* Despite the STOMP article itself not having any mentions of race, the comment sections is coded with racialized comments, most being negative.
* Chinese are covid (new) – but stereotypes for others are deep rooted (connect to lombrosso)
* Use covid as a way to clap back but it is not as harmful as other stereotypes, which points to the issue of larger systemic problems surrounding race.
* Add the “multiracial” comment as it being ironic!

This case study is a prime example of how acts of lateral surveillance work to reinforce, as well as reproduce, existing racial stereotypes in Singapore. Within the short STOMP article recapturing the altercation, there were no mentions of either party’s race and ethnicity. Other than the picture sourced from the TikTok post, the article itself was race-neutral.

Thus, this paper aims to analyze how existing acts of lateral surveillance reinforce and reproduce racial stereotypes in Singapore. But more importantly, it disproportionally harms racial minorities.

Aside from the racialized comments regarding both women’s ethnicity, the comment section within this STOMP article allows us to see how the publication and sensationalization of the act of deviance — in this case, the Indian woman taking up two seats — work to reinforce social norms of mindfulness in public spaces.

Starting, Emile Durkheim’s theory of control and deviance provides a useful framework for comprehending the function that deviance serves in society. Durkheim argues that crime and deviance are normal aspects of every society (pg. 86). He states that “crime… is bound up with fundamental conditions of all social life” (pg. 88). When crime exists, shared societal reactions to the act of violence and deviance arise, allowing for the development of collective moral consciousness. We learn what is right and wrong from the crimes themselves, accompanied by “appropriate” punishments. Moral boundaries are created and reinforced. Thus, the function of crime plays an essential role in societies by regulating social norms, collective sentiment, and moral boundaries (pg 88). Although it is important to note, the collective solidarity afforded through crime comes at the expense of ‘the deviant’ (pg. 88). When the punishment of the criminal, a socially constructed label, transforms into a spectacle aimed at reinforcing commitment to social norms, it leads to detrimental consequences for those who fall under that label.

We can apply Durkheim’s theory to this case study. Although the gravity of selfishly occupying two seats on the MRT does not warrant arrest, this is still a prime example of how acts of deviance regules social norms and boundaries. The act of deviance of selfishly taking two seats on a crowded train accompanied by public shaming through the act of lateral surveillance subtly communicates to the viewers of this article: be mindful of public spaces and do not take up two seats. In addition to exposing these instances of deviance on one of the largest platforms in Singapore, the comment section functions as a space for public moral criticism, which allows online users to partake in denouncing not only the deviant behavior but also the individual responsible (Billingham & Parr, 2020, 1000). As a result, these lateral surveillance practices further reinforce social norms and their consequences if they are overstepped. So by the end of reading the article, and maybe even the comment sections, people will take away that it is wrong to take up two seats and argue and create public disturbance in public spaces. Not only does posting and commenting on acts of deviance on a large public platform produce a sense of social solidarity,...

In the context of Singapore, Durkheim’s theory allows us to understand how the practice of lateral surveillance online produces and reproduces social solidarity. Yet, the outcome of social solidarity comes at the expense of further marginalizing minority groups. While the comment section includes derogatory stereotypes of both Indian and Chinese women, the implications and historical context of these stereotypes are more harmful to the minority. Because it perpetuates already existing stereotypes within a social structure that already marginalized minority individuals.

Applying Cesare Lombroso’s theory within positivist criminology underscores the harmful connections and implications of the racialized sentiments found within the case studies. Lombroso, regarded as the father of positivist criminology, “created a prototype of the criminal body based on specimens of ‘atavism’ from the ‘native’ peoples of the global south” (pg. 192). His theory centered around “images and assumptions regarding the traits held to be innate to non-white races – impulsiveness, lack of self-control, emotionalism, violent propensities, immortality, idleness, and so on…” (pg 186). Often these negative traits were placed on younger men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and racial and ethnic minority groups (pg 186). It is important to highlight that Lombroso’s theory implies that the traits of criminals he studies are innate. Thus, positivist criminology creates alluring fiction that is embedded in a discourse that links race, class, and age to criminality (pg 192). The core of positivist criminology justifies how certain marginalized individuals have a greater inclination towards crime, while completely disregarding systemic and structural factors at play.

Thus, the critizism through dreogortay comments of the Indian women perpetuates harmful stereotypes. For instance, in an heated argument within a comment thread, which initially started with “They, [indians], deserved to travel on the roof-tops of the train.” THis then garnered a debate between Commenter C and Commenter D. Commenter C replies stating, “‘Ur kind [should] do that since your types are the initial virus carriers,” which implies that the other party is Chinese and hold xenophic attitudes towards COVID-19 and its origins in China. Then Commenter D, respondes: “‘Actually, SITTING ON TRAIN TOPS is 'the' thing for INDIANS and PAKISTANIS”. Then further states, “We Chinese don't do stooo-pig things, like what Indians and Pakis do.” While the argument is heated on both sides, the basis or “main arugments” for Commenter D directed towards Indian and Pakistanis are ground in positive criminology. On the other hand, Commenter C’s remarks draw on xenophobolic rhetoric from the rise of COVID-19. Although both commenters exchange very hurtful words, Commenter D’s rehetoirc is rooted in a narrative that draws on atavism, which is more negative repercussions when this argument is situated in a social context that already disadvantnges brown people. For instance, the underlying assumption Commenter D makes regarding Indains and Pakistanis sitting on train tops and doing “stooo-pig” things is already fixed within well-know stereotypes of these groups in Singapore. Commenter D speaks from a place of privilege as a Chinese Singaporean (assumed)

Although it may seem harmless and online banner, the readily accepted stereotypes is ingrained in the social milieu of Singapore. Brown bodies are regressed and incompetent and come from thrid-world countries. The impact of lateral surveillance reinstills these images in the minds of citizens. And it is in the practice of survielling and judging that these assupptions and images are solidify, which further perpetuates the discimationation of the already marginalzied.

“A similar reading is offered by Michael Barr (2006), who has written on the education system in Singapore and how racial privileging and the endorsement of the development of a Chinese elite excludes Malays and Indians from Singapore’s top schools because their medium of instruction is in Mandarin and English. While the idea of meritocracy is frequently invoked in Singapore as an ideological principle that accords equal status to all races, it does not take into account systemic or structural impediments which may prevent underprivileged or minority races from accessing particular oppor- tunities or pathways to social mobility (Barr and Skrbiš 2008). As observed earlier, interracial disparity continues to grow and the Chinese population consistently occupy a commanding position in the socio-economic hierar- chy. The idea of meritocracy is never enforceable in practice because social advantage is not equally distributed. There are, for instance, no anti-discri- mination laws in Singapore to deal with discriminatory practices in the workplace.” (Velayutham pg 459)

“In other instances, when it comes to job applica- tion and workplace encounters, minority races are consistently confronted with additional requirements, inflexible attitudes and exclusion from certain positions or overlooked for promotion.” (Velayutham pg 461)

on factual accounts and are not intentionally racists but in reality the stereotyping reproduces structured systems of power in which the Chinese and indeed Indians have historically benefitted.

“This structured power differential between Chinese, Malays and Indians reinforces the hegemony of Chinese-ness in Singaporean society. The second, as Lai (1996), Fuller (1998), Lee et al. (2004), Khoo and Lim (2004) and Velayutham (2009) have argued, phenotype, perceived traits of ethnic group and stereotypes consistently form the basis of everyday discrimination experienced by the Malay and Indian racial minorities in Singapore.” (Velayutham pg 465)

– between the civilized and primitive worlds

“Chinese Singaporeans in this sense are in a unique position because they are in the majority and dominate the political, economic and cultural spheres.” (Velayutham 470)

[Add analysis of case study]

* Well in this case, the comment section included negative assumptions and racialize stereyptoes of both parties. An underlying theme is that the comments pertaining to the Indian women

Furthermore, applying Cesare Lombroso’s theory within positivist criminology underscores the harmful connections and implications of the racialized sentiments found within the case studies.

Although Lombroso’s positivist lens is outdated, its legacy still appears within the present-day criminal justice system. More specifically, the rhetoric of the atavist criminal still presents itself in the language used to criminalize and stigmatize ethnic minorities in relation to crime and deviance. [Add analysis of case study]

Thus, lateral surveillance works to perpetuate racial stereotypes and discrimination as it stems from a history of positivist criminology.

Implications here: power dyanaimcs and how it interactions with other issues