Visualising Facebook

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Chapter 3 found both overlaps and significant differences between the ways people in El Mirador and The Glades become constituted as adults. It was suggested that while new mothers in The Glades appear to show a devotion to their identity as parents, those of El Mirador specifically repudiate such a shift and strive to ensure that they maintain a glamorous image uninterrupted by motherhood. Indeed, both glamour and looking good remain important to women even when they are elderly. This is not viewed as vanity, but rather a duty to oneself and others. The underlying reasons behind this in terms of people’s concepts of identity and truth will be explored further in Chapter 7.

Looking good is a general goal shared by the people of El Mirador – but as people become adults the contexts in which they appear start to gain greater significance. This may include both institutional frames, such as the world of work, and cultural frames of social class and ethnicity. In his ethnography of work in Trinidad, Yelvington argues that class, gender and ethnicity are integral aspects to what you see in another person. In Trinidad people see each other as ‘having’ a class, a gender and an ethnicity. One of the advantages of studying social media – and especially of examining visual posting – is that we as academics can literally see how these are visually expressed.

We noted earlier that the world of work, which one might expect to be central to becoming an adult, is almost entirely absent from postings in The Glades, at least when used as a setting for photographs of people. By contrast images of people at work are of considerable importance to the inhabitants of El Mirador. What matters is not so much the kind of work a person does, however, as the adoption of a dress code that signifies a respectable job and a working person. Work and dressing for work establishes how class is expressed on Facebook. By contrast, gender is often established more through posts that are comments about
the nature of gender relationships: either positive ideals of romantic relationships or comments on the antagonistic relationship between the genders. This chapter finishes with a discussion on ethnicity – a complex scenario, as in Trinidad ethnicity is not simply a series of fixed categories. These visual postings will be used to show how some aspects of stereotyping of Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians are also appropriated by the other.

**Work and home**

Following completion of high school, young people and parents alike pay considerable attention to what they wear to work. Appendix Figure 1 shows that 343 images were taken at work or related places in El Mirador, but only 12 in The Glades. Appendix Figure 4 shows that people in the two sites equally post about work as a topic, so the difference concerns situating people in the work context. In Trinidad photos posted from the workplace are especially important for establishing upward mobility.3 For professionals who have fairly secure jobs and mobility within the private sector, photos taken at work are more playful and casual; they can include selfies or photos of colleagues or their vocation. But otherwise dressing up for work and looking good emerges as a serious concern in profile pictures (Figs 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).

The act of dressing for work is here just as appropriate a subject for a selfie as dressing for going out in the evening. Dressing for work is an expensive business, since there is an ideal of not wearing the same outfit twice at work unless the person has to wear a uniform. So it is likely that this degree of expense and effort is being reflected through such Facebook postings.

For young people just starting out on their careers, university graduates or lower income individuals looking to expand their opportunities, showing enthusiasm about their work through facial expression and demonstrating professionalism through body language and dress is important. Posting images with work colleagues is another genre of posts that create social acknowledgement and build relationships and collegiality (Figs 5.4 and 5.5).

Photos of work parties and ‘limes’ (a Trinidadian term for going out, see below) are also frequently posted, as are associated travel and conferences: all serve to emphasise the individual’s skills and merits as well as the achievements of the group. Work trips contain similar elements to everyday posts – liming, parties, drinks and food – but
Images taken by colleagues show collegiality and create social acknowledgement.

Showing work outfits is important for cultivating a professional-looking profile.
ideally at more up-market, glamorous or exotic (that is, distant) settings (Figs 5.6 and 5.7).

Most work dress is strictly formal, consisting of suits for men or shirts and trousers. Women wear tailored dresses or fitted, knee-length skirts with tapered shirts or blouses. Footwear is made of leather and is fitted, and hair is neat and styled back, off the face. Casualness in dress, or any kind of unkemptness, is a sign of poor upbringing or of being from a lower class, so there are rarely photos of people looking sloppy or with their clothes just thrown together. Most Trinidadians simply would not leave the house in such informal dress if they were going anywhere beyond a relative’s home. Respectability can be demonstrated both through how one dresses and through the company one keeps, as shown in these photos of work-related events. The emphasis is as much on the social relations of work as on the experience of the job and the act of working itself (Fig. 5.8).

This genre of work clothing is further reinforced by a striking contrast with the leisure environment of home (Figs 5.9 and 5.10). Here people may go to the opposite extreme and post images of themselves wearing shorts, T-shirts and flip-flops, though men rarely go as far as posting images of themselves ‘bare back’ (without a shirt). Women will wear sloppy shirts or tank tops, short or shapeless skirts, but again only up to a certain level of informality.

A trend in Facebook cover photos in El Mirador is to display the company or place you work for, especially if it is a small business. These complement or contrast with profile pictures, which emphasise either
attractiveness, sociability or the person’s professional persona. Cover images can look corporate and professional or colourful, especially for people who work in restaurants or bars (Figs 5.11 and 5.12).

For workers in small or family-run businesses, posting on Facebook is often a side effect of boredom. Men tend to share more humorous memes, while women will experiment with hair and make-up on particularly quiet days and post more ‘boredom selfies’; both share statuses, likes and, to a lesser extent, comment on posts. Trinidadians rarely get into serious discussion or commentary on Facebook unless they strongly identify with an issue or identify with being an activist. This is out of fear of ostracisation, blocking or a feeling of putting oneself out there too much. Instead work posts focus upon mood, humour and style.

Young women often post images of themselves doing their make-up or experimenting with hairstyles that again may reflect boredom. This is common not only for people who work in salons or are beauticians, but also for those who work in clothes or shoe stores where there

Photos showing very casual clothes worn within the home

Cover images may include a business one owns or where one is employed

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can be extensive periods with no customers. They often form groups of Facebook friends who thereby help to occupy each other’s time in the reciprocity of likes and comments (Figs 5.13, 5.14 and 5.15).

Adding comments to photos which link the post to boredom is also a way of legitimising good-looking photos of oneself without appearing to be too self-regarding. Such images can attract dozens of likes and several comments (Figs 5.16a and 5.16b).

Posting an attractive image attributed to boredom appears less self-regarding (a). In this case it drew many favourable comments (b)
If we now turn to the examination of images set in the home, the emphasis shifts – not to the home itself, which is rarely the subject of a posting, but rather to its role as a setting for relationships to the wider family, a theme already developed during childhood and adolescence. Also, as previously, images with the extended family are as prominent as those showing the immediate family (Figs 5.17 and 5.18).

For formal occasions, such as weddings, graduations, anniversaries, work functions and Hindu pujas (prayers), poses are as formal as the attire. People line up and stand in groups, place their hands in front of them or by their sides and pose with a neutral expression or a slight smile. In Appendix Figure 2 we find 19 out of the 50 people sampled for their profile pictures show people dressed in more formal wear for an event (with a total of 70 such photos), compared to only a single such case in The Glades – formality on the English site is often viewed as opposed to authenticity, and thereby seen as less appropriate for a profile picture. In El Mirador formal occasion photos seem to replicate the formal portraiture that in the past was more characteristic of official or bureaucratic documentation (Figs 5.19 and 5.20).

In photos of the family and family events, gender seems less important as a category, with little posing in overtly feminine or masculine forms (Fig. 5.21). Nor is there much sense of individual style, beyond looking appropriate for the occasion and looking respectable. This is also secondary to the importance of the image as capturing a sense of occasion.

Gender

In The Glades, the expression of gender consists largely of the establishment of genres of postings. For females this might be memes themed around ‘girls out together’, or an association with wine or
dieting; for males this might be photos of football and beer. We find equivalents of these in El Mirador, but an equally important element is more direct commentary on gender relationships. First, however, we need to examine how both masculinity and femininity are established as visual styles.

For lower middle-class and lower income populations in El Mirador, we find an identification with the ‘gangsta’ image evident in US hip-hop culture. For young men, young gangsta masculinity includes wearing caps, low-hanging oversized jeans, trainers, T-shirts or singlets that emphasise their upper body, gold chains, watches and sunglasses (Figs 5.22, 5.23 and 5.24). In Appendix Figure 4 we find hats and caps appearing in 254 photographs in El Mirador, compared with just 52 in The Glades. Young men who subscribe to the ‘gangsta’ image also post photos of money, memes about money or making money and images of conspicuous consumption, such as expensive drinks and posing with expensive cars (Figs 5.25, 5.26 and 5.27). The adoption of the ‘gangsta’ image is popular with young men who see themselves as identifying with the intersections
Some young men adopt the ‘gangsta’ image from US hip-hop culture.

Young men who adopt the gangsta image also post about money and making money.
of race, class, gender and sexuality that are embodied stylistically in hip-hop culture.5

Young men also post photos with several different young women at clubs or on nights out. It is difficult to tell from the photographs whether these young men are in serious relationships or not. Posts that show how they can attract a variety of women intriguingly share the walls with quite different posts in which these same males want to appear sincere, sensitive and trustworthy to attract women with the promise of genuine, longer-term relationships.

There are also men who concentrate on wanting to be seen as more rounded or more genuine, who are either in more permanent relationships or who are seeking them. They largely post images associated with work, where they went on vacation and their friends (Figs 5.28 and 5.29).

In terms of wider interests, young men continue to post about gaming and sport, especially associated with events such as the World Cup, but to a far lesser extent than teenage boys (Figs 5.30, 5.31 and 5.32). Working men, although they may play sports or train recreationally, don’t display the intensive competition and time investment in sports achievements found with teenage boys. Professional men may post motivational posts associated with work and success as well as
Young men post about interests such as the World Cup or gaming, but to a lesser extent than teenagers.

Images of themselves at work-related events, dressed very professionally (Figs 5.33, 5.34, 5.35 and 5.36).

In El Mirador, postings of young women suggest a subtle ambivalence towards aligning with gender norms. On the one hand, there is an emphasis on being independent and having their own means. While they rarely post about their interests, young women are happy to emphasise a lifestyle based on their taste and aesthetic appreciation. At the same time, although these images might not be explicitly linked to trying to attract a man, there remains a clear concern only to post images in which they look good. Consequently photos of everyday wear, being around work, going out and socialising all retain a focus on their looks (Figs. 5.37, 5.38 and 5.39). As noted, the primary difference between The Glades and El Mirador is that while people in both field sites use visual posts which portray gender as the separate norms of masculinity and femininity, there are far more comments upon the general state of gender relations in El Mirador in the form of memes. Appendix Figures 2 and 4 suggest that memes are about three times as likely to be posted in El Mirador as in The Glades, both in regular postings and as profile pictures. Furthermore, while those in The Glades are mainly humorous, in El Mirador funny memes are complemented by moral and serious posts, mostly commenting on the nature of relationships. There is often also an element of religiosity in memes about romantic relationships, although religious memes also appear as their own genre (see Chapter 7). This
Images posted by young women emphasise lifestyle, attractiveness and independence.

Professional men also post images of themselves at work events and motivational memes.
religious component is found in postings by people of any religion. The longer the relationship progresses, the less the person puts up posts of this kind; instead we start to see more photos of couples together and examples of courtship.

These serious memes with their moral commentaries about romantic relationships and love generally argue that romantic love should also mean fidelity, loyalty, trust, sensitivity and care (Figs 5.40, 5.41, 5.42 and 5.43). Even the more humorous memes about gender roles and expectations may carry underlying currents concerned with issues of neglect, being taken for granted emotionally and, sometimes, the hint of abusive relationships (Figs 5.44, 5.45, 5.46 and 5.47).

There is often a considerable ambivalence in these postings regarding two tensions within relationships. Firstly, they favour a committed relationship, but also emphasise the importance of being able to retain one’s autonomy in a relationship and not be taken for granted. Secondly, they express an idealistic (through moralising) view about relationships,
but also identify, usually through humour, the generalised antagonistic view that each gender holds of the other.

**Class**

Class in Trinidad has a complex history and is heavily entwined with race relations. Singh argues that in the first 50 years, post-emancipation, ex-enslaved Africans who were clearly unable to compete with the white upper class in terms of holding property tried to attain status through education and cultural capital. Generally, by contrast, ex-indentured East Indians sought to hold land and to generate wealth through business and entrepreneurship. Historically, there were various ways to make wealth and status visible, which included overt signs of achievement in education and the embracing of British and American culture, as well as adorning the home and oneself in acquired...
material things – all themes that run through V. S. Naipaul’s fictional writings on Trinidad.

In El Mirador discussions around class that come out in everyday conversations are mainly expressed through the use of the terms ‘stush’ and ‘ghetto’, which describe among other things the aesthetics of clothes and taste, and how people behave at celebrations or fetes. Both terms are coloured by moral judgements beyond simply describing being rich or poor: ‘stush’ implies that not only does one have money and better, or more elite, taste, but that one thinks one is better than other people because of these things. ‘Ghetto’ implies the opposite – that one has cheap, tacky and flamboyant taste, is loud and brash and has a crude sense of sexuality. ‘Ghetto’ also has a negative racial element that is often used offensively to describe lower income Afro-Trinidadians. The people who are the targets of being called ‘ghetto’ sometimes resist their positioning by overtly ascribing to the stereotype in order make others uncomfortable. ‘Ghetto’ can also be used to be extremely offensive, in the same manner that ‘nigger’ was used historically. In El Mirador, however, the term ‘nigger’ may cause even less offence than ‘ghetto’.

This is because Trinidadian racial epithets are entirely different from those of the US, with terms such as ‘coolie’ and ‘nigger’ remaining part of everyday greetings for decades after they became unacceptable in the US. Today, however, some people have re-appropriated the US inflected term ‘nigga’ instead – precisely an example of how people who find themselves branded as ‘ghetto’ respond by incorporating terms that make ‘stush’ people uncomfortable. As we show later in the chapter, ‘nigga’ also continues to be used more humorously, without the political and racial implications of ‘ghetto’.

The sense of class is increasingly linked to the idea of cosmopolitanism in Trinidad. In the last couple of years, with the introduction of 3G and with WiFi broadband more readily available in homes, we see a new trend among women in their early twenties who are university educated and young professionals of different ethnic backgrounds. While the images that they post retain some of the genres that we’ve already discussed, including the concern with pose and sexuality, they increasingly display influences that can be described as more ‘global.’ This may include images posted of food alone, dishes at American chain restaurants or restaurants in malls, holidays to other Caribbean islands or further abroad, clothes and make-up (Figs 5.48 and 5.49). These young women follow fashion blogs avidly; they bookmark them, subscribe to them on YouTube and experiment with looks they’ve seen from bloggers who exhibit fashion in the US, the UK and Asia, most notably, Singapore.
The fashion or lifestyle bloggers, make-up and style gurus they follow on YouTube defy the image of the ‘all-American girl’ that was popularised in Trinidad with Hannah Montana. For women in their early twenties, the social media icons they follow have their own sense of ‘glocality’ – global images that can be appropriated in multiple local sites. As such, these are women to whom Trinidadians feel that they can relate. Popular social media style icons are from countries with similar histories and cultures to Trinidad: places with multiple ethnic backgrounds, with a colonial past and a growing middle class. Most of the bloggers are the same age as their followers, in their late twenties or early thirties, and generally their blogs emphasise beauty, consumption and lifestyle. Very few of the bloggers these young women follow write about sexual relationships or romance tips; instead they post about being close to one’s family and others values with which young Trinidadian women can identify.

A core component in the expression of class through postings is that associated with travel and mobility. Most Trinidadians in El Mirador will have taken a holiday in their sister island of Tobago. Images from Tobago, as well as beaches and nature leisure spots around Trinidad, are common, often focused upon relatives and friends having a good time (Figs 5.50 and 5.51).

For the more upwardly mobile, male and female, travel images may emphasise more exotic or distant locations (Figs 5.52 and 5.53).

Typical settings are Florida, New York, the UK or other Caribbean islands (Figs 5.54 and 5.55). Frequency and distance of travel are an important indicator of social class within Trinidad. Instagram collages are popular with the young middle class in the capital, but, since the platform was rare in El Mirador at the time of this research, it is not being considered here.
Going to the beach and other nature leisure spots are popular weekend activities.

International travel is enjoyed by the more upwardly mobile.

Trips further abroad are indicative of having a higher income.
While materialism and consumption can be reflected in photographic posting, people who consider themselves to be of higher classes want to maintain their sophisticated image. Conscious that they could appear crass or vulgar by posting images of consumption, one strategy is to frame expensive items as gifts from others, rather than crudely showing off ‘this is what I bought’ (Figs 5.56 and 5.57).

The contrast is with people from lower income groups. They might more directly associate themselves with branded goods, but more as part of popular culture which includes also associations with films, television and music. Appendix Figure 1 shows that branded goods are evident in 147 images from El Mirador, but in only six images from The Glades. Appendix Figure 4 shows the last 20 postings included only nine foreign music videos posted by seven people in the Glades, as compared with 125 videos posted by 36 people in El Mirador – though this obviously also reflects the relative size of the local music industry. US music videos, especially associated with hip-hop and Top 40 songs, are generally popular in Trinidad, as are more sentimental or love songs from the 1980s to now. Often the latter include comments such as ‘an oldie but so true’, or ‘still true’, or ‘a classic’. This sharing of music links and videos is common to teenagers and young adults and declines with age (Figs 5.58 and 5.59).

People from peripheral areas such as El Mirador often post images that relate to time spent in the fashionable areas of Port of Spain, though lower income groups would probably visit less frequently (Figs 5.60 and 5.61). For the middle class this might include postings of restaurant and bar food, where the emphasis is on dining and presentation.

Posts of food from lower income groups are also common, but the types of food posted are more likely taken from cooking with family and friends, takeaways or beach and river cook-ups (Figs 5.62 and 5.63).
In addition, while middle-class women will post popular local food, they also present what they perceive to be cosmopolitan foods, where the emphasis is not on the company or the occasion, but on the status of the food itself. An example occurs in Chapter 8 where one of the images, that of focaccia bread, promotes a food that most Trinidadians would not have heard of.

People living in more peripheral areas enjoy visits to the sophisticated city of Port of Spain.

Other popular posts of food include take-away meals and dishes prepared at home.
Trinidadians in El Mirador generally post more about food than the English in The Glades. This could be explained partly by the way these posts on food reflect class, but also the importance of food and eating to socialising associated with ‘liming’ (see Chapter 7). Appendix Figure 1 shows that in the posting of visual images there are 126 photos of food and people in El Mirador, compared with only 79 in The Glades. In addition, food alone appears in 253 photos compared to 65 in The Glades.

Differentiation is also important in images of drinks. More elaborate drinks, such as cocktails or shots of liqueur, are shown alone or in bars where the background is clearly visible and reflects middle-class lifestyles. Multiple empty beer bottles that show how much has been drunk and spirit bottles are more common to lower middle-class posting. Alcohol brands that would be recognised in Trinidad as expensive are posted regardless of people’s incomes (Figs 5.64, 5.65, 5.66 and 5.67).

Expensive alcohol brands are posted regardless of level of income, as alcohol is considered important for showing enjoyment as well as lifestyle.
If food is more common in El Mirador posting than in The Glades, the opposite is true for drinks; these feature in 352 photos in El Mirador, but in 568 images posted in The Glades. The difference reflects the earlier discussion about how the English, most notably teenagers, need to show a drink in their hands to indicate that they are having a good time.

Photos of home interiors rarely focus on the furnishing, though as backgrounds they certainly mark a contrast between middle-class homes (Figs 5.68 and 5.69) and lower income ones (Figs 5.70 and 5.71).

Even when Miller carried out his initial field work in Trinidad in 1988, cars were strikingly important as an expression of individual taste and identity. At that time cars, as much as homes and clothes, were heavily adorned and accessorised, and people put a large amount of

Images of home interiors can indicate a middle-class status

Lower income homes are shown as unfinished, such as needing a coat of paint or still being in the process of completion
time, effort and expense into maintaining them. Today almost all cars appear washed and shiny, with around half also showing wider elaboration and decorative work. This might range from religious motifs to fancy lights, or hubcaps and wheels made up to resemble those of racing cars.

On social media people may pose with cars, as emblems of a high-class lifestyle, or to suggest going out to have fun (Figs 5.72, 5.73 and 5.74).

In addition people, especially those in their early twenties, may show off the cars themselves – either in their entirety or through a focus on specific parts such as modified doors, wheels, decoration or other features. There is no equivalent in The Glades, where cars are always in the background rather than a focal point (Figs 5.75, 5.76 and 5.77).

**Ethnicity**

Trinidad has a mixed population. It includes approximately 35 per cent who are descended from indentured East Indians (from south Asia) and 35 per cent who are descended from ex-enslaved Africans. The remaining 30 per cent are descended from Chinese, South American, Syrian, Lebanese and European (locally termed French Creole, irrespective of which part of Europe they originated from) and mixed backgrounds. Khan (2004) describes Trinidad as a ‘callaloo’ society – the name of a national dish in which different vegetables are boiled, then blended together to make one dish. Diversity is also expressed in religion – not just between Hindus, Muslims and Christians, but sometimes through highly significant differences between their respective denominations,
for example Pentecostal and Catholic Christians. Trinidadians have developed a number of ways to show that they belong to different categories of ethnicity and religion; these are worn and shown on the body, a practice that now extends to social media.

When it comes to ethnicity, however, social media also reflects Trinidad's long history of co-existence, meaning that today each group is comfortable posting images originating from groups outside of their own. A good example of this is the way in which the gangsta aesthetic (see above) can today be found equally among Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian men. Young adults show themselves with others of both backgrounds, commonly referring to each other in banter as ‘nigga’ or ‘dawg’ and, to a lesser extent, ‘coolie’. Racial epithets are used openly in El Mirador and don’t cause offence if they are used between friends or with humour, although they still have the potential to be used in a derogatory way for the denigration of others (Figs 5.78 and 5.79).

Young women also post featuring the word ‘nigga’, which again can be friendly and humorous in certain contexts. However, it also extends to a more derogatory usage, usually when talking about men they consider obnoxious (Fig. 5.80).
Afro-centrism is more unequivocally positive when manifested through Rastafarian culture, particularly in the appearance of Bob Marley in posts. These include merchandise such as T-shirts, visiting iconic sites and posting song quotes or images (Figs 5.81, 5.82 and 5.83). The Rastafarian culture embodied by Marley is embraced by Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians alike.

East Indian cultural heritage is mostly visible through clothes for religious or family events such as Hindu prayers (pujas), weddings and anniversaries. Both men and women take pride in styling themselves for these events and post photos taken before leaving the house and at the event itself (Figs 5.84 and 5.85). Once again, however, extended families often incorporate mixed Indo-Afro nuclear families, so there would often be at least one relative of another ethnic background present. Today it is also common that at Indian family events there would also be mixed or Afro-Trinidadians

Racial epithets are used openly between friends, particularly in a humorous context
wearing Indian ethnic clothing. The incorporation of visual images therefore goes in both directions (Figs 5.86, 5.87, 5.88 and 5.89).

Within these more general ethnic categories, there remains a subtler positioning based on traits such as precise skin colour, build and the texture of hair. Liking Facebook pages around hair is also a common mode for expressing ethnic heritage (Fig. 5.90).

Trinidadians have a rich vocabulary of terms related to mixed heritage such as ‘red’, which means having some European ancestry,
Indian ethnic clothing is worn on special occasions by those of different backgrounds.

Ethnic heritage can also appear through ‘liking’ pages dedicated to styling, such as hair.
or ‘dougla’, referring to mixed Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian. The continued significance of these differences is most evident from the cases of siblings in mixed families. The sibling who looks more African may have very different experiences from the one who looks more Indian (Figs 5.91 and 5.92).

Some people’s posts make explicit their claims to cultural heritage, for example through the way they post images of ‘African’ hair and hairstyles. Others avoid such positioning by posting more ‘global’ influences around lifestyle, consumption and interests such as vacations abroad.

Other minorities are also present. When we look at posts of recent Chinese migrants in El Mirador, we see a contrast, not only in content – here humour, memes and an emphasis on looks are rarely posted – but also in how the Chinese relate to China as their homeland. Chinese migration in Trinidad goes back to labourers arriving in the post-emancipation years of the 1850s. More recent migration from the 1990s, however, reflects China’s new involvement in the global economy. The handful of Chinese in El Mirador who are on Facebook migrated to the area in 2010. They own and work in Chinese restaurants and have extended family in Trinidad. As with the rural migrants to factory towns studied within our project by Wang, they display their attachment to their home villages in ‘homeland’ albums, posted on the Chinese social media platform QQ. In El Mirador young female Chinese migrants also post about their friends at home in China through albums called ‘I Miss You’ or ‘Memory’ (Figs 5.93 and 5.94).

Their posts emphasise the difficulty of living and working away from their homeland. Life in El Mirador is characterised by long hours working in the restaurant, with Sunday as their only day off (Fig. 5.95). Although several have settled permanently in Trinidad, these posts reflect what Liu describes as huaqiao – Chinese sojourners who consider themselves to only be living overseas temporarily, and whose cultural
Recent Chinese migrants express their attachment to home by posting groups of photos forming ‘homeland’ albums

Other posts emphasise their migrant experience of living and working away from home

Although they have migrated to Trinidad, Chinese migrants’ cultural orientation remains towards China

orientation is still towards China (Fig. 5.96). This is similar to the situation of Filipina maids who ‘lived’ in London, but whose orientation remained to their homeland.

While this section has concentrated upon ethnicity as difference, perhaps the most surprising content showed a degree of cross incorporation especially between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians.
This leads on to a consideration in Chapter 7 of quite a strong sense of ‘Trini-ness’, in which ethnicity becomes subservient to a wider national identity.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on several parameters of differentiated identity as they are rendered visible through postings on Facebook. On the one hand, there are personal relationships to nuclear and extended family, and those developed through friendships. On the other hand, social structures also create various sets of affinity that people negotiate, set around class, gender and ethnicity as well as work. These relationships and structures emerge more clearly in the posts of adults rather than teenagers. The groundwork is laid by young people experimenting with styles, identity and association with others. For adults, however, these become more fixed and normative categories of identity that are taken for granted as who they now are.

The chapter began by looking at the role and importance of relationships to people, the expectations and obligations around friendship, family and romantic relationships through memes, status updates and commentary and the direct portrayal of relationships on Facebook. It then shifted from personal relationships to focus on the workplace, working life appearing just as prominently in profiles and posts as do friends and family. This emphasis upon work in El Mirador strongly contrasts with the lack of any such association in The Glades – part of a more general contrast that will be analysed more deeply over the next two chapters. Postings about work were also found to be central to the establishment of class identity in Trinidad. Carried through into consumption, class may also be expressed through cultural capital found in the aesthetic appreciation of cosmopolitan food and drink. We also see class proclaimed through travel destinations, from weekend and beach outings to more remote destinations and holiday photos that signify higher incomes and more opportunities.

Consumption and image are strongly linked to gender. More international or global styles signify independence and choice for women just as much as the gangsta image represents independence and reputation for men. For lower-middle-class and lower-income people, portrayal of lifestyle is less common than posting around relationships, whether time spent with others or moral commentary on the expectations of relationships through the posting of moralising memes. As people move
upwards in terms of income, they post less about the moral state of relationships and more around lifestyle and consumption.

Class, gender and ethnicity in Trinidad have been treated within this chapter as sequential topics with their own particular characteristics. This will shift dramatically when we come to Chapter 7. There we will argue that all of these social parameters not only map on to each other – each also expresses a wider and more foundational dualism that we will refer to as the values of transience and transcendence. Being a man, but also being Afro-Trinidadian and lower class can together come to embody reputation, the world of the street and what is temporary. In contrast women, while also being, for example, Indo-Trinidadian and higher class, embody respectability, the home and what is permanent.