The London School of Economics and Political Science

The influence of socio-political context on racial identity: strategic identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans

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For my grandparents,
R Venkatasamy Reddiar & Seethalakshmi Reddiar,
who lost their homes so that I could find mine.

DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science, is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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I declare that my thesis consists of 63,052 words, excluding acknowledgements, appendices and references.

Statement of conjoint work

I confirm that Chapter 2 was jointly co-authored with Dr. Ilka Gleibs and Dr. Caroline Howarth, Chapters 3 and 4 were jointly co-authored with Dr. Ilka Gleibs and Chapter 5 was jointly co-authored by Dr. Caroline Howarth. I contributed roughly 75% of the work in each of these chapters. This is made of the study design and operation, data analysis, article outline and authoring main, and final drafts of chapters. Co-authors provided key supervisory assistance, funding of transcriptions and editorial suggestions for the chapters.

Statement of inclusion of previous work

I can confirm that about 20% of the data presented in Chapter 2 was the result of previous study (for the award of MSc Social Psychology) I undertook at the University of Surrey, United Kingdom. This previous study functioned as a pilot study for the PhD.

Geetha Reddy

ABSTRACT

In the field of Social Psychology, race has been said to be socially constructed at the level of both individuals and groups. In this social psychological study, I examine how different socio-political contexts influence the construction of racial identities. Specifically, I argue that the concept of the socio-political context needs to be examined from different perspectives. In the three studies described here, I break socio-political context down to government policies, colonial history and politicised geographies using examples from Malaysia, and Singapore. In Study 1, I research how everyday engagements with government policies influence racial identity construction among multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans. In Study 2, I explore how everyday engagements with colonial symbols influence contemporary racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans living in Malaysia, Singapore and the UK. In Study 3, I examine how changes in politicised geographies, as demarcated by three different multicultural countries Malaysia, Singapore and the UK, influence racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans. I posit that racial identities are strategically constructed according to the demands of the specific socio-political context that it is studied in. As a whole, this thesis shows that there are different aspects of racial identity construction at play at any given time and space, and the social psychologist can elucidate specific aspects depending on how they decide to conceptualise the socio-political context. This research has implications for understanding identity constructions in multicultural societies. More broadly the findings have relevance to social psychological understandings of contemporary multicultural societies that have individuals who traverse many spaces of home - both drawn by racial and national boundaries. As societies, and so, identities become increasingly complex in today's world, I hope that such insights are important for the development of Social Psychology and social research in general.

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ACRONYMS

DA	Dialogical Analysis
MRI	Multiracial Individuals
M'SIA	Malaysia
SG	Singapore
SIA	Social Identity Approach
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SRA	Social Representations Approach
SRT	Social Representations Theory

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PREFACE

My interest in studying the social psychology of race and racism stems from my own life experiences. I believe that this makes my work richer, and not lesser for it. I am motivated by understanding the underpinnings of how society *races* the individual and how the individual responds to this racialisation in their everyday experiences. No doubt my own experiences influence my research, my relationships with research participants and my analyses of the data. But this is true for all researchers. While researchers with little personal experience of the object of their research may gain in distance and 'objectivity', they may lose in terms of rapport, depth of collaborated knowledge constructed in the research process and nuanced understanding. What is important is reflexivity and understanding the connections between researchers' identity and the process of research. Hence, I take a look at my research journey, which has led to the completion of this PhD thesis, and discuss how reflexivity has been the core of the PhD research process.

I have been drawn to understanding the psychology of human behaviour since I was an undergraduate at the National University of Singapore. Yet the disconnect between the lived experiences of the individuals that surrounded my everyday life and the theories and methods that I studied led me to believe that psychology was merely the study of that which cannot be seen, that is, that which takes place only in the mind. Because of this belief, I went on to study pre-frontal cortex activation in the brain using fMRI technology straight after getting my first degree in psychology. I was fascinated by this- how one is able to map the brain, with the help of advanced medical technology, whilst the research participants complete a cognitive task. Even so, I found my one-to-one interviews with participants as I tested their completion of the WTAR (Wechsler's Test of Adult Reading) were the sessions that I looked forward to every week. It soon became clear that it was this human element, this time when I could personally connect with the individual to find out what they were thinking, that I enjoyed the most, and what I found most insightful.

Seeking for a deeper more comprehensive knowledge, I went onto to explore other fields where I could apply what I learnt in my undergraduate psychology degree

in applied social settings, each time finding jobs that allowed me to connect with the individual to understand what they were thinking, and what led them to hold these identities and representations of their social world. Academia called me back soon enough, when I realised that my partial understanding could be augmented by expanding my ways of thinking through the rigorous study of human thoughts, behaviour and actions in their everyday life contexts, which could be undertaken in postgraduate study. To prepare for the switch back to academia I undertook my first qualitative study, as a research assistant with an epidemiological research project looking at the socio-cultural determinants of eating habits among Indians, Chinese and Malay women in Singapore. As part of the job, I had to create interview guides, help conduct 18 focus group discussions, analyse all of the data by myself and present it to my research team. I scoured books on qualitative research methodologies, and self-taught myself the basics of focus group discussions and thematic analysis, having never been exposed to qualitative psychology before. This opened up a new intellectual world, where context loomed much larger than had been the case in my traditional psychological under-graduate training. I was motivated to learning how to carry out interviews better, and analyse thoroughly. It was this motivation that fuelled me through my postgraduate study in social psychology.

I owe thanks to Professor Adrian Coyle, who was my MSc course director at the University of Surrey. He moulded my deep desire to learn this 'new' methodology into a sustainable learning process that would require me to focus on my own position as a researcher. I was no longer the 'objective' researcher that I thought I had to be, but the 'subjective' researcher that we all are- we just needed to be explicit about how we are connected to our research work, and make clear to other researchers how we navigate this minefield of the Self in the research project. I cultivated the ability to be 'objective' insofar as to ensure that depth and detail of the participant's subjective view is captured, and the participant's view has been represented in a fair manner consistent with her or his meanings (Charmaz, 1995), at the same time as being subjectively aware of my own social positioning as a researcher.

The dreaded realisation that I had to complete an independent research project culminating in an MSc dissertation soon turned to joy when I found out that

I could work on *anything* I wanted to. The options were endless and I went back and forth on an A4 list of project ideas that I had. The ones that I kept returning to were those that were rooted in understanding my own life experiences, and those that I grew up with in Singapore. I discussed them with a patient supervisor who helped me articulate these ideas into an achievable MSc dissertation. This marked the start of a five-year supervisory relationship, the MSc followed by the PhD, with a motivated, understanding and critical young psychologist- Dr. Ilka Gleibs.

To say that I was motivated only by my desires to understand my Self and Others around me is not the whole picture. The distinction that I received on my MSc dissertation, as well as the MSc overall, definitely spurred me on in my academic journey. It gave me a new confidence to examine the connections between the personal and the psychological. I was now looking at the social world with this new lens that I could not remove (not for want of trying!) and soon I did not want to remove it. I could connect with my peers well; we spoke a common language of identity, life worlds, representations, prejudice, racism, the Self and the Other. We attempted to break down unfamiliar concepts and theories into the familiar, by grounding them in our research and our own understanding of the social world. We thrived on discussions of the unknown, challenging our own and each other's views on theoretical paradigms, methodologies and the politics of it all.

Yet, conducting fieldwork in Malaysia and Singapore provided me with the exciting though difficult challenge of putting these research ideas into action in a concrete social setting. The walls of academia that I had grown to enjoy and build with my colleagues had to be torn down very quickly. I had to learn how to connect with participants right from the start, with participant recruitment. How could I interest people to spend an hour of their time with me, to share a part of their lives, to share such an *intimate part* of their lives with me? How could I, a young female researcher living in London, convince people that the stories they share with me would be relevant for them? A good researcher needs to learn to develop a sense of the multiplicity of perspectives (Orr, Assor, & Cairns, 1996). I strived to do so by understanding the breadth of perspectives relevant to racial identity construction by looking at both self-identifying multiracial and monoracial individuals. I also took the

perspectives of monoracial individuals who would be my potential participants in trying to understand how racial identity construction would be relevant to their everyday lives. I managed to reach out to over 600 people who would, over the period of 4 years of the PhD, complete questionnaires and sit in interviews and focus group discussions with me.

But this is also an account of how they positioned me, a young, female presenting, multiracial researcher who has a Singaporean accent and is studying in London, a few visible aspects of my identity that the participants would pick up on very quickly. I knew very early on that my experiences as an individual of multiple racial heritages were markedly different from that of my multiracial participants. Seven interviews that I conducted during the MSc taught me that, and I had to learn very quickly how I should be positioning myself as a researcher by understanding how *the participants* positioned me.

In all of the interviews and focus groups I conducted, two aspects of my identity were particularly pertinent. The first was my positioning as a Singaporean, which became clear to both Malaysian and Singaporean participants because of my Singaporean accent. While participants spoke to me in various local languages (Tamil, Malay and Mandarin, all of which I have at least a basic conversational competency in), it was the manner with which I spoke English that differentiated me from my Malaysian counterparts. Thus, participants positioned me as either an outsider or an insider based on their own national identification. It must also be noted, that participants often drew on my identity as a Singaporean when broaching topics that required an understanding of the Malaysian and Singaporean context. Participants would not hesitate to draw on local analogies or incidents that happened either recently or in history in their conversations with me, and would expect me to understand what they were referring to. Where this passing reference was one that I was unfamiliar with, I would seek clarification. Most times however, I understood the reference and would not disrupt the flow of their conversations. Issues of race and racism in Malaysia and Singapore were not foreign to me. I lived in Singapore for 27 years of my life, and experienced many of the events that participants spoke about. I was taught Malaysian and Singaporean history in school and often debated the

veracity of, as well as the application of these histories, politics and challenges of these two young countries in Sociology classes that I took outside of my Psychology major in my undergraduate years.

Secondly, my identity as a multiracial individual was questioned during the interviews that I carried out in Study 1. Because of my physical appearance, participants who did not know anything about me would position me as either multiracial or Indian. While 'sameness' could be achieved on the basis of the Singaporean identity with the Singaporean participants, there were practical limitations of assuming similarity with research participants based on racial "mixedness" when trying to reduce the 'Self-Other' gap. Participants, especially in my first study, were keen on identifying "how mixed" I was, and what the component parts of my multiracial identity were. I was always upfront and explained to them that I am of both Telugu[1] and Peranakan[2] heritage. On some levels, I could understand their experiences of growing up in a household where two different cultures, languages and food co-existed. I was never completely Telugu nor was I completely Peranakan in the eyes of my family and this personal experience allowed me to connect with my participants when they spoke of similar issues. However, when discussing experiences of how everyday engagement with social policies influenced how they constructed their identities, it was clear to me, and the participants, that I was an Other. As my father is categorised as Indian, and not Peranakan on his birth certificate, I am categorised as Indian. Given that my mother's categorisation is also Indian, I did not face the same challenges with categorisation policies that my multiracial participants did. While this was clear to me prior to the interview process, I was mindful of my position especially when I was trying to understand how participants were making sense of their lived experiences. I tried to be careful not to Otherise, as I was aware that there would be little that I would learn except for my

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[1] Whilst the official language of Andhra Pradesh, a state in India, Telugu also refers to a group of people who share Dravidian heritage, cultural, and language markers.
[2] Descendants of Tamil traders, who settled in the Malay Archipelago and married local women (Dhoraisingham, 2006).

projection of what multiracial individuals in Malaysia and Singapore faced. To give a more specific example of how I did so, I was mindful not to use the term 'Chindian'[3] until the participants themselves used it, as I understood that I was collaboratively constructing the data with the participants. In drawing the reader into my analytic thought process, I wish to note that I resolved this dilemmatic position by being 'wise' rather than 'own' (Oguntokun, 1998). That is, I focused on being knowledgeable about, and empathetic to participants' experiences, instead of having to own those experiences. In this light, I was able to understand and identify the relevant concepts that were discussed, without having experienced them.

In focus groups conducted in Study 2, the questions were not as direct, with participants sharing that they had these constructions of me (Singaporean, multiracial) after the sessions concluded. This often led to an extended discussion on why I was studying these relevant issues outside of the two countries. Here was yet another opportunity for me to be open with my participants. I explained that I wanted to take a step back by immersing myself in a different environment, and using classic European social psychological theories that have been used in many different cultural settings, to attempt to understand race and intergroup relations in Malaysia and Singapore. This resonated especially with participants who themselves had lived and studied 'overseas'.

To return to a point I brought up earlier on the subjective researcher, subjectivity was not only limited to the qualitative studies that I conducted in the research project. Reflexivity also extended to the quantitative study. The choice, phrasing and order of questions, to name a few aspects, all show the subjectivity of the researcher. Potential participants for the online questionnaire would also question me when they were making their decisions to participate in the study. Some of them would email me before or after they finished the online questionnaire, reaching out to me to gauge the validity of the study, to find out why I was conducting this study

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[3] A colloquial term used by multiracial individuals, and non-multiracial individuals to describe individuals of both Chinese and Indian racial backgrounds.

and what I gained from this. I had to be aware of my positioning as a researcher, and as a Singaporean especially when conducting the final study for the PhD, as I did not have the opportunity to clarify my position with most of my participants during the course of the study. The participant recruitment call, platforms where I advertised for participants and the introduction to the online questionnaire needed to convey the importance of the study in a manner that showed participants that I was not partial to Singaporeans, and that I was not merely using their experiences to further my own career advancement. Rather, I would share my findings with them and keep them updated about the progress of the projects. One way I addressed this issue was to create and maintain a personal website that I would periodically update in an accessible manner to give participants information about the research project, as well as the different platforms that I was presenting the data and analysis in.

In outlining the key ways that I engaged with reflexivity in my research project, I hope that I have made my position as "the human instrument" clear. To draw from Guba and Lincoln (2005), my focus on reflexivity made me aware of my multiple Selves. My research based Self required me to be reflexive about my position as a researcher as my participants perceived me to be, and as I presented myself to them. My brought Self, required me to understand how my own life experiences were present in my analysis and the ways I conducted my research. Finally, my situationally created Self required me to be aware of how, within each study, my position as a Singaporean living in London influenced how data was collected in Singapore, Malaysia and London.

I utilised a number of different methodological and analytical instruments in my research. But above all, I am the key instrument that binds the methodologies together, and through this I hope to have facilitated the construction of a rich data corpus and undertaken a deep analytical process that remains true not only to the science of social psychology but also to the participants who have kindly and generously lent their voices and insights to me. There is power and value in acknowledging the personal in the study of the social psychological phenomena. The personal is political, and recognising this I believe, is a key step to progressing in this field.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly changing and globalised world, identities are becoming increasingly complex and more multicultural. This thesis explores the role of the socio-political context on the construction of social identities, with particular reference to the construction of racial identities in multicultural Malaysia and Singapore. The challenge of incorporating context into social psychological models has been the topic of on-going debate in social psychology for a number of decades. In his theoretical writings, Henri Tajfel, the founder of Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), a leading social psychological theory of identity construction, argued that context was a key influence on identity. However in practice, context has often served as a static contextualising variable in studies of identity – a backdrop to social psychological processes with an emphasis on cognition – rather than context being central to theory and method. This is particularly the case with some SIT research (Spears, 2001; Deaux & Martin, 2003). Moscovici, the founder of Social Representations Theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1984), has argued that context is the heart of the construction of social knowledge, which is fundamentally what the study of social psychology is about. A long tradition of researchers have drawn connections between these two theories in the social psychological study of issues such as gender (Duveen, 2001), race (Philogène, 2007), ethnicity (Howarth, 2002a), social categorisation (Augoustinos, 2001) and identity processes (Breakwell, 1993). More recently Elcheroth, Doise and Reicher (2011) have joined this line of thought and reinforced the need to 'marry' SIT (which provides a good account of the cognitive dimensions of identity construction) to SRT (which provides a good account of the process and content of how social knowledge is created in specific contexts). They argue that the two theoretical traditions are very compatible, and that the addition of an SRT perspective opens productive theoretical and methodological avenues that place social context at the heart of psychological processes. The psychological process that I examine is racial identity construction in Malaysia and Singapore.

This thesis takes the resulting approach, namely what Elcheroth, Doise and Reicher call the 'Social Representations Approach' (2011, p.736) (SIT + SRT = SRA)

as its starting point, drawing both its theoretical and methodological inspiration from this paper and other work in this tradition outlined above. Theoretically the thesis is rooted in the emphasis on the role of the Other– and more particularly the role of 'how Others view us' – at the core of identity construction. The role of the Other has been explored in social psychology since the birth of the discipline (Heider, 1958; Ichheiser, 1949; Mead; 1934). More recently, the role of the Other has been examined at great length within the SRT paradigm in the study of poverty (Chauhan, 2016), mental illness (Jodelet, 1991), language and dialogue (Marková, 1997; 2003), naturalisation and identity (Andreouli, 2010) and gender identity construction (Lloyd & Duveen, 1992) to name a few. SIT focuses on the role of Self and Other in identity construction to some extent, as will be elaborated later. However the Other is often loosely defined in SIT, and frequently in terms of human Others (outgroup members etc). This thesis will extend the way in which the Other is conceptualised to include political institutions within different socio-political contexts. Methodologically, the thesis is rooted in Elcheroth and colleagues' advice that research in the role of context in understanding social psychological phenomena is best pursued through comparative research, focusing on the construction of identity in different contexts. This thesis takes this recommendation through its cross-country comparisons of socio-political contexts. SRT discusses how the individual encounters the knowledge of others across different contexts, yet context at times remains a vague concept, as is the case with SIT. The thesis hones in on how Others within a particular socio-political context influence racial identity construction. Each of the empirical papers puts forth a conceptualisation of the socio-political context as conceptual contributions. Specifically, three dimensions of socio-political context that have arisen as findings from the studies presented below are (1) social policies, (2) colonial history, and (3) interface between geographical contexts and political ideologies, referred to as politicised geographies.

Thus, the starting point and main research question for this thesis is *"How does the socio-political context influence racial identity construction in multicultural settings with multiple Others?"*

This is an important and interesting question to focus on in both the global and academic context. Within the global context of migration and rapid social change where national borders are often shrinking, and multicultural societies are expanding, the relevance of race as a salient social category with which group boundaries are drawn becomes an important question for us to consider. In the academic context, there exists a challenge of incorporating a detailed understanding of context to mainstream social psychological approaches. Some SIT research is mired in social cognition with context as static backdrop that is manipulated in laboratory or experimental settings. While these manipulations have been successfully executed to show the influence of the immediate perceptual context in identity construction and negotiation processes (Markus & Plaut, 2001), there exists a need to shift from lab settings that dominate SIT to locate studies of identity in people's everyday experience. The thesis presents an important piece of the increasingly complex puzzle of racial identity construction in contemporary multicultural societies.

1.1 Race in Social Psychology

The study of race, and racialised identities, is hotly debated within social psychology. Many psychologists avoid the use of the term "race" to describe a social category that is salient for most people, prefer the term ethnicity and do not use the two terms interchangeably (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997; Howarth, 2009; Mama, 1995; Reicher, 1986). In contrast, I use the term race without double quotes as it is reflected in participants' own discourse, and is used in a seemingly unproblematised manner in Malaysia and Singapore (Gabriel, 2014; Reddy, 2016). Some scholars have acknowledged that the sole focus on ethnicity has left the persistent nature of racism unaddressed (Harrison, 1995) and it is indeed advantageous to researchers if they are interested in how 'ordinary people' employ such concepts in the rhetorical construction of identities for themselves and others (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). I also respond to a critique that Billig (2014, p. 236) holds of social psychology that 'general concepts become greedy concepts, devouring the individual, unique features of the social world' and the result 'is less, not greater, theoretical understanding'. In the context of race research, this can mean concepts like stereotypes and attributes

become greedy concepts that we use to talk in general terms and contextually significant factors seem less important than they should be. We should instead use such constructs to sensitise us to otherwise neglected features of the phenomena before us and to do so in such a way that recognizes their cultural specificity (Hopkins, 2015). I take this to mean that a thorough understanding of the social world would require the social psychologist to abandon previously (or currently) held ideas about how the social world needs to be understood. Therefore, while I understand race as being socially constructed, situational and fluid, and not a biological fact, I maintain the use of race, and the relevance of race in understanding the social world of the participants, throughout this thesis.

Social psychological research on race has evolved over the years. Attributions of racial difference have legitimized exploitation, enslavement and genocide for centuries (Goldberg, 1993). Seminal work by Clark and Clark (1947) firmly grounded the importance of the psychological study of the impact of race on everyday lives of individuals. Since then, psychologists have focused on the different ways that race impacts an individual's sense of wellbeing (Townsend, Markus & Bergsieker, 2009), attitudes on immigration (Deaux, 2006), sense of belonging (Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson & Sammut, 2013), views on multiculturalism (Verkuyten, 2001), experiences of colonisation (Fanon, 1967), intergroup contact (Ramiah, Schmid, Hewstone & Floe, 2015) and evident in all these studies, racism (Tizard & Phoenix, 2002). The focus has been placed on how individuals and relevant Others identify themselves as members of their racial ingroup. In the case of multiracial individuals, inconsistencies between how society defines multiracial individuals and how they define themselves has been shown to create psychological challenges (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Yet, relatively little is known (outside of literature on South Africa) about contextualised institutional prescriptions of race on individuals and the resultant influence on the psychology of these individuals.

In these ways, Western scholarship has influenced the way we look at race. Behavioural scientists have critiqued how much of psychological research involves examining WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) populations (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010; p.19) who may often be "the worst

population" from which to make generalizations about human psychology. While there is extensive research on race in the Western world, we know little about constructions of race outside of this research context. Even as we avoid the dichotomy of East vs. West, collectivistic vs. individualistic cultures, cultural differences do lead to different construals of the Self and Other (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Indeed, there is a rich tradition of psychological studies from Asia, Africa and Latin America, which inform our understanding of the human condition and that cannot be ignored (Sinha, 1981; Paranjpe, Ho & Rieber, 1988). There have been many, more recent contributions to the study of racial identities from South Africa (Bowker & Star, 2000), Malaysia (Gabriel, 2015) and Brazil (Bianchi, Zea, Belgrave & Echeverry, 2002) for example, which have used and extended Western research and theories on racial identities. To this end, there are much insights to be gleaned from directing our focus to racial identity constructions in a comparative study among Malaysians and Singaporeans, as will be shown in section 1.6. This thesis adds to the existing literature on race and multiculturalism by drawing findings from two under researched non-Western communities to show how a social psychological understanding of different socio-political contexts leads to a more robust understanding of racial identities and its impact on the daily lives of people living in multicultural societies.

Specifically, this thesis focuses on the social psychological aspects of racial identity construction. Race in itself is a social construction, as outlined above. But what entails the making of this social construction? Anthropology, history (Smedley & Smedley, 2005) and sociology (Rockquemore, 2002) have much to say about racial identity construction. A social psychological perspective of racial identity construction encompasses the process of identity construction, the content of identity construction as well as the motivations of identity construction, in the presence of Others, implied, imagined and present. Importantly, racial identities are not only constructed by the individual, they are co-constructed with Others. This multi-faceted perspective of racial identity construction looks at *what* racial identity *does* for individuals and *how*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *with whom* these racial identities are constructed. Thus, racial identity construction is as much social cognition, as it is

social construction. Howarth (2002b) has outlined how Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Social Representations Theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1984) can be used together to understand racial identity construction among teenagers in Brixton, UK. Other psychologists have combined SIT and SRT in different ways in the study of racial identity construction in Australia (Augoustinos & Riggs, 2007) and in the US (Philogène, 2007). I extend this collaborative theoretical perspective by drawing these theories together by using Social Representations Approach (SRA; Elcheroth et al., 2011) to study racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans. In this thesis, I also provide suggestions where SRA can be expanded, drawing on the original underpinnings of SIT and SRT.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

I will first provide a brief overview of theories utilised in the thesis in this next section. I will then choose certain elements of these theories that are relevant for the thesis and compare them side by side.

1.2.1 Social Identity Approach

Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) can be said to help understand the motivations of identity construction. Tajfel (1978) defined social identities as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 63). SIT is the social psychological study of how people conceptualise themselves in terms of groups-through group membership, processes and intergroup group relations (Hogg, 2006). SIT posits that individuals are, in part, motivated to identify themselves as group members because of the need for positive self-esteem. One of the ways identities are constructed is through self-categorisation, where individuals define themselves in terms of social categories such as race, religion and gender. This is the basis of Self Categorisation Theory (SCT; Turner, 1975; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). While distinct theories in their own right, many social psychologists use both SIT and SCT together in the understanding of psychological process. This

is referred to as the Social Identity Approach (SIA, Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). Importantly, identity construction is influenced by multiple *motives* such as self-esteem, efficacy, continuity and meaning (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge & Scabini, 2006). Thus, identity processes are often viewed as intrapsychic processes within the classic SIA tradition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, et al., 1987), often positioning SIA as a study of social cognition.

Michael Billig's critique of how SIA theorists analyse identities such as race without distinction between laboratory settings and categories that have meaning outside of the laboratory led to his conclusion that meanings associated with social groups is more important for the social identities of people than how an individual self categorises (Billig, 1995). More recent research within SIA tradition has incorporated these social elements into the individual's identity construction and negotiation process (Hopkins & Reicher, 2017; Schmid & Muldoon, 2013). For example, Schmid and Muldoon (2013) examine how indirect and direct exposure to political conflict moderates perceived intergroup threat, social identification, and psychological well-being. Other research into identities and well-being has also physically taken place in social settings such as water clubs in residential care homes (Gleibs, Haslam, Haslam & Jones, 2011). Following this line of thought, this thesis thus grounds research on racial identities within socio-political contexts. Hence, as we shall see in the research presented here, context, in its many forms is consequential for identity. Context is also a central concern for Social Representations Theory (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

1.2.2 Social Representations Theory

Social Representations Theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1984) is focused on the context, process and content of the identity that is constructed. I take the position that identities are one of the functions of social representations (Jovchelovitch, 2007). A useful definition of social representations "as the elaborating of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating" (Moscovici, 1963, p.251) shows that identities as a process, serve a social function that allows the individual to participate in social life and in different social worlds. Thus social

representation theorists locate identities and identity categories in cultures and/or social groups (Billig, 1993), highlighting the contextual element of identity construction. Moscovici and Hewstone (1983) argued that social representation also contributes to group identity formation because by sharing a social representation, group members come to feel a "common identity by having a "common world view" (quoted in Breakwell, 1993, p.186). Thus, identity is common sense knowledge that considered to be resulting from the simultaneous operation of the process of *objectification* (that transforms abstract concepts into concrete images) and the process of *anchoring* (that names and classifies new knowledge and unfamiliar events into familiar frameworks) (Chryssochoou, 2003). In research on racial identities in the UK for example, Howarth (2004) has demonstrated how contemporary understandings of race and racism are anchored in historical legacies and that race, is not simply an abstract idea, but an embodied experience where individuals become objectified representations of race. This approaches the concept of identity from the content perspective.

SRT is complex, and while I have provided a definition above, Moscovici was keen on not reducing SRT to simple propositions (Moscovici & Marková, 2001). But an important aspect of SRT that is fundamental to this thesis is the fact that SRT is a process; specifically it is both a social and cognitive process (Volklein & Howarth, 2005). While the process of anchoring and objectification is similar to cognitive psychologists' descriptions of categorisation and schemata (Billig, 1993), anchoring and objectification are also social, cultural and ideological. As shown in Wagner, Elejabarrieta and Lahnsteiner's (1995) work on sperm donors, there are moral and social, not logical reasons, to liken men with (active, conquering) sperms and women with (passive) ova. What this does is that it connects the cognitive process of selecting specific images and the social process of the diffusion of popular knowledge. Thus, in researching racial identity, it is imperative to look at identity not only as something that exists within oneself (intrapsychic process) but one that is mediated by the presence of other individuals and institutions in society in the construction of the contents of the said identity. Hence there is a political, as well as social aspect to the psychology of race and identity.

1.3 Theoretical Assumptions

This next section will draw upon both theories in conceptualising core assumptions of racial identity construction that the thesis is based upon. These core assumptions are the existence of the Self and Other, similarities between personal and social identities, and the relevance of context.

1.3.1 The Self and Other

Social comparison is a key element within the SIT framework. Tajfel (1981) explains that individuals assess the relative value of their ingroup compared with the outgroup. Identification (with a particular racial group for example) reflects and is expressed the inclusion of the ingroup in the self-concept (Tropp & Wright, 2001). To this end, the Self is conceptualised as being part of the ingroup, while the outgroup is perceived as the Other. The Self and Other constructs can switch though. Outgroups are not static and are context dependent. That is, what is considered the Other (outgroup) when I self-categorise according to gender, may become the Self (ingroup) when self-categorising according to nationality. Yet what is clear is that there exists a dichotomy between the Self and the Other within the SIA tradition, with the individual being motivated to maintain a distinctive Self (ingroup) identity. Elsewhere, psychologists have drawn from other schools of thought that incorporate the Other in the self. Bakhtin (1981) states that the Self is fundamentally relational - Others form part of the Self. Indeed, the presence of Others is important for us to develop the ability to recognise ourselves, to build relationships with Others, to become self-conscious and agentic (Howarth, 2002b). Thus the construction of the Self is one that takes place as a dialogue with the Other; identity is dialogical (Marková, 2003). This Self-Other relationship is integral in understanding the *process* of identification, *content* of the identity, as well as the *motivations* of the racial identity constructed. The individual thus constructs racial identities with the Other in mind, and racial identities are also co-constructed with the Other where present.

1.3.2 Personal and social identities

It is precisely because the Other is embedded in the Self that personal (or individual) and social identities are not approached as distinct concepts in this thesis. Researchers within both the SIA theoretical tradition have argued for this distinction to be minimised or done away with completely (Postmes, Baray, Haslam, Morton & Swaab 2006; Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). Recently, Vignoles (in press) discussed how the personal and social identities are not different as previously thought and it is in fact hard to maintain the distinction between the two in practice. Within the SRT perspective, identity construction could be simultaneously a personal as well as a socially shared experience (Chryssochoou, 2000). Thus a racial identity is both a personal and shared identity. With this in mind, I refer to an old but still relevant conceptualisation of identities. Rather than a distinction between personal and social identities, the presentation of self takes place on the front stage, back stage and off stage, within the confines of the setting, or in this case, socio-political context (Goffman, 1959). What this means is that individuals present, and re-present themselves in many, different settings.

1.3.3 Relevance of context

We know that identities themselves are not static and are dependent on the context. Thus what the social psychologist conceptualises as the context becomes very important. Most identity researchers within SIA tradition highlight the fluid nature of identities by stating that these identities are "constructed on the spot to reflect contemporary properties of self and others" (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty & Hayes, 1992, p.5) and that "attributes are context-specific, mutually defining outcomes of the categorisation process" (Oakes, Haslam, Reynolds, 1999, p.71). This is to say that identity construction should be firmly rooted in the immediate perceptual context (the context within which the individual is currently in). Different identities such as gender, occupation, and race are thus salient in different contexts, and individuals identify with these identities at different levels depending on the context. What this means is that a Singaporean psychologist, would identify strongly with the psychologist identity within an academic context, while identifying strongly with the Singaporean identity within a national context. SIA is thus focused on

measuring the change in the levels of (salient) identification across context, that is, how much does one identify with a particular identity in any given situation. This is based on the presupposition that "category formation is relative to the frame of reference" (Turner et al., 1987; p.47). As the world changes, so does category salience thus categories have to be appropriate to the comparative context (Reicher, et al., 2010). In fact, Reicher (2004) argues that context is fundamental to the SIA approach, and has unfortunately been mainly left out in the pursuit of seeking "psychological universals" (p. 921). In sub-fields such as organisational social psychology, the relevance of context has been made more salient. Gleibs and colleagues have shown how changes in one's context, seen through a merger of two university institutions, can lead to changes in one's identification with the university (Gleibs, Mummendey, & Noack, 2008) and how identity change and compatibility are important for understanding merger adjustment and support (Gleibs, Noack, & Mummendey, 2010). The influence of context on leadership has also been accounted for in more recent studies (Gleibs & Haslam, 2016; Gleibs, Hendricks & Kurz, in press).

Yet the relationship between identity and context has been a contested one. The variation of the nature and composition of the immediate social context (such as, was the person giving instructions in the experiment wearing a lab coat, were the other participants completing the study together with other ingroup members) is frequently studied within social psychology and its influence is well documented (Markus & Plaut, 2001). Some identity theorists, on the other hand, question this by stating that an emphasis on the immediate perceptual context within the social identity tradition is not able to adequately explain the development of political categories because there is no space for the social and political definitions of these same categories (Herrera & Reicher, 1998). Indeed different actors in a society (governments, citizens) hold different definitions (political and social respectively) of categories. This is also to say, that according to the former perspective, categories will hold the same meaning for all individuals in that category, and categories change according to contexts, which is challenged by Reicher and Hopkins (2001). Huddy (2002) also makes a clear argument for how the SIA paradigm shifts between identities being fluid, and categories being relatively stable in meaning, showing

tension with identity categorisation across different contexts. Elsewhere, Gillespie, Howarth and Cornish (2012) have argued that the process of categorisation (i) stems from a social position (perspectival), (ii) is affected by history and thus changing (historical), (iii) is disrupted by the individual's movement between categories and (iv) interferes with social phenomena, firmly grounding identities within a multifaceted perspective of context.

1.4 Social Identity and Social Representations

Some of the more recent work that connects identity and social representations of different social groups demonstrates how different aspects of one's identity interact with one another within the environmental and social context (e.g. Khan et al, 2016; Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011, Howarth, 2002a; 2006). For example Andreouli and Howarth (2013), in their study of immigration in the UK, show that the repositioning of one (national) identity to another takes place within "the reified context of policy-making and the consensual context of everyday knowledge" (p.377), connecting government policy and everyday practice. Another relevant study by Scuzzarello (2012) showed that the political opportunity structures operating in a context are important in understanding studying how the micro-level of social interaction (by extension, racial identity co-construction) can be encouraged or hindered.

This thesis does not claim that the fundamental differences between the two theoretical traditions can be glossed over and any such resulting conflict from the combination of these theories can be minimised by the newer theoretical framework adopted in the research. Rather, I believe that some of the critiques of each tradition, can be addressed by looking to the other with regard to racial identity construction, and the thesis endeavours to speak to this collaborative and critical enterprise. Attempting to draw these two theories together requires careful consideration of key concepts such as content of categories and representations, contact and intergroup relations (Marková, 2007). I am not alone in this project, for many social psychologists have combined these theories well. The combination of these theories has been used successfully in researching other psychological phenomena such as intergroup

relations, immigration, multiculturalism, and gender identities (Chrysochoou, 2000; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000; Duveen, 2001, Howarth, 2006). Looking at these critiques broadly, SIA and SRT have often been reduced to the social cognition-social construction debate. While this is not an altogether helpful perspective of these theories, I will briefly outline these critiques here.

SRT has been critiqued for explaining social cognition using new terms, but relying on the framing of existing cognitive theories (see Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). But a key difference between most definitions of social cognition and the SRT perspective on social cognition is the view that cognition is not merely the process of the individual mind. Moscovici argues early on against treating minds as "black boxes" (1984, p. 15). Instead, he looks at the content of thoughts and how these are historically and socially constituted and communicated. Mind and society therefore are not inherently separate (Jovchelovitch, 1996). This reinforces the point about how identities are entrenched in the context from which they emerge and exist. Social representations been also been criticized for being a merely a linguistic device, which Howarth (2005) countered in her research on Black British school children where she emphasised that "social representations are often only apparent in action" (p. 7). Racial identities are constructed and mobilised in interactions with one another and not relegated only to talk (though see Potter & Billig, 1992 for how social representations are achieved through talk). Thus social representations are simply not just social cognition or social construction.

This dialectic is less clear within the SIA tradition. SIA research, while primarily focusing on cognitive concepts like categorisation, schemata and levels of identification (Reicher et al., 2004), which lie in the realm of social cognition, has recently been highlighting the role of social identity content in understanding issues like collective action and politicized identities (Livingstone & Haslam, 2008; Turner-Zwinkels, van Zomeren & Postmes, 2015; 2017) which I suggest draws from the social construction perspective. As seen in the discussion of SRT above, social cognition and social construction do not need to lie at the opposite ends of the spectrum in our understanding of social psychological issues.

What these critiques and their defense shows is that these theories contain the critical potential to speak to each other and hence provide a more nuanced view on social psychological phenomena. Specifically, I posit that using these theoretical traditions together will provide us with a more robust understanding of how racial identities are constructed, are reconstructed and are maintained in society. SIA could benefit from an alliance with SRT because it has been too narrowly focused on explaining intergroup conflict and differentiation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), even though newer research has focused on expanding the boundaries by looking at how the importance of groups and group life to health and well-being (Haslam, Jetten, Postmes & Haslam, 2009; Gleibs, et al.; 2011). Further, since SRT cannot explain why a particular social representation takes the form that it does, SIT could help to describe the motivations that might be at work both in shaping the form of the representation and then determining the work it is made to do (Breakwell, 1993).

1.5 Social Representations Approach

Thus, to elucidate the process, content and motivations of racial identity construction in context, I am guided by the Social Representations Approach (SRA; Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011). SRA combines both SIT and SRT and has been used together to understand socio-psychological processes that are embedded within a political dimension. As shown above, SIT and SRT can be used complementarily to understand the psychology of racial identity construction. SRA (Elcheroth et al., 2011) endeavours to provide a framework where both theories can be combined to look at psychological processes within a political dimension, and thus this theoretical approach was employed in this thesis.

Four key facets of SRA are crucial for this thesis. In elaborating these facets as outlined by Elcheroth and colleagues (2011), I draw on key references from other social representations theorists. The first facet is that social representations are *shared knowledge*, and this shared knowledge is critical in defining how people act within their social worlds. Howarth (2006, p.71) describes representations as existing "only in the relational encounter", and this space can exist because of the existence of shared knowledge. That is, referring to the assumptions outlined above, the Self and Other

are intricately linked in the sharing of common representations of their social world. This is not to say that they agree with them; rather an understanding of these representations is what constitutes the "shared" element.

Second, social representations are *meta-knowledge* implying that what one thinks that others know, think and value becomes part of the individual's 'interpretative grid' (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011; p.729). In expanding on this, I take from Jodelet's (1991) description of social representations.

> Social representations are images that condense manifold meanings that allow people to interpret what is happening; categories which serve to classify circumstances, phenomena and individuals with whom we deal, theories which permit us to establish facts about them. When we consider social representations embedded in the concrete reality of our social life, they are all the above together.

What this shows is that the individual's interpretive grid holds many aspects of the social world. In addition to this, meta-knowledge, a facet of SRA based on the principle of reflexivity, underlines the importance of people understanding themselves through the awareness of how Others view them, through the anticipation of how Others may respond to them, and through social norms that make interaction in the social world possible (Staerklé et al., 2011). This, combined with meta-knowledge, firmly places the study of racial identity construction within the study of relations between people, rather than a study of isolated individuals.

Third is that social representations are *enacted communication* that is shaped by factors that limit social practices, such as how Others act towards us. This draws from a Habermasian concept of communicative action (Habermas, 1987). Communicative action forms the participants of the communicative process and involves non-discursive language that manifests in the everyday practices, formal institutions and informal structures of the social world (Habermas, 1998). What this goes to show is that social representations, as routine practices, are supported by the creation and maintenance of institutionalised process (either by formal processes such as governance or informal processes of social norms and expectations). While maintaining the utility of this Habermasian concept, Jovchelovitch (2007) urges the

social scientist to include the multiple logics and rationalities of human behaviour that Habermas does not acknowledge, and that goes into the communicative effort undertaken by individuals in the intersubjective space. In this thesis, I adopt Jovchelovitch's perspective on communicative action and explore how individuals construct their lifeworlds[4], without a priori interpretations of what is considered rational or irrational thought and action.

The fourth facet of SRA is that social representations are *world-making assumptions* that not only constitute reality; they sometimes change reality as well. Within this assumption is that social and historical contexts are not external factors that impact social representations. In fact, they are realities that are brought into existence throughout the social representations present. This fourth facet brings in a core assumption of the thesis itself, that of identity in context. The context is not an external, static background; rather it forms the basis of the identity in question. Importantly, it is social representations that bring this context to life. But the power of social representations extends beyond that of giving birth to context. It also has the ability to change the context, for changes in social representations can lead to changes in the institutional world (Elcheroth et al., 2011). In her research on naturalised citizenship in the UK, Andreouli (2010) exemplifies this facet by demonstrating how individuals draw on representations of Britishness to position themselves as insiders (British citizens), thereby changing their social realities as they dislocate themselves not only physically but also through the adoption of the new identity.

In addition, I consider Staerklé, Clémence and Spini's (2011) fifth component of SRA that seeks to show how shared knowledge is structured through "thinking in antinomies"(p.762). Contradiction is abound in everyday thinking (Billig et al., 1988) and social thought is inherently dialogical, that is one thinks in terms of oppositions,

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[4] The lifeworld is an intersubjectively shared space where "communities link the past, the present and the future through social memory, social representations and social identities" (Jovchelovitch, 2007; p.79).

dualities and antinomies (life-death, good-evil) (Marková, 2000). Dwyer, Lyons and Cohrs (2016) found that polyphasic representations of Irish neutrality with regard to foreign policy were context-dependent and interdependent. There was plurality in the representations, yet these representations were interconnected. Extending this perspective, in this thesis I argue that the relationships between shared knowledge are not only binary- there can be multiple opposing connections that co-exist within thought. Thus SRA should invite the researcher look at relations not only between individuals, as suggested by Elcheroth and colleagues (2011) but also examine relationships as the basic structure of everyday thinking in the psychology of racial identity construction.

1.5.1 Extensions of SRA

There are three crucial gaps in the SRA paradigm that the thesis has endeavoured to examine and fill. What needs to be explored within the SRA paradigm, is how individuals use meta- and shared knowledge to change the content of representations, and so their identities. I posit that the critical potential of social representations exists beyond a reflection of their identities, to a re-presentation (that is to present in other ways) of their identities. In addition, the distinction between ingroup and outgroup when outlining Others needs to be clearer (Staerklé et al., 2011). Elcheroth and colleagues' conceptualisation of Others harks back to an almost Meadian perspective of the generalised Other (Mead, 1934) which I argue needs to be distinguished further, especially in the study of racial identity construction. Further, there needs to be a broader conceptualisation of power within this theoretical paradigm (Staerklé et al., 2011). This underdevelopment of power within SRT has been criticised and addressed elsewhere (Volklein & Howarth, 2005). Representations do not simply contain knowledge about social object; that they prescribe power to some groups and not to others (Duveen, 2001). Power and agency are intricately linked in SRT (Howarth, 2006). Arguably, the value of power to shared identities is also a concern with SIA (Reicher, 2004; 2015). The study of racial identity construction is thus an opportune platform to develop these gaps. Each of these gaps is tackled in two of the three empirical chapters, which have been presented in this

thesis as journal articles. Chapters Two and Three address the first gap of how meta and shared knowledge is used to change the content of identities. Chapter Two tackles the issues of distinguishing between ingroup and outgroup Others, as well as the expansion of the definition of power, within the examination of racial identity construction.

There is a fourth gap within the SRA paradigm that is perhaps magnified when considering the social psychological study of racial identity construction. This draws SIA closer with SRT, and in my opinion, develops the scope for SRA to be applied to studying other psychological phenomena beyond the examples outlined by Elcheroth and colleagues. They discuss shared knowledge without mentioning how this is influenced by how strongly one identifies with an identity. This is understood as levels of identification, a core aspect of racial identity research within the SIA tradition. A high level of identification would mean that one decides to identify more strongly with an identity. The connection between identification and identity content has been explored elsewhere (Howarth, 2002b). Yet the relationship between the strength of identification and the content of identity is less clear. I posit that the content of identity is fundamentally shaped by how much one decides to identify with the said identity. That is, the strength of identification influences what possible changes may take place to the content of that identity, and thus, within what is considered shared knowledge. With respect to the theoretical framework, there is a link between identification and shared knowledge that has not been discussed in the SRA paradigm. I argue that the shared knowledge of the identity changes in different socio-political contexts depending on how much one decides to identify with the said identity. This is addressed in Chapter Four.

1.6 Malaysia and Singapore: An Overview

Following Elcheroth and colleagues' (2011) call for more comparative research, this thesis chose to explore racial identity reconstruction in Malaysia and Singapore. Malaysia and Singapore share a common history. Sociologists and political scientists have been interested in understanding the unique multiculturalism frameworks in these two countries, and how social policies in these places can be

applied to other multicultural societies, or give recommendations for the improvements to current policies that take into account the evolving citizenship in these countries. I contribute to these discussions by bringing in a social psychological perspective of these issues. Namely, how psychological processes interact with politicised constructions of race to produce an understanding of the everyday constructions of race among Singaporeans and Malaysians.
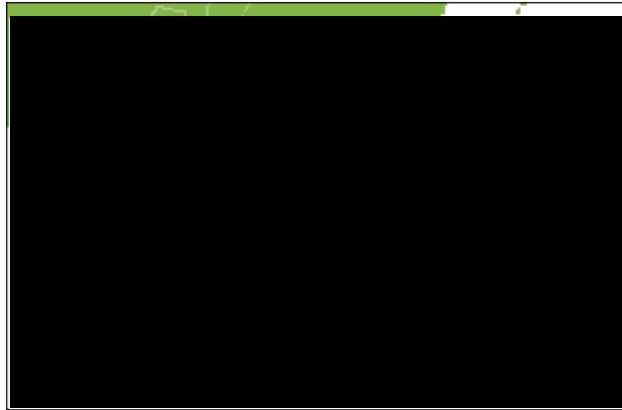
Figure 1:Map of Malaysia (in red) and Singapore (blue dot)

Geographically located next to each other, the two countries were initially ruled together as 'Malaya' by British colonisers. Colonial management of diverse populations, made up of immigrants mainly from India and China, and local Malays, was administrative and based on a divide and rule policy. Racial categories underpinned social policies in these two countries when they were granted independence from the British more than 50 years ago, and little has changed since then with regards to the importance of the racial categories as well as the content of these categories from times of colonisation (see Reddy, 2016, for an elaboration). Malaya became an independent self-governing nation within the British Commonwealth in 1957, through dismantling the colonial system and establishing a new nation in its place (Abraham, 1997). Separate ruling bodies for Malaysia and Singapore were created, but the central government was still one. Malaysia and Singapore thus are two multicultural societies with the same colonial background, similar racial make up and a focus on racial categorisation that is the core of social policies. The race-based social policies in each country explicitly outline how each

racial group has access to housing, education, second language acquisition, and political party representation. Malaysia and Singapore also focus on reducing discord between the different racial groups by maintaining strict laws and legal bodies that regulate what can be said and done with regard to race in the two countries.

However, in 1965, Malaysia and Singapore separated on grounds of different political ideologies. Two different forms of multiculturalism developed because of these different political ideologies. In Singapore's policy of multiracialism, the 'social formula' of the CMIO model is built upon the acceptance of the four main races in Singapore - Chinese, Malay, Indian and 'Other'[5]- as separate but equal in formulating most of its social policies, thus positioning Singapore as a meritocracy. In contrast, a different form of multiculturalism is practiced in Malaysia where the governance of Malaysia is defined by political primacy for the Malays. Non-Malays, instead of formal racial equality, recognize Malay primacy in exchange for equal citizenship rights (Goh, 2008). Race based social policies in Malaysia consistently favour Malays (also categorised as *Bumiputras,* or *sons of the soil*), unlike Singapore.

While the countries share a similar racial makeup of predominantly Malay, Indian and Chinese citizens with a number of minoritised groups such as Eurasians dispassionately lumped together as "Others", what is different is the numbers of individuals who have been categorised as Malay, Indian and Chinese. Malays make up 60.3% of the Malaysian population, while they form 15.0% of the Singaporean population. Indians form 7.1% of the population in Malaysia and 7.4% of the population in Singapore. Chinese are a minority in Malaysia where they make up 24.6% of the population, but they are a majority in Singapore with 76.2% of the population. Malays and Chinese differ in minority and majority status in Malaysia and Singapore, while Indians are a minority in both countries. Power relations and social hierarchies between groups also influence boundaries between the different races and

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[5] The category of 'Other' encompasses all who did not fit into the categories Chinese, Malay or Indian, and includes all European heritages and nationalities as minority groups (Hill & Lian, 1995).

this impacts the construction and maintenance of racial identities in the two countries. Majority-minority positions in each country are therefore important in understanding intergroup relations in the two countries. Political power lies with majority communities within both countries, but majority communities in each country (such as the Chinese in Singapore) do not necessarily have power in the regional (Southeast Asian) and global contexts (Soon, 1974). Unequal statuses between the racial groups because of prevailing political ideologies meant unequal outcomes and the birth of race based social hierarchies in the two countries. Ultimately what this shows is that being Malay, for example, in Malaysia would afford very different outcomes to being Malay in Singapore because of differences in political ideologies, and its subsequent social hierarchies.

There are some similarities between Malaysia and Singapore that allow for a comparative social psychological analysis to take place. State mandated racial categories, and racial ascription processes at birth, ensuring that the public focus is fixed on the benefits of multiculturalism, controlling the narrative of multiculturalism within the two countries such as positive images of diversity in action (such as the image below) proliferating the public sphere are some of the ways where we see the intersections of race, multiculturalism and intergroup relations in Malaysia and Singapore.

Figure 2: Image taken in Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia

What is clear is the importance of race in both these countries. Race, as a social representation and identity, is both an imperative and a contractual obligation (Duveen, 2001) because in these two countries race is automatically assumed in the visibility of the categorisation policies (imperative) and can also be chosen by a person in social situation (contractual) to different extents. Whether one has a choice or not, there is no avoiding race in the daily lives of Malaysians and Singaporeans. Elsewhere, it has been argued that where identity is perceived to be highly salient, and not taken for granted, that the complex process of identity construction be elucidated (Kiely, McCrone, Bechhofer & Stewart, 2000). People's everyday lives are heavily influenced by the politics that drives the multicultural ideologies in the two countries, as we shall see in this thesis. Indeed, as Reicher, Spears and Haslam (2010) discuss, individuals organise people into categories because this is how they are organised in the real world. In this light, we see that categorical perception of race in the two countries reflects rather than distorts social reality (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994). However, both countries differ on racial demographics and governance of their multicultural societies. Chapter 5 of the thesis expands on the differences and similarities between the multiculturalism models in the two countries, highlighting the need for socio-political context to be clearly defined before embarking on comparative research. The chapter functions as a suggestive guide for social psychologists who wish to study racial identity construction in context by connecting both the everyday perspective and the institutional perspective of multiculturalism. Chapter 5 is a result of the thesis's three-part conceptualisation of the socio-political context within which racial identity construction is studied. The three different aspects of racial identity construction within the socio-political context are (1) Socio-political context as everyday engagements with social policy, (2) Socio-political context as everyday engagement with colonial symbols and (3) Socio-political context as demarcated by interface between geographical contexts and political ideologies.

1.7 Research Questions

This overview of theories and empirical findings on race has highlighted key areas that would benefit from a focused examination as discussed in detail above.

Section 1.1 on race in social psychology showed that it would be advantageous to expand the study of race to include greater attention to non-Western, especially Asian countries. Section 1.2 on the relevant theoretical frameworks showed that (i) expanding the conceptualisation of power, (ii) clarifying the role and nature of the Other and (iii) showing how meta and shared knowledge changes result in changes to identities would contribute to an advancement of the SRA approach. Finally, section 1.6 on Malaysia and Singapore highlighted the three identity-relevant dimensions of people's everyday experience of politics that emerge from the research below. Government policy, colonial symbols and geographical location will each be presented as key aspects of the socio-political context. As such, the overarching research question for the thesis is

How does the socio-political context influence racial identity construction in multicultural settings with multiple Others?"

I address this research question with three studies that have resulted in three empirical papers, presented in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 respectively. The three sub-questions that relate to the three studies respectively are:

1. How does the socio-political context influence racial identity construction among multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans?

2. How do different socio-political contexts influence racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans in group settings?

3. How does a change in the socio-political context influence racial identity construction and levels of identification among racial ingroup members?

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Mixed methods

The analysis of social identities requires a diversification of methods (Deaux, 2001). This is especially important given the assumptions that identity construction is dialogical, and the social psychological study of racial identities in this thesis is taken to mean the analysis of processes, contents and motivations of racial identity construction. To rely on a singular methodology would be an ambitious undertaking not matched by the limitations of practicality, and epistemology. If we were to take the position that there is no such thing as a single interpretation of reality[6] or "truth", then surely this must mean that the examination of different interpretations of reality requires an undertaking of different methods. The multi method research design is seen as the "best of both worlds" (Giddings, 2006: p.196), where there lies a bridge connecting the two paradigms of qualitative and quantitative research and researchers stand to gain from a diversity of methods. This is not to make the point that the convergence of methods leads to discovering "truth" or that divergence of methods means that the weakness of each method can be offset by the strengths of the other (Denzin, 1970).

To expand this point, quantitative and qualitative methods are at times seen to be binary and on opposing points of view of the research paradigms. Quantitative methods are associated with a positivist epistemology and the assumption of a single, documentable reality and qualitative methods are associated with a constructivist epistemology and an acknowledgment of multiple, constructed realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus the epistemological and ontological position taken by the researcher becomes paramount. In this thesis, a pragmatic epistemological framework and critical realism as the ontological position was adopted (Willig, 1999) to manage the differences in the epistemologies. The pragmatic approach is seen as a way to settle metaphysical disputes between the two methods. The critical realist approach allowed me to work within the limits of 'reality' as viewed by participants while

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[6] 'Truth' and 'reality' are seen as normative concepts through which knowledge claims cannot be devoid of certain beliefs and interests (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

making sense of the participants' experience and acknowledging the socio-political context that is influencing them (Willig, 1999). To draw reference to a point brought up in the preface on hermeneutics, I adopted the view that meaning is participative and not simply produced by the researcher, but that the contribution of the researcher to the construction of data corpus needs to be acknowledged.

With this in mind, the PhD research project utilised both qualitative (interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (online questionnaire) methods. Much of the SRT, SRA and SIA guided research cited above have already successfully used the chosen qualitative and quantitative methods. In this sense, the methodologies adopted for the PhD research project fit well within the chosen theoretical frameworks. While studies 1 and 2 were studies that used purely qualitative methods, study 3 was a mixed method design. The mixed method research design functions as a "cooperative inquiry" method, which looks past the competitiveness of the individual methods to jointly deal with the social issues at hand (Giddings, 2006; p.202). This design seeks to converge and corroborate the results from all the studies, i.e. triangulation so as to produce high quality research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). That is not to say that triangulation will lead us closer to reality than through the adoption of a single method. Rather, triangulation in this thesis is taken to mean the connection between multiple interpretations of reality that are understood differently in each method utilised in this thesis.

1.8.2 Study 1

Study 1 was undertaken to examine the first research question, namely *How does the socio-political context influence racial identity construction among multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans?* Study 1 was a qualitative study of 31 interviews involving multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans. Qualitative methods were seen as a useful methodology to adopt given the exploratory nature of the early stage of the research project. Interviews specifically were chosen because it has been shown that narratives that emerge in interview contexts are not only situated in social worlds within the confines of the interview, they also come out of the worlds that exist outside of the interview process itself (Silverman, 1997). Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was utilised

in the analysis of the data. The coding framework is attached as Appendix 2. Chapter 2 is an empirical paper written from some of the findings of Study 1.

The interviews were held over the Internet via 'Skype', and were electronically video recorded using the programme 'Call-recorder'. There were considerable benefits to conducting these interviews online. Participants were able to control the time and place that interviews are carried out. In Study 1, participants and I would work out a mutually convenient time. At times this meant that interviews were carried out very early in the morning GMT because one part of the data collection was carried out while I was in London. All, except for two participants, were at home while the interviews were carried out. These two participants chose to have their interviews at quiet areas in their university and office. What this meant for the study was that the interviews were conducted in a location that they personally felt comfortable in and were open to sharing their personal stories. This method was also preferred to online written interviews, as social scientists have viewed the face-to-face encounter as the optimal way to actively engage with research participants in qualitative construction of the data corpus (Seymour, 2001).

A semi-structured interview schedule employing conceptual categories in a simple manner was developed and used. It consisted of nine open-ended, exploratory questions, and explanatory probes were used as and when they were necessary. Each recorded sessions lasted between 50 and 75 minutes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim upon completion, and where local languages were used, translated into English.

A call for participants was advertised on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Purposeful sampling was used in selecting the interviewees so that richness and depth of data could be maximised (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). What this meant was that individuals who identified as multiracial across a number of different racial backgrounds were interviewed. The large age range was also a conscious decision so as to include different generations, and by extension different social worlds and life histories, in the study. Participants were also recruited based on opportunity and snowball sampling, where potential participants

recommended family members and friends who identified as multiracial. Participants were not reimbursed for their participation.

1.8.3 Study 2

Study 2 was undertaken to examine the second research question, namely *How do different socio-political contexts influence racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans in group settings?* Study 2 was a qualitative study consisting of 10 focus group discussions held with Malaysians and Singaporeans in Kuala Lumpur (capital of Malaysia), Singapore and London (capital of the UK). While Study 1 allowed a deeper exploration of the individual within the socio-political context, it was important to factor in the voice of the Other. Thus, the next step in the research process was to understand how racial identities were constructed and re-constructed in the presence of Others who were physically present, in addition to those who were implied and imagined, and thus the choice of focus groups was an important step in terms of gathering this specific data and thus a deeper understanding of the connectedness between individuals in the racial identity construction process. Specifically, an understanding of the dialogical interplay of the Self and Other, as well as the role of the social context as outlined in Reicher (2004) was needed at this step of the research process. Focus groups are thus a valuable resource as they move beyond "essentially individualistic framework" (Puddifoot, 1995, p. 364) and examine the inter-subjective level of social identities.

A third research setting was added to the research project for two reasons. One was to see how a socio-political context that does not limit the self racial identification of individuals in the same manner as in Malaysia and Singapore would influence the psychology of racial identities and was thus chosen to add depth to the comparative study paradigm. Second, the UK, especially London has attracted many Malaysians and Singaporeans for work, study and to live because of the colonial history, ties with Commonwealth nations and the perceived value of reputable English educational institutions. This presented an apt platform for understanding how racial identity construction may change in socio-political context that has different institutional policies with regard to race.

Given this study's focus on dialogicality, that is the "capacity to conceive, create and communicate about social realities in terms of Otherness" (Marková, 2003, p. 91), Dialogical Analysis (DA) was adopted in the analysis of these focus group discussions. Specifically, DA with a focus on metaperspectives within the intersubjectivity paradigm (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010) and multivoicedness (Aveling, Gillespie & Cornish, 2014) was applied to the data. All sessions were video-recorded with participants' permission. This allowed for the transcription to be tagged to each individual and the interaction between the individuals could be followed without doubting whom the conversation was directed to. Chapter 3 is an empirical article written from some of the findings of Study 2.

Following the success of online participant recruitment for the first study, I proceeded to recruit participants for the second study online using the same social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter. I also advertised through my website, www.reddygeetha.com, having started to use the platform to keep in touch with participants from Study 1. A larger number than those who finally participated in the study came forward to show their interest and commitment to the project. As a result of this communication, I had initially scheduled five focus groups in Singapore, and 5 focus groups in Malaysia. Due to conflict in timings amongst scheduled participants in Singapore, one focus group did not take place. In Malaysia, three focus groups did not materialise due to last minute cancellations and unreturned calls. Upon discussion with participants who turned up for the two focus groups, it was understood that a recent addition to the Sedition Act[7] in Malaysia in April 2015 (Agence France-Presse, 2015) two weeks before the focus groups were scheduled might have been the cause for the sudden attrition of participants. Participants in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore were provided with refreshments. Participants in London were reimbursed with £5 for their travel costs.

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[7] The Sedition Act in Malaysia gives authorities the rights to target those who oppose them. In 2015 alone 91 individuals, more than 5 times as many during the first 50 years of the law's existence, were arrested, charged or investigated (Amnesty International, 11 March 2016).

1.8.4 Study 3

Study 3 was undertaken to examine the third research question, namely *How does a change in the socio-political context influence racial identity construction and levels of identification among racial ingroup members?* Study 3 was a quasi-experimental questionnaire design with 3 independent variables, socio-political context (Singapore, Malaysia and the UK), racial categories (Malay, Chinese and Indian) and nationality (Malaysian and Singaporean). The key dependent variables were racial identification and racial identity construction.I wanted to be able to ask the same group of individuals how they perceived a change in socio-political context would influence how much they identified with their racial identities. Thus, I chose a quasi-experimental design so that I could manipulate the socio-political context by cueing individuals with images associated with each of the socio-political contexts.

Importantly I draw on key SRT concepts in the manipulation of context. Subject, Object, Other is an important triangular relationship within social representations (Moscovici, 1984). The figure below outlines this formula that corresponds to the foundational categories that capture the phenomena of social representation. [8] In the social psychological examination of racial identity construction, I conceptualise the Other as not a human Other. Rather, the Other is the *space* within which the object is understood, similar to Mead's generalised other (Mead, 1972). That is, the individual uses the Other (socio-political context) in the understanding of the object (racial identity). This is different to the conceptualisation of the public sphere as the Object by Jovchelovitch (1995). She posits that the public sphere is the social Object upon which representations develop. While this is true, and relevant for Study 1, in this study I posit that the individual also draws from the context in their construction of what race means to them.

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[8] Bauer and Gaskell (1999) have added time to this basic model, which will not be focused on in this study.
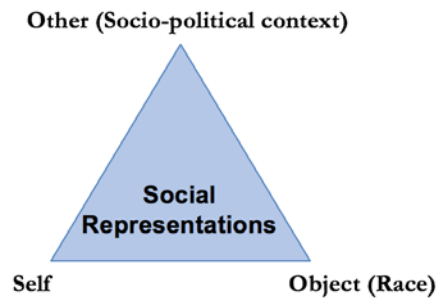
Figure 3: Model showing relationship within social representations, adapted from Moscovici, 1984

Because of this premise, the *implied* or the *imagined* presence of Others (Allport, 1954) should be factored in as well. I appeal to this perspective by cueing participants to imagine themselves in different socio-political contexts by showing different images of the socio-political contexts. These images (such as national landmarks, schools and housing) are devoid of people, and thus any other social cues that may exist has been carefully removed. With this, I intend for an activation of symbolic representations of the socio-political contexts to take place through the cueing of these images.

When conducting the 1st two studies, a number of participants expressed an interest in participating in the research, but either did not have the time to commit to an online interview, or were not able to make it to the location for the focus group discussions. They requested that the questions be given to them via email, so that they could respond on their own time. This was an important reason in choosing to use an online questionnaire method for the final study. Another key reason to do so was to try to capture the phenomena of contextual racial identity construction across a larger number of participants. There were a total of 518 participants who attempted the questionnaire and 337 participants who completed all the questions. The responses of these 337 participants was analysed in Study 3. Participants were not reimbursed for their participation.

The findings from Studies 1 and 2 were exploratory and allowed for the generation of hypotheses for Study 3. Preliminary analysis of the qualitative studies

also guided the construction of the questionnaire. To be more specific, I refer to the coding frameworks of Studies 1 and 2, attached as Appendix 2 and 3.

The quantitative Study 3 allowed for the generalisation of some of the findings from Study 2. Studies 1 and 2 provided some depth into understanding the different aspects of racial identity construction but it was unclear if some of these experiences were relatable to a larger group of people. With the view to understand if there were common patterns involved in racial identity construction and identification, an online questionnaire was carried out. One view within social psychology is that the meanings associated with social groups are more important for the social identities of people than how an individual self categorises (Billig, 1995). Thus I found it important to add an open-ended question that will allow participant to enter the meanings they associated with their own racial ingroup identity, thereby capturing identity content. However, in exploring why some of these patterns emerged, I returned to the qualitative data. Patton (1990; p. 132) has suggested that 'qualitative data can put flesh on the bones of quantitative results, bringing results to life through in-depth case elaboration', which is what I sought out to do with a deeper analysis of data from Study 2 that was not analysed and written in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

Study 3 combines statistical analysis of levels of racial identification and content analysis of the construction of racial identities. Content analysis is a hybrid technique that bridges statistical formualism and qualitative analysis of material and allows the researcher to construct indicators of worldviews, opinions, prejudices and stereotypes for comparison across communities (Bauer, 2000). Specifically, a directed content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used where prior research findings from literature above aided the development of coding categories. Chapter 4 is an empirical article written that draws on the findings of Study 2 not written up in Chapter 3, as well as some of the findings from Study 3.

1.8.5 Participant selection

For study 1, participants who self-identified as multiracial were invited to participate in the online interviews (Appendix 5). However, I wanted to understand

more about how (mis-) categorisation by the state influenced their racial identity construction, and thus in a pre-interview email, I would ask participants if their parents were ascribed with different racial categories (i.e. Mother as Indian, Father as Chinese).

Study 2 had an open call (Appendix 6) for all Malaysians and Singaporeans. I made sure to specify both multiracial and monoracial individuals in the call. This was to signal to participants that I was broadening the scope of the study, especially to those who had seen the first study call. I also did so to address the issue of hyphenated citizenship (Indian-Singaporean for example) so participants who did not feel like they belonged to one racial group, and hence had difficulty seeing themselves as hyphenated citizens would still be interested in participating.

Recruitment for Study 3 was carried out in the same way as Study 2. The recruitment calls are attached as Appendix 7.

1.8.6 Analysis Software

The programme ATLAS.ti version 6.2.23 was used in analysing the data from Study 1. Basic codes and final codes were coded using the software. The translation of codes to themes was carried out by hand. The programme NVivo version 10 was used in analysing the data from Study 2. Similar to Study 2, basic codes were coded using the software. NVivo was a programme that allowed the easy retrieval, and management of coding tree frameworks. I wanted to also develop competency in another qualitative software. Qualtrics was used to administer the questionnaire online. SPSS was used to analyse the quantitative data in Study 3. When analysing the open-ended questions, all answers were initially hand-coded. Categories were then collated on Microsoft Excel, and counted before returning to SPSS to conduct chi-square analysis.

1.9 Reflexivity

The thesis began with an extended section on reflexivity, which I believe is core to the research process. Here, I outline other aspects that were not discussed in the preface. This section outlines reflexivity additionally involved in the mechanics of

conducting the study such as the construction of study materials, transcription and analysis. This was an important undertaking that highlights the commitment to rigour and positionality undertaken when data was collected and managed.

1.9.1 Study materials

In terms of epistemological reflexivity, Fine's suggestion of the use of critical informants to facilitate the construction of the research participants' realities was adopted (Fine, 1998). As such, the interview schedule was given to two senior academic researchers who were familiar with doing research on race in Malaysia and Singapore prior to embarking on Study 1, so as to ensure that participants were given a broad platform to discuss a wide variety of topics that was understood to be important in their discussion of racial identity construction. The interview guide for Study 2 and questionnaires for Study 3 were developed based on findings from the previous studies, as the studies were conducted sequentially.

1.9.2 Transcription of Interviews and Focus Groups

For Study 1 (interview data), I transcribed 8 out of 31 interviews myself. A professional transcriber recommended by the university transcribed the 23 remaining interviews. While this aided the speed with which transcriptions were completed, I found a lot of missing gaps, and flaws in the transcripts, especially due to the lack of understanding of the local languages, and Singaporean and Malaysian accents. I personally corrected the mistakes and filled the gaps in the 24 interviews. Facial expressions and hand gestures were also accounted for, where they were seen to reinforce a point made. This was also not a focus of the professional transcriber, so it was useful for me to review the transcripts and add these details. A sample script is added as Appendix 8.

Learning from Study 1, I sought the help of two Singaporean undergraduate students who were taking an introductory module in Psychology at the LSE to assist me with the transcription process of 10 focus group discussions conducted in Study 2. I furnished the students with a sample transcript from Study 1 and briefed them about the transcription method and positioning of the researcher. They would return

the transcripts to me and I would review each transcript for accuracy personally. In my opinion, this collaborative process strengthened the depth and detail captured in the sessions, as well as paved the way for a rich analysis to follow because discussing contentious words and gestures flagged out issues of researcher positioning and understanding. One example of this would be an inaccurate transcription of a Malay word, which I flagged up during the review process. This signalled how my basic knowledge of conversational Malay helped me to understand the meaning making of the participant. A sample script is added as Appendix 9.

1.9.3 Analysis

The research process was double hermeneutic in nature (Giddens, 1987) acknowledging the need for researchers to be reflexive in their approach, methodology and position when embarking on their research and analysing the results (Shope, 2006). Not only were the participants making sense of the world, I was also trying to make sense of how the participant made sense of the world. What this meant for the analysis was that I was aware of how participants positioned me during the interview process, and how this translated in the analysis process. Central to the hermeneutic stance is that researchers need to understand both the context of shared meaning, and the individual perspectives of situation that is being investigated. Even so, the researcher is cautioned from making claims as to whether knowledge is transferable between contexts. This key point underscores the research project, and is especially focused in Study 3, as I seek to understand if the social knowledge constructed in one socio-political context is relevant to the next. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix 10.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Based on British Psychological Society ethics guidelines, ethics approval was given by the Chair of the Department of Psychological and Behavioural Sciences ethics committee, as well as Research Degrees subcommittee (Appendix 1). A consent form was created and administered to all participants. To protect participant confidentiality, all interview participants were given pseudonyms during the

transcription process. All participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form prior to their participation and were debriefed upon completion of the interview. The consent form, and information sheet for each study are attached as Appendices (11, 12, 13). Participants were given the option to reach out to a member of ethics committee or myself should they find any aspect of the study challenging or upsetting. No participants came forward with such concerns.

1.11 Conclusion

This introduction has sought to provide an overview of the PhD thesis both in terms of theoretical and empirical frameworks, as well as an integrative account of the three studies. I have also provided details of the methodological framework utilised in the PhD research project. Chapter 2 will present key findings from Study 1, and will be submitted for review in *Racial and Ethnic Studies*. Chapter 3 will present key findings from Study 2, and will be submitted for review in *Frontiers of Psychology* (Cultural Psychology section). Chapter 4 will present key findings from Studies 2 and 3 and will be submitted to the *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* journal for review. Chapter 5 focuses on a critical discussion of the socio-political context, and will be submitted to the *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* for review. Given the nature of the paper- based thesis, there will inevitably be some repetition with regard to theoretical frameworks used and the background information on Malaysia and Singapore. However, the methods used, analysis undertaken and contributions to literature are distinct. References for each paper (Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5) are provided at the end of each chapter, as the chapters are presented as standalone papers. The relevant appendices have been numbered in the introduction and referenced accordingly in each chapter. References for the entire thesis, including Chapters 1 and 6, are provided at the end of the thesis in Appendix 17.

Principally, this thesis endeavours to answer the research questions outlined in section 1.7 using examples from two lesser-known research settings within the social psychological discipline. The studies conducted in this thesis to address these questions are guided by two broad aims that are connected by the main research question, namely *How does the socio-political context influence racial identity construction in*

multicultural setting with multiple Others?. The first aim is to extend of the social psychological understanding of the process, content and motivations of racial identity construction. The second aim is to provide a clearer conceptualisation of the socio-political context. The two aims are not separate and have drawn from and spoken to one another in each of the empirical papers.

What can be said about racial identities in light of what we already know- importantly that racial identities are fluid, and contextual? How do institutionalised representations of race influence racial identity constructions among Malaysians and Singaporeans? How can the context, a significant aspect of identity construction, be concretely studied in social psychological studies? Chapter 6 serves as a conclusion to the thesis by drawing the findings from all four papers together to answer these questions, and presents the novel contributions of the thesis.

It is my hope that avid seekers of knowledge on identities, representations, categorisation, politics, multiculturalism and race will find this thesis enriching, and thought provoking. This thesis is a small but significant contribution to the social psychological study of race and multiculturalism and I wish for it to spark many new conversations and reignite older conversations on what we know, and what we can do to understand our social worlds better.

CHAPTER 2: RACIAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT AS UNDERSTOOD BY EVERYDAY ENGAGEMENTS WITH SOCIAL POLICIES

Preface

Chapter 2 is a paper written from the analysis of data from Study 1. It is a paper written with a view to submit to the journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies.*

Study 1 was a qualitative study consisting of 31 semi-structured individual interviews. The research question for Study 1 was *"How does the socio-political context influence racial identity construction among multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans?"*

Why multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans? A pilot study conducted as my MSc project (Reddy, 2012) showed that multiracial Singaporeans face distinctive challenges in negotiating their racial identities around the static government policies in their daily lives. This project had a sample size of seven participants, all of whom were Singaporeans of Chinese and Indian parentage. Three superordinate themes and nine sub-themes were identified in a thematic analysis of the data and one of the sub-themes was "Structural Influences as a threat". The MSc dissertation discussed this very briefly, but I wanted to explore this further, and look at the specific way everyday engagements with social policies influence multiracial identity construction. I wanted to understand more about how (mis-) categorisation by the state influenced their racial identity construction. I carried out a comparative study because I wanted to examine if differences in social policies would result in different identity construction processes. Therefore I expanded the research context to include Malaysia. I kept the same interview schedule, but reanalysed all of the 7 interviews from the MSc project. The interview schedule and a sample transcript is attached as Appendix 8.

While the MSc project yielded some interesting results, Study 1 (of the PhD) was still an exploratory project. With this premise, a qualitative study was conducted, and inductive and deductive analysis was carried out. However, few researchers can claim that inductive analyses are completely inductive. My knowledge of relevant theories and the socio political context in Singapore influenced the generation of themes. It is argued that this worked in this study as I have adopted a critical realist

framework. My prior knowledge gave me an analytic edge in contextualising the meaning making of the participants. The key themes were chosen based on whether they captured important factors in relation to the dynamics of group membership, racial ascription, racial identity construction and negotiation within their lived experiences. These themes did not necessarily account for a large size within each data item but were chosen because of their prevalence across the data set.

Given that the views of this population are generally not known and that it is an under researched area, this paper aims to provide a rich overall description of the data set within the word limits of the journal. Within these parameters, it is expected some depth and complexity may be lost (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Presenting qualitative research in a manner that does justice not only to the topic but also the research participants' voices by displaying sensitivity to the context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance are important guidelines in creating good quality qualitative research (Yardley, 2000) and this was adopted in this report.

The research questions were addressed by drawing on several theories with an analytical emphasis on race and identity conflict that were introduced earlier. As the study is exploratory in nature, the theories have been solely used in providing the background for the research. They also provided the starting point of the development of the interview schedule. The research does not seek to test the theories, nor did the theories provide a framework in advance of the project. Instead, the theories were utilised as tools, at relevant points, in adding depth to the analysis of some of the findings. In doing so, it was found that the findings of the study could lead to extensions of theories, especially Social Representations Approach (SRA; Elcheroth et al., 2011).

Specifically, the distinction between ingroup and outgroup when outlining "Others", as well as a broader conceptualisation of power within this theoretical paradigm (Staerklé et al., 2011) was identified here. Participants showed the multiplicity in their racial identity construction in the presence of different Others and this was seen to be influenced by the role that government social policies and the

representative government bodies play in their lives. Thus I outline how SRA could benefit from such an expansion of key concepts.

In terms of empirical contributions, this work expands existing research on multiracial individuals. Current research (Choudhry, 2010; Kamada, 2010) on multiracial identities primarily revolves around people of part "white" heritage and often in European or North American contexts. Research on multiple Asian heritages seems to be missing from the current discourse, and this paper seeks to fill this gap. The combination of two Asian heritages does not necessarily mean that there is more harmony between the two cultures and thus less conflict. In this paper, I have shown that the differences between the races researched are magnified in the public sphere.

Furthermore, this paper urges the reader to look beyond multiracial identity processes as one that is only marked by conflict. It is true that false or mistaken identification by community members can be experienced as mis-recognition (Honneth, 1996) and lead to psychological conflict. In addition, when multiple group identities do not converge, there may be different ways in which the individual may structure his or her perception of the ingroups to reconcile the potentially competing implications for defining the social self (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Yet, I show that individuals do not necessarily change their perceptions of their multiple ingroup identities. It explains how individuals construct and manage multiple racial identities in a positive, strategic manner.

Study 1 paves the way for subsequent studies 2 and 3 to take place because it maps out concrete ways *Politics*, as understood by government institutions, policies, organisations and government representatives can influence the *p*olitics, seen through the everyday experiences, of racial identity construction. Furthermore, research on the mixed race population plays a critical role in the larger social scientific understanding of the structures of race, gender, class, and human societies (Rockquemore et al., 2009), and thus Study 1 became important in building the blocks necessary to conduct studies on race in Malaysia and Singapore.

Private and Public Racial identities among multiracial individuals: how everyday engagements with government policy shapes racial construction

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Abstract

Identities are said to be constructed based on the immediate context that one perceives as important, especially among individuals who possess multiple racial identities. Yet, the influence of political institutions in the formation of this context is often not addressed. This paper explores the complexity of multiracial identity construction in a qualitative study of 31 in-depth interviews carried out with multiracial Singaporeans and Malaysians. Thematic analysis identified key issues for the production and maintenance of racial identities for these participants. We show that there are specific situations within a socio-political context where racial identity construction takes place. Differences in the political ideologies in the two countries were reflected in how individuals sharing a racial category (e.g., Chinese) constructed their racial identities differently in their respective countries. However, these constructions resulted in the same distinction between public and private racial identities. This paper extends our understanding of racial identities by offering a psychological analysis of how multiracial individuals engage with government policy to construct their racial identities strategically, situationally and in the presence of powerful Others who use these policies. We suggest that a nuanced conceptualisation of the socio-political context to reflect everyday engagements with government policies leads to a better understanding of how racial identities are constructed among multiracial individuals.

Key words*: Multiracial, mixed race, identity construction, politics, social representations.*

Introduction

"There is a two-step test. First, what do you consider yourself as? So let's take a Malay-Chinese, or a child of Malay-Chinese parents. Does he or she consider himself or herself primarily Malay or Chinese? That's the first criteria. If he considers himself Chinese, then he cannot qualify as Malay. So culturally, what is he, how does he consider himself? Then there is also a committee that looks to see whether — you say you are Malay, but are you accepted by the community as Malay? So that's the two-step criteria, because people can try and game the system."

-Singapore Law and Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam[9]

As this quote outlines, multiracial identity construction is a complex process that lies not only within oneself, but also involves the state, and community. In countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, racial identity construction and negotiation is shaped by the racial ascription and categorisation by the state, racial identification by Others (both ingroup and outgroup), self-identification in the private sphere and the public realm. This is what we examine in this paper. Let us start with laying out terminology.

What is multirace?

Researchers have used different terms to describe people who possess multiple racial identities. The term "mixed"[10] has been commonly used in everyday interactions, as well as by governmental institutions when collecting data for national census and social policies, to describe people who have parents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Aspinal, Song & Hasheem, 2008; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002). Social scientists have had a long interest in the way people negotiate multiple identities (Park, 1928; Poston, 1990; Root, 2003; Stonequist, 1937). Often, social scientists have

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[9] Statement made by Singapore's Law and Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam at a dialogue session (Lim, 2016).

[10] As Hall (1996) and Tizard and Phoenix (2002) have highlighted the distinction between 'mixed' and non-mixed' races is a false one, and one that rests of ideas of cultural and ethnic purity. We reject such distinctions, while recognising that in particular contexts mixed or dual identities are meaningful social categories for individuals and political actors.

conceptualized racial and ethnic identity development among "mixed race" people paralleling certain assumptions about race and ethnicity that have prevailed in their respective historical contexts (Rockquemore et al., 2009, Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson & Sammut, 2013). Recently, Gillespie, Howarth and Cornish (2012) have called for social researchers to pay more attention to how we may reproduce and sometimes reify social categories in social research. Moreover, the societal and scientific (re)production of ethnicity and race has been seen as particularly problematic (Howarth, 2009; Mama, 1995). Most researchers do not see race as 'natural' or self-evident (Gilroy, 2004) and many do not use the terms race and ethnicity interchangeably (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997). The use of the term "mixed" in itself has divided many scholars in the field: some reject the term because of stigmatizing conceptions of "mixed blood" being dangerous and contagious the fictional assumption that some 'races' are pure and 'un-mixed' (Gilroy, 2004) and that the term in itself is inadequate as a coherent category (Ali, 2003; Phoenix & Owen, 2000); others use the term to reflect how individuals of multiple racial backgrounds refer to themselves vis-à-vis social discourse that use the term race (Mahtani, 2002; Song, 2010). In this paper, we use terms that reflect the participants' own discourse. In particular, we adopt the term multiracial to reflect participants' experiences where possessing different racial identities often means a combination of individual races ("mixed") at times, and being a single race at other times. Race is also used in this paper without the use of double quotes so as to reflect its seemingly unproblematised use in the context of Singapore and Malaysia[11], and will be used when specifically addressing or reflecting government or participants discourse. However, we recognise that race is socially constructed, situational and fluid, and not a biological fact.

We next consider multiracial identity construction in other research contexts, as well as theoretical frameworks used, before explaining the context of our research.

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[11] In Malaysia and Singapore, the terms race and ethnicity are used interchangeably, with race being more commonly used.

Multiracial Identity construction

We argue that identities are not static points that one achieves but rather ongoing positions that one takes up on a continuum of different possibilities depending on the relevant context (Mama, 1995). Given this, the point of departure for this paper is the notion that identity is best understood in its context (Howarth et al., 2013) as different contexts provide different choices for individuals. What needs to be better understood is the different types of context (see Howarth & Andreouli, 2015 on what is meant by context), and how these different contexts afford or force choices onto individuals. Indeed some critical psychologists unpack the all-encompassing construct of context by defining context more comprehensively (Jovchelovitch, 2007) and we have adopted this objective in this paper.

Turner and his colleagues (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) argued that the Self, while defining itself in social relations and comparison with an 'Other', identifies at different levels of abstraction - personal and social. Deaux (1993) argues for an interplay between social and personal identities, suggesting that they do not lie at the opposite ends of the spectrum and become more or less salient depending on the context; while Mama (1995) argues that the individual and the social are produced simultaneously. Rather than a distinction between personal and social identities, the presentation of self takes place on the front stage, back stage and off stage, within the confines of the setting (Goffman, 1959). The cultural capital that one has (i.e. awareness of how Others perceive us, how the presentation of oneself is ranked in society) shapes front stage behaviour (Bourdieu, 1973). Identities can also take different forms because of how Others perceive the said identity. Sedlovskya and colleagues (2011) reported how concealing stigmatised identities such as gay identities results in public and private selves. They conceptualise the public self as an identity that can be expressed in public settings, such as work andd the private self as one that can manifest itself where individuals feel safe, such as their home. Therefore, we take the point that identities are socially constructed, formed through interactions, and are shaped by social hierarchies.

The psychological concept of identity incoporates many aspects associated with the Self. Racial identity in particular can refer to the racial category assigned to an individual by the state (referred to in this paper as racial ascription), an individual defining one's own racial identity (referred to as racial self-identification), and the label given to individuals by Others (referred to as identification by Others). At any given context, all three aspects of the Self co-exist. Thus, identity is a multi-faceted concept yet, it is often studied in a singular fashion (Kinket & Verkuyten, 1997). Frequently the lived experiences of individuals inform us that these multiple layers of identity interact with one another to create unique social realities for individuals. This is especially significant when considering multiracial individuals who can be ascribed with one racial identity by the state, identified by another by different community members, and themselves identify as different racial identities in different contexts. Ali (2012) posited that multiracial individuals require both a public recognition of their multiple racial identities, and also a recognition of their own private self-definition. Thus racial identity does not only exist within oneself. It is also mediated by the presence of other individuals and institutions in society in the construction of mutiple facets of any one racial identity.

Multiracial individuals' racial identity construction is additionally complex: on the one hand multiracial individuals face particular social and psychological challenges (Tizard & Phoenix, 2002) and on the other, individuals who have integrated their different identities within a multicultural environment achieve better social and psychological outcomes than the rest (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). In particular, inconsistencies between how society defines multiracial individuals and how they define themselves can create some psychological challenges (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Much research has focussed on the internal conflict faced by individuals of multiple ethnic and racial identities in recent years (Chen, Benet-Martínez & Bond, 2008), showing that social and political structures are based on the ideological construction of 'singular' races, presenting clashes between political and psychological realities for these individuals. Studies conducted by Townsend, Markus & Bergsieker (2009), for example, show that stress experienced by multiracial individuals is caused when the sense of agency that comes from defining an one's

own identity is denied by an essentialising society that provides only a set number of ways in which identity can be expressed. Limited choice in the context of identity construction is associated with lower self-esteem, reduced motivation, and heightened anxiety, as well as with increased efforts to reassert one's choice (Iyengar & Lepper, 2002). However, when people can reclaim agency, they form more positive representations of themselves and are able to protect their sense of self (Howarth, 2002). Indeed, being able to claim multiracial identity is not an option available to everyone, with choice often being limited to certain groups of people, such as those who have higher status (Townsend, Fryberg, Wilkins & Markus, 2012).

Higher levels of integration between identities can be achieved by positive formative experiences around race and multiracialism characterized by growing up in more tolerant communities (Cheng & Lee, 2009). Moreover, Shih and Sanchez (2005) found evidence that having a multiracial background provided resources that contribute to resilience in meeting these challenges. Importantly, multiracial individuals have been shown to construct "chameleon" identities that change according to context (Choudhry, 2010; p.5). Hence there is a significant interplay between individual and contextual factors for multiracial individuals in particular. Importantly, the racial identity choices that a multiracial invidual makes in their racial identity construction process is influenced by the context and society, and these choices hold important meanings for the psychological outcomes of the individual. The aim of this paper is to understand in more detail, the political aspects of social contexts and the role that socio political actors such as state apparatus (for example, government organisations and schools) have on the multiracial identity construction process.

The theoretical framework adopted for this study, the Social Representations Approach (SRA; Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011), allowed us to explore the processes of constructing multiple racial identities within a sociopolitical context. SRA combines both social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social representations theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1984; 1988) and has been used together to understand socio-psychological processes that are embedded within a political dimension. The combination of both these theories, in the opinion of Elcheroth and

his colleagues, and others (Breakwell, 1993; Duveen, 2001) leads to a more robust understanding of psychological processes such as identity construction. SRT describes the content of representations, but does not predict what the content will be in any group context. Furthermore, since SRT does not explain why a particular social representation takes the form that it does, SIT could help to describe the motivations that might be at work both in shaping the form of the representation and then determining the work it is made to do (Breakwell, 1993). SIT conceptualises this as social creativity (Tajfel, 1981), whereby groups subjectively restructure situations with the view to influence others, especially in intergroup situations where prevailing social stratifications are fairly rigid. Importantly, SRT captures the plurality and variability in knowing the social world (Jovchelovitch, 2007). This is essential in exploring multiracial identity construction given that prior research has shown the contrasting lived experiences of multiracial individuals.

SRA's four key points are important in highlighting the identity construction process. The first being that social representations are shared knowledge, and this shared knowledge is critical in defining how people act within their social worlds. Second, social representations are meta-knowledge implying that what one thinks that others know, think and value becomes part of the individual's 'interpretative grid' (Elcheroth et al., 2011; p.729). Third is that social representations are enacted communication that are supported by the creation and maintenance of institutionalised processes. Fourth, that social representations are world-making assumptions that not only constitute reality; they sometimes change reality as well. In addition, we consider Staerklé, Clémence and Spini's (2011) fifth suggested component of SRA that seeks to show how shared knowledge is structured through "thinking in antinomies"(p.762). Contradiction is abound in everyday thinking (Billig et al., 1988) and social thought is inherently dialogical, that is one thinks in terms of oppositions, dualities and antinomies (life-death, good-evil) (Marková, 2003). Thus, this is an important consideration in understanding the racial identity construction process, in addition to SRA's four key points.

Previous research also showed that we do not and cannot develop psychologically without Others and with these Others, both imagined and real, a co-

construction of knowledge and identity takes place (Duveen, 2001; Farr, 1996). This communication, sharing and exploration of one's identity with the Other takes place in the public sphere where representations of identities are shared, but not necessarily agreed upon, and thus debated (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Indeed, it is knowledge about what Others think of us that allows us to function in the public sphere (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011). One's ability to enact their identities can be constrained by the actions of Others (Pehrson, Stevenson, Muldoon, & Reicher, 2014). These constraints could be shaped by the nature of the social and political environment that we are in. Such an analysis would require an understanding of how governments and citizens organize perceptions of social groups, particularly minorities and majorities, within antagonistic social categories symbolized by different ideological values (Staerklé, 2009). Thus, in researching multiracial individuals' racial identity negotiations, it is imperative to look at identity not only as something that exists within oneself (individual identity integration), but one that is mediated by the presence of other individuals and institutions in society, and is embedded in hierarchical racial categories.

What needs to be explored further within the SRA paradigm is the distinction between ingroup and outgroup when outlining "Others", as well as a broader conceptualisation of power within this theoretical paradigm (Staerklé et al., 2011). SRA would benefit from an expansion in the definition of power so as to better understand how SR (re-)creates social realities. Others (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013; Howarth, 2006; Phoenix, Howarth & Philogène, 2015) have discussed the limited nature of the concept power in SRT, arguing for a more critical social representations approach. Such an expansion may incorporate conceptualisations of power from colonisation (Kessi & Kiguwa, 2015; Reddy & Gleibs, 2017/Chapter 4) to hegemonic representations of diseases that require people to navigate their lived experiences around (Jodelet, 2001) to people in political power (Augoustinos, 2001). This paper adds to this expansion in definition by looking at the influence of socio-political structures (such as social policies), as a construct of power.

Race in Malaysia and Singapore

In Singapore and Malaysia, race is constructed as patrilineal and inherent in one's biological makeup. Racial identity shapes how individuals fit into local social support systems, and social policies such as education, housing and employment. Racial categories underpinned social policies in these two countries when they were granted independence from the British more than 50 years ago, and little has changed since then with regards to the importance of the racial categories as well as the content of these categories from times of colonisation (see Reddy, 2016, for an elaboration). Racial categorisation is a core aspect of multiracialism policies in these two young countries, which have a similar racial makeup of Chinese, Malay and Indian citizens, as well as a number of minoritised races such as the Eurasians.

Malaysia

Governance of Malaysia is defined by political primacy for the Malays (60.3% of population), where non-Malays (including Chinese (24.6% of population) and Indians (7.1% of population) (Department of Statistics, 2010) forego formal racial equality and recognise Malay primacy in exchange for equal citizenship rights (Goh, 2008). Thus, in Malaysia, the compromise was to grant full citizenship to non-Malays and in return, the non-Malays have to acknowledge the 'social contract' that stipulates the special privileges of the Malays as the Bumiputra, or 'sons of the soil', where the Malay language is the national language and Islam as the national religion (Ibrahim, 2007). Hence race is very salient in this context, as all citizens need to develop racial identities and be cognisant of different rights between the races through social policies in Malaysia.

Singapore

Singapore practices a unique policy of multiracialism that was formed to create an egalitarian and inclusive society by integrating the individual racial groups into a single Singaporean culture (Barr & Skrbis, 2008). In this policy of multiracialism, Singapore adopts a 'social formula' called the CMIO model, built upon the acceptance of the four main races in Singapore – Chinese (76.2% of the citizen population), Malay (15.0% of the citizen population), Indian (7.4% of the citizen

73

population) and 'Other'[12]- as separate but equal (National Population and Talent Divison, 2014). The CMIO framework is actively promoted by the state in formulating most of its social policies. As such, race is reinforced as a visible and grounded identity with the state insisting that everyone be a hyphenated citizen (i.e. Chinese-Singaporean) (Chua, 2003).

Hence racial categorisation and multiracial policies have been important in the nation building process in the two countries, and they influence how individuals view their racial identities. From a social psychological understanding of the two countries, we see that the two governments communicate social representations of race to individuals through the official process of categorisation. This categorisation process can also be described as a strategic action (Habermas, 1987) adopted by the governments to convey the prescribed representations of race. This poses various challenges for multiracial individuals who do not neatly fit into the governmental racial category systems, which primarily use single race categories. Multiracial Singaporeans and Malaysians are ascribed one racial category in their birth certificates (BC) and identity cards (IC). In 2010 however, Singapore introduced an option of double barrelling racial categories of both parents when parents belong to two different racial groups. Even so, the first race in the double barrel identification is used to ascertain how individuals fit into the top-down racial categorisation framework. When the society also prescribes these same 'rules' as used in government categories on multiracial individuals, this reinforces a rigid system of categorisation. Preventing an individual possessing multiple racial identities from having more than one racial identity (and so imposing a singular identity) across the course of their lives also does not take into account the fluidity of racial identity, or variability within the multiracial community [13] in terms of how individuals may choose to negotiate

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[12] The category of 'Other' encompasses all who did not fit into the categories Chinese, Malay or Indian, and includes all European ethnicities and nationalities as minority groups (Hill & Lian, 1995).
[13] The term community is contentious for some, as multiracial individuals do not identify themselves as a homogenous group.

different aspects of racial identification. A recent review on the role of multiple identities in intergroup relations has also shown that multiple identities and crossed categorisation shift the boundaries between in and outgroups (Kang & Bodenhausen, 2015). This could mean that multiracial individuals view themselves both as Chinese and Indian at the same time, depending on ability to cross categorise in the specific temporal and spatial context. This is in contrast to the government's narrower position on race. Within government discourses race is constructed as static across the life course, and the categories provided for the citizens to identify themselves thus limited.

Little is known about how governmental social policies involving race as a key political structure influence the psychology of how multiracial individuals understand and utilise their racial identities. Research that has focused on the structural influences that impact the individual's perceptions of their racial identity has been limited, particularly within psychological research (see Andreouli, Howarth & Sonn, 2013). While sociologists and political scientists have focused on showing how socio-political structures have influenced social order and political ideologies in society, the individual's everyday engagement of government social policies and the influence this has on psychological processes is an important component in understanding real issues that people are preoccupied with (Bar-Tal, 2000) and needs to be studied. Given that both Malaysia and Singapore have similar racial demographics but quite different forms of government and social policies, exploring racial identity negotiation vis-à-vis the social and political hierarchy and perceived advantages associated with a racial group in these two contexts will give a better understanding of the social psychology of multiple racial identities.

Present Study

This study forms part of a larger study exploring the connection between context and racial identity construction. The present study aims at understanding how multiracial individuals from Singapore and Malaysia construct and negotiate their racial identities vis-a-vis fixed, singular racial categories that underpin social policies in these countries. Thus, the research question for this study was: *how does the socio-*

political context influence the construction of racial identities among multiracial individuals from Malaysia and Singapore?

Qualitative research methods were employed as a tool to understand the complexity of multiracial identity in Singapore and Malaysia.

Participants

The first author interviewed 31 participants between the ages of 21 and 62. A pilot study was conducted with 7 Singaporeans of multiple Asian races. Combining data from the pilot study, there were 16 Malaysians and 15 Singaporeans of multiple Asian races (e.g. Indian and Chinese) in total. The mean age was 30 years for both Malaysian and Singaporean participants[14]. Purposeful sampling was also used in selecting the interviewees, such that participants who lived outside of these two countries but spent considerable time in their lives in Singapore and Malaysia were also selected, so that richness and depth of data could be maximised (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Recruitment advertisements were placed on a number of online social channels, such as Facebook and Twitter. Participants were also recruited based on opportunity and snowball sampling, where potential participants recommended family members and friends who also self-identified as multiracial.

Interviews

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed. It consisted of nine open-ended, exploratory questions (see Appendix 8), and explanatory probes were used as and when necessary. The review of the literature, discussed above, assisted in the development of the interview schedule as it enabled the identification of key topics that would be relevant in the two contexts. The interview schedule was examined by two senior academic researchers in Singapore who are experts in issues surrounding race and the Singaporean/ Malaysian population prior to the interview, to ensure relevance and check terminology used.

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[14] All Singaporean participants were not offered the double barrel option at birth.

The interviews were held over the Internet via Skype, as the research was carried out from the U.K and Singapore, and were electronically recorded using the programme 'Call-recorder'. We found that participants were comfortable with sharing their opinions and experiences and would often continue the discussion with the interviewer even after the recording was concluded. The recorded sessions lasted between 50 and 75 minutes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim upon completion and where local languages were used, individual quotations were then translated into English. Notes were made during the interviews and used in the analysis.

Analytic strategy

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to develop both a bottom-up and top down approach. In the inductive approach, themes were coded at the semantic level, where themes were identified within the surface meanings of the data, as it was envisioned that the interpretation of the data would lead to an understanding of broader social and political implications of multiracial individuals in Singapore and Malaysia. The code *"Boundaries between race and religion are blurred in racial identity negotiation"* is an example of a code produced inductively. In the deductive approach, the authors were guided by SRA (Elcheroth et al., 2011) and identity theories outlined above. For instance, "*Conflict, where present, is contextual and contributed by presence of Others*" is a deductive code. A critical realist and pragmatic epistemological position was adopted (Willig, 1999) as acknowledgment of multiple, constructed realities, so as to work within the limits of 'reality' as viewed by participants. This allowed the authors to make sense of the participants' experience and acknowledge the socio-political context that is influencing them (Willig, 1999).

10 interviews (5 interviews from Singapore and 5 interviews from Malaysia randomly selected) were coded very closely by the first author, and 165 codes were identified in this initial stage by focusing on repeated patterns of meaning around identity work carried out by participants. This was discussed with the other authors to ensure that a consensus in the coding framework was achieved within the variability of perspectives on the research topic. These codes were collapsed to 34 super-codes,

and a coding framework was created. This coding framework was then applied to the remaining 21 interviews. Analysis software Atlas.ti was used to manage the data. The coding of all interviews led to an identification of 24 basic themes, which were then collapsed to 9 main themes. For example, *chameleon Identity, and hybrid identity* as codes were collapsed to *Identity is both situation specific and blended* as a basic theme. This basic theme is then combined with the basic theme, *Self categorisation separate from government categorisation,* to form the main theme *Private racial identity is malleable and dynamic.* Three main themes outlined in the image below are reported in this paper. The coding and thematic framework is attached as Appendix 2.
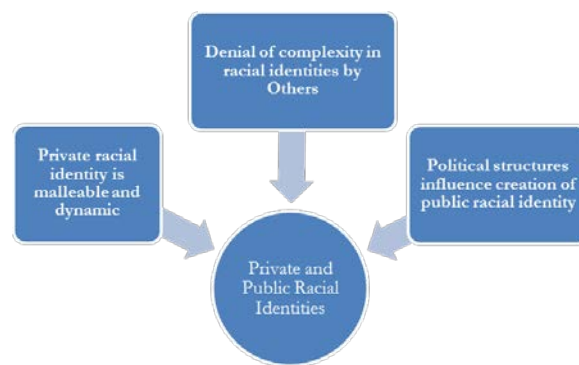
Figure 1: Thematic map of public and private racial identities

The research process was double hermeneutic in nature (Giddens, 1987) acknowledging the need for researchers to be reflexive in their approach, methodology and position when embarking on their research and analysing the results (Shope, 2006). What this meant for the analysis was that the first author was aware of how participants positioned her during the interview process, and how this translated in the analysis process.

Analysis

In seeking to understand how the socio-political context influenced the construction and negotiation of racial identities, we focused on the sites where identity work took place. This allowed us to closely examine the context of identity construction and the ways in which political aspects of such contexts influenced the psychology of identity processes. In doing so, we found that:-

1. There are a number of *different* situations within the socio-political context where racial identities are constructed by multiracial individuals in Malaysia and Singapore.

2. Racial identities are constructed differently in each situation, resulting in *public and private racial identities.*

The quotes below identify participants by their nationality, racial self-identification, and gender. What needs to be highlighted is that participants' racial self-identification reported here is the identity that they gave themselves at the start of the interview. As the reader will see, participants would change their racial self-identification in different situations, often leading to a different racial self-identification than what was reported initially. This means that racial identities are dynamic and they are chosen based on reactive responses to the different situations that participants encounter in their daily lives. This is a key point that we make in this paper. Some identifying characteristics have been changed in the interests of anonymity.

Where does identity construction take place?

In our data, we found that racial identity construction took place in a number of different specific situations even though participants expressed how race was salient in most aspects of their lives in Malaysia and Singapore. Participants described the pervasiveness of racial categorisation in Malaysia and expressed disappointment with the way race enters different aspects of daily life. Participants also discussed how constantly having to fit into racial categorisation frameworks by the state were limiting and caused discomfort, such as filling out government forms as Robin, a Malaysian man who self-identified as Asian during the interview explained:

> *Extract 1:*
>
> *While I would say a good percentage of the country doesn't really care so much about your ethnicity, it seems like certain levels within society, and it's usually the ones calling the shots, still like to maintain this concept of I can fit you into a box, which is why a lot of government forms still insist on what is your race; what is your religion?*

Other participants also spoke of similar experiences where forms that they fill 'incorrectly' with terms like 'Chindian' (a colloquial term used to describe multiracial Chinese and Indian individuals) were rejected, and they were forced to tick only one of the prescribed boxes. Participants also discussed having to construct their identities when applying for government housing (Singapore) or purchasing housing (Malaysia). Yet the interaction with racial categorisation frameworks was not limited to interactions with government bodies. Other significant settings for the construction and contestation of racial identities were the school and social relationships, as highlighted by many of our participants.

Rather than looking at the socio-political context as homogenous and one, the analysis of the data identified the different situational contexts where the rigid categorisation framework utilised by the state marked a space for which identity construction and negotiation takes place among multiracial individuals. In these situational contexts, racial self-identification was done in response to racial ascription in government contexts, education and also social relationships, as Seema, a Singaporean woman, explains:

Extract 2:

Another time, I was having drinks with friends outside, can't remember where it was, but, I was having a beer. Then this Malay woman in a tudong[15] came up to me and told me it was a sin for Muslims to drink. Oh that one, I told her off big time!

Seema does not identify with either of her parent's racial identities (Chinese and Indian), was confronted by a Malay woman because of that person's assumption of Seema's racial, and by extension religious identity based on physical appearance. The Malay racial identity is often conflated with the Muslim religious identity in Malaysia and Singapore. This extract shows how the presence of others outside of the social ingroups of our participants try to regulate their racial and religious identities. We also

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[15] Tudong is the Malay word for headscarf worn by Muslim females.

saw that ingroup members also influence the construction and negotiation of identities as Jessie, a Malaysian woman who had been ascribed the Indian category by the State at birth explains here,

Extract 3:

Then the Indians, they got the shock of their lives when I told them that I wanted to buy a sari, like I really wanted to buy a sari but they just feel like, why do you want to buy a sari when you're not fully Indian?

Jessie speaks of purchasing a sari, an item of clothing that she associates with the Indian culture. She highlights that wanting to partake of Indian culture and thus be a participating member of the Indian identitiy is censured by Others. This is due to their perception of her not being a full member of the Indian community, because her mother was Chinese. While Jessie refers to Indians as "they" in this speech, she uses the term not to refer to these individuals as an outgroup, but rather emphasising how individuals who can belong to one's racial ingroup often limit one's ability to identify with the said group. These experiences cause Jessie to refer to herself as her "own person", not wanting to racially self-identify with either of the racial identities that her parents belong to, at the start of the interview.

What these extracts show is that there are multiple Others that are involved in the racial identity construction process. Participants discuss constructing their racial identities with ingroup Others, outgroup Others and also, the state apparatus as an Other. We also get a sense of the complexities of racial self-identification, where racial ascription, and identification by Others often influence what identity choices a multiracial individual can make. These different extracts highlight the importance of different settings for identity construction in which explicit and internalised Others inform the ways in which racial categorisation practices are experienced and sometimes challenged. What this meant for the individuals in our study was that they needed to develop strategies that allowed them to hold multiple and fluid constructions of their racial identities with different Others in different situations, thus leading to the distinction between their own private understanding of racial identity and their public performance of racial identity.

Public racial identity

A key strategy among participants was to develop a clear public identity for dealing with government institutions and a private identity in their daily lives. This splitting of racial identity into a public level (which matched their racial categorisation and/or physical markers, when dealing with official "Others") and a personal level (more nuanced, fluid and dynamic racial identity within themselves) depending on the situation seems to be a coping mechanism that allows the individual to function within the realms of the rigid classification system while maintaining their own more reflected self identification.

> *Extract 6:*
>
> *But the thing about that is that even though I am half Malay, in the eyes of the government I'm full Malay. So they consider me when they ask me on the form or whatever, what race are you, I'm required to tick Malay (…) the reality is that in the eyes of the government, I am a single race. The government doesn't acknowledge my Indian part of me. In terms of the government, benefits, it's more beneficial for people like me to identify ourselves as Malay, and it is the required thing. Of course unfortunately we get more rights than others, even though other people may be more deserving.*

Here, Hemera, Malaysian female who identifies as either Malay or Indian[16], or a combination of both racial identities at different times, talked about how having a parent who is classified as Malay by the state, led to her being classified as Malay and this led to receiving scholarships and benefitting from the Malaysian government quota systems. While the government not acknowledging her Indian identity was problematic for her self-racial identification, she understood, if somewhat ambivalently, the usefulness of identifying herself as Malay in the eyes of the state.

Likewise, in Singapore, participants discussed choosing the racial identity that was most beneficial in that context, showing that the identity construction process

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[16] More specifically, Hemera identified with the being Malayalee, a language group originating from Kerala, India. See Appendix 8 for transcript.

was the same between the two countries. However, what was different was the choice of racial identity. Singaporean participants described how the Chinese identity was a more strategic identity to pick in most situations dealing with state apparatus. However, there was one situation that stood out.

Extract 7:

Wonderful. I could take the Chinese quota, so the next time round I could use the Indian quota, as long as I'm buying under my name. How good is that? So I could go to Toa Payoh, so actually the HDB [17]guy was telling me, I could go to Toa Payoh, you know those new 40-storey buildings, so all of it was, you know when I went there they were telling me everything is sold out, but looked at me and said, "Eh, you're Indian" "Yah, something like that, lah"

Priyan, a Singaporean male who self-identified as Indian, described how he was able to "manipulate" his official racial representation very strategically. Even though the official category ascribed to him is Chinese, he was able to use his multiple racial backgrounds to choose which racial quota he wanted to fill in his purchase of a HDB flat. In this situation, Priyan chooses to identify as Chinese, accepting his racial ascription. Priyan's experience shows that participants' self-categorisation is dependent on the context within which the chosen racial identity is most strategic. Priyan shows how multiracial individuals can be agentic in their categorisation by choosing which racial category the parents want to have their children categorised in, and by extension, how the social policies will apply to them. What is key in this extract is that Priyan was categorised as Chinese at birth, allowing him the majority quota (approximately 75% of flats) but because he "looked Indian" he was invited to apply for the Indian quota. He is identified by Others as a racial identity different to his racial ascription, however this is in line with his own racial self-identification. This extract also shows that what is the ingroup because of his racial ascription(Chinese)

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[17] Housing Development Board (HDB) is a Singaporean statutory board of the Ministry of National Development responsible for public housing in Singapore. The Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) implemented by them, was created to promote racial integration and harmony by preventing the formation of racial enclaves. They achieve this by enforcing racial quotas to ensure that each block of flats reflects the racial demographics of the country.

becomes the outgroup almost instantaneously because Others have identified him as Indian. Outgroup and ingroup boundaries thus become very dynamic. This has important implications on privilege and "passing", which has been discussed in 'mixed race' research elsewhere (Khanna & Johnson, 2010; Ahmed, 1999).

However, not being able to pass as one's chosen racial identity was problematic for participants.

Extract 8:

I feel a lot, a little bit, at times even irritated because I'm so tired of just explaining why I don't look Indian. For example you know, I can get into a taxi cab and when the taxi driver asks me you know, "Girl, what race are you?" And instead of just saying I'm Indian, I will just say I'm Eurasian, [laughs] I will just say I'm Malay so you know, I don't have to, have to answer questions.

Here, Vanessa, a Singaporean female who self-identifies as Indian, constructed her racial identity as something that she personally does not identify with just to avoid further questions about her racial identity. While she personally identified with the category Indian and has been ascribed the Indian category by the State, she thinks that an outgroup Other would not be able to accept or understand this identification because of their perceived mismatch between Vanessa's appearance and her racial identity.

In essence, Priyan's and Vanessa's speech here untangles the multiplicity of the multiracial identity construction process. Multiracial individuals can choose to identify with their racial ascription, or the racial identification of Others in different situations, even if these choices are not what one racially self-identifies with at all times. Racial identification is at times a response to the demands of the situational context.

Private racial identity

Participants constructed and negotiated their racial identities in a more nuanced and complex way when they did not have to deal with the "Other"- be it the state Other, ingroup or outgroup Other.

Extract 9:

Sayidah: *Right now I would say that it doesn't really matter because I know who I am and there are certain identifiers, like, I just came back from Tekka[18] yesterday because my Uncle has two shops there, and I got my outfit for Hari Raya[19], and okay, it's an Indian outfit, fine, and I still have my baju kurung[20]. I think as long as I know who I am I don't need the race on my IC to reflect that.*

First Author: *And so, how does that feel when your IC doesn't reflect how you feel?*

Sayidah: *For me, it doesn't really matter because my IC doesn't really have much of an impact on me right now, except when I apply for a house, that kind of thing. So, yah, I feel that it doesn't really matter anymore.*

Here we see that Sayidah, Singaporean female, has separated the official racial ascription as Malay and her own personal self-racial identification as Indian-Malay, a dual (Hopkins, 2011) or dialectic identity. In her use of the phrase "it doesn't really matter", Savidah emphasises that she does not require the acknowledgement of the state in her understanding of herself as an individual of mixed Indian and Malay heritages. There is no pressure to conform to the identity given to her by the state. Importantly, this is possible because it seems that that there is currently no contextual pressure requiring her to identify as Malay. She does not need to use her public racial identity to fill racial quotas for public housing, showing how her self-identification away from the state Other is free to be defined in ways not limited by the state. Unlike the examples outlined by Hopkins (2011) which describe dual identities as a combination of a superordinate (or national) identity and a minority (or racial) identity, the dual identity here relates both to racial identities. We highlight the multiplicity within one type of identity rather than the multiple types of identity (such as race, nationality) as is understood generally.

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[18] Tekka is a local name for Little India, a neighbourhood in Singapore that was originally a division of colonial Singapore.

[19] Hari Raya is Malay for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, two important Muslim festivals celebrated around the world.

[20] Baju Kurung is a traditional Malay outfit.

Similarly Dev, a Singaporean male who racially self-identifies as Chinese-Indian, discussed his self-racial identification when it is removed from demands placed by Others on how one can claim membership with a racial group.

Extract 10:

I think it's pretty fluid but for external parties, it may sometimes be a conflict. Like, 'You are not Indian enough' or you are not 'really Chinese' in order to be Chinese, because you are only half Indian or half Chinese. Erhm, but internally, for me, I think it is pretty fluid. I can use it to try to relate to people...where it's convenient.

Dev explains how both ingroup and outgroup others place boundaries on the identification with Chinese and Indian racial identities, which he himself does not subscribe to. It is important to note that Dev has been ascribed the Indian identity by the State. Dev himself constructs his racial identities as fluid, allowing him to self-identify with both races. Again here we view the Others' construction of Dev's racial identity in binary terms. He can only be Chinese or Indian, albeit not "enough" of either, but he cannot be both.

Discussion

The specific research settings that research was carried out in revealed a number of important issues for racial identity construction. Firstly, multiracial individuals in Malaysia and Singapore construct their racial identities *strategically*. Extracts 6 and 7 show us how the *enacted communication* (Elcheroth et al., 2011) of racial identities influences racial identity construction process. Indeed the focus of racial identity construction in these situations lies in what the identity does, rather than what it is. Identity is more a social practice than a simple category. Our research shows that a static construction one's racial identity as Malay, for example, is not always associated with positive outcomes, but being Malay in a specific situation may afford better outcomes. The choice of Malay racial identity in the public sphere represents a conscious decision to utilise the benefits associated with being Malay in a country (Malaysia) that has social policies that favour citizens who belong to this racial category. The same is true in Singapore but for the Chinese in Singapore. Being Malay in Singapore is a disadvantage in getting specific jobs in the Singapore military, even

though one would expect equal access to any job position in a full meritocracy (Mutalib, 2012). Thus, a person of both Chinese and Malay racial backgrounds would construct their racial identity as Malay in Malaysia and Chinese in Singapore to be able to reap the best outcome from their racial identity constructions. Therefore, what people do with their identities, rather than say their identities are, or what they have been categorised as, seems to be more salient in understanding racial identity constructions. This tells us that racial identity construction is strategic in these contexts, because it allows people to function within certain paradigms created by the state.

Secondly, multiracial individuals in Malaysia and Singapore determine the best strategy for constructing their racial identities *based on the situation, rather than just the socio-political context at large.* As shown above, and outlined in other research described here, racial identities constructed by participants are context-dependent and fluid. We extend this notion to show that the fluidity of the identity construction is more variable than before and dependent on changes in the demands of each situation. Extracts 7, 8, 9 and 10 highlight how racial identities are constructed differently in each situation. In a situation where participants need to engage with government social policies, participants construct their identities based on that which affords them the best outcomes. In a situation where participants need to engage with people who do not understand the complexities of multiracial identities, they choose to construct their racial identities in a way that will be best understood by the other person. In a situation where participants do not need to engage with a physically present Other, they construct their racial identities in a more nuanced and complex manner. Governments categorise individuals, and create social policies where these categorisations are pervasive and salient. Citizens thus engage with this categorisation in their everyday lives, resulting in different situations when multiracial individuals need to construct their racial identities. This fluidity in racial identity construction is captured when we view each construction within the situation that it occurs in. We see that identity construction is specific to that situation, and constructing one's racial identity as Indian for example does not mean that the individuals does not identify with their Malay racial identity. In our data analysis, we see that the broader socio-

political context is only part of the story of identity work. As shown, each situational context results in a specific combination of demands that multiracial individuals need to attend to. Multiracial individuals actively use the shared knowledge (Elcheroth et al., 2011) of government representations of race to fit into the social structures as well as to distinguish between what is a useful public identity and a complex private identity. How the individuals feel about their racial identities may or may not change over the course of their lives, but importantly it changes in the private and public spheres, creating private and public racial identities. What this shows is that participants can hold multiple constructions of their racial identities in the course of their lives, and in different situations.

Thirdly, within each situation, multiracial individuals co-construct their racial identities with the meta-knowledge of Others, who can be imagined, implied or present. We know from previous research that the presence of Others influences racial identity construction. In this paper, we bring into sharp relief that the knowledge of what Others think of us is influential in the construction of racial identities. Much of the data (see extracts 2, 3, 4, 8 and 10) show how participants' meta-knowledge (Elcheroth et al., 2011) of Others' representations of race permeated their identity construction process. Indeed, embedded within this meta-knowledge is the antinomic thinking (Staerklé et al., 2011) which organises the perceptions of these Others within majority-minority demographics (and its associated social hierarchies) of each country. Our findings show the distinction in Others when constructing and negotiating racial identities. Racial identity is constructed in the presence of multiple others- State, ingroup and outgroup Others- expanding our understanding of Others used in SRA. Indeed, an interaction with each of these different others lead to a different construction and negotiation as seen in the extracts above. Rather than viewing identity construction in the presence of Others to be distinguished between ingroup and outgroup Others, we show how construction is differentiated between Others who share an understanding of the complexities of racial identities (private sphere), and Others who contest the complexities, and construct race in a static and simplified manner (public sphere). The ingroup does not necessarily belong to the private sphere. There is debate and contestation that takes place within the ingroup,

and participants are forced to construct their identities on the terms of these Others, that is their public racial identity. Within the private sphere, participants are able to defend their choices, and achieve a construction of racial identity that is more inline with their personal view, that is their private racial identity.

Finally, this creation of public and private racial identities also highlights the role of power in the racial identity construction process, and we thus expand the definition of power in SRA to include that which political institutions such as governments have on individuals. Do Others in that situation afford the individuals the option to construct their racial identities as they wish? Individuals cannot change the categorisation that, they have been ascribed with, and at times others attribute to them, but they can contest this categorisation in the public sphere if they have the privilege of passing by choosing other racial identities that they have not ascribed with (Extract 7) or that is more in line with what Others perceive them to be (Extract 8). In the private sphere they can contest, change, and even ignore constructions that others place on them (Extracts 9 & 10). Participants are therefore active agents in defining who they are in a specific social environment. In juxtaposing the power that the state apparatus have in their lives, multiracial individuals reclaim power (as is outlined by Reicher, 2015) in their private spaces. This enables an expansion of the limited definition of power used by Elcheroth and colleagues (2011). State apparatus have clear, rigid constructions of race that exert considerable power on these individuals. Participants can challenge government representations of race (also utilised by individuals they interact with) as static and patrilineal by showing the fluidity and contextual nature of their racial identities in their self-identification.

Conclusion

To date, the study of multiracial identity has focused on highlighting that racial identities are fluid, and context driven for multiracial individuals. Conflict, where present, has been contributed by misattributions and lack of recognition by society. The influence of political structures on the psychology of multiracial individuals has been under-researched in other "mixed race"/multiracial and ethnicity studies. This paper extends this body of work through showing that multiracial

individuals racial identity constructions are *strategic* responses to the pervasive influence that political institutions have on their daily lives. Specifically, it highlights how multiracial individuals develop strategies to function in the societies that operate on single race identification and race based social policies. Given these restrictions, racial identities become *actions* that individuals employ. Identity processes are carried out strategically, in the presence of multiple Others who have different levels of power, resulting in the construction of *public and private racial identities*. When racial identities need to be constructed to navigate social policies, the public racial identity is constructed. When identities are constructed in the presence of others who understand the nuanced multi faceted concept of racial identities, or individuals either challenge or ignore the representations of race of others, the private racial identity is constructed.

In addition, looking at non-Western contexts has given insight into how the psychology of racial identities is influenced in non-Western democracies. The particular contexts of Singapore and Malaysia provide a rich context for the discussion of the interplay of race, political and social structures, not often examined in psychological studies of race. Yet this is by no means a unique setting. Many societies continue to employ race based social policies, albeit in different ways. By focusing on the specific ways that individuals need to engage with political institutions in their everyday lives, we can elucidate different aspects of the psychology of racial identity construction. This paper throws the different ways politics frames the everyday construction of racial identities into sharp relief, demonstrating that identity constructions are strategic actions taken by multiracial individuals in managing their everyday engagements with social policies.

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CHAPTER 3: RACIAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT AS UNDERSTOOD BY EVERYDAY ENGAGEMENTS WITH COLONIAL SYMBOLS

Preface

Chapter 3 is a paper written from the analysis of data from Study 2. It is a paper written with a view to submit to the journal, *Frontiers in Psychology* (Cultural Psychology Section).

Study 2 was a qualitative study consisting of 10 focus group discussions with a total of 39 participants from Malaysia and Singapore. The discussions were conducted in Malaysia, Singapore and the UK. The research question for Study 2 was *"How do different socio-political contexts influence racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans in group settings?"*

While we saw how individual racial development may be problematic for multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans who do not fit in one of the categories in chapter 3, this lead me to think about identity construction for individuals who do not identify as multiracial. Is government ascription of race only challenging for multiracial individuals, or can this influence racial identities of individuals who claim only one racial background? What are the processes at play when constructing racial identity in the physical presence of Others? These are the questions that drove Study 2. Using findings from Study 1, the interview schedule was created. Basic themes such as "mismatch between self categorisation and categorisation by Others", "Prejudices, Stereotypes, Racism by non- MRIs", "Society uses heuristics to categorise MRIs" were relevant to showing the connection between multiracial individuals (MRIs) and monoracial individuals and thus the interview schedule was formulated to address some of these issues. This interview schedule and a sample transcript is attached as Appendix 9.

Guided once again by the SRA (Elcheroth et al., 2011) theoretical framework, the focus of the study was to look at how racial identities are dialogically constructed in groups. Thus Dialogical Analysis (DA) was adopted in the understanding of the data. In setting out to compare how Malaysians and Singaporeans differed in the

constructions of racial identities, I found an underlying similarity that connected the participants' discussions across the different socio-political contexts. This was interesting as I identified how colonial ideologies were still present in contemporary constructions of race. For my analysis, I drew from one of the core functions of SRT that connects ideological systems in social and political life (Jovchelovitch, 2001). To this end, social representations are viewed as ideological tools that can facilitate the exploration of inequality and stigma (Howarth, 2009). Thus the conceptualisation of the socio-political context needs to factor in the ideologies that have created that society, in this case its colonial history.

With findings from Chapter 2 that highlighted the importance of conceptualising contexts as everyday engagements with social policies, a third comparative research setting was introduced. The UK does not carry the same race-based social policies as Malaysia and Singapore, and thus I added this as a research setting to present an adequate contrast in the study of racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans.

Empirically, this paper presents an often overlooked aspect of the context that contributes to racial identity construction- that of the (colonial) history. This might be because much of social psychology today focuses on the immediate social context that identities are constructed and negotiated in. However, this paper contributes to a growing body of research that seeks to expose the historical roots of how these identities and identity categories came to exist in its current state.

Theoretically, I found it interesting how individuals use meta- and shared knowledge to change the content of representations, and so their identity constructions. This is not addressed in the SRA framework. Therefore, this paper proposes a dynamic view of SRA in action, showing how social representations are not static descriptions of the reflections of society but rather are re-presentations of the social world that have the potential for change within society. By re-presenting their identities in a new socio-political context, I posit that participants are engaging in social change. This presents possibilities for a new reality, therefore connecting the four facets of SRA (meta-knowledge, shared knowledge, enacted communication and world making assumptions) in the study of racial identity construction.

In the big picture of the PhD, this paper functions as a link connecting multiracial identity construction and mono-racial identity construction. It demonstrates that racial identity construction is not only the focus of individuals of multiple racial identities but also of individuals who claim single racial identities. Within this group, individuals who identify as monoracial, and individuals from both majoritised and minoritised racial groups, construct their racial identities in the presence of Others. This paper also facilitated the planning of Study 3 because it allowed for the focus of Study 3 to be on the *change* of the socio-political context by marking out the relationships between the three different socio-political contexts in this paper.

The endurance and contestations of colonial constructions of race among Malaysians and Singaporeans

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Abstract

Psychological literature on race has discussed in depth how racial identities are dialogically constructed and context dependent. However, racial identity construction is often not compared across different socio-political contexts. By researching racial identity construction in three different multicultural countries, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Kingdom, this qualitative study comprised of ten focus group discussions (N=39) focused on how three racial identities, Chinese, Malay and Indian, are constructed among Malaysians and Singaporeans. Dialogical Analysis was applied to the data. This paper shows that both racial ingroups and outgroups constructed all three racial identities, with ingroups constructing their identities more heterogeneously compared to outgroups. Participants also engaged with colonial constructions of the three racial identities. The geographical locations, and therefore their perceptual contexts, of the participants differed. Yet, colonial constructions of race endured in contemporary identity construction and were contested in the group settings. We conclude that the socio-political context as understood by the context of colonialism and post-coloniality, influenced their racial identity constructions. This resulted in participants, regardless of differences in geographical location, using similar colonial constructions of Malay, Chinese and Indian identities to position themselves as well as Others in their group interactions. These findings show that there is value in conceptualising the context beyond that which individuals are immediately presented with, and the inclusion of cultural legacies of colonialism in the formation of the present context is an important one for psychologists to consider.

Keywords: identity construction, multiculturalism, race, intergroup relations, postcolonial societies, politics

Introduction

"I would feel that I am definitely most, very proud to be Indian, especially when I'm overseas. Why I don't know lah. Maybe because a lot of colonialism has rubbed into me, what I have read, so I'm very, a little, against it. (…) But when *you* subject me to some kind of, um, you know, social status where *you* look down upon me or something like that, if I get a feel of it, the Indian in me will come to the fore."

–Shan, Singaporean, self-identified Indian

Dialogical Construction of identity

Racial identity is constructed, and reconstructed by individuals in the presence of Others - implied, imagined and real (Reddy, Gleibs & Howarth, 2017/Chapter 2). The process of constructing a racial identity has been described, as "you think therefore I am" (Markus, 2010; p.361), echoing Descartes' famous insight. Thus following a dialogical perspective, this article assumes that identity construction occurs when people engage in a collaborative meaning making of themselves and their social worlds. Thus, the Self is fundamentally relational - Others form part of the Self (Bakhtin, 1981). Seen in the extract above, the influence of the Other makes the Indian identity salient for Shan and her racial identity becomes especially salient when she is outside of the country where she lives. A social and cultural psychological perspective on racial identity construction should thus focus on how an individual's construction of race draws from and feeds back to the social groups within which these constructions are made, how multi-cultural contexts influence these constructions and how harmonious or conflicting constructions among different individuals are managed or reconstructed. As such, this paper looks at the how racial identities are constructed, re-constructed and thus change, in group settings among Singaporeans and Malaysians living in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and London.

What is identity?

Firstly, we argue that identity is not merely a product of memberships of different social groups but rather a dynamic and contextualised process of connecting with a group, enacting that group's representations and being viewed as a member of

that group. We follow Duveen's (2001, p.182) conception of identity which highlights that is "identity is as much concerned with the process of being identified as with making identifications" and that the "identities provide ways of organising meanings so as to sustain a sense of stability". Indeed, the presence of others is important for us to develop the ability to recognise ourselves, to build relationships with others, to become self-conscious and agentic (Howarth, 2002). However, it is through social processes that the '*contents*' (e.g., norms and values) of any identity are constructed, and group identities are made and remade in and through argument and social practice (Hopkins & Reicher, 2011). Identity construction is influenced by multiple *motives* such as self-esteem, efficacy, continuity and meaning, keeping in mind the perception of others (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge & Scabini, 2006). Some complex identities like religious identities are strategically constructed based on essentialist, politicised discourses to meet different needs within a community, such as promoting political action (Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2004; Kahani-Hopkins & Hopkins, 2002). The Self is also responding to the voices of Others in that individuals are motivated to understand what other people think and say, and often repeat or paraphrase the words of others (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010; Marková, 2003). This Self-Other relationship is integral in understanding the *process* of identification, *content* of the identity, as well as the *motivations* of the identity constructed.

Secondly, identity is best understood in the context that it is constructed and managed in as many identity theorists argue (Howarth, 2002; Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010); yet context remains an allusive concept in many studies. Most identity researchers highlight the fluid nature of identities by stating that these identities are "constructed on the spot to reflect contemporary properties of self and others" (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty & Hayes, 1992, p.5). This is to say that identity construction should be firmly rooted in the immediate perceptual context, that is the context that is present at the point of direct observation. Thus, the psychology of identity construction should be studied across different contexts to understand the differences among individuals who construct the same identities, which belong to the same categories. It is this assumption that drives this study. Yet, the definition of context is often unclear and open for interpretation by the reader. Cornish (2004)

concretised context in the psychological study of sex worker and health outcomes by focusing on moments where social phenomena are activated. She reduced context to specific time points that psychological processes take place. Research elsewhere has made the case for grounding psychological processes within a broader perspective of the socio-political context constructed and maintained by political elites (Verkuyten, 2013) and influenced by institutions (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013). Therefore we ground our study of identity construction explicitly in group settings (specific moments) across different socio-political contexts (as demarcated by different geographical contexts) so as to capture clearly the influence of socio-political contexts on racial identity construction, and the dialogicality of construction of identities among individuals.

To elucidate the process, content and motivations of identity construction in its socio-political context, we use the Social Representations Approach (SRA; Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011). SRA combines both Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Social Representations Theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1984; 1988) and has been used together to understand socio-psychological processes that are embedded within a political dimension. Broadly, SIT can be said to help understand the motivations of identity construction and negotiation, while SRT is focused on the process and content of the identity that is constructed. Four key assumptions of SRA are crucial for this paper. The first is that social representations are shared knowledge that define how people act within their social worlds. Second, social representations are meta-knowledge implying that the individual is reflexive and takes into account what one thinks that Others know, think and value (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011; p.729). Third is that social representations are enacted communication that is shaped by factors that limit social practices, such as how others act towards us. Fourth, that social representations are world-making assumptions that both constitute reality and at times change reality as well. In addition, we consider Staerklé, Clémence and Spini's (2011) fifth component of SRA that seeks to show how shared knowledge is structured through "thinking in antinomies"(p.762), which is the notion that thought is inherently dialogical. Thus the SRA approach invites the researcher to look at relations, rather than isolated individuals. What needs to be

explored within the SRA paradigm however, is how individuals use meta and shared knowledge to change the content of representations, and so their identities.

Racial and ethnic identities

Race, ethnicity and nationality are important social categories for many individuals. They form part of an individual's self-concept that they adopt to make sense of their social worlds (Billig, 1993; Shih, Bonam, Sanchez & Peck, 2007). Constructions of race have been seen to be meaningful for minority group individuals living in multicultural societies across the world (Luke & Carrington, 2000; Verkutyen, 1997). We have decided to use race throughout the article reflecting how it is used by our participants, and how it is constructed in governmental discourse. We take Avtar Brah's (1996) position that race and racism are dynamic social processes that are different in different social contexts. In Malaysia and Singapore, the terms race and ethnicity are used interchangeably, with race being more commonly used in general public debates. In these two countries, race is understood to be patrilineal and inherent in one's biological makeup. Furthermore, scholars have acknowledged that the sole focus on ethnicity has left the persistent nature of racism unaddressed (Harrison, 1995) and in understanding intergroup relations in a context where race is a meaningful category, we believe that it is important to use terms that reflect the current discourse. As such, race is used in this paper without the use of double quotes so as to reflect its use in the context of Singapore and Malaysia, and will be used when specifically addressing or reflecting government or participants' discourse. However, from our perspective it is understood as being socially constructed, situational and fluid, and not a biological fact.

It is this disconnect between academic understanding of race as not being one of a biological construct and the everyday understanding of race as being entrenched in inherent differences that makes the contexts of Malaysia and Singapore an important and interesting research context to study racial identity construction. Political scientists and sociologists have been interested in the multicultural frameworks used in these two countries because of their impact on political ideologies, and development of civil society. Multicultural societies such as Malaysia

and Singapore present a unique opportunity for psychologists to understand how the individual's everyday engagements with race-based policies influence how they make sense of themselves and their social worlds, vis-à-vis a comparison with contexts that do not explicitly utilise race-based social policies. Thus, in line with understanding racial identity construction across contexts, three different socio-political contexts, Malaysia, Singapore and the UK were selected.

Malaysia, Singapore and the United Kingdom (UK): An overview

Malaysia and Singapore, ruled as one entity (Malaya) by the British till 1959, form an important part of our study as they show how the nations' evolution influenced by colonial rule sets the socio-political context for the construction of identities. The connections between knowledge, power and practice have impacted the construction of colonised subjects (Mama, 1995). Colonisation has especially influenced the psychology of individuals with regard to race and culture (Okazaki, David & Abelmann, 2008). Postcolonial Malaya separated into Singapore and Malaysia because of differences in styles of governance. Political ideologies in Malaysia and Singapore thus took different paths, with Malaysia choosing ethnocracy whilst Singapore chose meritocracy. Malaysia's *'Bumiputra' (sons of the soil)* policy means that Chinese, Indian and Eurasian Malaysians accept Malay supremacy in exchange for citizenship. While Singapore's multiracial policy is built upon the foundations of meritocracy and social cohesion, the reality is that a focus on individual race based cultural development and differential opportunities has led to unequal power dynamics amongst the population, resulting in racial inequalities (Chua, 2005; Mutalib, 2012). Two different models of multiculturalism thus developed in the two countries (Noor & Leong, 2013), forming two distinct socio-political contexts.

When understanding racial identity construction in the contexts of post-colonial Malaysia and Singapore, it is imperative to look at the process of racial categorisation. We understand that categorisation of the perceived world has administrative and informational functions (Bowker & Starr, 2000) and categories create the idea that the world is structured into predictable attributes, rather than arbitrary ones, thus maximising information with least effort on the individual's part

(Rosch, 1978). Informal and formal categorisations of the same object may have different contents and meanings. For example, the formal categorisation of race in Singapore and Malaysia involves a classification of an individual based on her/his father's racial categorisation as the patrilineal structure determines the individual's race. This formal categorisation takes place from birth, being inscribed in the birth certificate and national identity card of all individuals born in the two countries. Importantly, this formal categorisation process has its roots in British colonial management of diverse populations. British colonial strategies of 'define and rule' were created to determine people's function in the colonial economy (Mamdani, 2012). Indians were mainly recruited to work as 'coolies' in plantations, Chinese peasants were segregated in the tin mines and the local Malay peasantry was largely left bound to their rural-based activities (Hua, 1983). What this meant was that the heterogeneity within the diverse populations was collapsed into simplified racial categories for ease of administration. Postcolonial governments of the two countries carried forward this formal categorisation of race by the British. From a political perspective, little has changed since independence from colonial rule with regards to the importance of the racial categories as well as the content of these categories in Singapore (see Reddy, 2016, for an elaboration). Race retained its role as a prime apparatus of administration and control, with race based political parties in Malaysia deriving their origins and ideologies from post-colonial context (Gabriel, 2015).

On the other hand, an informal, vernacular categorisation of race in the two countries may be ascertained through appearance, language, and participation in that racial group's life. These vernacular categorisations tell us about what people do with formal categorisations, and interactions that occur between the informal and formal categorisations show us how we should aim to find out how people place themselves and Others into categories situationally (Edwards, 1998). Singapore and Malaysia show how through two classification systems, the concept of race is kept alive and used to hold institutions and people together (Desrosières, 1990). The formal and informal converge in the Singaporean and Malaysian individual's everyday engagement with social policies and in their interactions with one another.

While colonial rule reified racial categories, social and cultural psychology has been at pains to understand disruptions and changes to such categories. As Gillespie, Howarth and Cornish (2012) argue, social categories are perspectival (rooted in a social position), historical (changing categories, and changing human groups), disrupted by the movement of people (people move in and out of social categories), and re-constitutive of the phenomena they seek to describe (reproducing categories in theory leads to reifying them in practice). This means that in Malaysia and Singapore, one needs to value the categories of race alongside what it means within the historical, political and geographical context, while seeking to understand if and when individuals can move in and out of these categories that have been placed upon them.

While in Singapore and Malaysia today, racial identity is used to allocate resources such as education, housing and employment, and is assigned by the state, race is constructed very differently by the UK state. Here, individuals have the option to choose an ethnic (not race) label for themselves such as White and Black Caribbean at the institutional level, and assigning resources based on race would be considered illegal racism. This led us to choose London as a research site because thousands of Singaporeans and Malaysians take up temporary or permanent residence in London (Office of National Statistics, 2013). London presents an interesting research context to study how Malaysians and Singaporeans construct race as they would not need to use racial categories imposed by the Singaporean and Malaysian government to access resources in the UK, and have the option of giving themselves a racial identity that they self-identified with. Therefore the assumption is that Malaysians and Singaporeans living under different socio-political contexts (such as the UK) would construct Malay, Chinese and Indian racial identities differently because identity construction process is mediated by the immediate perceptual context.

Present Study

We wanted to understand the construction of Malay, Chinese and Indian racial identities in three different socio-political contexts, Malaysia and Singapore where race is constructed by the state and plays a salient role in the way individuals

interact with social policies and one another, and the UK where race is self-constructed and has less influence in the way individuals interact with the state. We wanted to study if there was a difference in the construction of the same racial identities by Malaysians and Singaporeans when they had experiences of living outside of the two countries of origin, especially in a country that does not utilise similar race based social policies. This study forms part of a larger study exploring the connection between context and racial identity construction. Thus, the research question for this study was:- *How do different socio-political contexts, namely Malaysia, Singapore and the UK, influence racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans in group settings?*

Methodology

Focus group discussions as an exploratory qualitative research method were employed as a tool to understand the complexity of racial construction and negotiation in the contexts of Singapore, Malaysia and London. Michael Billig's critique of how identity theorists analyse identities without distinction between laboratory settings and categories that have meaning outside of the laboratory led to the conclusion that meanings associated with social groups is more important for the social identities of people than how an individual self categorises (Billig, 1995). In understanding issues of race and race relations, it becomes important to use methodologies that will ground the research in the everyday experience and talk about these experiences (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005). Thus, Dialogical analysis and focus group discussions were chosen to enable us to understand the multiple meanings that categories hold for individuals. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed that was used in all three locations. It consisted of nine open-ended, exploratory questions, and explanatory probes were used as and when they were necessary. Some examples of these questions *"What are the ways you explored your Malay/Indian/Chinese Identity?"* and *"How similar is being Malay/Indian/Chinese Identity in Singapore and London?"*. A review of the literature, discussed above, assisted in the development of the interview schedule as it allowed the interviewer to identify key topics that would be relevant to Malaysians and Singaporeans with regard to their racial identities.

Participants

We conducted ten focus group discussions, with a total of thirty-nine participants, carried out in three different locations – Kuala Lumpur (capital of Malaysia), Singapore and London (capital of UK). Participant details provided in Table 1 and Appendix 14. Focus group discussions based on the semi-structured interview schedule were carried out to understand the complex constructions and negotiations of racial identities among the participants that reflected in the society at large, given Farr, Trutowski and Holzl's (1996) view that focus groups are "thinking societies in miniature" (Lauri, 2009; p. 650). All focus group discussions had participants who identified as mono-racial (Malay, Chinese and Indian) and multiracial (Chinese and Indian heritage, for example). Discussions were conducted in English, digitally recorded and transcribed. All participants were fluent in English and would use phrases in local languages, which were transcribed verbatim, and then translated. Participants had a range of educational backgrounds. Only one out of the 10 focus groups was conducted with all university students (Malaysians in London, n=5). There were no students in the focus groups conducted in Malaysia. All other focus groups had a mix of students from different educational institutions in Singapore, Malaysia and the UK, and working adults.

As discussions surrounding the topic of race were considered sensitive in the two countries, the groups were smaller than the ideal number for focus group discussions. However, there was breadth and depth in the conversations that took place as participants found that the topics covered were deeply relevant to their personal lives and shared many experiences within the hour allocated for each group. All focus group discussions extended beyond the allocated time. Two focus groups that were intended to be carried out in Malaysia did not materialise because of unexpected attrition due to the timing of the focus groups. Focus groups in Malaysia were conducted two weeks after the introduction of the new Sedition Act in 2015 (Agence France-Presse, 2015) and we postulate that this may have influenced participants' willingness to participate. Confidentiality was emphasised and participants details were anonymised accordingly.

Participant details	Malaysian	Singaporean
Mean Age	26.1 years	32 years
Female (n)	8	15
Male (n)	8	8
Focus groups in Malaysia	2 groups ($n_1=3, n_2=4$)	0
Focus groups in Singapore	0	4 groups ($n_1=5$, $n_2=4$, $n_3=3$, $n_4=3$)
Focus groups in London	2 groups ($n_1=6, n_2=3$)	2 groups ($n_1=5, n_2=3$)

Table 1: Participant details

Analysis

Dialogical analysis (DA) with a focus on metaperspectives within the intersubjectivity paradigm (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010) and multivoicedness (Aveling, Gillespie & Cornish, 2014) was applied to the data. Social and cultural psychologists have used intersubjectivity to study the context within which interlocutors make meaning (Jovchelovitch, 2007). The dialogical approach allowed us to unpack the multiplicity in the constructions of Self (identity) and Others (and how the Other is embedded in the Self), where we focused on how Others influence the self-construction of racial identities. We went beyond the purely individualistic approach to identity construction and explored how participants co-constructed self-constructions of racial identities with Other, focusing particularly on the process, motivations and content of racial identity construction in each context. In scaffolding the analysis of the data, we asked the following questions of the data- *Who is constructing the racial identity? How do Others interact with this construction?*

What this meant was that first, we identified all 'I' positions and Other positions relevant to racial categories in the two countries in the text. Second, we identified voices of the inner Others in discussions on racial identities. We then examined the dialogue and relationships between the different voices, as suggested by Aveling and colleagues (2014). Beacause multivoicedness is not only the simultaneous existences of different individuals voices in any individual, but also the simultaneous existence of individual voices and the voices of groups (Bakhtin, 1981),

we focused our analysis, and presented extracts here, that showcase both dialogues between focus group members, but also within each individual. Importantly, we identified challenging sections of the focus group discussion where participants bring up a point of conflict or contention and resolve this through their dialogical construction of the racial identities.

Our interpretation of the primary data was informed by other sources of information such as newspaper articles about the socio-political contexts, as suggested by Aveling, et al., (2014). The theoretical framework, knowledge about the socio-political contexts and data continued to speak to each other in the analysis of the data, and were unpacked together, leading to meaning emerging as a joint creation (Sullivan, 2012). The transcripts were analysed both by hand and using Nvivo. The dataset from each geographical location was analysed together first (KL groups together, Singapore groups together and London groups together) and then a secondary analysis was carried out where differences and similarities between the groups were compared. The analysis was structured around identifying how racial identities were constructed by both ingroup and outgroup members, as can be seen in Appendix 3. Analysis framework and codes were discussed in depth by a senior academic experienced in dialogical analysis and the final coding framework was developed after extracts, relevant codes and 'I' positions were corroborated.

Results and Discussion

Our findings will be discussed in two sections. First, we give an overview of the different constructions of Malay, Chinese and Indian identities that emerged in the data, showcasing the breadth of the content of racial identity constructions among Malaysians and Singaporeans. A table summarizing all constructions of race by participants is attached in Appendix 3. Second, we connect these constructions to the processes and motivations of identity construction, demonstrating how these processes influence interactions, and by extension, intergroup relations, between ingroup and outgroup members.

The content of racial identities

Based on our theoretical assumptions outlined above, we examined differences between Malaysians and Singaporean participants in the three different geographical locations. Instead, we found that constructions that were employed by participants in one location (Singapore for example) were also shared by participants in other locations (London). We thus broadened our analysis across ingroup racial identity constructions, and outgroup racial identity constructions. Malay, Chinese and Indian racial identities were discussed by both ingroup and outgroup members. These individuals spoke from multiple positions, or multiple voices as is understood in DA methodology. They represented their own opinions, but also echoed those of their family members, other racial group members.

Broadly, participants engaged in a wide range of constructions about their own and other racial identities across the three locations. These constructions ranged from identities being embedded in the languages being spoken (Chinese as Mandarin Language speaker, Indians as Tamil language speaker) to identities possessing qualities (Chinese as traditional, Malay as rich in culture, Indians as united) to physical appearance (Indians as black, Chinese as having small eyes). What was interesting to note was that participants' constructions of outgroup racial identities was less heterogeneous compared in their constructions of ingroup racial identities. For example, Malay identifying individuals constructed Chinese identity only as "enterprising" and "privileged", while Malay identity was constructed in a more diversified manner. This has been proposed previously by Tajfel (1981) where he showed that the outgroup is constructed to be more homogenous than it is, and the ingroup is constructed to be heterogeneous, also known as the ingroup heterogenity/outgroup homogenisation effect (Park, Judd & Ryan, 1991).

Importantly, moving beyond an analysis of differences between socio-political contexts meant that we could focus on the similarities between them. Specifically, when we examined the findings with the historical knowledge that race was constructed originally by colonial masters in Singapore and Malaysia, and that they had quite specific stereotypes for each race, we could see that participants were engaging with the same stereotypical constructions that the colonial masters had created long ago. For the purposes of this paper, we draw on the following colonial

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constructions of the Malay, Indian and Chinese identities. Colonial constructions of race were born from the imaginations of early European residents and administrators in Malaya as can be seen from extract below.

"From a labour point of view, there are practically three races, the Malays (including Javanese), the Chinese, and the Tamils (who are generally known as Klings). By nature, the Malay is an idler, the Chinaman is a thief, and the Kling is a drunkard, yet each in his own class of work is both cheap and efficient, when properly supervised"

Wamford-Lock (1907; p.31)

The colonialists' denigration for the Chinese went even as far as "Whenever money is to be acquired by the peaceful exercise of agriculture, by handicrafts, (…) there will be found the greedy Chinese" (Newbold, 1839; p.10, in Hirschman, 1986). This was clearly reflected in participants' contemporary constructions of Malay, Indian and Chinese identities. Specifically, these are "*Indians as alcoholics and labourers, Malays as lazy, Chinese as "kiasu"*[21] (see Appendix 3). Both ingroup and outgroup members engaged with these three constructions. For example, "Malays as lazy" was constructed by both Malay participants and Indian participants, while Chinese participants constructed Malays in a more nuanced and less negative manner by constructing Malays as less industrious and relaxed.

These constructions will be expanded upon in the following section. Now we turn to understanding how the processes and motivations of racial identity construction influenced, and was influenced by interactions with, Others.

Process and motivation of identity constructions

While the content of the racial identities was based on colonial constructions of race, the process of identity construction and motivations behind the process were seen when participants positioned themselves alongside or against these colonial constructions of race in their contemporary constructions of their own racial

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[21] Kiasu is a Hokkien (Chinese) term and a cultural concept for a negative form of competition that is said to promote selfishness and stem from greed (Ho, Ang, Loh & Ng, 1998).

identities, as well as those of Others. For example, what it means to be Malay today is juxtaposed against colonial constructions of the Malay identity, and Malay-identifying individuals would challenge these constructions by providing new constructions of the Malay identity, thereby changing the content of that representation to a more positive construction.

Positioning along colonial constructions of race

Participants took reference points for their own identity constructions from colonial constructions of race. In focus group carried out in London among Malaysian participants, the Chinese identity was constructed alongside the colonial construction of Chinese as "greedy" by Louisa, a self-identified Chinese Malaysian.

Extract 1:

Louisa:	*When I was brought up, even as a Chinese, I'm not that traditional. I don't speak Mandarin. I don't do all of the tradition things at home.*
First author:	*Do you speak any dialects?*
Louisa:	*No. My parents do. We're not really raised in that sense. Never really thought about…*
First author:	*So you didn't think about what it means to be Chinese…*
Louisa:	*I think it's based on a lot of stereotypes, so that's how I like picked up on*
First author:	*OK. Who created these stereotypes?*
Louisa:	*In school basically, when I was growing in primary school, basically like my friends were 70% Chinese. they would always label you like, Chinese people are super Kiasu [see footnote 13 above]. You know, that's how I like started forming my own thoughts like.*

While this extract seems to register the speech only of one person (and the interviewer), Louisa's speech is intersected by the voices of other non-present speakers, showing tension between these voices, particularly from the home and school contexts. Louisa constructs her Chinese identity from the position as a non-traditional Chinese thereby distancing herself from stereotypical constructions of the

Chinese identity. In constructing what she is, Louisa states what she is not, centering her construction on what is commonly thought of as symbolic practices that Chinese identity is constructed upon (speaking Mandarin, partaking in traditional activities at home). This is a case of *intertextuality,* where prior representations support subsequent representations, thereby enacting a particular understanding of the Chinese identity (Elcheroth et al, 2011).

In contrast, Louisa explicitly applies the construction by Others *(Chinese people are super Kiasu)* in the formation of her own Chinese identity. Louisa also deflected responsibility for perpetuating this stereotypical construction by using the phrase "*they would always label you*", removing agency from herself and directing the talk to Others in the room, instead of using the word "me" (and the I position) in that phrase. Other participants do not contest this hegemonic representation and move on to discuss their own experiences with the Chinese identity. The act of being "*Kiasu*" is one way of positioning oneself as Chinese, becoming a concrete enactment and social norm of the Chinese identity. By positioning herself along the colonial constructions of race, Louisa has sought to draw on common representations of the Chinese identity and changing it into an instrument that she can use in understanding what being Chinese meant to her. Drawing from SRT, the social representation of Chinese identity is transformed from one that depends on the individual being "traditional"and "speaking Mandarin", and as is Louisa when she adopts this colonial label of greedy into contemporary construction of "Kiasu".

Interestingly, Louisa's speech highlighted here was a follow up from a group member's response to how they constructed their identity of being Chinese. This participant, Selena, said that she asked her parents what it meant to be Chinese, and that was how she explored her Chinese Identity. Louisa contrasts this respnse by saying that she *"barely explored that to be honest".* This highlights the interdependence of group members' actions, both within the focus group and within the racial group in the construction of an identity and it shows that racial identity is as much doing, as it is saying.

Positioning against colonial constructions of race

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However, most participants positioned themselves against colonial constructions of race. Here we see two Singaporean participants, Sofia and Zara, from a focus group conducted in London using the colonial construction of Malays as "idler" to position their Malay identity.

Extract 2:

Sofia: *If I may just add I think I've noticed all of us wanting one, we're all Singaporean, which I'm so touched about, because as I said, I'm so much older than all of you, I grew up in a time when you were boxed, oh you're Malay, oh you're Chinese, oh you're Indian, you should be doing this, oh if you're Chinese, you cannot do art but you're good with numbers, Indian, then you have to smell of curry, you're very good at talking, you're Malay, oh very lazy, oh, very stupid, but you can sing very well [group laughs]. You come from that time when segregation was the norm, and you kind of accepted that.*

Zara: *It was almost like character profiling.*

Sofia: *Yah, I think the FBI can find a new job in Singapore, don't have to do profiling, it's all done. They themselves, we, my time, our people, accepted that by acting in that way, I'm Malay, of course I'm very bad in Math la, I'm not very clever… of course we are poor. You know that kind of thing. You know, now what I hear from all of you, the younger ones is that ok we are all Singaporean, we are a bit of Chinese, Indian, we are a bit of Malay, we eat all the different racial food, we happily celebrate each other's ethnic celebrations. I think we all sort of want that kind of cohesiveness, isn't it?*

Sofia introduces constructions of Malays being "*very lazy*" and "*very stupid*" to the discussion. It is interesting to see how Sofia adds an emphasis to racial identity that she has been categorised as (Malay), compared to other racial identities. She switches from the *I* position (*I grew up in a time*) to the *you* position (*you were boxed*) and continues to draw other focus group participants into her experience. While it may seem like a dyadic verbal interaction between Zara and Sophia, the group responds to Sofia's introduction of colonial constructions of race. Here the group laughs, showing that they too are aware of these constructions. We see these representations of Malays, Chinese and Indians as shared knowledge (Elcheroth et al, 2011). In response, Zara steps in and signals her shared experience with Sofia, positioning herself as a person who grew up in the same time period. Sofia then switches positions again from "*they*

themselves" to "*we, my time, our people*", this time aligning herself with Others who accepted these constructions. However, she underpins this construction with the use of "*of course*" twice, positioning herself as being outside of this construction by mocking it.

We see the multi-voiced nature in the construction of the self, and ingroup (Malay) identity here in Sofia's speech. This multi-voiced nature of the Self is considered an adaptive response to the fractured social world that we live in (Aveling & Gillespie, 2008). Sofia appeals to the participants from the younger generation by drawing differences between "*my time*", a much younger, less aware Singapore and the current state of affairs in the country. Her construction of the Malay identity here serves the purpose of illustrating a difference in the construction of racial identities from a time before. This shows the evolving nature of the importance of these colonial constructions, and the desire to move away from them comes from starting to name them as stereotypical constructions that are have little relevance to what the younger generation experience- a preference for the superordinate nationality identity (*we are all Singaporean*) over individual racial identities. Participants bring awareness of colonial constructions of race into the group, engage with these constructions collaboratively and distance themselves from it. Stereotypes are seen as judgments of a specific category (here race), at times different to one's own, and which becomes a device that contains a social content (Moscovici, 2011). The stereotypes are thematised by participants, and we argue that participants are motivated to changing these stereotypes, and thus changing the content, by first acknowledging and talking about them.

Arvin and Anika, two participants from a focus group carried out in Malaysia, also constructed their Indian identities against the colonial construction of Indians as drunks. This extract highlights a problematic construction of Indians and shows how participants worked through this point of contention.

Extract 3:

> Arvin: *Uh, I'm like yah, you don't know how much I can drink. I'm like no, I can't drink. [Laughs]*
>
> Anika: *But that's true right, so when you say Indian, immediately you think, oh, able to drink.*
>
> Arvin: *Yah, yah.*
>
> Anika: *Should be able to drink the entire table. And historically, and rightly or wrongly, there's the prejudice that Indians are, you know, labourers, working in the estates, maybe to some extent, quite edgy. And I'm not saying that this is right, I mean, this is perception, right.*

Here, Arvin switches between addressing the non-present other from his conversation outside the focus group (*you don't know*), and his fellow focus group participants in the room, drawing the participants into this construction of the Indian identity. He signals his position (against the construction) reiterating his point that he does not fit into this stereotypical construction of Indians, and that this is a false construction of Indians. Anika continues to draw on the voice of the absent speaker, showing the meta-meta knowledge (what we know about Others' knowledge of us) of the Indian identity is instrumental in the construction of racial identities.

Tension within Arvin's construction arises when Anika says "*But that's true right*", legitimising this false construction by then drawing Arvin and other focus group participants in by using "*you*" (other position). Arvin's positive response to this *(yah, yah)* then leads her to ground this construction in history, further legitimising this false construction. Yet even in the validation of this construction, Anika positions herself against it by being dismissive of it with the use of the phrase "*rightly or wrongly*". She distances herself even further when she says "*I'm not saying that this is right*" once again showing the tension between talking about this false colonial construction of Indians and the desire to reflect her own sentiment about it. In their dialogue, we see that meaning is drawn from meta (and meta-meta) knowledge of Indian identity, is contextual (historical and in Malaysia), and is not simply contained in the utterance of the stereotypical construction. Both Anika and Arvin seek to change the content of this construction through meta-knowledge, and in doing so, construct the Indian

identity in opposition to Others' construction of Indians. By positioning themselves against these (negative) constructions, they create space for alternative constructions of the Indian identity. Anika embarks on this process of creating alternative constructions with the use of the word "edgy" rather than drunk, carefully co-constructing the Indian identity with Arvin.

Outgroup members frequently constructed racial identities that they did not identify with as well. In this focus group conducted in Singapore, Janet, self-identified Chinese Singaporean constructs the Malay and Indian identity. What is interesting about the construction of the Indian identity is that Janet defers to Nadia, self-identified Indian participant in the construction of the Indian identity, positioning Nadia as a gatekeeper of the identity.

Extract 4:

Janet: *Something like that, I don't know. [Wrings hands] I don't want any "seditious" [Airquotes]*

First Author: *This is not like the Sedition Act[22]*

Janet: *I'm totally like, digging my own… Crossing the boundaries a little bit, maybe, you know, Malays like lepak one corner, so, kind of the stereotype like, where, you know, you think Malays generally are more relaxed, they take things at a slower pace, they have different kind of culture, they are very tight-knit, something like that. …Indians, my mum keeps thinking that, Indians, they are very good speakers, as what she said that's why we have so many doctors and lawyers [Nadia nods] from there, because they are such good speakers.*

Nadia: *Like…*

Janet: *Like they like to argue, this kind of thing. Because my Indian neighbour is, he always goes down to the void deck, he talks to a old bunch of ladies, and he every time, he's like the group's mover, you*

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[22] To date, public discussions regarding race, language or religion are considered to be taboo and discussions are censored by the state and citizens alike (George, 2000).

know. So he's like, always traveling with his things someplace. But he's quite unique himself, he can speak Teochew…

Nadia: *Yes. [Nods]*

Janet starts off this dialogue in an apologetic tone, aware that she is bringing up some controversial issues embedded in the construction of the Malay and Indian identities. She highlights this tension within her own dialogue when she switches from one position to another (*I'm totally like; you know you think; my mum*). She brings in her mother's perspective (absent speaker) into the discussion as an important point of view in establishing the stereotypical constructions that she is aware of. The invoking of this stereotype clearly made Janet uncomfortable, and we can see how she resisted the construction of Indians as "*good speakers*" by creating a distance when referring to her mother's views instead of hers. This device, called the *dialogical knot* (Aveling et al., 2014) illustrates the conciliatory approach taken by Janet in discussing such essentialised constructions of different racial categories in Singapore. In this particular focus group, views about minority were discussed very tentatively, and the other participants frequently looked to Nadia, the only racial minority member, for approval and acceptance. That Nadia did not question this positive construction of Indians, and the conversation moves on smoothly shows not only how Janet is able to draw on common references in the construction of the Indian identity, but also that belief in this construction allows Janet to elicit the support of her focus group members. Her mobilisation of this stereotypical construction, though tentative at first, gives her clues about the manner with which the conversation should unfold so as to elicit support from her other people in that group setting.

What is important to note is that Nadia herself is a practising lawyer, adding a dimension of credibility to Janet's construction of Indians as "*doctors and lawyers*". From Janet's perspective, it also becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is of course a positive construction of the Indian identity, and one that does not fall into the colonial construction of Indians. That it is so far removed from the colonial construction of Indians as drunk labourers is noteworthy. It is also perhaps telling that this construction of Indians is elaborated on in this dialogue, rather than the

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colonial construction of Malays that Janet starts the dialogue with, showing Janet's positioning of herself as being against colonial constructions of race. In the space created by positioning herself against the colonial construction of Indians, Janet then puts forth a (positive) contemporary construction of the Indian identity. She has drawn on shared knowledge of the negative construction of Indians to change content of the Indian identity.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was that all participants had at least GCSE 'O' level (or equivalent) education, and were fluent in English. While this is largely representative of the English speaking Singaporean population, it does not represent much of Malaysia, where Malay is the lingua franca. Perhaps individuals who are less fluent and comfortable communicating in English would have different constructions of the races present in their countries. Malaysian participants were also only sampled from Kuala Lumpur, as we only had resources to conduct the focus group discussions for Malaysia in that location. We expect that discussions around racial identity would be different if the study was conducted in more rural parts of West Malaysia or in East Malaysia.

Conclusion

Firstly, rather than drawing reference from the immediate perceptual context or specific moments in time as shown in other research, it was interesting to find that the psychological traces of colonialism still echo in the self- presentation, construction and negotiation of racial identities of individuals from Malaysia and Singapore. Participants, regardless of differences in socio-political contexts as characterised by different geographical locations, similarly engaged with colonial constructions of race in constructing contemporary Malay, Indian and Chinese racial identities. Importantly, the colonial representations served the purpose of a providing a reference point, a way with which people organise and view their social worlds. We stress that the core of these constructions is based on colonial representations of race,

both the idea of categorising people according to discrete, "racial differences" and the contents of what these racial categories mean, and have endured till today. Because identity is also located culturally and historically (Hammack, 2008), the socio-political context needs to more explicitly include historical and cultural elements. We extend Hammack's point by defining culture to include the post-colonial. Postcoloniality means that cultural legacies of colonial symbols still influence the psychology of contemporary society (Patke, 2005). This study reinforces Okazaki, David and Abelmann's (2008) call for more psychological research to be conducted to understand how major geopolitical events such as colonisation influence people's lives and calls for researchers to expand the conceptualising of context beyond that which is usually studied. Therefore, we argue that the conceptualisation of the socio-political context should include the ideological context of colonialism and post-coloniality. In this sense, socio-political contexts are not just demarcated by geographical locations and by extension, contemporary political ideologies, but can be rooted in historical experiences that create a powerful ideological context and crosses geographical boundaries.

Theoretically, we have extended the SRA concepts of meta and shared knowledge in the application of the study of racial identities. Notably, extracts 2 and 4 show how participants draw on meta and shared knowledge to change the contents of the representations of the Malay and Indian racial identity from a colonial construction to a contemporary construction. In doing so, they also frame their identities within this changed content. These enduring colonial representations provided the foundation for the change in the construction of racial identities among our participants. The use of these colonial representations did not mean that participants accepted them wholly. Participants challenged and contested these colonial constructions of race when constructing their racial identities today. The defining property of a social representation is not that it should be shared in the same way, by everyone who uses such a representation. Rather, the internal structure of the representation and the extent to which it is dispersed within a group or social category will depend on the functions that it serves. As seen from extracts 1 and 3, participants knowledge of a representation of the Chinese and Indian identity allowed them to

form their constructions of their own racial identities. This finding is important as it contributes to fuller understanding of the SRA paradigm by showing how individuals use meta and share knowledge to change their identities.

Lastly, we see that colonial representations of race are central to constructions of different racial identities in the Singapore and Malaysia by *both ingroup and outgroup members*. Racial identity constructions are not limited to minority group members, as shown in research discussed above. All participants used the construction of identity to identify how Others position them, and how they should position themselves to Others. Thus racial identity takes on a strategic role, informing the Singaporean and Malaysian individual of Chinese, Malay and Indian racial identity about how to interact with one another in group settings. We show that because racial identity construction is inherently relational, participants engage in them beyond the motivation of increasing positive self-esteem. Participants use these constructions to connect with one another, as seen in extract 1 and 2, and to ascertain how to interact with one another, as seen in extract 4.

Even so, participants express discomfort when engaging with these representations, and distance themselves from the negative aspects of these constructions. There is an awareness that the racial categories, and associated colonial constructions, are insulting and inappropriate. Participants are aware that these colonial constructions of race are limiting and do not necessarily represent their own views on race and racial categorisation in these countries. Nonetheless, they engage with them because it gives them not only a common understanding of racial identities, but also a way to interact with one another in group settings, which is telling of the enduring yet contested nature of these representations.

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CHAPTER 4: RACIAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT AS DEMARCATED BY POLITICISED GEOGRAPHIES

Preface

Chapter 4 is a paper that brings together the analyses of Studies 2 and 3. It is the third paper presented in this paper-based thesis.

Study 2 is outlined in Chapter 3. Study 3 is outlined in this chapter and was a mixed methods study. The research question for Study 3 was *"How does a change in the socio-political context influence racial identity construction and levels of identification among racial ingroup members?"* An online questionnaire, as the quantitative aspect of the study, was conducted. This research question was then applied to data from Study 2 that were further analysed. Study 3, in the thesis, refers to the combination of the new quantitative data, and the new analysis of the previously collected qualitative data. In this paper however, Study 1 is presented as a quantitative study (online questionnaire) and Study 2 is presented as a qualitative study (focus groups).

This paper contributes to the overall understanding of the influence of socio-political contexts on racial identity by charting how a change in the socio-political context can result in a change in the construction of racial identities among Malaysians and Singaporeans. By looking at how globalisation influences racial identity construction, I distinguish between country of origin (where the racial identities originate), country of birth/citizenship (where individuals first identify and construct their racial identities) and country where the identities are then negotiated and re-constructed.

Specifically, this study conceptualises socio-political context as politicised geographies. I define politicised geographies as political ideologies that are embedded in geographical locations (or countries), combined with the politicisation of race by the individual. Each country chosen for this study is differentiated by multicultural frameworks and social policies, which make up part of the complex political ideologies in those countries. I maintained the three countries researched in Study 2, namely Malaysia, Singapore and the UK.

In Study 3, participants were directed to an online questionnaire, which asked them key questions about their self-racial identification. Participants were then shown five images relevant to Malaysia and then asked the same questions on self-racial identification, as well as an open ended question allowing them to construct their racial ingroup identity. This was repeated by images of Singapore, with the same questions, followed by images of the UK and the same questions. Participants who completed all three sets of questions were analysed. Briefly, participants did not show a change in racial self-identification when there was a change in the socio-political context, but constructed their racial ingroup identities differently in all three socio-political contexts.

Participants in Study 2 also spoke of how changes in their politicised geographies influenced their racial identity construction. This data was not written up or analysed in detail in Chapter 3, but was coded for in the initial coding (carried out during a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)) of Study 2 data. This data was then re-analysed for the purposes of understanding why the change in racial identity construction, identified in Study 3, took place.

The qualitative studies complemented the findings from the quantitative study in understanding the social psychological aspects of racial identity construction changes across changes in socio-political contexts. This is presented in the following paper.

Broadly, this paper is important to the overall PhD thesis because it not only puts forth a different conceptualisation of the socio-political context; it also highlights how the content of the racial identity in question is an important part of understanding race in social psychology. Content is often overlooked in studies of race, and much research is focused on examining how a change in context results in a change in the levels of racial identification. Furthermore, there is an underlying assumption that the meaning of the racial category holds constant across time and space, and there exists a pan-racial identification among Asian identities for example (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010) which at times allows for racial categories to be manipulated as variables (Helms, Jernigan & Mascher, 2005). However, as this paper shows, the meanings associated with racial categories change as the socio-political contexts

change, while the categories themselves remain the same. In other words, Indian, as a racial category is used similarly in the UK, Singapore or Malaysia but the meanings associated with the category Indian change for people who identify as Indian.

Theoretically, this paper posits an extension to the Social Representations Approach by factoring in levels of identification as a component of *shared knowledge*. It argues that how much an individual identifies with an identity influences the shared knowledge of the contents of the identity, as well as the choice to re-construct the identity in another socio-political context. Elcheroth and colleagues (2011) used the empirical study of ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia to elaborate the theoretical framework of SRA. In my application of this framework to another social psychological phenomena, racial identity construction, I draw from classic SIT research and concept of levels of self-identification to augment SRA, thereby drawing SIT and SRT closer together in SRA. I therefore extend the application of SRA to the study of other social and political psychological phenomena beyond that which is outlined by the original authors, as well as suggest a more fuller conceptualisation of the potential of shared knowledge, to include levels of identification.

The dynamic constructions of racial and national identity across contexts: a case study among Malaysians and Singaporeans

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Abstract

Within social psychology, it is understood that how much one identifies with a specific (social) category changes as the context itself changes. Yet the change of what this identity means to the individual is often not discussed, and context is often conceptualised loosely. This paper explores how racial identity construction changes as the socio-political context symbolically changes, among racially minoritised and majoritised Malaysians and Singaporeans. Study 1 was an online questionnaire (n=337) where participants were shown images related to the three different socio-political contexts (Malaysia, Singapore, UK) and asked for the construction of their racial in-group as well as levels of racial self-identification. Participants showed a decrease in racial self-identification, and a change in racial identity construction after socio-political context was manipulated. This change was seen through participants drawing on different types of representations in the construction of their own racial identities in each condition. Study 2 was conducted to explore why racial identity construction changed in each socio-political context and was a qualitative study of 10 focus group discussions (n=39). Participants discussed how the change in racial construction resulted from a desire to free themselves from stigma and stereotypes, as well a decision to construct racial identities as hyphenated identities such as Malaysian Indian that was distinct from Others who shared the same racial identity (Indian). We argue that the distinction between the country that the racial identity originates from, country of birth (or citizenship) for the individual and country that the individual manages the identity in, what we conceptualise as politicised geographies, is important in understanding the changes in the psychology of racial identities. This paper presents conceptual contributions on the socio-political context that are important for the cross-cultural researcher interested in understanding identity processes among globalised individuals who often take up homes in different countries across the span of their lives.

Keywords: context, race, identity, change, politics.

Introduction

How are racial identities constructed and negotiated as people move across the world? Recent surveys have estimated that 191 million people across the world are living in a country different from the one they were born in (Van Oudenhoven, Ward & Masgoret, 2006). When individuals migrate, or travel, to a new country, they are constructing, and re-constructing their identity as they encounter different knowledge systems and ways of understanding the world. Much research on the influence of migration with regard to racial identity has focused on minoritised groups. This study examines racial identity construction among both majoritised and minoritised racial groups from two countries, Malaysia and Singapore, focusing on how individuals change their racial identity constructions and levels of racial identification when symbolic representations of three different socio-political contexts are made salient.

The study of race, and racialised identities is debated within social psychology. Many psychologists avoid the use of the term "race" to describe a social category that is salient for most people, instead using the term ethnicity and do not use the two terms interchangeably (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997; Howarth, 2009). While we understand race as being socially constructed, situational and fluid, and not a biological fact, we use the term race here without double quotes as it is reflected in participants' own discourse, and is used in a seemingly unproblematised manner in Malaysia and Singapore. It is indeed advantageous to researchers if they are interested in how 'ordinary people' employ such concepts in the rhetorical construction of identities for themselves and Others (Reicher & Hopkins 2001).

In the present article, we first examine key theoretical frameworks and empirical studies related to identification and identity content. Next, we look at racial and national identities in context, focusing on how migration as a social psychological phenomenon draws these two constructs together. We then give a broad overview of the research context before discussing the studies that are presented in this paper.

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Identification

Research into identities, within the Social Identity Theory tradition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) especially, has focused on motivations behind identity categorisation, as well as how levels of identification change across contexts. Herein, a leading view of social identity is that it is both individual and social, is relational in that we define ourselves based on comparisons with Others, and provides a basis for shared social action as we share identity with Others (Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). Some of the focus of work within the social identity tradition (which includes Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) has been on the relationship between group identification, ingroup bias and intergroup discrimination (Brown, 2000).

To this end, social psychological studies of racial, religious and national identities have concentrated on understanding cognitive processes such as levels of identification among individuals; thus, how much one identifies with a specific racial category. Importantly, Khan and colleagues (2014) showed how a change in one's physical location resulted in an increase in religious identification. Similarly, different societies have been shown to promote different levels of racial identification. For example, a society that is more open to embracing multiculturalism leads to stronger racial identification among minority group members, compared to a society that prefers assimilation, which leads to weaker racial identification (Verkuyten, 2007). Thus, racial identification, that is how much one identifies with their racial group, changes as context changes. However, it is unclear if identification with racial group changes if individuals are presented with a symbolic change of their contexts.

Identity Content

Turner (1999) has argued for the incorporation of the analysis of identity content into studies on identity processes as it has not been a key focus within the social identity tradition. This is despite the fact that Tajfel himself was concerned not only with the process of identification (e.g. how much a person identified as Jewish), but the content of identification (what it meant to be Jewish in Europe in the 1940s) (Duveen, 2001; Tajfel & Dawson, 1965). That is, what it means to be identified, in

contrast to how is one identified, has been neglected in identity research (Moloney & Walker, 2007). Yet, people are active meaning makers, and not responding passively to stimuli (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011). Therefore it is important for social psychologists to focus on what meanings that individuals have made, that is what is the content of the identity. Identity content is also important in understanding identity because the meanings (or content) associated with any social identity are a result of "our collective history and present" (Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010; p. 45). Social psychological research focusing on collective action and intergroup relations has indeed focused on identity content as a means of, for example, differentiating the psychological crowd that shares an identity from the physical crowd (Reicher, 1984) as well as how some forms of intergroup behaviour depends on the content of the identity (Livingstone & Haslam, 2008; Turner-Zwinkels, van Zomeren & Postmes, 2017). However, more needs to be studied about the content of racial identities within the social identity tradition.

Contrarily, Social Representations Theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1984) has highlighted the importance of the content of identities. Social representations are a function of social identities and the central core of a representation consists of "one or several elements that give the representations its meaning" (Abric, 2001; p.43), thus placing identity content at the heart of social psychological understanding of identity. In her research on African-American identity, Perkins (2006) showed that while American participants from Africa, the Caribbean and people of African-descent who were born in the US self-identified as African American, the meanings associated with that categorical label had distinctly different profiles. For example, African and Afro-Caribbeans downplayed the pervasiveness of discrimination in society. While racial identification was the same, that is how strongly they felt connected to being African-American, identity content differed across the racial groups. This goes to show that examining racial identity content is a meaningful exercise for the social psychological understanding of racial identities. In fact, why and how do changes in content take place are viewed as fundamental questions within the SRT paradigm (Moscovici, 2001). If we follow that identities are a function of social knowledge, and how contents change in social knowledge is a perennial problem for social scientists

(Goody, 1977), then how identities change as socio-political contexts change is an important question for all social psychologists to answer.

Identity in Context

Notably, identification and identity content are rooted in context. Some psychologists have argued that an individual's identity is motivated to adapt to a social context, specifically looking at modern Western societies (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). This is because different societies present different representations, thereby constituting different realities (Moscovici, 2001). In the process of constructing one's racial identity, different identity aspects interact with one another within the environmental and social context (Howarth, 2002; 2006). If we follow this, then changes in the socio-political context should result in changes to one's racial identity.

This paper contributes to the existing research on racial identity construction by examining racial identification and racial identity content change across different contexts. The interdependence between process (levels of identification) and content (meanings of identity) means that both can be deduced concurrently (Jovchelovitch, 1996), and thus this will be the focus of the paper. With these two aspects in mind, we explore whether symbolic changes in one's socio-political context, result in changes in one's construction of their racial identity (that is, change in identity content) as well as changes in how much one identifies with their racial identity (change in levels of racial identification) *at the same time*.

The socio-political context has been defined elsewhere (Reddy & Gleibs, 2017a/Chapter 2; Reddy, Gleibs & Howarth, 2017b/Chapter 3) as the everyday engagements with social policies and the experience of colonial symbols in Malaysia and Singapore. This paper adopts the view that the socio-political context is a combination of its social policies and colonial history and is also demarcated by geographical location. Each country chosen for this study is differentiated by multicultural frameworks and social policies, which make up part of the complex political ideologies in those countries Importantly, social, political and historical contexts are not external factors that impact one's perception and construction of Self. According to the Social Representations Approach (SRA; Elcheroth, Doise &

Reicher, 2011) that combines SIT and SRT, the context is a *reality* that is brought into existence through representations.

Therefore, we undertake our study with the theoretical framework of SRA in mind. SRA's theoretical framework, which draws from SIT and SRT, consists of four facets, *shared knowledge, meta-knowledge, enacted communication* and *world making assumptions* as key tenets of social representations of the social world. Notably, one of the four facets of SRA, *shared knowledge*, will be the point of focus in this paper. Shared knowledge refers to the "qualitative epistemic transformation" (Elcheroth et al., 2011; p. 737) that understanding goes through when individual experiences changes to shared meaning, thereby becoming social fact. Identification with a racial group requires the individual to understand the shared meanings associated with the said group, as is understood within the SIT tradition. This paper shows how identification with a racial identity is not only about how much one identifies with the said identity but rather whether one prefers to identify with all aspects of the said identity in a given socio-political context. This is turn influences the (re)construction of that racial identity in that particular socio-political context. Through this, we argue that this connection between the process and content can be pulled closer together.

Racial and National Identities in context

Psychologists have explored how racial identities are dynamic, responsive to life events and people around them in the past two decades (Howarth, 2006; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002; Philogène, 2007). Yet, racial identities are often connected to national identities, and this is often overlooked in racial identity research. Constructions of racial identities are embedded in national identities, as we see in Australia (Augoustinos, 2001) and the UK (Mama; 1995). Having a national identity is to possess ways of talking about nationhood, being situated legally, physically, socially and emotionally within a homeland (Billig, 1995). In other words, one's national identity is located geographically within a country that is considered to be one's country of origin. Indeed, many national identities are also racial identities, as seen in the case of India. Indian as a term, can be used to signal one's national identity and citizenship in the country India. It can also be used to describe the racial category.

However, in many multicultural societies, one's country of origin is not necessarily one's homeland, and the individual's homeland (or country where they possess a national identity) is at times a multicultural country where individuals from multiple countries of origin co-exist. Following from the example above, Indians form a specific racial group in the United States of America, alongside other racial groups. The Indian diaspora thus can have many different national identities. At times, there is a push and pull process that takes place between racial and national identities in multicultural societies, where some racial identities are minoritised identities that are markedly different from majoritised identities (Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson & Sammut, 2014). Using the same example, Indians in the US are a minoritised racial group that are in stark contrast in many ways, physical appearance for example, to the majoritised White population.

Importantly, Stevenson and Muldoon (2010) have shown that the socio-political context influences minoritised and majoritised individuals differently in their construction of national identities, highlighting that it is not simply being in that context that influences national identity construction, rather it is important to factor in social hierarchies when understanding identity constructions. Indeed, research in South Africa by Durrheim and Dixon (2010) highlights how social hierarchies that exist between Black, White and Coloured South Africans are related to how individuals respond to changes to the socio-political context seen in the case of desegregation.

Social hierarchies complicate the relationship between race and nationality where it is easier for some people to adopt racial identities if their racial identities are part of the majoritised racial identity. What this means for this study is that changes in one's social hierarchies, such as changing one's physical location such that new social hierarchies are at play, should result in changes in racial identity constructions and levels of racial identification. In addition, SRA (Elcheroth et al., 2011) calls for comparative research to understand socio-psychological processes that are embedded within a political dimension. It is for these reasons that identity construction and levels of identification need to be studied within the socio-political contexts that they have been created in, as well as compared against new socio-political contexts that

the identities are (re)constructed in. What this study endeavours to explore is how a how making different symbolic contexts salient, and thus symbolically changing social hierarchies, will influence racial identification and construction.

In addition, variability within communities, rather than between communities has often been obscured in research on identities (Hammack, 2008). Thus the point of departure for this paper is an examination of identity constructions and re-constructions within each racial identity and national identity group.

Race and Nationality in Malaysia, Singapore and the UK

The socio-political contexts of Malaysia, Singapore and the UK form a useful platform to understand racial and national identity constructions. Malaysia and Singapore position themselves as globalised countries, attracting international talent, students and investors (Rahman & Ahmed, 2014; Yeoh & Lam, 2016), and thus laying the foundation for cross-cultural exchange to occur and citizens to form an international outlook. Thousands of Malaysians and Singaporeans also migrate and take up residence in other countries yearly (Nadaraj, 2016; Yong, 2017). Malaysia and Singapore were ruled as one entity (Malaya) by the British until 1959, and colonial legacies include a strict racial categorisation framework that is not followed in the UK. Social policies in Malaysia and Singapore rely on state mandated racial categorisation that ascribes a racial identity onto all Malaysians and Singaporeans at birth. Furthermore, local social policies and their reliance on racial categories, and racial categorisation by the state, differ between Singapore, Malaysia and the UK. Today, in Singapore and Malaysia, racial identity is used to allocate resources such as education, housing and employment, and is assigned by the state.

The UK is one of the countries that sees thousands of Malaysians and Singaporeans taking up temporary or permanent residence in London (Office of National Statistics, 2013). However, race is constructed very differently by the UK

state. Racial (or rather, ethnic [23]) categorisation in the UK results from self-identification when filling out a government form. Residents have the option of choosing an ethnic label for themselves, and having a system of race-based social policies would be considered illegal racism. Thus the UK presents an interesting research context to study how Malaysians and Singaporeans construct race when their social worlds change, as they would not need to use racial categories imposed by the Singaporean and Malaysian government to access resources in the UK. Furthermore, they have the option of giving themselves a racial identity that they self-identify with, in the UK. Therefore, the assumption is that Malaysians and Singaporeans living under different conditions or thinking about race in a different socio-political context such as the UK would construct Malay, Chinese and Indian racial identities differently and would self-identify differently.

Methodology

Present studies

Two studies (the first quantitative, the second qualitative) were conducted because the analysis of meaning and content of social identities requires a diversification of methods (Deaux, 2001). Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to explore different aspects of racial identity construction and identification, and not to duplicate findings using different methodologies. As a longitudinal design following participants' changes in their socio-political context was not feasible within the time limits for this study, the qualitative study was adoped to understand issues related to how individuals understood changes in their identities if and when they moved from one country to the other. The mixed method research design thus functioned as a "cooperative inquiry" method (Giddings, 2006; p.202). As such, this design converged and corroborated the results from both studies, i.e. triangulation so as to produce high quality research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004;

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23 Here we refer to ethnicity, as this is the term used in UK public understanding and governmental discourse.

2007) that elucidated the complexities of racial identity construction in a globalised world.

The overarching research question for both studies was *"How does a perceived change in the socio-political context influence racial identity construction and levels of identification among members of the same racial group (e.g. Indians)?"* This question is broken down into two parts. The first part of this question corresponds with identifying *what* changes occur with respect to identity construction and identification when symbolic representations of socio-political contexts change, and is answered by the first study. The second part of the question refers to understanding *why* these changes occur and is answered by the second study.

The first study used a quasi-experimental questionnaire design to focus on whether levels of racial identification and content of racial identity constructions change across Malaysia, Singapore and the UK. There were broader hypotheses for this study- we did not specify the direction of this hypothesis as this study was explorative in nature.

H1: Construction of racial identity will change when different socio-political contexts are made salient.

This is to say that participants will construct their ingroup racial identities differently in the manipulated contexts of Malaysia, Singapore and the UK.

H2: Identification with racial ingroup varies systematically based on manipulated socio-political context, race and citizenship

What this means is that individuals will show a difference in their racial identification between the baseline, and the three different socio-political contexts. This was rather exploratory as we have no theoretical reason to believe that change occurs in one or the other direction.

While the first study was conducted to map the psychological processes at play when a symbolic change of the socio-political contexts occurs, it is not clear why these processes were taking place. Qualitative methodology has been credited with

being able to explain meaning that underpins identity processes that has not been developed using quantitative methodology (Muldoon, McLaughlin & Trew, 2007). Thus, the second study was conducted as a qualitative analysis of 10 focus group discussions to focus precisely on understanding the reasons behind these processes.

Study 1

Method

Study 1 was a quasi-experimental 3 x 3 x 2 mixed design. The first factor was a within-factor (socio-political context: Singapore, Malaysia, UK). Race (Indian, Chinese, Malay) and citizenship (Malaysian, Singapore) were between-factors. Socio-political context was made salient with a symbolic representation of context three times, resulting in three (within) conditions. Race and citizenship were measured. The key dependent variables were racial identification and racial identity construction.

Procedure

Participants were asked about their racial and national identification at the start of the questionnaire. They were then assessed on their level of racial identification. This question at the beginning forms the baseline racial identification. Participants were then shown with five images each that represented the Malaysian, Singaporean and the UK socio-political contexts. These were images of landmarks, schools and housing in each country. Each socio-political context manipulation was followed by questions on levels of racial identification, as well as one open-ended question on the construction of racial identities.

Sample

There were a total of 337 participants who completed the study. 129 identified themselves as Malaysian and 208 identified themselves as Singaporean. Within the Malaysian sample, 33 identified themselves as Malay, 38 identified themselves as Indian and 83 identified themselves as Chinese. Within the Singaporean sample, 35

identified themselves as Malay, 72 identified themselves as Indian and 119 identified themselves as Chinese[24].

Measures

Construction of racial identity measure

To assess how construction of racial identities changed across each socio-political context, participants were asked to "Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box. When I am in (Malaysia/Singapore/UK), I think (Indians/Chinese/Malays) are....". This question is based on Kotzur, Forsbach and Wagner's (2017) study that explored individual's self-definition of social categories. These questions were asked after each context was elicited (i.e. three times in total).

Racial and national identification measures

The Single Item Identification Scale was found to be a valid and reliable measure of identification (Postmes, Haslam & Jans, 2013). For this study, each racial identification item was worded as "When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as Malay/Indian/Chinese" for Malaysian participants and "When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as Malay/Indian/Chinese" for Singaporean participants. Each national identification measure was worded as "I am a Malaysian" and "I am a Singaporean" to distinguish between Malaysian and Singaporean participants. As both countries do not allow dual citizenship, participants were only allowed to select one national identity.

Levels of racial identification measure

Levels of racial identification were measured with four items that were created based on findings on racial identity construction in other research (Reddy et al., 2017a/Chapter 2; Reddy & Gleibs, 2017b/Chapter 3). They were (1) "I think about

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[24] Oversampling of Chinese participants in both countries was not intentional.

my race", (2) "I feel like I am representative of people in my racial group(s)", (3) Being a part of my racial group(s) is very important to me and (4) I feel connected to other people in my racial group(s) ($\alpha = .791$ for Malaysia, $\alpha = .655$ for Singapore). Using five-point scales ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed with each of the items on the racial identification identification items.

Results

Construction of racial identity

Content analysis (Bauer, 2000; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used to analyse three open-ended questions relevant to H1, which were asked after each geographical location condition. These were "*When I am in Malaysia, I think Indians/Chinese/Malay are....*", "*When I am in Singapore, I think Indians/Chinese/Malay are…*", and "*When I am in the UK or think of the UK, I think Indians/Chinese/Malay are…*", where participants who self-identified with the Indian, Chinese or Malay race answered the questions relevant to their racial identity.

To examine difference between the constructions of racial identities, all responses were coded thematically. Intercoder reliability was achieved by corroborating coding framework with a researcher not related to the research project (intercoder reliability= 0.805 Krippendorf α, 96.8% agreement). Discrepancies in coding were resolved by discussion. A total of 9 variables for Malay identity, 14 variables for Indian identity and 14 variables for Chinese identity were formed. Each quotation was coded for these variables, and each occurrence was tabulated. We conducted a series of chi-square tests to test whether the coding categories differed between each condition, within each racial identity. That is, we tested if there were differences between the construction of Indian racial identity in the Malaysian, Singaporean and UK conditions. Where observed frequencies were less than 5, Fisher's Exact Test (*FET*) was used. Significant results are displayed in with asterix below (* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.001$). Given that significant differences between the conditions was found in most variables, we discuss here the findings that were both

(i) significantly different across conditions and (ii) comprised of at least 10% of the total codes for one condition (as indicated by percentage scores in each cell).

Chinese Racial category

Chinese Malaysians and Chinese Singaporeans constructed their Chinese identities differently across socio-political contexts. We found that there were significant differences in content across the three conditions between both nationalities, as shown in Table 2a and 2b. Meeting the criteria of minimum 10% occurrence in each condition, we have Chinese Identity constructed differently along seven codes. They are Chinese Privilege, Educated, Foreigner status, Majority vs. Minority, Marginalised, Negative personality constructions *and* Positive personality constructions.

Variables	Chinese Malaysians			
	Malaysia	Singapore	UK	χ^2/FET
Associated with food	5 (5.5%)	0	3 (3.5%)	40.180**
Chinese Privilege	2 (2.2%)	12 (12.8%)	2 (2.3%)	32.225**
Comparison with Chinese in Other Countries	1 (1.1%)	8 (8.5%)	7 (8.1%)	40.180**
Educated	4 (4.4%)	3 (3.2%)	9 (10.5%)	40.180**
Foreigner Status	0	0	17 (19.8%)	30.463 **
Language	1(1.1%)	2 (2.1%)	3 (3.5%)	40.180**
Majority vs Minority	2 (2.2%)	17 (18.1%)	10 (11.6%)	40.180**
Malaysian	8 (8.8%)	0	0	11.367**
Marginalised	10 (11.0%)	0	1 (1.2%)	40.180**
Negative Personality constructions	18 (19.8%)	17 (18.1%)	8 (9.3%)	7.850*
Neutral Personality constructions	2 (2.2%)	6 (6.4%)	6 (7.0%)	11.367**
Positive Personality constructions	30 (32.9%)	18 (19.1%)	8 (9.3%)	13.000**
Profession	3 (3.3%)	2 (2.1%)	5 (5.8%)	40.180**
Wealth	5 (5.5%)	9 (9.6%)	7 (8.1%)	1.143
Total (per condition)	91	94	86	-

Table 2: Differences in content among Chinese Malaysians

What this meant was that after being reminded of Malaysia, Chinese Malaysians constructed the Chinese Identity most negatively in Malaysia, compared to Singapore and the UK. Interestingly, they also constructed the Chinese identity most positively in Malaysia, compared to Singapore and the UK, using phrases like "*work hard always*". Participants constructed Chinese identity to be marginalised in Malaysia. After images of Singapore, Chinese Malaysians constructed Chinese identity along majority-minority dynamics, especially highlighting Chinese privilege issues in Singapore, where Chinese are majoritised for example, "*sometimes ignoring others' (non-Chinese perspective)*". After images of the UK, Chinese Malaysians constructed Chinese identity along majority-minority dynamics more than after images of Singapore and also used terms such as "*immigrant*" and "*tourists*" indicating Chinese as foreigners in the UK.

Among Chinese Singaporeans, Chinese identity was constructed differently across the three condition based on five different codes which had at least 10% occurrence in one condition. They were, *Chinese privilege, foreigner status, majority versus minority, marginalised* and *profession.*

| Variables | Chinese Singaporeans | | | |
	Malaysia	Singapore	UK	χ^2/*FET*
Associated with food	4 (2.3%)	1 (0.59%)	7 (5.3%)	244.300**
Chinese Privilege	3 (1.8%)	33 (19.5%)	1 (0.76%)	244.300**
Comparison with Chinese in Other Countries	14 (8.2%)	14 (8.3%)	12 (9.1%)	6.400*
Educated	4 (2.3%)	4 (2.4%)	4 (3.0%)	0.000
Foreigner Status	0	0	17 (12.9%)	144.501**
Language	16 (9.4%)	5 (3.0%)	6 (4.5%)	8.222*
Majority vs Minority	27 (15.9%)	64 (37.9%)	38 (28.8%)	16.791**
Malaysian	3 (1.8%)	0	0	121.146**
Marginalised	35 (20.6%)	1 (0.59%)	15 (11.4%)	244.300**
Negative Personality constructions	8 (4.7%)	14 (8.3%)	3 (2.3%)	244.300**
Neutral Personality constructions	6 (3.5%)	7 (4.1%)	1 (0.76%)	244.300**
Positive Personality constructions	26 (15.3%)	18 (10.7%)	12 (9.1%)	5.286
Profession	9 (5.3%)	1 (0.59%)	16 (12.1%)	244.300**
Wealth	15 (8.8%)	7 (4.1%)	7 (5.3%)	0.034
Total (per condition)	170	169	132	-

Table 3: Differences in content among Chinese Singaporeans

Chinese Singaporeans constructed Chinese identity along majority-minority dimension most in Singapore, highlighting Chinese privilege in the country. This was similar to Chinese Malaysians construction of Chinese identity in Singapore. After images of the UK, participants constructed Chinese identity most with content about professions (such as *"accountants"* and *"restaurateurs"*) as well as terms associated with being a foreigner, similar to Chinese Malaysians.

Overall, Chinese Malaysians and Chinese Singaporeans drew on different representations (associated with different variables) to construct the Chinese identity each time they were shown with images of Malaysia, Singapore and the UK.

Specifically, after having seen images of Malaysia, Chinese Malaysians used representations of being marginalised. Chinese Singaporeans used representations of being marginalised as well. After the Singapore condition, Chinese Malaysians used representations of majority and minority, and Chinese privilege. Chinese Singaporeans used the same terms. After being shown images of the UK, Chinese Malaysians used representations of minority status and Chinese Singaporeans used representations of professions.

In sum, this shows that there were differences between Malaysians and Singaporeans who identified as Chinese, as well as differences between the conditions not only along dimensions of valence (positive/negative) but also on types of representations, such as *marginalisation* which we conceptualise as a representation of community (Howarth, 2001) and *profession* which we understand as a representation of socio-economic indicators.

Indian Racial Category

Indian Malaysians and Indian Singaporeans constructed their Indian identities differently across socio-political contexts We found that there were significant differences in content across the three conditions between both nationalities, as shown in Table 3 and 4. Among Indian Malaysians, Indian identity was constructed significantly differently across three conditions based on seven different codes namely, *appearance, comparison with Indians from other countries, cultural, foreigner status, marginalised, wealth* and *profession.*

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| Variables | Indian Malaysians | | | |
	Malaysia	Singapore	UK	χ^2/FET
Appearance	1 (2.4%)	0	0	0**
Comparison with Indians from other countries	0	7 (43.8%)	0	0**
Connected to Indian Community	3 (7.3%)	0	1 (3.4%)	1.000
Cultural	3 (7.3%)	0	0	0**
Foreigner Status	0	1 (6.3%)	0	0**
Marginalised	12 (29.2%)	0	2 (6.9%)	7.143**
Minority	4 (9.8%)	1 (6.3%)	1 (3.4%)	0.667
Negative Personality constructions	3 (7.3%)	0	1 (3.4%)	1.000
Neutral Personality constructions	7 (17.1%)	6 (37.5%)	8 (27.6%)	0.286
Positive Personality constructions	4 (9.8%)	1 (6.3%)	2 (6.9%)	2.000
Education	2 (4.9%)	0	2 (6.9%)	0.000
Wealth	0	0	3 (10.3%)	0**
Profession	2 (4.9%)	0	0	0**
Treated as equal to other races	0	0	0	0
Total (per condition)	41	16	29	-

Table 4: Differences in content among Indian Malaysians

After being shown images of Malaysia, Indian Malaysians constructed the Indian identity as being connected to the Indian community, cultural and using terms linked to professions. In this condition, there was one incidence of using appearance to construct the Indian identity among Indian Malaysians. Importantly, there were significantly more constructions of Indian identity as being marginalised in Malaysia, compared to the UK. The concept of being a foreigner was used after the Singapore condition, but not in the other countries. Indian identity in Singapore was not constructed as marginalised. Participants attributed wealth to Indian identity in the UK condition (and not the others).

Among Indian Singaporeans, Indian identity was constructed significantly differently across three conditions based on five different codes namely, *comparison with Indians from other countries, connected to Indian community, foreigner status, marginalised* and *minority.*

Variables	Indian Singaporeans			
	Malaysia	Singapore	UK	χ^2/FET
Appearance	1 (0.69%)	1 (1.1%)	0	5.154
Comparison with Indians from other countries	12 (8.3%)	6 (4.2%)	2 (2.9%)	7.600**
Connected to Indian Community	4 (2.8%)	2 (1.4%)	10 (14.5%)	6.500*
Cultural	8 (5.5%)	3 (2.1%)	4 (5.8%)	2.800
Foreigner Status	0	1 (1.1%)	7 (10.1%)	4.500*
Marginalised	21 (14.6%)	16 (18.0%)	7 (10.1%)	6.864*
Minority	9 (6.3%)	9 (10.1%)	5 (7.2%)	7.348**
Negative Personality constructions	8 (5.5%)	11 (12.4%)	4 (5.8%)	3.217
Neutral Personality constructions	18 (12.5%)	22 (24.7%)	16 (23.2%)	1.000
Positive Personality constructions	5 (3.5%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.4%)	3.250
Education	0	3 (2.1%)	3 (4.3%)	0.000
Wealth	2 (1.4%)	3 (2.1%)	6 (8.7%)	2.364
Profession	2 (1.4%)	7 (7.9%)	2 (2.9%)	0.818
Treated as equal to other races	0	3 (2.1%)	2 (2.9%)	0.200
Total (per condition)	144	89	69	-

Table 5: Differences in content among Indian Singaporeans

Indian Singaporeans constructed the Indian identity in the Malaysia by comparing them with Indians in other countries, significantly more than in Singapore and UK. An example of this would be "*they seem more Indian to me than the Indians I have met in India*". Indian identity in the Malaysia condition was also constructed as marginalised. They also constructed the Indian identity in the UK condition as one, which is connected to the Indian community, significantly more than in Malaysia or Singapore. Indian identity in the UK condition was constructed the most as bring foreign and, the least being in the UK.

In summary, Indian Malaysians and Indian Singaporeans drew on representations (associated with different variables) to construct the Indian identity each time they were shown images of Malaysia, Singapore and the UK. After being shown images of Malaysia, Indian Malaysians used representations of community, culture and work to construct the Indian identity. Indian Singaporeans used representations of Indians in other countries and community. In the Singapore

condition, Indian Malaysians drew on representations of community (*connected to Indian community*) and the Other (*foreigner*), while Indian Singaporeans used different social representations of community (*marginalised* and *minority*). In the UK condition, Indian Malaysians used representations of socio-economic indicators (*profession*). Similar to Chinese of both nationalities, Indians of both nationalities used different types of representations to construct the Indian identity in the three different conditions.

Malay Racial Category

Malay Malaysians and Malay Singaporeans constructed their Malay identities differently across the conditions. We found that there were significant differences in content across the three conditions between both nationalities, as shown in Table 5 and 6. Meeting the criteria of minimum 10% occurrence in each condition, Malay identity was constructed differently along seven codes, *levels of openness, levels of competence/education, majority vs. minority, marginalised, negative personality constructions, positive personality constructions* and *religious dimension* among Malay Malaysians.

	Malay Malaysians			
Variables	Malaysia	Singapore	UK	χ^2/**FET**
Community and Culture	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.6%)	13.109**
Levels of Openness	5 (12.2%)	3 (11.1%)	1 (3.6%)	33.527**
Levels of Competence/Education	3 (7.3%)	3 (11.1%)	12 (44.4%)	24.807**
Majority vs. Minority	3 (7.3%)	8 (29.6%)	2 (7.1%)	33.527**
Marginalised	0	4 (14.8%)	1 (3.6%)	33.527**
Negative Personality constructions	14 (34.1%)	2 (7.4%)	5 (18.5%)	33.527**
Neutral Personality constructions	3 (7.3%)	0	0	13.109**
Positive Personality constructions	8 (19.5%)	3 (11.1%)	6 (22.2%)	33.527**
Profession	0	0	0	0
Religious Dimension	5 (12.2%)	3 (11.1%)	0	33.527**
Total (per condition)	41	27	28	-

Table 6: Differences in content among Malay Malaysians

Malay Malaysians constructed the Malay identity in the Malaysia condition most negatively compared with the other two contexts. An example of this is the use of "*lazy*". Interestingly, they also constructed the Malay identity most positively in the Malaysia condition.

Among Malay Singaporeans, Malay identity was constructed different along different codes namely, *majority vs. minority, marginalised, negative personality constructions* and *religious dimension.*

	Malay Singaporeans			
Variables	Malaysia	Singapore	UK	χ^2/FET
Community and Culture	0	2 (4.1%)	2 (6.1%)	17.896**
Levels of Openness	3 (6.7%)	3 (6.1%)	3 (9.1%)	0.000
Levels of Competence/Education	5 (11.1%)	5 (10.2%)	5 (15.2%)	0.000
Majority vs. Minority	5 (11.1%)	7 (14.3%)	11 (33.3%)	35.503**
Marginalised	0	9 (18.4%)	0	21.431**
Negative Personality constructions	6 (13.3%)	8 (16.3%)	1 (3.0%)	35.503**
Neutral Personality constructions	3 (6.7%)	0	0	17.896**
Positive Personality constructions	17 (37.8%)	14 (28.6%)	8 (24.2%)	3.231
Profession	0	0	2 (6.1%)	24.517**
Religious Dimension	6 (13.3%)	1 (2.0%)	1 (3.0%)	17.896**
Total	45	49	33	-

Table 7: Differences in content among Malay Singaporeans

They constructed the Malay identity as marginalised only in the Singapore condition and not the other two socio-political contexts and only along dimensions of profession in the UK using phrases such as "*student*" and "*professionals*".

Comparing Malay Singaporeans and Malay Malaysians, different types of representations were once again used. In the Malaysia condition, Malay Malaysians used negative representations of personalities, while Singaporeans used positive representations of personalities. Both Malay Malaysians and Malay Singaporeans constructed the Malay identity as marginalised in the Singapore condition. In the UK condition, Malay Malaysians had significant representations on levels of competence, while Malay Singaporeans drew on representations of socio-economic indicators.

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Next we look at the results from the data on how much the participants identified with their racial identities across the different socio-political contexts.

Levels of racial identification

A repeated measures ANOVA revealed that levels of self-racial identification significantly differed across conditions, $F(2.38, 799.823)=55.90$, $p<.001$. Paired sample t-tests showed that there was significant difference between baseline condition and Malaysian condition, $t(377) = -8.906$, $p<.001$, baseline condition and Singaporean condition, $t(364) = -9.122$, $p<.001$, and baseline condition and UK condition, $t(349) = -8.999$, $p<.001$. different ($p<.001$) between the baseline condition and the three (socio-political contexts) conditions, across the entire sample. Importantly, this difference was only found between the baseline and all three conditions. There was no significant difference between the three conditions.

Racial Identification	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Baseline	12.03	3.19807	337
Malaysian condition	10.79	3.99511	337
Singaporean condition	10.66	4.19565	337
UK Condition	10.59	4.27859	337

Table 8: Racial Identification Scores

All participants identified more strongly with their racial identities at baseline, than after images relevant to each socio-political context were shown.

Discussion

The construction of racial identity, in this paper the *content* of identification, changed when the symbolic representation of the socio-political context changed, as expressed by 3 different conditions. In each of the conditions, participants constructed their racial identities using different representations that ranged from personality constructions to culture to marginalisation. However, the levels of racial identification, thus how much participants identified with the specific category, did

not change when the condition changed. Importantly, levels of racial identification were higher at baseline, for Malaysian and Singaporean participants, than when comparing between contexts. SIT research has discussed how levels of identification change across contexts, but these results show that there are no significant differences between how much an individual identified with their racial identity across symbolic representations of different socio-political contexts. As this was an exploratory hypothesis, we suggest that further research be conducted to examine why such a difference took place between the baseline and the conditions, and not between the conditions themselves.

Using this data on the *changes in identity content* across conditions, we see the formation of *shared knowledge* (Elcheroth et al., 2011). Importantly, it highlights how shared knowledge is not necessarily *shared* in the sense that everyone agrees and constructs the identity in a similar way. While there exists certain commonalities in the construction of racial identity in each condition, such as marginalised in Singapore among both Malaysian and Singaporean Malays, and Chinese privilege in Singapore among both Malaysian and Singaporean Chinese, not all representations of each racial identity were aligned. Rather, there exist clashes in the understanding of what the identity means in that symbolic representation of the socio-political context. This is best understood using Staerklé and colleagues (2011) suggestion of the additional concept of "thinking in antinomies", where thinking is inherently dialogical. This is an example of how dialogicality in the construction of identities is not only limited to the co-construction of the racial identity between Self and Other, but also in the construction of identity content where connections are made between different constructions of the racial identity in question. In this study, we posit an extension to the idea that people often think in opposing dualities such as good and evil (Marková, 2000). For example, we see that positive and negative personality constructions are constructed within the same identity in the same condition. Yet, what was interesting was the prevalence of neutral personality constructions as well. We see that constructions are thus not only oppositional but relational beyond two axes. Thus we argue that relationships between different constructions, and not only

relationships between people as suggested by Elcheroth and colleagues in the SRA framework, are important in the psychology of racial identities.

Study 1 goes beyond existing work on identities in contexts to show that racial identity construction, and not levels of identification, changes across contexts. While it charted the change in construction of racial identities across symbolic representations of socio-political contexts, we are unable to gather why this construction changed from the single open-ended question. Methodologically, while content analysis has been a useful tool to understand the complexity of identity processes, it has also been argued to constrain understanding of data because it is guided by a priori position of researchers and is thus a top down approach to data analysis (Muldoon et al, 2007). Furthermore, it was only the symbolic representation of context that changed, rather than the socio-political context itself. This study thus depended on participants' interpretation of the context and their subsequent reponses to a change in the representation of a context. Thus, to supplement this examination of racial identity construction, a second study was conducted.

Study 2

Method

Given that we found significant changes in the construction of racial identities across socio-political contexts, and no change between the symbolic representations of socio-political contexts in how much participants identified with the racial identities, Study 2 focused on identity content and not levels of racial identification. Further, given the limited scope of research on identity content as described above, Study 2 was conducted to understand why racial identity content changed across socio-political contexts. Study 2 was a qualitative study, consisting of 10 focus group discussions.

Sample

The sample consisted of a total of 39 participants. There were 16 Malaysians and 23 Singaporeans in total. The table below shows the compostion of the the focus groups.

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Participant details	Malaysian	Singaporean
Mean Age	26.1 years	32 years
Female (n)	8	15
Male (n)	8	8
Focus groups in Malaysia	2 groups (n_1=3, n_2=4)	0
Focus groups in Singapore	0	4 groups (n_1=5, n_2=4, n_3=3, n_4=3)
Focus groups in London	2 groups (n_1=6, n_2=3)	2 groups (n_1=5, n_2=3)

Four focus groups were conducted in Singapore, two focus groups were conducted in Malaysia and four focus groups were conducted in London. Each focus group was conducted with different participants belonging to different racial groups in Malaysia and Singapore. All focus groups discussed how changes to their socio-political context, such as moving from Singapore to the UK, would influence racial identities. Participants will be identified by their pseudonyms, nationality and racial identification, where they wished to be identified as such.

Analysis

The data corpus was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A pragmatic epistemological framework and critical realist ontological position was adopted (Willig, 1999). The data was analysed at the semantic level, where codes and themes were identified within the surface meanings of the data (Patton, 1990). The data was managed using NVivo. As we were looking to understand why racial identities construction differed between Malaysia, Singapore and outside of these socio-political contexts, we identified data that addressed this question. We then coded the data both deductively (where we guided by theories, empirical research discussed and Study 1 findings) and inductively (where we identified issues that brought up by participants themselves). An example of a deductive code is "Comparison with home country", and an example of an inductive code is "Leaving the country to be recognised as a citizen of the country". Prior knowledge of findings

from Study 1 and theoretical frameworks gave us the analytical edge in contextualising the analysis of data from Study 2.

Results

Three overarching themes (Appendix 4) were identified in analysing why racial identity constructions changed when the socio-political context changed. They were "*Stigma and Stereotypes influence construction*" "*Racial identification does not always transcend geographical boundaries*" and "*Cultural reference but not identification*". These three themes together describe how participants' experiences of racial identities in different countries led to the re-construction of their racial identities. The extracts below explore these themes in detail and show how participants had a nuanced understanding of their racial identities depending on the socio-political contexts they were in.

Stigma and Stereotypes influence construction

Participants living outside of their countries of origin discussed how they could change the construction of their racial identities in different socio-political contexts, especially one that was different to where they first identified with the racial category. In this paper, we refer to this as the "home country". This was particularly significant with regard to the Malay racial identity. For example, one participant mentioned that she could define what it meant to be Malay, when she was in the UK, compared to when she was in Singapore. When she was growing up in Singapore, she had to align her identity of being Malay in reference to existing constructions of Malays there.

> *Extract 1:*
>
> *Zara:* *I find it easier to be Malay here. [Sofia agrees] I love being Malay here. I can actually feel like I can actually be stuck here. (…) Because in London, sorry, if I'm dominating. But in London, you see all these buildings, look how old they are, and there's an appreciation of culture, revisiting stuff, and recreating stuff, like being inspired from your past, whereas Singapore is just like, knock down, knock down.*

First author: *Why is it easier to be Malay here?*

Zara: *Um, also, you're not stereotyped.*

<div align="right">Zara, 32 Singaporean Malay</div>

Specifically, Zara points to the lack of stereotypical constructions of Malay identity in the UK allowing her to change the contents of the Malay identity. She can construct her Malay identity alongside what she perceives as important in the new context, that of nostalgia and recognition of the worth of one's culture. Sofia, another Singaporean focus group participant shares her view on being able to identify with the Malay identity with the Malay identity more easily outside of Singapore because of the ability to change the contents of the Malay identity in the UK.

In a focus group conducted in Singapore, participants discussed some of the stereotypical constructions of the Malay identity.

Extract 2:

Zainal: *Being Malay, I think, Malays have a lot of negative stereotypes, for sure.*

Shan: *Yah.*

Zainal: *It's very very bad. It reinforce(s), especially If you're not sure of who you are, it reinforces your mentality. Like if you're a Technical student, 90% of them are Malay, you are an SCDF, confirm Malay, Police Force, also Malay, Navy is no Malay.*

First Author: *How does that make you feel?*

Zainal: *Man, I feel kind of upset, honestly speaking.*

Mika: *Yah, Yah.*

<div align="right">Zainal, Singaporean Malay
Shan, Singaporean Indian
Mika, Singaporean Indian</div>

Participants, regardless of whether they self-identified with the Malay identity, knew of the constructions of the Malay identity as being limited to specific jobs in the armed forces and found mainly in technical education streams in Singapore. This not only

upsets Zainal, a Malay identifying Singaporean, but also Mika, an Indian identifying Singaporean.

Thus being in another socio-political context that does not reinforce these identity constructions is seen as liberating for Zara and Sophia. Their view is elaborated in another focus group discussion conducted in London.

Extract 3:

(…) the Malay community being here, they like being here, they are open to new experiences, the pressure to confirm is not as high as in Malaysia, where there are Malays everywhere. But here, there is also a group which I see them for Raya, they still wear Baju Melayu, so you can still practice your Malay culture, at the same time, you can do your own stuff, you're free to do it, it's quite anonymous.

Ilan, Malaysian Malay-Chinese

The anonymity associated with being outside of the country of origin[25] encourages individuals to alter their constructions of Malay identity according to what suits them. In another socio-political context, they are free from social expectations of how the identity needs to be enacted and communicated. The "new" constructions of their racial identities in the UK is compared to the negative stereotypes of Malays in Singapore and the societal pressures of enacting Malay identity in Malaysia. Contrary to other research on migrant minority identities as devalued and stigmatising (see Chryssochoou, 2004), here we see that migrating to a new country offers participants a more positive view on their racial identities. The new country of residence presents less restrictive options for these participants. However, freedom from stigma and stereotypes is only part of the reason why participants changed the construction of their racial identities.

Racial identification does not always transcend geographical boundaries

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[25] Malaysia is the country of origin for the Malay identity.

The change in racial identity construction is in part due to the perspective that individuals who share the same racial heritage do not necessarily belong to the same ingroup.

Extract 4:

There is a stark difference between those who are Singaporean Indian, and those who are non-Singaporean Indian. I think if you look at it as ingroup-outgroup boundaries, the ingroup is more, not really your ethnicity[26], but more of Singaporean.
-Bala, Singaporean Indian

Bala redraws the boundaries of the ingroup from one that is limited to his racial identity, to another that is hyphenated with his national identity. We see that his self-racial identification is embedded in his national identification. The distinction was also extended to the Chinese identity.

Extract 5:

Trina: *Or like even Singaporeans are totally different.*

First Author: *OK, so how different?*

Trina: *Just different.*

Louisa: *Yah they are just different.*

Trina: *They speak the same way we speak but different*

Amit: *The culture is different.*

Trina: *the mentality. (Group laughs)*

Trina, Malaysian Chinese
Louisa, Malaysian Chinese
Amit, Malaysian Lain-Lain[27]

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[26] Participants used race and ethnicity interchangeably, and extracts here reflect participants' speech.
[27] Lain-Lain is a category given to individuals who do not fit clearly into Bumiputra, Chinese and Indian category. In this case, Amit identifies both as Lain-Lain and Punjabi.

Here, participants in another focus group conducted in London discuss how Malaysian Chinese and Singaporean Chinese are different. Not only did participants distinguish between racial identity members in Malaysia and Singapore, they would compare their racial identities against individuals from the countries where the racial identities originated.

Extract 5:

But about the time when I started realizing my more Indian Singaporean self, was when I was in secondary school, and most of my Indian classmates were India-born. And that was when, when you talk to them, and suddenly, you realise there's something called a caste system, and the way that you speak Tamil to them is different, they all eat vegetarian food and home, and I realized how different I am for them, and my experience of growing up is very different from theirs

Revathi, 25, Singaporean Indian

Revathi's perspective of the Indian identity is different from how Indians from India construct their racial identities, and the stark differences in these constructions leads Revathi to believe that she is different from individuals who share the same country of origin. Indians and Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore have their roots from India and China respectively. Yet, participants did not recognise individuals who are not first generation Malaysians and Singaporeans of Chinese and Indian descent as being the same as Chinese and Indians who are currently living in those countries. Another participant in a focus group conducted in Malaysia shared this sentiment. Here, Sarojini echoes a similar sentiment to Revathi.

Extract 6:

No, I think there is a difference between what you identify with, and also the country of origin right? Like, of course, we have, yeah, my mother is Chinese but she was born here in Malaysia. Yeah my maternal grandparents are actually from mainland China, but you know, I don't feel any affinity with China as a country, and neither do I feel any affinity, you know, to India as a country.

Sarojini, Malaysian Chinese-Indian

Sarojini, a multiracial individual describes a lack of closeness to the countries where her grandparents have come from, and by extension, her racial identity roots. Again

here we see how she grounds her racial identification, and that of her mother's, within her national identity. For some participants these differences within the same racial identity came as a surprise.

Extract 7:

So, that got me a bit more interested in Chinese culture, and I started to travel to Chinese places for vacations. But when I travelled out, I realized that the Chinese culture that I expected there is actually quite different from what I expected there, and I found myself drawing a line between I'm Chinese and I'm Singaporean Chinese, because we're so different in our habits and even our mindsets, and yeah, so. I'm quite glad that I'm a Singaporean Chinese and not a Chinese Chinese.

Ray, 27 Singaporean Chinese

Ray, on the other hand, travelled to the country of origin (China, in her case) only to realise that what she assumed was a common construction of Chinese identity was instead not enough to share a common group identity.

What these four extracts have in common is a desire for participants to distinguish themselves from the racial identities of countries where their ancestors originated. Their constructions of their own racial identities are embedded within the national identities, and participants find ways that their identities are different by highlighting differences in thinking, and lived experiences. This also provides a better understanding as to why there was a change in racial identity construction in Study 1. While the countries of origin remain the same (i.e. Indian) what it means to be Indian is different in India, Malaysia and Singapore, according to these participants. The diaspora constructs their racial identities differently to racial identities from the countries of origin. However, Ray's perspective also tells us something about the similarities between people that share the same racial identity.

Cultural reference but not identification

While Singaporean and Malaysian participants did not identify with people from China for example, they found themselves connecting with Others who shared their racial identity when they were in the UK.

Extract 8:

    Jing Wei: I think Chinese Malaysians are more, they seems to me like they can make friends with other Chinese from other parts of the world.

    Aadil: I agree.

    Jing Wei: Like maybe Taiwanese, they can easily like, talk to them, they can form group very easily, like people from Hong Kong, Singapore, they can form group very easily, from what I can see.

                                        Jing Wei, 32 Malaysian, Aadil, 23 Malaysian Malay

Jing Wei speaks of Malaysians who identified as Chinese showing an inclination to connect with Chinese from other parts of the world. There exists a platform in the UK to focus on the commonality of Chinese heritage. Yet, even within this we see that Jing Wei distinguishes them by nationality (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore) rather than viewing them as individuals who have ancestors from the same country of origin. What is interesting also is that Jing Wei does not name people from China specifically. However, Jing Wei names Chinese from countries other than China (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore). His connection is limited to people from these countries and not from China, like Ray in Extract 7, perhaps because he perceives that Chinese from these other countries form the diaspora, and the diaspora shares similar constructions of Chinese identities compared to the country of origin. Here we see a clearer relationship between identification and content of identity. Racial identification, for these participants only extends to individuals who share the same national identification because they share the same identity content.

Discussion

What is clear in these extracts is that participants have a nuanced understanding of multiple countries that their racial identities originate from, are constructed in and are managed in. What we mean by this can be clarified if we consider the example of participant Revathi. Revathi identifies as Indian. We know that this was an identity category created in Singapore that refers to her ancestors

coming from India. She is currently living in the UK. India thus is the country of origin, Singapore is the country where her identity is constructed (what we refer to in this paper as "home" country) and the UK is the country where her identity is managed and re-constructed. Within the participant's' imagination is a complex understanding of the different representations associated with the Indian identity in each of these countries. Each country marks a different socio-political context that has different politicised geographies as underlined by different social hierarchies, and social policies, to name a few of these differences. Previous research has shown that identity construction is influenced by the everyday engagement with social policies in a socio-political context (e.g. Reddy, Gleibs & Howarth, 2017/Chapter 2), and this paper extends this by defining the context for the racial identity, distinguished here as country of origin, country of birth/citizenship and country where identity is negotiated has merit in deepening our understanding of the changes in the psychology of racial identity construction.

To further this point, we see a distinction in the ways racial identities are constructed in the different types of countries. Extracts 1, 2 and 3 outline how racial identification differs between "home" countries (country of birth/citizenship) that they were brought up in and countries outside of these "home" countries. These extracts provide us with some insight as to why participants change, and importantly why they perceive that they have the ability to change, the constructions of their racial identities. Freedom from stigma and stereotypes drives some of the change in construction of their racial identities as participants feel stifled by the stereotypical constructions of their racial identities in Malaysia (country of origin) and Singapore ("home" countries). This is of course complicated by Malaysia being a country of origin and a home country for Malaysian Malays, who share the freedom of re-constructing their Malay identity in the UK with Singaporeans.

Yet another reason for the change in individuals' construction of their racial identities could be because they see racial identities as being hyphenated with their national identities. Individuals who identified as one racial identity in their "home" countries (Chinese for example) did not necessarily identify with other Chinese individuals outside of their home countries (in the UK for example). This is because,

the core reason for their identification is the socio-political context (Chinese Singaporean, rather than only Chinese) given that the context requires individuals to identify racially. When the context changes (UK), and individuals no longer need to strategically identify as Chinese, the racial identity is not strong, and individuals find value in distinguishing themselves as Singaporean Chinese, rather than Chinese alone. Here we see the preference to be identified as a dual identity (Hopkins, 2011) with both national and racial identities combined. Extracts 4, 5, 6, and 7 show that participants distinguish themselves from individuals who share the same country of origin as themselves and prefer to identify themselves as both racially and nationally. This parallels Tajfel's (1978) claim that the extent to which individuals see themselves and Others in terms of group membership, and the extent to which they personally identify with the social group to which they belong, individuals tend to act towards Others as group members rather than unique individuals. What this means is that participants would consider individuals they meet in other countries who share *both* the same racial and national background as themselves, as members of the same ingroup. This is elaborated further in extract 8, which shows us that participants do draw on similar cultural references from their racial identities to connect with Others who share the same racial identities, but therein lies the extent of "sameness". Participants still fall back on the hyphenated nationality-racial identity to distinguish between members of the same racial group, This highlights participant's view that the racial group is not perceived as homogenous, and racial identities are often embedded in national identities.

While we do not measure in quantitative terms how much the participant identifies with the racial identity in each socio-political context in this qualitative study, participants discussed here identified strongly with their racial identities, established by the ways they sought to maintain their racial identities in the new socio-political contexts and they way they expressed the importance of their racial identities to their self-concepts in the focus groups. One's preference to identify with a racial identity is influenced by common understandings and constructions of the said identity, as shown in SIT research (Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds & Turner, 1999). Yet here, we see that the strength of one's identification with a said identity has a part to

play in their desire to change the contents to their identity. Rather than choosing another facet of their self-concept to identify with as understood by the SIT concept of *social creativity* (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), where the individual compares the ingroup and outgroup on another dimension such as gender instead of race, here we see a commitment on the part of the individual to change the devalued contents of their identity because they identify strongly with the said identity. Therefore, we see a connection between identification and identity content beyond that outlined by Howarth (2002) by factoring in strength of identification.

Limitations

The findings of these studies bear some limitations. Only participants who had access to a computer with Internet could participate in the study, given the study design as well as recruitment process. We suggest an expansion of the participant pool to include individuals who do not have Internet based computer access. This is to better understand how globalisation could influence racial identity construction and identification among individuals who perhaps have different concepts of the globalised world, through moving or travelling to another country, that does not include the interconnectedness of the World Wide Web. Secondly, the manipulation of the socio-political context in Study 1 was limited to images, and this could have been a reason as to why we were unable to capture how levels of identification changed over socio-political contexts. A potential exists to further this line of enquiry in a longitudinal study by looking at the direction of this relationship between identification and identity content for example, how higher levels of identification lead to more complex identity constructions, as well as what this means for how an individual decides to change one's construction of racial identity in a different socio-political context.

General Discussion

The present paper makes three significant contributions to the study of racial identities. Firstly, it directs focus of psychological studies of racial identities onto the content of identities rather than the magnified, though informative, focus on the

strength of identification of racial identities as discussed above. It shows while racial identity categories (as political categories) remain the same across different contexts and are enduring concepts, the content of these categories differ; thus participants have different understandings of these racial identity categories as they exist in different socio-political contexts. This paper highlights that one's racial identity may not change across contexts, but what individuals construct that identity to be changes across (symbolic representations of) context. There is an assumption that what the individual associates with a racial identity is constant across space. We know that identity is fluid, and individuals change what the identity means for them in different situations. Yet, what this paper demonstrates is that identities can change across space. For example, what is perceived to be Chinese, by a Chinese identifying individual, is meant to be constant regardless of context. However, this paper asserts that the socio-political contexts (both symbolic representations of and experiences of changes) influence individuals to construct their identities differently, thus changing what it means to be Chinese in different contexts. Unlike Perkins (2006) research, which shows the differences in the meaning of the same identity category amongst a diverse group of people who all identify with the said racial identity in the same socio-political context, here we see that a change in the socio-political context triggers a change in the meaning of the racial identity.

This leads to our point on the conceptualisation of the socio-political context, which is our next contribution. Our initial definition of the socio-political context as was limited to political (multicultural) ideologies of governments that were also differentiated by geographical location. From the findings of this paper, we see that individuals construct their racial identities distinctly in different countries. This distinction is made between country of origin, country of birth/citizenship and country of residence where identity is negotiated. Identities are constructed and re-constructed through debates and social practices, and it has been said that this contested process is not limited by cultural or geographical boundaries (Hopkins & Reicher, 2011). Herein we see that while cultural boundaries remain the same insofar as participants find common cultural references, but newer boundaries are created within the same racial identity because racial identities are constructed with national

identities. Social psychology has been criticised for not addressing the "active nationalization of the Self" (Hopkins & Moore, 2001; p.240), and this paper responds to these critiques by outlining how national identities are mobilised in the construction of racial identities.

We argue that by hyphenating racial identities with national identities in the everyday construction of racial identities, individuals politicise their racial identities further by creating more boundaries that are not just geographical, but also relational. The countries (Malaysia, Singapore, UK, China and India) are delineated as geographical boundaries between states, but for the participants there is an additional psychological imagination of the differences between the countries as differentiated by origin, birth, citizenship and residence. That is, how each country relates to their personal location vis-à-vis their racial identities. Furthermore, social hierarchies change with respect to one's racial identity in each of these countries. Thus, in connecting the political ideologies of the countries with the everyday politics of racial identities for individuals, we present a more nuanced conceptualisation of socio-political contexts as *politicised geographies*. Politicised geographies are thus aspects of the socio-political context that include both the realm of the political elite as well as the everyday politics, and can be mapped onto different geographical locations. It is thus the psychological relationship between individual, politics and country.

With such a conceptualisation in mind, we bring to light a more sensitive comparison of racial identities in a globalised world. Racial identities are often discussed from a singular, monolithic perspective, and compared across contexts in a similar fashion in psychology. For example, cross-cultural research often compares how individuals acculturate or assimilate when they move to a new country. For example, Chinese migrants in America are often studied as a homogenous group, and details regarding the countries they have migrated from are often left out (e.g Lieber, Chin, Nihira & Mink, 2001; Schnittker, 2002). However, we know, at the everyday level from Study 1 and 2, that the diaspora might have different conceptions of these identities compared to those living in their country of origin. What it means to be Chinese to a Singaporean, is different to a Malaysian's construction of Chinese identity. Because Chineseness to a Singaporean is embedded in the Singaporean

context, sharing Chinese heritage is not enough to forge a common ingroup identity in a different country. This is a significant finding, given the increasing numbers of migration taking place in the globalised world today. This nuanced perspective of the socio-political context and migrant populations will be useful in understanding issues of cohesion, acculturation and intergroup relations in the increasingly diverse multicultural societies we live in.

In this paper, we put also forward a theoretical suggestion through these findings. Elcheroth and colleagues (2011) briefly talk about identification but do not endeavour to outline explicitly the connection between representations and identification. They warn of this oversight early on in their paper when they say "any theory of social identities which ignores the process by which representations of social categories are constructed and assimilated is in danger of becoming mechanical and realist … any theory of social representations that ignores the role of social identification in organizing our relations in the world is danger of becoming descriptive and idealist" (p.736). Perhaps because the empirical example given in their paper does not require a clarification of this role of identification, and that they think that how people genuinely identify with categories is "increasingly irrelevant" (p.752), this important concept in SIT research is not explored in detail within the SRA framework as it stands.

Echoing Howarth (2002), identification and content need to be understood hand in hand and here we see that identity strategies that the individual engages in can be elucidated when exploring these two social psychological concepts relevant to racial identities, *together*. We suggest that identification is indeed still relevant, and in fact bears some relation to the content of the identity. Indeed, the individual who wishes to identify with a group asks the question 'who am I?' in terms of characteristics that they think they share with other group members (Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). In other words, the individual taps on the shared knowledge of what the identity means to decide how much they want to identify with that identity. Thus a key component of identity construction is identifying with the said identity as has been discussed elsewhere (Howarth, 2002). What we suggest here is that this relationship between the strength of identification and identity content should be

embedded within the SRA concept of shared knowledge. Social representations are intertwined with identity construction (Jovchelovitch, 1996). Jovchelovitch clarifies this to mean that "there is no possibility of identity without the work of representation, just as there is no work of representation without an identificatory boundary between the me and the not-me" (p. 126). To add to this position, we offer an extended conceptualisation of shared knowledge to include not only what is shared by those who identify with the identity in question but also what becomes of the shared knowledge in different settings depends on how much one identifies with it, highlighting the critical potential of shared knowledge within the SRA framework.

In conclusion, this paper has furthered our understanding of racial identity construction. Racial categories are entrenched within the countries that they originate, that they are formed in and that they are negotiated in, and each of these countries present different constructions of the same racial identity. Therefore, race is not merely a category within a national context. It is a system of representations that "set(s) out the field of activity and inform(s) the members of social systems of their rights & duties; of a sense of belonging" (Moscovici, 2001; p.21). It binds people together, within the context that it was formed in. This paper shows that socio-political context is not just a geographical or spatial concept, but it is a state of being that anchors one's world view and one that they carry over when they cross spatial contexts. Indeed, Jovchelovitch (2007; p.48) outlines how the individual herself is a "multidimensional context" comprised of both the body and the mind that is "socially, culturally and historically located". Thus when understanding how identities are constructed and re-constructed in the globalised world that we inhabit, one needs to contextualise not only the place where the identities are currently being constructed, but also where the identities were originated and also where participants first identified themselves as members of this identity group, as these may very well be different socio-political contexts. In this sense, we are better able to understand the lived experiences of globalised peoples, such as migrant communities in multicultural societies that we live, study and work in.

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CHAPTER 5: RACE RULES: THE ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT WHEN STUDYING RACE IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Preface

Chapter 5 is a paper that will be submitted to the journal, *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*. It outlines the way socio-political context can be further conceptualised into smaller analytical components and provides a commentary on the study of race and multiculturalism in social psychology today.

This chapter has been developed from a book chapter (Reddy, 2016) about the evolution of the racial categorisation framework used in Singapore since its independence 50 years ago, and is attached as Appendix 14. Hence it provides good contextual information for the PhD, but it has been reworked to examine more directly the ways that socio-political context has been researched, analysed and interrogated in the three empirical studies in this thesis (Chapter 2, 3 and 4).

When I started my PhD research project four years ago, I found that a lot of social psychological research referred to context, but context itself was often defined in vague terms. In various platforms where I have presented my work, I would explain the specific aspect of the context that I was situating my studies in. I received feedback that encouraged me to make clear how the research settings of Malaysia and Singapore were different from those that were usually studied. In conceptualising and refining my research practice in the course of the PhD, I realised that there is a particular conceptual gap that could be filled in with my research. This paper thus has taken its form based on different discussions and debates of the socio-political contexts that have arisen out of each of the three empirical chapters.

Chapter 5 is a standalone paper that intends to provide social psychologists with a detailed framework on how the socio-political context can be conceptualised in research that takes place outside of the laboratory setting. By breaking the socio-political context down into (1) people's everyday engagements with social policies, (2) their everyday engagement with colonial symbols, and (3) their location at the

interface between geographical contexts and political ideologies, I argue that this framework facilitates clarity in the psychological examination of racial identities. I do not wish to make static these conceptualisations of the socio-political context especially when I make the case for context to be dealt with sensitively. However I believe that such a nuanced conceptualisation of the socio-political context also allows different aspects of racial identity processes, contents and motivations to be focused on, providing a more holistic perspective on the psychology of racial identities in multicultural settings.

Race Rules: The analysis of socio-political context when studying race in multicultural societies

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Abstract

Context is often a loosely defined concept in Social Psychology, especially with references to the "multicultural context". Race, an important social category that individuals use to make sense of their social worlds, is frequently overlooked in these definitions of multiculturalism. In some multicultural societies, race and racial categorisation are fundamental to the way that those societies are structured, both from an institutional perspective, as well as the everyday lived experience of individuals. This paper discusses how social psychologists should research the dynamics of race in its socio-political context by concretising what is meant by context. We make suggestions for researchers on how to break down the concept of the socio-political context into smaller analytical components, illustrated with examples from Malaysia and Singapore. In researching racial identities in a socio-political context, such a context is usefully further conceptualised in terms of (1) peoples' everyday engagements with social policies, (2) their everyday engagement with colonial symbols, and (3) their location at the interface between geographical contexts and political ideologies. We argue that this conceptualisation provides a useful analytical frame for researchers who seek to understand how individuals engage with the socio-political context in their meaning making of their social worlds in multicultural settings.

Keywords: *context, politics, race, multiculturalism, identity*

Introduction

In Social Psychology, references to context are frequently made somewhat obliquely. Often terms such as "multicultural contexts" are used in social psychological studies to make reference to diverse societies that the research is conducted in, without engaging in detail with the socio-political context (Guimond, Sablonnière & Nugier, 2014) and with what multiculturalism means for the individuals we seek to understand. These 'top-down' perspectives are at times defined by political understandings of what multicultural societies are, which often highlight the "cultural" aspect and leave out the "racial" aspect of diverse societies that marks the everyday experience for the individual in these societies. In a systematic review of 35 years of literature on multiculturalism in the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (Arasaratnam, 2013), for example, race is not mentioned once; the term ethnicity being preferred. Indeed, while overlapping, these concepts of race, ethnicity and culture are often distinct for individuals and present different outcomes in the comparative study of identities in different multicultural settings around the world. In this paper, we argue that a clearer conceptualisation of context within which social psychological phenomena take place is necessary, and leads to a more sensitive examination, and nuanced understanding, of racial identities. This paper examines the socio-political context within which multicultural societies function from both the perspective of political elite as well as the everyday experience of the individual, and presents a practical framework for studying race within different socio-political contexts. Specifically, we put forth three definitions of the socio-political context that facilitates the critical study of racial identity construction in multicultural societies.

This paper will begin with outlining differences in the understanding of multiculturalism, leading to the exploration of how race is embedded within multicultural frameworks and the necessity for the social psychologist to engage with race because it is part of the lived experience of the individual we seek to understand. The paper will then draw on the importance of defining the socio-political context. Using observations from Malaysia and Singapore, the paper then discusses multiculturalism from both the political and everyday perspective. Whilst some of the

critiques discussed here have been made by leading scholars in the field of multiculturalism and race (e.g. Hall, 1996; Brah, 1996; Gunaratnam, 2003), work actually addressing these issues is less common (beyond these same authors). We aim to extend this discussion by recommending that how race is conceptualised by both political elite and public within the socio-political context studied is an important factor to consider in the social psychological study of multiculturalism. This paper thus provides an analytical framework that will be useful for social psychologists and other social scientists intending to undertake a nuanced study of racial identities in multicultural societies.

Multiculturalism̲s̲ as the bedrock of society

The speed with which globalisation is both shrinking and expanding borders means that our societies are becoming more and more diverse in terms of racial, ethnic and cultural make up. Globalisation transcends nation states (McGrew, 1992) and indeed the nation state that used to be the framework with which we defined societies for 150 years is being replaced by multicultural and global societies (Chryssochoou, 2000). The criticism of multiculturalism is a ubiquitous subject for academics and politicians alike with many positioning themselves alongside or against the debate regarding its supposed success or, more often, failure (Howarth, 2017). However, in an increasingly globalised and culturally diverse world, what is clear is that multiculturalism is a lived reality for many individuals, and an important part of the social fabric that binds individuals that social psychologists often seek to understand. Sociologists have been dedicated to studying everyday multiculturalism (Wise & Velayutham, 2009; 2014), yet what this means for the psychology of individuals is perhaps less explored (Howarth & Andreouli, 2012; Verkuyten; 2004).

Multiculturalism is not one concrete, definite phenomenon. It is a complex concept that has multiple and sometimes competing definitions, is embedded in different political ideologies and differs from country to country (Verkuyten, 2007). Yet it is often discussed in a singular fashion, with comparisons being made across multicultural societies that have different demographics of culture, race and ethnicity,

and different origins. Multiculturalisms are distinguished by definitions, levels of understanding, and political ideologies, as will be explored here.

There are many contrasting definitions of multiculturalism adopted by different countries, and these also differ between academic and political discourses (Meer & Modood, 2012). A definition of multiculturalism that connects the demographic composition of the society, government policies and social beliefs (what we could call social attitudes or social representations, Moscovici, 1988) is preferred here because it brings key components such as identity being dialogical (Marková, 2003), and being influenced by social and political categories (Herrera & Reicher, 1998) into sharp relief. This is provided by Van de Vijver, Breugelmans, & Schalk-Soekar (2008, p.93) who say multiculturalism refers to (i) demographic features, (ii) specific policies about cultural diversity and (iii) is an "attitude related to the political ideology" for the support of a culturally heterogeneous society.

This definition shows us that there needs to be a multi-level awareness of multiculturalism that connects the political, the social and the psychological (Scuzzarello, 2012). To take a leaf from Stuart Hall's many texts on multiculturalism (e.g. 1996; 2000), the psychic and the social cannot be separated in the study of multiculturalism. To this end, there is a need for a social psychological understanding of multiculturalism that draws these aspects of multiculturalism together. Verkuyten (2007) has outlined in detail how social psychology can study multiculturalism by looking at the importance of intragroup processes, the nature of (religious) identity, and the issues related to tolerance and civil liberties. Yet the value of race is often left out in these conceptualisations of multicultural societies.

The types of political ideologies and histories that each country holds differentiate how multiculturalism is practiced and understood in many countries. In postcolonial countries such as Canada, Australia and the United States of America (US), multiculturalism is often seen a result of clashes between colonisers, indigenous communities, and individuals who were forcefully brought in as slaves or who came in search of better lives. Multiculturalism in Canada was asserted in the seventies as a mosaic - not melting pot policy, a response to the difficulties of the cultural minorities in the country and a way of avoiding or delaying bipolarization between

Francophones and Anglophones (Wieviorka, 1998). Multiculturalism goals in Australia have changed between the Labour and Conservative governments and are meant to frame everyday interactions between Australians, yet research has shown that there exists a divergence between the ideology of Australian multiculturalism and how multiculturalism is practiced in the country (Arasaratnam, 2014). In the US, multiculturalism is an institutionally implemented principle, which is characterised by the need to balance affirmative action and respect for minority cultures (Wieviorka, 1998), however much research has shown that this is met with increasing resistance from white Americans who perceive multiculturalism as non-inclusive to themselves (Plaut et al., 2011). In countries that were once colonisers like the United Kingdom, the multiculturalism model used is a bottom-up approach that is often managed at the local level and is applied to immigrant minorities as a response to "ethnic grassroots pressure, budgetary constraints and demands for redistributive justice" (Werbner, 2012, p.200). There is therefore not *one* multiculturalism, but many multiculturalisms.

The case for the study of race in social psychology

Race, ethnicity, and culture are significant, and often separate markers of social groups that researchers need to explore as distinct concepts in understanding how individuals engage in sensemaking within their multicultural worlds. While these three concepts are often used interchangeably in public discourse such as in politicians' speeches, and public discourses and lived experiences are co-constituted (Gunaratnam, 2003), the boundaries that hold each of these concepts are different. For example, categorical membership is often not needed, or given, in a cultural collective unlike in racial groups (for e.g biracial or visible minorities) (Wan, 2015). Within psychology, ethnicity is seen as a multidimensional, dynamic construct that refers to one's identity in terms of a subgroup that claims a common ancestry within a larger context and that shares race, religion, culture, language, kinship, or place of origin (Phinney, 2000). Race, on the other hand, is embedded in socio-political contexts that reflect a socio-economic hierarchy resting on the relative superiority and inferiority of different races (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997). Furthermore, different

multicultural ideologies involve different conceptions of race, based on the inherent makeup of those societies. Race relations are usually entrenched in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of multicultural ideologies in many countries, as will be discussed using the examples of Malaysia and Singapore below.

Much of our current social psychological understanding of race has been influenced by Western scholarship. This extensive research on racial identities constructs race as individualised self-definitions, and categories that are used as variables in our study of individual behaviour, attitude and perceptions. Although, this has been useful insofar as expanding our understanding of how individuals see themselves, and outlining the cognitive aspects of racial identification, the study of race and racism should not be limited to laboratory settings. The relational aspects of racial identities, that of one race seen in existence only with the Other (such as the conceptualisation and politics of Whiteness in opposition to Blackness (Allen, 2012)) and also recognising the part that our colonial histories plays in the construction of race (Gunaratnam, 2003) is often lost in the lab. A fuller psychological perspective on race needs to incorporate everyday experiences of race as well as the under-researched non-Western contexts.

Within the academy, there also exists a divide in relation to the decision to use the term race, with some American psychologists embracing the term as it is believed to be a relevant concept to study, and some European psychologists refusing to engage with the term at all (Philogène, 2004). This refusal is sometimes because of the ways in which race is embedded in notions of purity and pollution. For example, within so-called "mixed race" research, some avoid the term because of stigmatizing conceptions of "mixed blood" being dangerous and contagious, and the fictional assumption that some races are pure and 'un-mixed' (Gilroy, 2004). Many researchers do not see race as 'natural' or self-evident (Howarth, 2009), do not use the terms race and ethnicity interchangeably (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997), and prefer the term *racialisation*, as coined by Fanon (1967), to refer to problems experienced by colonised peoples.

Here, we take Avtar Brah's (1996) position that race and racism are dynamic social processes that are different in different socio-political contexts and thus use the

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term race while we recognise that race is socially constructed, situational and fluid, and not a biological fact. This is easier said than done, given the "treacherous bind" (Radhakrishnan, 1996; p. 81) that social scientists are placed in when we challenge racism and oppression through our research, yet depend on these reified identity categories to articulate our work in the academic world and in public discourse. Here Hall (1996) suggests that we continue to use these terms, albeit in their deconstructed forms clearly distinct from essentialising notions of fixed and discrete differences between social groups. Hence while race categories have passed their analytical expiry date (Gunaratnam, 2003), as scholars of the everyday, we still need a social psychology of race.

Our position in this predicament is to maintain the usefulness of disconnecting from the academic understanding of race as not being one of a biological construct, but to connect with the everyday understanding of race as being entrenched in inherent differences in the social psychological examination of the lived realities of individuals. While social psychologists need to be conscious of, how we reify categories such as race (Hopkins, Reicher & Levine, 1997) and, the very problematic use of race in psychology (Helms, Jernigan & Mascher, 2005; Richards, 1997), we need to understand social phenomena as it happens, and how individuals use these categories as we seek better understanding of human behaviour, perceptions and cognition. Race is a consequential social fact for most of us. An adequate social psychology of racism must therefore focus on the embodied and located everyday practices, as well as talk about racism, which bring race into being and makes it appear real (Howarth & Hook, 2005). Indeed racism is a reality for both perpetrators of racism, as well as those who are on the receiving end of it and this continued existence of both parties requires social psychologists to engage with this reality as it is understood by the individuals themselves (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

Race and the socio-political context

Social, and particularly Societal, Psychology often asserts the significance of context (Himmelweit & Gaskell, 1990; Howarth, Campbell et al, 2013). While many a social psychological phenomena is researched in laboratory settings successfully,

'real world' psychology requires an understanding of understanding human activity within a practical setting, and anchoring this understanding in its socio-political context. This is particularly true for the study of the psychology of race and multiculturalism. For example, historical context has been shown to influence multicultural ideology in diverse societies such as New Zealand (Sibley & Ward, 2013). However, as outlined previously, sharing postcolonial history does not mean a shared multicultural ideology. Different contexts also limit and afford racial identity choices for individuals. Seen in the case of Dien (2000), a Taiwan born psychologist whose Chinese identity was suppressed and made invisible to show support for the ruling Japanese in Taiwan, some identity choices are simply not possible in certain historical contexts. Yet when the Chinese took over Taiwan, the impossible became possible, and Dien was able to celebrate her Chinese identity. Other significant examples of the narrowness of race, and the importance of context, are the South African government's defining and redefining what it means to be black, white or coloured (Bowker & Star, 2000), the "One drop rule" with regard to black and white parentage in the US, and rules about white and Aboriginal parentage in Australia resulting in the "lost generation" has meant that generations of individuals have been classified and re-classified by the state according to what has suited the prevailing political ideologies and goals. The geographical locations have not changed, yet the socio-political context has evolved across time, changing the definition and experience of racial categories.

What is clear from this brief overview of what is meant by context could be historical (colonial history), geographical (country to country), political (political ideology), temporal (across time) and social (grassroots level), and that this presents a challenge in communicating clearly what is meant when we study multiculturalism in context. Social psychologists understand that the term socio-political context draws on these different elements. But socio-political context is complex, and the dynamics between different aspects of the socio-political context needs to be understood in its own right. Connecting the different aspects of multiculturalism with the different aspects of the socio-political context leads to confusing and ambiguous terms that try

to capture many concepts but does not always clearly explain what it is that is being studied.

How do we study the socio-political context? Some insights from Malaysia and Singapore

Aside from more cognitive approaches that study social categories such as race, more attention has been paid to the political, ideological and symbolic nature and functions of context within certain fields of Social Psychology, such as from a Social Representations Theory perspective (e.g., Augoustinos, 2001). Indeed, Social Representations Theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1984) outlines how different societies present different representations because there are key differences in how representations penetrate institutions, beliefs, relations and behaviour, thereby constituting different realities (Moscovici, 2011). According to Jovchelovitch (2007), what happens with social knowledge as it moves contexts and enters the lives of different social groups is one of the most important yet challenging questions for social scientists. Therefore, we bring to light how race and multiculturalism can be intricately connected using examples from two different and under researched societies, Malaysia and Singapore. Social representations of race, defined as community objectifications that constitute social reality for that community (Moscovici, 2000) in Malaysia and Singapore, has many facets. These include the lives of the individual citizen to the government perspectives that translate into social policies, and draw the political, ideological and symbolic nature of context together.

Whilst many world leaders assert that multiculturalism has failed, the leaders of Singapore and Malaysia praise its thriving multiculturalism. It is used as a basis for attracting tourism, investment and maintaining social and political stability in its racially diverse countries. Multiculturalism models used in Singapore and Malaysia in managing its diverse populations, differ from Western concepts of multiculturalism which are more known and widely studied in psychology. In fact, both countries refer to their multicultural ideologies as multiracialism, embedding race directly within multicultural discourse. Unlike challenges outlined by Howarth (2017) who shows that there is often a distinction between nationalism and multiculturalism (particularly in contexts like the UK), multicultural identity is embedded in national identities in

these two countries. A version of multiculturalism that threatens the nation and is thus bereft of nationalism is an uncritical nationalism, according to Howarth. Thus nationalism and multiculturalism are seen to be at opposing ends. This has been seen to be the case in European countries, where there is often a negative association between nationalism and multiculturalism (Verkuyten, 2005). However, in other contexts such as Malaysia and Singapore, politicians believe that a key component of the national identity is its multiculturalism; these present different cases to discussions on how critical nationalism is an inclusive nationalism that includes multiculturalism. This demands that psychologists to have a critical understanding of the socio-political context within which we study multiculturalism because multiculturalism is not only differentiated by definitions, and political ideologies as shown above. It can also be different based on representations of nationalism and multiculturalism as *not* being in opposition, unlike the situation in many Western countries today. For example, the rise of white supremacy in the US and Europe is driven by nationalist organisations. This is in line with the multicultural hypothesis put forth by Berry and colleagues (1977) that posits when individuals feel that their identities and their place in society is threatened, hostility will result. Yet when multiculturalism connects racial and national identities, a different conceptualisation of multiculturalism becomes necessary for social psychologists to consider. We unpack this further with concrete examples from Singapore and Malaysia.

The next section will have three parts. The first part of the next section will discuss institutionalised perspectives on race and multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore. These formalised institutional perspectives are conceptualised as the *Politics* of multiculturalism. The second will discuss everyday experiences of race and multiculturalism in the two countries. These everyday experiences are conceptualised as informal structures that scaffold the social world, and in this paper, defined as the *politics* of multiculturalism. Finally, we will draw the two perspectives together to show how socio-political context needs to be broken down into smaller components when studying race in multicultural societies. While this is by no means an exhaustive comparison of the political ideologies of the two countries, and its impact on the psychologies of individuals living there, a few key indicators have been expanded

upon to demonstrate how social psychologists can study socio-political contexts when researching the social psychology of race.

Race and multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore- Institutional perspective

In this section, we show an overview of multiculturalism and race in Malaysia and Singapore from the perspective of political leaders, governments and ruling bodies that organise their citizens' lives. Within this we look at the institutional perspective as it is outlined by political history, contemporary social policies and national identity constructions.

Multiculturalism was undertaken as a top-down system of Politics in Malaysia and Singapore. Decolonized Singapore and Malaysia (initially ruled together as 'Malaya') are split along lines of how the countries are governed. Malaya became an independent self-governing nation within the British Commonwealth in 1957, through dismantling the colonial system and establishing a new nation in its place (Abraham, 1997). Political leaders in Singapore faced the challenging task of building an independent nation in 1965 when Singapore and Malaysia separated on grounds of different political ideologies. Racial categories underpinned social policies in these two countries when they were granted independence from the British more than 50 years ago, and little has changed since then with regards to the importance of the racial categories as well as the content of these categories from times of colonisation (see Reddy, 2016/Appendix 14, for an elaboration).

Colonial management of diverse populations, made up of immigrants mainly from India and China, and local Malays, was administrative and based on a divide and rule policy (Abraham, 1997). In contemporary times, both countries have a broad racial categorisation policy applied to individuals in the countries which have a similar racial makeup of predominantly Malay, Indian and Chinese citizens with a number of minoritised groups such as Eurasians dispassionately lumped together as "Others". What is different is the numbers of individuals who have been categorised as Malay, Indian and Chinese. Malays make up 60.3% of the Malaysian population, while they form 15.0% of the Singaporean population. Indians form 7.1% of the population in Malaysia and 7.4% of the population in Singapore. Chinese are a minority in Malaysia

where they make up 24.6% of the population, but they are a majority in Singapore with 76.2% of the population. Malays and Chinese differ in minority and majority status in Malaysia and Singapore, while Indians are a minority in both countries. Here we see how the shared colonial history has shaped contemporary racial categorisation policies, which forms part of the current socio-political context.

Postcolonial multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore took the form of multiracialism, and this, along with racial categorisation developed by the ruling elite to assist in nation building. Multiracial social formation in Malaya, as it was seen during the period it was colonised by the British, was born out of colonial capitalism and this was followed by large scale immigration, rootlessness, lack of social cohesion alongside rapid economic growth that was aided by labour from India and China (Brennan, 1982). A plural society that "mixed but did not combine" (Furnivall 1948, quoted in Brennan 1982), similar to the idea of a "salad bowl" in the US was created and it was important to cultivate harmony and consensus in the diverse population. Yet today, in practice quite different models of multiculturalism in each country. As Noor and Leong (2013) have described, Malaysia's model focuses on managing inter-racial tensions and social justice as a result of past inter-racial clashes and the Singapore model's policies are guided by pragmatic realism and economic goals necessary to meet the needs of the city. While the foundations of the multicultural ideology is similar for both countries, current practice and goals of multiculturalism differs, creating two different socio-political contexts.

Multiculturalism has also been important in cementing national identity in Singapore. National unity and identity were not diminished by multilingualism and multiculturalism in both Malaysia and Singapore (Ward & Hewstone, 1985). It was seen to be important to forge a collective Singaporean identity among the largely diverse migrant population so as to anchor these migrants to Singapore soil (Velayutham, 2007). Singapore's multiracial policy has been to accept the plural society as a desirable feature of the social fabric of Singapore, and the management of this multiracial society is developed through changes to the education system and policy and different weight given to the different languages at different times. Founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's personal perspectives on race resulted in

the official Singaporean approach, where he appropriated the existing social British –
and Chinese-generated racial prejudices of the 1940s and 1950s and developed them,
viewing society in terms of hierarchical relationships (Barr & Skrbis 2008). Political
leaders often promote this multiracial ideology in connecting the country as a
cohesive unit, for example, when former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (1999)
referred to Singapore as a "multiracial tribe". Individual racial groups cannot and do
not make self-interested claims because that would violate the foundation of
multiculturalism in Singapore - that of group equality from the state's perspective
(Chua, 1998). In this policy of multiracialism, the 'social formula' of the CMIO model
is built upon the acceptance of the four main races in Singapore - Chinese, Malay,
Indian and 'Other'[28]- as separate but equal in formulating most of its social policies,
thus positioning Singapore as a meritocracy.

In contrast, a different form of multiculturalism is practiced in Malaysia where
the governance of Malaysia is defined by political primacy for the Malays. Non-
Malays, instead of formal racial equality, recognize Malay primacy in exchange for
equal citizenship rights (Goh, 2008). Thus, in Malaysia, the compromise was to grant
full citizenship to non-Malays and in return, the non-Malays have to acknowledge the
'social contract' (also known as the *Bumiputra* policy) that stipulated the special
privileges of the Malays as the *Bumiputra,* or sons of the soil, where the Malay language
is the national language and Islam as the national religion (Ibrahim, 2007). In this
ethnocracy, Malay identity development becomes crucial to the existence of the
Malaysian States. While this focus started strongly initially, Malay identity was later
moderated through the policies of Dr Mahathir Mohammad, Prime minister from
1981-2003. He articulated multiculturalism through a more inclusive national identity,
allowed the use of English in classrooms and promoted a more progressive Islam
(Lian & Appudurai, 2011).

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[28] The category of 'Other' encompasses all who did not fit into the categories Chinese,
Malay or Indian, and includes all European ethnicities and nationalities as minority groups
(Hill & Lian, 1995).

A key factor that unites both Malaysian and Singaporean multicultural ideologies is the focus on racial categorisation of their citizens and using these racial categories in the operationalisation of social policies. Citizens are ascribed a racial category at birth, and government officials ensure that individuals adhere to the categories that they have been assigned to. Table 1 below gives a brief summary of the different types of social policies that are influenced by racial categorisation as an administrative tool and the differences between the two countries.

Social policies	Country	
	Malaysia	**Singapore**
Housing	Discounts for Bumiputras	Racial quota based allocation of public housing
Education	Race based primary and secondary schools National Education policy to build national identity among races Bilingual education (Malay and English to be taught in schools) policy introduced in 2003	Race based stereotypes in books Multiracial society highlighted in school activities 2nd language competency needs to be developed in "mother tongue"
Political party representation	Raced based political parties	Each political group represented in each constituency needs to include minority and majority racial group members
Language	Malay as official language English is viewed as a language to promote national cohesion, but different states have differing views on this	English as official language, but 4 national languages- Malay, Tamil and Mandarin, English included. Speak Mandarin Campaign to encourage Chinese Singaporeans to maintain heritage
Social Support	New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced in 1971 was created to address income inequalities regardless of race, however operationalisation of policy has been race based	Welfare of Singaporeans lies with their individual racial group based societies, and not the government. Each Singaporean who is employed contributes a fixed sum of money every month (an opt out policy) towards the maintenance of these organisations, and one's racial categorisation on his/her IC determines which organisation they would contribute to

Table 9: Summary of race based social policies in Malaysia and Singapore

Managing race relations in Malaysia and Singapore is an essential aspect of multicultural policies in both countries. To date, public discussions regarding race, language or religion are considered to be taboo and discussions that censored by the Singapore state and citizens alike (George, 2000). This is a similar situation in Malaysia. While talks were in the way to table a Race Relations act in Malaysia that to regulate interaction between racial groups so as to reduce conflict (Gabriel, 2015), the plans were abandoned in favour of maintaining existing laws, such as the Sedition act, that would cover all offences that may affect race relations. In April 2015, the Malaysian government made amendments to the Sedition act. These include increasing the maximum jail time to 20 years (from 3 years), so as to "realise our goal of building a stable, peaceful and harmonious state" as announced by Prime Minister Najib. It had already resulted in 74 arrests by May 2015 (Agence France-Presse, 2015). In Singapore, the Presidential Constitutional commission was created in 1966 to consider the protection of racial, linguistic and religious minorities in Singapore. The Presidential Council for minority rights functions as an ombudsman in respect of minority grievances (Soon, 1974). The Registrar of Societies has the right to withhold registration from societies, which are not specifically intended for multiracial membership. These social policies have been created to insure racial harmony among the diverse Singaporean population (Clammer, 1998). The countries thus maintain a tight grip on inter-racial relations, tying legal institutions with social policies so as to ensure racial harmony.

What we see from this is that contemporary multicultural ideologies have deep roots in colonial history, infiltrate the daily lives of people by limiting and affording choices through social policies and mediate intergroup conflicts by putting in place rigorous legal frameworks. This institutional perspective of multiculturalism that makes up the _Politics_ of multiculturalism grounds the everyday perspective of multiculturalism.

Race and multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore- Everyday perspective

In this section, we will give an overview of multiculturalism and race in Malaysia and Singapore from the perspective of the everyday lived experience of the

individual living in these countries. Within this we will look at how individuals engage with social policies, national identities, and informal categorisations of race.

The lived experiences of Singaporeans and Malaysians show the disconnect between the goals of the multicultural ideologies adopted by the governments and the practices of individuals in society. Even though Singapore's multiracial policy is built upon the principles of meritocracy and social cohesion, the reality is that uneven focus on individual culture development and unequal opportunities has led to unequal power dynamics between the races, resulting in racial inequalities (Chua 2003, Mutalib, 2012). Clammer (1998) argues that communication among the races and inter-cultural knowledge remain at a low level and that racial stressors come in the form of growing social inequality, elitism in Singapore society, marginalization of some racial groups, religious fervor that comes with modernity, geneticism and outgroup projection of shortcomings, carving the line between "us" and "them. In Malaysia, multiculturalism meant racial discrimination is replaced by meritocracy for the Chinese, freedom of religious practice for the Indians, and a challenge to the privilege system in place for the Malays in theory (Lian & Appudurai, 2011). Yet Malaysians struggle with achieving this because the *Bumiputra* policy and resultant effects on the non-Malay population puts race relations in a precarious position in Malaysia. Enforcing affirmative action in the interests of Malays through Bumiputra policies and the NEP institutionalised racial boundaries between the Malays and the Chinese and Indians (Gabriel, 2015). As such, everyday engagement with social policies requires individuals to be very aware of their racial identities and how one needs to navigate these identities around these policies marks the socio-political context within which race is constructed.

The formal categorisation of race in the two countries gains weight through informal categorisation that takes place through everyday interactions. Social identity is constructed through self-categorisation where people define themselves in terms of social categories such as race, gender and age (Turner, 1975; Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994). Yet in these two countries, the State categorises the individual formally. The ascription policy takes away some agency from individuals in deciding how to self-categorise, as mentioned earlier. The state creates a set of rules

regarding racial categorisation such as who gets to belong to one race, what being in the race means, what the boundaries of this race are. Informally, individuals use these existing categories in their interactions with Others.

This is especially noticeable in the case of multiracial individuals in the two countries. Singapore's 2000 Census shows that those of "mixed race" parentage were categorised under the racial group of their fathers. In Malaysia, however, this patrilineal structure of race seems to be more arbitrary, with differences among the states of Sabah, Sarawak and West Malaysia (see Wong, 2009). Generally, if either parent is a Bumiputra, the child is recognised as Bumiputra as well, and accrued all the privileges that come along with it. What this means is that a Malaysian or Singaporean individual may be formally categorised as belonging to one racial group, while informally choosing another racial identity. As we see in Reddy, Gleibs and Howarth (2017/Chapter 2), the formal and informal categorisation of multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans leads to the construction of public and private racial identities. One's geographical location, and the prevalent political ideologies on race thus becomes the setting that decides whether that individual has the ability to exercise some power over their racial identity choice, both formally and informally.

The countries reify racial differences on one level and promotes national unity and harmony on other levels (Ward & Hewstone 1985; Clammer 1998). In addition, it essentialises differences within the racial category by aggregating cultural markers and setting out distinctions between each racial category that includes religious dimensions, appropriating British colonial masters perspectives on race and religion. What this means, for example, is that the Indian racial category is embedded with the Hindu religious identity. In this way race is essentialised into political governance systems as well as everyday thought. This sets up a dialectic relationship between the personal and national level. Haslam and colleagues (2000) found that the notion of essentialism can be two-dimensional, first is the extent to which categories are understood as inherently different, and the second is the extent to which categories are reified or perceived as homogenous and unified. Essentialism is not by definition oppressive (Verkuyten, 2003), however in the collapsing of differences within a category, certain groups became invisible. For example, Muslim (religious) and Malay

(racial) identity is equated in the two countries - complicating identity for Indian Muslims who themselves could come from many different cultural groups - the Malabar Muslims and the Kadayanallur Muslims to name two of them.

Yet, minoritised group members may use this essentialist thinking to assert a valued identity when the majority denies it (Morton & Postmes, 2009). Thus some individuals seek to regain power in their everyday lives when governments diminish the visibility of their identities institutionally. In their construction and negotiation of their racial identities today, individuals still have to engage with colonial symbols because it was these symbols that lead to the current racial categorisation framework. As such, postcoloniality means that cultural legacies of colonial symbols still determine practices of the society today (Patke, 2005). At times, this engagement with colonial symbols leads to resistance and a desire to re-construct racial identities (Reddy & Gleibs, 2017a/Chapter 3).

The everyday perspective outlines the space where individuals can construct and negotiate their identities, resist and reclaim power when dealing with the institutional perspective. While it seems like the countries have policies in place to maintain order in the society, some individuals resist these race-based social policies that are entrenched in the multicultural ideologies. The citizens of these two countries engage with the policies in different ways- from clashing with authorities on the necessity of policies (like the Sedition act and Bumiputra policies in Malaysia) to finding strategies to overcome barriers that are created by the policies (such as choosing which racial identity to put down in an application for public housing in Singapore). This reflects how everyday multiculturalism differs from a political perspective on multiculturalism, and how political perspectives influence everyday meaning making and intergroup relations (Wise & Velayutham, 2009). On account of the politicisation of race by institutions, individuals engage in the *politics* of multiculturalism because it makes up their social worlds. The *politics* of multiculturalism thus endures geographical boundaries as individuals traverse multiple social worlds that are not limited to different countries. Reddy & Gleibs (2017b, Chapter 4) argue that migration influences how individuals construct and re-

construct their racial identities as they inhabit different (both imagined and real) social worlds marked by political ideologies and geographical boundaries.

Drawing the institutional and the everyday perspectives in the socio-political context

The *Politics* and the *politics* of multiculturalism form the socio-political context within which social psychologists examine psychological processes. Using the examples of Malaysia and Singapore allows us to examine "the legitimisation of different knowledge systems and the possibilities for resistance" (Howarth, 2006; p.80) for people living in the two countries. In connecting the two different perspectives outlined above, we suggest a more granular assessment of the socio-political context into more specific contexts that allows the social psychologist to better understand the interplay of context and the psychology of race. These specific contexts are connected, but it is useful to separate for clarity in analysis. Indeed, studying race devoid of its socio-political context is not enough and only reinforces essentialising notions of race as concrete differences between differently evaluated social groups. Studying how an identity is structured is imperative in multicultural societies because of the interplay of different systems of categorisations and identifications (Chryssochoou, 2000). Three components of the socio-political contexts that we suggest are particularly relevant for interrogating and understanding racial identity processes are (1) Socio-political context as everyday engagements with social policy, (2) Socio-political context as everyday engagement with colonial symbols, and (3) Socio-political context as politicised racial geographies.

Socio-political context as everyday engagements with social policy

Rather than looking at the socio-political context as a static backdrop on which psychological processes take place, viewing socio-political context as specific, changing situations where individuals need to engage with social policy makes the study of racial identity construction more nuanced. In these countries, discussed above, there are specific racial rules with regard to housing, language, social support that may influence how identities are constructed and negotiated. We know that

identities themselves are not static and are dependent on the immediate perceptual context (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) thus what the psychologist conceptualises as the context becomes very important. We suggest researching racial identity construction within the backdrop of engagement with social policies. This is perhaps one of the more direct connections of the political, social and psychological as outlined above. When social psychologists localise the examination of race within the socio-political context of everyday engagements with social policies, we are able to elucidate the situational aspects of racial identities. For example, in a study conducted by Reddy, Gleibs and Howarth (2017/Chapter 2), they identified that individuals hold two types of racial identity constructions, the public and the private, to manage the influence that social policies have on their daily lives.

Socio-political context as everyday engagement with colonial symbols

In the case of Malaysia and Singapore, the colonial history not only shaped the formation of racial categorisation policies in the inception of these young countries, but individuals are still required to engage with such colonised symbols in their contemporary understanding of their racial identities. Many countries today still preserve colonial legacies in different ways, and in seeking to understand psychological processes today, researchers should uncover the ways that individuals engage with colonial symbols in their everyday sense-making. This is especially important when researching countries which carry a postcolonial legacy and were forced to adopt Western political ideologies. Gunaratnam (2003) suggests exploring the relationship between colonial histories and race, yet we extend this by grounding this examination in the individual's perception of, and relationship with colonial or historical racial categories. Reddy and Gleibs (2017a/Chapter 3) discuss how colonial symbols still endure in individuals' contemporary constructions of race in Malaysia and Singapore, and we suggest that such a conceptualisation of the socio-political context is applicable in other countries as well. One other example we suggest that would benefit from such a conceptualisation of socio-political context would be the social psychological study of racial identity construction and negotiation in Canada.

Comparing these two countries with similar racial demographics, we know that geographical contexts, political ideologies and conceptualisations of race differ while the origins of both were the same country (Malaya). We argue that it is this interface between geographical contexts, political ideologies and race that presents an interesting challenge for the social psychologist who is interested in racial identity construction across different multicultural societies. Countries are not vacuous terms but come laden with different signifiers (Billig, 1995) and different multicultural ideologies as emphasised in this paper. This comparison is interesting if one considers how similar racial identities change across different geographical settings, and thus across different political ideologies. Yet, it is not only the political ideologies of the ruling elite that differ between these settings; the relationship that the individual has with the setting also changes. This is made clearer in a paper by Reddy & Gleibs (2017b/Chapter 4) which highlights how and why the contents of racial identities change as socio-political contexts change among Malaysians and Singaporeans in Malaysia, Singapore and UK. They argue that it is not simply the change in multicultural (and thus political) ideologies that differ between the contexts that has an influence on the change of the contents of the identity, but also how the participants viewed their relationships with each of these countries in the study (Malaysia, Singapore and UK), and the countries that the racial identities originate (India and China). Specifically, the participants distinguished the countries by country of origin (where the racial identities originated), country of birth/citizenship (where they were ascribed these identities) and country of residence (the "new countries where identities are negotiated and re-constructed), drawing racial and national identities together

We define this interface as *politicised geographies*. This term goes beyond what is discussed in political geography (Political Geography, 2017) because it takes into account the active construction and co-construction of identities within these spaces- thus, taking a social psychological perspective. Nonetheless, the social psychological study of race in the socio-political context would no doubt benefit from a closer

connection with this extensive work (see also Koch & Passi, 2016). However, in this paper, we also underline the importance of the everyday racial politics, as well as the more active notion of politicisation, in our conceptualisation of *geographies* as *politicised*.

Given that this conceptualisation is based on how the socio-political context influences identity construction, we believe that it would be useful to social psychologists who would like to engage in comparative research across different research settings. Looking at such a comparison would allow social psychologists to specifically chart how the psychology of racial identities changes as politicised racial geographies change in other research settings such as different provinces in Canada for example. Conceptualisation of the socio-political context as politicised geographies could also be useful in charting changes in migrants' racial identity construction as their country of residence changes.

Conclusion

By first mapping out the complexities of multiculturalism in academia and around the world, we shed light on the importance of a nuanced examination of multicultural contexts that takes into account (i) a multi-level definition, (ii) political ideologies, (iii) histories, (iv) changes in geographical boundaries, and importantly, (v) race. Multiculturalism forms a permanent aspect of the contemporary socio-political context, and thus needs to be accounted for in the social psychological study of identities, especially racial identities. By using the examples of Malaysia and Singapore, we examined the institutional and everyday perspective of race within a multicultural framework. We argue that combining both the *big P* (institutional perspective) and *small p* (everyday perspective) politics of multiculturalism is essential in the social psychological study of the individual who is making sense of their multicultural world.

To simplify the challenging prospect of incorporating socio-political context in a meaningful way in social psychological studies, we put forth a three-part conceptualisation of the socio-political context by drawing both these perspectives together. Guimond and colleagues (2014) have outlined how greater focus should be placed on the importance of the socio-political context when studying intergroup ideologies such as multiculturalism. We offer social psychologists a nuanced and

interrogative conceptualisation of the socio-political context, showing that different aspects of racial identity construction can be elucidated depending on how the socio-political context is conceptualised. We also suggest further research that can be undertaken using, and no doubt developing, these conceptualisations.

By drawing references to two non-Western research settings, we have illustrated how expanding our research to less familiar research settings not only highlights the complexities of racial identity construction, but also accentuates the limits of our current understanding. We have directed more attention to the relevance of social psychological scholarship in expanding our current understanding of race. There is merit in applying this framework in other research settings, and we hope to have encouraged others to join us in this endeavour. Working through the "treacherous bind" (Radhakrishnan, 1996; p.81) of race in social psychology is one that requires a sensitive appraisal of not only how race has been used in political and academic settings but also how it is experienced in the daily lives of the individuals we seek to understand. By providing a clear analytical framework for the socio-political context, we hope to work with and through this contested, yet unfortunately still relevant concept of race.

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CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have unearthed and examined the role of the socio-political context in the construction of racial identities among Malaysians and Singaporeans. The socio-political context itself is approached from different perspectives, resulting in a fuller understanding of the different ways context can influence racial identity construction. Chapter 5 draws the conceptual contributions of the socio-political context from the three empirical chapters together and argues for a contribution to the existing frameworks for the study of the socio-political context. Three chapters of this thesis were dedicated to exploring different dimensions of the socio-political context in the study of racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans. By examining the meaning making of both self-identifying multiracial and monoracial individuals, I interrogated a breadth of perspectives relevant to racial identity construction. While each of these four chapters is a self-standing paper with its own conclusion, this chapter takes a more integrative view of the theoretical, conceptual and empirical contributions of this thesis as a whole.

This thesis posed the following research questions:

1. How does the socio-political context influence racial identity construction among multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans?

2. How do different socio-political contexts influence racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans in group settings?

3. How does a change in the socio-political context influence racial identity construction and levels of identification among racial ingroup members?

Chapter 2 addressed the first research question in a qualitative study of 31 interviews of multiracial Malaysians and Singaporeans. Chapter 3 expanded the examination of racial identity construction to include multiracial as well as monoracial individuals in focus group dicussions to answer the second research question. Chapter

4 then built on the findings from the previous two chapters in attending to the third research question through a mixed methods study. Chapter 5 drew the conceptual findings of the three preceding chapters and outlined the different definitions of the socio-political context that a social psychologist may use in the examination of racial identity construction.

In this thesis, two main strands of research were carried out and key findings will be re-examined in the following sections. They are (i) the process, content and motivations of racial identity construction, and (ii) defining the socio-political context.

6.1 Process, content and motivations of racial identity construction

Contributing something novel to a rich, extensive tradition of research on race and racialisation is no easy task. Many different disciplines have in the past, and continue to, provide insightful knowledge on these aspects of our social world. Because social reality is not the exclusive domain of one single social science discipline (Sinha, 1998), I have endeavoured to connect my research practice with key observations from sociology, political science and human geography to provide a more comprehensive view on how social psychology can contribute to the study of race and racialisation.

The thesis's commitment to understanding not only (i)*what racial identities do* for individuals but also (ii) *how*, (iii) *when*, (iv) *where*, (v) *why* and (vi)*with whom* racial identities are constructed has lead to important findings that offer an additional lens to capturing the social psychological phenomena that is racial identity construction. In this thesis, my core finding is the *strategic construction of racial identities* by both minoritised and majoritised racial groups in their sense making of their social worlds, and the positioning of themselves and Others in intergroup settings.

What is strategic is best understood in the demands of the socio-political context, and thus Chapter 2 shows that it is not simply being Chinese, for example, that is associated with positive outcomes. Rather, it is being Chinese in a socio-political context defined by social policies that favour the Chinese identity that provides positive outcomes, that is preferred by participants and thus constructing one's identity as Chinese thus becomes strategic. This answers the question of *what*

the racial identity does for the individual, and *where* and *when* such a racial identity construction takes place.

Similarly, in Chapter 3 I show that participants are strategic in constructing their identities within group situations where members of minoritised and majoritised racial groups have a say in what the racial identity is. Individuals thus draw from uncomfortable and problematic colonial constructions of race and re-construct them in the focus group in a more positive manner. Here we see that engaging with colonial constructions of race provide a frame of reference (*why*) for individuals who co-construct (*how*) their racial identities with Others in a group setting (*when* and *with whom*).

In Chapter 4, we see that participants living in the UK re-construct their racial identities differently from when they are in Singapore or in Malaysia, highlighting the importance of their personal location- not only physical as will be discussed below- and once again demonstrating *where* racial identity (re)construction takes place. Participants who were shown images of different socio-political contexts constructed their ingroup racial identities differently in each of the socio-political contexts, illustrating *how* racial identity construction can change across different settings. Strategy in identity construction is thus seen in the way participants navigate different social hierarchies, and political ideologies to maintain the relevance of their racial identities to their self-concepts.

6.2 Defining Socio-political context

This thesis is an empirical demonstration of what socio-political context can mean in the context of people's everyday experience. There is merit in understanding context as that which the individual is immediately surrounded by (that of the immediate perceptual context). Yet what I argue is that there needs to be a deeper and wider engagement with the socio-political context, especially in the study of multiculturalism than previously done by social psychologists, as put forth by Guimond and colleagues (2014). Context is a complex concept for individuals and I have endeavoured to offer some insight into this loaded concept. I have shown the dimensions of politics that frame people's every day identities and actions across the

three studies, and how the socio-political context is also shaped by history and culture (Chapter 4). I have advanced the conceptualisation of the socio-political context in terms of people's everyday engagements with social policies, colonial symbols, and politicised geographies. I have demonstrated how politics filters into and at times, intrudes into the *everyday* via these three concrete dimensions. Importantly, I show that different conceptualisations of the socio-political context allow the social psychologist to elucidate different aspects of racial identity construction.

In Chapter 2, the socio-political context has been conceptualised as everyday engagements with social policies. In this way, the influence of socio-political structures, such as government organisations, policies and representatives, on the daily lives was highlighted. Looking at the socio-political context in this manner allowed for the close examination of the racial ascription policies and their perceived impact on racial identity construction among multiracial individuals from Malaysia and Singapore.

In Chapter 3, the socio-political context constituted the everyday engagement with colonial symbols. Historical events lead to lasting cultural legacies and political ideologies in the constructions of racial identities. To this end, we see how the past still has a place in contemporary psychologies, especially in the psychological imagination of race. Individuals continue to endure and engage with the same constructions of racial identities that were entrenched during colonial times to navigate today's array of socio-political contexts.

In Chapter 4, the socio-political context was developed from the previous two conceptualisations. Politicised geographies combine the political element of the first two definitions (as understood as a system of governmental structures as well as political ideologies), with the spatial demarcation of countries. Herein, we saw how the differences in the political systems' relationship with race and categorisation, as the resulting change in social hierarchies, influenced the individual's construction of racial identities,. Importantly, the psychological imagination of a country with reference to the individual's personal location was highlighted. Here participants differentiated between the origins of their racial identities, the country where they were born and ascribed that racial identity and the new country that the racial

identities are re-constructed in. Changing the politicised geography for the individual leads to changes in the psychology of racial identity construction (seen through levels of identification and racial identity content) among Malaysians and Singaporeans.

Together, we see that different conceptualisations of the socio-political context elicit different aspects of the psychology of racial identity construction. Identity is multifaceted and a directed approach at understanding the context within which identity is constructed and managed in, allows for the psychologist to focus on specific aspects of the identity constructed, such as the multiplicity of the identities, the endurance of historical constructions (in this case, colonial constructions) and why changes in identity content take place. The thesis as a whole thus provides a systematic examination of the socio-political context. Taking context seriously allows the psychologist to be clear in what it is that they are studying and gives weight to the findings, as it not only grounds the research within the social world but offers an in-depth understanding of how the individual is embedded within their socio-political context. That is, context is not external to the individual as espoused in the Descartesian duality of mind and society, but rather is intrinsic to the psychology of the individual.

To take this further, context is *embodied*. Participants discuss how their physical presence in different countries, and their personal locations with reference to the origins of their racial identities, influenced their construction of racial identities. This perspective of the context is not a recent one. Jovchelovitch (2007) has argued that the individual, comprising of both a body and a psychological make-up that is located socially, historically and culturally, is herself a "multidimensional context" (p.48). Even earlier, Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962; cited in Tanaka, 2011) brings our attention to *savoir de familiarité* or the knowledge bred of familiarity, that a corporeal knowledge is one that is "in the hands" and cannot be exclusivly understood by processes of the mind because mind and body are not separate. In other research, a case has been made for a situated social cognition, which challenges the view that social cognition is abstract, stable and activated by context-independent processs (Smith & Semin, 2004; 2007).

However, in this thesis, I argue that the relationship between Self and context goes beyond a personal location within the physical space they were in when the studies were carried out. Rather, the socio-political context is so entrenched in the embodied minds of the participants, that participants referred to their personal location vis-à-vis other spaces that used similar racial identity categories, often imagining themselves in those spaces with the awareness of the histories, cultures and political connections between themselves and the spaces. Individuals are thus not passively moving through the physical spaces that they inhabit. The minded body engages with an array of aspects within the socio-political context, as highlighted above. Indeed, the socio-political context is not simply one that is imposed or self-evident, but rather that which is actively constructed (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2014).

To take a critical view of Study 3, perhaps this is one of the reasons I could not ascertain why there was no significant change in how much participants identified with their racial identities across different socio-political context. While I focused on a symbolic representation of context through the images of the three countries to manipulate the socio-political context, the fact lies that images, in themselves, do not present an embodied experience. Thus the quantitative method in this study was not truly contextualised. This methodological insight can be linked back to theory. Others have made the plea for building structural and systematic variables into the research design such that the social reality that is under study "not lose its vital character and become laboratory trivialities" (Sinha, 1988; p. 27). When the theoretical positioning of the socio-political context is one that links history, culture, politics and the embodied experience, the social psychological study of the context will involve more nuanced methodologies. This is a key proposal contributed through this thesis.

6.3 Revisiting Contributions of thesis

This next section will address each of the contributions of the chapters and are important to revisit in this conclusive chapter as I draw together the two different strands mentioned above to provide a cohesive perspective on the thesis. It is also to illustrate that the contributions of this thesis are not limited to understanding the psychology of Malaysians and Singaporeans, and thus firmly resting its merits within

the realm of a Southeast Asian or an Asian social Psychology. This is not the goal of the thesis. I have not discovered new Asian constructs or theories from the study of two Southeast Asian countries (cf. Leung, 2007). Rather, I have extended existing Western theories and concepts using examples from these countries. Historically, results that did not conform to existing Western theories and models were considered exceptions that unfortunately left the theoretical bases unchallenged (Sinha, 1995). One response to such a position was for local psychologies in various societies to develop their own respective indigenous psychologies, with the hope that "they then be gradually integrated to form a genuine global psychology" (Yang, 1997; p. 70). Yet, this model of global psychology was not considered feasible because it was viewed as continuing the hegemony of the West (Bhatia, 2002). Indigenous psychologies are very important, especially in the case of applied social psychological studies that are highly relevant to the research setting, and perhaps less so outside of that setting. Yet by classifying applied social psychological work as indigenous psychology *only* and thus not part of "mainstream" psychology does not do the research, nor the insights that social psychology as a discipline can gain from it, any justice. Thus I hope that my contributions speak to a wider audience, and are not considered exceptions to the rule, but rather important findings that can augment our current social psychological understanding of our social worlds.

Yet another relevant but separate point is the tension between generalisability of findings and unique understanding of the social worlds we live in. The pursuit of psychological universals has left a significant mark on the fabric of social psychology (Reicher, 2004). Generalisability of empirical findings was not one of the objectives of this thesis. In fact, I adopted the position of multiple representations of the social reality through the critical realist epistemology. As such, I was focused on understanding different, at time unique insights of the social world. Presenting work in a discipline that privileges the general over the unique presents a very real concern for the (early career) researcher who embraces the view of diversity within psychology and adopts a contextualised, person-centred approach (Hammack, 2008). This challenge is compounded in this thesis by the study of two seemingly unique research contexts. While Malaysia and Singapore present a novel research platform in many

ways, the findings from this thesis can be adopted and adapted in research in other contexts by the astute, critical social psychologist. Issues of today that social psychologists examine such as racism, migration, and urbanisation are often simultaneously local and global (Kessi & Kiguwa, 2015). Thus presenting two "local" psychologies has potential, in itself, for a more global understanding by the mere fact that the phenomena studied are not local but instead global in nature. The thesis thus is an appeal for such case studies to be part of mainstream psychology, and lends voice to other social psychologists who have been calling for an expansion in the scope of what is considered to be a "Euro-American centric social psychology" (Kessi & Kiguwa, 2015; Sundarajan, 2014).

6.3.1 Theory informing context

With clear definitions for context, I set out to apply classic social psychological theories, Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Social Representations Theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1988), used in combination within the Social Representations approach framework (SRA; Elcheroth et al., 2011) to understanding racial identity construction in two under-researched Southeast Asian countries. I extended the usefulness of these theoretical frameworks and relevant concepts to societies and socio-political contexts beyond that which they have originated from, and where a significant portion of work on identity and representations is carried out to other research contexts. This is an empirical contribution of the thesis. Specifically, the following key concepts facilitated the social psychological examination of racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans in this thesis.

Public sphere (Jovchelovitch, 1995) as the space where intersubjective realities exist helped conceptualise the public and private spheres that then lend to the finding of the construction of public and private racial identities among multiracial individuals, as seen in Chapter 2.

Shared knowledge (Elcheroth et al., 2011) was fundamental in understanding the ways the shared social world manifested in the minds, action and talk of the participants in the three empirical studies of this thesis. Specifically, shared knowledge

of government representations of race (Chapter 2) and colonial representations of race (Chapter 3) was factored into participants' own self-constructions of their racial identities, as well as that of Others.

Meta-knowledge was useful in understanding how participants valued the knowledge of Others in their own constructions of racial identities. In Chapters 2 and 3, we saw that knowledge of what different Others with varying levels of power thought about their racial identities were important for the individual's understanding and construction of their racial identities.

Core concepts of SRA such as *enacted communication* and *world making assumptions* were especially relevant in the understanding the chosen socio-political contexts. Looking at enacted communication allowed for the exploration of racial identities as actions rather than mere categories that people ascribe to themselves and Others. Within this, Chapter 2 showed identity construction as a conscious decision and action in the public and private spheres of the social world. Embedded within the concept of enacted communication in SRA (Elcheroth et al., 2011) are *anchoring* and *objectification* (Moscovici, 1984). These two concepts were important in elucidating how participants constructed their contemporary racial identities based on colonial constructions of race. Combined, this allowed the exploration of how institutional backgrounds supported social representations in racial identity construction, and this included both informal social interactions and formal relations within governmental bodies. The embodied nature of representations of race (Howarth, 2004), was identified in Chapter 3, yet in a different manner to what was presented by Howarth. While her research exemplified how black bodies were marked with demeaning qualities, here I highlight how colonial constructions of race become embodied by the individual in their contemporary constructions of race. This is elaborated below. In addition, the concept of world making assumptions signalled the importance of understanding how social and political contexts are not simply external background factors that influence social representations. Rather they are brought into existence through the social representations and thus construct reality, as highlighted in Chapter 4. Thus these two concepts of enacted communication and world making assumption

drove the thesis's commitment to understanding the importance of context for individuals in the construction of racial identities.

Thinking in antinomies (Staerklé et al., 2011) aided the exploration of tension and conflict within participants' talk in Chapters 2,3 and 4. Where there was a public sphere for the conflict to arise from the clash of racial ascription and self-identification, there was a private sphere where contestations were minimised (Chapter 2). Where there was debate and disjuncture within group discussions, there was resolution and possibilities for social change (Chapter 3). Where there were negative personality constructions, this was juxtaposed with positive personality constructions (Chapter 4).

However, there were a number of ways that the limits of these theoretical frameworks, especially seen through the incorporation of SIT and SRT within the SRA theoretical framework, were tested. This thesis thus responded to the call for a return to societal forms of psychology where the suitability of theories and methods to understanding the social world beyond academia was reflected upon (Howarth, Campbell et al., 2013).

6.3.2 Context informing theory

As much as Western theoretical frameworks have helped to understand social psychological phenomena taking place in two Southeast Asian countries, my thesis extends social psychological theories on race, identities and representations. First, the introduction of research settings that stand apart from those that are commonly studied allowed for the testing of theoretical limits and the possibilities for those limits to be expanded. In Singapore and Malaysia, race is institutionalised and racialisation of the individual becomes an inevitable process in both formal institutions and informal social structures. Thus race permeates everyday life in ways that is different to other contexts usually studied such as the UK and US. This presents a novel opportunity to understand different ways the individual is influenced by the socio-political context, and as a result, inform Western theories as they currently exist. Below I outline the theoretical contributions of this thesis.

In this thesis, I show specific ways that SRA can be further developed to understand racial identity construction. Overall, I extended both Social Identity Approach (SIA; Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010) and Social Representations Theory (SRT; Moscovici, 1984; 1988) elements in SRA to demonstrate that racial identity construction is indeed *strategic*, as outlined above. In doing so, I have contributed to the collective effort of bringing together the two distinct theories of SIT and SRT as others have endeavoured before me (e.g. Augoustinos, 2001; Breakwell, 1986; Duveen; 2001; Howarth, 2002).

In Chapter 2, I expanded the definition of Others used by Elcheroth and colleagues, building on the psychological understanding of ingroup and outgroup by suggesting a more nuanced private sphere (individuals who share a complex understanding of racial identity) and public sphere (individuals who challenge the multiracial individual's complex understanding of race), rather than ingroups (and outgroups) being defined as one that shares (or does not share) the same racial identity. In this chapter, I also built upon the concept of power as outlined in Elcheroth and colleagues paper by showing the influence that political institutions can have on the everyday racial identity constructions of multiracial individuals in Malaysia and Singapore. I will expand on this below in section 6.3.3.

In Chapter 3, I showed how participants drew on meta and shared knowledge to change the contents of the representations race from a colonial construction to a contemporary construction, and thereby framing their identities within this changed identity content. This revealed the potential of representations in facilitating identity change, and that representations are not merely descriptions of mental processes.

In addition, I suggested that a deeper collaboration between SIT and SRT can be fostered with the addition of levels of identification, a primary focus of SIT research into racial identities, to shared knowledge, a concept within SRT and SRA. This was elaborated in Chapter 4.

Notably, the proposition that relationships are the basic structure of everyday thinking was highlighted in Chapter 4. While the basis for this was the inclusion of "thinking in antinomies" (Staerklé et al. 2011; Markova, 2000), I suggest, through the findings of Study 3, that the relationships between thought extends beyond duality of

thought that was suggested by Starklé and colleagues. In the constructions of racial identities in Study 1 (of Chapter 4) and Study 2 (of Chapter 4), we see that participants construct their racial identities not only in a binary fashion. What I have found for example, is the identification of positive, negative *and* neutral personality constructions. This finding helps us interrogate the psychology of racial construction beyond the duality of thought as positioned by Marková (2003). In fact, we can sometimes extend these to three or four connected axes of thought. Of course, one could argue that for the third axis of thought to exist, there needs to be a duality or an oppositional relationship (positive versus negative). I do not deny the importance of such a clarification on thought that has been so clearly outlined by Marková who draws from ancient Chinese and Greek Philosophy, and more recent Western philosophers and psychologists like Kant, Hegel, Tarde, Wallon and Freud. In fact, Markova mentions briefly the potential for triadic thought, though much of the examples elaborated are based on dualistic notions of thinking and that which I propose an expansion of. It is here that I am influenced by Hindu theistic philosophy of the *Tridevi* or *Trimūrti,* where in Sanskrit *tri* means three, and *mūrti* means representation or image. It exists as one of the many Hindu theistic systems that fits different divine figures into a framework (Matchett, 2003). Within this philosophy, the cosmic functions of creation, preservation, and destruction are each the purview of one god form. That which is created and in the end destroyed, is joined together by the concept of maintenance, or preservation. All three co-exist, with one existing only because of the Other and thus are mutually interdependent. This is but a proposition in its very early stages as deeper exploration of the relationships between the constructions, beyond that which is outlined in this thesis, was not the main focus of Study 3. Nonetheless, this proposition is worth exploring further in future studies, especially by those that wish to engage more critically in the epistemological and ontological origins of concepts within social psychology.
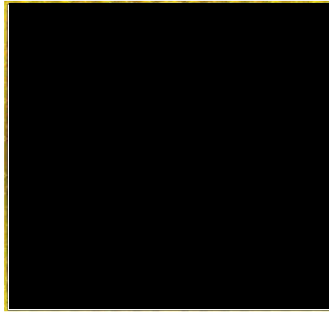
Figure 4: Image of Tridevi: From left to right, Parvathi (destruction) Lakshmi (preservation) and Saraswathi (creation)

6.3.3 Political institutions as the Other

Broadly, I suggest the conceptualisation of Others to include the socio-political context through the different empirical chapters in this thesis. That is, in understanding of race (Object) I argue that the Self uses the Other (socio-political context). The socio-political context aids or hinders the individual's understanding of race and places boundaries on the Self that limit or expand the psychological imagination of race in the individual's life. This of course is met by the individual who finds ways to resist, re-present and change their identities as they see fit, and as much as the Other allows them to. This is not to present the socio-political context as all-powerful, but it frames the psychology of identity in different ways as we have seen.

Specifically, it is the presence of political institutions within this socio-political context that I have illustrated in this thesis, that influences racial identity constructions. It is this specific engagement with these powerful and pervasive Others, in different situations that captures the strategic, everyday identity construction processes that individuals engage in. In Chapter 2, I highlight that conflict experienced by multiracial individuals in possessing multiple racial identities is not internal, but rather comes from having to navigate a social world that imposes a singular, discrete notion of race and racial categories. This social world is heavily painted by political institutions' (such as government bodies and social policies) perspectives of race. In Chapter 3, we see that when political institutions carry the same racial categories as colonial masters so as to facilitate an ease of administration, they carry the colonial representations of race through as well. In Chapter 4, the social hierarchies that result from different multicultural ideologies filter into the individual's perspective when constructing their racial identities.

Of course the irony of using the same categories that political institutions use, in my study, is not lost on me. However, following Radhakrishnan's (1996) view on working within the treacherous binds and Hall's (1996) position that until such a time where such concepts are no longer useful in understanding the people we study, the social scientist needs to engage with them, I have used maintained the use of the same categories, albeit in a critical manner. I acknowledge the inherently problematic view of clearly demarcated racial categories, and as a result, what is seen as distinct, separate and exclusive racial identities. Nonetheless, I use the categories Indian, Chinese and Malay as participants understand and use it. This is in line with my critical realist ontological and pragmatic epistemological framework, which is observing reality, as participants perceive it to be. Furthermore, I have made conscious efforts to understand what it means to be Indian, Chinese and Malay to the individual by asking participants this very question in each of my studies, rather than approaching each study with a preconceived notion of what these racial identities mean, no matter what my findings were in the previous studies. While tedious to some extent, I believe that this is a powerful methodological tool. It presents the researcher with the opportunity to compare different racial identity constructions that are elicited by different methodologies, and thus present multiple interpretations of reality, as individuals understand it to be. It also serves as a check for the researcher who may have adopted certain perspectives at the start of such a research project that may or may not match the participants' perspectives of their social world.

6.3.4 Multiple identities

An important contribution is made to existing research on multiple identities by showing that there are indeed multiple identities within one type of identity category. In other words, multiple identities exist within racial identities. Existing research on multiple identities show how there are multiple identities within the individual, but this is with regard to different types of identities (e.g. Ramarajan, 2013). That is, an individual can be an academic (professional identity), female (gender identity), Indian (racial identity) and Singaporean (national identity), with each identity becoming salient at different times. Yet this thesis shows that there exists a

multiplicity within racial identities themselves. Chapter 2 outlines private versus public racial identities, Chapter 3 describes multiple positionings of each racial identity and Chapter 4 shows what is usually assumed as a singular racial identity category is actually understood as distinct identities depending on the socio-political context that the identity originates from, and is understood in. This extends the scope of existing identity literature to include these ways of conceptualising multiple identities. Such a perspective of multiplicity within one type of identity could also be extended to other types of identities such as gender. The performativity and fludity of gender (Butler, 1990) has been the subject of extensive research in other disciplines and its inclusion in the research of identities within social psychology is vital to better understanding the lifeworlds we inhabit.

6.3.5 Conceptualisation of race

This thesis has reinforced other research that has highlighted how racial identities are fluid and influenced by the presence of Others within the socio-political context. Yet, by extending Others to include political institutions, I have signalled the role of governments, social policies and other state bodies such as schools, in defining what race means for individuals living in those societies. Identity is not fixed and is constructed in, and through social practices and arguments (Hopkins & Reicher, 2011). Importantly, in this thesis I highlight that arguments and change in social practices do not necessarily need to take place in an overt, or institutionally visible way. Individuals' private deliberations and disruptions to state ascription forms an integral part of their conceptualisation of racial identities and what this means for them. Given this, the social psychological conceptualisation of race needs to factor in how racial identities are constructed by such political institutions, the less obvious ways individuals disrupt these meanings of race, and the multiplicity within racial identities that is outlined above. This is especially important in comparative research when racial identities are compared across different socio-political contexts as it is assumed that the category remains the same in each of these contexts. In other words, social scientists may compare Indians in Singapore, Indians in India, and Indians in the US with the assumption that they all have the same conceptualisation of the

category Indian, without crediting how the Indian identity is influenced by different political institutions and if these individuals accept the same meanings of race both privately and publicly. Chapter 4 especially highlights that such a comparison needs to be followed by an awareness of differences in the content of those identities for the individuals concerned, and the influence of different political institutions in the constructions. Thus, the social psychological conceptualisation of race needs to be critical of the complexities involved for the individuals we study. This is a significant theoretical contribution of the thesis.

6.3.6 A practical framework for the study of racial identity construction

As a result of this four-year research project, I propose a practical framework to social science researchers who are interested in studying racial identity construction. I am aware that the suggestion of a framework based on an in-depth study of two small Southeast Asian countries is open to critique. Yet I believe that there is enough academic rigour supporting this thesis, and latitude for adaptation to different socio-political contexts, such as looking at historical influences rather than post-coloniality for example. Furthermore, this thesis is supported by a great deal of literature as discussed throughout. By clearly outlining how different conceptualisations of socio-political contexts leads to a better understanding of different aspects of racial identity construction, I suggest a methodological and theoretical framework that can be applied in the social psychological study of how racial identities are constructed and re-constructed in the presence of Others across different socio-political contexts. By using these clear conceptualisations of the socio-political contexts, I offer the social psychologist a guide to studying racial identity in its context. "There is nothing so practical as good theory" (Lewin, 1951; p. 169), and in this light I have recommended concrete ways that SRA can be augmented in its application to the study of racial identity construction in the social world beyond the confines of the laboratory. Blackwood, Hopkins & Reicher (2013) call for social psychologists to look beyond the focus on individual level of theories to understand social dynamics as well as the influence of majoritised individuals' perspectives and

practices in the study of psychological phenomena. This framework could be useful for the social psychologist who is interested in addressing this call.

6.4 Methodological Strengths of the Thesis

6.4.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity has been at the core of this research project, and a strength of each of the methodologies that I have utilised in this thesis. As a researcher, this has been an area of focus that I have developed over the past four years. I have been interested in how the researcher exhibits reflectivity in her work and can be used as a tool in the acquisition of social qualia (that is, the acquisition of subjective experiential knowledge), development of richer understanding of the nature of social phenomena beyond the experimental setting and how she can improve her ability to be reflexive within an experiment by understanding the co-occurrence of perspectives (Corti, Reddy, Choi & Gillespie, 2015). In each of the empirical studies, I have exhibited this reflexive position in the construction of study materials, communication with participants during and beyond the study, and analysis of data. I have tried to be transparent in the ways that my own positioning may influence the collection of data as well as the analysis of data, and this commitment to transparency has guided my approach in remaining close to the participants' voices when constructing and analysing the data corpus.

6.4.2 Different Methodologies

The strength of small-scale case studies can also be assessed by its attention to triangulation (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000) and this thesis has achieved triangulation by drawing on different methodologies and thus multiple forms of data. The utility of using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the three empirical studies is seen not only in the construction of different types of data but also because the epistemological position adopted supported discovery of new insights as outlined in sections 6.1 and 6.2 above. The adoption of different methodologies allowed for a more robust examination of racial identity construction in Malaysia and Singapore by bringing together multiple interpretations of reality. There is no single multiracial or

monoracial experience, and the multiplicity of perspectives is highlighted in the different methodologies used. Together, the methodologies helped triangulate the different perspectives (individual, group, racial ingroup, racial outgroup), different levels of openness (face-to-face interaction versus anonymity of online responses), different aspects of racial identity (racial ascription, racial self-identification and identification by Others), and different socio-political contexts, which could be studied as research platforms, because of the relatively diverse methodological toolkit used.

Within the qualitative paradigm, I have used two different methods of data collection, interviews and focus group discussions and engaged with participants in one-to-one interactions online as well as in person. I adopted two different types of analysis, Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and Dialogical Analysis (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010; Aveling, Gillespie & Cornish, 2014) in the evaluation of the data. I hope to have presented qualitative research in a manner that does justice not only to the psychology of racial identity construction but also the research participants' voices by displaying sensitivity to the context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance as advised by Yardley (2000).

Within the quantitative paradigm, I have utilised online questionnaires to collect data from a significantly larger group of participants. In the analysis of open-ended questions in the questionnaire, I used Content Analysis (Bauer, 2000; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and statistical analysis to give a clearer picture of how racial identity constructions can systematically change across different socio-political contexts. Echoing Doise, Clemence & Lorenzi-Cioldi (1993) that quantitative analysis continues to provide insights that further our understanding of social representations, and by extension identities, I highlight the usefulness of the adoption of quantitative methodologies in the social psychological examination of racial identity construction. In addition to the value of correspondence analysis in analysing the connection between social representations and social memberships that they put forth in their book, I showed that using Content Analysis in the manner undertaken in Chapter 4 could also facilitate the examination of identity linked content of social representations.

Methodology	Study		
	1	2	3
Data	Interviews	Focus Groups	Survey, Focus Groups
Analysis	Thematic Analysis	Dialogical Analysis	Content Analysis, Statistical analysis, Thematic Analysis

Table 10: Different methodologies used in this thesis

6.5 Prospects for future research

While I have endeavoured to study racial identity construction among Malaysians and Singaporeans within the limited time and funding scale of the PhD that marks much of the research at graduate level, these very limitations possess possibilities for future research. A longer time frame for the recruitment of participants for the focus groups in Study 2, and as well as for the implementation of the focus groups in Malaysia would have been beneficial in exploring the breadth of issues relevant to a larger section of the population. This is especially significant given the timing of the focus groups after the introduction of the new Sedition Act in Malaysia. Study 3 would have also benefitted from an increase in the numbers of Malay and Indian participants, who were underrepresented in the final number of participants who completed the online questionnaire. Another angle of study that would benefit from a longer time frame would be a longitudinal study that follows individuals as they move from country of birth to new country to see how a change in socio-political context could influence their racial identity construction. Greater financial resources would also mean that differences within the Malaysian population could be captured. While this thesis focused on individuals from West Malaysia, some participants mentioned differences between individuals in East and West Malaysia. My personal experiences travelling in Sarawak, a Malaysian state in East Malaysia leads me to believe that it would be a worthwhile endeavour to expand this research paradigm to include

comparative research between East and West Malaysian individuals' racial identity construction.

Given that one of the aims of the PhD was to study racial identities in the context that they are constructed in, participants outside of the university environment were sought. However, the fact that participants were not primarily university students meant that they may not have had the experience of completing questionnaires and taking part in experiments that many university students have during the course of their undergraduate studies. This meant that the issue of questionnaire fatigue and unfamiliarity of quasi-experimental studies was a very real consideration for me as a researcher. Although 337 participants completed the study, just under 200 participants did not complete the study, with many participants dropping off after the second set of images. The repetitive nature of the images, which was important in manipulating context, could have been tedious for these participants. While Study 3 showed the possibilities of how the socio-political context could be manipulated through relevant images, a more realistic way of manipulating context that goes beyond the singular dimension of images could be developed in future research that would be accessible for participants who have little experience with such methods of learning about their perceptions and experiences. One suggestion would be to get participants to write a small vignette that describes the socio-political context relevant to the study so that the process of having to think about themselves in the context would present a more embodied experience.

In the process of recruiting participants online, I came across long discussions on Facebook and Twitter on race in Malaysia and Singapore, sparked off by recent events in the two countries. While many are quick to dismiss these passionate online conversations by "keyboard warriors", these discussions are ripe with tension, debate and disjuncture that are often painful to read, but the lack of restraint gives an insight into the psychology of the individual who is often speaking from a very candid and open place. While this presents an ethical minefield in terms of getting informed consent, as outlined by Gleibs (2014), this could be a potential line of enquiry for future studies into online and offline racial identities, as well as racial identity co-construction within the world wide web. Researchers can also form part of the

epistemological space under investigation when collecting online data (James & Bushner, 2009), thereby being more transparent to the participant in the data construction process.

Given the desire to get an in-depth understanding on racial identity construction for most of this thesis, the intersections between racial identities, religious identities and gender identities were not explored in detail. While this singular focus was important for this thesis, this opens up the field for future research to explore intersectionality as conceived by legal scholar Crenshaw (1989) within the social psychological paradigm. This intersectional approach in Social Psychology is a relatively younger approach in need of development (see Phoenix, 2006; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), having received much more traction in the field of Sociology. Each social category (race, gender, religion) intersects with one another to produce unique worldviews. This is not merely the result of an addition of each of the experiences and levels of oppression (depending on one's place in social hierarchies) that come along with each category, but rather a multiplication of these lived experiences that results in a particular perspective of the social world that one lives in and a multiplicative effect that cannot be neatly segmented. I wish to further explore how the intersection of racial identities with other identities such as nationality, gender and abilities (such as a physical disability) construct a particular type of reality for the individual. That is to say, that being an Indian British Hindu man is not the same as Indian+British+Hindu+man but rather the combination of these categories that render higher status in some situations and lower status in others. I hope to continue this line of thinking in researching race in the future because of its potential to better understand how race in itself comes associated with multiple intersections of which some may provide a buffer against racism, and others which drive the wedge between group boundaries deeper.

6.6 Implications

Whilst outlined above are the different types of contributions that may be useful for the social psychology community, I believe that my findings could be of interest to policy makers in multicultural communities such as Malaysia and

Singapore. Importantly, I add to research on "co-ethnicity" in Singapore and elsewhere (see Liu, 2014), in support of the view that sharing the same racial identity is not enough for group identity to form and thus community cohesion to develop. This is essential in understanding how new migrants who share the same racial country of origin, but not necessarily the country of birth and the socio-political context within which their racial identities are constructed, may or may not feel connected with second or third generation individuals in those countries. On the other hand, citizens who are second and third generation migrants themselves may not feel connected to new migrants because they hold different representations of those racial identities, as shown in Chapter 4.

Programmes that welcome new migrants into these countries need to be mindful of this and find ways to create a common identity beyond that, which is defined by racial boundaries. Representations of race are communicated to citizens through government discourse and social policies, as seen in Chapter 2. Policy makers should be aware of how the evolving demographics of multicultural societies, that are seeing an influx of new migrants, influence the individual's representations of race and how government institutions need to play a part in updating what they communicate to their citizens through their multicultural policies. As seen in Chapter 3, individuals are exhibiting a desire to move away from colonial constructions of race, and finding new ways to re-construct these identities. We have seen that people are resilient, they resist irrelevant representations and re-present them in a way that is strategic for them. Yet social policies could rise to meet this need of their citizens and facilitate social change at an institutional level, should they desire to truly shake themselves off from the shackles of colonial systems and move forward in the future.

This thesis has also informed my own research practice. I was focused on identifying ways that formal institutions and informal social structures limited individual's construction of racial identities in the initial stages of the research project. I thought that social change had to come from an institutional perspective, and that one of the goals of the thesis should be an elaborate signpost for the policy makers in Malaysia and Singapore to reduce the ways that race is constructed in a heavy handed manner because of the negative ways it influences Malaysian and Singaporean

citizens. As the project developed, I found increasingly that the individual possesses the capacity for social change, if not for anything else, because the society and the individual are intricately woven together. This thesis has shown how individuals disrupt government narratives in their daily lives, and finds other ways to make meaning of their social worlds. The individual possess the potential to create social change without governments and institutions, even when these institutions yield power in the construction of their racial identities. In fact, the individual *is* the social change because the Other is embedded in the Self and where the individual recognises this, there is an understanding of interconnectedness that is the catalyst for social change.

It would be a utopian vision to expect a society where race does not rule, but when we can change the rules of race, the rules that create boundaries both imagined and real between individuals, the rules that influence individual's constructions of race and the rules that have power and thrive in certain socio-political contexts, perhaps we have a chance. A chance to develop our own versions of racial identities, and so the world-making assumptions about race that inform our lives. A chance to live in a society where "the tool never possesses the (wo)man" (Fanon, 1967) and the political does not completely restrict the psychological.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics and Fieldwork Approval

Ethics Application
Institute of Social Psychology

Title of project: Ethnic Identity Negotiations and its impact on well-being among mixed ethnicity malaysians and singaporeans.

Name of Researcher(s): Geetha Reddy

Email Address: g.reddy@lse.ac.uk

Name of Supervisor (for MSc/PhD projects): Dr Ilka Gleibs

Date: 15 JANUARY 2014

		Yes	No	N/A
1	Will the proposed research entail any risk to the researcher(s)? (eg., entail travel to unstable regions, exposure to environmental risks, collection of sensitive data, or lone working in an unfamiliar context)		✓	

If you ticked **Yes** to Q1, you should complete a **risk assessment form**

		Yes	No	N/A
2	Will you describe the main experimental procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	✓		
3	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	✓		
4	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	✓		
5	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	✓		
6	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw at any time and for any reason?	✓		
7	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting any questions they do not want to answer?	✓		
8	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	✓		
9	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. given them a brief explanation of the study)?	✓		

If you ticked **No** to any of Q2-9, you should **tick box B** overleaf.

			Yes	No	N/A
10	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?			✓	
11	Is there any realistic risk of you or any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort? If **Yes**, give details on a separate sheet and state what you will tell them to do if they should experience any problems (e.g., who they can contact for help).			✓	
12	Does your project involve work with animals?			✓	
13	Do participants fall into any of the following special groups? Note that you may also need to obtain satisfactory CRB clearance(or equivalent for overseas students).	Schoolchildren (under age 18)		✓	
		People with learning or communication difficulties		✓	
		Parents		✓	
		People in custody		✓	
		People engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug taking)		✓	

If you have ticked **Yes** to any of Q10-13 you should **tick box B** overleaf.

There is an obligation on the lead researcher or supervisor to bring to the attention of the Departmental Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist.

PLEASE TICK **EITHER** BOX A OR BOX B BELOW AND **PROVIDE THE DETAILS REQUIRED** IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION. THEN SIGN THE FORM.

	Tick box
A. I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications to be brought before the Departmental Ethics Committee	✓

Give a brief description of participants and procedure (methods, tests used etc.) in up to 150 words.

Two qualitative and two quantitative studies will be carried out. The qualitative studies are semi structured individual interviews with 18 participants and the 10 focus group discussions with approximately 70 participants. The interviews will be carried out over skype and the focus groups will be carried out in Malaysia and singapore.

The quantitative studies will include questionnaires and experiments carried out online.

The participants for all the studies will be recruited through snowball sampling.

If you have ticked box A, then sign and submit this form (and any attachments) to the ISP Ethics Committee.

	Tick box
B. I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Departmental committee, and/or it will be carried out with children or other vulnerable populations	

Please provide all the further information listed below on a separate attachment.

1. Title of project
2. Purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. Brief description of methods and measurements
4. Participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. Consent, participant information, debriefing (*attach information, consent, & debrief sheets)
6. A clear concise statement of ethical issues raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.
7. Estimated start date and duration of the project.

If any of the above information is missing, your application will be returned to you.
If you have ticked box B, then sign and submit this form along with a separate document providing the above information (and any attachments) to the ISP Ethics Committee.

I am familiar with the BPS Guidelines for ethical practices in psychological research and I have discussed them with other researchers involved in the research (e.g., supervisor or co-researcher).

Student signature _____ Print Name **GEETHA REDDY** Date **13 JAN 2014**

Supervisor signature _____ Print Name Ilka Gleibs Date 13/1/14

Statement of Ethical Approval: To be Completed by the Chair of the Ethics Committee
This project has been considered using agreed procedures and is now approved.
Signature _____ Print Name ALEX GILLESPIE Date 14/1/14

LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

RESEARCH DEGREES UNIT

Application to undertake fieldwork
For MPhil/PhD students only

- This form should be completed if you want to spend time away from LSE to undertake fieldwork. **You must also complete the attached risk assessment.** If you are going on a placement (at another institution to conduct your fieldwork) your department will need to check that the other institution has satisfactory public liability insurance.
- Absence from the School for the purpose of fieldwork will not normally be allowed in the first year of registration.
- Periods of fieldwork will count towards the minimum and maximum periods of registration required by the School (paragraph 17, *Regulations for Research Degrees*)

Name	GEETHA V REDDY		
Student number	201130236	Do you have a student visa?	Yes
Department	SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY		

Dates of fieldwork

Number of terms of fieldwork	Date fieldwork to begin (e.g. Lent term 2012/13)	Date expected to return (e.g. Lent term 2013/14)
1	SUMMER TERM 2013/14	MICHELMAS 2014/15

Reason for the fieldwork

To carry out interviews and focus group discussions among Singaporeans and Malaysians of mixed ethnic identities in the respective local contexts, as part of my PhD research project entitled "Ethnic Identity negotiations among mixed ethnicity individuals in Singapore and Malaysia". It is anticipated that 2 focus group discussions and 12 interviews will be held in total over the course of the term. Recruitment for subsequent studies will also be carried out during this period.

Please indicate whether you are in receipt of any funding for your programme of study and if it has been awarded by the LSE:

NIL

While you are away, you must continue to pay a fee whilst on fieldwork. For ESRC, AHRC and LSE PhD scholarship award holders, the full fee will continue to be charged. For all other students, a reduced fee will be automatically applied. Reduced fees do not count towards the qualifying period of eligibility to pay the continuation fee. Therefore, you may wish to continue to pay the full fee. This maybe beneficial if you are sponsored and it is only available for a fixed number of academic years. More information can be found at our fieldwork page: http://www2.lse.ac.uk/researchStudents/Fieldwork.aspx.

I understand the options with regard to my fee liability and I wish to continue to pay full fees whilst on fieldwork please tick here: ☐

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS UNDERTAKING FIELDWORK

Checklist 1: Feasibility of the project

Access

Location(s) of fieldwork	SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA
How do you intend to travel to the fieldwork site?	AIR TRAVEL
What special travel arrangements, if any, will be involved in conducting the fieldwork?	N.A.
Is it possible to get permission from local institutions and authorities to conduct the fieldwork?	YES
Has travel and health insurance been arranged?	YES
Are special insurance provisions required (e.g. emergency medical evacuations from some regions will require a supplement to be paid; working in specific regions may also involve an insurance surcharge)?	N.A.

Please note that you must arrange your own travel and health insurance; the School's insurance will not cover you while you are on fieldwork.

Training

Does the work require access to remote areas?	NO
Does this require any special skills needed for traversing hazardous terrain, e.g. mountainous, desert, ice-bound, jungle, or open water conditions?	N.A.
May this need specialist equipment, and if so, what?	N.A.
If accessing remote areas are you trained to an appropriate level in wilderness first aid?	N.A.
Have you acquired appropriate language skills? Alternatively, have you made appropriate provision to be accompanied by a translator?	YES
If the project involves research into sensitive subjects (e.g. sexual health) then have you received appropriate interpersonal skills training?	N.A.
Are there particular knowledge and skills needed for everyday activities at this site (e.g. food preparation, filtering and treatment to provide potable drinking water)?	N.A.
Will the work require specialist driving skills (e.g. off-road driving, traversing moving water courses, etc)	N.A.

Health

Will the fieldwork involve working in countries outside the EU, USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand?	YES
Do you need malaria or other prophylactic advice and treatment?	NO
Do you need particular vaccinations for this specific fieldwork site?	NO
Do you need a health or dental check-up?	NO
Are appropriate first aid kits available?	NO
Do you have a specific medical requirement for which you are fully prepared, e.g. asthma inhalers, epipens, emergency and back-up medication?	N.A.

Pre-planning

Are all the relevant documents easily available (e.g. permits to work, visas, insurance, driving licences, proof of vaccinations etc)?	YES
Does your tutor or supervisor have a record of your next of kin and home GP?	YES
Has a record been lodged with an appropriate 'home contact' of any specific medical problems (e.g. allergies, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, medication needs)?	N.A.
Have local authorities been informed of the work (if appropriate) and have all appropriate permissions been sought?	N.A.
Have the local conditions been evaluated on the basis of information, such as can be obtained on the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/	YES
Has information been sought on local codes of practice, standards and legal statutes that may be relevant to the fieldwork?	YES
Has knowledge been obtained about local culture and customs?	YES
Are provisions in place for the logging of itineraries and return times?	YES

Checklist 2: Risks inherent in the travel

Transport

What method of travel will be used to reach the fieldwork site (e.g. car, public transport, air travel or a combination of these)?	AIR TRAVEL
Are there any particular hazards associated with these methods of travel in the fieldwork area?	NO
What method of travel will be used during fieldwork?	CAR/PUBLIC TRANSPORT
What measures are being taken to address any significant fieldwork hazards (e.g. suitable transport, qualified drivers for conditions, maintained vehicles)?	N.A.
Are suitable maps and navigational aids available?	YES
Have you evaluated the risks of various modes of transport in the fieldwork area, and considered any appropriate alternatives?	YES

Equipment/vehicles

Do your vehicles comply with all local legislation?	YES
Are they adequately insured for the purpose for which they will be used?	YES
Are they correctly maintained and serviced?	YES
Are they correctly loaded?	YES
If visiting remote locations are critical spares available?	N.A.
Will adequate fuel be available?	YES

Training

Does the work require access to remote areas?	NO
Does this require any special skills (e.g. navigation by map and compass, and/or by electronic navigation equipment)?	NO
Do you need training in self-administered wilderness	NO

First Aid (for instance, are you more than two hours from reliable medical facilities)?	
Is your level of driving competence appropriate for the location (e.g. significant experience of off-road driving, defensive driving techniques)?	YES

Checklist 3: risks inherent in the site

Physical hazards

Are the fieldwork activities likely to encounter extreme weather (e.g. hot or cold desert, extreme heat or cold, tropical jungle conditions, etc)?	NO
Are your equipment and clothing sufficient to meet these conditions?	N.A.
Will the fieldwork involve moving across extreme or hazardous terrain, including watercourses (e.g. on foot, by bike or using public transport)?	NO
Is your training sufficient to meet these conditions?	N.A.

Biological and environmental hazards

Are local animal populations likely to present any special hazard?	NO
What measures are being taken to address any significant hazards (e.g. suitable clothing such as a bug jacket or headnet, antidotes for venom, rabies inoculations, tick hooks to prevent Lyme disease, etc)?	N.A.
Does plant life at the fieldwork site present any hazard?	NO
Will there be chemicals, biological agents or dusts present at any part of the fieldwork location, of the kind covered in the UK by COSHH [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health] regulations (e.g. industrial or agricultural site, hospitals or laboratories)? See http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/	NO
Will a COSHH assessment be needed or has a local assessment of similar standard already been undertaken?	N.A.
Are levels of air- or other types of pollution likely to pose a danger?	NO
Is there a prospect of imminent military activity or civil unrest?	NO
If overseas has contact been made with the appropriate officials from your own country (e.g. US State Department, LOCATE system for UK citizens, etc)?	YES

Checklist 4: risks inherent in the work

Personal safety

Has the risk of attack been assessed and provided for (if appropriate)?	N.A.
Has appropriate equipment been obtained (e.g. personal attack alarms)?	N.A.
Are accident and emergency plans in place (including emergency evacuation plans)?	N.A.
Has a routine method of communication been established (e.g. landline telephone, mobile phone, satellite link, radio, email, fax or other)?	N.A.
Has an alternative method of communication in an emergency been established?	N.A.
If lone working is to be undertaken can it be justified	N.A.

(taking account of the hostility and location of the site and your experience)?	
Has a daily itinerary been lodged with a responsible person?	YES
Is there a daily routine for logging in and out with a nominated person, who could raise the alarm if necessary?	YES
Do you feel you have adequate communications equipment in the event of a systems failure or 'black out' (e.g. portable radio)?	N.A.
Do you have a local 'home contact' who can alert your main 'home contact' to be in touch with appropriate authorities in case of an emergency?	YES

Food and accommodation

Are there adequate arrangements for the provision and hygienic preparation of food and water?	YES
Do you have adequate knowledge of local potable water conditions and the necessary standards of food hygiene and preparation?	YES
Is appropriate secure accommodation available?	YES
If necessary, do you have a 'Plan B' for alternative secure accommodation as a refuge in an emergency?	YES

Clothing and equipment

Do you have adequate and appropriate clothing for the location and any conditions that you may encounter there, including the need to 'blend in' with local cultural expectations?	YES
Is your equipment fit for the purpose and is it well maintained?	N.A.
Are you adequately trained in its use?	N.A.
Has appropriate safety equipment been provided and is it being used (e.g. malaria protection nets).	N.A.
Is project-critical or safety-critical equipment repairable on site?	N.A.
If not, should it be duplicated before leaving for the fieldwork site?	N.A.

Emergency evacuation and additional factors

Have adequate provisions been made for evacuation and the recovery of casualties and medical emergencies to an appropriate health care facility (e.g. this may require special arrangements with an insurance provider)?	YES
Do you know the procedures to be followed in case of such an emergency evacuation?	YES
Are there any other significant hazards attached to your proposed trip, and have you taken care to evaluate any further issues that might give rise to 'serious additional risk' for you?	NO

Research Ethics

LSE has a research ethics policy and guidance with which all students undertaking research are required to comply. Please read these and discuss with your supervisor whether there are any ethical dimensions that have not been addressed previously.

If new ethical dimensions have been identified, please tick here:

Student's signature

I confirm that I have carried out a risk assessment in accordance with the School's policy and that I consider reasonable measures are in place to provide for my safety and deal with the eventualities identified in the risk assessment. I am undertaking this fieldwork of my own volition and I acknowledge that it is not required by the School. I accept that while engaged in fieldwork or away from the School I am responsible for my own health, safety and possessions.

	Date
[signature]	7 Nov 2013

Supervisor's signature

I certify that the student has satisfied me that a risk assessment has been carried out in line with the School's procedures and that the student has shown me that reasonable measures are in place to provide for his/her safety and deal with the eventualities identified in the risk assessment.

	Date
[signature]	7/11/13

Doctoral Programme Director's signature	Date
[signature]	26/11/13

FOR OFFICE USE:

Chair of Research Degrees Subcommittee's signature	Date

Additional comments from the Chair:

For office use only:	
Date received:	Visa check completed:
Date sent to RDSC Chair:	SITS amended:
Date approved/rejected:	Fee liability (if applicable) amended:
Email confirmation to student (and department):	

Confirmation email

From: Brack,M
Sent: 11 September 2017 10:01
To: Reddy,G (pgr)
Subject: RE: Fieldwork application approval forms 2014 and 2016

Dear Geetha

I have checked and we do not have the emails archived. They are usually automated from the Database. I can confirm that we approved fieldwork 28 April 2014 to 30 September 2014 and 1 October 2016 and 12 January 2017.

Regards
Matt

Matthew Brack
PhD Academy Assistant Director
PhD Academy
LSE
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE

http://www.lse.ac.uk/PhDAcademy

Appendix 2: Thematic Table for Study 1

Codes	Basic Themes	Description	Main themes
Chameleon Identity	**Identity is both situation specific and blended**	Participants do not report conflict between the different identities and adopt identities based on the demands of the situation	**Private racial identity is malleable and dynamic**
Hybrid identity			
Self Identity Construal	**Self categorisation separate from government categorisation**	Government categorisation does not affect self identity and Sense of self not from race identity	
Negatives associated with being mixed	**Benefits and Costs of being a MRI**	Participants discuss negative and positive experiences, as well as advantages and disadvantages of being a MRI	**Importance of multiple racial identities can be re-assessed based on situation**
Positives associated with being mixed			
Raceblindness	**Invisibility of race**	Race is not perceived as a factor by participants/stakeholders	
Advantages of being the majority race	**Impact of Racial demography**	Participants describe advantages associated with being the majority race in M'sia and SG	**Political structures influence creation of public racial identity**
Disadvantages of being minority race			
Government level categorisation and race based policies	**Government classification systems impact racial identity construction**	Government imposed categorisation system and relevant social policies have a significant impact on MR identity negotiation	
Policies favour majority race			
Double barrel identity classification			
Conflict occurs in some situations	**Conflict is context driven**	Conflict between self-identification and categorisation is context specific	
Political disengagement	**Politics in Malaysia**	Participants discuss not voting in M'sia and how political	**Everyday politics**

Race based politics		parties are aligned according to race	merges with institutional politics
Language Politics	The politics of learning and speaking languages	Language seems to be intricately linked to claiming a racial identity. Acquiring 2nd language dependent on IC classification.	
Mixed race represents Malaysia	What is the Malaysian Identity?	Both Malaysian and Singaporean national identity are related closely to individual racial identities	Racial identity and nationality are interrelated in Malaysia and Singapore
Ketuanan Melayu (Malay dominance)			
Mixed race represents Singapore	What is the Singaporean Identity?		
Multicultural Society			
Relationship between nationality and race	Nationality and Race overlap		
Geographical differences	Geographical location matters in MRI identity construction	City vs. East Malaysia vs. Experiences overseas different from SG/M'sia	Identity construction differs among MRIs in different countries
Differences between Singapore and Malaysia	MRIs' experiences differ between SG & M'sia	MRIs Experiences differ between SG & M'sia	
Importance of religion	Religious identity is salient in racial identity construction	Religious identity is both important in claiming a racial identity, and also important in perceiving that race is not as important an identity	Boundaries between race and religion are blurred in racial identity construction
Malay Muslim Identity	Malay Identity is intertwined with Muslim identity	Malay and Muslim identity overlap in these two countries	
Not Indian/Malay/Chinese enough	Inadequacy related to claiming membership in group	Not fitting certain stereotypes of a racial group challenges self categorization	Denial of complexity in racial identities by Others

Physical appearance	Importance of physical appearance	Appearance seems to be important for participants in claiming their racial identity. Non-mixed Singaporeans also seem to assume the race of the participants based on their appearance.	
Miscategorised by others	Mismatch between self categorisation and categorisation by others	Non-MRIs categorise MRIs differently from self categorisation	
Prejudices, Stereotypes, Racism	Prejudices, Stereotypes, Racism by non- MRIs	Participants talk about prejudices/stereotypes/racism faced by MRIs, as well as prejudices/stereotypes/racism associated with being a specific racial group in the 2 countries	
Societal Expectations and its management	Society uses heuristics to categorise MRIs	Singaporean and Malaysian society uses heuristics/stereotypes to categorise people	
Social Circle	Influence of social circle	How the social circle (friends, colleagues) influences perceptions of MRIs	
Negative experiences with others	Others make racial identity challenging	Races are conflicting when others make it so	
Parenting Style and Race	Influence of Parents' experiences, and parenting styles	Participant's parents and grandparents have a significant impact on their MR identity negotiation	Family may provide a safe space for private racial identity
Parents' Marriage			
Family Influence and Issues			

- MRI- Multiracial Individual
- M'Sia- Malaysia
- SG- Singapore

Thematic map/Narrative arc for Chapter 2

- Denial of complexity in racial identities by Others
- Private racial identity is malleable and dynamic
- Political structures influence creation of public racial identity
- Private and Public Racial Identities
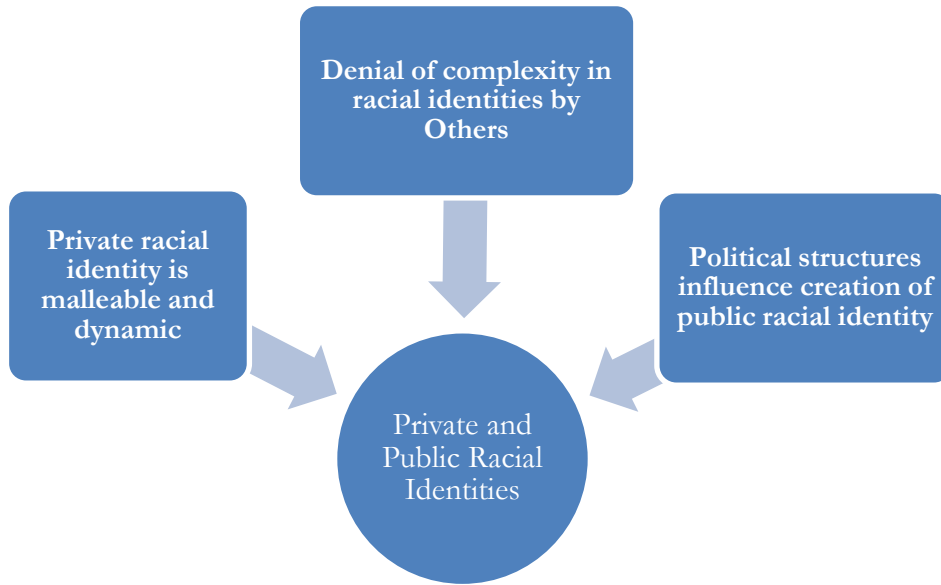
Appendix 3: Dialogical Analysis Table for Study 2

	Constructions of		
Constructions by	*Chinese Identity*	*Malay Identity*	*Indian Identity*
Chinese identifying individuals	Chinese as a Mandarin Language speaker Chinese as traditional Chinese as enterprising Chinese as religiously diverse Chinese as educated in Chinese medium schools Chinese as kiasu Chinese as having privilege Chinese as having small eyes	Malays are relaxed and not industrious Malay as Muslim Malay as made to be complacent Malay as a Malay speaker Malays don't eat pork and don't drink	Indians as Tamil Language speaker Indians as well spoken Indians as doctors and lawyers
Malay identifying individuals	Chinese as enterprising Chinese as privileged	Malays who speak English have lost their Malayness Malay as lazy Malay as Muslim Malays as insular group Malay as a Malay speaker Malays are not homogenous Malay as minah Malay as rich in culture	Indians as Tamil Language speakers Indians as united Indians as North Indian and South Indian

Indian identifying individuals	Chinese as Mandarin language speakers	Malay as Muslim Malays as insular groupMalays don't care about money Malays are multi-ethnicity Malay as lazy	Indians as Tamil speakers, Punjabi speakers, Malayalam speakers, Telugu speakers, Malay speakers, Urdu speakers Indians as English educated Indians as pottu wearing Indians as labourers Indians as alcoholics Indians as Black Indians as "Keling"

Appendix 4: Thematic table for Study 3

Content Analysis Coding Framework (Study 1 of Chapter 4)

Chinese Racial Identity Constructions

Basic Codes	Final Codes
Hardworking	
Kind	
Resourceful	
Successful	
Driven	Positive personality constructions
Unique	
Community Spirit	
Friendly	
Inconsiderate	
Racist	
Entitled	
Loud	Negative personality constructions
Kiasu	
Arrogant	
Narrow minded	
Marginalised	
Stereotyped	Marginalised
2nd class citizen	
Wealthy	Wealth
Materialistic	
Conservative	Neutral personality constructions
Kiasu	
Multilingual	
Unable to speak good Mandarin	Language
Cantonese Speaking	
Immigrants/migrants	
Foreigners	
Tourists	Foreigner Status
Westernised	

Leaders	
Students	Profession
Business people	
Treated better than Chinese in Malaysia	
Associated with mainland China	Comparison with Chinese in other countries
Different from "mainland Chinese"	
Minority	Majority vs. Minority
Majority	
Chinese Privilege	Chinese Privilege
Malaysians	Malaysian
Malaysians are nicer	
Educated	Educated
Associated with food	Associated with food

Indian Racial Identity Constructions

Basic Codes	Final Codes
Marginalised	
Stereotyped	Marginalised
Misunderstood	
Treated as equal to other races	Treated as equal to other races
Minority	Minority
Friendly	
Brave	
Awesome	
Hardworking	
Driven	
Talented	Positive Personality Constructions
Successful	
Open	
Respectable	
Good communicators	
Creative	
Aggressive	
Narrow minded	
Alcoholic	
Unhygienic	Negative Personality Constructions
Prejudiced	
Self-deprecating	
Different from Indians in India	Comparison with Indians from other countries
Better compared to own country Indians	
Religious	
Fortunate	Neutral Personality Constructions
Conservative	
Connected to Indian Roots	
Community Spirit	Connected to Indian Community
Tamil	
Educated	Related to educational outcomes
Uneducated	
Poor	Related to wealth outcomes

Rich	
Expats	
Immigrants/Migrants	Foreigner Status
Westernised	
Tanned	Appearance
Beautiful	
Vibrant culture	Cultural
Connected to food	
Construction workers	Work related
Professionals	

Malay Identity Constructions

Basic Codes	Final Codes
Brave	
Friendly	
Adaptable	Positive Personality Constructions
Successful	
Hardworking	
Unambitious	
Racist	
Entitled	Negative Personality Constructions
Loud	
Emotional	
Conservative	Neutral Personality Constructions
Skin colour	
Majority	Majority vs. Minority
Minority	
Liberal	
Modern	Level of openness
Ignorant	
Community Spirit	Community and Culture
Strong sense of culture	
Religious (Islam)	Religious Dimensions
Unislamic	
Marginalised	Marginalised
English Competency Higher	Levels of Competence/Education
Well Educated	
Students	Profession
Professionals	

Thematic Analysis (Study 2 of Chapter 4)

Code	Basic Theme	Description	Main theme
Malaysia vs Singapore	**Differences between Malaysia and Singapore**	Race is understood and experienced differently in Malaysia and Singapore	**Racial identification does not always transcend geographical boundaries**
Leaving the country to be recognised as a citizen of the country	**Change of socio-political context means being able to identify with national identity**	Participants discuss being able to identify with nationality outside of country of citizenship/country of birth	
Local vs London	**Differences between home country and London**	Racial identities are experienced and managed differently between home country and London	
Comparison with "home" country			
"Outside vs inside"			
Superordinate identity	**Identification beyond race**	Other identities such as national identity are preferred	
Freedom to create racial identity outside of local context	**Freedom to re-construct racial identity outside of "local" socio-political context**	Participants talk about being able to construct their racial identities more freely in London compared to Malaysia or Singapore	
What does it mean to be Malay	**Change in identity constructions across politicised geographies**	Participants have different constructions of racial identity differentiated by country of origin, country of citizenship/birth and country of residence	
What does it mean to be Chinese			
What does it mean to be Indian			

Diversity in Indian categorisation	**Indian identity more complex than Category**	Identity is complex, category is simplified	
Not fitting into boxes	**Not fitting into boxes**	Participants do not fit neatly into racial categorisation framework	
Chinese Chinese vs Western Chinese	**Formation of different boundaries within same racial identity**	Racial identity is not homogenous among members of same racial group	**Racial categories used by government is limiting and essentialising**
Formation of group boundaries			
Race is important in Malaysia	**Importance of race in both Malaysia & Singapore**	Race is pervasive in both countries and participants need to engage with racial identity frameworks in their daily lives	
Race is important in Singapore			
Distancing self from existing stereotypes	**Distancing self from existing stereotypes**	Racial Stereotypes lead participants to distance themselves from racial identity	**Stigma and Stereotypes influence change in racial identity construction**
Stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination	**Stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination**	What are the different racial stereotypes?	
Common cultural references as a group boundary	**Cultural references unite members of same racial identity**	Participants draw from similar cultural experiences to connect with members of the same racial identity across geographical boundaries	**Cultural Reference but not identification**
Sharing same race is a bridge for social interactions	**Racial identity connects**	Sharing the same racial	

Chineseness/Indianess/Malayness connects people across national boundaries	**people from diaspora**	identity can mean connecting with people in different countries	

Thematic map/ Narrative Arc
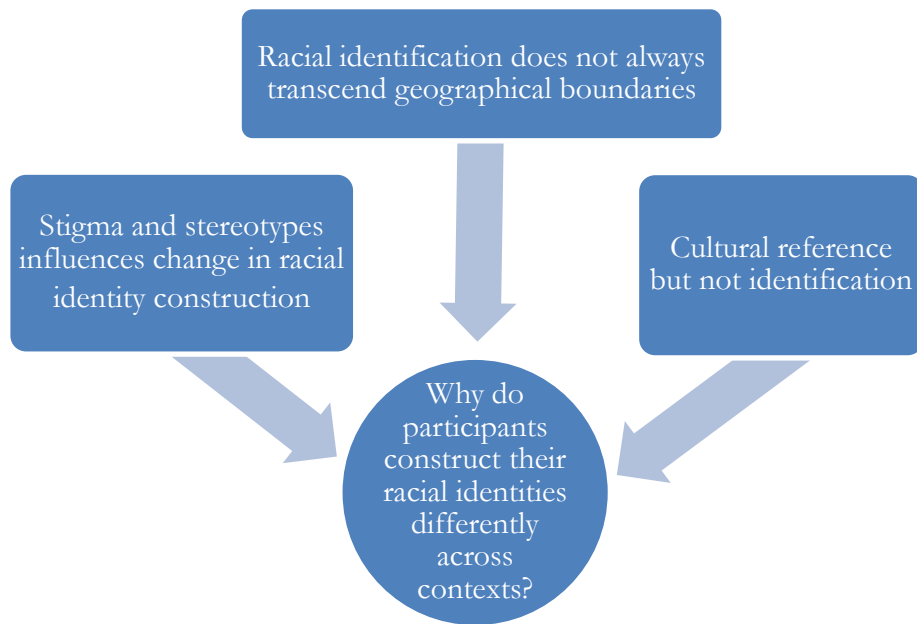
Appendix 5: Recruitment for Study 1

Mixed Ethnicity voices needed for PhD research project

I am Geetha Reddy, a PhD student at the London School of Economics and Political Science. I am interested in how mixed ethnicity individuals understand ethnic identity, and how they feel that their environment helps them in their understanding.

I am looking for 15 Malaysians and Singaporeans of mixed Asian ethnicity (Chinese+Indian, Malay+ Chinese, Chinese+Iban, Indian+Malay etc.) for a Skype interview in April/May. The session will last for an 1 hour.

As research participants, your identity and responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Please contact me at g.reddy@lse.ac.uk or through my website www.reddygeetha.com. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you!

Online interviews

Appendix 6: Recruitment for Study 2

Focus groups in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore

Focus groups in London

Appendix 7: Recruitment for Study 3

Online questionnaire

Appendix 8: Interview schedule and Sample transcript from Study 1

Introduction	Remarks
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study. (Introduce yourself) Thank you for filling in the short questionnaire on background information and emailing it to me. I hope to get as much information as possible so please share as many details and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your opinions. The interview will be recorded so that I can write out transcripts, which will help me analyse the results later. No names or personal identifiers will be used at any stage of the analysis. All information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Are there any questions at this stage? Ok, before we begin, could you share with me why you agreed to take part in this interview?	
Main Discussion points	Issues that require attention/Probes
1. Your parents are of different ethnicities. Which ethnic identity do you associate yourself most with? Why?	Did you explore the 2 identities or did you accept it as such? Is there an intermediate position that is reached? Do you see the identities as conflicting or fluid? In what way and under which circumstances? (Context dependent i.e. family, school?)

2. What racial category was used to describe you when you were born?	If participant has mentioned different identity previously, ask why they do not claim the identity given to them. I.e. So there is a difference in the identity given to you and that which you claim as your own. Why do you think this is so?
	What do you think were the influences on your parents in choosing one identity over the other? School/social class/peer groups?
	What racial categories have you been given by others, other than your parents? I.e. School, peers.
3. Do you have friends/other family members (not from your immediate family) who are mixed?	
4. In 2010, the government gave parents the option of putting both the identities on the birth certificate/IC (identity cards) for their children. Did you know about this new option? The take up rate has been 1 in 5 babies. Why do you think many parents have taken/not taken up this option?	What are certain issues involving the take up of this option?
5. Knowing that you can take up this option, would you change your IC to reflect your mixed parentage now?	Why/why not? Is there any point in time where there may be a change in this racial categorisation for you? When? Why?

6. Do you think being identified as a single race is better?	In what ways? Do you think it is more advantageous to be identified as Chinese or Indian as your dominant race? Why? Is one ethnicity seen as more prestigious than the other?
7. Is there any prejudice or stereotype associated with being of mixed parentage?	Have you encountered any racism/prejudice personally? Have your family members experienced any racism/prejudice? Have your extended family members discriminated against you for being mixed? What do you think are the advantages of being mixed ethnicity?
8. How does your identity of being an individual of mixed ethnicity relate to your identity of being Singaporean?	Do you see them as separate or connected? Is it difficult/easy? Where do you think you fit into the CMIO model that is used in many aspects of Singaporean life? For e.g. housing, GRC elections and social support from organisations like Sinda and Mendaki. What do you think are the future implications for the model?
9. We are now at the end of our discussion and I would like to get some feedback from you. *Considering all the issues discussed this afternoon, which do you feel are the most important issues discussed?*	Have we missed out any important issue?

Sample Interview from Multiracial Malaysian Participant

INT = Hemera, Interviewee
GR =   Geetha Reddy, Interviewer

<u>Recording 1 starts</u>

GR: Thank you so much for spending some of your time with this morning to help me out with my interviews. I'm Geetha and I'm currently doing my PhD at the London School of Economics & Political Science, and this will be my first study for my PhD, the first out of four studies. I have 30 interviews and I'm actually at the end of the data collection and once this is done, I will actually be transcribing the interviews and analysing the data after that.

        So this interview is being recorded. No names or personal identifiers will be used at any stage of the analysis, so you will be given another name, or you can give me a name if you'd prefer. If I were to quote you in my paper, I would use this other name in the paper.

        I just want to get as much information as possible, so please share as many details and opinions and stories that you're comfortable with sharing. I just want to know more about what your experience is growing up mixed ethnicity in Malaysia and I'm just interested in your opinions. All the information will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Do you have any questions at this stage?

INT: No questions. I'll just see as it goes along and if I have anything I can ask you.

GR: Thank you. Before we begin, could you just share with me why you agreed to take part in this interview?

INT: Well, I thought it was an interesting thing to study. Of course being mixed for my whole life, it's been a very interesting part of my life, and sometimes there are good parts and bad parts. So I would also be interested in looking at your findings as well to see what other people who are also like me in Malaysia would have thought about this; so what your findings are. In a way, I'm also hoping to be able to help you as well.

GR: Thank you so much. So your parents are different ethnicities, could you just describe these ethnicities?

INT: My father is a Malayalee, he's from Kerala. He moved to Malaysia when he was very young, he was about five years old, so most of his childhood was spent in Malaysia but his early childhood was in India. My mother is Malay, she's from Negeri Sembilan, which is a state a few hundred kilometres south of here. Actually the origin of her family is Indonesian Minangkabau, but her ancestors have come to Malaysia before she was born. She was born in Malaysia but her ancestors are from Indonesia, so that's the background of ethnicity of my parents.

GR: Which ethnic identity do you associate yourself most with?

INT: Actually I think I associate with both at different times, I'm quite close to both sides of the family. But in terms of religion I am a Muslim, so in that sense, in terms of the religious part, it's more towards the Malay part, but other than that I would say I'm both at equal times.

GR: Did you get to explore the two ethnic identities or did you accept it as such?

INT: What do you mean by explore?

GR: Did you explore what it was to be Indian, what it was to be Malay?

INT: I didn't consciously explore it, what it means to be Indian or Malay per se, but in terms of my identity, it was more associated closely to the religious part of it rather than the ethnic part of it. For example, as I was growing up, of course back then mixed marriages were not very accepted yet, and I think even now not so but not as bad as before.

So in the very early years, there was… I mean my father and my mother kind of got married against the wishes of their parents. So the issue of me and my brother not being a Christian was a bigger deal in my father's side of the family rather than us not being fully Malayalee or fully Indian. So that was something that, as a child, we kind of grappled with. There were times when we did not get Christmas presents because we weren't Christian, but of course now after the years, we are accepted as part of the family.

It was perhaps a bit harder for the Malayalee side because Malayalees try to also marry Malayalees most of the time. My father was the eldest boy in the family so the eldest boy is supposed to carry on the bloodline. So with him choosing to marry my mother, this was a very big deal for his family especially, and especially since he had to convert to Islam. In Malaysia you have to convert to Islam.

Because of that, my grandmother was very disappointed especially, and there were a few years where he was sort of… not really disowned but very much treated quite unkindly by his side of the family. But I think this was just an

adjustment period because now we are very close and both sides of the family, we are fine. They have grown to accept us and we have also grown to accept them, even though we are the only… yes, we're actually the only mixed from both sides.

GR: Two questions I have here, firstly, at which stage did your father convert?

INT: He converted just before marriage, so actually he converted because he wanted to get married so it was the marriage thing.

GR: And could you just explain a bit more about how he and how your family was treated unkindly by your father's side?

INT: Well, maybe the word 'unkind' is a bit too strong, but just to give you an example when my father and my mother got married, my father's side was not aware of the marriage. So there was nobody from my father's side who was there, and only after that my father had to slowly bring them around to the idea that he was already married to my mother. My grandmother actually had told my father, if you marry this Malay girl, I will kill myself, but she didn't, luckily. So things like this.

Other things like not getting any Christmas presents and then my auntie used to call us mongrels, mixed breed. She used to refer to me and my brother as mongrels to denote that we're not pure Malayalee and, therefore, we are not as good as her children who are pure Malayalee. So this kind of thing.

It didn't really affect me so much at the time because I was fairly young but it affected my mother a lot. My mother had a very hard relationship with my father's sister for a few years but now it's much better.

GR: What was the change?

INT: The change I think it was just time. Most of us are in KL so we are around each other a lot. We're not in different areas, so we do meet quite often so you cannot really avoid… We are not excluded from the family and especially since we live quite close by to my Indian grandparents, so usually whatever they need, my grandparents will not have to but tend to look for my father. So he was still carrying on his filial duties even though he had changed his religion.

I think also because religion is not a huge part of our lives. I mean as in we are Muslim but we are not super Muslim if you know what I mean, so it's not a big part of our lives. So it was not very obvious all the time, so it was more about how often we visited them, how often we saw them and what we did to help them or to keep them as part of our life. So after a while, the

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change of religion sort of was not forgotten but it wasn't that important back then, and that normalised it I think.

GR: Touching on your point about super Muslim, what is being super Muslim and where do you practice in the spectrum of Islam?

INT: I think partly because of my mixed background, we did not grow up in an atmosphere where it was a very religious house. My father he converted because he wanted to get married, so he was a practising Christian for 30 years plus. It was a love marriage so the religious part sort of became a very personal thing, it's not a family thing.

If you want to be religious you can pray in your own way, you can go and study in your own way, you can go to mosque. Well, my father was basically asked to leave his church because he converted so he was quite sad about that, but he had to accept it. So he couldn't go to church unless it's a wedding or whatever like that. It became something personal so if I wanted to go, I can go; if my mother wants to go, she can go and all that.

My mother had religious classes for me and my brother but it was just a way for us to learn about the religion but nothing was really imposed very strictly upon us. We practised fasting during the fasting season. We have no qualms about praying and (…) and all this, it's just whether we want to do it. Nobody has forced us to become anything that we're not prepared to do. So religion is something that's personal, it's not at the family level and everybody practices in their own way.

GR: Do you see the ethnic identities of being Malayalee and being Malay as conflicting or as fluid?

INT: Do you mean that I have to either be Malayalee or Malay, is that what you're trying to say?

GR: If that's how you feel, you could explain that as well, but do you see the identities as being at odds with each other or are you able to manoeuvre…?

INT: It's fairly easy for me to manoeuvre into either or because when we celebrate our Islamic festivals, (…), we go back to our village, and then when we go back to the village, then basically we practice the Malay culture and I participate in whatever is going on as well. At the same time during Christmas and all that, we visit our father's side and then we also take part in that. When there are family weddings or any funeral weeks or anything like that, we also go to their houses and we take part. Even when they pray, we still pray together. Usually I find it quite easy to adapt to both cultures. I think it's not difficult for me because I've been doing it my whole life, it's quite natural already.

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At the same time also sometimes this Malayalee thing over here in Malaysia, it seems like being Malayalee is a bigger deal than being Malay, like being Malayalee is really something. You are a rare breed, for example, so you have to be proud of it, you have to be very conscious of it. But for the Malay side not so much. They're quite chilled about it.

So even when my mother and father got married, my mother's side was a bit disappointed but they did not protest as much, but the Malayalee side were the ones who made a bigger deal about it. I think the Malayalee identity in Malaysia, because we are a smaller group of people, it may be that they have a tendency of trying to protect it more, trying to make it more special, trying to make sure that it is retained as it is.

GR: Are there certain contexts where you find that the ethnic identities are conflicting?

INT: In my personal life you mean?

GR: Yes.

INT: Sometimes in terms of food, there may be times when… you know we're not allowed to drink alcohol so sometimes when we are in our Malayalee side family's house, we will be offered wine, or something like that, and because we are not super Muslims sometimes they expect us to accept. Like my mother, my father, my brother they are quite okay., Their philosophy is that if you take a bit, it is okay, it's not that you're going to get drunk or anything like that.

But me personally, I stopped taking alcohol a few years back. It's not really because I had some sort of big change of heart or whatever but I just thought that I didn't particularly enjoy it, I don't need it, so why should I even do it a bit? So I should just totally not touch it at all since it's part of the religion anyway.

So when things like that happen, it might be a bit of an awkward situation but usually if I refuse them, they will just laugh it off, they won't make a big deal out of it. But for the Malayalee side, they are very careful about pork with us. So they have never served pork when we are around so that's very good. They don't even ask, they don't even offer, and also because I think they generally don't really eat pork that much anyway. But in terms of food, that's the only part where it does come up in some situations where we have to really identify ourselves, we are Muslim, or we are Malay so we cannot eat this, but otherwise there's no problem.

GR: What was it like growing up in school?

INT: In school, there was not much problem because I grew up in Kuala Lumpur in a particular suburb called Bukit Damensara, Sri Hatamas and this was quite an affluent suburb, Sri Hatamas is besides Bukit Damansara which is a very affluent suburb, it's kind of upper middle class. So I was in the not super affluent but beside it. But we went to school in Bukit Damensara

So a lot of the people in school were also quite mixed as well. A lot of them were mixed half white, half Malaysian; a lot of them were Chindians. I don't think there were many Malay Indians but then it was not something too out of the ordinary in that school.

Also because of the background of the parents and all, they were a bit more affluent so I think they were a bit more open minded, so their kids were able to accept. So I don't think we felt anything strange about being mixed. Of course there will be questions about my name, do I look Malay? Do I look Indian? That kind of stuff, but it was not anything mean, it was just more of curiosity. Like how to pronounce my name, that was a big deal in school but it was nothing negative about it, just the practical stuff how to pronounce the name and who do you look like? That kind of stuff.

GR: How did that make you feel when people asked you who do you look like?

INT: It used to make me feel a bit… not offended, because I see people and people look so different anyway. To me even Malays, they look so varied. So sometimes I feel a bit like, do I look that different anyway? Because even within that race, there are people who look like all kind of things. So in the beginning I was like, why do they think I look different because even they themselves within their own group look different?

After that, it used to be a bit amusing when they say, but actually you don't look very Malay. For some reason they think I look more Indian than Malay. I don't think of it as anything bad because I guess it makes me more memorable and people won't forget me so fast. And also my name as well I think is quite special so people won't forget me. So I think it's a positive thing, you don't just blend into the crowd. In those terms, to me now I think of it as a positive.

GR: What racial categories have you been given by others other than your parents, like at school, your peers?

INT: Well, a lot of people assume that I'm *Mamak*. That kind of makes me a bit annoyed because it is an assumption, just because they know that I'm Muslim and I look Indian so they assume that I'm *Mamak*, meaning that I am an Indian Muslim. So in that sense, I'm a bit annoyed because they do

not acknowledge my Malay heritage. They seem to think I'm completely Indian but I'm Muslim.

And also maybe it's also a bit of the Malayalee sense of defending your Malayalee-ness as well, because I'm not Indian, I'm Malayalee Malay. So that is one category that I have to continuously keep correcting people. I think it's the lack of understanding of people, like they assume that all people who are Indian but Muslim are *Mamak*, and because I look more Indian, they assume that I'm also *Mamak*.

So I think that is one categorisation that I have been called a lot and I always make a point to correct people, and also to educate them that not all Indians are this *Mamak* if you're Muslim, so that's one.

People also look at me and they assume that I have some either Eurasian heritage or Portuguese heritage. So I also correct them immediately and I tell them that my mum is Malay and my father is Indian, but generally people will just assume that I'm mixed and then they ask, if they want to.

GR: You mentioned earlier that you're the only person of mixed heritage on your father's side of the family, is it the same on your mother's side?

INT: Yes, my mother's side also. All of her sisters and brothers married Malays, and in the same way, my father's side also, all of his brothers and sisters married either Malayalees or Indians.

GR: And you mentioned when you were in school, you had friends who were mixed. What was it like growing up surrounded by people who are mixed?

INT: I think basically we were kids so we didn't know any different. It didn't feel any different but it became more obvious as we got older and started going to university and all that, where the demographics are not so mixed. For example like nowadays when I go to any weddings, sometimes if I go to a Malay wedding even though I'm dressed up in full Malay costume, like my husband who… my husband isn't so mixed actually, he's half Malay half Iban, but he looks more Malay. So for example if my husband was beside me, they will say, *As-salaam-Alaikum* to him, but then when they see me, they will say, hello, welcome. So this kind of stuff like that you experience, it's quite amusing,

I don't see anything bad about it. It's just that people judge you by how you look, and people also assign your ethnicity by how you look in a split second so they don't have time. I mean I guess you cannot expect any different, like you cannot expect them to ask you, are you a Muslim and I have no problem of either answering, salaam or not. But it's just that this is how people perceive you, like they look at you and then they assume certain

things and they act in certain ways in response. So in that sense, like when I was younger, I didn't realise any different, or just questions and curious questions, that's all.

GR: Do you think that being identified as a single race is better?

INT: No. I don't think it's better on a personal level because if you identify as a certain race, you are not acknowledging the other part of yourself, and I think both of your father and mother is equally important, therefore acknowledge both sides of your existence of your family. But in Malaysia, of course the Malays and the Bumiputras are the ones who are… not prioritised but they have more rights than others.

But the thing about that is that even though I am half Malay, in the eyes of the government I'm full Malay. So they consider me when they ask me on the form or whatever, what race are you, I'm required to tick Malay. I actually do not believe that they should. I mean I believe this race-based policy is very unfair, but the reality is that in the eyes of the government, I am a single race. The government doesn't acknowledge my Indian part of me.

In terms of the government, benefits, it's more beneficial for people like me to identify ourselves as Malay, and it is the required thing. Of course unfortunately we get more rights than others, even though other people may be more deserving.

The one thing, since you mentioned that, I just remembered, a few things that have come up with regards to this single race, or this identify as Malay and Indian in terms of government policy, is that I did quite well in school so I managed to get scholarships throughout. So I believe that I'm fully deserving of this scholarship, meaning that, no matter what race I am, I deserve to get this scholarship. But some people they would say you only got the scholarship because you are Malay.

So I think that is very hurtful and that is something very unfair, especially when I was a bit younger, to say things like that to people who are still quite young, not 20 yet. This would sometimes come from my father's side as well, and also my brother also the same, my brother still has certain scholarships. This kind of statement is very hurtful. It's as if we only get things from the government or get where we are today because we have identified ourselves as Malay and, therefore, we shouldn't have got them otherwise, but actually me and my brother and my mother and my father we…

I mean I look at it as in, even if I was not a Malay, I believe that I would have qualified for it anyway, but of course in reality that has not happened.

A lot of Malays do get scholarships because they are Malay. So that sort of sequence, the scholarship, to some people they look at me as, oh she went there because she's Malay, she went overseas, she went to study there because she's Malay, not because she's smart or not because she's worked hard, not because she's deserving of it.

So in that way, it's bad to be identified as Malay because people don't take you seriously. They think that you only got where you are because you're a certain race. That's is the problem with these racial politics in Malaysia, when people like me get certain things and people believe that we don't deserve it. We deserve it because of what we are not because of our efforts.

GR: I want to talk about this a bit more a bit later. Do you think there's any prejudice or stereotype associated with being mixed parentage?

INT: Not in where I grew up but in general, in Malaysia, I believe there is in the larger population. Stereotypes maybe, I don't know. There are good and bad prejudices and stereotypes, I don't know whether it's prejudice but stereotypes. I think it's probably the same all over the world. People assume that mixed kids are smarter, people assume that mixed kids are more good looking.

So this kind of stuff is good, I don't mind of course, and if people think like that, I just say, thank you. That is something that God has probably blessed us with, so we must be thankful for that, and I think there's a scientific basis for that as well with the mix of the genes and all that as well.

But in terms of the negative part, I think it was probably harder in my mum's and dad's generation; now it's not such a big deal. Maybe in terms of religion, because from my observation as well, mixed people because of their mix, they're not so Muslim or so Christian or so whatever. The religious part gets watered down a bit. So often, they may be a bit prejudiced that we're not as religious, or we're not as connected to God or whatever as other people who are pure Malay, pure Islam also, in that sense.

GR: How does that make you feel?

INT: I think religion is a very personal thing so as long as you yourself are comfortable with your relationship with God, nobody can question you or nobody should be bothered with what you do. Religion should be in your private life, it should not be public.

Some people would assume that I am more liberal than... I mean I am liberal, in the sense that I don't wear the *tudong* for example, but then they would assume that this is because of my ethnic background, and maybe that makes it also for them easier to accept, like she's like that because she's

mixed. So in that way also it may make it that I don't really have to explain myself.

But at the same time I think that this is something that they should not even be bothered about, but if they want to use that as an explanation, then I think that's no problem. Maybe actually it's a good thing; it's easier for people to understand also why I have this outlook in life, an outlook to religion.

GR: Onto more positive things, what do you think are the advantages of being mixed ethnicity?

INT: Language is one advantage I think, in the sense that because my parents are mixed so, therefore, they were forced… not forced but they tended to communicate in English, therefore me and my brother, our first language is actually English, it's not Malay, it's not Malayalee. Unfortunately, my father did not teach us Malayalee properly so we're not fluent in Malayalee.

Our Malay also, we basically became fluent because of our schooling not because of at home. But of course today, this is something very good because having English is of course a very great advantage in the working world, and even in the social life and everything, so we benefited from that.

Other than that, people are always a bit curious about you lah, so I think that makes you more memorable, it makes us more memorable. People remember us more and I think that's positive. Also my name, people will say, I remember your name from somewhere and I think also maybe my face is not so forgettable. So that is something that's positive, that we just don't blend into the crowd, and I think that is something that we should use to our advantage.

GR: Following on from the point you brought up earlier and we can discuss this a bit more, how does your identity of being an individual of mixed ethnicity relate to your identity of being Malaysian?

INT: Actually I would prefer to be identified as Malaysian first rather than Malay or Indian because it does get very confusing, and then you also have to adapt how you portray yourself according to your audience as well. So I would really like it if Malaysians would just call themselves Malaysians first and not what race you are, and anyway now so many people are mixed in Malaysia, it's no longer a rare thing.

Maybe the mix of the Malay is rare but mix of Chinese, Indian, and Chinese Iban or Chinese Kadazan, all these other races, it's very common. I mean if you asked a Chindian, are you Malaysian; if you asked a Chindian, what are you, I imagine they would have the same problem as well. So if you could

just say, I'm Malaysian, I think that would be much easier for everyone, and I think this is what we should also be pushing towards in Malaysia.

I notice that when we go overseas, when I was studying overseas, if you ask someone, what are you, they would say I'm Malaysian, even though they were Chinese or Indian or Malay or mixed. It's very sad because when you're overseas, you identify yourself as Malaysian first but when you're in Malaysia, you identify yourself as your race first, and then it becomes problematic for us when we don't really have a race, I mean have one race. So we have to explain ourselves, we have to explain longer. So I hope eventually more and more people will choose to identify themselves as Malaysian and not by their race, because Malaysia is getting so mixed anyway.

There are less Malay mixes because of the fact that you have to convert to marry a Malay. So I think that's what's holding the Malay community back from being mixed, being more mixed, because it's really a big deal if a non-Malay wants to marry a Malay because they must be prepared to give up their religion. But for the other races, it's not so strict. It only depends on the church whether they allow you or not. Like my friend, who's an Anglican, wants to marry a Catholic, the Catholic Church said it could only give you half a blessing because you're not a Catholic, and that sometimes happens but then it's not an institutional thing, like the government does not allow kind of thing.

But I think as time goes by, Malaysia will be more mixed so it will be even harder for people to identify themselves. And even Malays, Malays whose both sides parents are Malays, nowadays I notice, or rather from my group of friends or from my experience, they also want to be known as mixed, they will say I have Thai blood, or I have Siamese blood, or my ancestors are Chinese.

So even though both of their parents are allegedly Malay, they also want to be considered mixed as well, they also want to say, I have Chinese blood, or I have Thai blood, or I have Indonesian blood. So to them, it's sort of a source of pride as well. So even the ones who are so called pure, they also want to be known as mixed. So it becomes a more positive thing now I think. So hopefully in the future, everybody will think of it even more positively, and hopefully there will be a change.

Actually in the society level, there's already this shift, it's very obvious, but then in the government level, they're still trying to maintain Malay superiority and all that. But on the ground, I think people have been looking for any chance to say that they have mixed blood actually.

GR: Your identity as mixed and your identity as Malaysian, do you see them as separate or connected?

INT: I think it's connected because both my parents are Malaysian, even though my father was born in India but he has Malaysian citizenship, and of course I'm not mixed with like Irish blood or anything like that, so I think I'm very much Malaysian. I mean Malaysian and then my ethnic identity is very closely linked.

GR: What are the future implications for this social policy framework which is built around race, what do you think are the future implications for this model with the increasing number of mixed ethnicity individuals in Malaysia?

INT: I think it will be even harder for... I mean with more and more mixed ethnicities especially with… I mean to the government, actually it is good for them to have more Malays marrying and bringing… as in converting people to become Muslim so that their kids will be considered Malays. If a Malay marries an Indian, the kid will be considered Malay and, therefore, there will be more numbers of Malays in Malaysia.

So in terms of the numbers game, it is good for the government if there are more mixed marriages, Malay and something else so they can maintain their majority status, because Malays are the majority in Malaysia. I believe for the government, this is a positive thing but, like I said, on the personal level, because of forcing the change in religions so the family level it may be more difficult. That's why there has been a slower pick up of mixed marriages among Malays, that's my experience and maybe you have figures that contradict that, I'm not sure.

In terms of the policy, the government has to now become… I mean even now Indian Muslims are considered Bumiputras, they are considered actually Malays. So now the government is actually considering anybody who is Islam, or practices the Islam and the Muslim way of life, as a Malay, as a Bumiputra. So the government is actually… they themselves are blurring the ethnic identities for their own interests. So if you are Indian Muslim, in the government's eyes, you can get all the rights that are given to Bumiputras and to Malays; if you're a Chinese Muslim, the same thing, you are also considered a Muslim and a Malay and you can get all the rights as well.

So as far as the government is concerned, this is something good for them, but in a society level, there may be some people who are still a bit… the traditional ones, maybe the ones who are against it, but the implication for government I think this can only be strengthening their hold on the majority.

But only in the sense of numbers, because I think if you really look down at the identities of these people who are mixed, we have a much more loose identity, therefore we do not identify ourselves with any race and therefore we also do not identify ourselves with any political sort of allegiance as well. The government can use our statistics or figures to support that there are a lot of Malays but it does not translate to government support per se so that means there will still be...

I mean the trend of people becoming more politically open-minded and politically liberal, it continues to go on, and especially I think a lot of the mixed people are the ones who would have this sort of outlook because they're open to... I mean they're basically really open to… I mean exposed to much more than just traditional Malay, pure Malays. So the political outlook in terms of the real what is in your heart or what is in your minds, these mixed Malays would not have the traditional political outlook as the pure Malays, but for numbers there is there.

GR: So where do you think you fit into this social policy framework, this race based policy framework especially around elections, where do you think you fit into it?

INT: Where do I fit? I mean for me, I think if there's an opportunity out there, it would be… you know the saying, don't hate the player hate the game. So for example, if people say, I got a scholarship just because I am a Malay, of course I feel offended because of that but then it's not wrong for me to take the scholarship either because I deserve it.

For example, I went to boarding school and the boarding school was mostly Malays, there were only two Indians and one Chinese, and probably I got in through the Malay quota, and I don't think that's wrong either. I use whatever benefits that I get, but at the same time I am positive that I deserve it either way. So it's not that I would say, no, I will not take the scholarship because I don't want to be recognised as a Malay, because I believe the scholarship should be only for pure Malays or whatever.

So these policies, they are policies that have benefitted me because of race. So I think that I should not turn that opportunity down, because it's not my fault that these policies exist, but at the same time I must make sure that I feel fully deserving of it. My father always made a joke when he was younger when he said that… my father didn't really save much for education because he was a businessman and he didn't really have many savings. So he used to tell us, I married your mother because I wanted my kids to go into a government university.
So he makes jokes like this and then, I didn't save any money because I knew you guys were smart because you are mixed blood. Stuff like this, so he will use this quite lightheartedly. He was aware of the benefits that were

available to use but he always made sure that we really deserved what we got.

In terms of elections and all that, I don't feel that I owe the government anything because I feel that I deserve whatever I got. So, therefore, I do not feel like I'm compelled to vote in a certain way. I vote because of what I believe will be the best for my future. So race based politics does not have much effect on me, and I think a lot of other mixed race probably also feel the same way. Race based politics would only probably have more effect on the purer races and the ones who are a bit more distant from the ethnicities and a bit less exposed to all this.

GR: What would you say to removing these race-based politics, what's your opinion of it?

INT: Well, I think that would be really the best thing that could happen to Malaysia because I've seen a lot of my friends who have chosen to stay overseas because they believe that there's no future for them in Malaysia because they're not Malay. I think this is very sad because these people are usually very smart and very intelligent, they could really help the country if they would choose to stay.

But these policies are really chasing people away. You cannot blame them because it is true. They do have a harder time in Malaysia, but at the same time I feel very… it's a mixed feeling, I cannot blame them for wanting to run away from Malaysia because of these race based policies but at the same time also I feel like, why must you run away because this is your home? This is where you grew up and this is where you've gotten your education and everything. So even though you're not Malay, it doesn't mean that you cannot succeed in Malaysia at the same time.

It's not like everything is totally shut out for non-Malays. So when people say that I don't want to come back to Malaysia because I cannot survive, I think that's not true. But if they give the reason, I don't want to come back to Malaysia because I think that they're being very unfair to us, then I can understand. But if you're talking about survival, making money, succeeding, I think that's not true. That's also entirely up to your own effort and if you work hard, you can succeed. Even if you are Malay also, if you don't work hard, you cannot succeed, and also and of course but sadly also sometimes also if you're Malay but you know.

Recording 1 ends 47:10 minutes- Skype connection fails
Recording 2 starts

INT: What was I saying just now?

GR: About people not being able to survive.

INT: These race based policies are really chasing people away from Malaysia, especially now that there's so much opportunity to go overseas, to migrate and all that, so it makes it even less attractive for people to stay. Even Malays, people who are identified as Malays, they're also leaving because they also feel that the situation is not conducive for family and to have a life in Malaysia. That would be more closely related to cronyism and corruption and how the government is run and all that kind of stuff, and the wastage that happens in government and all that.

        So Malaysia is becoming less and less attractive for young people, especially educated young people, and these race-based politics are one big part of it. But then to me, I think that no matter where I go… because like I said I identify myself as Malaysian very closely so I think that no matter where I go, other than Malaysia, I will always be a foreigner.

        So I think the best place for me is in Malaysia so that's why I came back. I am working here now. Hopefully there will be more people like me who are willing to come back and give Malaysia a chance, and hopefully in our lifetime, we will see some change to either these policies or the larger make up of our government.

GR: We're just at the end of the discussion and I just want to get some feedback. Considering all the issues that we discussed this morning, which do you feel are the most important issues discussed?

INT: I think these race-based policies and how that influences the choice of people to contribute to the country is very important, but that maybe because my background is political science so that would be interesting to me. I think perhaps in your study, the social part of it is also very interesting, and I think all individuals will react in a different way. I have certain aunties who are much more open-minded and other aunties who are closed, certain ones are very defensive about their race and believe that my father has done a great wrong and all this kind of stuff.

        So that part would be quite interesting to see whether the similar experience exists. And also if you want to explore, I mean like I said about how pure Malays also want to identify themselves as mixed, this is something that I think might be an interesting avenue for you to look into, the exclusivity of it. Why do pure Malays also want to keep saying, I have Chinese blood or I have Thai blood. So that is something that I think would be interesting for research.

GR: Do you think we've missed out on any important issues with regards to experiencing mixed ethnic identity in Malaysia?

INT: I don't know whether it's something that you want to look into but it would also be interesting to see whether mixed races also go on to marry mixed races, whether your social circles also get shaped by your mixed-ness. I mean like for me, my closest friends somehow happen to also be very mixed as well. We didn't plan for it to be like that but that's how it turned out, and also of course my husband also is mixed. So that might be interesting how it works across generations.

GR: So yourself for partner selections, were you specifically looking for someone of mixed identity; how did that happen that your husband is also mixed?

INT: I was not specifically looking for mixed identity but I was looking for someone who I could communicate with effectively and that happened to be the English factor. I'm most comfortable in English, so it happened to be that my husband also is comfortable in English. We met in university and in university usually most people are in university, Malay so in that atmosphere, he stood out because he had the English and it grew from that. The important factor was the communication, so it just happened.

        I think I mentioned that actually my husband… well, too bad you didn't interview him as well but he actually, from my understanding, does identify himself more as Malay rather than mixed, and that has a lot to do with his upbringing as well. Probably you have already found in your research that some people do identify themselves very strongly with just one ethnicity. For myself, I identify myself with both but for my husband he's more Malay than Iban.

GR: Ok that's great. I'm just going to stop this recording.

        <u>Recording 2 ends 5:36 minutes</u>

Appendix 9: Interview schedule and Sample transcript from Study 2

Introduction	Remarks
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study. (Introduce yourself) I hope to get as much information as possible so please share as many details and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your opinions. The discussion will be video recorded so that it can be transcribed later. This will help me understand better what everyone is saying. No names or personal identifiers will be used at any stage of the analysis. All **information** will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Are there any questions at this stage? Ok, before we begin, could you share with me why you agreed to take part in this interview?	
Main Discussion points	Issues that require attention/Probes
1. Ok let's go around the group and introduce ourselves. We can state our names (or names that you would like to be called in this group), pronouns that you would use to call yourself, and the item that you have brought along that encapsulates your ethnic identity.	
2. What racial category was used to describe you when you were born?	What makes you XXX?
3. What are the ways you explored your XXX Identity?	

	Language? Food? What does the XXX culture mean to you?
4.	How does your idea of your ethnicity differ from others in your ethnic group?	How representative of your ethnic group are you? Do you find it easy to be a member of your ethnic group?
5.	When you see another person of your ethnicity, what language do you speak to them in?	How do you decide if someone you have never met is of your ethnicity?
6.	What do you think of interethnic marriage?	Do you have friends/other family members (not from your immediate family) who are mixed?
7.	Suitable Vignette from list	What do you think about this statement?
8.	Malaysia is seen as a multiracial country. What makes it multi racial?	What are some ways that Malaysia is multiracial? What is the importance of Malaysia being multi racial?
9.	How similar is being xxx in Malaysia and London?	
10.	We are now at the end of our discussion and I would like to get some feedback from you.	Have we missed out any important issue?

Considering all the issues discussed this afternoon, which do you feel are the most important issues discussed?	

And such an experience happened when I was 16, so I went up to visit my Chinese friend and Indian friend in a restaurant. So it's fasting month and I was eating and enjoying myself with my friends and talking. There were these authorities from Jakim, the Islam Council, and they were conducting raids in restaurants to catch any Muslims or Malays eating food and not doing their fasting and stuff.

So I was eating and suddenly there was someone slapping my shoulder very hard and it caused a lot of pain and I turned around and there was this officer. and I said, 'no, I'm not, I'm a Chinese mixed Indian,' but they don't believe, and to the extent that I had to bring out my identity, my IC and then he refused to look at the IC. They just grabbed me and put me in the car.

And then went to the police station and I sit there for hours, called up my parents, my mother basically but my mother can't come because she's working. So they phoned up my aunt and when they called up, they were so surprised why is he Chinese and then I said, 'I only asked you to look at my IC but you did not, you refused.' So I showed them the IC and nobody came to the police station, they sent me back to the

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My mum is a bit antagonistic towards my dad so she's always telling me, don't be like your dad, he's lazy because we've got this stereotype about Malays. So she's always like, don't be like your dad, don't be lazy, don't be this, don't be that and after a while, those stereotypes got in my mind and I started identifying myself as a Chinese more.

I feel that the Indian community and the Chinese community are somewhat playing on a somewhat similar playing field. I think they both face discrimination. They both face similar issues in their lives. They go through about the same level of racism as well in other countries and also within their own country as well. So in many ways, they do have a lot of similarities that they've not actually acknowledged that they do.

GR: How did your friends see you?
INT: The majority of my very close childhood friends saw me as Chinese sometimes. Another Chinese girl who was just bigger, a little darker, had an Indian father and an Indian name. Apart from that, she was very much like… I was very much like them and they accepted me. I started picking up a lot of Chinese dialects. I ate a lot of Chinese food. I wanted to do all the fun activities with my friends. And apart from that, everybody would just call me Vino you know.

Participants: Selena, Louisa, Trina, Amit, Noel, Christine
(names changed to maintain confidentiality)

Geetha	Thanks so much for coming. There are no right or wrong answers. So I'm not expecting you to tell me factual things about history, I'm just interested in your opinions. Like I said, it will be recorded and transcribed. At this stage, do you have any questions? No? Ok? Erm, before we begin, could you just share with me why you agreed to take part in this interview and also give me your names that you'd like to be called or a pseudonym.
Selena	Cos I get paid. **Laughs**.
Geetha	OK. Laughs. Good motivation.
Selena	Do I come up with a name by myself?
Geetha	If you want to call yourself by your normal name you can do that.
Selena.	I can use my normal name, like Selena.
Geetha	Ok. Selena.
Louisa	Yeah same reason as well.
Geetha	**Laughs**
Louisa	My name is Louisa, hi. Yeah, erm, I think most because were paid and I don't mind sharing some Malaysia stuff.
Christine	I'm Christine
Noel	Er, yeah, the main reason is because we're getting paid. My names Noel.
Trina	Yeah, we get paid. Trina.
Amit	Er, Amit. Easy Money. **Group Laughs**
Geetha	Right! Laughs. OK. Yeah, especially If you can convert it. Yeah, pretty good hey, 1 hour of discussion. Laughs. OK, erm this is something an exercise to think about, but if you could think of one item that encapsulates your ethnic identity, what would it be.

Trina	Some food.
Geetha	Yeah?
Trina	Yeah.
Selena	Nasi Lemak
Trina	No. Not Nasi lemak (inaudible), just like going to the store, and grabbing whatever, like economy rice **laugh**s
Geetha	Yeah, cai fan. So that symbolises your ethnic identity for you? So Cai fan for you, Nasi lemak for you? (pointing to Selena)
Selena	**Nods in agreement**.
Christine	I'd say like red packets or green lanterns, yeah.
Geetha	Like Chinese new year?
Christine	Yep.
Geetha	Louisa?
Louisa	Hmm, nothing really comes to mind. Mmm. What do I associate myself with? Hmm. Chinese?
Geetha	OK, we'll come back to you.
Noel	Mainly the hawker centres. Mainly Chinese food and Chinese stalls there.
Geetha	That for you symbolises your ethnic identity?
Noel	Yeah
Geetha	Amit, for yourself?
Amit	I would say maybe *teh* ice or something
Geetha	Teh ice symbolises your ethnic identity for you, why?
Amit	Because that's what they do in Malaysia,
Trina	It's a Malaysian thing
Amit	it's a very Malaysian thing to do.
Louisa	I guess I would say Chinese food.
Geetha.	OK. Everyone seems to thinking about food. Is because we miss Malaysian food? OK so that symbolises your ethnic identity. I think in some of your answers you actually eluded to the racial category you ascribe yourself or born with. So what racial where you?

Selena	Chinese
Louisa	Chinese
Christine	Chinese
Trina	Chinese
Amit	I don't know. Maybe no racial identity. Maybe *Mamak*?
Geetha	Do you have that on your IC?
Amit	No. My IC is Lain lain Maybe *teh* ice is lain lain? **Laughs**
Geetha	Why is *teh* ice lain lain?
Amit	There's no association with a particular race maybe.
Christine	It's a general thing, it's a Malaysia thing? (group consensus)
Geetha	Ok, maybe we can have this discussion. In what ways do you explore your Chinese or lain lain identity? How did you explore this. How did you know what this is?
Selena	Ask my parents.
Geetha	So you actually asked your parents when you were a kid?
Louisa	I barely explored that to be honest.
Geetha	Why not?
Louisa	When I was brought up, even as a Chinese, I'm not that traditional. I don't speak Mandarin. I don't do all of the tradition things at home.
Geetha	Do you speak in dialects?
Louisa	No. My parents do. We're not really raised in that sense. Never really thought about…
Geetha	So you didn't think about what it means to be Chinese
Louisa	I think it's based on a lot of stereotypes, so that's how I like picked up on
Geetha	OK. Who created these stereotypes?
Louisa	In school basically, when I was growing in primary school, basically like my friends were 70% Chinese. they would always label you like, Chinese people are super *Kiasu*. You know, that's how I like started forming my own thoughts like.

Geetha	Great. You can jump if you share these experiences or have a different experience. That's part of group discussion.
Noel	I think mine was more parents taught me rather than me asking them. Mainly grandparents. Extended family teaching you ethnicity, rules and cultural bit mainly.
Geetha	what are these rules?
Noel	you know like maybe for Chinese, like for Chinese new year, I can't really remember them, but like you can't sweep the floor on the first day of the year, there's a word for it, I can't think about it, like rules kind of stuff
Geetha	so if someone else follows these rules are they Chinese?
Selena	Erm no… No not strictly
Geetha	No, so what does it mean?
Selena	erm its coincidence
Geetha	Laughs
Christine	It's just the belief in it, some people feel it will sweep your fortune off, so mm other people who believes in it be oh, I should not sweep my fortune off as well.. So it's not mainly er, it probably started with the Chinese, but probably influenced the others as well.
Geetha	so if you follow these rules you are not automatically Chinese.
Christine	No, not really
Geetha	So what makes you Chinese?
Christine	We started it (laughs)
Amit	I think this is like racial and cultural identity. So…Racially you can be Chinese, but if you follow something culturally it does not necessarily make you Chinese.
Geetha	Right, so there 2 difference aspects of this Chinese ness. Racial side and cultural side. You can be culturally Chinese and practice Chinese beliefs but you can't be racially Chinese
Noel	it depends on whether you want to be Chinese, like
Amit	But racially you can't change that

Christine	yeah you can't change anything I think, I would say.
Geetha	Trina?
Trina	Sorry, I'm not really sure what the question was?
Geetha	I started off by asking how you explore your Chinese identity, but now we've come into this discussion that it is racially different and culturally different. So you can be culturally Chinese but cannot racially.
Christine	No, you're racially Chinese but culturally not Chinese right.
Selena	Yeah, culturally you can be anything you want.
Christine	Yah.
Selena	So racially you are forced to be Chinese
Geetha	ok you're forced to be Chinese? How are you forced to be Chinese?
Trina	Because your birth cert says you're Chinese!
Geetha	So if your birthday cert says you're Indian then you are…
Group	Yes, pretty much!
Geetha	so if your birth cert says something different you think you will be something different?
Selena	No.
Cell	I think I will be something different
Amit	I think the question is racially it doesn't matter what you are, the only difference is in terms of appearance, but everything else, what you do, how you speak, how you think, is all cultural, so it's more environmental factors I think. So yes you can't change who you are racially, but from a culturally point of view you're definitely, you're definitely free to be anything you want. So that's obviously going to be a product of your upbringing, the way you were brought up.
Geetha	when you say you can't change yourself racially, is that a problem?
Amit	I don't think so. Erm, Maybe in Malaysia! Laughs Personally I don't this so. Obviously in Malaysia.
Geetha	Ok, so tell me about Malaysia. So why sudden change to your sentiment.

Trina	If you're another race in a Chinese school, you're kind of screwed. you get made fun of when you are different.
Geetha	Yeah? So when you are Chinese, in a non-Chinese school you get made fun of?
Trina	Oh yah, like even if you're any race in blah blah blah school.
Louisa	Yeah, it is difficult when you come to interracial thing, like relationships, like typical Chinese family will always be like, Oh my god, you can never marry Malay, it's not even about the religion. It's towards the race. A lot of people have something against it.
Get	Why do you think that's the case?
Louisa	I don't know why
Trina	cos I think it's the Muslim part, because you can't change it in Malaysia, if you're in another country maybe you can change it
Louisa	Yeah true.
Geetha	so its intricately linked religion and ethnicity
Trina	Like my Malay friends they go to *Mamak* store no one serves them food during Ramadan, but some of them are actually Chindian, and they don't serve them food, then they just take your chopsticks away and give you fork and spoon or something,
Geetha	Oh, okay.
Trina	Yeah, they are actually Chindian, so..so like outside people judge you, and obviously you change because of that, you change a person because that's what shapes you.
Geetha	Right so other people, So their reaction to you, influences your Chinese identity as well?
Trina	Yes
Geetha	So if you were to be in a Malay medium school this wouldn't work?
Trina	I dunno, secondary school is different
Geetha	How was it in secondary school?

Trina	Everyone is like everyone. Chinese school really like they raise, how many Malay students are there? And then secondary school they don't care because it was like mixed.
Geetha	Because all *campur*. Did all of you go to language medium schools, like Chinese medium school or.
Selena	I did not.
Louisa	I did not.
Christine	I did, I went to a Chinese Primary School.
Geetha	And secondary school was just mixed?
Christine	Yes
Noel	I went to a *Kebangsan*. I feel is *kebangsan* you probably get to mix with other races better. In the end, there are usually big groups, like Chinese and Malay groups and Indian groups but then, In general, I went for primary and secondary, and I feel like there's no racial tension or anything, you do talk and you mixed well, But in the end, you make friends but you tend to go back to your own.
Geetha	Can you explain this *kebangsan* concept?
Selena	It means national school.
Geetha	So public schools?
Noel	Ah yeah public schools.
Geetha	Ah Yeah. And you went to?
Trina	I went to a mandarin Chinese primary school.
Amit	I went to a *kebangsan*.
Geetha	Maybe because both of you went to this *kebangsan,* you can tell me more about it. What makes it different to language medium schools.
Amit	You wanna go first? (Groups laughs)
Noel	I would say *Kebangsan* is more different to private schools, because now private schools are really popular in Malaysia. In *kebangsan* education is free. And so its where most people who are not rich go because the private schools are really expensive. And you have like most races in *kebangsan* schools. It's quite even I would say like...

Geetha	So 33% each?
Noel	er, its equal in terms of Chinese and Malay, not that much in terms of Indian… in my school I'm not sure about the rest. And there's no like, they teach all languages, so you have the options of taking Chinese, or Tamil, but Malay is compulsory but you communicate with all races. And so I feel like that's the main difference. But if you go to a Chinese school you learn maths in Chinese and a lot of stuff so you have to communicate in mandarin
Geetha	So in your Chinese medium schools, there were people who were non-Chinese?
Christine	Yes there is, buts quite minority, like probably 1 class there's only maybe 3 or 4 of them.
Geetha	So who are these?
Christine	Indians and Malays, yeah its possible.
Geetha	And they have to learn mandarin
Christine	Yeah, they have to learn Mandarin, because in Chinese schools, Chinese, English Malay is compulsory language. And most of it is in Chinese.
Geetha	So how did you y'all make the switch from Chinese medium schools to *campur* secondary schools?
Trina	Ah actually my Malays was very bad. **laughs**. Malay is an easy language to pick up. If you go from Malay to Chinese, it don't think it's possible.
Geetha	Yah, so the other way around is more difficult. OK, so I think the important question based on this is so representative you are of your ethnic group?
Selena	Not at all.
Louisa	Not at all
Geetha	Anyone else think that your representative of your ethnic group. There is no right or wrong answer.

Christine	I would say, quite for myself because I think I could speak quite well Chinese and all the other dialects.
Selena	Oh do you mean in terms of country or personal?
Geetha	How representative are you of your ethnic group, like Selena of Chinese Malaysians
Selena	OK orh…**laughs**
Geetha	What does that mean?
Selena	Cos, I'm not exactly Chinese, I'm Chinese Christian. So like…
Geetha	There's a difference between Chinese and Chinese Christian?
Selena	Yeah? As in your when you fill out like forms and stuff, your race, like under race you would tick Chinese, but and under religion you have like Buddhist or Christians and stuff , so I'm not exactly strictly towards the more very traditional Chinese kind?
Geetha	So traditional Chinese usually are not Christian?
Selena	Yeah sort of.
Trina	Yeah my Grand fathers like oh you all are going to be Christians, like what the hell! **(group laughs)** Because they are very traditional Chinese.
Geetha	So what religion do they practice?
Trina	Buddhists, but I don't think it's really Buddhist. It's called Buddhists but what they do is really not Buddhist, its random. Like…Taoist?
Geetha	Taoist? Confucian?
Trina	Yeah, I think Taoist. Yah.
Geetha	So traditionally Chinese is associated with Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and then if you don't...
Selena	Not so Chinese Chinese…not so Chinese chinese…
Geetha	Not so Chinese Chinese is Chinese Christian?
Christine	You can have a choice whether…Religion wise you have a choice whether what you wanna be.
Trina	A lot of Chinese, like Chinese speak mandarin, only mandarin or Cantonese people they are Christians.

Christine	Yah.
Trina	They don't speak English at all.
Christine	Religions wise is optional, you can choose what you want to be. I mean just for Chinese and Christian lah, between this, there is a choice. It's not like you are born Chinese so you have to be in Buddhism.
Geetha	Right, but for other ethnicities you have to?
Noel	Mainly for Muslims because it's in the law, but for Indians I'm assuming you can be Christian, you know…Hindu.
Selena	Muslims by law…you cannot be any religion.
Geetha	As in Malays by law?
Selena	Yah
Geetha	Right, okay- and you were saying, you're not representative of the…
Louisa	Probably by my looks
Geetha	You're representative by your looks but otherwise you're not?
Louisa	Otherwise not really, I think.
Geetha	Why not? What makes you different?
Louisa	Largely, because I don't speak, I can't speak the language. That's the first thing people ask me, are you even Chinese you don't speak Mandarin. Why? Why? I don't practice a lot of the traditional things…at home. Like even, when it comes to food, I don't eat Chinese food like all day every day. Erm Yeah. I guess that's it.
Geetha	So do you find it easy to be a member of your ethnic group?
Louisa	Erm, yah, I don't think it's that difficult like still pretty, in the loop, Chinese loop
Geetha	So it's easy to be in the Chinese loop..
Louisa	Without having to be like… traditionally Chinese.
Geetha	In what ways is it easy?
Louisa	I guess it depends on who you interact with, like my family and closest friends, they are a lot like me in a way so….kinda easy to just like.

Geetha	Ok, by outside of your family and friends? Like for example, when you come to a new place like the UK, is it still easy to be Chinese Malaysian, or Chinese? This question is for everyone as well.
Selena	Good question. (**group laughs**)
Louisa	Yeah I wouldn't say it's a problem to still identify as a Chinese Malaysian. It's the first think I usually say, I'm Chinese Malaysian. Yeah there isn't anything that limits me to still identify me as a Chinese Malaysian overseas.
Geetha	Right. Do y'all find it easy to associate yourselves. Amit I'll come back to you. To associate yourselves with the Chinese ethnic identity outside of Malaysia.
Trina	Chinese people are totally different. Mainland Chinese are… you're basically Malaysian here. Doesn't matter what race you are already. Compared to how different other people are. There are differences between Malaysians is like so small.
Geetha	So outside of Malaysia the difference between Malay, an Indian and Chinese is minimal compared to Malaysia.
Louisa	So small.
Trina	Yeah, so small. Like in Malaysia they emphasise difference, I don't know why. Like if you come out here, they are totally the same.
Geetha	But then when you find a difference from someone from Mainland China.
Trina	I think everyone is always trying to find a difference, like trying to group and like I'm better than you, that's why.
Geetha	In Malaysia or here?
Trina	I think like it's human nature to just want to, or when you come here, Malaysians are totally different from everyone. So in Malaysia you always want to have a little group or something
Geetha	So in Malaysia the differences are
Trina	empathised quite a lot,
Geetha	but outside, you're just one group?

Trina	Right, then you suddenly realise that there's no freaking difference.
Geetha	Right, so now the difference is Malaysian, mainland Chinese, you change your group.
Group	**All laugh and some nod in agreement**
Geetha	Ok that's interesting.
Trina	Or like even Singaporeans are totally different.
Geetha	OK, so how different?
Trina	Just different.
Louisa	Yah they are just different.
Trina	They speak the same way we speak but different
Amit	The culture is different.
Trina	the mentality. (**Group laughs**)
Geetha	In what sense. This is interesting.
	A certain vibe that they give.
Trina	They always care about each other, judging each other. There's nothing else better in the world to do than talk about each other. Ok, that's from my Singaporean friends. (**Group laughs**)
Geetha	Ok so they talk about their own community
Trina	They will talk in this small world. They really care about it. They are worried about how other people think about them. Like what they think about other people. They are very worried about them.
Geetha	Are you saying they only care about other Singaporeans or they care only about themselves and they don't care about…
Trina	I think, I think everyone, most people only cares about themselves, then Singaporeans somehow care about other people, which is quite scary.
Geetha	Sorry I didn't get that point.
Trina	Like most people only care about themselves but then I feel like the Singaporeans like…
Selena/Louisa	They just extra *kiasu* lah.

Trina	They just notice every single thing that their friends do. And then they know that their friends are also noticing them.
Geetha	They just *kaypoh* about other people?
Trina	Yah yah yah. But very serious way. I know Chinese Malaysians also do that, but not that serious. Does not mean they are *kaypoh* about every one but…they are not serious about it. They forget about it, then later…They don't take it to heart. They still *kaypoh*. It's culture also.
Geetha	OK, so, is this Chinese Singaporeans or just Singaporeans in general. Are different from Malaysians in general.
Trina	I don't know really Indian or Malays Singaporeans..
Geetha	like any non-Chinese Singaporeans. So you'll see the difference between Malaysians and Singaporeans.
Trina	But then again maybe it's a bit biased because this is (University name) Singaporeans
Geetha	That could be it. Do you all feel the same way as Trina is saying.
Louisa	Yeah, quite easy to distinguish. I know straight away. Their accent.
Trina	Yeah the accent. The things they talk about.
Geetha	What are they talking about. This is so interesting
Trina	Like, or that person was crying
Louisa	They like to gossip la.
Geetha	And Malaysians don't do that.
Louisa	No they do..(group laughs)
Trina	But they don't take it so seriously.
Amit	6 of them here just shitting on Singaporeans. Group laughs. Typically, Malaysia. there about 6 of them here. Group laughs.
Trina	You like them at first. Then talk to them, and like Oh my god. Most of them, not everyone, the image of them, I assume they are like that, then change and oh this one isn't like that.
Geetha	So doesn't really belong to the group- like outliers?

Trina	Dunno what you call it. But you always have to prejudge someone right.
Geetha	So, Amit, come on, we all do this as well right?
Amit	Some of the Malaysians are hypocrites and the same as Singaporeans. I don't think about the Singaporeans.
Geetha	Do you have close contact with Singapore
Amit	Yeah I have a few Singaporean friends.
Gee	Why are you laughing?
Amit	No because, I've known Singaporeans basically, because I know what you're talking about Trina! But there are prototypes.
Trina	This better be anonymous!
Amit	Yeah I know who they are. I don't completely agree, but I sort of agree.
Geetha	They all fit the same template
Amit	I don't know...I don't think about these things. I'm like 'do you want to hangout'? And they are like 'no' and I'm like ok, whatever, I don't really care'
Geetha	Right, so when you see another person of your ethnicity so when you see them they look Chinese for example, what language do you speak to them in?
Trina	in London English. In Malaysia, if they are older Cantonese, if they are younger English or depends lah, how they….in School.
Selena	Technically if I talk to them in English, then from there you can actually know if the person actually speaks Chinese.
Geetha	Really?
Selena	For me, I don't know.
Trina	Yeah but no one in Malaysia really speaks Mandarin?
Selena	No but Chinese, Chinese-Chinese
Trina	Chinese-Chinese don't really speak Mandarin?
Amit	What is Chinese-Chinese?
All	laughs

Selena	I mean Chinese educated Chinese. That means they know how to speak Chinese. Ok wait, Chinese-Chinese speaks Chinese. Chinese are Chinese people who don't speak Chinese.
Trina	But there are different kinds of Chinese. Because I think most people on the street speak Cantonese and not mandarin, so you don't speak to them in Mandarin.
Selena	Ok probably it's my community because Puchong people speak Chinese a lot.
Amit	What is speak Chinese? It's not a language!
Selena	OK, people call it Mandarin or Chinese, we call it Mandarin Chinese, or Chinese for short.
Geetha	I've learnt a lot of Chinese today. There is Chinese Chinese and there's Chinese Christian, then there's Chinese-Chinese and non-Chinese-Chinese which…
Trina	that's like putting everyone in a little stereotype group
Geetha	No, but its seems like that's what coming out of these conversations. I'm not doing the stereotyping. So that's interesting. So this is important. Can you be non, Chinese, non Mandarin speaking Chinese that practices Buddhism and Taoism.
Trina	You can.
Selena	My Dad ah.
Trina	Can, my friend.
Geetha	So there are things that you pick and choose out of these different baskets of what it is to be Chinese. So you have the language group, you have the religion group, you have the racial thing on your IC, on your BC and then you can *campur* anything? But you're still Chinese.
Selena	Yeah.
Christine	On you IC or BC wise your still Chinese but if you just probably you are still speaking different dialects.

Geetha	So if you're BC says Indian, but then you follow Buddhism and go to a Chinese School and you look Chinese can you be Chinese? So your birth cert can say…
Selena	I've never heard of Indian being Buddhist.
Trina	Yeah my friend is Chinese but she is Malay. Not really Malay actually….
Geetha	She is Chinese but she's Malay?
Trina	I don't know, I'm sorry (group laughs)
Amit	How can be she be 2 races?
All	**Laugh**, **look at each other**
Trina	Cos she got changed, her father is Chinese and her mother is not Malay, sorry, Kadazan also but Muslim, yeah but she's Chinese. But I don't understand why she is Bumiputra.
Amit	Because Kadazan
Trina	Oh yah, that works that works. But she's quite culturally Malay. She Speaks Malay
Geetha	So is she is Chinese.
Trina	Her BC says Chinese but I wouldn't say she is Chinese-Chinese but that kind of thing happens, you know you were saying is that person blah blah blah…
Geetha	OK. So the important thing I'm getting here is that if your BC says you're Chinese then you are confirmed Chinese,
Trina	Doesn't matter.
Geetha	if your birth cert said that you're not Chinese, than you're not Chinese.
Amit	What your Birth cert says doesn't matter at all… it's just your racial identity.
Selena	But technically…What's says on your birth cert?
Amit	That determines whether or not you can say (inaudible) but that's another question. Yeah but that's a different question.

Trina	My friend who is Chindian, her Birth cert is Indian but she is more like a Chinese you know.
Geetha	So would you consider her Chinese?
Trina	Chindian.
Group	Chindian.
Trina	She is more culturally Chinese, hang out with Chinese.
Geetha	So is she a member of the Chinese community? Would you say she is a member of the Chinese community? So it doesn't matter what her IC says lah?
Trina	She's probably a member of both.
Geetha	You all feel the same.
All	Yes
Geetha	Right, you would see her as Chindian not Chinese?
All	Yes
Geetha	Why
All	Laughs.
Geetha	I feel like I've asked this a lot today – 'why'? So what makes her Chinese, or what makes her Chindian if she follows all of these characteristics of the Chinese community and the Chinese culture, why do we still see her as Chindian?
Trina	Actually some Chindian people look more Chinese and some more Indian so that's all. My friend actually looks more Chinese.
Geetha	Ok if she looks more Chinese than ok la, pass la, then Chinese la
Trina	Yeah, I don't know why lah but we are programmed to do that.
Geetha	Ok that has to be a connection between appearance and...so I can't come and tell you actually my IC says I'm Chinese
Group	I would trust, actually I would./ You can though/Immigration. (all together at once)
Selena	You know that its never happened before that cos I have friends who look very Indian but in fact they are actually Chinese, so like

	OK. So its like default category will be Indian ok switch to Chinese then.
Louisa	I feel like what it says on your IC it really matters especially when the first time you meet someone you have a general perception of Chinese, Indian or whatever. Then the person is like my Dad is Indian and then after you realise actually, oh okay...I tell people he's actually like mixed, he's not Chinese. Yah, I think it does matter.
Geetha	OK, so if my Dad is Chinese I could be Chinese
Selena	Yeahhhhhhhh
Trina	Yah.
Geetha	OK, that's very interesting.
Trina	I think we usually follow what our dad is. You know a lot of Malay people, like my friends and half Chinese or a quarter Chinese but I don't know why they are so Malay.
Geetha	Like What?
Trina	Like you would never suspect that they are Chinese. Because they are more fair that's why. They are very very culturally Malay, so you can be like that also.
Geetha	So you can be anything you want to be? Is that it? Can you be anything you want to be?
Trina	Yeah you can be anything you want to be.
Selena	Unless you're Muslim.
Geetha	Unless you're Muslim. What happens then?
Selena	By law, if you're Malay, you have to be Muslim, you cannot be Christian, you cannot be any others, so by law...
Geetha	Do you know anyone who is Malay and Christian?
Selena	It's not allowed.
Louisa	But I've heard of people.
Selena	Really?
Louisa	Yeah, they just move out of the country and then just come back.

Selena	If you move out of the country then, buts its illegal within the country
Geetha	So outside of the country its easier to be anything you want?
Trina	Anything, yes.
Noel	It depends on which country you are in. There are countries that are worse than Malaysia. **Group laughs**
Amit	Syria
Geetha	Ok Amit, I am interested to hear about your lain-lainess.
Amit	What do you want to know?
Geetha	How are you Lain lain.
Amit	Oh no, I'm actually Punjabi, so in my IC it's just Lain Lain.
Geetha	Oh, so it doesn't fall under the Indian category
Amit	No. Both my parents are lain lain
Geetha	So you are also lain lain…automatically. So how does it feel being lain lain but you actually know that you are Punjabi
Amit	I dunno. I don't really care I think, it hasn't really affected me like.
Selena	Do you feel offended your IC is lain lain.
Trina	I think it is better that way.
Amit	No, I feel pretty special…People ask me I say lain lain. You know others like…
Geetha	Its unique?
Amit	Yeah it's pretty unique
Geetha	So it's better to be lain lain than…
Amit	I dunno, I don't really care. I feel like its got nothing to do with who I am or to identify me with …
Geetha	Does it affect you on a day to day basis
Amit	No, I don't wake up in the morning thinking I'm lain lain.. *all laugh*
Geetha	Ok, so it's not in your psyche…but erm, going for school or for work
Amit	I went to a *kebangsan* school, in my school there are like, out of 200 there 3 other lain lain students. I don't have any other lain lain

friends, all my friends are either Malay, Chinese or India, so I come from quite a diverse background. I don't even speak Punjabi, I don't have Punjabi friends, I speak Malay pretty fluently, like I can speak with boarding school Malay kids, and I speak English obviously and I can understand a bit of Cantonese cause a lot of my Chinese friends speak Cantonese and my family are pretty fluent in Cantonese. Like my dad, grandma grandpa speak Cantonese.

Geetha	Ok so Amit speaks Cantonese
Amit	No…I don't…I don't…
Selena	Example eh (*Speaks in Cantonese*)
Amit	If my friends are having conversation. About sitting around a table, I can sort of understand what they are saying
Geetha	Ok, assuming Amit speaks Cantonese, fully Cantonese, he speaks Cantonese well. Would he be accepted into the Chinese community?
Trina	Yeah
Louisa	Yeah
Selena	Yeah, quietly more
Geetha	But he doesn't look like he's a member of the Chinese community
Selena	But he speaks Chinese
Geetha	So then he's Chinese
Trina	Also I think the language…it shapes what you are. I mean when you speak a native language, it makes you a different person.
Amit	Coming from erm, government school I can tell you what differentiates groups of individuals in like what you said earlier, like *kebangsan* schools…like people tend to, like everyone is friends with each other but then people tend to gravitate towards their own racial group and I think the main reason for that is because of the language barrier because you're most comfortable speaking the language that…mother tongue basically, what you were taught and what you grew up speaking. So that is why I think people tend to gravitate towards their own racial groups.

Geetha	But you don't speak Mandarin?
Louisa	Yeah but I to come to a government school as well, and so because I don't speak mandarin a lot of my friends are from different backgrounds. I have Malay friends, India friends and then Chinese speak mandarin as friends. Then I notice that some of my other friends who are more comfortable speaking mandarin, they usually stick around the other mandarin speaking people.
Amit	That's why I said the language plays quite a huge role in like deciding who your groups of friends are I think.
Louisa	Not so much of race, more the language
Trina	I feel like we just solved the mystery of why groups together
Geetha	Because we speak the same language
Amit	You tend to move toward the same language as you which is why that if you speak, if you can understand Cantonese then you wouldn't mind hanging out with people, in a group of people who are most comfortable speaking Cantonese. Like you can just hang out with them, they don't really care.
Geetha	So it doesn't matter what your categorisation is, as long as.
Amit	Yeah it does it matter. I think the main issue is the language. Even in Malaysia when you say everyone speaks Malay here, if you put them in a group of Malay friends, then they can't understand, or like keep up with the pace of boarding school Malay tradition speaking, you're not going to feel comfortable, you're going to feel a bit detached from the group. That's why I think speaking the language the way the people speak it. Like if I go to Kelantan or something then obviously its going to be really weird. I mean I'll be able to understand what they are saying but there's no proper conversation. So it's quite an important factor I think.
Geetha	OK, so I told you guys this is my second study. I did a first study where I did 31 interviews. I want to tell you one of them and then maybe we can talk about it. So erm, so this person said, erm 'I feel

	that the Indian community and Chinese Community and playing on a similar playing field. I think they both face similar issues in their lives. They go through about the same level of racism in other countries and also within their own countries. So in many ways, they do have a lot of similarities that have acknowledged that they do'. What do you think about this? Because I saw like a….
Selena.	Generally, it's not illegal to discriminate against the minorities. The government can find a way to like twist it and say 'oh no its not discrimination and stuff' and politicians can actually go up and say the Malays have the priorities and this and that. The Malays they have priority in almost everything Bumiputra the 5% discount. Which I just realised is a subsidiary given by the government to all people. And then in terms of financial aid and scholarship, the Malays have it a lot easier. For example, in the national university you can hear of Chinese Indians getting straights A, CGPAs for STPM and they cannot get into the school of their choice. Whereas, Malays they can get really low and still get in the same course.
Geetha	Have you all felt the same way, or is this something isolated?
Noel	I know a lot of Chinese that feel the same way, but personally probably don't agree with that.
Geetha	Why?
Noel	I think it is hypocrite. Yeah you do see Malays getting advantage, but you see in Malaysia right now, the Chinese just group up in the same and are trying to take their advantage also. So like you do see a lot of Malays here, but there also a lot of poor Malays in Malaysia, not poor, but they are more into agriculture in Malaysia and you don't make as much money from agriculture that you do in service. And there are lot of Malays in Malaysia from that kind of background who require the government…like obviously the government is I would say, like incentivising them to work for them by giving them all these subsidies but they do require it. While you see a lot of

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	Chinese like, what the Chinese do, if they open their open business, they tend to hire Chinese. It's the same for each race. But that's the same thing the Chinese do, they tend to hire their own Chinese people, they send their children to the best private schools, I think it's kind of hypocritical to say you're being minoritised. Obviously yes the government is giving them advantage but er I mean it's hard to think about it lah. I feel But I wouldn't say its overly kind of a one-way thing.
Geetha	OK
Amit	I would say obviously there is some sort of like er….affirmative action in Malaysia is unfair. Especially coming from government school where I come from in, Ipoh like a small city, a lot of my like Chinese friends who got really good results they don't get what they deserve in terms of educational opportunities. So I think that quite unfair. So obviously there would be dissent. But what he said earlier, the most of the people who complain are from the upper class, so they have no real right to complain.
Geetha	Upper class Chinese and Upper Class Indians?
Amit	Yeah, Upper class Chinese and Indians. But then again, I think the policy when it was first implemented, the MEP the issue was to tackle poverty. But now, its become more of a political agenda to win over votes because you have over 65% Malays in Malaysia, and to win them over. And not all of them are poor. So it's a politically popular thing to do. Obviously it's unfair. The people who complain number 1 not really helping. Obviously in an ideal world they should change. Then again, everyone poor should be helped. If you travel to Kelantan or Trengganu , you will see the Malays there are poor and backwards. The policies that meant to be helping them aren't. The 5% housing policy, why would you get 5% discount on a 20 million ringgit house in KL? That's just ridiculous isn't it? All of these things show that, obviously there will be racial tensions because people

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aren't happy, obviously, when there inequity, there's some sort of affirmative action on government scale, like unfairness, people will be unhappy. Then again, we're trying to solve the problem of poverty, so maybe they should..., obviously, they change the policy to help poor people, and obviously, more Malays will get help anyways because there are more Malays who are poor. As of now, it just doesn't look very promising, obviously I would complain as well.

Selena   On the topic of poverty, recently there was one politician who was talking about reducing poverty, sorry, she was making a statement that rising house prices was making it hard for Malays to buy houses, it was just like people in general. She precisely said that Malays could afford this Malays couldn't afford that and then I was reading an article that asked what makes you think Chinese can actually afford it? Like my parents myself are also struggling with like rising costs, and this additional, now that we have the exchange rate problems. In a recent article, I just read about 800 Malays NGOS trying to petition for Malays to not having to pay PTPTN loans. Because PTPTN loans do not need to be paid if you get first class. And majority of the Chinese actually do get first class. So they do to pay their PTPTN loans. So Malays don't often have to because they do not get. So why aren't the Malays getting a first class and stuff, because I was just thinking you make it so easy for them to not need to get first class.

Geetha   So you saying because institutionally it doesn't help them anyway to motivate them to.

Selena   I would say like the Malaysia system is making the Malays really complacent. They are having everything really easy and stuff. Oh it's like, even if I have the PTPTN loan and stuff, and I'm Malay if the government will give me all the stuff like that.

Geetha   Is this sentiment shared? She was nodding her head as well.

Noel	I a lot of this is more towards political statements. In that if you are Chinese or Indian, then you read it in Facebook that the thing is really stupid, but if you think in terms of politically, obviously Malay as the majority, and when you make these sort of statements, the people will want to vote for you because they agree with it. So its sounds stupid to us, but it's not. For the politics, peoples think politicians in Malaysia are stupid but they're not, they are just catering for who votes for who them. So we think is a political thing, this politician is so dumb, why are they doing this, they are being smart. They are just catering for who votes for them, because they know the Chinese won't vote for them so it's better to keep your support.
Geetha	Right. Actually I'm coming to then cos we are running out of time. So we are now actually at the end of the discussion. Considering all the issues we have discussed this morning, which do you feel are the most important ones we have discussed.
Selena	Politicians
Geetha	Ok.
Amit	They are the root of all evil.
Geetha	Everyone is smiling. I'm guessing...
Amit	I think the main issue is institutional racism. Like especially in school. In primary school, I had a third of my class were Malays. By secondary school, by form 2 or 3, all of them gone to boarding school, mainly boarding schools. So like no Malays in my class left. So how to do you expect to integrate? You put them into a separate community amongst themselves. So obviously you're fostering racist sentiment and erm attitudes. I mean is not exactly racist, you're making them more comfortable amongst their race, which I think is quite said really, because what we have in Malaysia is quite unique. And we keep talking about, we saying we are diverse, were unique you know, promoting this in tourism, they make it such a big deal.

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	But come on, let's like think about. All the country is not diverse. Look at London for instance. Does the London tourism board goes round putting signs up saying 'look London truly the world's most diverse or whatever' no one really gives a sht. Everywhere is getting more diverse.
Geetha	So why is it important in Malaysia to be diverse
Selena	That's there only selling point to be honest.
Amit	All the countries are diverse really, Singapore, Thailand whatever. All the major capitals around the world- All the financial capitals, tourist capitals.
Geetha	So what's the importance in Malaysia?
Amit	so we keep promoting diversity is the big deal, but this not the big deal. We should forget every racial aspect to it. I said there are 2 things to it, racial and cultural. Racially there shouldn't be any barriers. Culturally because most of the Malaysians, especially the people Malays, Chinese and Indians, culturally we are very similar although you can find some sort of differences within the Chinese, Indians like festival wise, like culturally, if you go out of Malaysia, you will notice that most of the Malaysians are almost identical culturally. That's what's important. So that maybe the politicians should get their heads of their asses
Geetha	Ok shall we end on that note. Thank you so much for this, it's been very very useful. I'm just going to pass this around so you can sign so I can pay you. I'm trying to find a better way to classify ourselves rather than using this thing Chinese, Malays, Indian and ticking. So I'm trying to do something quite interesting to look at what our heritage is. SO for example, I'm mixed race, I gave 2 different ethnic groups, so personally I would like here, I would here. So this is 1 ethnic group, and this is a second group and I'm in between here. And then for some people, oh no, I'm somewhere here. Erm, but my 2 ethnic groups are very far from where I am, I don't really

identify with either of them. Or one ethnic group is like a box, the other one is circle, and I'm like a triangle. So I'm just trying to find ways to pictorially show my heritage.

Note:
Words in bold are actions.
Words that are italicised are those spoken in local languages.

Note: Full Questionnaire is provided here, though only two aspects, racial identity construction and racial identity content are studied in this thesis.

Being Malaysian and Singaporean

Introduction

Welcome to our research study.

This study is interested in understanding what it means to be a Malaysian or Singaporean individual of Chinese, Malay, Indian and Mixed Race background. You will be asked to provide your ratings and opinions on your racial group. You will also be asked to provide some basic information about yourself (e.g., age, gender). The surveys need to be completed online and take about 15 minutes to complete.

Your decision to participate in this and subsequent surveys is completely voluntary and you have the right to stop your participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to refuse to answer any questions will not affect your relationship with the researchers, or the London School of Economics and Political Science either now or in the future.
Your participation will be anonymous, and all collected data will be confidential. Anonymity and confidentiality will be provided in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Geetha Reddy (g.reddy@lse.ac.uk). If you have concerns regarding the ethics of this study,

please contact the Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Ethics Research Committee head, Dr Lucia Garcia (L.garcia@lse.ac.uk).

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire. It will help us greatly in understanding what being Singaporean and Malaysian means, and we look forward to sharing our findings with you.

Q125 I have read the informed consent and by clicking below agree to participate in this study:

I understand what participation in this study entails.

I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions and may withdraw at anytime.

 I understand that my details will remain anonymous and confidential.

I understand that this projects subscribes to the ethical conduct of research.

I am above 18 years of age.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Q125 = No (2)

I am

○ Female (1)

○ Male (2)

○ Non-binary (3)

I am _____ years old.

_____

Which religion do you identify with

○ Hindu (1)

○ Buddhist (2)

○ Muslim (3)

○ Christian (4)

○ Sikh (5)

○ Taoist (6)

○ Others (please enter religion here) (7)

_____

○ I do not identify with any religion (8)

What is your highest educational qualification?

○ Primary School (1)

○ Secondary School (2)

○ Junior College Certificate/Pre-University Diploma/A Levels (3)

○ Diploma (4)

○ University (BSc/BA etc.) (5)

○ Postgraduate (Postgraduate Diploma/Masters) (6)

○ PhD/DPhil/Doctorate (7)

End of Block

MALAYSIA

I am a Malaysian.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

X→

	Indian (1)	Malay (2)	Chinese (3)	Mixed Race (4)	Others (5)
When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I am in Malaysia, and among my family and close friends, I identify as .... (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I am in Malaysia, and in public, I identify as ... (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I am in Malaysia, and when I fill out governmental forms, I identify as ..... (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On my birth certificate/identity card, my race is ... (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People who do not know me personally think I am .... (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as .....

If you have clicked Others for the statement above, please write down the race you identify with below.

_____

Click the option that applies most to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
I think about my race. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I am representative of people in my racial group(s). (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Being a part of my racial group(s) is very important to me. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel connected to other people in my racial group(s). (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that most applies to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
I speak the language that is connected with (one of) my racial identities (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I speak languages connected with other racial identities. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I belong to (one of) my racial group (s) because I speak the language connected with it. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I understand my racial identity through my use of the language connected to it. (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that most applies to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
I get to decide what the Indian identity means in Malaysia. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I get to decide what the Chinese identity means in Malaysia (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I get to decide what the Malay identity means in Malaysia (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I get to decide what the Mixed Race identity means in Malaysia (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Other people decide what the Indian identity means in Malaysia. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Other people decide what the Chinese identity means in Malaysia. (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Other people decide what the Malay identity means in Malaysia. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Other people decide what the Mixed race identity means in Malaysia. (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	Definitely true (1)	Probably true (2)	Neither true nor false (3)	Probably false (4)	Definitely false (5)
How I have felt about my racial identity has changed over the course of my life. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
How I feel about my racial identity currently changes from situation to situation. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
How I feel about my racial identity remains the same no matter the situation. (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
People who do not belong to (one of) my racial group(s) can tell what race I am by looking at me (1)	○	○	○	○	○
People who do not belong to (one of) my racial group(s) can tell what race I am when they read my name (2)	○	○	○	○	○
People who belong to (one of) my racial group(s) can tell what race I am by looking at me (3)	○	○	○	○	○
People who belong to (one of) my racial group(s) can tell what race I am when they read my name (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
I can tell if a person belongs to my race looking at them (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I can tell if a person belongs to another race looking at them (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I can tell if a person belongs to another race by reading their name (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I can tell if a person belongs to my race by reading their name (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
My racial identity is important to me. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
My religious identity is important to me. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
My religious identity is more important than my racial identity. (13)	○	○	○	○	○
My racial identity is more important to me than my religious identity. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
My racial identity is as important as my religious identity. (16)	○	○	○	○	○
Neither my race nor my religion is important to me. (18)	○	○	○	○	○
My racial identity and religious identity are interconnected. (12)	○	○	○	○	○

How interconnected are race and religion for you? Click the option that applies to you below.

How interconnected are race and nationality for you? Click the option that applies to you below.

Click the option that applies most to you

	All of my life (1)	Most of my life (2)	Half of my life (3)	Some of my life (4)	Never (5)
I have lived outside of Malaysia (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I have lived in Malaysia (2)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	I live in the UK now (1)	I have lived in the UK before (2)	More than 10 times (3)	5-10 times (4)	Less than 5 times (5)	Never (6)
I have been to the United Kingdom (UK) (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○

How long have you lived in the UK?

○ Less than 1 year (1)

○ 1-2 years (2)

○ 3-4 years (3)

○ 5-6 years (4)

○ 7-8 years (5)

○ 9+ years (6)

SINGAPORE

I am a Singaporean.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

X→

	Indian (1)	Malay (2)	Chinese (3)	Mixed Race (4)	Others (5)
When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I am in Singapore, and among my family and close friends, I identify as .... (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I am in Singapore, and in public, I identify as ... (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I am in Singapore, and when I fill out governmental forms, I identify as ..... (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On my birth certificate/identity card, my race is ... (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People who do not know me personally think I am .... (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Display This Question:

If Contains When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as .....

When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ...

If you have clicked Others for the statement above, please write down the race you identify with below.

_____

Click the option that applies most to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
I think about my race. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I am representative of people in my racial group(s) (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Being a part of my racial group(s) is very important to me. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel connected to other people in my racial group(s). (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I identify with my nationality (Malaysian or Singaporean). (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that most applies to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
I speak the language that is connected with (one of) my racial identities (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I speak languages connected with other racial identities. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I belong to (one of) my racial group (s) because I speak the language connected with it. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I understand my racial identity through my use of the language connected to it. (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that most applies to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
I get to decide what the Indian identity means in Singapore. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I get to decide what the Chinese identity means in Singapore. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I get to decide what the Malay identity means in Singapore. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I get to decide what the Mixed Race identity means in Singapore. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Other people decide what the Indian identity means in Singapore. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Other people decide what the Chinese identity means in Singapore. (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Other people decide what the Malay identity means in Singapore. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Other people decide what the Mixed race identity means in Singapore. (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	Definitely true (1)	Probably true (2)	Neither true nor false (3)	Probably false (4)	Definitely false (5)
How I have felt about my racial identity has changed over the course of my life. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
How I feel about my racial identity currently changes from situation to situation. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
How I feel about my racial identity remains the same no matter the situation. (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
People who do not belong to (one of) my racial group(s) can tell what race I am by looking at me (1)	○	○	○	○	○
People who do not belong to (one of) my racial group(s) can tell what race I am when they read my name (2)	○	○	○	○	○
People who belong to (one of) my racial group(s) can tell what race I am by looking at me (3)	○	○	○	○	○
People who belong to (one of) my racial group(s) can tell what race I am when they read my name (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
I can tell if a person belongs to my race looking at them (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I can tell if a person belongs to another race looking at them (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I can tell if a person belongs to another race by reading their name (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I can tell if a person belongs to my race by reading their name (7)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
My racial identity is important to me. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
My religious identity is important to me. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
My religious identity is more important than my racial identity. (13)	○	○	○	○	○
My racial identity is more important to me than my religious identity. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
My racial identity is as important as my religious identity. (16)	○	○	○	○	○
Neither my race nor my religion is important to me. (18)	○	○	○	○	○
My racial identity and religious identity are interconnected. (12)	○	○	○	○	○

How interconnected are race and religion for you? Click the option that applies to you below.

How interconnected are race and nationality for you? Click the option that applies to you below.

Click the option that applies most to you

	All of my life (1)	Most of my life (2)	Half of my life (3)	Some of my life (4)	Never (5)
I have lived outside of Singapore (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I have lived in Singapore (2)	○	○	○	○	○

Click the option that applies most to you

	I live in the UK now (1)	I have lived in the UK before (2)	More than 10 times (3)	5-10 times (4)	Less than 5 times (5)	Never (6)
I have been to the United Kingdom (UK) (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○

How long have you lived in the UK?

  ○ Less than 1 year (1)

  ○ 1-2 years (2)

  ○ 3-4 years (3)

  ○ 5-6 years (4)

  ○ 7-8 years (5)

  ○ 9+ years (6)

Instructions

You will be given a sample question next. Please look at the image and answer the following questions.

Manipulation Test Orange

This is a picture of an

  ○ orange (1)

  ○ apple (2)

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of, and type these responses in the box below.

I think Oranges are ....

_____

Orange answer

Your answer may have looked something like this.
I think Oranges are ....
Sweet
Round
Orange in colour
Sometimes sour
Without seeds
A citrus fruit
Source of vitamin C
Are grown in different parts of the world
Made into orange juice

You will now be shown some images. Please click the option that you think describes the image best.

Manipulation Malaysia

This is a picture of the

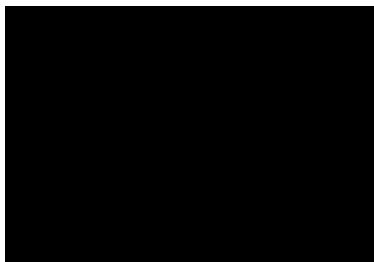○ Petronas Twin Towers (1)

○ Kuala Lumpur Tower (2)
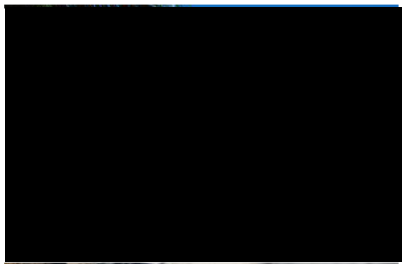
This is picture of the beach in

○ Langkawi (1)

○ Sipadan (2)

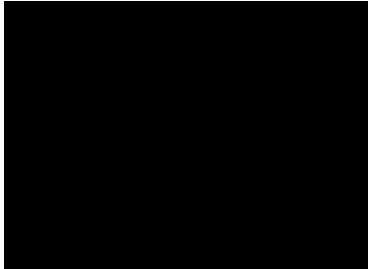This is a picture of the

- ○ Malacca High School, Malacca (1)

- ○ St Mary's High School, KL (2)

This is a picture of the

- ○ Cameron Highlands (1)

- ○ Perhentian Islands (2)

This is a picture of a house for sale at

- ○ Alam Damai, Cheras (1)

- ○ Kuching, Sarawak (2)

How easy was it to imagine yourself in Malaysia, after looking at these images.

○ Extremely easy (6)

○ Somewhat easy (7)

○ Neither easy nor difficult (8)

○ Somewhat difficult (9)

○ Extremely difficult (10)

Malaysian Indian in Malaysia

Display This Question:
    If = When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Indian]
Or If
    = When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Indian]
    And = When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Malay]
Or If
    = When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Indian]
    And = When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Chinese]
Or If
    = When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Indian]
    And = When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Malay]
    And = When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Chinese]
Or If
    Contains When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as .....

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Malaysia, I think Indians are ....

_____

_____

Singaporean Indian in Malaysia

Display This Question:
    If = When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Indian]
Or If
    = When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Indian]
    And = When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Malay]
Or If
    = When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Indian]
    And = When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Chinese]
Or If
    = When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Indian]
    And = When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Malay]
    And = When I am in Singapore, and by myself, I identify as ..... [Chinese]

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Malaysia, I think Indians are ....

_____

_____

Malaysian Chinese in Malaysia

Display This Question:
    If Contains When I am in Malaysia, and by myself, I identify as .....

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Malaysia, I think Chinese are ....

_____

_____

Singaporean Chinese in Malaysia

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Malaysia, I think Chinese are ....

_____

_____

Malaysian Malay in Malaysia

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Malaysia, I think Malays are ....

_____

_____

Singaporean Malay in Malaysia

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Malaysia, I think Malays are ....

_____

_____

SELF ID MALAYSIA

Click the option that applies most to you in this context.

	Always (13)	Most of the time (14)	About half the time (15)	Sometimes (16)	Never (17)
I think about my race. (1)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel like I am representative of people in my racial group(s). (2)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Being a part of my racial group(s) is very important to me. (3)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel connected to other people in my racial group(s). (4)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I identify with my nationality (Malaysian or Singaporean). (5)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Manipulation Singapore

This is a picture of the

○ Merlion (1)

○ Singa, the charity lion (2)

This is a picture of the

○ Esplanade (1)

○ Arts and Science Museum (2)
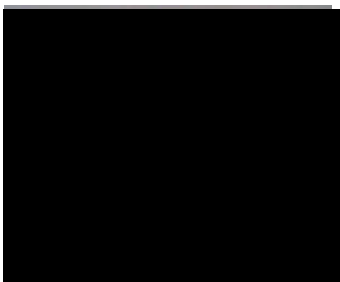
This is picture of the .... flats in Singapore

○ Pinnacle at Duxton (1)

○ The Peak at Toa Payoh (2)
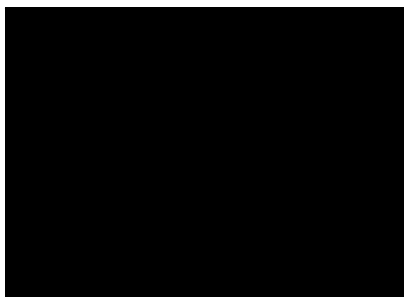
This is picture of

○ Yio Chu Kang Primary School (1)

○ Bukit Batok Primary School (2)
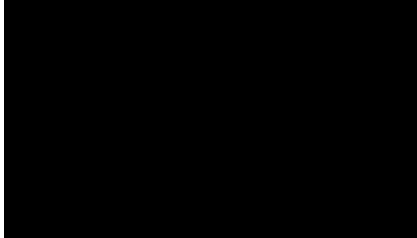
This is picture of

○ Sentosa Beach (1)

○ West Coast Beach (2)

How easy was it to imagine yourself in Singapore, after looking at these images.

○ Extremely easy (6)

○ Somewhat easy (7)

○ Neither easy nor difficult (8)

○ Somewhat difficult (9)

○ Extremely difficult (10)

Malaysian Indian in Singapore

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Singapore, I think Indians are ....

_____

Singaporean Indian in Singapore

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Singapore, I think Indians are ....

_____

_____

Malaysian Chinese in Singapore

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Singapore, I think Chinese are ....

_____

_____

Singaporean Chinese in Singapore

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Singapore, I think Chinese are ....

_____

_____

Malaysian Malay in Singapore

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Singapore, I think Malays are ....

_____

_____

Singaporean Malay in Singapore

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in Singapore, I think Malays are ....

_____

_____

SELF ID SINGAPORE

Click the option that applies most to you in this context.

	Always (13)	Most of the time (14)	About half the time (15)	Sometimes (16)	Never (17)
I think about my race. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I am representative of people in my racial group(s). (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Being a part of my racial group(s) is very important to me. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel connected to other people in my racial group(s). (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I identify with my nationality (Malaysian or Singaporean). (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Manipulation UK

This is a picture of the

  ○ Big Ben and Houses of Parliament (1)

  ○ Buckingham Palace (2)
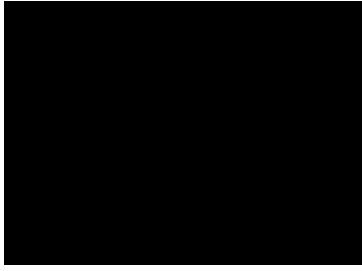
This is picture of houses in

○ Brighton (1)

○ London (2)

This is picture of

○ Oxford University (1)

○ Cambridge University (2)
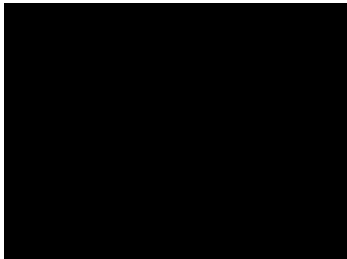
This is picture of the

○ London Eye (1)

Tower of London (2)
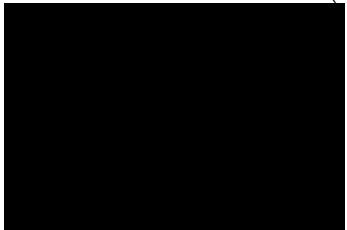
This is a picture of

○ Hyde Park (1)

○ Regent's Park (2)

How easy was it to imagine yourself in the UK, after looking at these images.

○ Extremely easy (6)

○ Somewhat easy (7)

○ Neither easy nor difficult (8)

○ Somewhat difficult (9)

○ Extremely difficult (10)

Malaysian Indian in UK

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in the UK or think of the UK, I think Indians are ....

_____

_____

Singaporean Indian in UK

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in the UK or think of the UK, I think Indians are ....

_____

_____

Malaysian Malay in UK

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in the UK or think of the UK, I think Malays are ....

_____

_____

Singaporean Malay in UK

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in the UK or think of the UK, I think Malays are ....

_____

_____

Malaysian Chinese in UK

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in the UK or think of the UK, I think Chinese are ....

_____

_____

Singaporean Chinese in UK

Please complete the sentence with as many responses as you can think of and type these responses in the box below.

When I am in the UK or think of the UK, I think Chinese are ....

_____

_____

SELF ID UK

Click the option that applies most to you in this context.

	Always (13)	Most of the time (14)	About half the time (15)	Sometimes (16)	Never (17)
I think about my race. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I am representative of people in my racial group(s). (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Being a part of my racial group(s) is very important to me. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel connected to other people in my racial group(s). (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I identify with my nationality (Malaysian or Singaporean). (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Debrief

This is the last page of the survey.

We would like to know what you think about the study.

What do you think the purpose of this study was?

_____

_____

Had you previously heard about the purpose of this study from somebody else?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Why do you think you were shown images of different countries?

_____

_____

Please click the option that applies most to you.

	Extremely familiar (1)	Very familiar (2)	Moderately familiar (3)	Slightly familiar (4)	Not familiar at all (5)
How familiar are you with the Malaysian context? (18)	○	○	○	○	○
How familiar are you with the Singaporean context? (19)	○	○	○	○	○
How familiar are you with the UK context? (20)	○	○	○	○	○

If you have lived outside of Malaysia or Singapore, please list locations and time periods below.

For example, United States of America, 5 years.

_____

_____

Do you have any other comments?

_____

Final

Thank you for participating in this study.

This was a study on how Singaporeans and Malaysians construct the Indian, Malay and Chinese racial identities and how they identify themselves. We also wanted to find out if participants thought of themselves differently when they were in different countries.

We hope to share our findings with you soon.

Please get in touch with us via email at g.reddy@lse.ac.uk if you have any questions. You can also follow the progress of this study on www.reddygeetha.com.

Have a lovely day!

Appendix 11: Consent form and Information Sheet for Study 1

LSE **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Background Information Questionnaire

Before we begin, I would like to get some basic information about you. The reason that I would like this information is so that I can show those who read my research report that I managed to obtain the views of a cross-section of people. The information that you give will not be used to identify you in any way because this research is entirely confidential.

Please tick (✓) where appropriate.

1.   Are you

        Male ___   Female ___

2.   What is your date of birth?   _____

3.   Are you Singaporean?

        Yes _____   No ____

4.   Please tick the sentence, which describes you most.

        I have lived in Singapore all my life.   _____

        I have lived in Singapore most of my life.   _____
        (Please state the number of years here: - _____)

        I have lived in Singapore for less than half of my life.   _____
        (Please state the number of years here: - _____)

5.   How would you describe your ethnic origins?

        a.   Chinese   _____

b. Malay   ____
   c. Indian   ____
   d. Eurasian   ____
   e. Others (please state your ethnicity)   _____
   f. Mixed ethnicity (please describe your ethnicity) _____

6.   What is the ethnicity stated on your Singapore I.C.?

   a. Chinese   ____
   b. Malay   ____
   c. Indian   ____
   d. Eurasian   ____
   e. Others (please state your ethnicity)   _____
   f. Mixed ethnicity (please describe your ethnicity) _____

7.   What is the ethnicity stated on your father's Singapore I.C.?

   a. Chinese   ____
   b. Malay   ____
   c. Indian   ____
   d. Eurasian   ____
   e. Others (please state your ethnicity)   _____
   f. Mixed ethnicity (please describe his ethnicity)   _____

8.   What is the ethnicity stated on your mother's Singapore I.C.?

   a. Chinese   ____
   b. Malay   ____
   c. Indian   ____
   d. Eurasian   ____
   e. Others (please state your ethnicity)   _____
   f. Mixed ethnicity (please describe your ethnicity) _____

9.   What is your highest educational qualification?

   None   ____
   GCSE O-level   ____
   A-level   ____
   Diploma   ____
   Degree   ____
   Postgraduate degree/diploma   ____

10. What was the 2nd language that you took in school? Please state below.

       _____

Thank you for your time. Please save this file with your name at the end of the file name. (E.g. Background information_**insertyournamehere**.doc)

![LSE logo] **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM**

---

1.   **Project title**
       Understanding multi-ethnic identities in the Singaporean and Malaysian context.

2.   **Principal Investigator and co-investigator(s), if any, with the contact number and organization.**

       Principal Investigator - Geetha REDDY
                                  PhD Student
                                  London School of Economics and Political Science

       Contact: Ms Geetha Reddy

       Phone: +44 7412988502
       Email: g.reddy@lse.ac.uk

3.   **What is the purpose of this research?**
       You are invited to participate in a research study. This information sheet provides you with information about the research. The Principal Investigator will also describe this research to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

       The Principal Investigator would like to understand what it means to be Singaporean and have a mixed ethnicity in Singapore.

4.   **Who can participate in the research? What is the expected duration of my participation? What is the duration of this research?**

       Singaporeans between the ages of 18 and 65, who have parents who of different races (as stated in their I.C.), can participate in the research.

       The expected duration of your participation will be a single interview session of about 30 to 45 minutes over Skype. The session will be conducted online, at a time convenient to both yourself and the principal investigator.

5.   **What is the approximate number of participants involved?**

There will be approximately 30 participants involved in this part of the study.

6. **What will be done if I take part in this research?**

You would have agreed to a pre-arranged time slot for the interview to take place. You will be asked a few questions from a discussion guide. You will also be encouraged to share your personal experiences. The interview will be conducted in English. The session will be video recorded. Participants who do not agree to the recording of the session will be excluded from the research.

7. **How will my privacy and the confidentiality of my research records be protected?**

Your name, date of birth, race, highest educational qualifications, second language in school and how long you have lived in Singapore will be asked in a questionnaire that will need to be filled before the start of the interview. The race of your parents will also be asked. Only the principal investigator and the supervisors will have access to your information. This will not be released to any other person or organisation. Any identifiable information will not be used in publications or presentations. Research data will be coded (i.e. only identified with a code number) at the earliest possible stage of the research and anonymous data will subsequently be used. The data will be stored in a secure location with only the principal investigator and supervisors having access to it. Soft copies will be password encrypted and all participants and establishments will be anonomised and coded.

8. **What are the possible discomforts and risks for participants?**

As this research only involves participation in an interview, no discomforts or risks are expected.

9. **What is the compensation for any injury?**

There will be no compensation as there will not be any foreseen injury.

10. **Will there be reimbursement for participation?**

Participants will not be reimbursed for their participation.

11. **What are the possible benefits to me and to others?**

There is no direct benefit to you by participating in this research. You will assist us in understanding the important issues about being a mixed ethnicity

Singaporean in Singapore. The knowledge gained will benefit future research in this field.

12.   Can I refuse to participate in this research?

Yes, you can. Your decision to participate in this research is entirely voluntary. You can also choose to withdraw from the discussion at any time without giving any reasons.

13.   Whom should I call if I have any questions or problems?
Please contact the Principal Investigator, Ms Geetha Reddy at **telephone** +44 7412988502; **and email** g.reddy@lse.ac.uk for all research-related matters.

Consent Form

Project title: Understanding multi-ethnic identities in the Singaporean and Malaysian context.

I hereby acknowledge that:

1. My signature is my acknowledgement that I have agreed to take part in the above research.

2. I have received a copy of this information sheet that explains the use of my *feedback and personal information* in this research. I understand its contents and agree to donate my *feedback and personal information* for the use of this research.

3. I can withdraw from the research at any point of time by informing the Principal Investigator and all *my feedback and personal information* will be discarded.

4. I will not have any financial benefits that result from the commercial development of this research.

_____   _____

Name and Signature (Participant)   Date

LSE **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Background Information Questionnaire

Before we begin, I would like to get some basic information about you. The reason that I would like this information is so that I can show those who read my research report that I managed to obtain the views of a cross-section of people. The information that you give will not be used to identify you in any way because this research is entirely confidential.

Please tick (✔) where appropriate.

11.   Are you

        Male __   Female __

2.   What is your date of birth?   _____

12.   Are you Singaporean?

        Yes ____   No ___

13.   Please tick the sentence, which describes you most.

        I have lived in Singapore all my life.   ____

        I have lived in Singapore most of my life.   ____
        (Please state the number of years here: - _____)

        I have lived in Singapore for less than half of my life.   ____
        (Please state the number of years here: - _____)

14.   How would you describe your ethnic origins?

        g.   Chinese   ____

h. Malay   ____

i. Indian   ____

j. Eurasian   ____

k. Others (please state your ethnicity)   _____

l. Mixed ethnicity (please describe your ethnicity)   _____

15. What is the ethnicity stated on your Singapore I.C.?

    g. Chinese   ____

    h. Malay   ____

    i. Indian   ____

    j. Eurasian   ____

    k. Others (please state your ethnicity)   _____

    l. Mixed ethnicity (please describe your ethnicity)   _____

16. What is the ethnicity stated on your father's Singapore I.C.?

    g. Chinese   ____

    h. Malay   ____

    i. Indian   ____

    j. Eurasian   ____

    k. Others (please state your ethnicity)   _____

    l. Mixed ethnicity (please describe his ethnicity)   _____

17. What is the ethnicity stated on your mother's Singapore I.C.?

    g. Chinese   ____

    h. Malay   ____

    i. Indian   ____

    j. Eurasian   ____

    k. Others (please state your ethnicity)   _____

    l. Mixed ethnicity (please describe your ethnicity)   _____

18. What is your highest educational qualification?

    None   ____

    GCSE O-level   ____

    A-level   ____

    Diploma   ____

    Degree   ____

    Postgraduate degree/diploma   ____

19. What was the 2nd language that you took in school? Please state below.

    _____

Thank you!

14.   Project title

Understanding multi-ethnic identities in the Singaporean and Malaysian context.

15.   Principal Investigator and co-investigator(s), if any, with the contact number and organization.

Principal Investigator	Geetha REDDY
	PhD Student
	London School of Economics and Political Science
Contact:	Ms Geetha Reddy
Phone:	+44 7412988502/+65 98004402
Email:	g.reddy@lse.ac.uk

16.   **What is the purpose of this research?**

You are invited to participate in a research study. This information sheet provides you with information about the research. The Principal Investigator will also describe this research to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

The Principal Investigator would like to understand what it means to be Singaporean and participate in a multiracial setting.

17.   Who can take part in the research? What is the expected duration of my participation? What is the duration of this research?

Singaporeans between the ages of 18 and 65 can take part in this research.

The expected duration of your participation will be 45 minutes in a single group discussion. The entire research project is expected to take 4 years.

18.   What is the approximate number of participants involved?

There will be approximately 30 participants involved in this part of the study.

19.   What will be done if I take part in this research?

You would have agreed to a pre-arranged time slot for the interview to take place. You will be asked a few questions from a discussion guide. You will also be encouraged to share your personal experiences. The interview will be conducted in English. The session will be video recorded. Participants who do not agree to the recording of the session will be excluded from the research.

20.   How will my privacy and the confidentiality of my research records be protected?

Your name, date of birth, race, highest educational qualifications, second language in school and how long you have lived in Singapore will be asked in a questionnaire that will need to be filled before the start of the interview. The race of your parents will also be asked. Only the principal investigator and the supervisors will have access to your information. This will not be released to any other person or organisation. Any identifiable information will not be used in publications or presentations. Research data will be coded (i.e. only identified with a code number) at the earliest possible stage of the research and anonymous data will subsequently be used. The data will be stored in a secure location with only the principal investigator and supervisors having access to it. Soft copies will be password encrypted and all participants and establishments will be anonomised and coded.

21.   What are the possible discomforts and risks for participants?

As this research only involves participation in an interview, no discomforts or risks are expected.

22.   What is the compensation for any injury?

There will be no compensation as there will not be any foreseen injury.

23.   Will there be reimbursement for participation?

Participants will not be reimbursed for their participation.

24.   What are the possible benefits to me and to others?

There is no direct benefit to you by participating in this research. You will assist us in understanding the important issues about being Singaporean in multiracial Singapore. The knowledge gained will benefit future research in this field.

25. **Can I refuse to participate in this research?**

Yes, you can. Your decision to participate in this research is entirely voluntary. You can also choose to withdraw from the discussion at any time without giving any reasons.

26. **Whom should I call if I have any questions or problems?**
Please contact the Principal Investigator, Ms Geetha Reddy at **telephone** +65 84834584/ +44 7412988502; **and email** g.reddy@lse.ac.uk for all research-related matters.

Consent Form

Project title: Understanding multi-ethnic identities in the Singaporean and Malaysian context.

I hereby acknowledge that:

5. My signature is my acknowledgement that I have agreed to take part in the above research.

6. I have received a copy of this information sheet that explains the use of my *feedback and personal information* in this research. I understand its contents and agree to donate my *feedback and personal information* for the use of this research.

7. I can withdraw from the research at any point of time by informing the Principal Investigator and all *my feedback and personal information* will be discarded.

8. I will not have any financial benefits that may result from the commercial development of this research.

_____   _____

Name and Signature (Participant)   Date

Appendix 13: Consent form and Information Sheet for Study 3

Note: The consent form and information sheet were incorporated into the online questionnaire as shown in Appendix 10.

Appendix 14: Participant details Study 1

Participant name	Age	Nationality	Father's race	Mother's race	Own race	Self Identification
Alfian	22	Malaysian	Malay	Chinese	Malay	Malaysian
Brian	23	Malaysian	Chinese	Iban	Chinese	Hybrid
Hemera	31	Malaysian	Indian (NS)	Malay (NS)	Malay (NS)	With both, at different times
Jessie	27	Malaysian	Indian	Chinese	Indian	A person
Jiamin	22	Malaysian	Chinese	Indian	Chinese	Indian
Kai	40	Malaysian	Indian	Mother	Indian	Both, but stronger affinity to Indian
Nadir	27	Malaysian	Sulu (MC-MR)	Sulu (MC-Chinese)	Sulu	Bajau
Robin	35	Malaysian	Eurasian	Bidayuh/Chinese	Eurasian	Asian
Shalini	32	Malaysian	Indian	Filipino	Indian	Do not associate with ethnic identity
Shazana	32	Malaysian	Malay (MC)	Filipino	Malay	mixed Malaysian and Filipino
Shiro	22	Malaysian	Chinese	Japanese	Chinese	Chinese
Sufian	36	Malaysian	Indian (NS)	Chinese (NS)	NS	Malaysian
Tamilselvi	31	Malaysian	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Neither
Vinodhini	31	Malaysian	Indian	Kadazan	Indian	Indian
William	30	Malaysian	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Chinese
Yasodha	21	Malaysian	Chinese	Indian	Chinese	Neither
Dev	32	Singaporean	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Chinese-Indian
Kate	35	Singaporean	Chinese	Indian	Chinese	Religion instead of race
Nabilah	24	Singaporean	Malay	Malay (MC-Chinese)	Malay	Malay
Pat	31	Singaporean	Indian (MR)	Chinese	Indian	Chindian
Prema	28	Singaporean	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Indian
Priyan	36	Singaporean	Chinese	Indian	Indian-Chinese	Indian
Rathi	21	Singaporean	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Neither
Salina	27	Singaporean	Malay	Chinese	Malay	Malay
Sayidah	22	Singaporean	Malay	Malay (MC-Indian)	Malay	Difficult to self identify as Malay
Seema	24	Singaporean	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Neither
Sheela	34	Singaporean	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Human
Sophia	35	Singaporean	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Chinese
Vanessa	40	Singaporean	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Indian
Vernon	62	Singaporean	Indian	Chinese	Indian	Indian
Vignesh	28	Singaporean	Chinese	Indian	Chinese	Chinese

Note: MR- Multiracial
MC-Miscategorised
NS- Not Stated in Birth Certificate or Identity Card but listed officially

Appendix 15: Participant details Study 2

Singaporeans in Singapore				
Pseudonym	**Age**	**Self-Identification**	**Racial Categorisation**	**Educational qualifications**
Kelvin	25	Chinese	Chinese	Degree
Nadia	28	Indian	Indian	Postgraduate
Janet	25	Chinese	Chinese	Degree
Kumar	33	Indian	Indian	Postgraduate
Shan	53	Indian	Indian	Postgraduate
Zainal	27	Malay	Malay	Diploma
Mika	37	Indian	Indian	Postgraduate
Jesslyn	31	Chinese	Chinese	Postgraduate
Heera	27	Indian	Indian	Degree
Ben	28	Chinese	Chinese	Degree
Saiful	31	Malay	Javanese	A level
Eugene	31	Chinese	Chinese	Postgraduate
Aarif	36	Indian	Indian	O level
Nurah	34	Indian	Indian	Diploma
Helen	33	Chinese	Chinese	Postgraduate
Malaysians in Malaysia				
Pseudonym	**Age**	**Self-Identification**	**Racial Categorisation**	**Educational qualifications**
Sarojini	33	Chinese-Indian	Indian	Postgraduate
Sachin	24	Chinese-Indian	Indian	A-level
Nirmal	35	Indian	Indian	Degree
Arvin	28	Kadazan	Kadazan	Degree
Sanjana	23	Indian	Indian	Degree

| Zaza | 28 | Bajau/Melanau | Bajau | Degree |
| Anita | 36 | Ceylonese | Ceylonese | Postgraduate |

Singaporeans in London

Pseudonym	Age	Self-Identification	Racial Categorisation	Educational qualifications
Sofia	41	Human	Malay	Diploma
Zara	32	Malay	Malay	Postgraduate
Revathi	25	Indian	Indian	Postgraduate
Bala	25	Indian	Indian	Postgraduate
Ray	27	Chinese	Chinese	Degree
Pam	59	Eurasian	Eurasian	O level
Jon	26	Chinese	Chinese	Degree
Mel	22	Chinese	Chinese	Postgraduate

Malaysians in London

Pseudonym	Age	Self-Identification	Racial Categorisation	Educational qualifications
Ilan	34	Malay+Chinese	Malay	Postgraduate
Aadil	23	Malay	Malay	Degree
Jing Wei	32	Teochew+Hakka	Chinese	Degree
Amit	21	Punjabi	Lain-Lain	A levels
Louisa	20	Chinese	Chinese	A levels
Noel	21	Chinese	Chinese	A levels
Christine	21	Chinese	Chinese	A levels
Trina	20	Chinese	Chinese	A levels
Selena	19	Chinese	Chinese	A levels

Appendix 16: Book Chapter- Race Rules in Singapore (Reddy, 2016)

Multiculturalism is a constitutionally entrenched obligation. It is part of the fabric of Singapore as a nation from the day it was born. We have to make it a success for our collective survival as a sovereign state.

Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong [1]

Multiracialism, Singapore's brand of multiculturalism, and racial categorisation function as important structures that scaffold the nation building process in Singapore. Race and racial categories have underpinned Singapore's development at both micro and macro levels from colonization of the country to independent statehood.[2] Notwithstanding the passage of 50 years since decolonization in Singapore, ethnic relations and national politics still revolve around the racial categories used by the British colonialists.[3] Differences among the races were emphasised and the ruling elite used notions of inherent racial categories to explain inequality among the migrant population.[4] Race is the primary means of cultural and social classification in Singapore and every Singaporean is cognizant of what their race is, at least in official terms. Founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's personal perspectives on race and ethnicity resulted in the official Singaporean approach, where he appropriated the existing social British- and Chinese-generated racial prejudices of the 1940s and 1950s and developed them, viewing society in terms of hierarchical relationships[5].

Race and ethnicity are used interchangeably in national discourse, without the acknowledgement of the fundamental differences in the definition of these constructs. Briefly, in psychology, ethnicity is seen as a multidimensional, dynamic construct that refers to one's identity in terms of a subgroup that claims a common ancestry within a larger context and that shares race, religion, culture, language, kinship, or place of origin [6]. Race, on the other hand, is embedded in sociopolitical contexts that reflect a socio-economic hierarchy resting on the relative superiority and inferiority of different races and defined around a biological component[7]. While ethnicity is clearly defined today by the Singapore Department of Statistics using racialised categories and individual choice is implied – 'ethnicity refers to a person's

race as declared by the person'[8] – there is little agency in self-definition in Singapore as individuals are ascribed the race of their fathers when they are born. Here we also see how the boundaries between race and ethnicity are blurred, and race is taken to be genetic and is imposed upon individuals.[9] While many social scientists advocate the renouncing of the term race [10] in our discourse[11], countries like Singapore and Malaysia, amongst many others, continue to use the term.

In discussing race, a highly politicized and ideological construct in Singapore, we see how places of origin, language, phenotype[12], religion and cultural practices are interpreted and manipulated according to the state's objectives creating the content of the racial categories.[13]. Race can be understood on a number of levels. [14] Psychologically, one claims an identity for her/himself through processes of self and social racial identification by comparing themselves to others in the categories. Politically, socially and historically constructed identities may be imposed on them[15]. The importance of race is both emphasized and downplayed in different spheres of everyday life, in the pursuit of a meritocratic Singaporean society where no one race is privileged.[16]

This chapter sets out to mark the progress of racial categorisation and multiracialism in Singapore. First, it will briefly look at the operationalization of racial ideology with its roots from British colonisation of the region in the 1800s, which in some part laid the foundation for pluralist society in the country. Next, nation-building plans from Singapore's independence in 1965 amidst a background of racial and religious conflict till today will be investigated. This will include a discussion on multiculturalism has evolved through the years and how racial categorisation, and the construction and management of racial categories, have remained the same since 1965. Also, the stress experienced by individuals who perceive a lack of agency in defining their own identity that has been denied by an essentialist society, and that provides only a set number of ways in which identity can be expressed,[17] will be explored through the eyes of mixed ethnicity Singaporeans. The chapter ends with a look at the future of racial categorisation and multiracialism in the country.

The historical underpinnings of racial categorisation in Singapore are relevant to the understanding and operationalization of the multiracial society in Singapore today, and historical contexts have been shown to influence current multicultural ideology in plural societies.[18] When Sir Stamford Raffles arrived in Singapore in 1819, it was estimated that there were 120 Malays and 30 Chinese on the island, although archaeological records show that Singapore had been an important port of call for years before the British arrived. [19] This changed drastically after it was clear that the British were interested in the development of the island for trade. The first Census of population taken in 1871 shows that there had been 97,111 people living in Singapore, of which 56.2% were Chinese, 26.9% Malay, 11.8% Indians, and the rest Caucasians, Arabs, Jews, Siamese and other minorities. [20] This census also had 33 vaguely defined categories, which were streamlined to 6 main categories (European and American, Eurasian, Chinese, Malays and other natives of the Archipelago, Tamils and other Natives of India, and other nationalities) housing 47 sub-categories in 1881.[21] From 1921, these 6 categories were further simplified to *Europeans, Eurasians, Malays, Chinese, Indians and Others*, and in 1931, 70 sub groups were classified under these 6 main categories, blurring the boundaries between race, religion and nationality. Since 1931, the Chinese population maintained its majority of approximately 75% of Singapore society, a trend unique to Singapore amidst its Southeast Asian neighbours, which had Chinese minorities. [22]

The different races were administratively categorised and their daily lives were kept separate. The census functioned as a tool not only for administrative purposes in abstracting and capturing the heterogeneity of the population, the British administrators also used the census to control and eradicate existing Chinese secret societies. [23] Occupational clustering and racial enclaves were also part of colonial policies adopted by the British when they ruled the island and this has had considerable impact in the policy formation and maintenance of post-independence Singapore. [24] Figure A below shows the timeline from British involvement in the region to Singapore's independence.

Timeline
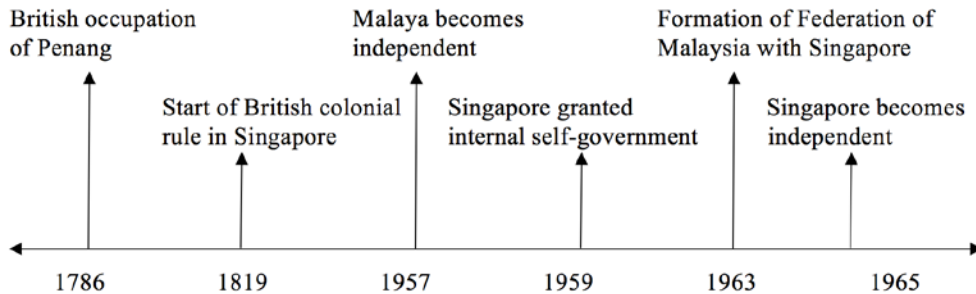
Figure A: Timeline of events leading up to Singapore's independence

Malaya became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth in 1957, through dismantling the colonial system and establishing a new nation in its place.[25] The special position given the Malay population, and the establishing of Malay as the national language as agreed by multiracial leaders were written into the 1957 Federation Constitution. Singapore was granted internal self-government in 1959, and some political leaders could not envision an independent Singapore for a number of reasons. Many argued that it was economically more viable to develop alongside Malaysia. Politically, it had been ruled administratively as part of peninsular Malaya. Demographically, Singapore consisted of immigrants from neighbouring countries and ideologically, these immigrants were oriented towards their 'home' countries (India and China, for example) and not Singapore.[26] The Federation of Malaysia was formed with Singapore in 1963, which lasted two brief years. Political leaders in Singapore soon found themselves with the mountainous task of building an independent nation in 1965 when Singapore and Malaysia separated on grounds of different political ideologies. Nation-building in Malaysia and Singapore, therefore, took quite different paths, with Malaysia choosing a *bumiputra*-centred nation versus meritocracy in Singapore. Forging a national unity among multiple nationalities and pluralist divisions is a focus among postcolonial states[27] and it was important to forge a collective Singaporean identity among the largely diverse migrant population so as to anchor these migrants to Singapore soil.[28]

Furthermore, the Maria Hertogh racial riots, which took place in December 1950, and the Prophet Muhammad birthday riots in 1964, served to remind Singaporeans of the fragility of peace among different ethnic groups in Singapore.[29] Denied of a shared cultural background, a multiracialism policy created by the state was formed to create an egalitarian and inclusive society by integrating the individualized racial groups into a single Singaporean culture, a melting pot of the main cultural influences in the country. Prime Minister Lee then carefully selected values that he perceived were representative of Singapore's ethnic communities to direct the newly independent nation.[30]

After 50 years of independence in Singapore, ethnic relations and national politics still revolve around the racial categories used by the British colonialists [31] where differences among the races were emphasised and inequality among the migrant population was explained using notions of inherent racial categories [32] even though the Chinese, Malay or Indian from colonial Singapore are not the same as those in present day Singapore.[33] From 1959 till today, ruling elites in Malay-dominated Malaysia and Chinese-dominated Singapore, establish themselves in political parties that have formal multiracial representation along the lines of demographic proportions: roughly two-thirds Malay and one-quarter Chinese in Malaysia and three-quarters Chinese and one-fifth Malay in Singapore, with the remainder made up by the Indian and Eurasian categories in both countries.[34] Postcolonial multiculturalism in Singapore took the form of multiracialism, and this, along with racial categorisation were developed by the ruling elite to propagate the process of nation building. One would think that given this case of pluralism in Singapore, racial tension would be high. However, this is not true. Racial strife post-independence has been almost non-existent due to the multiracial social policies in the country but certain strains do exist in society, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

Importance of racial categorisation and multiracialism to nation building

Nation-building, as a process, is made up of two closely linked dimensions – that of building the physical infrastructure, and also of the 'construction of the

national community of belonging'. [35] The latter refers to the creation of both communal and institutional bonds of belonging. [36] Thrust into independence, the ruling elite from the People's Action Party (PAP) had the heavy responsibility of crafting the national identity separate from Malaysia. From then till today, the state actively constructs and normalizes a worldview to embed the nation in, while it maps out its plans for the city. [37] The principle behind categorisation and race-based social policies has been to ensure harmony between the diverse groups in the country. Race-based social policies are crafted and maintained in a transparent manner, as will be shown in the chapter. Yet, it designs and maintains some aspects the racial demographics of the country in an opaque manner,[38] such as inviting immigration from certain groups of people and certain countries to varying degrees, and relegating others to transient labour, denying them reproductive rights, [39] or denying them citizenship. The state reifies ethnic differences on one level and promotes national unity and harmony on other levels. [40] Differences are highlighted through the racial categorisation process, and maintained through the ideology of multiracialism, in the nation-building process.

Racial Categorisation in Singapore: The CMIO Model

Racial categorisation is an important policy that supports the nation-building process in Singapore. At the political level, people are placed in categories for the state to govern a multi-ethnic group of people. On an individual level, people then learn how to behave based on these categories. When bureaucratic institutions aid these classifications, these categories gain social weight [41]. The background of Singapore shows how through its classification systems, the concept of race is kept alive and used to hold institutions and people together [42], even though historically classification systems in other countries are often sites of political and social struggles.[43] Categorisation is formalised in the country through specific racial categorisation frameworks, and these formal categories gain weight through informal categorisation, which takes place through everyday interactions, which will be discussed later. In Singapore, the state categorises all Singaporeans using the CMIO Model: Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others. Essential information on the front of

every Singaporean's identity card (IC) includes his/her racial classification. Race follows a patrilineal structure in Singapore, and is ascribed at birth. There is very little manoeuvrability around this, with the exception of recent developments for mixed race individuals. As such, race is reinforced as a visible and grounded identity with the state insisting that everyone be a hyphenated citizen. [44] But, Singaporeans outside the dominant Chinese majority are unlikely to think of themselves as Singaporean without hyphenating their Singaporean identity with their racial marker, for example, 'Indian Singaporean'.[45]

Race is taken to be unproblematic, and unambiguous in the CMIO model (Benjamin, 1976). In this policy of multiracialism, the 'social formula' of the CMIO model is built upon the acceptance of the four main ethnicities in Singapore – Chinese, Malay, Indian and 'Other' [46] – as separate but equal in formulating most of its social policies. This strategy provides the state with the political and ideological advantage of claiming that it has adopted a neutral stance toward all racial groups.[47] These social policies have been created to insure racial harmony among the diverse Singaporean population and this has proved successful from the government's point of view. The meritocratic intentions of the CMIO policies have been undermined by a number of ways such as the publication of PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination – a nationwide examination that takes place at the end of the primary school education in Singapore) and university results according to race.[48] The CMIO framework is actively promoted by the state in a number of ways, from maintenance of racial quotas (reflective of national demographic statistics) in public housing estates in Singapore, called the Ethnic Integration Policy, to representation of minorities in Group Representation Committees (GRCs) during election to national celebrations of ethnic and religious festivals. Official annual public holidays are also allocated according to each racial group. There are 2 days of Chinese holidays (Chinese New Year), 2 days for Malay, and by extension Muslim, holidays (Hari Raya Puasa and Hari Raya Haji) and 2 days for Indians (Deepavali for the Hindus, and Vesak Day for the Buddhists, even though this is celebrated predominantly by Chinese Singaporeans, with exception of Sinhalese Singaporeans as elaborated by Jack Chia in this volume).

We see that race and religion overlap at times, and these boundaries do not accurately reflect the religious make up of each race.

The multiplicity within each of these categories (Chinese, Indian, Malay) is not acknowledged by the government, and these differences with the categories, as well as between the categories are essentialised. The categorisation frameworks, however, were not accurate in capturing the populations that they sought to understand. As mentioned earlier, the heterogeneity within each ethnicity was collapsed into simplified categories for ease of administration. Singapore is a 'society of minorities' [49], where minorities exist within these four categories (Chinese, Malay, Indian) and have been dispassionately lumped together, or where they exist, in the 'other' category and are distinguishable from other communities in the category along ethno-cultural and religious lines. For example, the Indian category is hardly homogenous. They are divided by place of origin (Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Sri Lanka), language (for example, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi) and religion (such as Syrian Christian, Hindu, Muslim). However, in the everyday practice in Singapore, they are summarized as one category. This reinforces the earlier point on the intersection of race and religion, and that differences between the races are broadly conflated with religious differences as racial groups are essentialised. Essentialising groups becomes something that the government does for its social policies to work, an action that then influences how people perceive and think. Essentialism is not by definition oppressive.[50] However, in the collapsing of differences within a category, certain groups became invisible, such as the Peranakan Chinese[51]. Essentialist thinking guides inner psychological processes to either function as causal attributions to explain and rationalize behaviour of social groups, facilitate stereotypes or maintain the status quo in a society.[52] For example, Muslim and Malay identity is conventionally equated in Singapore – complicating identity for Indian Muslims, who themselves could come from many different cultural groups – the Malabar Muslims and the Kadayanallur Muslims to name two. Here we see how differences within (Indian) and between (Indian and Malay) racial categories are essentialised. While the CMIO model appears to capture most of Singapore society into three neat categories, the reality is far from that. In Singapore we can evaluate that the argument that

'multiculturalism as a policy and as a philosophy essentialises culture and reifies cultural difference' becomes valid. [53] Racial categories hold simplified meanings of each race in the country. Moreover, essentialisation of the content of the racial categories leads to the *accentuation effect* - when similarities among one racial category are perceived as greater than they actually are, and differences between members of different racial categories are perceived to be greater than reality as well. [54] I argue that the pervasiveness of racial categorisation leads to race functioning as a powerful system of social representation for many Singaporeans. In this way, race is essentialised into political governance systems as well as everyday thought.

In addition, categorisation performs a social cognitive function for individuals. Social cognitive psychology informs us that perceivers prefer to construe individuals on the basis of the social categories (e.g. race, gender, age) to which they belong, instead of considering them in terms of their unique characteristics, because categories provide perceivers with a wealth of related information that resides in long-term memory[55]. The state has been so successful in administering the CMIO model at the public level that its far-reaching influences can be seen in the shaping of the daily inter-racial interactions of Singaporeans. Race functions as a framing device for many Singaporeans. Categorisation influences intergroup relations in that it has an effect on the perception of heterogeneity of group members.[56] The desire to put everyone into the neat categories takes over any understanding of subtleties within the race-religion-culture continuum for the individual on the street as well as the state. Racial stereotyping by the British, and further reinforced by views held by former PM Lee Kuan Yew, has also become accepted by the general population. British administrators found that the Malays were 'lazy' (though one administrator, Vlieland, graciously admitted that this was a mistake), Indians were 'docile and receptive to arduously repetitive tasks' and Chinese were 'industrious'.[57] Stratification along ethnic lines, together with essentialist thinking, has led to inequalities becoming self-perpetuating, institutionalized and stereotypes such as the myth of Chinese energy and Malay laziness, being formed and maintained.[58] Teachers have been shown to hold some of these stereotypes[59], and subtle racialization of characters exists in Singapore's primary school textbooks, such as the dark skinned school bus driver.[60]

This, in some part accounts for a preference of Chinese employees in job advertisements today, resulting in overt preference for 'bilingual applicants' in reference to the valued English-Mandarin bilingual combination. Alcoff illustrates that individuals are judged on their physical appearance, and this 'visibility of racial identities...[leads] to opening up of, or shutting down [of] job prospects, career possibilities, places to live...'.[61] In this context, visibility of one's racial identity in Singapore is not only through their physical appearance but also through their ICs, and the second language that one has acquired.

Individuals not only categorise others, they also categorise themselves. Social identity is constructed through self-categorisation where people define themselves in terms of social categories such as ethnicity, gender and age.[62] Self-categorisation has different demands in different situations. This is true in the context of Singapore. In the public realm, self-categorisation is limited by state racial ascription. State frames discourse and enactment of identity in the public sphere. As can be seen above, there are specific ways of enacting racial identity. For example, if you are categorised as Malay, you should be Muslim, and you will develop competency in the Malay language. Furthermore, the ascription policy takes away some agency from individuals in deciding how to self-categorise, as mentioned earlier. The state creates a set of rules regarding racial categorisation - who gets to belong to a race, what being in the race means, what the boundaries of this race is. I posit that racial categorisation in this context functions as a *symbolic reserve*[63]. They gain meaning through its operationalization in social relations, through the individual self-categorisation, and continued categorisation of citizens that becomes legitimate through the nation building process.

Race in the public realm versus private sphere

The management of race takes on different forms in the public realm and private sphere in Singapore. The essentialisation of race in the public realm is not always seen in the private sphere. The importance of race is both emphasized and downplayed in different spheres of everyday life, in the pursuit of a meritocratic society where no one race is privileged.[64] The state reifies cultural differences on one

level and promotes national unity and harmony on other levels.[65] This sets up a dialectic relationship between the personal level and the national level. Each citizen is encouraged to identify oneself along racial lines, and maintain their uniqueness through the preservation of their individual practices in the private sphere. The onus for cultural vibrancy in the group lies entirely with its members. What is interesting is that the minorities (such as the Indians in Singapore) maintain their distinct identities on a personal level, even though we have seen that their ethnicity is essentialised and regarded as homogenous in the public arena. This takes place with continued self-identification through the generations (preference of third-generation Singaporeans to call themselves Ceylonese, instead of using the 'Indian' category), marriage practices such as the uxorilocal marriage in the Chinese Peranakan community in Singapore (a minority community within a majority category) where some Chinese men integrate into Peranakan society as a result of taking a Peranakan wife,[66] and in their private daily lives through food, language, religion, customs and entertainment. It is important to note that while these communities draw from their 'home' cultures and practices, these have been adapted to the local context and this keeps them distinct from their counterparts abroad.[67] This becomes a salient issue when we consider increasing immigration from India and China in recent times. Chinese nationals who take up citizenship in the country are categorised as Chinese, yet they are markedly different in terms of cultural expression. Local Chinese in Singapore in recent times for example, differentiate themselves from Mainland Chinese by peppering their conversations with Malay words and phrases.[68] We see that ethnicity in the private sphere becomes even more complex than is captured by the government's categories and individuals find strategies to manage the heterogeneity within these categories.

This duality of ethnic identity as seen through the public and private selves has implications for inter-ethnic group relations. While there has been some strengthening of positive ethnic relations over the years, this is not to say that ethnic prejudice does not exist.[69] Clammer argues that communication among the races and inter-cultural knowledge remain at a low level and that ethnic stressors come in the form of growing social inequality, elitism in the Singapore society, marginalization of

some ethnic groups, religious fervour that comes with modernity, geneticism and out group projection of shortcomings, carving the line between 'us' and 'them'.[70] At the same time, multiracialism and racial classification have politicized ethnicity in Singapore at the individual level in the private sphere and depoliticized ethnicity in the public sphere.[71] While it seeks to highlight differences and maintain Singaporeans in individual categories, it has a legal framework in place to ensure that there is fairness and equality in handling majority-minority relations. To date, public discussions regarding race, language or religion are considered to be taboo and discussions are censored by the state and citizens alike.[72] The Presidential Constitutional Commission was created in 1966 to consider the protection of racial, linguistic and religious minorities in Singapore. The Presidential Council for Minority Rights functions as an ombudsman in respect of minority grievances. [73] The Registrar of Societies has the right to withhold registration from societies, which are not specifically intended for multiracial membership. The state maintains a tight grip on inter-racial relations, tying legal institutions with social polices so as to ensure racial harmony.

Multiculturalism in Singapore

Singapore's policy of multiracialism was a policy formed to create an egalitarian and inclusive society by integrating the different racial groups into a single Singaporean culture.[74] As theorists such as Noor and Leong [75] have described, Singapore's multiculturalism model's policies are guided by pragmatic realism and economic goals necessary to meet the needs of the city. The multiculturalism policy has evolved over the years. In its inception, a plural society that 'mixed but did not combine' [76] was created and it was important to cultivate harmony and consensus in the diverse population. This led to a multiracialism policy created by the state that was formed to integrate the different racial groups who did not have a common cultural heritage; a melting pot of the main cultural influences in the country. Singapore's multiracial policy has been to accept the plural society as a desirable feature of the social fabric of Singapore, and the management of this multiracial

society is developed through changes to the education system and policy and different weight given to the different languages at different times.

Singaporean Singapore 1965-79

In 1965, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew carefully selected values from Singapore's different ethnic communities that he thought would direct the newly independent nation. [77] The failed merger with Malaysia led to the Singapore government consciously developing a Singaporean Singapore identity. Since rapid modernisation was deemed essential to the survival of the country, and modernising Singapore meant cutting all ties to tradition, the ruling elite made a conscious decision to cut emotional ties to their ancestral countries. [78] Race was less overtly used a category of governance till the early 1970s. [79] This meant a de-pluralisation process. Chinese newspapers were clamped down in 1971. Since self-government in 1959, all political parties agreed that English should remain the language of administration. [80] At the same time, the adoption of four official languages for each of the ethnic communities (English for everyone, Mandarin for the Chinese, Bahasa Melayu for the Malays and Tamil for the Indians) formed part of the multiracialism approach of 'one race, one language, one mother tongue' that was created in the 1970s and solidified in the 1980s. [81]

Melting Pot to Mosaic Multiracialism 1979-90

Language formed an important aspect of the multiracialism policy. Although multilingualism and bilingualism scaffold this policy, national unity and identity are not diminished. [82] They are in fact seen as an important aspect of the Singapore identity and Singapore Story. The Singapore story quells alternative interpretations of events historical surrounding Singapore, [83] and stresses the contribution of the different ethnic communities to Singapore society [84.] Singaporeans are made to feel good about their heritage and this ensures that Singaporeans accept the official national building narrative, and perpetuate the Singapore Story for the next generation. [85] For fear of Singaporeans losing their Asian cultural ballast to Western liberal values and cultures, special nationwide schemes were created to ensure that

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Singaporeans returned to their 'ethnic roots'.[86] As a policy of bilingualism, it is also compulsory for Singaporean students to develop fluency in English alongside a second language (referred to as their 'mother tongue'), which is determined largely by the racial category on their ICs.[87] This policy also made sure that cross-cultural exchanges were limited to English and linguistic crossings were curtailed. [88] Mother tongue languages were important in anchoring Singaporeans to their roots, and in the late Lee Kuan Yew's view, gave people their 'identity and [made] our society vigorous and distinctive'. [89] His beliefs echo in his son, current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who affirms the need for the bilingual policy, in ensuring that the next generation 'preserves and transmits values, culture and sense of identity'. [90]

The year 1979 saw the birth of the Speak Mandarin Campaign, alongside the naissance of the bilingual policy. That year, then PM Lee Kuan Yew delivered the National Day Speech in Mandarin, signalling a symbolic shift in the state's ideology. [91] The goal of the campaign was to increase the usage of Mandarin among the Chinese community in Singapore and 'not substitute for English or other dialects'. [92] Given the prominence of English among Singaporeans, a conscious effort by the government, an unintended consequence arose. A threat to the Chinese identity was perceived as Chinese Singaporeans had chosen to converse in English over Mandarin. Steps taken to deal with this include the Speak Mandarin campaign, increasing the standard of second language competency in secondary schools through the Special Assistance Plan (SAP), [93] and insistence of Mandarin in national media channels instead of Chinese dialects.[94] An acknowledgement in the partial failure of this bilingualism policy has also seen the birth of a less demanding syllabus for students from English-speaking homes [95] and those who are weaker in Mandarin. [96] That Mandarin was not the 'true' mother tongue for many Chinese Singaporeans was unimportant. Maintaining the numerical preponderance of the Chinese in Singapore was viewed by Lee as an important factor in ensuring economic prosperity of the country [97] and Mandarin was taken to be the 'social glue' that would unite the Chinese in the country and a device to transmit tradition and values to guard against Western values.[98] This was grudgingly accepted by the population, who saw that they would

much rather put up with the heavy handed approach to regulating racial boundaries and reap the economic benefits that also came along with PAP rule.[99]

It is important to note that all English-mother tongue combinations were not valued equally, and the English-Mandarin combination is perceived to be the 'most functional'. [100] This has serious implications for Singaporeans who belong to minority groups and cannot take Mandarin in school. These individuals experience discrimination when applying for jobs, and many resort to learning Mandarin (outside of the school curriculum) with the view that this will lead to better job opportunities. Economic benefits are also an intended outcome of the multilingual policy. Knowledge and development of one's racial heritage is viewed by the government as a necessary focus in the public spheres of the Singaporean life as this would give Singaporeans an edge over Western counterparts, functioning as (in the words of the former Minister for Foreign Affairs George Yeo) 'knowledge arbitrage'. [101] English, as a 'neutral, and global language' functions as the primary means of inter-racial communication, though earlier generations frequently used Malay as the language of communication between the races. The preservation of individual ethno-cultures is also important for Singapore to maintain its attractiveness as a tourist destination.[102] Furthermore, possessing the ability to speak in Mandarin meant easier access to China's economy and this allowed Singaporeans to capitalize on China's open door policies. [103] Given this premise on the importance of Mandarin, local social scientists have recommended that individuals be given the choice of deciding their 2nd and/or 3rd languages without restricting access to Mandarin to non-Chinese populations in Singapore.[104]

Welfare of Singaporeans also lies with their individual racial groups, where one gets 'help from their own kind'. [105] To help Malay Singaporeans, Mendaki, a Muslim organisation sponsored by the PAP and publicly funded with ten million dollars, was established in 1981. The goal of the organisation is to empower 'the disadvantaged through excellence in education' so that long term employment and financial prospects of the community is improved. [106] Two other community self-help organisations were conceived later on, without funding from the government. In 1989, an organisation was set up for low-achieving Indians called SINDA

(Singapore Indian Development Association), although its programmes also include high-achieving Indian students (Project Vidya) and discussions with local business leaders. [107] The logic of multiracialism saw the creation of the Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) in April 1992. Each Singaporean who is employed contributes a fixed sum of money every month (an opt-out policy) towards the maintenance of these organisations, and one's racial categorisation on his/her IC determines which organisation they would contribute to. This important aspect of managing a plural society continued to leave Singaporeans in different communal silos, allowing differences between the social groups to entrench, asserting 'ethnic consciousness within Asianisation' as the main driver in this stage of the evolution of multiculturalism in Singapore. [108] As we see here, Singapore's multiracialism policy post-independence moved from a melting pot policy that carried over from the 1950s till the 1970s, to a mosaic policy from the late 1970s till the turn of the millennium.[109]

Political leaders often promote this multiracial ideology in connecting the country as a cohesive unit, for example, when former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (1999) referred to Singapore as a 'multiracial tribe'. Individual racial groups cannot and do not make self-interested claims because that would violate the foundation of multiculturalism in Singapore - that of group equality from the state's perspective (Chua 1998). In this communitarian multiculturalism, a shared desire for peace among the races, carving out a unique Singaporean identity vis-à-vis that of neighbouring countries and presenting itself as 'Asian' against the 'West' holds the nation together even as differences among the races are highlighted. [110] The preservation of individual ethno-cultures was also important for Singapore to maintain its attractiveness as a tourist destination (Clammer 1998), and thus multiracialism is positioned as an important factor in maintaining the growth of the economy.

Cosmopolitanism (since 2000)

In 2003, however, then Minister for Community Development and Sports, Yaacob Ibrahim signalled the state's move from multiracialism to multiculturalism where Singaporeans are not amalgamated or hyphenated anymore, but rather, 'cosmopolitan' with each individual possessing 'elements and traits reflecting the

larger society'.[111] This shift from the ideologies of the past reflects a call for a more inclusive Singapore, one that acknowledges the influences that all cultures in Singapore have on an individual's identity, and the blurring of boundaries between cultures, a partial return to the earlier policy on Singaporean-Singapore identity. This change came about soon after the arrests of Jemmah Islamiah militants in Singapore in 2001 and 2002 which resulted in doubts on the loyalty of Muslims in Singapore, as well as the occurrence of the issue of the *tudung* (headscarf in Malay) in Singapore in 2002, in which four Malay Muslim parents insisted on modifying their children's school uniforms to include the *tudung*. These issues challenged the previous stage of multiculturalism's logic of the positives of ethnic consciousness. [112]

Tactical solutions of the past become today's strategic problems [113] in the operationalization of these multiracialism ideologies. Although Singapore's multiracial policy is built upon the foundations of meritocracy and social cohesion, the reality is that uneven focus on individual culture development and unequal opportunities has led to unequal power dynamics between the races. [114] Moreover, unequal valuation of the races in Singapore has led to certain negative outcomes. Some minority members (such as members of the Malay community) do not reach the highest political offices, but achieve senior level positions in the diplomatic, economic, cultural and academic spheres. [115] However, positive images associated with the country almost always highlight the multiracial aspect of the country. The idea that Singapore is a nation where four different races live in harmony is so rooted in the national discourse that narratives that are produced manifest this ideology in a number of ways. National Day and Chingay parades, held 6 months apart from each other, are state funded celebrations where the oversimplified cultural differences are highlighted and displayed. Singaporeans sing National Day songs that emphasise this categorisation, multiracialism and its ensuing implications: 'Every creed and every race, has its role and has its place. One people, one nation, one Singapore'. The 21st of July [116] is declared Racial Harmony day in schools, which is a celebration of individual races, and cross-cultural exchange. Students and teachers dress up in their own ethno-cultural costumes or swap outfits with a member of another race. From postage stamps to community centre banners, one can see images of Chinese, Malay,

Indian and (presumably) Eurasian children donning their ethno-cultural outfits and playing together, reflecting the 3S (celebrating *saris*, *samosas* and steel drums) model of multiculturalism posited by Alibhai-Brown [117] seen in the UK.

When the Model does not fit – Mixed-Ethnicity Singaporeans

However, the continued emphasis on individual racial development may be problematic for mixed-ethnicity Singaporeans who do not fit in one of the categories. Changing family structures have seen inter-ethnic marriages in Singapore rising steadily over the years (3.37% in 1965 to 5.79% in 1993 to 18.24% in 2013).[118] As an extension of this social change, it can be presumed that the number of interethnic children has increased. This assumption is made as it is challenging to chart this in Singapore, particularly because all Singaporeans were required to state their race, and only one, on their birth certificates. The 2000 Census shows that those of mixed parentage are to be categorised under the ethnic group of their fathers. The 2010 Census does not share this definition.[119] In 2010, the Singapore government recognised the increasing numbers of Singaporeans who are of mixed parentage and allowed them the option of being categorised as mixed-ethnicity with a double-barrel racial option.[120] All the same, individuals still need to choose which of the two races indicated will be the primary race, which will then be used in classifying them according to the CMIO model. Prior to this double-barrel option, children of mixed racial parentages were ascribed the father's racial identity. Demanding that multiracial respondents select a single racial identity requires them to categorize themselves in a way that may not reflect their own self-identification.

Racial ascription is also socially significant unless one is 'morphologically atypical' for one's racial group.[121] In my research, I found that the important perspective on appearance is that the most of the participants themselves felt that they did not associate themselves with a single ethnicity. This was based on their perceptions that they did not fit the prototypical image of a person of each of the two or more ethnicities that they belong to. While individuals are usually members of many different groups, not all these group memberships are salient at any one point in time.[122] Membership in ethnic groups, unlike some other groups, can (though not

always) be highly visible and salient and this aspect of claiming membership to an ethnic group was challenging for the participants.[123] Drawing from Social Representations theory,[124] individuals identify themselves and gain an awareness and knowledge of self through interactions with others and an understanding of how others perceive them. This knowledge also materialises within the definitions of the social structure. As such, participants' own views of them not fitting the image of an average member of an ethnic group could have been influenced by their experiences with prototypical members of each ethnic group, as well as assumptions that non-mixed ethnicity Singaporeans make in trying to ethnically categorise other Singaporeans they meet. As seen earlier, national discourse shows the constant constructions of racial identity and these constructions highlight the divisions between the different races in Singapore in seeking to establish social cohesion. Additionally, I found that participants who identified themselves as mixed ethnicity consistently spoke about not fitting into the CMIO model. Second language acquisition also functioned as another site of struggle for these individuals:

Sheela: *In schools and all we see Chinese hang out with Chinese, Indians hang out with Indians, there's no... There's very little erhm, cross cultural interaction and socialization and I think a lot of it stems from within right, you see others as really Others, you can't communicate with them, hence you can't socialize with them and can't understand them better.*
                    Sheela, 32 year old female, child of Indian and Chinese parents

Sheela drew attention to how second language acquisition is seen to group students and according to their racial classifications, encouraging them to play along ethnic lines. The question of which racial identity they develop and which language they adopt as their 'mother tongue', when their parents do not share the same ethnic identity and second language becomes essential when they enter the education system in Singapore. Furthermore, the lack of interaction between the races builds boundaries between them. Here we see how the social policy of having to learn a second language according to one's racial classification has caused tension for mixed ethnicity individuals not only because it was challenging in itself, but also because of

the knock-on effects from peer interactions which exerts powerful influence in children's and adolescent's life.[125]

Importance of Racial Categorisation and Multiracialism for the Next 50 Years

We have seen how racial categorisation is low on cultural content in these two countries and flattens the differences within the ethnicities into essentialised differences for easy filtering and management of the population. These simplified categories are omnipresent and gain social weight among the citizens because of the pervasiveness of them in the daily lives of the citizens. How ethnicity is experienced in the private realm is very different from how it is policed in the private sphere. There exist limits on how one may identify themselves ethnically in the eyes of the government. The nuanced perspectives on ethnicity are replaced by rigid concepts of race. Gilroy has noted that 'social and cultural differences are being coded according to the rules of a biological discourse'[126], highlighting how race has been constructed, in other places, as natural and separate divisions within the human population based on visible physical differences and fallaciously assuming that races are biologically distinctive and homogenous groups that are clearly demarcated, unambiguous and uninfluenced by migration.[127] This ideology has been used in Singapore's definition of race, and this holds little value in understanding the hybridity of the population and how Singaporeans identify themselves. What can be seen through this chapter is that the CMIO model, and the racial categorisation of Singaporean society, hardly reflects the lived experience of Singaporeans. While identity is social constructed and context specific [128], we see how these rigid, top down ways of categorising the population shape concepts of race, ethnicity and identity in the Singaporean population.

Indeed, we see that these divisions seek to create order and equality within a diverse society of migrants, and have served its purpose in the nation building process. We discuss them today from the perspectives of policy successes because these policies were important, and served the country well in its nation building stage. It is certainly the time for reassessment now, and to push those boundaries that we

have so carefully treaded these past 50 years. Can Singaporean society evolve to look beyond these racial divides? Can we look at ourselves as Singaporeans instead of hyphenated citizens? Without polices like the Ethnic Integration policy, will we end up in racial enclaves and not integrate with fellow Singaporeans of other races? It has been suggested that race, as a primary identity can be a resource for coping.[129] However, when racial categorisation does not accurately reflect the individual's self-identity, this proposition is questionable. In fact, feeling forced to choose one identity over the other has been shown to result in negative outcomes, and a fragmented self-identity.[130] Limited choice is associated with lower self-esteem, reduced motivation, and heightened anxiety, as well as with increased efforts to reassert one's choice.[131] Huo and Binning have shown that having one's valued identities neglected or ignored can be a threatening experience[132] and Singapore's increasing hybridity population means that this will be of rising importance in years to come.

As evident in the case study of mixed ethnicity Singaporeans, the CMIO model challenges their self-identity and perceptions of race and culture. The CMIO model is also problematic as a result of the influx of new migrants. Singapore has adopted a liberal stance toward immigration, validated by the low fertility rate and 'shrinking economy'.[133] Less than 50 percent of the Singapore population today is born here, and because of perceived cultural differences between locals and new citizens, these migrants are imagined as part of the 'O' category by locals – that of 'Others'.[134] In a recent study, Leong showed that key attributes that Singaporeans perceived were necessary for effective acculturation and adaptation by migrants was the need to respect multi-religious and multiracial practices in Singapore[135] showing a unidirectional change that Singaporeans believe is needed. The increasingly complex, and changing demographics of the population requires a more open definition of Singapore and Singaporeans – one beyond the CMIO model.

There exists a fear of change, one that could potentially destabilize the Singapore story that has been so carefully constructed and maintained.[136] Minorities in Singapore understand that social policies have been set up around the CMIO model that altering it to accommodate a small population like the mixed ethnicity population in Singapore will not only be problematic because the influences the social policy

structures have on daily life are far reaching and rooted within the population. From a pragmatic perspective, changing these policies is also challenging in terms of affecting tangible change. This fear demands more critical scholarship and bold responses to truly transform. The focus should not only be on the pressures faced from existing policies, but to also have foresight on policies that will address the future culture and identity of Singapore. Changing social contexts could result in an expansion of 'contemporary cultural horizons' and at present, these do not materialize due to the state's interest of maintaining racial harmony and tolerance.[137] Recent Singaporean-led campaigns like 'Cook a Pot of Curry',[138] [139]and calls for understanding of wider issues involved in the Little India Riots [140]beyond a view of 'us' versus 'them' have shown us that there is room for hope in the creation of a more inclusive society.

Yet, Singaporeans are getting ready for change, and state policies need to catch up with the evolving needs of the population. While Lee Kuan Yew suggested that Singapore was not ready for a Singaporean Prime Minister of Indian ethnicity in his 1988 National Day Rally,[141] an IPS report in 2008 on inter-racial and inter-religious relations in Singapore showed that more than 90% of people in a survey believe that racial and religious differences did not have any bearing on their choice of Member of Parliament (MP).[142] Sharon Siddique questioned whether multiracialism in Singapore will stand the test of time, and suggested that we should celebrate values that bring us together.[143] A national identity that goes beyond the attempts to create national songs and dances to something that is much deeper, one where each community is valued, commonalities are understood, celebrated and shared across the divisions of race. With the increasing number of migrants in the country, this cannot be stressed enough. It is clear that these divisions that have been imposed on Singaporeans form a part of the Singaporean identity that is here to stay. Perhaps future generations will find themselves living in a Singapore where race does not rule and being 'Singaporean' is all that matters.

NOTES

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Centre (CMC) had facilitated the arguments between the two families that resulted in the Indian family cooking curry when their neighbours were not at home, and the family from China being asked to try eating curry. Singaporeans were outraged by the insensitivity of the family from China and the lack of an 'acceptable' solution by the CMC. Over 61,000 Singaporeans joined a Facebook event page as a way to show solidarity to the Singaporean Indian family and pride in Singapore's diverse multicultural community.

[140] The Little India riots which took place on 8th December 2013 after Sakthivel Kumarvelu, a 33-year-old Indian construction worker, was run over by a private bus that he was trying to get on in Little India and killed. About 300 migrant labourers from Tamil Nadu and Bangladesh attacked the bus involved and emergency vehicles that arrived at the location. This was the second 'riot' in post-independence Singapore, and the first in 44 years. While news sources and officials were calling the incident a riot, many locals on internet mediums such as Facebook and Twitter appealed for it to be called 'unrest' and rallied for the incident to be seen for what it was rather than an "Us" versus "Them" struggle between locals and migrant workers.

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