Introduction

Singapore has always been known as a well-regulated multiracialism society that promotes and celebrates racial harmony. The notion of racial equality seem to be the focus of governance in Singapore, through the use of meritocracy, implements of anti-discrimination laws and restrictive measures to prevent racial conflicts. However, such ideology is often questioned for its practical application/implementation and surveillance.

(background) Singapore’s multiracialism can be traced back to British colonial states and open trading in the early 19th century which attracted a large number of immigrants from China, Southeast Asian countries and British India. As a result of the history, Singapore were and are ‘descendent of immigrants’

- Current population by race: Chinese (74%), Malays (13%), and Indians (9%), 4% others

- Demographic during political independence: Chinese (78%), Malays (12%), and Indians (7%), others (3%)[SC1]

With such a racially diverse population, the Singapore government placed great emphasis on ensuring racial harmony by punishing individuals that demonstrate racially discriminatory language and behaviours. Legal sanctions, such as the Penal Code section 298 and 298A and Sedition Act

were enforced to penalise racist and religious hate speech and behaviours.

- History of stereotypes and its implications

o Falsity hypothesis

However, despite the government's effort in regulating racial concerns, racial stereotypes are still prevalent. Racial stereotypes are ‘reflexive and exaggerated’ mental images that we hold of individuals of a specific racial group. These stereotypes are so inflexible that we often disregard any information that contradicts the existing stereotype about that racial group.

(examples from comment section)

This highlights how racial stereotypes are still prevalent in people’s perception towards the minority groups – the Malay, Indian and others.

Since much of the current literature analyses how the government policies and legal entities prevent and perpetuates racial stereotypes in the Singapore society, enforcement and surveillance process of law and regulations, where the public also play a critical role, are left unexamined. Particularly, we are interested in lateral surveillance and individual’s existing understanding of race shaped the surveillance process.

**Thesis:** This paper analyses the narratives of lateral surveillance in unintentionally perpetuating racial stereotypes towards the minority groups[SC3] , which in turn disproportionately harms these groups.

Racial Categorisation and Existing Stereotpyes

Singapore adopts the Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others (CMIO) model in classifying citizens into different ethnic groups at birth, namely the Chinese, Malay, Indian or Other (cite). CMIO is implemented as an administrative mechanism by the government in managing and regulating race policies, which continues to be a significant part of the Singaporean identity. While such model might play a role in maintaining the overall function of the society, predominant arguments in recent years evolve around the idea that race categorisations fostered social divisions and institutionalised advantages towards the Chinese and marginalisation towards the Malay

Comment

* Your group wrote: “However, such ideology (racial harmony) is often questioned for its practical application/implementation and surveillance.” The link between racial harmony and surveillance needs to be made clearer. What do you mean when you say that such ideology has been questioned for its practical application/implementation and surveillance? How was it questioned? Why was it questioned? In fact, how has the ideology been questioned in relation to surveillance? Contextualise the research problem.
* From what I understand from your introduction, your group is interested in understanding how one’s understanding and perspective of race in Singapore influence how they may then watch their peers. Correct me if I misunderstood. If this is your group’s intention, your group needs to first establish how individual’s mindset and perspective on race shapes why, how they choose to watch others in society (perhaps they are more wary of certain races, you can also then examine how they chose to frame the photos that they took of minorities, how they captioned their posts etc) before delving into how this process of watching then exacerbate or reinforce harmful stereotypes.

Research question

Ideology – race-culture equality

- Singapore governance as benevolent dictatorship (Tan 2015)

- Heavy surveillance – view surveillance as the solution to preventing unwanted incidents from happening again, as for safety purposes

- Such perspective/reasoning is rather well-accepted by the citizens

- ‘The positive perception of surveillance amongst the population has led to a rise in lateral surveillance in Singapore where ordinary citizens are beginning to adopt surveillance techniques into their everyday life’

o To shame other who are doing antisocial behaviours

o As a reflexive action they have taken as a response to living in a risk society

- However, while people engage in lateral surveillance, we observe that ppl display racial biases

Individual’s mindset and perspective

Social categorization

- People inherently categorise others into groups, typically in ways that delineate one's own group from other groups

- In group vs out group – between-group differences exaggerated

- The process of social categorization also influences affective reactions. categorization in terms of group membership rather than individual identity evokes greater feelings of fear and lower levels of trust in interactions with others

Races without Racism?: everyday race relations in Singapore

Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) survey on Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony

- ‘When I know what a person’s race is, I have a good idea of what some of their behaviour and views are like’.

o 46% said they agreed or strongly agreed and a further 35.6% answered ‘somewhat agreed’ with the statement

- Exist of Inherent biases and assumptions of behaviour made with race alone

- Such findings highlighted the prevalence of racial stereotypes and how easily individuals can be subject to them in their everyday interaction with people.

- Such attitudes can also manifest in lateral surveillance, since pre-assumptions about certain races already exist.