

Additional Practice for SBQ Message and Surprise Qns (HIHS Prelims 2023)

Source A: Adapted from an extract on the relevance of CMIO classification in policies from the Straits Times newspaper, 24 January 2022.

We want to be able to manage this, so having (CMIO) labels allows us to administer policies... It's a piece of information that allows you to take action. How this stance evolves comes down to the extent to which the Government needs to keep intervening and managing such issues. The day when people no longer use race or skin colour as an identifier is the day when policies that differentiate by race would be meaningless. The EIP, for example, will become less and less relevant as people naturally choose to live in diverse neighbourhoods. However, the fact that there are still a lot of applications that potentially could be rejected - because they have met the quota - means that there is still a tendency for people to want to congregate in a way that we think doesn't promote cohesion and a shared lived experience in a neighbourhood.

Q1 Study Source A. What is the message of this source?

The message of the source is that CMIO categorisation is still relevant in policy making in Singapore as Singaporeans are still not ready for the removal of CMIO categorisation/do not demonstrate readiness in living in a diverse society.

The evidence is "...having (CMIO) labels allows us to administer policies... It's a piece of information that allows you to take action." In addition, "However, the fact that there are still a lot of applications that potentially could be rejected - because they have met the quota - means that there is still a tendency for people to want to congregate in a way that we think doesn't promote cohesion and a shared lived experience in a neighbourhood."

Source D:

An extract from a CNA commentary, "I am Peranakan not Chinese", 8 Feb 2021.

"Are you Chinese or Malay?", people often ask me. For many years, as a Peranakan growing up in Kampong Potong Pasir, I was caught in an identity crisis. My skin was more brown than other Chinese folks. I didn't speak Chinese; only Malay. I didn't even have a Chinese name. The only Chinese thing about me was my surname. Peranakans fall in between the cracks of our traditional notions of race. Many of us in Singapore dress and talk like the Malays, and we struggle to identify with the Chinese. However, we eat pork and celebrate the Lunar New Year so we don't belong to the Malay or Muslim camp either. Unfortunately, for me, my identity card (IC) says I am Chinese but I personally would rejoice if my IC says Peranakan, not Chinese.

Study Source D. Are you surprised by the Peranakan lady's opinion on the CMIO categorisation? Explain your answer.? Explain your answer.

I am not surprised by the Peranakan lady's opinion on the CMIO categorisation as it shows that the CMIO categorisation is not relevant due to its failure to categorise major races that do not belong to any general group. The source states that "Peranakans fall in between the cracks of our traditional notions of race. Many of us in Singapore dress and talk like the Malays, and we struggle to identify with the Chinese." Additionally, the Peranakans "eat pork and celebrate the Lunar New Year so we don't belong to the Malay or Muslim camp either." Hence, the CMIO categorisation fails to categorise culturally relevant races that do not belong to any one of the particular groups, failing to differentiate races that are significantly distinct from the official groups due to their culture.

This is not surprising to me as Source D is supported by the background information, which tells me that the CMIO categorisation is not relevant due to its failure to categorise major races that do not belong to any general group. It states that "the CMIO model is problematic in a number of ways, for example, within the C, M and I categories, the model does not differentiate between local-born and foreign-born Chinese, Malays and Indians. The Others' category also does not distinguish between distinct groups such as ethnic Koreans, Americans and Filipinos - groups with unique cultural histories." This shows that the CMIO model is too general in attempting to categorise the races and cultural groups in Singapore without resorting to excessive generalisation, and is thus not relevant in the modern context of Singapore where its cultural diversity has resulted in great varieties of races that go beyond the CMIO categorisation.

As the background information supports Source D, Source D is thus expected and not surprising.

Answer Key

I am not surprised by Source D as it is similar to the Background Information.

Source D tells me that the Peranakan lady is of the opinion that the CMIO categorisation is irrelevant because it discriminates unique groups by homogenising them with majority groups. The evidence is "Unfortunately, for me, my identity card (IC) says I am Chinese but I personally would rejoice if my IC says Peranakan, not Chinese." This suggests that she thinks that the CMIO categorisation is irrelevant as it homogenised her group as Chinese even though the Peranakans and Chinese are distinct groups.

Similarly, the Background information also tells me that the CMIO

I am surprised by Source D as it is different from Source A.

Source D tells me that the Peranakan lady's opinion is that the CMIO categorisation is irrelevant because it discriminates unique groups by homogenising them with majority groups. The evidence is "Unfortunately, for me, my identity card (IC) says I am Chinese but I personally

would rejoice if my IC says Peranakan, not Chinese." This suggests that she is of the opinion that CMIO categorisation is irrelevant as it homogenised her group as Chinese even though the Peranakans and Chinese are distinct groups.

In contrast, Source A tells me that the CMIO categorisation is relevant because the data based on the categorisation can be productively used despite the apparent distinction of groups. The evidence from Source A is "We want to be able to manage this, so having (CMIO) labels allows us to administer policies... It's a piece of information that allows you to take action." Hence, the CMIO categorisation is useful to the government as it allows for the proper implementation of government policies.

Since Source A is different from Source D, hence I am surprised by the Peranakan lady's opinion in Source D that the CMIO categorisation is irrelevant.

I am not surprised by Source D as it is by a Peranakan lady whose group is not recognised but homogenised together with the Chinese even though her group only share some cultural aspects of the Chinese.

Source D highlights the dilemma of the Peranakan lady "caught in an identity crisis" as her "identity card (IC) says [she is] Chinese but [she]"