



Petrotrin Opinion Poll

Prepared By:



The voice of the consumer.

Market Facts & Opinions (2000) Limited
12-18 Tragarete Road
Port of Spain

November 2018

Research Methodology

Research Method	Telephone Interviews
Initial Sample Size	661 telephone interviews
Sample Margin of Error	+/- 4.14%
Respondent Criteria	National sample of persons over the age of 18 years
Secondary Sample Size	267 telephone interviews
Sub-Sample Margin of Error	+/-2%
Respondent Criteria	Persons who participated in the initial survey and had indicated that they had voted in the last General Elections
Fieldwork	<p>Fieldwork was initially conducted over a one-week period from September 14th to 21st 2018. The original sample was selected using a random digit dialling technique.</p> <p>A second wave of interviews were conducted in a four day period (October 13th to 17th 2018). This second wave was initiated when the dispute was brought to the Industrial Court and subsequently to the Court of Appeal. The persons, who had indicated that they had voted in the last General Elections (71% or 437 persons) in the initial wave, were re-contacted. Of this group, 61% were successfully contacted and consented to participate in the second wave. This criteria was selected since they, as a group, may have an impact on future elections.</p> <p>Fieldwork was conducted by a team of six interviewers. The interviews were conducted in-office using dedicated telephone landlines.</p>
Telephone Interviews	<p>The Telephone Call Centre uses the CATI system which utilizes computers to assist the interviewers in performing basic data collection tasks. It reduces interviewer error in that it removes the ability of the interviewer to take shortcuts in the questionnaire process and also ensures that the sequence has to be followed. This occurs since only one question is screened at a time and the interviewer cannot proceed without a valid answer to the question. Data entry errors are also minimized by the incorporation of consistency check in the CATI questionnaire programming. Using this system means that there is the removal of a separate data entry process which minimises potential transcription errors.</p>
Data Analysis	Data entry and data analysis were done using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Data Collection 7 and Statistics 23.

Background of the Research

- The Petrotrin discussion is a major news story in that it has been covered in more than one media outlet in their main national news coverage and not only in the business pages. It has dominated the national news for a sustained period – August 27th to October 25.
- The discussion has been triggered by the announcement by Prime Minister Dr. Rowley that the refinery operations of the company would be wound up and that all employees would be sent home.
- The basis of the decision was said to be the dire financial state of the company that was deemed unsustainable, and which would negatively impact the Treasury in a time of declining economic performance for the country.
- Dr. Rowley, as Prime Minister, took the responsibility for the decision and noted that even if it were to cost him his political life, it was the right decision for the country.
- In the absence of any public opinion polls about this major news story, MFO undertook to conduct an independent study. This study is not sponsored by any body or organisation and all methodological decisions have been made by MFO.
- As evidenced in national public opinion polls over the past five years, Trinidad and Tobago is a society with low trust in all institutions exacerbated by sharp partisan political behaviour. In such circumstances, studies elsewhere show that citizens often make judgments that are opposite to the arguments made by the leading actors. Crises breed uncertainty, panic and rumours and in the absence of perceived accurate consistent information, trust spirals downwards.
- The study seeks to provide a national perspective on the issue as a means of informing the public dialogue. It looks at the issue in terms of national confidence about the economy, an assessment of the leaders involved in the matter and the views about the decision and latterly the Industrial Court.

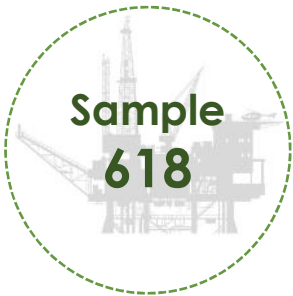
Methodological Considerations

- “Individuals form belief about an object by associating the object with certain characteristics” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1981). This knowledge is gained through personal experience or by obtaining the information through family, friends or the media (the ‘Others’). Each characteristic is evaluated as being either favourable or unfavourable and weighted in the determination of an overall assessment. There are three sources of change: the actor themselves, the information sources and the weight given to the individual attributes.
- This led this study to incorporate an examination of the media coverage and the information gathering done by individuals during the period. To do this, MFO drew on two sources: an examination of the content of the media coverage and the use of Google Trends for the key search items for Trinidad and Tobago.
- MFO reviewed the news coverage of the daily newspapers and performed a content analysis. This approach is the ‘primary message-centered methodology (Neuendorf, 2002) and can be used to study the editorial and news coverage of newspapers, including the accompanying photographs. This is based on a quantitative approach and is supplemented by another technique – discourse analysis – which seeks to qualitatively analyse what were the power relationships between the key players and the major themes that were advanced in the coverage (van Dijk, 1985). MFO acknowledges that there are three issues to consider in this assessment: the media credibility as a source of information in the immediate context, the context of the news story (being a topical issue it would be read more widely) and the audience’s demographic profile. We have assumed that the respondents of this study have been exposed to the levels of the media coverage as indicated by them.
- Google Trends is a website by Google that analyses the top searches by residents of a country. As noted in the book “Everybody Lies” (Davidowitz, 2017), big data from internet searches offer an unprecedented look into our fears and interests. MFO used Google Trends to examine which searches were trending and where in our country the inquiries were being generated. This, we believed, would assist us in interpreting the data that would be collected from our respondents in the national sample. We looked not only at the company – Petrotrin – but also tried, unsuccessfully for some, to look at the leaders. Google Trends do not give you the volume estimates for Trinidad and Tobago, but it does provide an insight into comparative intra-regional interest.

Methodological Considerations

- As economic institutions, trade unions have a significant influence on the economy. They will take part of the credit/blame for the existing economic conditions (Jarley and Kuruvilla, 1994). In the immediate national economic context, there is uncertainty about the future amid lowered energy prices. This will form a central concern in an economy which derives its wealth from the energy industry. The Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Initiative (TTEITI) reports independently verified data on oil, gas and mining company tax payments to the Government and other critical information and has provided data on the situation (<http://www.tteiti.org.tt/eiti-report-provides-data-on-petrotrin/>). The tripartite nature of the TTEITI – Petrotrin, the OWTU and the Ministry of Energy are all Steering Committee members- enable a unique look at the actual financial contributions of the company. The key data is presented in this report.
- MFO has initially intended to present a view of public opinion about the closure of the refinery but the OWTU went to the Industrial Court before it could be published. The decision by the Court and the subsequent appeal to the Appeal Court prompted MFO to re-contact a subset of respondents to assess whether their views had changed in the light of the new information/events. The report covers both phases separately.
- Because of the sensitive nature of the questions and because of the expected political dimensions of the issue, MFO introduced different devices in its fielding of the survey instrument. These included, but are not limited to, the use of an algorithm to randomly change the order of the most sensitive questions to the various respondents. This was supplemented by the wording of the questions that opened the possibility of a range of answers to increase the comfort of respondents in voicing what they may otherwise consider unpopular answers.

Demographic Profile



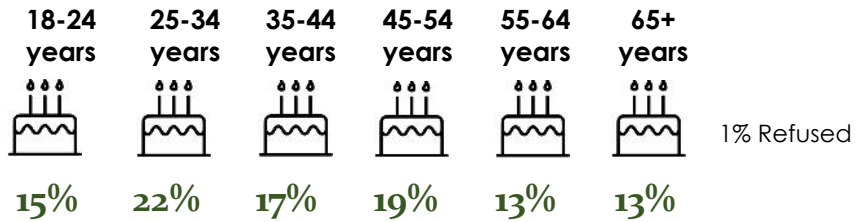
Gender



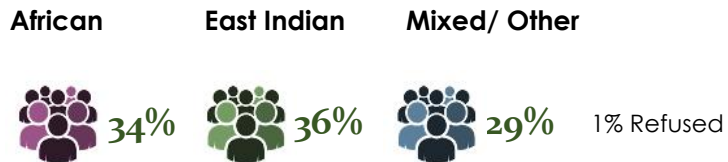
Average Household Size



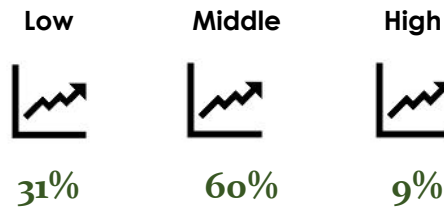
Age



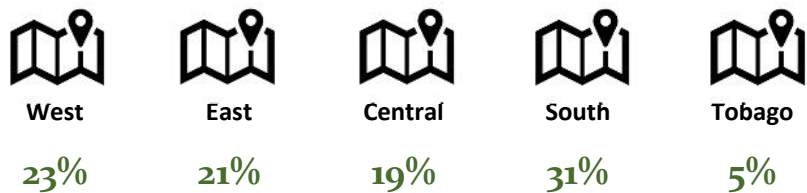
Ethnicity



Socioeconomic Status

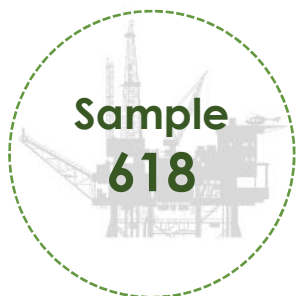


Region

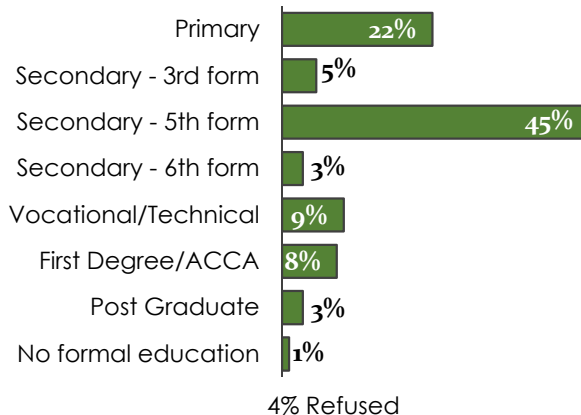


1% Refused

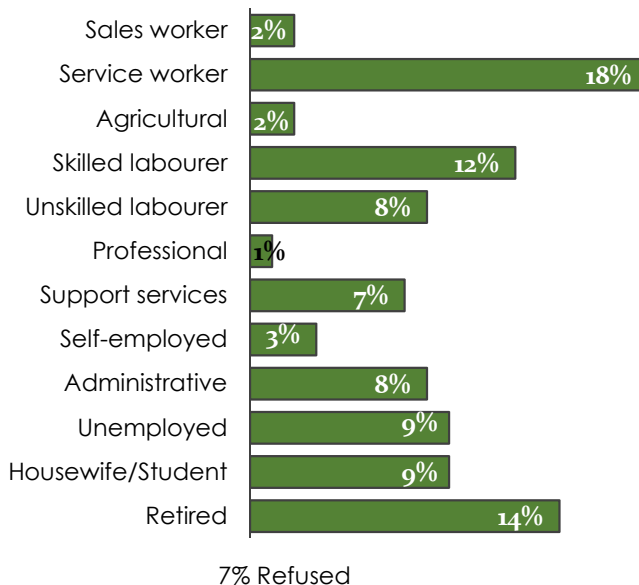
Demographic Profile



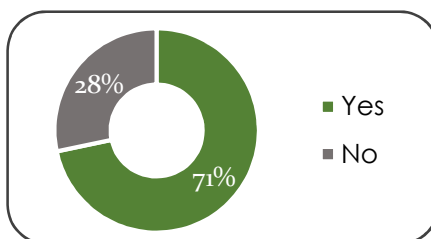
Education



Occupation

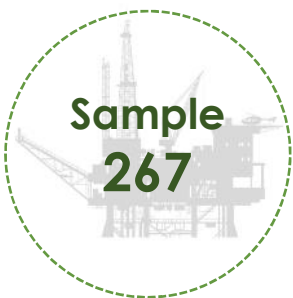


2015 General Elections Voters



1% could not recall

Sub Group Demographic Profile



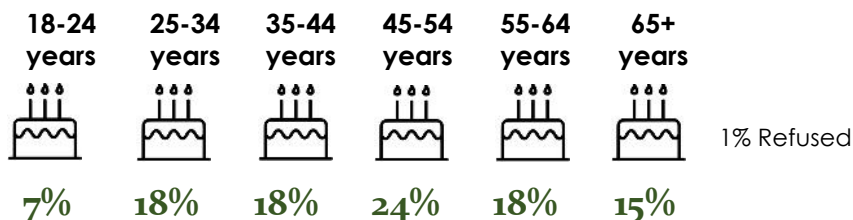
Gender



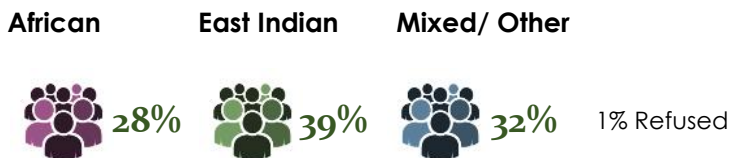
Average Household Size



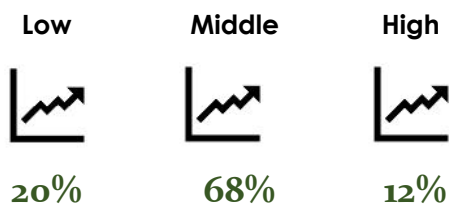
Age



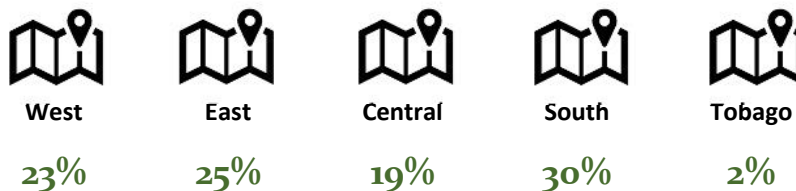
Ethnicity



Socioeconomic Status

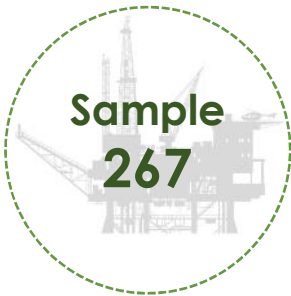


Region

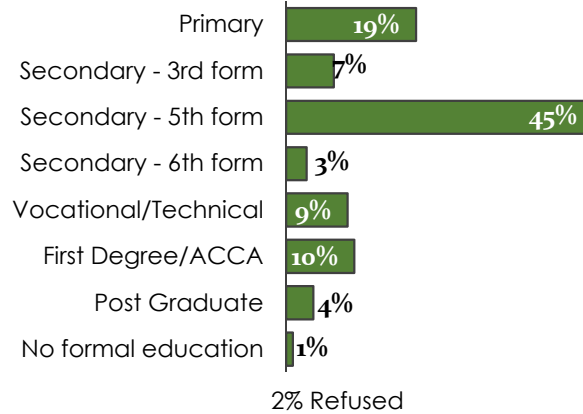


1% Refused

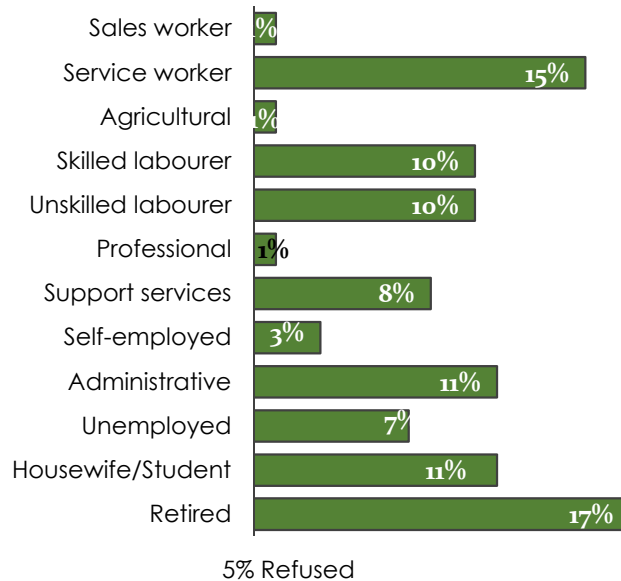
Sub Group Demographic Profile



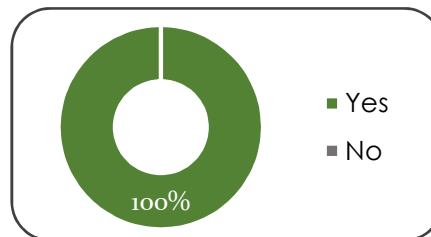
Education



Occupation



2015 General Elections Voters



1% could not recall



What is Google Saying?

Google Trends is a tool that tells users how frequently any word or phrase has been searched in different locations at different times. It provides data when lots of people make the same search. This is reliable in that the search engine will reveal what people are looking for even when they will not tell others.

We incorporated this component into our research since it would reveal which locations were interested in the key issues under review. This would therefore act as a corroborating element in our results. They will help to explain better why certain areas respond differently to the issues.

Note: Charts show Interest over time

Numbers represent search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time.

A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term. A value of 50 means that the term is half as popular. A score of 0 means there was not enough data for this term.

Source: Google Trends

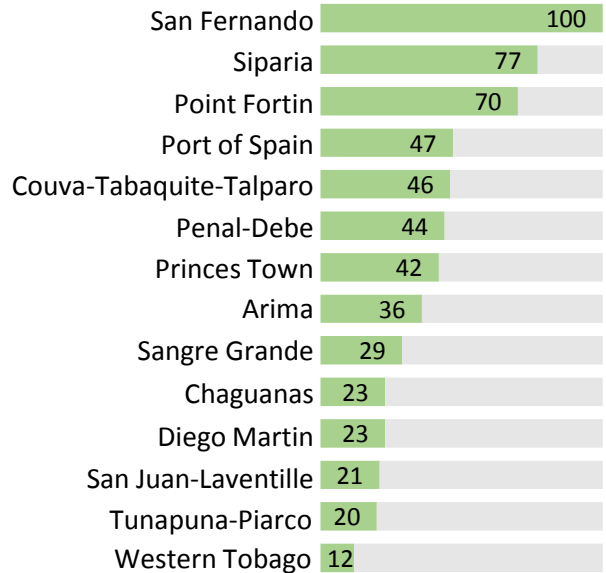
What's Trending? - **PETROTRIN**

On August 28th The board of Petrotrin met with the representative union and the management to announce the plans to end the refining operations and to redesign the Exploration and Production operations.

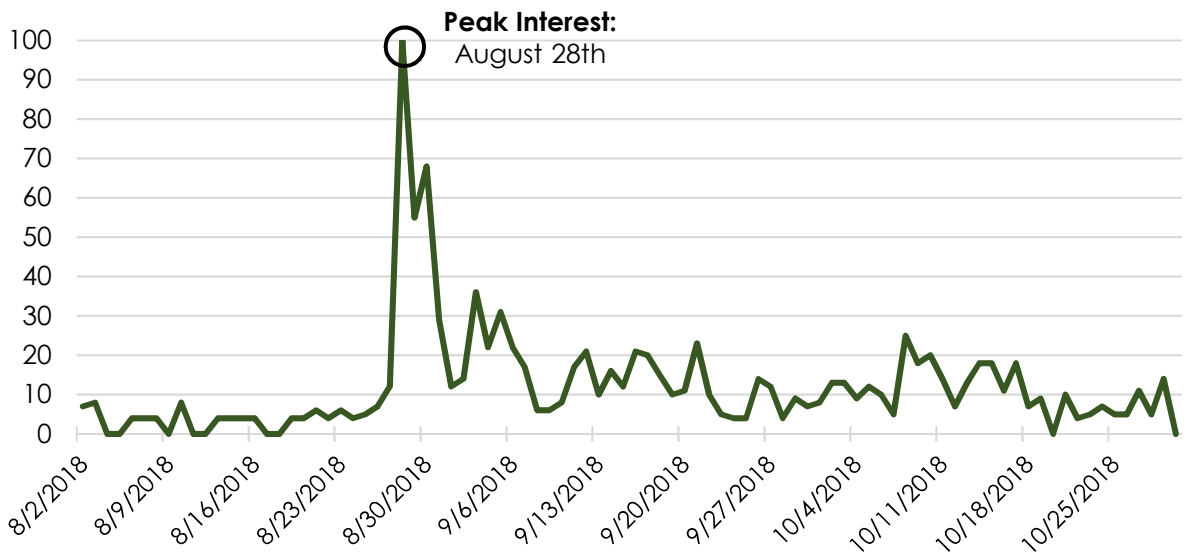
The Google Trends data showed an immediate ten-fold spike in searches on the very day. Interest levels have not returned to their previous lows.

Analysed by region, it is clear that the interest in the company is largely south-based. Tobago was unconcerned with the proceedings and the East- West Corridor, with the exception of Port of Spain, was less likely to perform searches than their southern counterparts.

Interest by Sub-regions



Interest Over Time

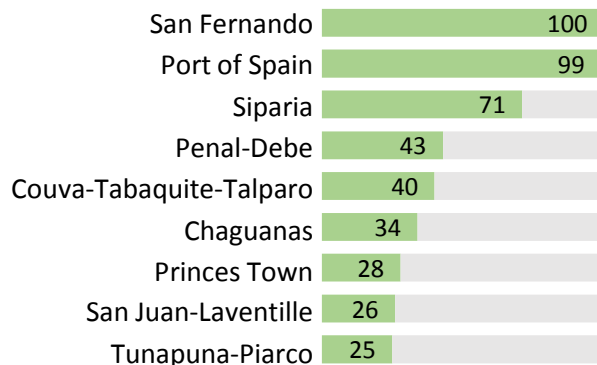


What's Trending? – O.W.T.U

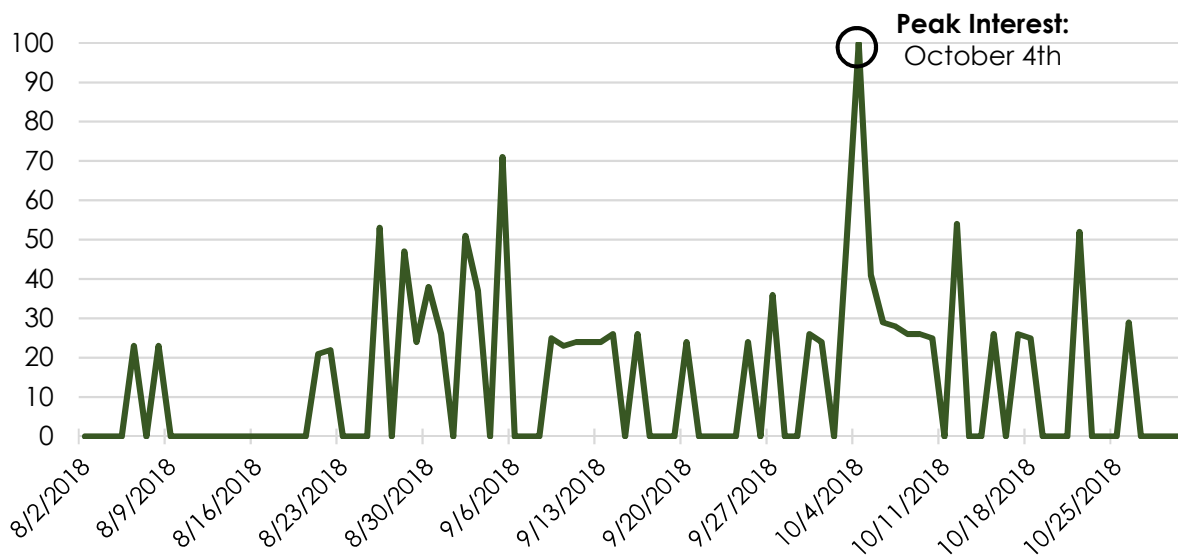
The most significant issue re the searches about the OWTU is that interest in Port of Spain is as significant as in San Fernando. While it is still a south-based concern, it is important to note that it represents twice the number of searches made about the company. This is significant since it may represent an interest in the Union's position. This interest is more narrow, based on geography, than the one for the company.

The peak searches occurred on the second day of the Union's three-day march into Port of Spain.

Interest by Sub-regions



Interest Over Time





Content Analysis

Note:

The three major local newspapers – the Trinidad Express, the Trinidad and Tobago Newsday and the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian - were used in this analysis. Both the physical and online versions were used.

The Media and the Petrotrin Story?

The context in which a news story is highlighted, the words used to describe the event and the images used to accompany such stories all play significant roles in the way the story is perceived by its readers.

In this section, an attempt is made to analyse the content surrounding the Petrotrin story which was highlighted in the three major local newspapers.

Generally, news of the Petrotrin shutdown and its development is a top story. This reflects the understanding of the media that this news resonates with their readers. The story led the news on several days, making major headlines over the course of 3 months (August-October). In most instances, articles relating to the story was covered at the front of the newspapers and would have, boosted public discourse as varying sides of the story were presented. There was a heavy coverage of the views of the major political leaders and the involvement of the leaders of the main national groups.

It was observed that throughout the discourse during the initial 3-month period there was a close balance of articles for and against the shutting down of the refinery as covered in the three newspapers. While this balance was seen, the content of articles which were pro-Petrotrin's position were more likely to use negative language which appear designed to demonize the persons on the other side.

Use of Language

As the discourse evolved a blend of both positive and negative wording and language can be observed in the description of the Petrotrin situation.

Articles, using positive language, were observed in mainly two instances. The first being articles supportive of the Petrotrin refinery being closed. In such instances, the content sought to boost positivity and encourage optimism with key concepts couched as “restructuring” the company, “focus(ing) on exploration (of new economic avenues)” and moving forward with “significant strategic thought”. Positive language was also used to express the possibilities of allowing the refinery to continue its operation. Phrases such as “developing a framework for cooperation”, Petrotrin having been “a beacon of economic growth” and “a major contributor to CARICOM” were also employed.

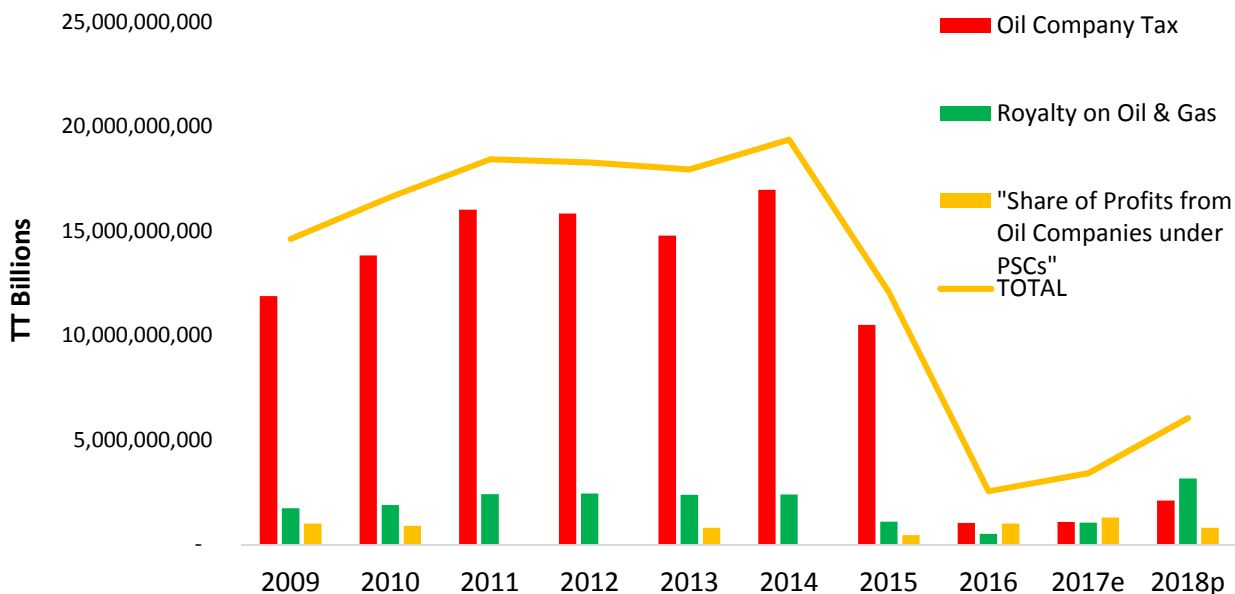
It should be noted that articles using strong negative language out-numbered positively-worded content. Phrases used in the description of the refinery included the need for “radical surgery”, “the demise of this one-time jewel”, “the devil is in the details”, a “scandal of immense proportions” and it was even described as having a “terminal illness”.

Use of Imagery

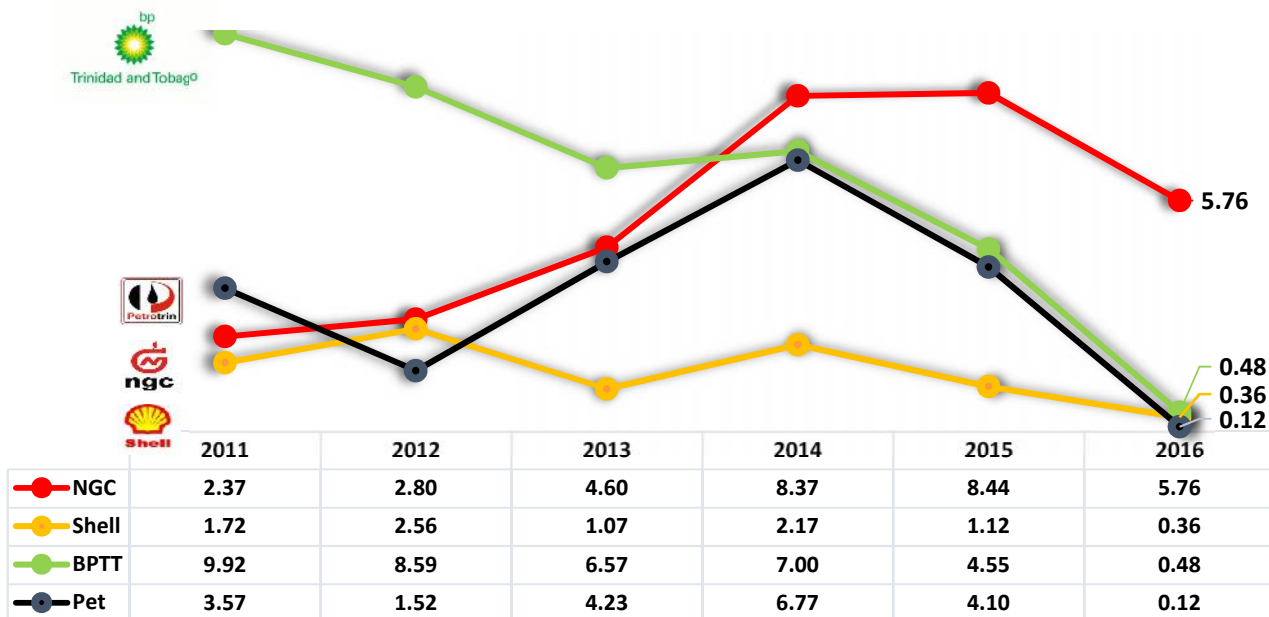
The imagery used across the three major newspapers to accompany articles on the Petrotrin refinery did not vary widely. Two major themes were identified – images portraying tense/rowdy situations or images displaying an individual or team of persons deep in thought.

Not Highlighted- TTEIT's data

Oil & Gas Taxes (2009 - 2018)



Company Payments (2011 - 2016)

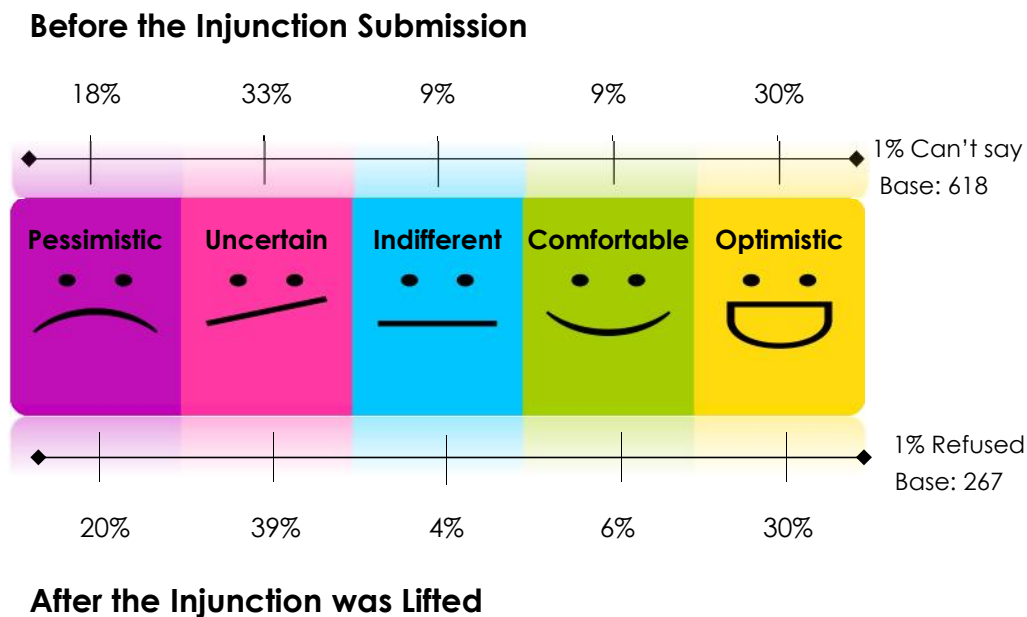


Source: The T&T Model: An evolution of oil and gas contracts and the impact on government revenue. Professor Andrew Jupiter and Sherwin Long. Caribbean Energy Policy, Societies and Law Conference. UWI (October 4, 2018)

The country is sharply polarized. The general mood of the country appears split. While 3 in 10 persons expressed a sense of optimism, a similar proportion (33%) expressed feelings of uncertainty. 1 in 5 persons (18%) harboured pessimistic /negative feelings.

Persons expressing an optimistic outlook tended to be younger persons (18-24 years) and those in the retirement age range (55-64 years). These persons were more likely to be living in communities along the East-West corridor and to be of African ethnicity. Meanwhile, persons holding a negative outlook was inclined to those in the oldest age cohort (65 plus years), tended to be residing in South Central communities and to be persons of East Indian ethnicity.

With the injunction granted by the Industrial Court being lifted by the Court of Appeal, there was greater sense of uncertainty and some darkening of the mood. Significantly, those who were optimistic about the country remained so. Movement can be observed towards the negative, with two in five (39%) now expressing uncertainty about the country's future.



Who Followed the Story?

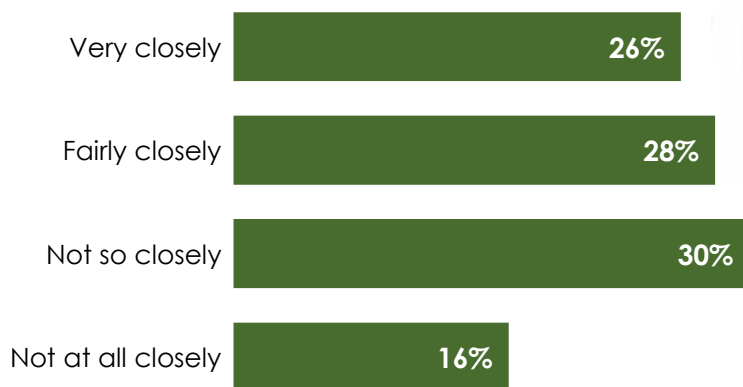
Most respondents (54%) followed with great interest the events as they happened. Similar proportions of persons reported that they were following the news either 'fairly closely' (28%) or 'very closely' (26%). The older you are, the more likely you are to have followed the developments.

Persons who had no interest in the story (following 'not at all closely'), tended to be younger respondents in the 25-34 age bracket and was more likely not to have an opinion on whether the country would be better off without the refinery, stating that they 'don't know'.

Those following the story very closely were more likely to be middle-aged (45-54 years) or in the oldest age cohort (65+ years). They were more likely to reside in the South Central and Central communities (consistent with the Google Trends report) and to hold the view that the refinery should not be closed. Interestingly, however, there were split views among these persons on whether they 'strongly agreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that the country would be better off without the refinery.

Of those in strong agreement that the country would be better off should it be shut down, a majority were older persons (55 years and over), of African or Mixed ethnicity and to be currently comfortable or optimistic about the country. In contrast, of those who strongly disagreed, a majority were middle-aged (45-54 years), of East Indian ethnicity and were uncertain or had a bleak mood about the future.

How closely have you followed news about the Petrotrin Refinery?



Base: 618

Do not close Petrotrin!



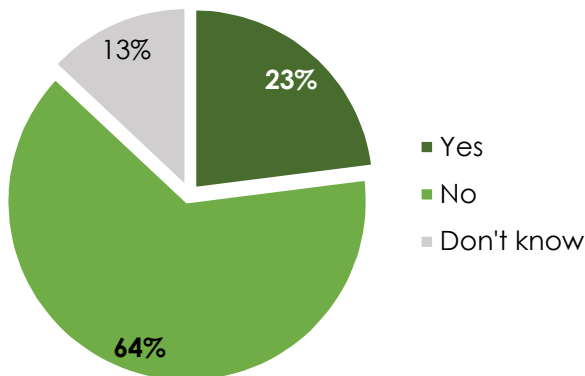
A super-majority, two-thirds (64%) of respondents, are convinced that the Petrotrin refinery should not be closed. A significantly smaller proportion (23%) felt that the refinery should indeed be shut down. 1 in 10 persons (13%) was unsure of what the best decision would be.

Persons, who felt that the refinery should be closed, tended to express a sense of optimism about the country and to be of a high socio-economic status. They were more likely to be older (55-64 years), of African or Mixed ethnicity and reside in regions less impacted by the decision to be made – Tobago and the East/West Corridor.

Those who felt that the refinery should not be closed were less optimistic about the future and are younger (in the 25-44 years age group), male, and of East Indian ethnicity. As may be expected, these persons largely resided in communities most affected by the Petrotrin pending closure – that is, South Central, South West and Central communities. This is correlated with the Google Trends data.

Those who were unsure whether the refinery should be shut down, were the youngest respondents (18-24 years), more likely female and persons of a low socio-economic status.

Should the Refinery be closed?



Base: 618

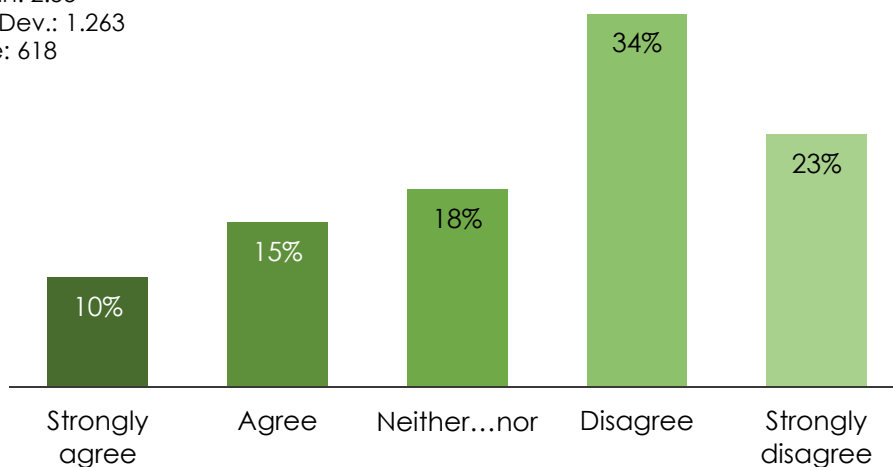
Is the country better off without Petrotrin?

There are strong opinions against the view that Trinidad and Tobago would be better off without the Petrotrin refinery. As many persons 'strongly disagree' as those who either 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

While approximately 3 in 5 persons (57%) disagreed as compared to a quarter of the respondents (25%) who disagree.

The country can be better off without the Petrotrin Refinery...

Mean: 2.55
Std. Dev.: 1.263
Base: 618



Agree

- African (32%)
- 55-64 years (35%)
- Technician/ Support Services (34%)
- High SES (34%)
- Tobago (35%)
- Tertiary/ University Educated (37%)
- Strongly Trust Keith Rowley (55%)
- Strongly Distrust Kamla Persad-Bissessar (34%)
- Comfortable/ Relaxed about the Country (47%)



Uncertain

- Female (24%)
- African (23%)
- 18-24 years (29%)
- Unskilled Labourer (33%)
- Low SES (27%)
- West Trinidad (28%)
- Primary Educated (31%)
- Strongly Distrust Kamla Persad-Bissessar (27%)
- Optimistic about the Country (25%)



Disagree

- Male (62%)
- East Indian (74%)
- 45-54 years (65%)
- Unemployed (73%)
- Central (69%)
- Secondary Educated – up to Fifth Form (64%)
- Strongly Distrust Keith Rowley (77%)
- Strongly Trust Kamla Persad-Bissessar (84%)
- Split between being Pessimistic (69%) or Indifferent (69%) about the country

Do I trust you?

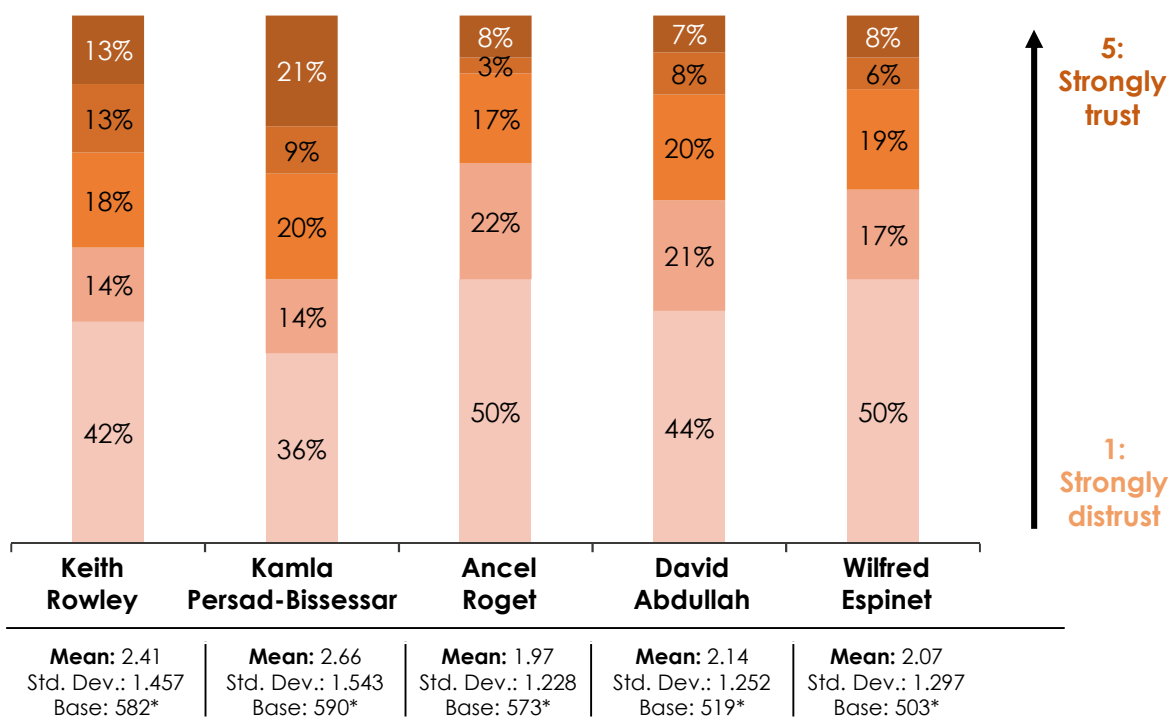
The respondents placed very little trust in the key figures as persons who will seek the best interests of the country. Opinions are polarized and appear to be linked to political support and the respondents' core position on the closing of the refinery.

Interestingly, OWTU President-General Ancel Roget (mean = 1.97) and Petrotrin Chairman Wilfred Espinet (mean = 2.07) were the two least trusted persons. Both men had the same 'trust' profiles. Just 8% of persons 'strongly trusted' that they would put the country's best interest first. The MSJ Political Leader, David Abdullah, received similar ratings but a lower percentage of respondents (44%) 'strongly distrusted' him.

There were higher trust levels for the leaders of two major political parties in the country, but it appears that this trust is influenced by partisan interests (political and union). On the two top box score (strongly and somewhat trust) basis, the difference in the level of trust for the two leaders is minimal (26% KR versus 30% KPB) and falls in the margin of error zone for this study.

Persons were more passionate about the UNC Political Leader, Kamla Persad-Bisessar (21%: strongly trust) than they were of the current Prime Minister and PNM Political Leader, Keith Rowley (13%) – to have the country's best interest at heart.

(Before the Injunction Submission) How much do you trust...



*some persons refused or were unaware of the individual mentioned



Strongly Trust

- African (18%)
- 65+ years (26%)
- Retired/ Pensioner (27%)
- Lives in West Trinidad (20%)



Strongly Distrust

- East Indian (64%)
- 25-34 years (52%)
- Unemployed (62%)
- Lives in Central Trinidad (52%)
- Pessimistic about Trinidad (59%)



Strongly Trust

- East Indian (35%)
- Unemployed (41%)
- Low SES (29%)
- Lives in Central Trinidad (33%)
- Pessimistic about Trinidad (26%)

Strongly Distrust

- Female (43%)
- African (51%)
- 55-64 years (55%)
- Employed in an Administrative field (44%)
- Lives in West Trinidad (45%)
- Optimistic about Trinidad (45%)



Strongly Distrust

- 55-64 years (65%)
- Unskilled Labourer (57%)
- Lives in Central Trinidad (62%)

- 55-64 years (56%)

- 45-54 years (60%)
- Unskilled Labourer (68%)
- Lives in Central Trinidad (61%)
- Indifferent about Trinidad (59%)

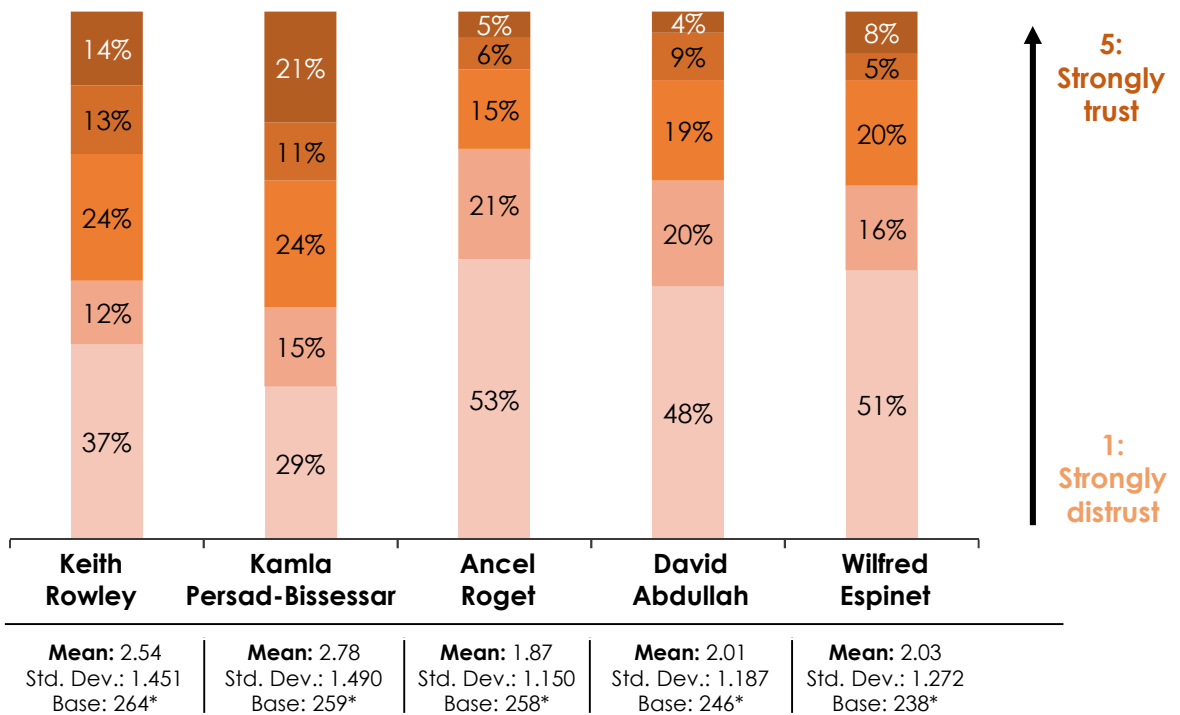
Trust post the Industrial Court intervention?

After the granting of the injunction by the Industrial Court and the subsequent intervention of the Court of Appeal, there were small but significant changes in the trust levels..

Most changes were observed in the opinion about the trust in the leaders of the two major political parties. While the proportion of persons who 'strongly trusted' them remained unchanged there was a decrease in the proportion of the respondents expressing distrust. This resulted in both leaders having the same level of increase in trust.

The other parties involved in the Petrotrin discussion marginally lost trust compared to the levels obtained before the intervention.

(Post the Industrial Court intervention) How much do you trust...



*some persons refused or were unaware of the individual mentioned

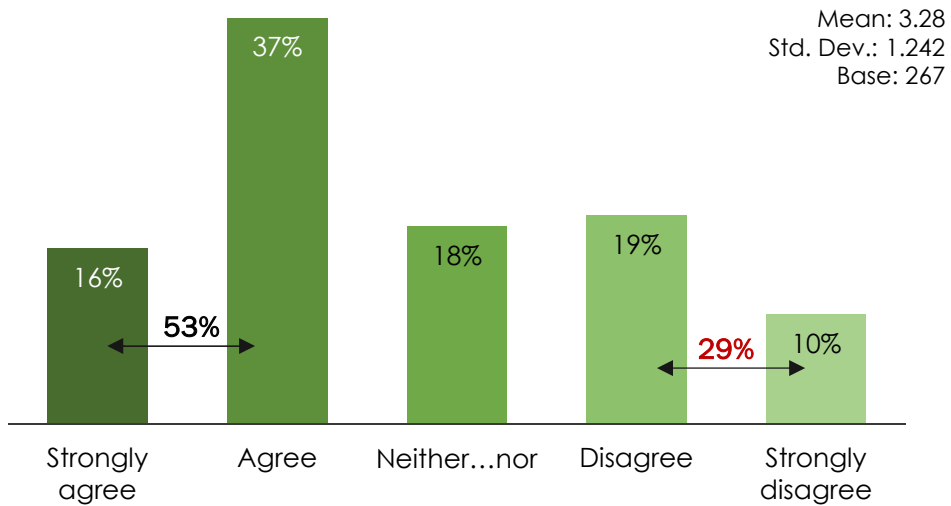
Do we need the Industrial Court?

At the time of the Industrial Court's granting of the injunction to the OWTU and again when the Court of Appeal decided to overturn the injunction, the media had substantial coverage that suggested that the role of the Industrial Court be restructured or removed.

Respondents were asked their views about the statement that the "Industrial Court is no longer relevant".

A clear majority (53%) agreed that there is need for the Industrial court with only 3 in 10 (29%) disagreeing.

There is still need for the Industrial Court

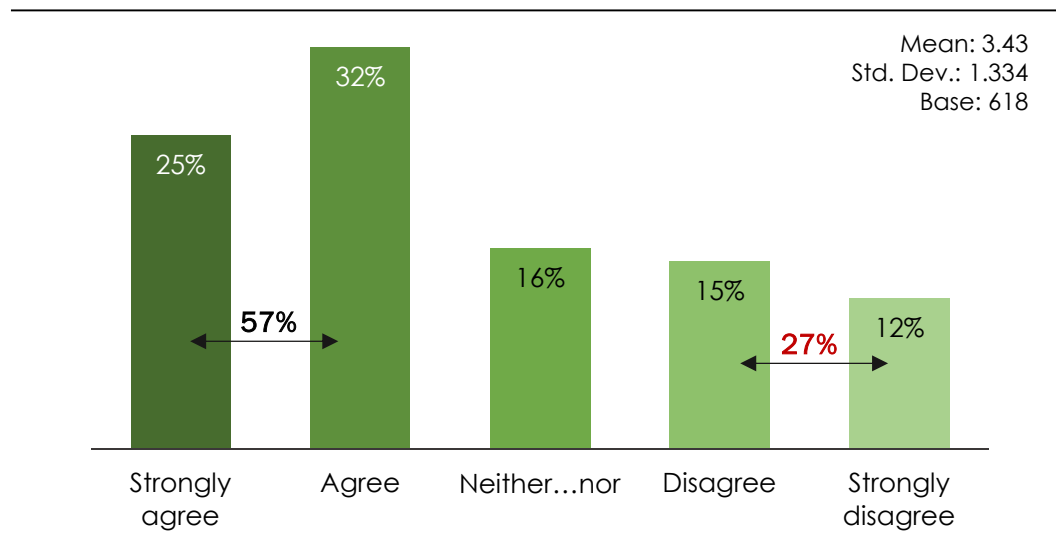


Do we need Trade Unions?

On September 5th, 2018, the OWTU proposed a “day of rest and reflection” which, according to media reports, suffered low support. In the face of this perceived lack of support, there was the view expressed in the media that trade unions may no longer be useful or needed.

A clear majority - almost 3 in 5 persons (57%) – believe that trade unions are still very much necessary. There were as many persons who ‘strongly agreed’ that trade unions were necessary as those who ‘disagreed’ and ‘strongly disagreed’.

There is still need for Trade Unions



Agree

- Unemployed (63%)
- Middle SES (64%)



Disagree

- African (36%)
- Skilled Labourer (39%)
- Low SES (35%)

Can Petrotrin & the Union Agree?

While there is a clear majority view that the Petrotrin refinery should not be shut down and that the country is better with trade unions there is a definite split in opinion, among the respondents who were re-contacted post the Industrial Court's intervention, on whether Petrotrin and the Oilfield Workers Trade Union can find common ground on the issue at hand.

While 46% expressed some level of disagreement that consensus can be reached, 37% agreed that there can be some consensus if the two parties were to meet again. 1 in 5 persons were uncertain.

Petrotrin & The Union can come to an Agreement

Mean: 2.28
Std. Dev.: 1.295
Base: 267

