

Section A: Source-Based Case Study [15 marks]

1 Government and Governance

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer **all** the questions.

You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to the sources which you are told to use. In answering the questions, you should use your knowledge of the issue to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

- (a) Study Source A.

What is the message of this cartoon? Explain your answer. [4]

- (b) Study Source B.

Why was this post written? Explain your answer. [5]

- (c) Study Sources C and D.

How similar are these two sources? Explain your answer. [6]

Has trust in TraceTogether been lost?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Read this carefully. It may help you to answer some of the questions.

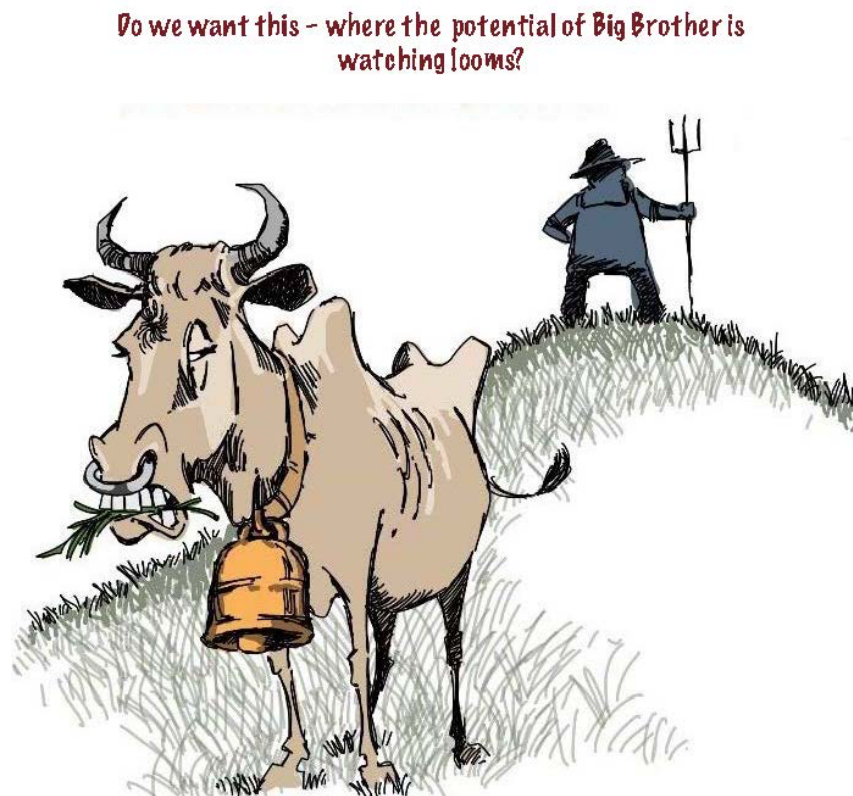
In its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, Singapore's Government Technology Agency (GovTech) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) jointly developed a digital contact tracing system called TraceTogether. It was first launched as a mobile app in March 2020, and a portable wearable device called the TraceTogether Token was announced on 5 June that same year. However, there were public concerns over privacy and how data collected would be used, and some worried that TraceTogether could even be used to track where they went. In response, the Government reiterated that the data collected and technology used by TraceTogether would only be for contact tracing purposes.

In January 2021, in response to a query in Parliament about whether the police use TraceTogether data for criminal investigations, the Government clarified that the police are in fact empowered under the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) to use TraceTogether data for the purpose of investigating crimes. This revelation, which was previously not widely known to the public, triggered outrage as many thought that the Government had gone back on its initial promise that the system would be used only for contact tracing.

On 1 February 2021, the Government introduced a Bill in Parliament to restrict the use of TraceTogether data to seven serious crimes, including murder and terrorism.

Study the following sources to understand the debate over TraceTogether.

Source A: A cartoon published on The Online Citizen Facebook page on 22 October 2020.



Source B: From a Facebook post by the Minister in charge of Singapore's Smart Nation drive, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, on 20 June 2020.

We welcomed four experts and open-source* advocates for a teardown** of the first version of the TraceTogether Token at the GovTech office this morning. They gave much good advice to our GovTech engineering team that will help them refine the initial design.

There are many ways we can work with the community, and today's teardown is a good start. I have asked GovTech to plan for another event sometime in the next few weeks to crowdsource the knowledge and expertise of the tech community to further improve the Token.

* Open-source refers to software for which the original source code is made freely available and may be redistributed and modified.

** A teardown refers to the disassembling of an electronic device to understand how it works.

Source C: A speech made by Leader of the Opposition Pritam Singh in Parliament on 2 February 2021.

There is little or no doubt that TraceTogether would make things convenient for the Police. But it is my view that convenience for the Police may not be a good enough reason to compromise the trust necessary to win the COVID-19 fight. Even so, the Workers' Party is prepared to support the Bill, as a Singaporean's right to privacy is better protected with this Bill than without.

The discomfort and distrust in some quarters generated by the belated disclosure of how the CPC applies to TraceTogether is somewhat unsurprising. To counter scepticism and to replace it with trust and cooperation, Singaporeans need to better understand the necessity of data collection. The public must also be assured that the data collected and used for investigative purposes have safeguards that are robust enough with independent and external checks and balances, if necessary.

Source D: A speech by PAP Member of Parliament Alex Yam, during the parliamentary debate on 2 February 2021.

The abrupt change in the terms concerning personal data usage is upsetting for many. In this pandemic, the people have entrusted their personal data for an important purpose. To be then told it will also be used for something beyond the original intention feels like trust has been broken.

However, while Singapore may be safe, it is not crime-free. Access to information is key to the resolution of any crime. Police need evidence and the sooner the better, the more complete the better. I reluctantly support the intent of this Bill as I am uncomfortable with the limits upon our Police capability to solve crime and to keep us safe. This must not set the precedence for future data access for new technology when it comes to issues of public safety. Stability, safety, security and human lives are at stake, pandemic or otherwise.

.End of Paper.

Copyright Acknowledgements:

Source A: <https://www.facebook.com/theonlinecitizen/photos/a.310010691382/10158981171391383/?type=3>
Source B: <https://www.facebook.com/Vivian.Balakrishnan.Sg/posts/10156902734466207/>
Source C: <https://sprs.parl.gov.sg/search/sprs3topic?reportid=bill-495>
Source D: <https://sprs.parl.gov.sg/search/sprs3topic?reportid=bill-495>