic, racial, and national identities to be shaped. I found this not to be the case; in the comments sections of the survey, these four participants articulated clearly how their identities were impacted by living in Trinidad. Therefore, I decided to disregard that criterion for these participants, and I have included their responses in the data summaries. One also participated in the second portion of the study, the qualitative interview.

The survey had 23 participants of various ethnicities, education levels, ages, and lengths of time living in Trinidad and in the Philadelphia area. Significantly, all of the participants are long-term residents of the United States, having lived here for a minimum of 10 years, with more than half having lived in the United States for over 20 years. Because of the history of Trinidadian immigration to this country, I was not able to find any recent immigrants who had lived in the United States for less than 5 years. The following sections describe the survey participants' demographics.

**Age.** Participants were asked to indicate which age group described them. One (4.4%) was 21–30, four (17.4%) were 31–40, eight (34.8%) were 41–50, six (26.1%) were 51–60; and four (17.4%) were over 60. Seventy-eight percent were over 40.

**Number of years living in Trinidad.** Participants lived in Trinidad from 9 to 40 years with a mean of 22.5 years and a standard deviation of 8.02 years. Most participants (15 of 23) lived in Trinidad from 16 to 30 years.

**Gender.** The gender of participants was almost evenly split, with 12 females and 11 males.

**Age migrated to United States.** Participants moved to the United States between the ages of 9 and 35 with a mean age of 22.26 years and a standard deviation of 7.07 years. A majority moved to the United States by the age of 20.

**Highest level of completed education.** The education level of the participants was varied with the mode of achieving graduate-level education. For six participants (26.1%), the highest level of education completed was secondary school (the equivalent of high school in the United States); for three participants (13%), the highest level of education completed was trade and technical school; for three participants (13%), the highest level of education completed was an associate's degree; for three participants (13%), the highest level of education completed was a bachelor's degree; and for eight participants (34.8%), the highest level completed was graduate school.

**Number of years living in Philadelphia region.** Participants lived in Philadelphia or the surrounding region from 10 to 41 years with a mean of 22.61 years and a standard deviation of 7.83 years. Sixty-one percent lived in the area more than 20 years.



**Frequency of visits to Trinidad.** Twelve participants (52.17%) visit Trinidad one or more times per year; two (8.7%) visit every other year; eight (34.78%) rarely visit; and one (4.35%) never visits.

**Ethnicity.** The ethnicity options for the participants were described as African descent, East Indian descent, mixed descent, or other. Responses indicated that six (26.2%) were of African descent; five (21.7%) were of East Indian descent; 10 (43.5 %) were of mixed descent (three self-described as African and East Indian; one self-described as Trinidadian and Brazilian; one self-described as Black, Chinese, East Indian, and Portuguese; and five did not specify their mixed descent); and two (8.7%) indicated “other” (one self-described as Negro and one as Hebrew Israelite).

Five of the survey participants were selected for follow-up interviews. Chapter 4 contains a detailed description of interviewee demographics.

### **Sampling Methods**

The selection strategy to obtain participants for the survey entailed snowball and network sampling. In snowball sampling, a researcher’s knowledge of potentially viable participants who meet the research criteria and interest are obtained from people who know them (Creswell, 2013). I contacted friends and family members of Trinidadian and non-Trinidadian descent, to request referrals to potential participants. Snowball sampling worked well in this type of research because the referrals I acquired opened doors to qualified participants, and the referring people vouched for my trustworthiness. Network sampling entails using social or other networks (e.g., organizations) to locate and recruit participants (Davis & Lachlan, 2012). I was taken to two Trinidadian restaurants and a West Indian nightclub in Philadelphia by my Trinidadian stepfather, who acted as a

cultural liaison, introducing me to his friends. I also spoke with the founder/director of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Philadelphia (TTAP), who agreed to both participate in the study and assist me in the outreach process. I composed an email explaining the purpose, goals, criteria, and expectations of study participants, along with an explanation of how confidentiality would be maintained and a link to the survey. She and I sent this email to Trinidadians in our circles of acquaintances and to others referred to me through friends and family. Additionally, the founder/director of TTAP gave me access to the email addresses of the target population. This allowed me to send follow-up emails with gentle reminders to complete the survey by my deadline.

When selecting participants for the second stage of the study, in-depth interviews, I used a purposeful maximal sampling. In this type of sampling, “the researcher uses his or her own judgment about which respondents to choose, and picks only those who best meet the purposes of the study” (Bailey, 1994, p. 96). The advantage of this type of sampling “is that the researcher can use his or her research skill and prior knowledge to choose respondents” (Baily, 1996, p. 96). Therefore, based on my prior knowledge of Trinidadian culture, and my interest in understanding the responses of people of different ethnic identities, I selected participants of the three largest ethnic groups represented in Trinidad—African, Indian, and mixed descent—to show different perspectives. Additionally, I narrowed down the group based on those who elected to leave comments to explain their answers on the survey, showing that they were willing to share ideas and go deeper into their answers. The final question of the survey asked participants if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview of 1 to 1.5 hours to dig more deeply into the topic. I contacted individuals who answered “yes” or “maybe” to this question. I

then followed up with a phone call or email to determine who was most articulate and willing to share ideas to ensure adequate data, as suggested by Creswell (2013).

### **Research Instruments**

**Online survey.** The first stage of the study was the online survey, consisting of 23 questions (see full survey in Appendix B) divided into three sections: The first section was designed to gather information about the participants' migration history, the second section elicited responses to the study's central questions, and the final section asked about demographic information and willingness to participate in Stage 2 of the study, the follow-up interview. The platform used was Qualtrics, a web-based survey research tool chosen because it allows a wide variety of question types, a range of skip and branching logics, and various data reporting options.

The survey was designed to be brief, taking 10–15 minutes to complete, and began with a consent form (see Appendix A) that described the research topic, purpose, and process and introduced me as the researcher. It reviewed participant qualifications, the potential risks and benefits, the voluntary nature of participation and the participant's right to withdraw at any time, and assurance of their anonymity.

***Background questions on migration history.*** The first section consisted of seven questions that assessed the participant's migration history, such as how many years he or she lived in Trinidad and the United States, as well as the participant's age when he or she migrated and how often the participant visits Trinidad. I designated this as the first section because these questions seemed to be the least threatening. Pew Research Center (n.d.) stated:

A questionnaire, like a conversation, should be grouped by topic and unfold in a logical order. It is often helpful to begin the survey with simple questions that

respondents will find interesting and engaging to help establish rapport and motivate them to continue to participate in the survey. (“Question order,” para. 10)

These questions eased the respondents into more complex questions about their cultural identity and began the survey with personal, interesting, and engaging questions that provided context to the series of questions that followed.

***Answering the central question.*** The second series of questions was designed to assess the strength or importance of the four dimensions of identity (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality) when participants were living in Trinidad and again now that they are living in the United States, as well as any changes in saliency between their time living in both countries. This series of questions addressed a portion of the secondary central question of this study: “Do identities shift and, if so, how, for Trinidadian immigrants when they move across cultures and nations to a society where they are no longer in the racial, ethnic, or cultural majority?” Burton, Nandi, and Platt (2010) noted, importantly, that ethnicity and race are defined and categorized differently according to national context. In designing these questions, several of my Trinidadian friends pointed out to me that Trinidadians do not separate race and ethnicity, as is the norm in the United States. I therefore adjusted the definitions for each of the identity dimensions to clarify the questions’ intentions.

The first questions asked participants how much they agreed (using a scale from “strongly agree” to strongly disagree”) with the following two statements: (a) “When I lived in Trinidad, I had a clear sense of my *ethnicity* and what it meant to me,” and (b) “When I lived in Trinidad, I had a clear sense of my *racial identity* and what it meant to me.” The first statement was borrowed from Phinney’s (1992) Multigroup Ethnic

Identity Measure (MEIM), which included 15 statements. Phinney noted that this is one of the statements that measure affirmation, belonging, and commitment to one's ethnic identity. In the second statement above, I adapted Phinney's statement to racial identity. I then asked these questions again regarding their time living in the United States.

According to the Pew Research Center website, "When measuring change over time, it is important to use the same question wording and to be sensitive to where the question is asked in the questionnaire to maintain a similar context as when the question was asked previously" ("Measuring change over time," para. 3). I used exact wording of the questions that were asked twice, addressing the United States immediately after Trinidad, with questions in the same order for each country. Additionally, Pew Research Center described social desirability bias as follows:

People have a natural tendency to want to be accepted and liked, and this may lead people to provide inaccurate answers to questions that deal with sensitive subjects . . . research has also shown that social desirability bias can be greater when an interviewer is present (e.g., telephone and face-to-face surveys) than when respondents complete the survey themselves (e.g., paper and web surveys). ("Question wording," para. 9)

In this study, the use of the web-based survey reduced social desirability bias.

Burton et al. (2010) recommended that, when a researcher is measuring identity salience in a survey, for each identity dimension focused on, "there could be a question attempting to gauge the strength or importance of that dimension, possibly on a scale rated by terms such as 'very', 'not very', etc." (p. 1,344). With this in mind, I designed this section of the survey to include a series of questions attempting to gauge the strength or importance of each of the four dimensions of identity focused on in this study, ranked on a sliding scale, where 0 = not at all important and 5 = extremely important. This same

series of questions was asked first regarding their time living in Trinidad, and then again regarding their identity now that they are living in the United States.

This section of the survey included two additional questions addressing national identity: one designed to determine whether respondents describe their national identity as Trinidadian, American, or somewhere in between and one to determine how participants identify themselves when someone who is not from the Caribbean asks them. Each question in this section gave the respondent the option to leave a comment to explain his or her answer.

***Demographics.*** According to Pew Research Center, “Demographic questions such as income, education or age should not be asked near the beginning of a survey unless they are needed to determine eligibility for the survey or for routing respondents through particular sections of the questionnaire” (“Question order,” para. 10). Accordingly, the third and final section of this survey, consisting of six questions, was designed to gather demographic information such as age, gender, ethnic background, and education. The questions asking age and ethnicity were included to look for patterns in the responses to the saliency questions based on these demographics. The ethnic identity categories were based on how participants would be labeled in Trinidad (African, East Indian, or mixed), rather than how they would be categorized in the United States. Other demographic questions, while not included in the Results chapter, were used as selection criteria for interviewees and may be used in future research.

***Survey validation strategies.*** Bolarinwa (2015), in his discussion of validity of questionnaires in social research, provided the following definitions:

Validity expresses the degree to which a measurement measures what it purports to measure. Internal validity refers to how accurately the measures obtained from

the research was actually quantifying what it was designed to measure whereas external validity refers to how accurately the measures obtained from the study sample described the reference population from which the study sample was drawn. (Introduction, para. 3)

Bailey (1994) noted that “Face validity is simply assessed by the evaluator’s studying the concept to be measured and determining, in his or her best judgment, whether the instrument arrives at the concept adequately” (p. 89). To increase internal validity, I studied the concepts of identity salience and identity shifting, as well as immigrant identity-based acculturation, and used my best judgment to design an instrument that would adequately measure these concepts and would answer and quantify this study’s central questions. However, there may have been other variables that impacted the change in identity saliency measured in the survey. For example, I cannot be entirely certain that the saliency scales are actually measuring the impact of migration and the process of acculturation on the four identities. Changes in identity salience between Trinidad and the United States for a given participant could have occurred partially because of maturing with age or other influences on the participant’s identities that occurred over his or her lifetime. The spaces for respondents to leave comments explaining their answers were designed to allow them to elaborate by providing this type of context to their answers. Additionally, the relative importance of any individual dimension of identity could vary based on situational and social contexts that are not measured in this instrument (e.g., changes in U.S. attitudes and potential policies toward immigrants after the election of President Trump, personal events such as marriage). Regarding external validity, the small sample size of the survey, limited because of insufficient time to gather more participants, may not be representative of the larger population of Trinidadians living in Philadelphia.

I also assessed the survey's content validity. Bolarinwa (2015) noted, "The development of a content valid instrument is typically achieved by a rational analysis of the instrument by raters (experts) familiar with the construct of interest" (Content Validity section, para. 1). My thesis committee members reviewed my survey tool for content, readability, clarity, and comprehensiveness and made recommendations for improvement. Additionally, I tested the reliability of the survey and the interview questions by conducting a pilot study with two of my Trinidadian family members who, because of personal relations, were not eligible to participate in the study. I revised my questions based on their feedback. The feedback from my thesis committee, as well as from the pilot study, informed my decision to reword the saliency questions on the survey for more precise definitions of the four identities and to provide clearer instructions for answering those questions. Additionally, some of the language used in the survey was altered to make it more appropriate for Trinidadians (e.g., the term "secondary school" replaced "high school" when asking education level).

**In-depth interviews.** Qualitative data were collected during the second stage of the study, through one-on-one semistructured in-person interviews. The interview protocol consisted of some predetermined questions that guided the interview's focus on in-depth responses that were specific to the research topic. The semistructured format allowed me to be flexible in probing areas of interest as they arose and allowed participants to communicate freely. This process not only cultivated unique themes but also facilitated rapport-building with the participants. Additionally, remaining flexible as the interviewer helped accommodate answers that were provided before questions were asked. The in-person format allowed me to observe and note nonverbal behavior as well.



The interview consisted of 13 open-ended questions that elicited retrospective and introspective responses from participants regarding their racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, and national identities before and after their immigration experience.

The interviews began with a biographical question, asking participants to tell me about themselves and their migration story. This biographical question served two purposes: First, similar to the approach used with the online survey, it allowed me to begin with a simple and engaging question that helped establish rapport. Second, it provided context for an individual's responses, creating room for diversity of individual perspectives, experiences, and personal identities. The remaining interview questions were designed to assess the impact of migration and the resulting intercultural interactions on participant racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, and national identities, and were arranged into three main themes: (a) questions that were a direct or indirect follow-up to the survey questions noted above that addressed the central question, allowing the interviewee to expand on their survey answers or go deeper into the topic; (b) their experiences with discrimination in Trinidad and the United States and the impact this has had on their cultural identities; and (c) questions that addressed identity-based acculturation and assimilation.

Interviews were held either in my home or the interviewee's home, based on convenience for the participant and a need for a quiet location free from distractions to ensure privacy and accurate recording of information. Interviews were recorded on a hand-held Philips voice recorder that was placed between me and the interviewee to capture the best sound. After meeting at the interview site, I reviewed the purpose of the study and the amount of time needed for the interview, and had the interviewee read and

sign the informed consent form (see Appendix C). At the end of the interview, participants were given a \$25 gift card for participation. Interviews lasted a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of one and a half hours.

***Interview validation strategies.*** To ensure that the interview process was valid, I hired a professional transcription service to confirm accurate data collection through verbatim transcription. Cultural and racial differences between the interviewer and interviewees may be regarded as problematic (Miller & Glassner, 2002). The respondents may or may not have seen me, a White, U.S. American stepdaughter of a Trinidadian immigrant, as a cultural outsider with insider knowledge. To mitigate any potential problems, I ensured that selected interview participants were motivated to share their stories with me through our communication before meeting in person. I shared the history of my connection with Trinidad to facilitate a familiarity and comfort level with participants to build trust and honesty in answers and thereby promote valid data.

One of the most essential characteristics of facilitating a good interview and producing valid data collection is the initial establishment of rapport with the participants (Ryen, 2001). As noted above, to assist my interview participants in feeling comfortable, I used a semistructured interview style and began the interviews with informal conversation. I described the nature of the research and why I am doing it, as well as the potential benefits for them—the opportunity to share their stories and learn about their community—so that the research process became a two-way exchange.

***Mixed-methods validation strategies.*** Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) noted that a mixed-methods research design is a validation strategy in itself—the data collected in each type of research of a mixed-methods study may be contradictory, and this would

not have been discovered had only one type of data collection been used. Comparing and integrating the data from both sources helps considerably to validate the results.

In Creswell's (2015) discussion of challenges and threats to validity in mixed-methods research that use an explanatory sequential research design such as the one used in this study, he noted that the researcher must make the following considerations: (a) what quantitative results need follow-up, (b) how they will select the sample of follow-up participants, (c) how they will develop relevant interview questions, and (d) how they will ensure that the qualitative data indeed explains the quantitative results. In this study, I asked interview questions that dug deeper into the causes of the participants' responses to the identity saliency and nationality survey questions. After an initial review of the survey results, I identified which results needed follow-up and modified some of my interview questions accordingly. I ensured that the qualitative data explained and clarified these quantitative results by asking them directly to explain their survey answers. Regarding Creswell's concern about how the sample of follow-up participants was selected, in this case for interviews, using purposeful sampling as cited above, I selected participants of African, East Indian, and mixed descent, as well as participants representing various ages and lengths of time living in Trinidad and in the United States, to show different perspectives and increase validity. However, because of a lack of willingness from people of lower educational backgrounds to participate in the interviews, I was not able to select interviewees with a sufficiently broad range of educational backgrounds to ensure complete representation of the survey respondents. Four out of five interviewees had either a master's degree or Ph.D., while the survey

participants' education level ranged from a secondary to postgraduate level, with a majority (65.2%) holding a bachelor's degree or lower.

### **Ethics**

Several strategies were used to remain ethical in this research. I obtained approval from the University of the Pacific Institutional Review Board before beginning the research, provided informed consent forms and a clear explanation of the study's purpose to participants, and informed them of their right to withdraw at any time. To maintain confidentiality, questionnaire data were accessed only by me, the researcher. I protected the identities of participants by maintaining confidentiality of names (Rossman & Rallis, 2011). All direct identifiers were removed and substituted with codes as soon as possible after receipt of questionnaires. I maintained a "master key" that linked the participants to the substitute codes. Interview data were accessed only by me and the transcriber, who deleted the data after transcription. I continued to use the code identifiers for the interviews and first names only during the conversations. In reporting of questionnaire and interview results, no identifiers were used. All data were maintained in a password-protected cloud server.

Martin and Butler (2001) noted that ethical researchers are self-reflective about their positionality and motivations. While recruiting survey participants in local restaurants and nightclubs in Philadelphia, I was aware that as a White, U.S. American, I may be perceived as a cultural and racial outsider; therefore, I brought a cultural liaison with me, my Trinidadian stepfather, who is known and respected in the community, to help bridge these gaps. In preparing for the interviews, I remained aware that I might be perceived as a cultural outsider by my interlocutors, and that their

perceptions of me might influence their answers. I am familiar with cultural nuances, histories, and attitudes of Trinidadians in the United States, and I consider myself both an insider and outsider of the culture. Therefore, I was able to maintain respect for racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, educational, and other cultural differences that surfaced.

I do, however, acknowledge and remain cognizant of the fact that throughout the conducting and presenting of this research, I am writing as a privileged White woman born in the United States with subjective experiences and an advantaged worldview. In my efforts to act ethically, it was vital that I remained self-reflexive, evaluating my own positionality and the perceptions, biases, values, and worldviews I brought with me working across racial and cultural differences. In my opinion, racial and class-based discrimination is widespread in the United States, creating a bitter reality that cannot be ignored. Remaining aware of this perception allowed me to bracket it as much as possible, which helped me avoid projecting my views when collecting and interpreting data.

Martin and Butler (2001) noted that ethical research is reciprocal. To make this research reciprocal, findings will be shared with the subjects, giving them the opportunity to learn about both the shared and unique acculturation experiences that they have with other Trinidadians in their community.

### **Data Analysis Processes**

A quantitative analysis of survey data was used to present a numerical representation and manipulation of data. The constant comparative method was used to analyze the results of the qualitative interviews. The convergence model of mixed

methodology was used to compare and contrast the quantitative and qualitative results. This section will describe these processes in greater depth.

**Quantitative data analysis.** Qualtrics, the internet-based statistical analysis software used to gather the survey data, was also used to perform the analysis. I downloaded the default report in Qualtrics, which presented data in tables or graphs, and used filters to show results for respondents who satisfied certain criteria. The report also included statistical representations such as the mean and standard deviation, and total responses recorded were automatically calculated. I applied percentaging where deemed most relevant to presenting the data. For some questions, I transferred data to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to develop subgroup comparisons in the form of charts and tables.

I prepared data in Qualtrics by reviewing all responses for completeness and consistency. Using the Qualtrics default report, interval questions, such as those using a Likert scale to determine whether respondents agree or disagree with a statement (Questions 8 and 10), were measured and reported in a table. For some questions, data were transformed; for example, Questions 9 and 11 measured the results of the saliency of the four identities, and responses were collapsed so that five points on a Likert scale were reduced to three categories to improve the intelligibility and produce a better picture of the outcomes. This assumes that the intervals between the five points on the scale are uncertain and unquantifiable.

In response to the central question about shifting identities, data about saliency of the four identities while living in Trinidad and the United States were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. I constructed a bivariate table, and the differences were calculated and collapsed into three categories: more salient, less salient, and no change for reporting

purposes. A multivariate analysis was performed to achieve a subgroup comparison to describe the shift in saliencies in the four identities based on the respondents' ethnicities.

Survey questions related to the study's central question included the option for respondents to leave comments, and comments that were deemed important to the central question were added to the results. Additionally, I looked for trends and distributions in the tables and charts and described them in text format.

**Qualitative data analysis.** The approach to conducting the interview analysis was derived from Boeije's (2002) "A Purposeful Approach to the Constant Comparative Method in the Analysis of Qualitative Interviews." The first step was comparison within a single interview. I read transcriptions in their entirety to review responses and listened to recorded interviews at key points for clarification and to hear the interviewees' voice inflections when speaking about a specific topic. The process involved open coding, an initial organization of data to try to make sense of it and determine exactly what was said (Boeiji, 2002). Passages were labeled with a code using key words, and parts of the interviews that were relevant to the central research questions were color coded. Consistency or lack thereof within each interview was noted. During the process of inserting codes, relevant quotes related to each code were noted for possible inclusion in the results. I used memoing to track my thoughts about the data analysis process, as well as noting when there was a relationship among code categories and themes. The primary purpose of this step was to lead to categories that would be developed in Step 2 and to identify the core message of each interview.

The second step entailed comparison between interviews. The purpose of this step was to enrich the information obtained in Step 1 and to lead to the identification of

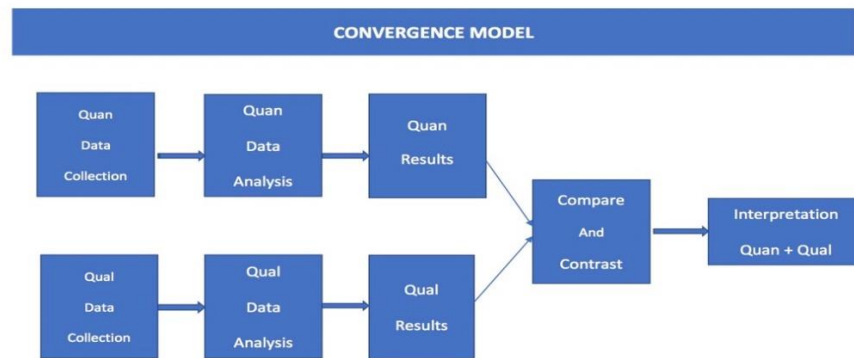
concepts and themes. The process involved axial coding, the identification and interconnection of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For this step, I incorporated mind mapping using Mindomo software. I formulated initial categories for comparing the interview data based on the codes established in Step 1. I compared passages that were coded the same but from different interviews, and I transferred coded key words from the interviews to the mind map into the appropriate categories. As the comparison process continued, code words and categories were expanded and collapsed until appropriate categories were finalized. The final categories were: race and ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, personal identity, and acculturation/assimilation. I initially had one additional category, the impact of discrimination and racism on identity, which I collapsed into the category of race and ethnicity because of redundancy in codes between the two. I also referenced quotes from interviewees on the mind map that were appropriate to different codes.

The third step was interpretation of the data. I compared codes in each category by interviewee to hypothesize and identify patterns and themes. A theme was defined as something important relating to the research questions, such as, "Race and ethnicity are more salient in the United States." As I identified the themes, I noted how many of the five interviewees addressed each theme. As the purpose of this method is to compare and contrast, when I deemed it important, I noted a contrasting viewpoint. Finally, I reorganized the quotes and inserted them where appropriate to each theme or pattern.

**Mixed-methods data analysis.** Mixed methodology contributes to the constant comparative method through comparing and contrasting the quantitative and qualitative data. Creswell (1999) addressed three criteria for mixed methodology design: timing,



weighting, and mixing. As mentioned above, this study applies the sequential explanatory research design to address timing, the order in which each method is completed. Equal weight is applied to qualitative and quantitative methods. The convergence model (see Figure 1 below), which merges results during interpretation of the data, was used to address the mixing criteria. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the findings that emerged from these analyses.



*Figure 1.* Creswell's (1999) convergence model of mixed methodology.

## Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter 3 presented the mixed-methods design of this research and why it was deemed appropriate for this study. Chapter 4 will present the findings, first of the quantitative results of the survey and the qualitative survey comments that contextualized them. Next, the qualitative findings from the interviews will be presented, revealing themes that emerged regarding why and how a small subset of survey participants defined and reconceptualized their racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, and national identities after migrating to the United States. The chapter will conclude with an interpretation of data based on comparing and contrasting the quantitative and qualitative findings.

### Quantitative Findings

This section will present data for responses to the survey questions that addressed the secondary central question of this study: “Do identities shift and, if so, how, for Trinidadian immigrants when they move across cultures and nations to a society where they are no longer in the racial, ethnic, or cultural majority?” It will also present data that compare the saliency of each of the four dimensions of identity when participants were living in Trinidad, and then again now that they live in the United States—in other words, any potential shifts in their perception of each identity. In the data presented below, the term *salient* is used interchangeably with the word *important*.

**Questions 8 and 10 (see Appendix B).** Question 8: *Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: When I lived in Trinidad, I had a clear*

*sense of my ethnicity and what it meant to me. When I lived in Trinidad, I had a clear sense of my racial identity and what it meant to me.* Question 10 asked participants the same questions for their time living in the United States. All 23 respondents answered the questions on a Likert-type scale with the option to select one of the following answers: strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree. Table 1 shows the results for Questions 8 and 10.

<u>Race and Ethnicity in Trinidad and U.S.</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>%</u>
Ethnicity in Trinidad	17	73.9	5	21.7	1	4.4	0	0.0
Ethnicity in U.S.	17	73.9	3	13.0	2	8.7	1	4.4
Race in Trinidad	14	60.9	6	26.1	2	8.7	1	4.4
Race in U.S.	16	69.6	2	8.7	3	13.0	2	8.7

*Note.* Measured by number of respondents and percentage of the total participants.

A majority of respondents either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with both statements noted above regarding their time living both in Trinidad and the United States. Significantly, at 73.9%, the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed that they had a clear sense of their ethnicity and what it meant to them did not change after moving to the United States. A majority of respondents also strongly agreed that they had a clear sense of their racial identity when living in Trinidad at 60.9%, but this number increased to 69.6% for their time living in the United States.

**Questions 9 and 11 (see Appendix B).** Question 9 asked, *How important were the following parts of your cultural identity to you when you lived in Trinidad: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality?* Question 11 asked participants the same questions for their time living in the United States. The next set of data measures the saliency of the four dimensions of cultural identity (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality) for survey participants when living in Trinidad and in the United States. All 23 participants answered the questions on a Likert-type scale of 0–5: 0 = not at all important and 5 = extremely important.

The saliency of identities was summarized as follows in Table 2: selections of 0–1 on the scale = not at all important or slightly important; selections of 2–3 on the scale = moderately important; and selections of 4–5 on the scale = very important. For detailed responses, see Tables E1 and E2 in Appendix E.

Identities	VI*	%	MI	%	N/SI	%	M	SD
Race in Trinidad	12	52.2	4	17.4	7	30.4	2.96	1.76
Race in U.S.	15	65.2	3	13	5	21.7	3.52	1.64
Ethnicity in Trinidad	13	56.5	4	17.4	6	26.1	3.22	1.61
Ethnicity in U.S.	16	69.6	3	13	4	17.4	3.65	1.55
Socio-economic in Trinidad	14	60.9	5	12.7	4	17.4	3.39	1.55
Socio-economic in U.S.	15	65.2	6	26.1	2	8.7	3.65	1.34

Nationality in Trinidad	13	56.5	6	26.1	4	17.4	3.39	1.74
Nationality in U.S.	16	69.6	5	21.7	2	8.7	3.91	1.44
<i>Note.</i> Measured by number of respondents and percentage of total participants.								
*VI =very important; MI=moderately important; N/SI=not at all or slightly important; M=mean ranking on a scale of 0–5; SD=standard deviation								

***Saliency of identities in Trinidad.*** Of all the participants, 52%–61% found all four identities to be very important (or salient) for them when they lived in Trinidad. Higher percentages of respondents found race and ethnicity to be not at all or slightly important compared to socioeconomic status and nationality. When combining the first two columns in Table 2, 70% of respondents found race to be moderately or very important, 74% found ethnicity to be moderately or very important, 74% found socioeconomic status to be moderately or very important, and 83% found nationality to be moderately or very important. The mean rankings, representing the average of the survey participant responses on a scale of 0–5, ranged from 2.96–3.39.

***Saliency of identities in the United States.*** Notably, 65%–70% of respondents found all four identities to be very important (salient) now that they were living in the United States, a higher percentage than when they lived in Trinidad. The mean rankings ranged from 3.52–3.91. Additionally, the percentage of respondents who found the identities to be moderately or very important increased for all four identities in the United States: 78% of respondents found race to be moderately or very important, 82% found ethnicity to be moderately or very important, 91% found socioeconomic status to be moderately or very important, and 91% found nationality to be moderately or very important.

**Context to responses.** Survey participants were given the option to leave comments explaining their answers to the two questions asked above (9 and 11), addressing their identities in Trinidad and then again in the United States. Seven out of 23 respondents left comments for both questions, and an additional two people left comments only for Question 11, addressing identity in the United States. Four themes emerged. First, three of 10 respondents who identified as mixed race commented that race was not important to them, specifically because of being mixed race. One person noted, “I had very little challenges as I was born into a mixed-race family. We never felt or was made to feel different.” Another respondent noted, “Race and Ethnicity are more important and looked at more intensely (when compared to Trinidad) in the U.S.”

Second, three people commented that issues around these four identities were not salient to them when they lived in Trinidad because of their young age. The third theme was addressed by two respondents who commented on Trinidad’s cosmopolitan nature. One noted, “Trinidad is a cosmopolitan nation, one [that] in my opinion celebrate[s] ethnic and racial differences.” Finally, four respondents commented that identities are negatively impacted by living in the United States. One person noted, “This society forces one to choose sides and to define oneself in its version of race, ethnicity and nationality no matter one’s rich contextual personal story.” Another commented that she is “now a more culturally awakened person who identifies with many of the minority concerns, as there are many minority groups in the United States that are deprived of the same opportunities and privileges as other groups.”

**Shifts in saliency of four dimensions of identity.** The saliencies of the four identities when living in Trinidad were compared to the saliencies of these identities

when living in the United States for each participant, measuring changes in the level of importance as more salient, less salient, or no change. Table 3 below displays the results.

<u>Identities</u>	<u>More Salient</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Less Salient</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No Change</u>	<u>%</u>
Race	9	39.1	4	17.4	10	43.0
Ethnicity	8	34.8	2	8.7	13	56.5
Socio-economic	6	26.1	1	4.4	16	69.6
Nationality	7	30.4	2	8.7	14	60.9

*Note.* Measured by number of respondents and percent of total participants (23).

Notably, for three of the identities (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality), more than half of respondents indicated no shift in saliency: 50% of females and 64% of males stated that there was no shift in saliency in their ethnic identity, 75% of females and 64% of males showed no shift in saliency in socioeconomic status identity, and 50% of females and 73% of males showed no shift in saliency in national identity. Additionally, very few respondents indicated that any of the identities became less salient in the United States. Contrary to my expectation that a higher number of participants would indicate a more salient racial identity, only nine participants indicated that race became more salient, while 10 indicated no shift in racial identity.

**Shifts in saliency of identities based on participant ethnicity.** Table 4 below displays a comparison of shifts in saliency of the four dimensions of identity based on the ethnicity of the participants.

Table 4								
<i>Shifts in Saliency of the Four Dimensions of Identity Based on Participant Ethnicity.</i>								
<u>Amount of Shift</u> <u>by Identity</u>	<u>African</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>East</u> <u>Indian</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Mixed</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>%</u>
Race								
MS*	2	33.3	3	60.0	4	40.0	0	0.0
LS	1	16.7	1	20.0	2	20.0	0	0.0
NC	3	50.0	1	20.0	4	40.0	2	100.0
Ethnicity								
MS	3	50.0	2	40.0	3	30.0	0	0.0
LS	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	10.0	0	0.0
NC	3	50.0	2	40.0	6	60.0	2	100.0
Socioeconomic								
MS	2	33.3	2	40.0	1	10.0	0	0.0
LS	0	0.00	1	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
NC	4	66.7	2	40.0	9	90.0	2	100.0
Nationality								
MS	1	16.7	2	40.0	3	30.0	0	0.0
LS	1	16.7	0	0.0	1	10.0	0	0.0
NC	4	66.7	3	60.0	6	60.0	2	100.0
<i>Note.</i> Measured by number of respondents and percentage of the total of each ethnic group								
*MS=more salient; LS=less salient; NC=no change								

Of Afro-Trinidadians, 50%–67% showed no change of saliency in all four identities. For people of mixed descent, over half of respondents indicated no change of saliency in ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality; however, only 40% showed

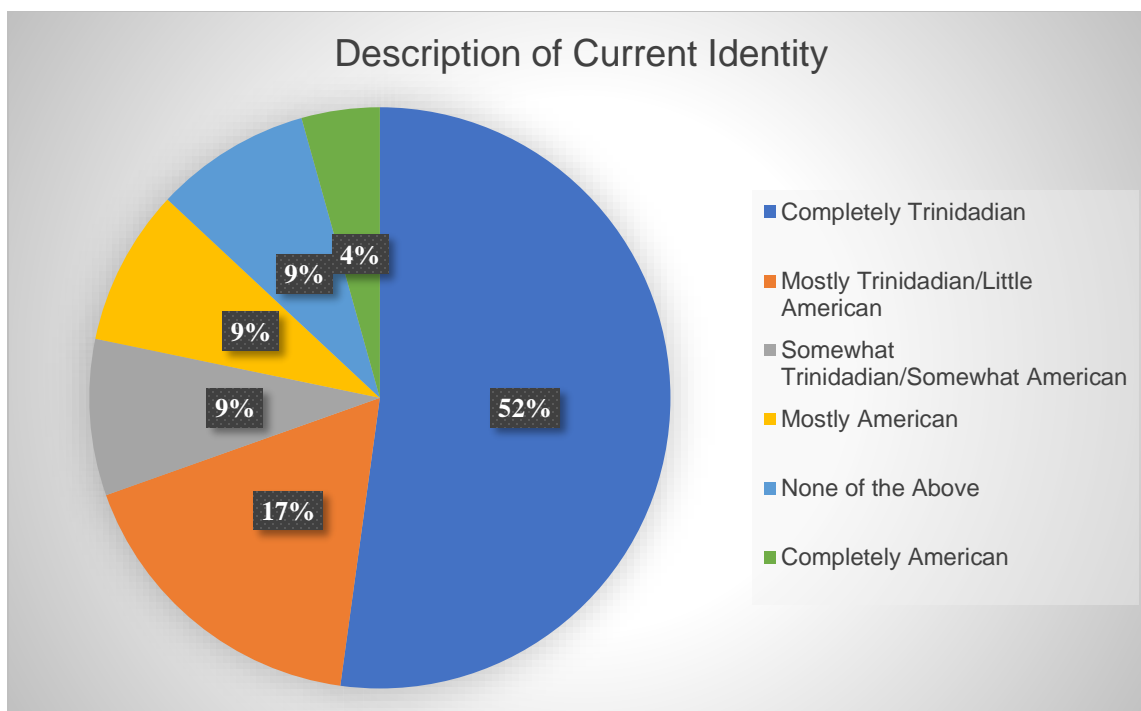


no change in saliency of racial identity, while 40% indicated that racial identity is more salient in the United States. For East Indian participants, race became more salient in the United States for 60% and varied for each of the other three identities.

Table E3 in Appendix E displays a comparison of shifts in saliency of the four dimensions of identity based on age. The majority of respondents were over 40. There was no change in saliency in socioeconomic or national identities for a significant majority of respondents in that age bracket; however, ethnic identity became more salient in the United States for that age bracket. Participants over the age of 50 had the highest percentage of respondents whose race became more salient in the United States.

I also intended to analyze the shift in saliency of identity based on the length of time participants lived in the United States; however, as they have all lived in the United States for a minimum of 10 years, and more than half of them have lived here for more than 20 years, I consider them long-term U.S. residents who displayed minimal variance in length of time living in the United States; therefore, I did not include it.

**Question 12 (see Appendix B), self-descriptions of current identity.** *Which of these descriptions do you feel most clearly describes your current identity: completely Trinidadian, mostly Trinidadian but a little American, somewhat American and somewhat Trinidadian, mostly American but a little Trinidadian, or completely American?*



*Figure 2.* Self-descriptions of current identity. This figure illustrates how respondents describe their current identity.

Notably, 16 respondents (69%), all living in Trinidad from 14–40 years, indicated they identified as completely Trinidadian or mostly Trinidadian and a little American. Thirteen out of 23 respondents left an optional comment explaining their answers to Question 12. Among those commenters who identified as mostly or completely Trinidad, they stressed that Trinidad was their place of birth and they will always be a Trinidadian. One woman of African descent who left Trinidad at age 15 and visits every other year said, “I’ve lived in the U.S. about half of my life now and I find that I identify with many American values, yet my Trinidadian heritage is key to how I see myself. I make a point to reconnect with my Trinidadian culture when I can.” Another man of African descent who left Trinidad at age 18 said, “Strong National Pride.”

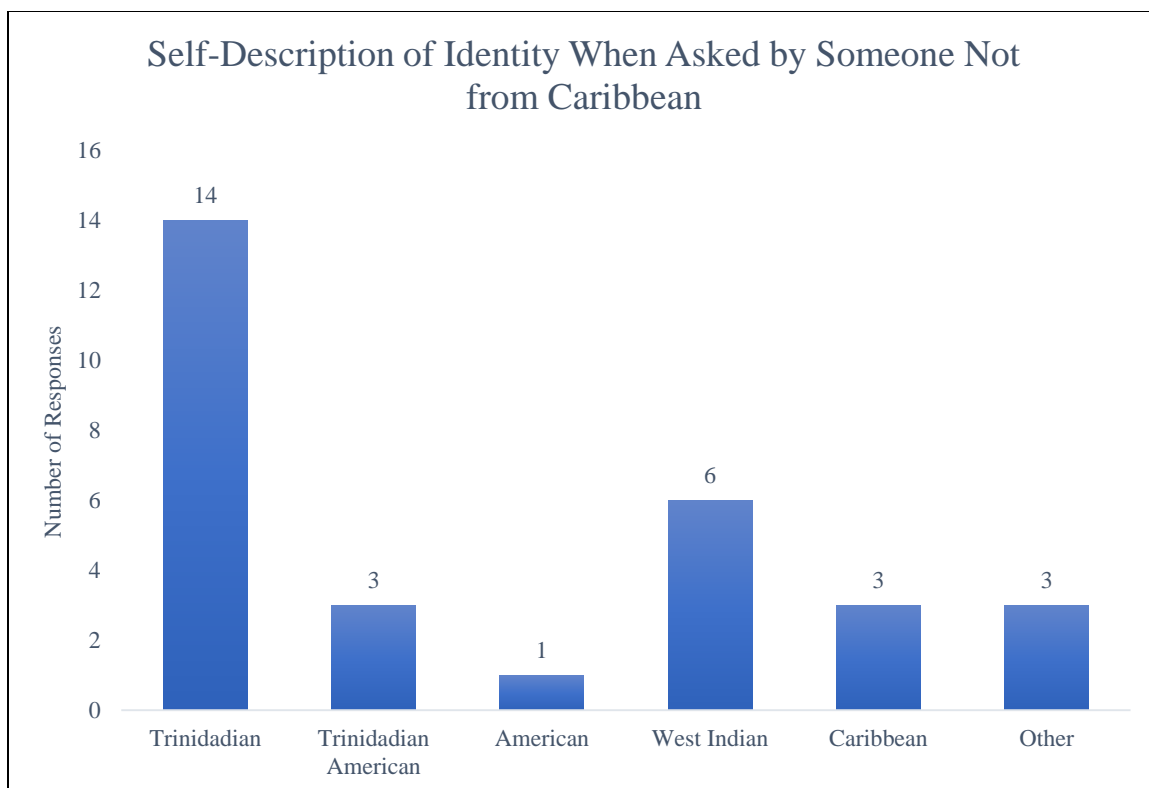
Two out of three respondents who identify as mostly American or completely American left a comment. The theme of assimilation arose for both of them. One woman of mixed descent who left Trinidad at age 9 and rarely visits said,

I assimilated into this culture. When we first came to Philadelphia it was the late 1970s. Being from the Caribbean was not popular. I remember when kids heard my accent, I was told to get back on the “banana boat.” My dad told us at that time to forget everything Trini. He even enrolled us in speech classes to get rid of the accent and were told to speak proper English no slang. Then I was told, I speak like a “white girl.” I still enjoy Trini foods.

Another woman of East Indian descent who left Trinidad at age 15 and rarely visits said, “As a young child, I never felt the want or need to stay in Trinidad, my heart and mind was always come the United States of America.”

**Question 14 (see Appendix B), self-identification when asked by someone not from the Caribbean.** *If someone who is not from the Caribbean asks you, how do you identify? Check all that apply: West Indian, Trinidadian, Trinidadian-American, Caribbean, American, or Other (with an option to explain).*

Thirty responses were given see Figure 3. A majority of respondents still identified as Trinidadian, or even West Indian, when asked by someone who is not from the Caribbean. Participants who selected “other” were given the option to explain their answer. One answered, “Afro-Caribbean”; one answered, “It depends what each of the above mean”; and one answered, “I always check the other box.” One woman of African descent commented, “I do identify as Afro-Caribbean, a term not easily found on documents as an option ... often, we as a people get categorized or we fall into the limited categories present to us.”



*Figure 3.* Self-description of identity when asked by someone not from the Caribbean. This figure illustrates how participants identify when asked by someone who is *not* from the Caribbean.

With survey respondents who participated in interviews, I attempted to explore the “how” and the “why” behind the quantitative findings by asking them to qualify their survey responses and to delve more deeply into their personal experiences.

### **Qualitative Findings**

Five survey participants were selected to participate in the semistructured interviews. Throughout the reporting of the data analysis, I will refer to them as P1–P5. These participants’ survey responses varied in their reflection of the patterns identified in the quantitative data. I will begin this section by summarizing the survey responses and describing the backgrounds of each interviewee to provide context for their answers to

the interview questions. Biographies will be followed by an analysis of how the interviewees defined each of the four identities after migrating to the United States and why they did or did not reconceptualize their identities.

**Participant biographies.** P1 is a woman of African descent between the ages of 31–40. She lived in Trinidad until the age of 14 before moving to Jamaica until age 18, when she moved to the United States in 1996 to attend college in Virginia. She moved to Philadelphia in 2004 to pursue a Ph.D. and has lived there since. She visits Trinidad every other year to spend time with family. On the survey, she described her identity as mostly Trinidadian but a little American and commented, “I find that I identify with many American values, yet my Trinidadian heritage is key to how I see myself.” Her survey response indicated that she identifies as Trinidadian when asked by those who are not Caribbean. Her answers to the survey questions addressing the saliency of the four identities for her time living in Trinidad and now that she is living in the United States (0 = not at all important; 5 = extremely important) were as follows: Race shifted from 2 to 5, ethnicity shifted from 4 to 5, socioeconomic status stayed the same at 3, and nationality stayed the same at 5.

P2 is a woman of mixed African and East Indian descent between the ages of 51–60. She lived in Trinidad until the age of 32 before moving to Philadelphia in 1996 to attend college. She chose to live in Philadelphia because she had friends and family living there, and she has settled in the city, continuing her education to attain a Ph.D. She visits friends and family in Trinidad at least once per year. On the survey, she described her identity as mostly Trinidadian but a little American and commented, “I live and work in America and I carry an American passport and therefore at times I have to identify

myself as an American, especially during travel abroad.” Her survey response indicated that she identifies as Trinidadian, West Indian, or Caribbean when asked by those who are not West Indian, and she commented, “I am first a Trinidadian.” Her answers to the survey questions addressing the saliency of the four identities for her time living in Trinidad and now that she is living in the United States were as follows: Race shifted from 1 to 3, ethnicity shifted from 1 to 3, socioeconomic status shifted from 3 to 5, and nationality stayed the same at 5. She commented about her identity while living in Trinidad: “Race was not very important to me because I consider myself as biracial or belonging to both of the major race or ethnic groups in Trinidad.” She also commented about her identity while living in the United States: “Race and ethnicity are more important and looked at more intensely (when compared to Trinidad) in the U.S.”

P3 is a man of African descent over the age of 60. He lived in Trinidad until the age of 18, when he moved to the United States in 1961 to attend college on an athletic scholarship. He has a master’s degree and has lived in Philadelphia for most of his life. He visits Trinidad one or more times per year. On the survey, he described his identity as completely Trinidadian and commented, “strong national pride.” His survey response indicated that he identifies as Trinidadian, West Indian, or Caribbean when asked by those who are not West Indian. His answers to the survey questions addressing the saliency of the four identities for his time living in Trinidad and now that he is living in the United States were as follows: Race stayed the same at 5, ethnicity stayed the same at 5, socioeconomic status stayed the same at 4, and nationality stayed the same at 5. On the survey, he commented regarding his identity while living in Trinidad: “Because Trinidad is a cosmopolitan nation. One in my opinion celebrate ethnic and racial

differences.” Regarding his identity while living in the United States, he commented on the survey, “One cannot help but be aware because most times it impacts your life negatively.”

P4 is a woman between the ages of 41–50. She identified her ethnic background as African descent on the survey; however, she also discussed growing up in a mixed-race family, with her grandmother being of East Indian descent. She lived in Trinidad until the age of 23, when she moved to Antigua and Barbuda before moving to Philadelphia at the age of 29 with her now-ex-husband, who was attending college there. She has an associate’s degree and visits Trinidad one or more times per year. On the survey, she described her identity as completely Trinidadian and commented,

Trinidad is the place of my birth and can never be erased. I do identify as Afro-Caribbean, a term not easily found on document as an option, but in order to be counted in America, I encourage others to have that or Indo-Caribbean or even our Latino-Caribbean (Afro-Latino) cultures. Because often, we as a people get categorized or we fall into the limited categories present to us.

Her survey response indicated that she identifies as Afro-Caribbean when asked by someone not from the West Indies, and she commented,

As a person of color with the given struggles and fights for racial identity, it’s important to embrace my Caribbean Heritage. As I reframe people’s mind about who I am in the context of my contribution, it helps them to see your value, first as a person, then as an immigrant expat.

Her answers to the survey questions addressing the saliency of the four identities for her time living in Trinidad and now that she is living in the United States, were as follows: Race shifted from 2 to 5, ethnicity shifted from 3 to 5, socioeconomic status shifted from 1 to 3, and nationality shifted from 2 to 3. She commented about her time living in Trinidad:

I had very little challenges as I was born into a mixed race family with my grandmother's side of the family being Indian. We never felt or was made to feel different. Our socio-economic status matched those around us. My age and lack of conscious awakening had a lot to do with my acceptance.

She also commented about her identity now that she lives in the United States: "I am now a more culturally awoken person, who identifies with many of the minority concerns, as there are many minority groups in the United States that are deprived of the same opportunities and privileges as other groups."

P5 is a woman of East Indian descent between the ages of 41–50. She was born in Canada to Trinidadian parents who moved her back to Trinidad at 1.5 years old. She lived in Trinidad until the age of 16, when she moved to Toronto, Canada, to attend boarding school in 1985. She eventually returned to Trinidad for work and stayed until 1993 when she moved to the United States to pursue a master's degree in New York. Since then, she has lived in Barbados and Connecticut, where her now-ex-husband found work. She has lived in Philadelphia since 2001 and visits her family in Trinidad one or more times per year. On the survey question that asked which description most clearly defines her current identity, she selected "none of the above" and commented, "Of the world ... but mostly people see me as Indian." Her survey response indicated that she identifies as West Indian when asked by those who are not West Indian. Her answers to the survey questions addressing the saliency of the four identities for her time living in Trinidad and now that she is living in the United States were as follows: Race stayed the same at 4, ethnicity stayed the same at 4, socioeconomic status stayed the same at 4, and nationality stayed the same at 3. Regarding her identity while living in Trinidad, she commented, "I had a strong family support network who reinforced a sense of identity, tradition and heritage. It seemed easier to define oneself there. Also, I was still a part of



my parents' household, and their identities were clearly defined.” Regarding her identity now that she is living in the United States, she commented on the survey:

I have no family support network here and have forged my own traditions and identities based on multiple factors: born in Canada, lived in the Caribbean, schooled in the US and Canada, formerly married to an East Indian, mother to a first-gen Indian-American child. This society forces one to choose sides and to define oneself in its version of race, ethnicity and nationality no matter one's rich contextual personal story.

**Personal identities are key.** For all interviewees, personal identities played a key role in their acculturation and assimilation in the United States. When addressing these topics during the interviews, they could not discuss their cultural identities without including their personal identities in their understanding of themselves.

All of the interviewees demonstrated a strong sense of self that anchored them during their acculturation process. P2 discussed that, although she is considered different in the United States because of her accent, she does not give in to others' expectations of her: “I think I stay me. True to the heart.” P4 also expressed a strong personal identity in the following quotations:

I don't struggle with my identity within the context of the wider world, I just fit in. ... I prefer to consider myself a grounded Trinidad and Tobago person who is very much in tune with the global affairs and my contribution to global humanity ... who I am is [her name], and that outlook, how God has made me and my contributions to the world is what makes the difference.

P4 continued discussing her ability to assimilate while maintaining her personal identity:

My ability to assimilate and not hide the fact of who I am, but very proud of who I am. I feel very comfortable in my skin as opposed to some people who assimilate and completely disassociate themselves from the culture.

P5 conveyed that she never felt the need to assimilate because her upbringing provided her with a strong, integrated sense of self that has stayed with her throughout her life. She was not defined solely by her individual or cultural identities, as stated in

this quote: “Who I was wasn’t defined by being ... Indian ... Trinidadian ... a woman ... I’m from a certain family. ... I was all of it, not one or the other.”

**Defining and reconceptualizing racial and ethnic identity.** I am addressing racial and ethnic identities together because interviewees spoke about both interchangeably. Although only three of the five interviewees showed a shift on the survey toward more salient racial and ethnic identities in the United States, all five expressed verbally during their interviews that they had developed a greater awareness of their racial identity in the United States. Race was not salient for both interviewees of mixed ethnic descent when they lived in Trinidad, and they described that it was normal to be mixed in Trinidad:

In Trinidad, I am just considered a mixed person because my mom is Indian and my dad is black. Back home, they have a term for people like me, they call me Douglá. I’m just a part of the mix. Trinidad and Tobago is culturally mixed and we say it’s a Callaloo, a mixture of everything. But here people consider me black, I think, and sometimes they get confused because of my look. I have had a lot of people ask me if I’m from Africa. ... Whenever I have to fill those forms out, I always put “other” and I add “multiracial.” [P2]

My grandmother was Indian and so we have that evolution of race in Trinidad. You didn’t think too much because you grew up with her. You have that identity and you recognize the difference and you liked it. Nobody treated anybody any differently ... you don’t feel any different. [P4]

Two interviewees mentioned that Trinidad is a cosmopolitan nation, and one discussed how race and ethnicity are more defined in the United States:

I often say, God knew what he was doing when I was born in Trinidad, because it prepared me for the things that I’m interested in now. ... And when I talk about stuff with culture and ethnicity and so on ... I have such a broad base of knowledge to pull from because I grew up in a place where we had people of so many different backgrounds, where the major holidays were major Muslim, Hindu, Roman Catholic holidays, you know. And so I do think compared to other Caribbean islands, it’s probably ... the most cosmopolitan. [P1]

It [race] is more defined here, you know, in the States, it is more defined. In Trinidad ... it has the reputation of being cosmopolitan so to speak. ... There's a lot of blending of the races as such ... and so it's not unusual to see ... folks who distinctly ... are Afro-Caribbean with Chinese features. [P3]

Contrary to the others, P5, who experienced a cosmopolitan society when she lived in Toronto, Canada, does not find Trinidad to be a cosmopolitan nation as she defines it:

Cosmopolitan, to me, means an exposure to worldly things, to the world, to different kinds of people, different kinds of thoughts. ... No, I don't find that about Trinidad, where you were either Indian, or black, or Chinese, or Syrian. Nobody else [other than Trinidadians] would understand any of this. ... It's become such a complex race of people, like branches and branches of the mother races that came to Trinidad. You can't tell if somebody's all Chinese anymore. They might be Chinese Black, or ... In Trinidad, people talk about that openly. That's the difference, right? ... I mean, it's just a natural part of how you talk about yourself.

Like P5, two other respondents mentioned that the intercultural mixing of ethnic groups in Trinidadian society has left people to speak more openly about racial and ethnic identity than in the United States. All three of these interviewees mentioned that in Trinidad people refer to others by their ethnic origin and discuss people's race based on physical features. P5 mentioned that she discovered that in the United States, this is considered derogatory, and another said that in the United States, people are defined by judgmental stereotypes:

That Trinidadians talk about race in very ... it's like part of conversation to define or understand someone's physical traits, right? Oh, *trabazao*, red, Black, Indian, smooth Indian, dark Indian, light Indian. I mean, it's just hilarious. And again, because there's no shame attached to it. It's just very open.

Three interviewees, one of mixed descent, one of African descent, and one of East Indian descent, said that in Trinidad they saw the majority of people as Black; there was no differentiation between Indians and Africans:

In Trinidad you grow up with everybody—the majority of people Black and you look up, your prime minister is Black, your teacher in school is Black. They

might be Indian, but they are still considered dark-skinned. We all are considered Black. That's what I grew up thinking. [P2]

It's interesting because like in the States, it's very apparent, White or non-White, you know? And that in some cases, in addition to your socioeconomic status, your color determines your place in society. And it's very apparent here. In Trinidad, we're all brown or black or different shades in between for the most part. So that doesn't determine your place in society. [P1]

Coming from these influences of Trinidadian society, where racial and ethnic identity are generally not salient, interviewees expressed an increased awareness of the role of race and ethnicity in U.S. society and the impact of racial and ethnic dynamics on their identities. P3 said that, upon coming to the United States to attend college, the American students, both Black and White, wanted to know the race of people in positions of authority in Trinidad, and this made him aware of the importance of race in the United States:

When you've always had a Black principal, when ... there were always people in authoritative positions who were Black, and ... I didn't make the connection, you know, that was a prevalent question. Even the Black guys on the team [in the United States] ... always wanted to know the race, ethnicity of people in decision-making positions [in Trinidad], if they were Black or White. Well, I think it made me even more aware of what the situation was here. You know, it made me think that ... one of the criteria to be in a position of power, one had to be White. [P3]

P2 addressed the importance of race for her in the United States:

The culture here, it's very different from my culture, and because of the mix in society here. Different people identify differently, and it's part of the—not just the culture—race is important in everything in America. It affects everything you do in America. ... I think it took me a while to assimilate and understand how race is viewed here. ... I would say maybe about 5 years to really understand how important race is in America, how I was identified and perceived.

P2 said that, as a multiethnic person, she does not fit in to categories presented in the United States:

Every form you fill out, you have to fill out your ethnic background, whereas you didn't have that in Trinidad. There was hardly anyone asking you what's your

ethnicity because everybody was considered the same, but here, almost every form or anything you fill out they want to know what's your ethnic background, so that was new. I didn't think about that by living in Trinidad ... When I first came, and I still do, I always have problems just filling in that I'm Black. I think I'm more than just black, so I always do multiethnic or multiracial.

P1, a woman of African descent, is one of two interviewees (also P4) who showed a greater shift in racial identity salience than in ethnic identity after moving to the United States. When asked whether she thinks of herself as Black now, P1 responded, "I do." She continued that she did not feel Black when she lived in Trinidad because it was not an issue:

I often tell people I did not know I was Black until I came here ... meaning I didn't have to be conscious of it every day. In Trinidad, I knew I was different from my Indian friends or the people of Portuguese background or French background or whatever. But it wasn't something where they might say or do things around me that might make me feel self-conscious for being Afro-Trinidadian. Whereas here, it's so obvious. I might be the only Black person in the class. I'm the only Black person in our Ph.D. program.

***The impact of racism and discrimination on racial identity in the United States.***

One of the influences resulting in a more salient racial identity in the United States was the increased awareness of racism and the interviewees' experiences with discrimination. All of the interviewees said there is no overt racism in Trinidad like there is in the United States, where everyday tensions between Blacks and Whites exist. However, four out of five mentioned there are subtle ethnic tensions between those of African and East Indian descent in Trinidad that surface during election season, when power issues are at play.

None of the respondents personally experienced racism or discrimination in Trinidad. Contrary to that, all said they experienced prejudice, racism, or discrimination in the United States, but in subtle rather than overt forms. Three of the respondents (P1, P2, and P5) said they experienced racism or discrimination specifically in the workplace.

P4 stated that she finds that kind of subtle racism to be more powerful than overt racism.

P3 described this type of subtle racism in the following quote:

One of the things that you did as a Black person in the U.S., especially those who have been here for a long time, you kind of avoid situations, subconsciously, you know, like if I'm jogging for example, early in the morning and it's dark and stuff, and there's somebody I'm running behind or something, I would make sure that they know that there is somebody coming and stuff. Because, you know, a tall, black man in the dark can evoke a lot of ... you do that routinely. You get sensitized to situations where it might be subtle. [P3]

*The impact on shifting identities.* Experiencing racism clearly impacted the racial identity of two of the three survey respondents (P1 and P4), who indicated a shift toward more saliency in the United States:

I've never had to think that I would not fit in in that environment [Trinidad], because every Caribbean place I'm in, there are other people that look like me. And even if they don't look like me, they're used to me. So coming into the States and being so consciously aware of the fact that I am other, that my skin marks me as different, and people make assumptions about me because of my skin. That was a head job. ... More and more, I question what it is to be Black. Especially in this environment, you know? Because it means so many different things. Like it means one thing to people in the Black community versus what it means to people who are not Black. It's a mind-blowing, confusing sort of thing to work through. ... I think I am constantly revising or learning more about what it is to be Black ... and what my Blackness is like, and how I fit into the Black community, and how I fit as a Black woman in this country in general. And I think a lot of that has to do with some of the police shootings and the attention that was coming to that. [P1]

P4 discussed structural racism. Her shift in identity is demonstrated through her role as an activist for causes addressing race and economic disparities in the United States. She noted that, after some years living in the United States, with the ill treatment of Black Americans and with the Black Lives Matter movement, she is in the fight against racism. "It's the growing disparities that are happening and ... the gap between the haves and the have nots. ... So it's a growing sense of all these things existing. It bothers you and you have to get involved." [P4]

P2 indicated a shift toward greater saliency of racial and ethnic identities in the United States because of the importance this society places on these identities. P2 stressed that although she experiences discrimination in the workplace, she has not let it change her personality:

I don't think it has affected me. I'm conscious of it. But I won't change my personality, the way I do things, the way I say things because of those things. I have been discriminated against a lot at [place of work]. ... I one time had a patient tell me, "Go back to Jamaica," and I'm not even from Jamaica, but I see it as him just being not educated enough.

P5, who indicated no shift on the survey in racial identity, expressed the following during her interview:

I have moved through my life oblivious to being Indian, Trinidadian, a woman ... oblivious to all of that, 'cause I grew up that way. I grew up just understanding that this is who I was, and I'm very educated. ... I don't see myself as a woman of color, a people of color, like all this stuff that Americans talk about.

However, during the interview, it became clear as she spoke that more recently she has experienced a shift as she negotiates the impact of structural racism due to being a woman of color in her workplace:

But, as a woman, a person of color, a woman of color at [workplace], I have seen a difference in the way I'm treated. I'm pretty high up in senior administration. I'm usually the only woman in the room. And definitely the only dark-skinned person in the room. And, you know, [workplace] is a very old, male, white place. So, it's a combination of things. But it has been very apparent. I don't feel discriminated against, but I feel it's tougher. [P5]

P3 indicated no shift in racial identity upon moving to the United States. He explained why and described that, despite this, the question of race is inescapable for him:

Yeah, in Trinidad, when you are growing up, there are certain things that are emphasized, you know, school, and going forward academically and socially, you have to improve your status in all areas as such. That was kind of inculcated in you, I mean, it's—it's just in you, you know. At no time did I feel that for

whatever reason, because of my race and stuff, I had to think a certain way ... even when I came here that really didn't change for me at all, you know. Although, because of some of my experiences here, the question of race is inescapable. ... If you are the only Black person in the lecture hall that has about 300 people ... you have to be aware of that. ... It is so strikingly different from my experience. [P3]

*Impact of intercultural interactions with European and African Americans.* All four interviewees of African or mixed descent described that they are ascribed an African American identity until others hear them speak. Three interviewees who specifically addressed their interactions with African Americans were impacted differently by their experiences.

Two women, P1 and P4, said they felt closer to the African American experience over time. P1 discussed feeling initially alienated by African Americans but eventually began to understand their perspectives. She described her earlier experiences with those who asked her if she was racially mixed. She coped by understanding that they are not used to people being "all mixed up" like they are in Trinidad:

Yeah, especially at that job, it was Black Americans who asked me that. Not so much the White people. The White people just ask, "Oh, where you from?" Because they get caught up with the accent. So it was kind of like, so you [Black Americans] don't think I could fit in your category? I don't belong? I must be other again. ... They're saying, I can't be Black. ... They're trying to find which box to put me in. [P1]

When asked if she ever felt like people put her in a particular category that did not fit her identity, she responded that she no longer minds being perceived as African American, even though she does not identify herself that way; rather, she perceives herself as Black or Afro-Caribbean. She explained that her perspective about African Americans is shifting over time, and she now empathizes with their experiences:

People make the assumption that I am African American without hearing me speak. And I think when I first came to this country, I probably had some



internalized negative stereotypes about African Americans. So if they thought, oh she's just an African American person, I was kind of thinking, maybe they're perceiving me as less educated or less qualified to be here. And that would affect me.

But now I don't think I mind as much being perceived as African American, because I feel like having lived here and learned a little bit more about what African American history entails and what people have to do, it's like, you know, this is a very diverse and resilient group of people. Like it's an honor to say I belong to them. ... My perspective has certainly shifted. Gosh, it's 20 years now I'm in the States. [P1]

As P4 acculturated to U.S. society, she became more aware of the common experiences of people of African descent: African Americans, Africans, and Caribbeans. She responded by becoming a leader in community development and an activist in support of causes addressing race and economic disparities:

So you fit in where you're needed, and the minority concern is always a concern 'cause I'm a part of the minority groups. And my culture is a part of the minority group. And so with these things you get connected. [P4]

P5, a woman of East Indian descent, shared a story that was the defining moment for her. The interaction brought on a shocking awareness that relations with African Americans would differ greatly from her experiences with people of African descent in Trinidad:

When I first came to the States, one of the hardest lessons I ever had to learn was in Syracuse. I was by myself, master's graduate student, moving my stuff into my apartment. And I remember, I was double-parked in a place, I was trying to get something out of the car, and this young Black boy was riding his bicycle. ... And I'm so used to Trinidadian Blacks, you know, you just hail somebody, "Hey!" You know, we're all friends. And I, I thought, "Oh, Black guy. He's just like me. Like we're Black," you know—we're like Trinis. And so, I said to him, "Could you help me with my bag?" He gave me the tongue lashing, like, "I don't know who you are ... And it, you know, really heavy" ... bitterness, and, "Go back to where you come from. You come to this country ..." And I was like, "What? You and I are the same." Like, I was so confused. I was just like, I don't get it. And that's the defining moment, it took me 20 years to understand. Wow. [P5]

Upon further reflection, she noted, "Through my years I have noticed how alien a Caribbean culture and an African American culture are." [P5]

In summary, all interviewees described U.S. society as starkly different from Trinidadian society regarding the social constructions of race and ethnicity. In adjusting to life in the United States, they all experienced what they described as subtle racism or discrimination that resulted in an increased awareness of their racial and ethnic identities. For some, this is an ongoing process, impacting their racial identity development within U.S. social and cultural contexts. For all interviewees, their personal life experiences and identities are interwoven with their social and cultural identities in influencing how they've defined and reconceptualized their racial and ethnic identities in U.S. society.

**Defining and reconceptualizing socioeconomic status identity.** The interviewees varied in their responses to the importance of socioeconomic status to their identity and whether this identity shifted after settling in the United States. Their personal backgrounds and experiences with class and socioeconomic status influenced how they perceived that dimension of their identity, both in Trinidad and the United States. Three interviewees (P1, P3, and P5) stressed that class overrides race and ethnicity in Trinidad and supported this idea with the fact that people of African and East Indian descent can be from a higher socioeconomic status. They each defined socioeconomic status as educational background, including the importance of which secondary school they attended, as well as family wealth and job status. Two of these three (P1 and P5) self-described as coming from a privileged background in Trinidad and indicated that their socioeconomic background played an important or moderately important role in shaping their identities. P1 described socioeconomic status as moderately important when she lived in Trinidad because she was aware that she came from a privileged class:

But I knew, like my mother's a doctor, my father used to work for [name of company]. He used to train the pilots. And I have family members who are lawyers, teachers, nurses, very professional family. And like I said, we were able to have all these different amenities, you know, different extracurricular activities and stuff. So I knew I was in a good place that way. I knew that other Trinidadians weren't. But it didn't keep me from being friends with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. ... I think in the States, socioeconomic background is a very important thing ... even though people might want to minimize it.

P5 also discussed growing up in a wealthy family, affording her access and opportunities, but having friends from all different socioeconomic backgrounds with whom she went to school. This stayed with her even after leaving Trinidad:

I understand the advantages of growing up in that world, because now I can ... slip in and out of different levels of socioeconomic status here and everywhere else, because I'm just comfortable being in every situation. And Trinidad taught me the value of appreciating all people. [P5]

On the survey, P3 ranked socioeconomic status as important to his identity, both in Trinidad and the United States. He discussed education and class as always being emphasized to him when he lived in Trinidad and that importance of striving to achieve stayed with him even after he left Trinidad. He noted that race and ethnicity override class in the United States, while class is more important than race and ethnicity in Trinidad:

The difference here [in the United States] is that your race and ethnicity kind of overrides your class as such. You know, you can be in a situation where you are economically well off and so on, but the fact that how you look, I mean that is the determinate factor. That kind of distinction is not as apparent in Trinidad. ... In Trinidad, they know what class you are from, they know your educational background, your job status, and stuff. I mean, all those are indicators as such, you know. How you look really doesn't enter into the equation. [P3]

P2 had a different perspective on socioeconomic status than the others. On the survey, the salience of socioeconomic status increased for her in the United States. During her

interview she explained that for her, class did not define people in Trinidad as it does in the United States:

In America, same things on the questionnaire. They always ask how much money do you make? Which category—like they would put 0 to 20,000; 20,000 to \$40,000; everything you do, to me, you have to do that. So I think class is more important in America, you're part of working class, you pay more taxes, so it becomes more aware and more conscious. But in Trinidad—I worked at the general hospital. I didn't even think about those things. It's just accepted. But everything in America becomes more highlighted. They talk about it on the news, and so you become more aware of it because it affects you also. I think you get more knowledge on it because you listen to them talking about the middle class on TV and so you think, "What class am I?" [P2]

For two of the interviewees who grew up in Trinidad surrounded by people from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, socioeconomic status was less salient until they moved to the United States. For two who self-identified as coming from privileged backgrounds, both discussed being aware of their socioeconomic status in Trinidad, and there was no shift for either of them in this dimension of their identity after moving to the United States. The fifth interviewee showed no shift in this dimension of his identity on the survey and explained that his value system stressing the importance of striving to achieve stayed with him after moving to the United States.

**Defining and reconceptualizing national identity.** In a U.S. society where very few people are familiar with Trinidadian culture, a strong Trinidadian and West Indian identity clearly emerged during the interviews. The interviewees described being mistaken for Jamaican or Indian, and some use this as an opportunity to educate others about Trinidad. They maintain their Trinidadian cultural identity in numerous ways, with their accent playing an important role.

Three interviewees (P1, P2, and P3) strongly identified as being proudly Trinidadian when discussing their nationality and said that being Trinidadian will always be a part of them:

Wherever I go, I still let people know I'm Trinidadian. The first thing I do when I introduce myself [is], I say, "My name is [P2]. I'm originally from the beautiful islands of Trinidad and Tobago." It's part of me. I feel like I can't get rid of the Trinidadian in me ... and I've seen that I cannot give up my roots. ... So I always say I'm Trinidadian first. And then I would say American, because America has been good to me. I've achieved a lot since I've been here, and I feel I am where I am because of America—my education, my job status, and all of that. [P2]

I am an American citizen. And it was weird, like, the second the judge said, "I welcome you to—as citizens of United States of America," I felt like, "No, that's wrong. I'm not. I'm still Trinidadian. You can't take that away from me." [P1]

P2 and P4 described that their national identity was just accepted in Trinidad and said they did not have to think about their nationality much; however, when they came to the United States, they developed a greater awareness of their Trinidadian national identity. P4 identifies as Caribbean panethnic, or Afro-Caribbean, but also said that her Trinidadian identity became more salient after leaving. When discussing which elements of her Trinidadian cultural identity have changed or stayed the same after leaving, she described the evolution of her identity from moving first to Antigua and Barbuda, and then to Philadelphia:

It was evolution. I did not feel like a Trinidadian. Being Trinidadian born for 23 years and staying there, you just automatically became Trinidadian. Your identity when you leave there becomes, like, questionable. ... I'm a little bit Antiguan Barbudan, I am from Trinidad Tobago, and that's when you start thinking about all the things that make you who you are. ... So it's an evolution of identification in, just really realizing now, in this time, fast forward, that my identity is even much stronger. ... When I lived in Trinidad, I didn't have to identify that I was Trinidadian. You just be. [P4]

In contrast, P5, who is of East Indian descent, does not identify as Trinidadian and described that she felt like an outsider for much of her life as a result of living in multiple

countries and her upbringing as a child in Trinidad. She stressed that she was raised with an East Indian value system that reflected a strong emphasis on education:

I've been an "other" in every situation. ... My entire life, the things I liked didn't gel with other Trinidadians. ... we weren't Carnival people. We weren't "down the islands" people ... all the things that define sort of what Trinidadians are. We didn't go on river limes, and we didn't have a pelau in the back of the car. [P5]

When asked how they feel they are viewed by non-West Indians, there was consensus among the four interviewees of African or mixed descent that they are often confused with Jamaicans. Three of these respondents used these situations as opportunities to educate misinformed U.S. Americans, who they perceive as being unfamiliar with Caribbean geography and Trinidadian culture specifically:

I think when I say I'm Trinidadian to some White Americans, when I first got here, they're like, oh, well what part of Jamaica is that? You know, like, no part, no part whatsoever! ... I think that people don't really know that much, and ... I have to contextualize it by saying it's in the Caribbean. And then ... they have all these fantasies about the Caribbean life that come into play ... so they see me as this, oh you're the exotic Caribbean. [P1]

I've been asked several times, "Is Trinidad part of Jamaica?" Uh, Jamaica tends to dominate ... Caribbean, when you say you're Caribbean or from the island, "Are you Jamaican? Is that a Jamaican accent?" It's happened so many times, that you know, now ... I do the correction almost immediately. I use the opportunity to do a little education. [P3]

P5 is often confused with East Indians:

Sometimes they'll ask, and I'm like, "Yes, I'm Indian." But when I tell them I'm Trinidadian, I have to go into a whole thing. Because to them, Trinidadian is Black. They didn't even know there were Indians in the Caribbean. It's just an opportunity to educate people. [P5]

***Maintaining Trinidadian cultural identity.*** P1, P2, P3, and P5 indicated on the survey that there was no shift in their national identity; it was strong or moderately strong in both Trinidad and the United States. P4 explained that her national identity became more salient after leaving Trinidad, as described above. All interviewees except P5

explained that they maintain their Trinidadian cultural identity by attending or organizing Trinidadian and Caribbean cultural events, including Carnivals throughout the diaspora and Trinidad Carnival itself. They all, including P5, maintain transnational contact through phone calls, social media, and visits with family who still live in Trinidad. P3 explained that Trinidadians were his primary social contact even after he ventured into U.S. society, where he was seen as and felt Trinidadian because he never lost his accent:

My primary social contacts were indeed ... islanders, Caribbeans. Even though I lived here, I was heavily influenced in terms of retaining, all ... Trinidadian kinds of stuff. Caribbean folks ... have tendency to ... seek out each other, socialize for social purposes and stuff like that. So, you know, at all these turns that your natural heritage is kind of reinforced.

*Language and acculturation.* Four interviewees (P1, P2, P3, and P5) mentioned maintaining their Trinidadian cultural identity through their accent. Except for P5, who is of Indian descent, they each discussed that they may be ascribed an African American identity until they speak and said that they are seen as exotic, or as an “island person,” and foreign when people hear their accent. P4 explained that U.S. Americans see Trinidadians as bilingual because their Creole accent is viewed as a different language. P1 and P3 both discussed that people are often less friendly toward them until they hear their accent and then change the way they respond to them:

What I have noticed, especially once people hear my accent, I’ve become exotic, and they’re all fascinated. And sometimes when I stop and look back on it, I kind of wonder if it’s like, they want to fit me in a certain picture. Like I must now fit this picture of the typical island woman or something. And sometimes, I’m willingly going along with that, not being aware of what I was doing. [P1]

One of the things that I’ve experienced, especially in the academic environment, is that folks assume I’m an African-American until I start talking, and then they immediately change how they respond to me. They either become more friendly, or they want to know where I’m from, where I was born, that kind of stuff. And I know that has something to do with the fact that I’m not from here. [P3]

P1 and P3 both code-switch in different cultural contexts; for both, their accent changes based on who they are with and where they are, affirming the fluidity of cultural identity that changes based on different intercultural interactions. When they are with other West Indians, their Trinidadian accent becomes stronger, and when they are with U.S.

Americans, they have to enunciate their words for others to understand them:

Even though I thought I was speaking quite clearly ... I realized I have to shift how I pronounce certain words and bring different kinds of inflections into my voice, and that just grew over time. I'm conscious that I've made that switch, but I'm not always conscious when I do it. [P1]

There's a way of being American when you have to be, in the workplace, your profession might demand that as such. So you go back and forth, you know. And I think that is kind of unconscious. So you really don't plan to as such, like for example, when I get up in court and I'm addressing the judge, and so on, I feel I'm totally immersed in American culture at that time—there is absolutely nothing that is Trinidadian then. [P3]

Although P2 said that she does not code-switch, she finds it necessary to clearly enunciate her words for others to understand her.

*Shifting values and acculturation.* Two interviewees described how their values have shifted, developing broader perspectives as they acculturated into U.S. society. P1 says that, although she still feels Trinidadian, she recognizes she has been influenced by American ways and thoughts; for example, she discussed feeling more open toward the LGBTQ community because of living in Philadelphia. P2 also discussed her broadening outlook:

My outlook and values have changed because traveling, living here, you have a broader perspective on everything: on life, on family, on everything, education—you do learn a whole lot. I think your total view, your whole personality and everything change. I think I have grown a lot since I've been here. If I stayed home, I wouldn't be the same person that I am today.



**Identity-based assimilation and acculturation.** In summary, interview findings showed that intercultural interactions with European and African Americans influenced how the interviewees' racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and national identities were defined and reconceptualized as they acculturated into U.S. American society over time. Findings showed that personal identities played a key role in conjunction with social and cultural identities in the interviewees' acculturation and assimilation in the United States. Race and ethnicity are more salient in the United States and are impacted by racism and discrimination. A strong Trinidadian national identity emerged for four participants, and a strong West Indian identity emerged for the participant of East Indian descent. Although there were no consistent findings in how the interviewees' socioeconomic status identities were reconceptualized in the United States, their personal backgrounds and experiences with class and socioeconomic status influenced how they perceived that dimension of their identity, both in Trinidad and the United States.

### **Answering the Central Questions: Comparing and Contrasting Results**

The quantitative results addressed a portion of the secondary question of this study: "Do identities shift and, if so, how, for Trinidadian immigrants when they move across cultures and nations to a society where they are no longer in the racial, ethnic, or cultural majority?" These findings addressed whether identities shifted and, if so, how much. The qualitative findings addressed the central question of the study: "How do Trinidadian immigrants define and reconceptualize four dimensions of their cultural identities (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality) as they make new lives in American society?" Qualitative findings also revealed *why* their identities did or did

not shift after migrating to the United States, providing context to and clarification of the quantitative findings.

Quantitative findings revealed that a majority of respondents said they had a clear sense of their ethnic and racial identities when living both in Trinidad and the United States; however, while the number of respondents who had a clear sense of their ethnic identity in Trinidad and the United States did not change, the percentage who had a clear sense of their racial identity increased in the United States. When measuring saliency, quantitative results also showed that a small yet higher percentage of respondents found all four identities to be more important in the United States than they were in Trinidad. When measuring shifts for individual survey participants, more than half of respondents indicated no shift in saliency for three of the identities (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality), with demographic data revealing no patterns as to why this may be the case. Additionally, only a few respondents indicated that any of the identities became less salient in the United States. Quantitative results for the five interview participants reflected the overall results for socioeconomic status and nationality, but for ethnicity, only two of five interviewees showed no change.

Respondents to the quantitative survey rated their shift in racial identity as almost equally between more salient and no change in saliency. Participants in the qualitative interviews reflected this finding, with three indicating a shift toward greater saliency in the United States and two indicating no change in racial identity. However, when probed further during the interviews, all five expressed a greater awareness of the role of race and ethnicity in U.S. society and the impact of U.S. racial and ethnic dynamics on how they renegotiate their identities. Qualitative findings also provided further clarification as

to how and why the interviewees developed a greater awareness of their racial and ethnic identities in the United States. They explained that they did not experience racism or discrimination until after immigrating. They did not see themselves as a minority in Trinidad and developed an awareness that they are part of a racial, ethnic, or cultural minority in the United States. This is due to either personally experiencing racism or discrimination or witnessing structural racism or discrimination. For most, their strong personal identity buffered their experiences with prejudice or racism, and some said they did not let these experiences change them, even though their racial and ethnic identities are more salient for them in the United States.

When analyzing the quantitative data based on the ethnicity of the respondents, over half of both Afro-Trinidadians and people of mixed descent showed no change in saliency for ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality. Half of Afro-Trinidadians also showed no change for racial identity, while only 40% of people of mixed descent indicated no change in racial identity, and 40% indicated racial identity is more salient in the United States. For 60% of East Indian participants, race became more salient in the United States, and changes in saliency varied for each of the other three identities.

Qualitative findings revealed that participants of mixed descent said it was normal to be mixed in Trinidad. They said they believe race and ethnicity hold less importance in Trinidad and do not determine one's place in society, while these identities do play a role in the United States. Of those interviewees whose racial identity became more salient in the United States, one did not think of herself as Black until after acculturating to U.S. norms, another now asserts her multiethnic identity, and the third identifies as Afro-Caribbean and now identifies with minorities of African descent.

Regarding socioeconomic status, quantitative results showed a majority of participants having no change in saliency, with a small percentage showing more saliency in the United States. Qualitative findings revealed that the respondents' personal backgrounds and experiences with socioeconomic status influenced this realm of their identity. Their responses varied, and there were no conclusive findings. Of the interviewees, three indicated no shift in this identity, and two indicated more saliency in the United States.

Quantitative survey results showed that a majority of respondents, regardless of their age at immigration, identified as completely or mostly Trinidadian and had a strong connection to their Trinidadian heritage. Additionally, when asked where they are from by someone who is not from the Caribbean, while most respondents identified as Trinidadian, a significant number identified as West Indian. Qualitative findings supported and clarified these quantitative results. Four respondents had a strong sense of their Trinidadian national identity and maintained that identity in various ways, most notably by attending Trinidadian cultural events and through their accent. Respondents of mixed or African descent spoke of being ascribed an African American identity until they spoke, as their accent defines them as Trinidadian. The fifth respondent, who is of East Indian descent, did not identify strongly as Trinidadian, but identified herself culturally as West Indian. All interviewees discussed the need to explain their national and cultural identities to U.S. Americans who know very little about Trinidad.

Chapter 4 presented the quantitative and qualitative findings of this mixed-methods study. Chapter 5 will present an analysis of the research findings, offer

implications of these findings, review limitations of the study, and make suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This study examined the impact of migration and the resulting intercultural interactions, on the cultural identities of first-generation Trinidadian immigrants who have lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for 10–41 years. The primary focus was on four dimensions of cultural identity: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality. The study aimed to discover which among these four dimensions were most salient for a small group of Trinidadians when they lived in Trinidad, and again now that they live in the Philadelphia area. It was also designed to measure whether there had been a shift in individual participants' identities after immigration. Additionally, it aimed to understand how and why these Trinidadian immigrants reconceptualized their identities when making their home in the United States.

As an exploratory study, it was not intended to be generalizable to the whole Trinidadian immigrant population in the United States or even the Philadelphia region; rather, it is meant to begin the conversation on Trinidadian immigrant identities and should be regarded as one small piece of the puzzle of immigrant identity research. This study came about because I believed this population comes to the United States with a unique cosmopolitan worldview that is not frequently studied within intercultural relations literature on acculturation.

The two primary questions in this study were:

1. How do Trinidadian immigrants define and reconceptualize four dimensions of their cultural identities (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality) as they make new lives in American society?
2. Do identities shift and, if so, how, for Trinidadian immigrants when they move across cultures and nations to a society where they are no longer in the racial, ethnic, or cultural majority?

Six themes emerged as relevant to these two questions:

- Personal identities are key to understanding immigrant cultural identity changes, and personal and cultural identities are interwoven.
- Shifting identities: There is a greater awareness of race for Trinidadian immigrants in the United States than when they lived in Trinidad.
- Trinidadian immigrants do not feel they fit into the racial, ethnic, or even national categories presented to them in U.S. society.
- The four cultural identities are fluid and renegotiated based on situations and contexts.
- A tridimensional rather than a bidimensional model of acculturation is more suitable to Trinidadian immigrants in multicultural Philadelphia.
- Trinidadian immigrants have a strong connection to their national identity and make continued efforts to maintain a connection to their home culture.

This chapter will present a discussion of the six themes that emerged from this research and their relevance and implications for the intercultural relations field, as well as for Trinidadians in the Philadelphia region and those who support them. It will also discuss the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

### **The Role of Personal Identities in Immigrant Cultural Identities**

My findings clearly indicated that personal identities are key for understanding how these immigrants define and reconceptualize their cultural identities as they make new lives in American society. The review of literature in Chapter 2 revealed how cultural identity is understood in the field of intercultural relations. Orbe and Harris (2007) argued that identity development simultaneously involves personal and cultural identities, and Chen and Lin (2016) noted, “Cultural identities are understood to be multiple, intersecting, and simultaneously personal and social” (p. 2). My findings are consistent with these assertions. As respondents spoke about their acculturation and adaptation to U.S. society, they could not separate their cultural identities from the importance of their personal identities and staying true to themselves. This was captured in a quote by a respondent who said she does not give in to expectations of her by U.S. Americans who are unfamiliar with Trinidadian culture: “I think I stay me. True to the heart.”

Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones (2006) stated that “(a) social and cultural identity underlie acculturation and (b) personal identity can help to ‘anchor’ the immigrant person during cultural transition and adaptation (p. 2).” This was substantiated by interviews and survey comments that described personal stories that underlaid and anchored participants throughout the acculturation process. These stories revealed spiritual outlooks or family values and upbringing that provided respondents with strength and grounding while they adapted over time to stark differences in U.S. culture from their home country’s culture.



Even though my respondents share common cultural norms in how they understand the four cultural identities featured in this study, and how they respond to changes in those identities, there is variation within the study population based on their personal experiences. Phinney (1996) asserted, “Even within an ethnic group whose members share a relatively precise ethnic label there is tremendous heterogeneity ... there is greater variation within than between groups” (p. 919). There is evidence in my findings that supports Phinney’s assertion, especially for some whose racial identity changed in the United States after they witnessed racial disparities. Each interviewee was unique in how he or she was impacted by these experiences. For example, while one described that she would not let them change her personality, another became an activist against racism in the United States. Understanding the combined impact of personal and cultural identities can help intercultural researchers understand immigrants in deeper and more complex ways and avoid more superficial explanations of how they define and reconceptualize their cultural identities as they make new lives in the United States.

### **Defining and Reconceptualizing Racial and Ethnic Identities**

As the researcher, I observed differences in how interviewees discussed their racial and ethnic identities; however, with the exception of one person, they themselves did not differentiate between the two constructs in their discussion with me. Interviewees defined ethnicity as nation-based (Trinidadian), ancestral-based (Afro-Caribbean or Indian), or regionally based (West Indian) but did not define it by race. Regarding saliency of racial and ethnic identities, quantitative findings showed little difference in the outcomes between the two constructs; almost the same percentage of people indicated that race and ethnicity are at the same level of importance for them in Trinidad and the

United States. This outcome implies that participants were equating race with ethnicity. However, the impact of race in America dominated the discussions in the qualitative results.

My findings confirmed that Trinidadians develop a starkly different view of race in the United States than they had in Trinidad. As established in Chapter 1, Trinidad has a unique ethnic and racial composition within the Caribbean region, with a majority of the population being of African, East Indian, or mixed descent, as reflected in this study's population. Due to its social, cultural, and demographic history, Trinidad is frequently described as a cosmopolitan nation with very different understandings of cultural, racial, and ethnic identity than we have in the United States. Carlin (2009) described the cosmopolitan nature of Trinidadian society in the following quote: "Through primary school texts, newspaper articles, poems, calypsoes, and political speeches, Trinidad is presented as a nation of people living in racial harmony. This racial harmony is the foundation of cosmopolitanism in this context (Rubin, 1962; Williams, 1962, as cited in Carlin, p. 197)." Findings in my study's qualitative interviews suggest support for Carlin's finding that Trinidadian immigrants "come to America with a cosmopolitan cognitive canvas and function through that ethos." This contradicts the discrimination and racism experienced in the United States. Similar to Carlin's findings, whether or not respondents in my study used the term *cosmopolitan* to describe Trinidad, they all described it as a country where there is much racial and ethnic blending and one that celebrates ethnic and racial differences. The Trinidadian immigrant's experience of coming to the United States is different from the experience of immigrants who do not come from a home built on cosmopolitanism.

Therefore, it is not surprising that a review of qualitative findings in this study indicates that Trinidadians have a different view of race in Trinidad than in the United States. In addition to cosmopolitanism in Trinidad, several other reasons emerged as to why this is the case. In Trinidad, people with black and brown skin are in the majority, and participants saw people who look like themselves in positions of power or authority. In the United States, they are considered a minority and see people who look like themselves less frequently in positions of power or authority.

As was cited in the literature review, Martin and Nakayama (2013) stated, “Most scholars hold a social science viewpoint—agreeing that racial categories like White and Black are constructed in social and historical contexts” (p. 191). My findings are consistent with this viewpoint and indicate that in Trinidad, identities are not grounded in race. Respondents expressed the belief that people of African, East Indian, and mixed descent are seen as Black, and that this does not determine one’s place in society. They all believe that race holds less importance in Trinidad, while racial identity plays a strong role in U.S. society. While in Trinidad it is normal to be “all mixed up,” race is more defined in the United States, where there is a Black and White dichotomy and people are asked to define who they are racially. Respondents also described that in Trinidad, people speak more openly about race, often referring to others’ ethnic origins and racial backgrounds based on physical features, with humor and no shame attached to it. Upon moving to the United States, Trinidadians discover this is considered derogatory and that people are judged by racial stereotypes. Carlin (2009) found similar results in her study of Trinidadian immigrants:

The approach to race in Trinidad and America is quite different as was understood through respondents’ explanations. Some of the differences between the two

societies included the views that race was a building block for American society, race is at the forefront of thought, discourse and daily operating procedures in America. (pp. 199–200)

This contrast between the relevance of race in Trinidad and the United States resulted in an increased awareness of racial identity for interview participants in the United States.

### **Shift in Racial Identity**

For three of the identities (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and nationality), more than half of respondents indicated no shift in saliency. Qualitative findings showed that of the four identities, race became most salient in the United States, even for those who showed no shift in this identity after resettling here. Because race is viewed so differently in Trinidad from how it is viewed in the United States, I expected the survey data to show that a high number of participants would indicate a more salient racial identity. However, only nine of 23 indicated that race became more salient in the United States, while 10 indicated no shift in racial identity. This may be explained by findings in Carlin's (2009) study on the racial identity of Trinidadian immigrants in Baltimore, which showed that most had no change in their racial identity after moving to the United States. She did find, however, that they had to contend with explaining their identities to curious Americans and on official documentation. Similar to Carlin's finding, Trinidadians in this study found the need to explain their Trinidadian identity to Americans who lacked knowledge of their country, and they are often mistaken for Jamaican.

How did the racial identities of these Trinidadian immigrants shift? The qualitative portion of my study expanded the survey results; those who showed no shift in their racial identity on the survey described a heightened awareness of their racial identity

in the United States, making this dimension more salient. Of those interviewees who indicated on the survey that racial identity became more salient in the United States, one did not think of herself as Black until after acculturating to U.S. norms, another now asserts her multiethnic identity in a society that insists on defining her as Black, and the third identifies as Afro-Caribbean and now feels a kinship with other minorities of African descent. Whether their racial identity shifted or they are just more aware of it, all were influenced by the identity they were ascribed in the United States and/or by their experiences with racial discrimination. These two influences will be discussed next.

**Ascribed identities.** After migrating to the United States, the Trinidadians in this study said the host culture placed them into ethno-racial categories that did not align with their avowed identities. As noted in the literature review, Schimmele and Wu (2015) discuss the implications of ethnicity functioning as a basis of social stratification in the United States, for the social identities of non-European immigrants. The immigrants' choices of self-identification are constrained because the dominant group defines and limits the available ethno-racial categories. This is different from the experiences of immigrants of European descent who have more ethnic options, with the ability to label themselves simply as American (Waters, 1990). Society perceives immigrants of African or Afro-Caribbean heritage as Black regardless of their personal identity choices.

The proximal host model (Mittleberg and Waters, 1992), which describes how immigrants respond to their ascribed identity in the host culture, provides an explanation for the racial and ethnic identity choices of participants in the interviews. Based on phenotypes, these Trinidadian immigrants were ascribed a Black or Indian identity by U.S. Americans. Of the four people who were ascribed a Black identity, three chose to

hold both their ascribed racial identity and their personal ethnic identity at the same time. This is consistent with Waters's (1999) research with West Indians in New York City, which found that participants held no contradiction between being a proud Black person and a proud Trinidadian or West Indian. Another of my participants rejected her ascribed racial identity by asserting herself as multiethnic or multiracial rather than Black. The woman of East Indian descent had not seen herself as her ascribed "woman of color" identity in the United States; however, this is changing for her as she deals with issues around race in the workplace. Consistent with Waters' and Carlin's (2009) findings, whether the five interviewees chose to hold or reject their ascribed racial identities, they maintain a strong and proud Trinidadian or West Indian identity.

**Discrimination.** Upon becoming a minority in the United States, the Trinidadians in this study experienced discrimination or racism that greatly influenced changes in their racial or ethnic identities. Leong and Ward (as cited in Ward et al., 2001) asserted that perceived discrimination is related to identity conflict. Carlin (2009) found this to be true in her study with Trinidadian immigrants; however, she did not find that this identity conflict necessarily led to a change in racial identity. My findings are consistent with Leong and Ward's assertion and partially consistent with Carlin's findings.

Some study participants discussed experiences with discrimination that triggered introspection, causing identity conflict. This identity conflict was an internal one between how they viewed themselves and how they are viewed by U.S. Americans, and some expressed differences in how they are seen by European and African Americans. The conflict resulted in identity development, meaning the internal conflict created a shift

in their racial or ethnic identity to seeing themselves as Black or Afro-Caribbean, or affirming their mixed identity in a society that insists on labels that do not fit their Trinidadian cultural self-perception. However, for others who experienced racism or discrimination leading to identity conflict, although they developed a greater awareness of their racial identity, this dimension of their identity did not necessarily change in the United States, despite their being here for many years.

Benson's (2006) findings on identity development showed that "Black migrants living in the United States for longer periods of time had greater odds of identifying with other blacks than more recent immigrants" (p. 238), due to greater exposure to racial discrimination. This was found to be partially true in my study, as two of the four participants of African or mixed descent spoke eloquently about how they developed a greater identification with Black Americans over time. A repeat of one participant's comments is particularly relevant here. Noting that she had internalized negative stereotypes about African Americans upon arrival in the United States, she now stated, "It's an honor to say I belong to them ... my perspective has certainly shifted. Gosh, it's 20 years now I'm in the States."

As noted in the literature review, Schwartz et al. (2010), stated that migrants of color are challenged with, and must adapt to, their new status as minority group members. There is clear evidence of this in my study, as all interview participants described their challenges with their status as minority group members in the United States. All five live and work within the city limits of Philadelphia in racially and ethnically heterogeneous neighborhoods. Although they may not have experienced overt discrimination in these heterogeneous neighborhoods, their cultural identity has been

continuously negotiated as they adapted to their status as a minority. Power and political dynamics around race in the United States also play a role in their acculturation process. Three participants specifically mentioned the impact of the Trump administration or racial conflicts focused on by the media on their racial and ethnic identities.

The discussion of how racism and discrimination impacted the identities of these Trinidadians relates directly to the discussion of the importance of personal identities as described above. Even though my respondents share common Trinidadian cultural norms in their experiences around race, their responses to racism and discrimination were very individualized, varying based on their personal experiences, as illustrated earlier in this chapter.

### **Checking the “Other” Box**

An important finding that emerged in the qualitative data is that respondents did not feel they fit into the racial, ethnic, or even national categories presented to them in the United States. Being made to feel “othered” in a society that did not recognize their Trinidadian racial and ethnic categories was another important influence on their racial identity development. This aligns with Waters’ (1999) study on West Indians and Carlin’s (2009) study on Trinidadians, which concluded that these immigrants interacted with a more binary racial and ethnic classification system in the United States, and that racial/ethnic categories in their new home are insufficient to capture their identities. Whether completing forms, applications, or census data with limited racial and ethnic categories, having intercultural interactions with U.S. Americans who have different understandings of race and ethnicity, or seeing themselves as citizens of the world, respondents feel they are presented with limited options that do not describe how they see



themselves. For example, one mixed participant who is seen as Black in the United States stated that she checks the “other” box on forms because she does not want to be limited to a label she feels does not describe her mixed identity. The limited categories presented to them in the United States have impacted the respondents’ racial and ethnic identity development, resulting in increased awareness of race and the need to renegotiate their racial identities. Those whose identities did shift were forced to redefine how they see themselves in their new milieu.

### **Fluid and Renegotiated Identities**

For participants in this study, the identity that is most salient at any given time, whether racial, ethnic, or national, is determined by the context or situation. Participants discussed differences in work and social settings or with co-ethnics (other Trinidadians or West Indians) and European or African Americans or in situations in which they anticipated discrimination. Some participants expressed this fluidity in their descriptions of code-switching. Their Trinidadian accent becomes stronger when they are with co-ethnics, affirming their ethnic and national identities, while they consciously or unconsciously modify their accent to be understood more clearly by U.S. Americans, thereby making their Trinidadian identity less salient. As summarized by one participant who expressed a strong and proud Trinidadian identity: “There’s a way of being American when you have to be, in the workplace, your profession might demand that.” This is consistent with many intercultural scholars’ descriptions of cultural identity, including racial, ethnic, and national identity, as dynamic and fluid and varying from context to context depending on the setting, the people involved, and the issue at hand (Tajfel, 1981; Hecht, Collier, and Ribeau, 1993; Hedge, 1998; Chen and Lin, 2016). It is

also consistent with the research conclusions of Waters (1999) and Carlin (2009), who both found that the identities of West Indian and Trinidadian immigrants are fluid and renegotiated based on situations and contexts.

### **Tridimensional Acculturation**

I compared how my participants' experiences aligned with Berry's (1997) bidimensional model versus Ferguson et al.'s (2012) tridimensional model of acculturation. Although there is not sufficient evidence in my study to concretely address which acculturation strategies the participants use, there is indirect evidence that my interviewees do not fall into any discrete category on Berry's bidimensional model (integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization). As Berry (1997) noted, the four strategies are not static, and individuals may switch from one strategy to another. For the five interview participants, who are long-term immigrants who have settled in the United States, the host society has become their home. With the exception of one, they would not consider moving back to Trinidad. In accordance with Berry's assertion that length of time in the host country and age can influence acculturation strategies, participants may have switched between multiple acculturation strategies over the years.

Ferguson et al.'s tridimensional acculturation model has been deemed as more relevant to minority immigrants in multicultural receiving societies, and particularly to Black Caribbean immigrants. This model suggests that these immigrants orient to at least three cultures: mainstream European American (as presumed by bidimensional models such as Berry's), African American, and their heritage Caribbean culture. Berry's bidimensional model is not complex enough to capture the acculturation experiences of the four study participants of African or mixed descent in multicultural Philadelphia.

Integration rather than assimilation seems the most likely acculturation strategy, as they have mixed their old Trinidadian culture with their new American culture, rather than replacing their Trinidadian culture with the American one. Findings show that these four participants of African or mixed descent, who have been educated in the United States and who live and/or work among European and African Americans, integrate into both African American and European American cultures, while simultaneously retaining their Trinidadian culture. This corresponds with the study by Ferguson et al. (2012), which found that Black Jamaican immigrants in New York and Chicago orient to at least three cultures: mainstream European American (as presumed by Berry's model), African American, and their heritage culture. Within this tridimensional model of acculturation, they found that 70% of participants favored integration—rather than assimilation, separation, or marginalization—and this proved to be true in my study.

However, how fully the participants had integrated into the new society could not be determined due to the research design of this study. Participants in this study may not have fully integrated because of becoming a minority and experiencing some level of discrimination. I found that my participants have adapted to U.S. norms of work habits. Some modify their Creole English language or Trinidadian accent to standardized and vernacular American English, and some have adapted their values to U.S. American norms, all while maintaining a strong Trinidadian cultural identity. For example, one participant who identifies as Trinidadian discussed becoming accepting of the LGBTQ community after living in Philadelphia for many years. These findings align with Van Oudenhoven et al. (2006), who asserted that immigrants may give up parts of their cultural heritage without giving up their cultural identity.

As noted in the literature review, scholars have criticized Berry's bidimensional model of acculturation for its assertion that integration is the ideal phase of acculturation to attain (Ward, 2008; Bhatia and Ram, 2009). They have asserted that immigrants of non-European descent may not fully achieve this as an end stage, because in their perspective, Berry's model assumes equal status and power between minority and majority cultures and does not consider systemic influences. Society is continuously changing and how immigrants respond and acculturate is impacted by regional, political, social, and cultural events. For example, immigration policies are impacted by which political party is in power. For one interviewee who is not a citizen, the immigration policies of the Trump administration have resulted in a change in her comfort level as a U.S. resident. She shared a relevant story, saying that no matter how integrated she feels to U.S. society, she knows that with the changes in immigration policies since Trump became president, she will always be seen as an immigrant.

An alternate acculturation strategy, constructive marginalization (Bennett, 1993), was adopted by the participant of East Indian descent who does not easily fall within either bi- or tridimensional models of acculturation. She lives in a state of integration of her various cultures and described herself as "of the world," having lived in four different countries and having a culturally mixed family in the United States. She never felt the need to assimilate, because her upbringing provided her with a strong, integrated sense of self that has stayed with her throughout her life.

### **National Identity and Acculturation**

Two themes arose in the survey results regarding national identity. First, a small minority of participants who felt completely or mostly American commented about their

assimilation. One assimilated as a coping mechanism in dealing with prejudice and racism, as her father told her to “forget everything Trini” upon arrival in the United States, and the other chose to assimilate out of a lifelong desire to live in the United States.

Second, for the majority who felt mostly or completely Trinidadian regardless of their ethnic descent (African, East Indian, or mixed), a strong Trinidadian national identity emerged in survey results and was reinforced by interview participants. They stressed that even with U.S. citizenship, their Trinidadian selves will always be a part of them, and they expressed pride in their Trinidadian cultural heritage. As participants wrote or spoke about their Trinidadian national identity, their statements were consistent with Carlin’s (2009) finding that, regardless of their Trinidadian ethnic identity, none of her participants rejected their Trinidadian or Caribbean identity, and those who had become U.S. citizens asserted that their Trinidadian selves “were not impacted by this citizenship and would never be altered by anything in life” (p. 208). My qualitative results also showed that even those who said they feel completely or mostly Trinidadian also said they feel somewhat American in their values, language, and identities, while maintaining a strong Trinidadian cultural identity at the same time. This is most likely due to the long period of time they have lived in the United States, having made it their new home, as well as the impact of transnationalism in sustaining their cultural heritage, as participants travel frequently to Trinidad and maintain contact through social media. This again aligns with Van Oudenhoven et al.’s (2006) assertion that immigrants may give up parts of their cultural heritage without giving up their cultural identity.

### **A Note about Socioeconomic Status and Acculturation**

As noted in Chapter 4, although there were no consistent findings in how the interviewees' socioeconomic status identities were reconceptualized in the United States, their personal backgrounds and experiences with class and socioeconomic status influenced how they perceived that dimension of their identity, both in Trinidad and the United States. Future research could examine more deeply the impact of socioeconomic status on the cultural identities of Trinidadian immigrants.

### **Implications of Study**

The findings of this exploratory study have practical implications for those who support Trinidadian and West Indian immigrants in the Philadelphia region and other heterogeneous U.S. cities, for the immigrants themselves as they acculturate and adapt to U.S. norms, and for intercultural trainers and researchers.

#### **Implications for Trinidadian immigrants and those who support them.**

Findings can serve as a resource for social workers, counselors, immigrant workers, and interculturalists who provide personal support to Trinidadian and West Indian immigrants in their identity-based acculturation and adaptation to the United States.

Findings can also serve as a resource for development of curricular materials for trainings for interculturalists and diversity and inclusion trainers who work in settings that include Trinidadian and West Indian immigrants. This thesis can assist them in making their trainings more specific to the experiences of these populations; help them adapt a more appropriate tricultural vocabulary; and understand identity salience concerns of immigrants of color more broadly, and West Indian or Trinidadian immigrants more specifically.

In addition to presenting trainings and workshops themselves, interculturalists could “train the trainers” by developing workshop materials in partnership with Trinidadian and West Indian community and organizational leaders to provide support for immigrants to better understand the identity experiences of themselves and each other. Additionally, these workshops will aim to help people share perspectives and expand their options in coping with the cultural identity-based challenges they will be facing. Recommended topics for trainers working in large multicultural cities can include but are not limited to discussions of how race is understood in Trinidad and/or the West Indies versus how it is understood in the United States, the racial identity they will be ascribed, discussions on racism in the United States, and anchoring themselves with personal identities during acculturation. Workshops might include immigrants who have been in the United States for varying lengths of time. When working with newly arrived immigrants, it will be important to include a discussion of any preconceived ideas new immigrants might have developed about U.S. race relations from the media before immigrating. Long-term immigrants can help smooth the way for those who are newer to the United States. Interacting with trainers and other Trinidadian immigrants can help normalize and illuminate the experiences of immigrant identity conflict so that new immigrants can adjust more easily and know their experiences are not unique.

**Implications for intercultural trainers and researchers.** The current study shows the importance of understanding the social, cultural, and historical underpinnings that shape the identities of immigrants in the United States in order to understand their identity-based acculturation process. Intercultural researchers must understand the uniqueness of any given population to understand how they acculturate.

To create a more inclusive society for Trinidadian immigrants and other immigrants of color, interculturalists and those who provide trainings for these members of our society will need to understand that race is not the most salient construct for many of them in their home countries. As intercultural trainers are preparing to support immigrants, it is important to make efforts to balance discussions of race-based topics in the United States with efforts to understand the identity constructs of immigrants of color. These considerations are necessary to encourage a truly pluralistic society that embraces and respects the cultures of various ethnic groups as they make new lives in U.S. society.

For interculturalists conducting research on the acculturation of West Indian or Trinidadian immigrants, a tridimensional model is more appropriate than the bidimensional model that U.S. interculturalists traditionally use. Using this model will provide a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the complexity of the Trinidadian or West Indian immigrant acculturation process, especially in multicultural settings where their acculturation process is not dominated by only one culture.

Additionally, as stated earlier in this chapter, understanding the combined impact of personal and cultural identities will help intercultural researchers understand immigrants in deeper and more complex ways and avoid more superficial explanations of how they define and reconceptualize their cultural identities. It will also help them understand that personal identities are an important factor in framing their research questions.

### **Limitations of Study**

There were three key limitations to this research. First, the survey portion of the study was limited in sample size. The small sample size in the survey data makes the



statistics less meaningful and not generalizable to the Trinidadian population in the Philadelphia region. While the interview participants provided deep, rich insights into the research questions, this study could have benefited from additional perspectives from other Trinidadians who are reflective of Philadelphia's West Indian neighborhoods and different demographic backgrounds, including varying socioeconomic statuses and educational levels, as all of the interview participants had an undergraduate or graduate college education.

Second, due to time limitations, I was unable to test the survey for reliability or how well the scales measured what they were intended to measure. Using the Cronbach's Alpha formula would have helped ensure that the survey instrument was reliable. Additionally, conducting a stronger pilot study after analysis of the survey results, but before conducting the interviews, would have allowed me to refine the interview questions to clarify and expand on the survey results. Time limitations also prevented me from conducting member checking with the interview findings, which would have further validated that my analysis of qualitative findings captured the participants' intended meanings.

Third, my protocol was not sufficient in measuring the impact of migration on socioeconomic status identity. Future researchers could search for an instrument that has been universally tested or could focus on refining an instrument to measure this.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This research provides many insights into the impact of migration on the cultural identities of Trinidadian immigrants in the Philadelphia area. It also reveals new questions and raises opportunities for continued research on the topic as outlined below.

The differences in the impact of witnessing racial disparities in the United States on the racial identities of the interviewees (e.g., one said she will not let it change her, while others experienced racial/ethnic identity conflict leading to identity changes) may be connected to the stage of racial identity development that the person is in when he or she encounters these experiences. Future research might examine the links between one's stage of racial identity development and resistance to changes to one's racial identity.

A future study with a larger sample size could yield a larger comparison between Trinidadians of African, East Indian, and mixed descent to look for more similarities or differences in responses. Additionally, the four identities researched in this study are not the only ones relevant to members of the Trinidadian diaspora. One possible area for future research would be to allow the participants to define which identities are most salient to them in Trinidad and the United States, and to see what emerges without the limitations of predefined identities. Future research might also focus on religious or gender identity, two important identity dimensions in Trinidadian and U.S. cultures.

Future research could also include an analysis of the impact of living in different Philadelphia neighborhoods and the implications of the broader cultural, political, and social environment. A study that focused solely on those living in neighborhoods with large West Indian or Black populations such as West Philadelphia or Cedar Park, may yield very different results from the current study and could lead to an interesting comparison.

Another study of interest could include subgroups of long-term immigrants and recent immigrants who immigrated within the past 5 years, as comparison groups. As

described in the literature review, cultural identity theory (Collier & Thomas, 1988) states that cultural identities have both changing and enduring aspects of identity. Changes may be due to several factors that are social, political, economic, and contextual, such as globalization, social media, and changing labor markets. As I have frequent contact with Trinidadians through social media and yearly travel to Trinidad, I have noticed changes in how Trinidadian youth relate to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation in today's contemporary, globalized world. I would like to conduct a study comparing a subgroup of younger, more recent Trinidadian immigrants to the United States, such as college students, with long-term immigrants who have already settled here, to account for differences in the impact of migration on these identities for different generations. This could capture the influence of social media, more exposure to U.S. news sources, and other contextual factors that have influenced the younger generation's identity-based acculturation.

A future study could also focus on comparing results of Trinidadian immigrants with immigrants from other West Indian countries to see whether there is variance among the groups. This would expand the knowledge of the identity-based acculturation of West Indian immigrants to the United States within the intercultural relations field. Researchers could take this further by incorporating African immigrants as well to add a fuller comparison of Black immigrants in the United States. Such a study might benefit from the use of a previously established instrument designed to measure identity and acculturation, such as Phinney's (1992) MEIM. A larger study may address the continuities and changes of racial and ethnic identity over time and the ramifications of contextual factors for individual identity changes.

**MAIR Program Relevance**

There are five courses that were particularly relevant in preparing me for conducting this study and analyzing the findings. Much of this thesis was based on Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations, during which we studied the concept of identity salience and the nature of shifting identities in different cultural contexts. The Process of Change was also important in my gaining an understanding of the impact of migration on immigrant identities. Advanced Intercultural Theory gave me practice in understanding the interpretive framework within the intercultural field, which I used in this study. This course also exposed me to how previous well-established studies on identity have been framed within our field. Of course, there were two very important courses with which I would not have been able to conduct this study. Research II was my initial exposure to research methodology and provided practice in how to write a research paper, and an elective through the School for International Training called Practice in Cross Cultural Research took me to Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, allowing me to gain practical experience in conducting research in Caribbean cultural settings. I am grateful for the MAIR faculty, who inspired me to pursue this course of research.

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## APPENDIX A. INFORMED CONSENT FORM (SURVEY)

**Informed Consent****Trini to de Bone: The Impact of Migration on the Cultural Identity of  
Trinidadian Immigrants in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

**Introduction:** You are invited to participate in a research study which will explore the impact of migration on the cultural identities of people of Trinidadian descent who live in the U.S., focusing on Philadelphia, PA and the surrounding suburbs. The researcher is Stephanie Zukerman, a graduate student at the University of the Pacific, Master of Arts in Intercultural Relations program.

This research will address whether and how cultural identities change when Trinidadian immigrants move across cultures and nations to the U.S.A. The study will focus on the following four areas of cultural identity: race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, and nationality. **Participation in this online survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. A small number of survey participants will be contacted with a request to participate in a follow-up interview.** Interviews will take place on the campus of Haverford College in Haverford, PA, or a convenient location mutually agreed upon between the participant and researcher. If selected for the interview, your participation will last approximately 1-.5 hours, and you will be provided \$25 towards travel expenses.

**Qualifications:** You were selected as a possible participant in this study because 1) you are of Trinidadian descent, 2) have lived in Trinidad until at least 17 years of age, 3) are currently at least 21 years of age, 4) have lived in Philadelphia or its surrounding area for a minimum of 2 years (currently or in the past), and 5) have legal immigration status.

**Risks:** There are minimal risks involved for participants in this survey. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can lead to your identification will remain confidential. In order to ensure your confidentiality, I will remove all direct identifiers (name, phone number, and email) as soon as possible after receipt of the survey. The data obtained will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed. There is always a minimal risk of unauthorized or inadvertent disclosure of an individual's identity, which could lead to embarrassment if personal or sensitive information was shared.



**Benefits:** Participants selected for interviews will be given the opportunity to share their stories in a confidential, non-threatening environment. Results will be shared with you, giving you the opportunity to learn about both the shared and unique experiences that you have with other Trinidadians in your community.

**Voluntary nature of participation and your right to withdraw without consequence:** Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**If you have questions:** If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me, Stephanie Zukerman, at 215-527-2267, or my faculty advisor Dr. Chris Cartwright at 503-297-4622. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Research & Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific (209) 946-7716.

You can contact me, Stephanie Zukerman, to obtain results of the study upon completion of the research. I can be reached at the phone number above or [szukerman@verizon.net](mailto:szukerman@verizon.net).

**Consent:** By completing and submitting this survey you indicate that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

I agree.

Yes

No

## APPENDIX B. SURVEY

1. How many years did you live in Trinidad? (text entry)
2. List up to two cities or towns in which you lived for the most time in Trinidad. (text entries)

First city or town \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years \_\_\_\_\_

Second city or town \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years \_\_\_\_\_

3. How old were you when you moved to the United States? (text entry)
4. How many years have you lived in Philadelphia and/or the surrounding area? If you currently live outside of the Philadelphia area, how many years did you formerly live in Philadelphia or the surrounding area? (text entry)
5. In which neighborhood of Philadelphia or the surrounding area do you currently live? If you've moved, please write in the neighborhood in which you last lived. (text entry)
6. List other cities or towns in the U.S. (including other neighborhoods in the Philadelphia area) in which you've lived. (text entries)

City/town one \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years \_\_\_\_\_

City/town two \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years \_\_\_\_\_

7. How often do you visit Trinidad? (check box)

One or more times per year

Every other year

Rarely

Never

Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

-----Page Break-----

**Instructions for the following questions:**

There are a number of ways that people describe their cultural identity. This study will focus on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (class), and nationality.

- **Race** refers to physical traits (often skin color, but also other shared physical traits).
- **Ethnicity** refers to a shared sense of traditions, cultural heritage, and/or ancestry (African-American, Afro or Indo-Trinidadian, or just Trinidadian are a few examples).
- **Socioeconomic Status** refers to class or social standing.
- **Nationality** is defined as belonging to a particular nation (e.g. Trinidadian or U. S. American).

The next set of questions will focus on how important these four parts of your identity are to you. Think about the influence each one (race, ethnicity, class, and nationality) had on shaping who you are.

The first set of questions will focus on when you lived in Trinidad. The second set of questions will focus on your time living in the U.S.

8.

Use the scale below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>When I lived in Trinidad,</b> I had a clear sense of my <b>ethnicity</b> and what it meant to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>When I lived in Trinidad,</b> I had a clear sense of my <b>racial identity</b> and what it meant to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure B1. Question 8. This figure illustrates question 8 of the survey.

9.

How important were the following parts of your cultural identity to you when you lived in **Trinidad?**

Use a scale of 0-5:  
0= Not at all important and 5= Extremely important, please drag the red slider to the most appropriate number.

Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important	
0	1	2	3	4	5
Race					
<input type="range"/>					
Ethnicity					
<input type="range"/>					
Socio-economic Status					
<input type="range"/>					
Nationality					
<input type="range"/>					

Optional: Please briefly explain your answers.

Figure B2. Question 9. This figure illustrates question 9 of the survey.

10.

Use the scale below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Living in the United States</b> , I have a clear sense of my <b>ethnicity</b> and what it means to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Living in the United States</b> , I have a clear sense of my <b>racial identity</b> and what it means to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure B3. Question 10. This figure illustrates question 10 of the survey.

11.

How important are the following parts of your cultural identity to you **now that you are living in the U.S.**?

Use a scale of 0-5:  
0= Not at all important and 5= Extremely important, please move the red slider to the most appropriate number.

Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important	
0	1	2	3	4	5
Race					
<input type="range"/>					
Ethnicity					
<input type="range"/>					
Socio-economic Status					
<input type="range"/>					
Nationality					
<input type="range"/>					

Optional: Please briefly explain your answers.

Figure B4. Question 11. This figure illustrates question 11 of the survey.

12. Which of these descriptions do you feel most clearly describes your current identity?  
(check box)

Completely Trinidadian

Mostly Trinidadian but a little American

Somewhat Trinidadian and somewhat American

Mostly American but a little Trinidadian

Completely American

None of the above (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

13. Optional: Why do you feel that way? (text entry)

14. If someone who is not from the Caribbean asks you, how do you identify? **Check all that apply.** (check box)

Trinidadian

Trinidadian American

American

West Indian

Caribbean

Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

15. Optional: Please explain your answer. (text entry)

16. What is your age? (drop-down menu)

21-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

60+

17. What is your gender? (text entry)

18. What term best fits your ethnic background? (check box)

African

East Indian

Mixed (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

19. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? (check box)

No schooling

Primary School

Secondary School

Trade/Technical/Vocational

Associate's Degree

Bachelor's Degree

Graduate Degree (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

Currently enrolled (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

20. What is your profession? (text entry)

21. What is your marital status? (check box)

Never married

Married or domestic partnership

Other (divorced/widowed/separated)

*If answered “married or domestic partnership” or “other,” respondents were taken to Q. 22.*

22. Are/were you married to a (check box)

Trinidadian

West Indian

U. S. American

Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

23. Are you available to participate in a 1-1.5 hour follow up interview?

Note: The interview will take place on the campus of Haverford College in Haverford, PA, or a convenient location mutually agreed upon between you and the researcher. If held in Haverford, there is public transportation to the site, and transportation will be paid for. (check box)

Yes

Maybe

No

24. Only a few participants will be selected for an in-person interview. Please provide your first name and phone number so I can reach you to discuss the opportunity further. Participants who decide to interview will receive a \$25 gift card.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX C. INFORMED CONSENT FORM (INTERVIEW)

**INFORMED CONSENT (for interview participants)**

*Trini to de Bone: The Impact of Migration on the Cultural Identity of Trinidadian Immigrants in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

**Introduction:** You are invited to participate in a research study which will explore the impact of migration on the cultural identities of people of Trinidadian descent who live in the U.S., focusing on Philadelphia, PA and the surrounding suburbs.

My name is Stephanie Zukerman, and I am a graduate student at the University of the Pacific, Master of Arts in Intercultural Relations program. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are of Trinidadian descent, have lived in Trinidad until at least 17 years of age, and have lived in Philadelphia or its surrounding area for at least 2 years.

This research will address whether and how cultural identities shift when Trinidadian immigrants move across cultures and nations to the U.S.A. The study will focus on the following four areas of cultural identity: race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, and nationality. Interviews will take place on the campus of Haverford College in Haverford, PA, or a convenient location mutually agreed upon between the participant and the researcher. **Your participation in this the interview will last approximately 1-2 hours and you will be provided with a \$25 gift card.**

**Risks:** There are minimal psychological and sociological risks involved for participants in the interview. Participants will be asked to discuss their personal experiences with racial, ethnic, socio- economic class, and national identities, as well as discrimination. These topics have a slight potential to create anxiety around memories and experiences that surface. Personal stories on sensitive topics can be exposed if confidentiality is breached. The inadvertent disclosure of an individual's identity could lead to embarrassment if personal or sensitive information was shared. However, all precautions are being taken to maintain your confidentiality. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can lead to your identification will remain confidential. Furthermore, I have removed all direct identifiers (name, phone number, and email) as soon as possible after receipt of the survey, and have substituted codes as identifiers for both the survey and interview portions of the research. The data obtained will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.

**Benefits:** There are benefits to this research as well, particularly that participants will be given the opportunity to share their stories in a confidential, non-threatening environment. Results will be shared with you, giving you the opportunity to learn about both the shared and unique experiences that you have with other Trinidadians in your community.

**If you have questions:** If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me, Stephanie Zukerman, at 215-527-2267, or my faculty advisor Dr. Chris Cartwright at 503-297-4622. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Research & Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific (209) 946-7716.

**Voluntary nature of participation and your right to withdrawal without consequence:** Your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Consent:** Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time, and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims or rights.

You can contact me, Stephanie Zukerman, to obtain results of the study upon completion of the research. I can be reached at 215-527-2267 or [szukerman@verizon.net](mailto:szukerman@verizon.net).

You will be offered a copy of this signed form to keep.

Signature

Date

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## APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about yourself. I would like to learn more about your migration story. You came to the U.S. when you were \_\_\_ age. What year was that? What brought you here?
2. In the survey, you stated that you feel *insert answer to Q. 12*. Can you tell me why you feel that way? What about you has changed/stayed the same?

Have you felt pressures to assimilate or fit in, or have you felt welcome to maintain elements of your own cultural identity?

Follow up on comments left in survey Q. 12.

3. In your experience, how did Trinidadians identify a person's racial or ethnic group when you lived there? In your experience, how do Americans identify a person's racial or ethnic group? Do these hold true for you specifically?
4. In the survey, I asked you to rank how important certain parts of your identity (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status/class, and nationality) were to you when you lived in Trinidad, and then again now that you are living in the U.S. I noticed that there was a change (or no change) in *insert any changes/no changes in the dimensions of identity*. Why do you feel that way? What has changed or stayed the same? Please share one or two stories or experiences you've had.
5. a) Did you experience discrimination when you lived in Trinidad? Yes/no
  - b) If yes, why do you think you were discriminated against? What was it based on? If not, why do you feel that you were not?

6. a) Have you experienced discrimination in the U.S.? Yes/no  
b) If yes, why do you think you were discriminated against? What was it based on? If not, why do you feel that you were not?
7. Since living in the U.S., has anyone ever asked you the question, “what are you?” or any related questions regarding your race, ethnicity, or nationality? If so, how do you answer? How do questions like these affect you?
8. How do you think non-West Indians view your ethnicity and race? How about your cultural identity?
9. Have you ever felt like people have put you in a particular category or labeled you in a way that did not fit your identity? If so, please tell me about it; how were you categorized or perceived?  
Probes: How did that make you feel? How did you respond? What effect do you think this has had on you? What do you think prompted them to categorize you this way?
10. What was your first impression of the U.S. when you arrived? Can you remember if your perception of your racial or ethnic identity changed within your first 2-3 years of being here? If yes, in what ways? Think about what labels you were assigned and how you felt about that.  
Probes: How has your perception of your racial or ethnic identity changed over the years? What are some of the factor that you think contributed to this?
11. Are you more aware of race and racial issues after coming to the U.S? If yes, what do you believe caused this?
12. Would you ever move back to Trinidad again? Why or why not?
13. How do you maintain or express your Trinidadian identity?

## APPENDIX E. SALIENCY RESULTS FROM SURVEY

Table E1												
<i>Saliency: Levels of Importance of Four Dimensions of Identity</i>												
Trinidad												
<u>Identity</u>	<u>0*</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>%</u>
Race	2	8.70	5	21.74	3	13.04	1	4.35	6	26.09	6	26.09
Ethnicity	1	4.35	5	21.74	1	4.35	3	13.04	7	30.43	6	26.09
Socio-economic	2	8.70	2	8.70	1	4.35	4	17.39	8	34.70	6	26.09
Nationality	3	13.04	1	4.35	2	8.70	4	13.04	4	17.39	9	39.13

*Note.* Measured by number of respondents and percentage of the total respondents (23).

\*0 = Not at all important; 5 = Extremely important

Table E2												
<i>Saliency: Levels of Importance of the Four Dimensions of Identity</i>												
United States												
<u>Identity</u>	<u>0*</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>%</u>
Race	1	4.35	4	17.30	1	4.35	2	8.70	6	26.09	9	39.13
Ethnicity	1	4.35	3	13.04	1	4.35	2	8.70	7	30.43	9	39.13
Socio-economic	1	4.35	1	4.35	2	8.70	4	17.39	8	34.70	7	30.43
Nationality	1	4.35	1	4.35	2	8.70	3	13.04	4	17.39	12	52.10

*Note.* Measured by number of respondents and percentage of the total respondents (23).

\*0 = Not at all important; 5 = Extremely important

Table E3								
<i>Shifts in Saliency of the Four Dimensions of Identity Based on Participant Ages.</i>								
<u>Amount of Shift</u> <u>by Identity</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>41-50</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>51-60+</u>	<u>%</u>
Race								
MS*	0	0.00	2	75.00	2	25.00	5	45.45
LS	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	25.00	2	18.19
NC	1	100.00	1	25.00	4	50.00	4	36.36
Ethnicity								
MS	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	50.00	5	45.45
LS	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	12.50	1	9.10
NC	1	100.00	3	100.00	3	37.50	5	45.45
Socio-economic								
MS	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	25.00	4	36.36
LS	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	12.50	0	0.00
NC	1	100.00	3	100.00	5	62.50	7	63.64
Nationality								
MS	1	100.00	1	33.33	2	25.00	3	27.27
LS	0	0.00	1	33.33	1	12.50	0	0.00
NC	0	0.00	1	33.33	5	62.50	8	72.73
<i>Note.</i> Measured by number of respondents and percentage of the total of each age group								
*MS=more salient; LS=less salient; NC=no change								