

## **Racialisation in Singapore**

### **Introduction**

This essay will seek to establish an account of racialisation in Singapore since it became an independent sovereign state in 1965 until the present day. The working definition of racialisation adhered to in this process is racialisation as "the dynamic process by which racial concepts, categories and divisions come to structure and embed themselves in arenas of social life" (Law, 2010, p. 59). This will be achieved by critically assessing four key dimensions which demonstrate how the State privileges the Chinese-Singaporean majority, comprising 74.2% of the population (Muigai, 2010), and both directly and indirectly discriminates against the minority ethnic groups. These are primarily the Malay-Singaporeans, the Indigenous people of Singapore making up 13.4% of the population, but also Indian-Singaporeans (9.2%) and other ethnic groups including Eurasians (3.2 %) (Mugai, 2010). This essay relates to Barr's (2008) thesis, and will argue that since the 1980s Singapore has faced a period of Racial Sinicisation, whereby there is a growing hegemony celebrating Chineseness above all other groups. This is producing an assimilationist logic, but also involves racial marking by the State, the People's Action Party (PAP). This is despite the fact that Singapore is globally recognised as multicultural and a site of ethnic social and cultural harmony, having a diverse ethnic mix all crammed into an area of 682.7km<sup>2</sup> and not having faced communal riots since 1964 between the Chinese and Malay (Mugai, 2010).

The first dimension explored will discuss how external influences have interacted with ongoing stereotypes about the different ethnic groups in Singapore (CMIO - Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other) and influenced State indirect and direct discriminatory policies. This will include an understanding of the negative image the Malay-Singaporean has specifically received because of the interaction of the West (colonialism and the disaster of 9/11) and the influence of Singapore separating from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965. This dimension will therefore draw upon Dikötter's (2008) interactionist model. Secondly, an analysis of how Singapore uses race as a basis of social classification, despite UNESCO (1950 in Law, 2010) giving a global consensus of there being no scientific basis for it, will be explored; emphasising how marking has heightened ethnic awareness and caused social ethnic tensions and a lack of mixing between CMIO. More specifically, the third dimension will discuss how the PAP is racialising society through community and landscape policies which demonstrate the growing "Chinese Privilege", termed by Sangeetha Thanapal (2015), and how minority groups are beginning to recognise this. Finally, this Racial Sinicisation will be explored more thoroughly through the educational policies carried out by what seems to be, an increasing "Chinese Supremacist State" (Thanapal, 2015) trying to assimilate minorities into the Chinese majority. After analysing these four areas a conclusion will be reached as to the problems of racism in the country during the time period, its future prospects, and the extent to which other regions and continents should learn from Singapore's success and mistakes.

Firstly, it is also necessary to understand the dominance and success of the PAP in Singapore since independence, as Singapore now has a dominant party system due to this (Mauzy, 2002). The party was formed by young nationalist Singaporeans educated in Britain in the late 1940's, with Lee Kuan Yew acknowledged as the founding father of independent Singapore, transforming it from the "third world to the first world in a single generation" (PAP, 2016). He was then Prime Minister of Singapore between 1959-1990 being described as a 'Chinese Supremacist', in spite of advocating multiculturalism initially (Han, 2015). The current Prime Minister is Lee Hsien Loong who now leads one of the world's longest surviving dominant parties and is very much unchallenged. For example, in the 1980 Parliamentary elections they faced seven opposition parties, but won a landslide victory winning all seats for the fourth successive election (Mauzy, 2002). Moreover, Singapore argues it has not been ready for a non-Chinese Prime Minister yet. However, this is increasingly being questioned

by the presence of minority candidates; such as, Dhanabalan, an Indian in the 1980s and more recently Tharman Shanmugaratnam in 2015 (Han, 2015). This relates to Barr's (2008, p. 252) argument that at the moment the Government is "rule by a self appointed elite, dominated by middle-class Chinese". Additionally, Thanapal (and Koh 2015) even argues that elite Indians in Parliament are not truly representatives of the minority either as "they might as well be Chinese", such as the nearly Prime Minister Dhanabalan who has a Chinese wife and is a Christian, not a Hindu as most Indian Tamils are. Evidently, this ethos is likely to influence why the State has ongoing Racial Sinicisation policies and an aggressive majoritarian logic; although one must be careful to see the PAP completely in this light as they do still advocate for a multiracial Singapore.

## **Interaction from external influences shapes stereotypes and policies**

### Colonialism

It is useful to know that Singapore is a former British colony and became an independent Sovereign State in 1965, after being elected out of the Federation of Malaysia (joint with Malaya, Sarawak and North Borneo). Reference to Loomba (2005 in Law, 2010, p. 11) defines colonialism as "the conquest and control of other people's land and goods". Like many other countries, one can see that Singapore's colonial history has affected its post-colonial society and the relations between its different ethnic groups. For example, Barr (2008, p. 88) emphasises that "the division of colonial society into ethnic silos facilitated the generation of stereotypes that persist us [Singapore] today". This is because the system of British colonialism divided the races in terms of labour, relating these choices due to stereotypes (Barr, 2008, p. 88). The colonisers viewed the Malay as being "endowed with traits of complacency, indolence [...] with a love of leisure and an absence of motivation and discipline", whilst seeing the Indians as "argumentative and troublesome" (Barr, 2008, p. 88). In contrast, the Chinese were seen as "hard-working, thrifty and materialistic" (Barr, 2008, p. 89). There is undeniable evidence that these stereotypes, based on a hierarchy of the 'whiteness' of skin colour of the ethnic groups, is reproduced in Singapore's post colonial society. For example, a sociological survey of Chinese Nanyang University Students in 1969 found that they thought most "Malays are Muslims and their intelligence on average is lower than among the Chinese" (Barr, 2008, p. 192). Although this was clearly taken by solely Chinese students, one can see that these colonial stereotypes have shaped the views of the ongoing generations. This relates to Dikötter's (2008) argument that an interactive approach is needed to study racist belief systems as colonialism has influenced these negative Malay stereotypes to permeate throughout society. As will be discussed in more depth later, this interaction has even gone so far as to effect State policies. For example, the Special Rapporteur (Muigai, 2010, p. 17) says the Government has determined the foreign communities in each section of employment and entrenched colonial stereotypes; domestic workers can originate from Indonesia, Myanmar or the Philippines but not China. Moreover, the Minority Rights Group (2016) even goes so far as to claim that since independence the Malay are "destined to occupy the bottom ranges of society" due to this, even though Malays were previously trusted until Malaysia elected Singapore from the Federation. This undoubtedly relates to Goldberg's (2009, p. 3) argument that "European expansion accordingly rationalised its global spread in racial terms" by legitimating its racial hierarchy as acceptable. Clearly this legitimisation was so successful as to still influence post-colonial stereotypes and create beliefs which influence PAP policies.

### Separation from the Federation of Malaysia

Mauzy (2002, p. 109) argues that this removal from the Federation was "the most serious grievance", in spite of colonialism's pervasiveness. This is because it marginalised the Malay community to never be trusted as fully equal citizens again due to suspicions about their ethnic and religious ties to a Malaysia that had just removed Singapore from the Federation. These stereotypes have clearly influenced policy making and consequently the daily lives of the Malay community; yet again revealing the usefulness of Dikötter's (2008) interactionist model. For example, these beliefs of untrustworthiness even caused the Malay to be mistrusted in the SAF, only able to become Officers through a "case-by-case basis" according to Lee Kuan Yew (Barr, 2008, p. 262). Shockingly, Yew (1999 in Suartman, 2004) even went so far as to say that "it's a tricky business" if "you put a Malay officer who's very religious and who has family ties in Malaysia in charge of a machine gun unit".

Additionally, the fact that upon independence in 1965, the Military decided to reflect conscription to the ethnic composition of the State, meant that many Malay were deliberately not conscripted in contrast to the overwhelming majority of the Chinese population. One can argue that this caused an indirect policy of discrimination towards the minority groups, most likely connecting the new beliefs of Malay disloyalty with their small attendance in the military. However, more importantly for the daily life of Malays, this change effected employment as many employers preferred hiring individuals who had already completed their national service. Consequently, this reveals the significant effect that the separation from Malaysia and the discriminatory conscription policy has had upon the livelihood of Malays, limiting employment prospects for the community due to the interaction of Singapore's history with policy making.

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Moreover, there is a clear continuation of this distrust since the 2001 Islamic terrorist Al-Qaeda attacks on the Twin Towers. Evidence supports this as many Malay Muslim's face discrimination due to the threat of them being militants rather than simply untrustworthy citizens associated with ties to Malaysia. This is exemplified in the Minority Rights Group International report (2016) where a ban on headscarves called the *tudung* in public schools led to three girls being removed in 2002, yet Sikhs were still allowed to wear theirs. Furthermore, Lee Kuan Yew conversed with Union leaders in 2003 and was dismissive towards the open discrimination Malay women were facing, simply saying that the long term fix was through "better education", but that the discrimination was "a reality of living in a multicultural society" (Barr, 2008, p. 104). This unworthy appreciation of the issue reveals that perhaps the State is not concerned with the embedded negative stereotypes that the Malay, and Malay Muslims, are facing. One can see that this is not simply a small grievance for the Malay community but something that is causing a "demoralising cycle" for victims (Barr, 2008, p. 104). This is evident as Miss Siti Shafrida Sulaiman, aged twenty-one, told *The Straits Times* in 2002 that she had been asked to remove her headscarf by more than ten potential employers, causing her to feel like she had to conform and lose her cultural identity (Barr, 2008). As such, one can agree with Winant (2006, p. 991) that "a general parallel exists between racial and gender-based oppressions". This is relevant as the State's assimilationist logic is not only influencing racial discrimination but effecting gender discrimination too.

As a result of this, this dimension shows that the Malay have been stereotyped as disloyal, unintelligent, lazy and even dangerous citizens. This is due to Singapore's turbulent history and the influence from the West; with these issues shaping State policies.

### **Race as a basis of social classification**

This dimension discusses that, in spite of the use of the concept of race being "unfashionable", in Singapore the concept is "alive and well" and is even used as the main means of social classification (Clammer, 1998, p.27). Moreover, there is an unusual ethos in the country as it uses race and ethnicity interchangeably. For example, the Singapore Department of Statistics defines ethnic groups as "a person's race as declared by that person", using ideas of 'race' and 'multiracialism', rather than 'multiculturalism' (Barr, 2008, p. 50). This issue undoubtedly portrays how ethnic and national identities in Singapore society are constructed as racial categories; the political discourse fails to distinguish between the two, with even the PAP's (2016) most recent manifesto using the term 'races'. One can see that this demonstrates the durability of race ideas in Singapore, and how the government fails to appreciate contemporary academia dispelling the existence of race and follows Winant's (2006) theory of social organisation functioning along racial lines. This is evident as by 1950 UNESCO globally declared that there is no scientific basis for race as it is a "socially constructed myth" (Law, 2010, p. 34). Subsequently, this raises awareness as to how Singapore's political discourse is embedding an ideology which promotes racial marking when these categories do not exist. This fundamentally hides the racist policies instilled by the State, as it is hidden behind ideas of culture and difference according to Dikötter (2008).

Furthermore, as already stated, the country is divided into CMIO groups that Giddens (in Barr, 2008, p. 50) terms "cultural containers". This signifies that the social fabric of Singapore is intrinsically bound up with fixed ideas of race and racial marking, which has subordinated citizens

national identity to racial identity. This is because the only piece of information on the front of a Singaporean identity card is ethnicity, apart from name and photograph. Thanapal (Thanapal and Koh, 2015) relates this process as similar to the use of the social security numbers in the United States whereby the information is used for important procedures such as applying for housing and loans. However, even more controversial is the commonality of job applications asking for the ethnicity of individuals, which is contrastingly illegal in many countries (Thanapal and Koh, 2015). As such, this is a clear issue in Singapore as Muigai (2010, p. 10) concludes by calling for the removal of ethnic backgrounds on identification documents in the Special Rapporteur Report. However, instead, ethnic identity seems to be increasingly important since independence, as by the late 1970s the PAP re-emphasised ethnicity by hyphenating all identities (eg: Malay-Singaporean) due to a fear of losing Asian values with a rising China that would help Singapore prosper economically (Mauzy, 2002, p. 102). As a result of this, it is clear the categories of ethnicity are thoroughly embedded in Singapore due to the direct policies of the state.

Racial marking is also having an extreme influence on the structure of housing in Singapore. This was especially so in the 1970s, and when officially implemented in 1989 by the Ethnic Integration Policy as the Housing Development Board (HDB), spearheaded by Mr Lim Kim San, instilled a policy to try and maintain ethnic 'balance' and a good distribution of ethnicities between towns. This meant the sale or purchase of HDB apartments had to be to a certain ethnicity due to trying to maintain distribution according to specific ethnic proportions (Clammer, 1998). For example, if there were too many Malay in Geylang Serai or Bedok, then a Malay could not sell to a fellow Malay (Clammer, 1998, p. 160). Although, one can argue this policy tried to prevent the formation of ethnic community areas and maintain a mixing of CMIOs after previous 1950/60 violence, one can find evidence that this has not succeeded fully as it has caused ethnic awareness in the housing market and a lack of mixing between the communities even when neighbours anyway. This is seen in the fact that minorities are continuously claiming difficulty in purchasing or renting properties due to a racist discourse in the private market (Clammer, 1998, p. 40). For instance, the BBC discussed Sunil's trouble finding an apartment as many landlords do not want Indian tenants (Cheung, 2014). This is supported by the fact that a glance at the rental market online produced numerous adverts listing "No Indians", such as 160 found on 'Property Guru' by Cheung (2014). Similarly, Yadav (2014) describes how his friend was actively encouraged by a housing agent to say he was a foreigner from America since his name was ambiguous and so he could more easily avoid any hassle. As already discussed, this problem is very much related to the stereotypes that different ethnic communities have in Singapore, and perhaps not even due to the quotas. A Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, enforces that this is because "there are stereotypes that people have about different immigrant groups and how responsible they are in terms of the upkeep of a rented apartment", including the fact that many landlords believe Indians will cook curries irresponsibly without cleaning (in Cheung, 2014). The evidence suggests that the use of race as a classification is marginalising ethnic minorities, both due to quotas and entrenched stereotypes. Moreover, this effects how Singaporeans live together as it is clear they are not "comfortable" living, working or employing other races (Liu, 2014, p. 1232). This is supported by a study of 4,000 citizens, finding that the majority of Singaporeans did not have a close friend in another race (Lim, 2013). This perhaps alludes to Mann's (2004) theory for the future of Singapore; ethnic hostility is more likely if democracies are divided by race.

In addition, the State and Ministry of Education has initiated a routine practise of issuing statistics of educational achievements broken down by ethnic groups. This has become ongoing since the 1990s but began in 1983 when Lee Kuan Yew first collectively identified Malays as underachievers in national exams (Barr, 2008). Clammer (1998) focuses specifically on how Yew, Prime Minister at the time, related statistics to ideas of scientific racism in the 1983 National Day Speech. This was because Yew revealed figures suggesting fewer graduates were marrying compared to non-graduates, becoming racialised as most graduates were Chinese. Yew therefore implied a decrease in fertility of Chinese-Singaporeans would occur and thus belittle the intelligence of the population because of the belief in a genetic basis of intelligence; 80% of an individual's intelligence was inherited, with the remaining 20% due to environment (Clammer, 1998). Moreover, the fact that a Priority Scheme of Tax and Educational incentives for university graduates was instilled for them to marry and reproduce more, and disincentives for non-graduates, significantly demonstrates the aggressive majoritarian logic of the State (Clammer, 1998). This is especially so as Clammer (1998) even discusses the cash grant low income couples were offered if they voluntarily sterilised.

From this dimension, it is evident that the State is using a policy of Racial Sinicisation which involves racial marking and classification. This is due to the PAP's inability to comprehend that race is a myth and should not be used to classify individuals. This has led to discriminatory policies in housing and in relation to education which have worsened with the impact of negative stereotypes. One therefore sees the need to assess further PAP policies, as will be done below.

### **The State's racialised society and privileging towards Chinese-Singaporeans**

This dimension will discuss the PAP's creation of a racialised society through landscape and community-focused policies which they have instilled or encouraged. Firstly, one sees that the State has constructed a racialised community by supporting non-governmental organisations create racially based self-help groups. For example, in 1992 the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations and the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry set up the Chinese Development Association Council (CDAC) to help low income underachieving Chinese households (Ma and Cartier, 2002). These households were defined as those in which the head wage earner took home S\$1,212 or less per month and who did not have a GCE O-Level (Ma and Cartier, 2002). On the one hand the argument was put forward by second deputy Prime Minister Cheong in 1984, that groups were using racial affiliations to help those less well off in the specific communities; thus using a "balance between calling on racial ties while achieving national goals" (Ma and Cartier, 2002, p. 207). However, although one can not discredit the aim of helping better society through this multicultural policy, there has been a clear problem with focusing on racial ties to create these self help groups as it "suggests inter-racial help is less natural" (Goh et al, 2009). This realisation is evident as the CDAC received poor funding; by 1992 only 8.25% of the working adult Chinese had opted to facilitate contributions towards it in the long term, in spite of the amount per individual being negligible according to Ma and Cartier (2002), and had instead chosen to opt out. To many this was because they were against the "racial" approach of getting a community to help only its own and saw the CDAC "largely as a Government outfit, and thus not in any dire need of money or other forms of help" (*The Strait Times* 28th November, 1992 in Ma and Cartier, 2002, p. 209). Consequently, the community therefore did not agree with the racialisation of community improvement projects and clearly understood that the Government was making clear-cut racial divisions which was not a fair way to help better society from most of the Singaporean citizens views. This was especially so as funding is currently unequal and differentiated between the groups, showing another policy of Racial Sinicisation. This is because the CDAC got a one-off \$10 million grant from the Government in 2014, whilst the Eurasian Association received \$400,000 and the Singapore Indian Development Association \$3.4 million per annum (Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, 2016). This is in spite of the fact that "the Government recognises that smaller communities face greater constraints in fundraising, and will generally be more generous" in their funding due to this (Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, 2016). One should question the unjust choice to give the CDAC a large sum one-off grant and nothing of the sort to other groups.

In addition, the State is carrying out Racial Sinicisation by creating a "Chinese landscape" (Ma and Cartier, 2002, p. 209). This is clearly seen in the fact that the URA Annual Report 1986/87 (Ma and Cartier, 2002, p. 209) discussed its new conservation ethos which tried to reclaim Chinese heritage and the city's "more traditional assets". Consequently, Chinatown was chosen by the Urban Redevelopment Authority and the Singaporean Tourism Board as a site of testimony to their culture. Furthermore, particularly during Chinese festivals, memorabilia and culture are increasingly emphasised, such as lion and dragon dances and calligraphy competitions (Ma and Cartier, 2002, p. 210). More recently, Thanapal (Thanapal and Koh, 2015) claims that the State is creating a society of 'Chinese Privilege' which grants unearned power, resources and opportunities to the Chinese; similar to McClintock's 'White Privilege'. Evidence suggests this is convincing as television screens on public transport are often broadcast only in English or Mandarin and more often customer service representatives are only fluent in Mandarin (Thanapal and Koh, 2015). As such, the State is valorising and reclaiming a Chinese identity and culture over all other ethnicities.

More importantly however, Singaporean citizens are recognising the impact these assimilationist and Racial Sinicisation policies are having on their daily lives. For instance, Mathilda Gabrielpillai participated in a Forum, describing the "great pride" of multicultural Singapore in the

1960s and 1970s, but now believed that "we counter this vision by 'racialising' everything" (Ma and Cartier, 2002, p. 215). Additionally, Thanapal's interview with Koh (2015) demonstrates her anger towards the State's 'Chinese Privilege'. However, this is clearly not just being recognised by a few individuals; relating to Dikötter's (2008) argument that individuals have human agency and do not simply accept racist policies. This is supported by the bitterness seen in the 'Up close' series in 2005 about rising stars in the Government when they allowed viewers to text in messages as screen crawlers, which unintentionally led to an "avalanche of anger" from non-Chinese citizens (Barr, 2008, p. 105). For example, one viewer said "I'm a 18 yr old Malay gal who has v gd result but end up wkg on a job tat pays \$4/h while my fren which did not do well is nt gd in talking got a job tat pays \$1000/per month cos she's Chinese" (Barr, 2008, p. 105).

This dimension has therefore demonstrated that the State's policies are using a process of Racial Sinicisation and an assimilationist logic to privilege the Chinese majority. However, it is refreshing to learn that Singaporean minorities are recognising this unfair privilege.

### **A "Chinese Supremacist State" controls educational policies (Thanapal and Koh, 2015)**

Likewise, this final dimension will analyse similar policies; this being the "elitist education policies" (Goh et al, 2009). Muigai (2010), the Special Rapporteur, reveals that Racial Sinicisation is occurring with the presence of Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools which the government set up as a programme in 1979 to cater to academically gifted students in primary and secondary schools, but which has increasingly favoured Mandarin. Muigai (2010, p. 13) states this is a "visible symbol of the marginalisation of ethnic minorities" as it creates an impression of a hierarchy of cultures which he witnessed on his visit for the Report as most students attending are Chinese. More discriminatory however is that SAP schools had a 22.8% advantage over ordinary schools for student-teacher ratios, and that per capita of Government funding for SAP secondary schools was 56.45% higher than ordinary schools (Barr, 2008). Subsequently, this is clearly creating a discourse and funding gap which prioritises Chinese children and their language, with the substantiation that it will enable better future Chinese trade with a rising superpower according to the Media. However, interestingly Thanapal (Thanapal and Koh 2015) argues that this argument is wrong as economists are predicting the one-child policy will have caused China to fall behind a flourishing India.

One can argue this is irresponsible as it is causing a stark contrast in education and a lack of mixing between CMIOs. This is seen by the fact that the Minority Rights Group (2016) argues some of the Malay minority "see this as a government-led effort to create a Chinese political and economic elite from which they are excluded". This is especially so when the Goh Report in 1979 introduced Streaming. At the time, this meant at the end of Primary Three (aged 9) a child would be placed in the 'Normal Stream', the 'Extended Stream' where they would take an extra two years to complete primary school, or the 'Monolingual Stream'; not being eligible to apply for secondary school (Barr, 2008, p. 115). Although this process loosened in 1992 to being carried out with age ten children and not affecting the eligibility of applying to secondary school, one can clearly see that this is a socially trained and controlled State limiting educational opportunities (Barr, 2008). This relates to the fact that many argue it is a "micro managed 'nanny state'", impacting upon the choices and therefore agency of its citizens. This is especially so as the PAP has increasingly advocated Confucianism and the idea of 'Kiasu' (a Hokkien word meaning "afraid to fail") as appropriate for non-Chinese individuals to aim for even at pre-school level. One can therefore see they have created a tool of ghettoisation to assimilate hard work, grades and exams into children; the values of the 'new' Singaporean they desire with stereotypical Chinese virtues to pass through Streaming.

This programme of Racial Sinicisation with an assimilationist logic is even more evident in language policies. For example, the PAP introduced a 1979 'Speak Mandarin' Campaign launched by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew which is still ongoing. Originally this was promoted to unite Chinese-Singaporeans with one language. This was due to the widespread use of different dialects in the community, demonstrated by a 1980 census whereby 64% of Chinese spoke a dialect at home, such as Hokkien and Cantonese; 9% English and only 26% Mandarin (Mauzy, 2002). Due to this, Chinese-Singaporean students were finding it increasingly difficult at school, often having to learn two new languages at school because of speaking their own dialects at home. As a result of this, objectives were instilled to improve communication amongst Chinese-Singaporeans, initially focusing on

specific groups of them such as public transport workers and white collar workers to use more Mandarin (Speak Mandarin Campaign, 2015). However, since the 1990s the year-round campaign has focused on English educated Chinese-Singaporeans, each year using a different theme and approach to reach out. It is evident that the campaign was successful initially as by 1990 more Mandarin was being spoken as the principle Chinese language as opposed to dialects; the Education Minister's survey of Primary One students found only 2.2% were using dialects at home (Mauzy, 2002 p. 107). As such, this evidence clearly supports Barr's (2008) thesis that Singapore is now no longer civic orientated but since 1980 increasingly sees ideas of Chinese ethnicity as more important. This is in contrast to in 1959 when Malay was the national language and in the mid-1960s when English was altered to it, due to being "ethnically 'neutral'" (Mauzy, 2002, p. 101).

Additionally, this issue is heightened as non-Chinese students are not allowed to study Mandarin unless they get special permission in ordinary schools (Muigai, 2010). Instead, since the 1990s the Ministry of Education has placed an emphasis on learning one's 'mother tongue'. This has created almost "mono racial classrooms" as students are often kept in the same language classes for all subjects due to timetabling (Barr, 2008, p. 163). This explains why up to 80% of some samples of Singaporean students are exclusively socialised with members of their own ethnicity; bunching children into their classification (Barr, 2008). More importantly, this is ongoing today as the Ministry of Education (2016) promotes a Nurturing Early Learners framework for encouraging kindergartens to experience and learn their local ethnic cultures. One can therefore see that the PAP is advocating the supremacy of Mandarin, but inhibiting the minority groups from learning the majority language and forcing them to maintain their own culture, whilst simultaneously attempting to follow Chinese values. Thanapal and Koh (2015) go so far as to relate this to Du Bois' theory of double consciousness; a feeling of 'twoness'.

Consequently, from this dimension it is undeniable that the State's policies involving Racial Sinicisation, with an assimilationist logic have gone so far as to impact the education of the next generations. The PAP has clearly instilled a pattern of understanding which views the Chinese as rightful leaders due to their values, better schooling and the privilege of Mandarin as the dominant language. This means minorities can never fully assimilate into the majority of society, but can also not simply follow their own culture.

## **Conclusion**

Overall this essay has demonstrated that since the c.1980s the PAP has instilled policies with Racial Sinicisation, an assimilationist logic and a focus on racial marking in. This is also due to the interaction of external influences which have shaped belief systems and stereotypes and thus influenced policies within school; employment; identity; community improvement projects and the overall society of Singapore. From a wider context, this demonstrates that racism is clearly not a product of the West, but a product of political modernity elsewhere, such as the exclusion from the Federation of Malaysia. This following of Dikötter's (2008) interactionist model therefore relates to Goh's (et al, 2009) argument that the State exercises power intelligently without brute force, hiding the incomplete assimilation of minorities into Chinese values, culture and language. However, it is also useful to learn that minority communities are recognising this. Consequently, this essay supports Mauzy's (2002, p. 113) argument that the PAP "must be careful" with its Racial Sinicisation approach as it could, and is, causing "ethnic issues and tensions".

For the future, the main problem that needs to be resolved, as recognised by Muigai (2010), is the focus on fixed ideas of race and racial marking as it is no longer globally recognised as a way to structure society. This must be immediately changed so as to prevent further CMIO tension and a lack of interaction between the next generations. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that in contrast to other racialised countries worldwide, Singapore has had no record of ethnic violence since 1964. Equally, one should question the extent of success a Government can ever gain with a diverse ethnic population due to the varieties of cultures that need to be accounted for. This therefore suggests that, in spite of the overwhelmingly State controlled society, there seems to be little way to gain harmony without it. Other countries should learn the extent to which State power prevents ethnic violence, but also understand the success of multicultural Singapore from independence until the 1980s and realise the impact of aggressive majoritarianism on minority groups since 1980 Singapore.

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