Lateral Surveillance and Racial Stereotypes

1. Introduction

* Singapore is a well-regulated multiracial society that promotes and celebrates racial harmony. However, such ideology is often questioned for its practical application/ implementation and surveillance.
* While much of the literature critiques how government policies and legal entities prevent, as well as perpetuate, racial discrimination and stereotypes, the role of public surveillance is left unexamined. In particular, we are interested in lateral surveillance and how an individual’s understanding of race shapes the surveillance process.

Research Question: How does the prevalence of lateral surveillance in Singapore exacerbate/ reinforce harmful stereotypes of the “deviant” minority?

(lateral surveillance reinforces/ reproduce/ instill/ internalized harmful stereotypes of minorities)

2. Academic context: lit review

* Lateral Surveillance as peer-to-peer surveillance (Mark Andrejevic 2005)
  + Every individual plays both roles, one of being the surveillant as well as the surveilled at the same time.
* How lateral surveillance is characterized in SG & Perception of lateral surveillance in Singapore (Jiow, H.J. and S. Morales. 2015.)
  + Ubiquitous phenomenon that shapes Singaporean social behaviors due to the internalized disciplinary effects of shaming
* Research Gap
  + Individuals use internalized social norms to surveil others, and deviant acts will then be posted online, as discussed previously.
  + When posting on social media platforms, comments can be left by other social media users who might react with outrage and we want to examine the extent social norms are perpetuated or challenged by such acts

3. Methodological context

**3.1 Historical context**

3.1.1 Background of Singapore’s multiracialism and stereotype:

* The population largely made up of immigrants
* History of racial dispute
* Placed great emphasis on ensuring racial harmony through policies, legal regulations

3.1.2 Existing Stereotype

* Definition of stereotype: ‘reflexive and exaggerated’ mental images that we hold of individuals of a specific racial group
* History of Stereotypes and its implications towards minority groups in Singapore
  + Racial categorization – CMIO which fostered social divisions and institutionalized advantages
  + How racial stereotypes came about – explore some mechanisms of why people judge? Influence of social surroundings and in the context of race
* Highlight how racial stereotypes are still prevalent in people’s perception of minority groups

**3.2 Data Collection**

* We plan on going through the comment sections of popular media (Facebook, Tiktok) and news media (Strait Times, Mothership) articles to highlight the existing attitudes towards “deviant” minorities
  + From some data collected, racist remarks are common place :(

[Need to put finding!]

Laterall survalnce is racializeed

4. Discussion

4.1 Application of Durkheim

* According to Durkheim, one of the main functions of crime is to promote social solidarity at the expense of the criminal.
* Through the practice of lateral surveillance, where individuals play an active role in labeling and ridiculing who is deviant, we see how Durkheim’s understanding of crime and deviance facilitates social solidarity in Singapore society.

4.2 Application of Lembrosso

* Although Lombroso’s positivist lens is outdated, its legacy still embeds itself within the present-day criminal justice system. More specifically, the rhetoric of the “born criminal” still appears in the language used to criminalize and stigmatize ethnic minorities (when talking about crimes).
* Lateral surveillance works to perpetuate racial stereotypes and discrimination as it stems from a history of positivist criminology.

5. Conclusion

* Summarize findings
* Limitation