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2019

DOES INVISIBLE PRIVILEGE TRAVEL?

LOOKING BEYOND THE GEOGRAPHIES OF WHITE PRIVILEGE

AS8 Seminar Room 04-04, 10 Kent Ridge Crescent, Singapore 119260

ARI
ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
National University of Singapore

The politics of identity is becoming increasingly salient. Being an undocumented immigrant in the United States, a Muslim in India or an asylum seeker in Australia today has a considerably disproportionate impact not just on quality of life indicators, but also for access to basic human rights and civil liberties. Within this context of rising conservatism and racialised modes of nationalism in the US, Europe and parts of Asia, the concept of racialised privilege has been reinvoked as a useful means to understand how collective resentment, and structural as well as everyday inequalities manifest.

Much recent research interrogates the implications of white privilege in the United States (Khan 2011, Sullivan 2017) as well as the UK (Bhopal 2018) and compellingly demonstrates unequal outcomes in education, incomes and job opportunities. These studies take the established notion of 'white privilege' (McIntosh 1988), to demonstrate that despite enabling institutions of social mobility such as meritocracy and affirmative action, race, together with socio-economic status and gender, can become a static and stubborn structural impediment that requires more severe actions to dismantle.

The concept of privilege, which has been described as an "invisible package of unearned assets", however, unlike related notions of (new) racism, discrimination, xenophobia or social capital, has not travelled or been translated readily across geographical contexts that don't have a white majority. Barring a few studies on gender privilege in South and Southeast Asia (Sen & Stivens 1998; McKay 2011; Sharafi 2014), there are remarkably few studies on privilege in Asia. The invisibility of this concept in scholarly research on Asian societies is jarring especially since Asia, including and especially Southeast Asia, has been a popular site for inter-ethnic strife and violence. While social tensions and inequalities are attributed to class privilege (Pinches 1999, Teo 2018), it is striking that there is little academic research and literature on intersecting racialised forms of privilege.

One of the key strands of this conference is devoted to exploring whether the concept of "invisible privilege," developed to explain how white America understands itself as blameless in the oppression of its own racial minorities, and even understands itself as the victim, can travel to Singapore to better understand the position of the local Chinese community in relation to ethnic minority groups. Much of the research on multiracialism in Singapore fosters the image of a peaceful and harmonious society where living in close proximity in a land scarce country has increased understandings of cultural diversity (Benjamin 1976; Clammer 1998; Hefner 2001; Ong, Tong & Tan 1997; Lai 1995; Quah 1990; Vasil 2000). On the other hand, many scholarly works on Singapore also touch on social and racial inequality (Trocki 2006) or focus on outright discrimination experienced by ethnic minorities in the city-state (Rahim 1998; Tremewan 1994; Velayutham 2017; 2016; 2014; 2009). It is in relation to this existing body of work that we consider the possible intellectual contributions of adopting 'privilege' as an analytical framework.

In this conference, we are bringing together scholars who interrogate how racialised privilege intersects with other vectors of difference such as immigration status, gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic class. In understanding how race operates relationally, we want to move past subjective and idiosyncratic understandings of invisible privilege and interrogate the cumulative everyday as well as institutional nature of inequality and its consequences.

The conference looks to explore, but is not limited to the following questions:

- How can we theorize privilege in an Asian context (ie. one that does not have a history of slavery or segregation)?

- How does racialised privilege intersect with others forms of advantage or disadvantage, particularly gendered and classed identities?

- Does Chinese privilege exist in Singapore? How can we measure it?

- Does the concept of 'privilege' have analytical purchase? Does it add to our understandings of social and political phenomena in ways that related concepts like racism and advantage don't encompass?

- How do institutions such as schools, language policies and housing practices serve to institute or reify privilege and advantage?

- How can privilege be understood from a social networks perspective? How is social mobility and advancement experienced by ethnic groups with different amounts of social capital?

- How do measurements of implicit bias contribute to interrogations of privilege?

- How can we methodologically and conceptually avoid the analytical pitfalls of reifying identity groups in discussions of privilege?

CONFERENCE CONVENORS

Prof Ted Hopf | polhtg@nus.edu.sg
Asia Research Institute, and Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore

Dr Saroja Dorairajoo | socsdnd@nus.edu.sg
Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore

Dr Laavanya Kathiravelu | laavanyak@ntu.edu.sg
Division of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

THURSDAY, 2 MAY 2019

9:00 – 9:15	REGISTRATION

9:15 – 9:30	WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

TED HOPF | Asia Research Institute, and Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore

9:30 – 11:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

CHAIRPERSON **SAROJA DORAIRAJOO** | Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore

9:30 Coming to See White Privilege: The Surprising Journey

PEGGY MCINTOSH | Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College, USA

11:00 – 11:30	MORNING TEA

11:30 – 13:30	PANEL 1	THEORY AND METHODS

CHAIRPERSON & DISCUSSANT **CHUA BENG HUAT** | Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, and Yale-NUS College, Singapore

11:30 "Chinese Privilege" in Singapore: A History of a Concept and its Contentions

HYDAR SAHARUDIN | Global and Interdisciplinary History, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

11:50 Gendered Geographies of Visibilities: Un/Safe Space and Everyday Travel in New Delhi and Singapore

CHAYANIKA SAXENA | Department of Geography, National University of Singapore

12:10 The Invisible Hand of Social Capital, Ethnic Groups and Intersectionalities

VINCENT CHUA | Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore

12:30 Teaching about 'Japanese Privilege' in Higher Education: Contextualizing Privilege to the Japanese Context

MAKIKO DEGUCHI | Department of English Studies, Sophia University, Japan
MEGUMI SHIBUYA | Department of Education and Child Development, Meiji Gakuin University, Japan

12:50 Discussion and Question & Answer

13:30 – 14:30	LUNCH

14:30 – 16:00	PANEL 2	BIAS

CHAIRPERSON & DISCUSSANT **IAN CHONG** | Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore

14:30 White Privilege in Higher Education in Asia

LEON MOOSAVI | Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology, University of Liverpool–Singapore

14:50 How Preschoolers Assign Jobs to Adults of Different Races

LEE JIA JIN KRISTY | School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
SETOH PEIPEI | School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

15:10 We are the Minority Here': Racial Disadvantage and Internalised Racism in Singapore

SELVARAJ VELAYUTHAM | Department of Sociology, Macquarie University, Australia

15:30 Discussion and Question & Answer

16:00 – 16:30	AFTERNOON TEA

DOES "INVISIBLE PRIVILEGE" TRAVEL?: LOOKING BEYOND THE GEOGRAPHIES OF WHITE PRIVILEGE   2-3 MAY 2019

Organised by Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, and held at AS8 Seminar Room 04-04, 10 Kent Ridge Crescent, Singapore 119260

16:30 – 18:00	PANEL 3 | ETHINICITY
CHAIRPERSON & DISCUSSANT	**ERIC THOMPSON** | Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore

16:30	Ethnic Privilege as Southeast Asian Form of White Privilege? Unpacking the *Bamar* Ethnic Privilege in Myanmar
	NYI NYI KYAW | Myanmar Studies Programme, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

16:50	Feeling Race: Gender and (In)Visible Privilege in Miss Japan Contests
	MICHELLE H. S. HO | Department of Communications and New Media, National University of Singapore

17:10	On Privileging the Concept of Privilege: Decoding 'Chinese Privilege' in Singapore
	TENG SIAO SEE | National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
	KWOK KIAN-WOON | School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

17:30	Discussion and Question & Answer
18:00	E N D O F D A Y O N E

FRIDAY, 3 MAY 2019

9:15 – 9:30	REGISTRATION

9:30 – 11:00	**KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2**

CHAIRPERSON	**LAAVANYA KATHIRAVELU** | Division of Sociology, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
9:30	**Can the Concept of White Privilege Travel? Ontologial Expansivenss and the Legality of Invisible Privilege** **SHANNON SULLIVAN** | Department of Philosophy, University of North Carolina—Charlotte, USA

11:00 – 11:30	MORNING TEA

11:30 – 13:00	**PANEL 4 | CLASS/CAPITAL**

CHAIRPERSON & DISCUSSANT	**TEO YOU YENN** | Division of Sociology, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
11:30	**Who's Chinese? 'Chinese-ness' and Class Privilege in the Immigrant City of Singapore** **SYLVIA ANG** | Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
11:50	**Understanding Brahmin Privilege in Contemporary India** **AMRITORUPA SEN** | Independent Scholar
12:10	**Interrogating Causes and Consequences of Changing Privilege in Cambodia** **TERI SHAFFER YAMADA** | Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, California State University–Long Beach, USA
12:30	Discussion and Question & Answer

13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH

14:00 – 15:30	**PANEL 5 | POLICY**

CHAIRPERSON & DISCUSSANT	**HO KONG CHONG** | Asia Research Institute, and Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore
14:00	**Critiquing Race Privilege: Comparing the Limitations of White and Malay Privilege** **JONATHAN YONG TIENXHI** | ELM Graduate School, HELP University, Malaysia
14:20	**Making "Invisible Privilege" Visible: Mapping the Interaction between Inequality and the Ethnic Integration Policy in Singapore** **YVONNE YAP YING YING** | Institute of Policy Studies Social Lab, National University of Singapore, and University of Oxford, UK
14:40	**Chinese Privilege in Politics: A Case Study of Singapore's Ruling Elites** **WALID JUMBLATT ABDULLAH** | Public Policy and Global Affairs Program, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore **HUMAIRAH ZAINAL** | Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
15:00	Discussion and Question & Answer

15:30 – 16:00	AFTERNOON TEA

DOES "INVISIBLE PRIVILEGE" TRAVEL?: LOOKING BEYOND THE GEOGRAPHIES OF WHITE PRIVILEGE   2-3 MAY 2019

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16:00 – 17:30   PANEL 6 | MEDIA DISCOURSE

CHAIRPERSON & DISCUSSANT	**IVAN KWEK**	Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore

16:00 — Speaking of Privilege, Privilege of Speaking: Educational Language Policies and Racialized Linguistic Privilege in Hong Kong

CHEE WAI-CHI | Education Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University

16:20 — Chinese Privilege in the Production of Knowledge and Culture in Singapore Mainstream Media

NURUL FADIAH JOHARI | Independent Researcher
MYSARA ALJARU | Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore

16:40 — Institutionalizing Privilege: Interrogating Indian School Textbooks

SHAFEEF AHAMED | Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, India

17:00 — Discussion and Question & Answer

17:30 – 18:00   CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

PEGGY MCINTOSH | Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College, USA
SHANNON SULLIVAN | Department of Philosophy, University of North Carolina, USA

18:00   E N D   O F   C O N F E R E N C E

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

Coming to See White Privilege: The Surprising Journey

Peggy McIntosh
Wellesley Centers for Women,
Wellesley College, USA

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I will discuss several systems of advantage that are built into US society and that strongly affect life outcomes for people who live within the US. These systems of advantage, with regard to race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and ethnicity, run counter to the US myth of meritocracy which is that the unit of society is the individual, and individual effort alone determines one's quality of life. All systems of colonization have resulted in privilege for some at the expense of others. I will talk about the benefits of seeing privilege and, in the case of democracies, trying to do something to share the power that privilege gives to a person, idea, or institution.

Peggy McIntosh is Senior Research Associate of the Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College. Thirty-five years ago, in the United States, she founded the National SEED Project on Inclusive Curriculum (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity). She co-directed this project with Emily Style for its first 25 years. The Project helps teachers to create their own local, year-long, peer-led seminars. Seminar participants use their own experiences and those of their students, children, and colleagues in important conversations that in turn make communities and workplaces more inclusive. The SEED Project has prepared 2,700 educators to lead SEED Seminars in 42 U.S. states and 14 other countries. McIntosh consults throughout the world with college and school faculty who are creating more gender-fair and multicultural curricula. She has consulted on 22 campuses across Asia on bringing materials on women into university curricula. McIntosh is widely known for her 1988 and 1989 papers on privilege—*White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies* and *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*. She has spoken at over 600 universities and organizations about privilege systems, including those of race, ethnicity, region, religion, class, sexuality, and gender. Her four-part paper series on *Feeling Like A Fraud,* written over thirty-four years, also empowers readers to draw wisdom from their own life experiences.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2

Can the Concept of White Privilege Travel?
Ontological Expansiveness and the Legality of Invisible Privilege

Shannon Sullivan
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In this presentation, I will examine two particular aspects of white privilege: its relationship to current law and its tendency to take the form of ontological expansiveness. I think that the concept of invisible white privilege can travel, but also that the concept must be connected to the particular cultures, legal and other institutions, and people's experiences in different places and nations. That might mean in some cases that the concept stalls, rather than moves across geographical and national borders, or that it changes so much in route that it might not be fully recognizable after its journey is complete. Because I am not an expert on Chinese privilege or other types of unearned advantages that might be found specifically in Singapore and other Asian countries, I greatly value the expertise of the participants in this important conference. What I hope to contribute are some salient questions and possible points of comparison between invisible racial/ethnic privilege in the West and in the East that hopefully will aid ongoing work on this topic.

I first will examine the legality of white privilege, using examples from the United States to highlight the kinds of patterns of invisible privilege that we might also look for in Asia. I then will focus on the phenomenon of ontological expansiveness: a privileged person's unconscious habit of assuming that all spaces are rightfully available for them to enter comfortably. Here too I will use examples from the United States to ask whether similar patterns and habits of racial privilege can be found in Singapore and other Asian nations.

Shannon Sullivan is Chair of Philosophy and Professor of Philosophy and Health Psychology at University of North Carolina, Charlotte. She teaches and writes in the intersections of feminist philosophy, critical philosophy of race, American pragmatism, and continental philosophy. She is author of *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism and Feminism* (2001), *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege* (2006), *Good White People: The Problem with Middle Class White Anti-Racism* (2014), and *The Physiology of Sexist and Racist Oppression* (2015). She is co-editor of four books including *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance* (2007) and *Feminist Interpretations of William James* (2015). *Good White People* was named a 2014 *CHOICE* Outstanding Academic Title and a *Ms. Magazine* Must-Read Feminist Book of 2014. It also was awarded The Society of Professors of Education 2016 Outstanding Book Award.

"Chinese Privilege" in Singapore:
A History of a Concept and its Contentions

Hydar Saharudin

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Between 2013 and 2014, through their social media and blogs, several prominent Singaporeans—Alfian Sa'at, Adeline Koh, Sangeetha Thanapal—proclaimed that Singapore's Chinese-majority enjoyed exclusive racial advantages over minorities. Since then, the concept of "Chinese Privilege" has triggered impassioned public debates on race and racism in Singapore, of which support for its claims has been matched by its responding repudiation and denials. Yet, both advocates and detractors of the "Chinese Privilege" thesis have questioned its applicability towards local settings, its ostensible mimicry of Western social justice thought, and its inchoate ideas, deficient empiricism, and radical heuristics. Such concerns, if left unresolved, could turn "Chinese Privilege" into a passing intellectual fad.

This paper addresses these issues by tracing the conceptual development of "Chinese Privilege"—highlighting its origins, progenitors, influences, antecedents, circulations, usage, and potential future directions. It argues that "Chinese Privilege", as an analytical framework, represents a synthesis of domestic and transnational developments in racial dynamics and anti-racist or racial scholarship. Indeed, the online advent of "Chinese Privilege" came amidst increased reports of racism in Singapore. And while popular interpretations of "Chinese Privilege" draw directly from Whiteness Studies, scholars of Singapore have long engaged the concept *avant la lettre,* albeit in a piecemeal fashion. By historicizing the transnational and transdisciplinary genealogy of "Chinese Privilege", this paper describes a nascent, fractious attempt to highlight systemic racism and racial privilege in Singapore, as well as interrogate the centres and practices behind Chinese-Singaporean hegemony.

Hydar Saharudin is a MA student in Global and Interdisciplinary History at Nanyang Technological University. His Master's thesis will examine the historical relationship between state surveillance and the Malay community in independent Singapore. His work has appeared on *New Mandala* (2016) and in *Budi Kritik* (2018). Hydar holds a BA in History (First Class Honours) from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Gendered Geographies of Visibilities:
Un/Safe Space and Everyday Travel in New Delhi and Singapore

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What does it mean to be invisible? Does invisibility always imperil and impede or can there be something comforting about not being visible? Moving from the city of New Delhi, called the 'rape capital of India', to Singapore, one of safest cities for women, I realised what it meant to become invisible. This invisibility instead of being divesting made my "experience of the city" (of Singapore) more comforting and holistic temporally and spatially. This stood in contrast with my experience in Delhi where my "right to the city" was curtailed over time and space

Such differences in experiences are effected by varying degrees of visibility that are socially constituted over space and time. Resultantly, where my gendered existence is made hyper-visible in Delhi, I feel a sense of comforting invisibility in Singapore despite it. *My gendered invisibility in Singapore then privileges travel.*

In this paper I will interrogate the concept of invisibility to show that there is more to it than just *being forgotten*. That being invisible can, on certain occasions, be facilitative than impeding. This is particularly the case when it comes to movement and travel that are not only physically but also socially constituted and conditioned. This paper will argue that hyper-visibility on account of social, ascriptive features is, in fact, fraught. Building on inequalities that are both latent and evident, the problem of hyper-visibility is then a product of structural/ productive/institutional biases quite like as *invisibility-as-being-forgotten* is. The *comforting invisibility* too can then be said to emerge from these social biases but which is related to them in an inverse manner, demonstrating that invisible *privileging* travel/movement is contingent on whether *invisible privileges* travel or not.

Chayanika Saxena is President Graduate Fellow and PhD candidate at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. She was formerly at RSIS, Singapore as Student Research Assistant and Post Graduate Student of International Relations. Her doctoral thesis looks at the interaction between spaces and political subjectivities of the Afghan diaspora in the Indian cities of New Delhi and Kolkata. She has more than six years of research experience on Afghanistan and has published and presented nationally and internationally. She maintains linguistic proficiency in Hindi, Urdu, English and has working knowledge of Farsi.

The Invisible Hand of Social Capital, Ethnic Groups and Intersectionalities

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Outward displays of privilege are obvious: important high-paying jobs, big houses, fast cars. This paper highlights a less visible form of privilege: the advantages that accrue from being embedded in valuable social networks. Social resources constitute powerful material for social advancement, but the reality is that some groups have more, while others have less (such as racial minorities). Why is that so? Drawing on Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt (2019), I write about the *relational* bases of inequality reproduction, namely of how ascriptive categorizations (such as gender and race) are converted into status hierarchies, then subsequently linked to inequality generating mechanisms such as exploitation, social closure and relational claims-making in the context of local organizations and everyday relationships. I conclude with a set of reasons explaining why social capital has had a relatively marginalized position in the theorization of privilege: 1) rise of the meritocratic society, 2) challenges associated with collecting network data, and 3) embeddedness of social capital in everyday life, rendering it invisible and taken-for-granted.

Vincent Chua is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. His research areas are in social networks, inequality and education. He is published in journals such as *Social Networks*, *Social Science Research* and *Sociology of Education*. He is also the recipient of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Award in 2013, 2017 and 2018, as well as the University Teaching Excellence Award in 2018.

Teaching about 'Japanese Privilege' in Higher Education: Contextualizing Privilege to the Japanese Context

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Educators in higher education who teach diversity and social justice courses face the challenging task of engaging students in the dominant group who exhibit disinterest and indifference toward prejudice, discrimination and various injustices in society. This paper presents research findings on Japanese university students' awareness about race and ethnic categories, Japanese students' experience with the racial 'other' as well as two course designs at the undergraduate level to teach about privilege awareness: the first, a course dedicated to privilege awareness in different domains; and the second, a few-week section in a teacher training course. The application and generalizability of the white privilege construct to the Japanese context, the differences in teaching about privilege in the U.S. and Japan, and some of the unique challenges about Japanese culture and society, will be discussed. The authors suggest that adopting a privilege awareness pedagogy is an effective method for teaching about diversity and inclusion, because students in the dominant group recognize that they are accountable in maintaining an oppressive system and thus can be are encouraged to reevaluate their privilege and their potential role as allies to minority group members.

Makiko Deguchi is currently an Associate Professor at Sophia University's Department of English Studies, Faculty of Foreign Studies. Deguchi specializes in psychology of discrimination, psychology of privilege, and cultural psychology. Deguchi's research interests are in the pedagogy of social justice education (focusing on educating members of privileged groups), and the impact of social oppression on the psychology of both the oppressor and the oppressed. Deguchi recently translated into Japanese, Diane J. Goodman's "Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating Members of Privileged Groups" (2011) from Sophia University Press in 2017.

Megumi Shibuya is currently a Professor at Meiji Gakuin University's Department of Education and Child Development, Faculty of Psychology. Shibuya specializes in comparative studies of citizenship education and minority education. Shibuya's research interests are in the pedagogy of social justice education (focusing on educating members of privileged groups), citizenship education, and national identity construction in Asia. Her works includes "Rethinking a Conceptual Framework for Citizenship Education in ASEAN Countries" (2016) in Kerry J. Kennedy and Andreas Brunold (eds.), *Regional Contexts and Citizenship Education in Asian and Europe,* Oxon and New York: Routledge.

White Privilege in Higher Education in Asia

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While it is well established that white academics benefit from white privilege in Western universities, there has been a lack of attention given to the way in which this may also occur in Asian higher education. This paper will argue that white academics in Asia can be the recipients of white privilege in terms of the opportunities, treatment and ease that they may enjoy on account of their whiteness. It will be suggested that this is rooted in a broader context of coloniality which leads to white academics being desired, celebrated and afforded enhanced respect by Asian universities, Asian academics and Asian students. In seeking a nuanced understanding, it will be acknowledged that not all white academics experience white privilege in the same way given the intersectional nature of social identities. In a departure from other literature about white privilege, this paper will suggest that white privilege should not only be understood as a benefit that is bestowed upon white people, but that some white academics may embrace, enjoy and perpetuate the white privilege that they are afforded. Alongside these arguments, this paper will posit that whiteness may be ascribed to people in Asia to whom it would not be ascribed to in the West, thus revealing the ontological complexity of defining whiteness. Furthermore, the methodological complexity of proving white privilege will be explored given that evidencing privilege can be difficult. The arguments in this paper are based on an auto-ethnography in which the author, a mixed-race individual who is sometimes racialised as white and sometimes as non-white, reflects on his own experiences and observations as an academic in Asia.

Leon Moosavi is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology at the University of Liverpool. He is concurrently the Director of the University of Liverpool in Singapore. Leon completed his PhD at Lancaster University in 2011 with the thesis title: 'Islamophobia, Belonging and 'Race' in the Experiences of Muslim Converts in Britain'. As well as publishing on topics relating to white privilege, racism and Muslim communities, since coming to Singapore in 2013, Leon has also taken an interest in racism and ethnocentrism in Higher Education. He has recently published papers on decolonising knowledge.

How Preschoolers Assign Jobs to Adults of Different Races

Lee Jia Jin Kristy

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Existing studies have largely assessed children's explicit racial biases through their choice of own- versus other-race peers. Few studies have looked at how children manifest explicit biases in their racial preferences for non-kin adults who take on different roles in their social environment. To address this gap, the present study examines how three- to six-year-old Singaporean Chinese pre-schoolers assign jobs that they encounter in their daily lives between own- and other-race adults.

In the present study (n = 71; age: 36—80 months), children were simultaneously presented with photos of an own-race (Chinese) and an other-race (Indian) adult matched to their gender, and were asked whom they would choose to take up various jobs. There were 11 photo pairs (trials) corresponding to 11 jobs, of which five were normatively desirable jobs (i.e., swimming teacher, dance teacher, drawing teacher, music teacher, doctor), and six were normatively undesirable jobs (i.e., rubbish collector, table cleaner, roadsweeper, grass-cutter, toilet cleaner, maid). Results revealed that children preferentially assigned both normatively desirable and undesirable jobs to own-race adults on a significantly greater proportion of trials than expected by chance. There was also evidence of significant implicit racial biases as measured on the Chinese-Indian Implicit Racial Bias Test.

These findings partially suggest that children are driven by a familiarity bias—they assign high and low status jobs to own-race adults, therefore showing a preference for a social world occupied by, but not necessarily dominated by, familiar own race adults. Children's intuitions about jobs, however, may not fully reflect a normative understanding of job demands, status and income concerns, and this should be addressed in future studies.

Lee Jia Jin Kristy is a third-year PhD at the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University. Her research interests lie in sociomoral reasoning and intergroup attitudes of young children. In her dissertation, she examines preschool children's tendencies to sacrifice self-interest in enforcing moral standards.

Setoh Peipei is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Director of the Early Cognition Lab at NTU, and an Associate of Asia Research Institute at National University of Singapore. Dr Setoh has a PhD in Developmental Psychology from the University of Illinois, specializing in cognitive development in infants and young children. Her research how young children make sense of the world around them, and what explanatory frameworks and learning mechanisms enable them to do so. Currently, her research focuses on sociomoral reasoning and early conceptual development. Specifically, she examines young children's expectations about interactions within and between groups, moral character development, and the development of gender and ethnic biases. Dr Setoh's research has been published in academic journals such as Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences and Child Development, and the research of her lab has been featured on *Channel News Asia*, *Lianhe Zaobao*, *The Asian Scientist*, among others.

We are the Minority Here':
Racial Disadvantage and Internalised Racism in Singapore

Selvaraj Velayutham
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Ethnic Chinese constitute a majority of the population in Singapore and are well represented at all levels of Singaporean society, politically and economically. Although all Chinese do not equally benefit from their social position, to some degree each has advantages that people of minority background, Malays, Indians and Eurasians cannot take for granted, Many Chinese, however, are unaware of the unearned advantages they possess and rarely reflect on the sources and meaning of racial inequality and structural and everyday racism that exist in Singapore. The study of race privilege helps in understanding how inequality and discrimination is sustained, and conversely, a focus on the oppression and discrimination sheds light on the treatment and experiences of minority group. This paper argues that a more productive way to advance the understanding of unequal race relations and anti-racism in Singapore would be to foreground the hegemony of Chineseness, the myth of meritocracy and continuing discrimination of minority races. This task is very much in its embryonic stage and require greater attention than the focus on unearned racial advantages. For without theorising and speaking up against internalised racism, the turn to Chinese privilege is a futile strategy to combat entrenched racists attitudes in Singapore. In this paper, I conceptualise the notion of Chinese racial privilege from the perspective of minorities and demonstrate how Chineseness as capital works to create opportunities, and provides the norms and categories against which other cultures are 'measured'; and the 'unearned advantage the Chinese have over racial minorities in Singapore.

Selvaraj Velayutham is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Macquarie University, Australia. His research interests are in international migration, race and ethnic relations, everyday multiculturalism and the sociology of everyday life. His most recent publications include: 'Races without Racism?: Everyday Race Relations in Singapore'. *Identities* (2017) and 'Everyday Multiculturalism and Humour at work: Convivial labour of language play, banter and teasing in Singapore's multi-ethnic workplaces'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (forthcoming, with Amanda Wise).

Ethnic Privilege as Southeast Asian Form of White Privilege?
Unpacking the *Bamar* Ethnic Privilege in Myanmar

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White privilege in western countries is often taken for granted as an unpacked package of privilege that is automatically and socially obtained by white people but not by non-white people. The concept has often been further scrutinized and unpacked by critical race studies and the more deeply underlying inequalities in terms of class, gender, and power highlighted. Adopting this predominantly interracial and western concept in the context of Southeast Asia—that does not often have strong biological differences between ethnic groups—is problematic. But, the concept of privilege is indeed transferable because several Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Myanmar have politicized structures of ethnicity—what we can call 'ethnic privilege'—largely created during colonization and post-colonial state-formation. Privilege itself, like white privilege, is a concept that must be further unpacked to suit the context of Southeast Asia. In general, ethnic structures in several Southeast Asian countries privilege one or more ethnic groups over others at the macro level—for example, the Malay in Malaysia and the Bamar in Myanmar. But, the big groups themselves often show intragroup inequalities at meso- or micro-levels that weakens a general theory of (ethnic) privilege in Southeast Asia. I discuss the case of the general prestige of the *Bamar* ethnic majority in Myanmar in relation to several other ethnic minorities such as the Kachin and Shan but remind that the group suffers from its own intra-group inequalities or privilege structures in terms of class, gender and power.

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Feeling Race: Gender and (In)Visible Privilege in Miss Japan Contests

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In 2015 and 2016, Ariana Miyamoto and Priyanka Yoshikawa became the first and second *hāfu* (mixed race) contestants respectively to be crowned Miss Japan. Following their win, however, in news and online media, critics and netizens alike have lambasted Miyamoto and Yoshikawa for not looking Japanese (enough) or being "pure" Japanese, to which both have repeatedly asserted, "But I am Japanese" and "I feel Japanese." This paper explores the (in)visible privilege of the ethnic Japanese majority as it intersects with gender through a case study of Miyamoto and Yoshikawa. Examining English- and Japanese-language news outlets and Girls Channel, a popular Internet forum, I argue that discourses surrounding the two biracial Miss Japan winners reveal the complex ways in which the ethnic majority construct privilege and determine racial and ethnic otherness through feeling. On the one hand, this lingering aversion is informed by Japan's long history of colonizing other Asian countries and subjects and subjugating their invisible ethnic minorities, such as the indigenous Ainu people. On the other hand, this racialized affect is intertwined with gender, especially how beauty pageants are perceived to reinforce normative femininity and an imagined national identity through the sexualization and commodification of young women's bodies. Drawing on theories of affect and emotion and the growing body of work on race in East Asia, I further suggest that theorizing privilege in the Asian context requires a serious consideration of racial feeling so that its invisibility not only accounts for "unearned assets," but also unseen (albeit felt) elements.

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On Privileging the Concept of Privilege:
Decoding 'Chinese Privilege' in Singapore

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Does 'invisible privilege' travel? Evidently yes, because the "geographies of white privilege" were historically extended worldwide through colonialism. Thus, one of the guiding questions for this conference is problematic: "How can we theorise privilege in an Asian context (i.e. one that does *not* have a history of slavery or segregation)". The phenomenon of 'White Privilege' (WP) in 'Asia' long predated the concept of privilege travelling into academic discourse. This paper attempts to analyse 'Chinese Privilege' (CP) in Singapore as historical and lived experience and as concept and discourse. Privilege is predicated on unequal power relationships between or among groups, involving taken-for-granted ideas and practices—which are challenged when the concept of privilege is consciously articulated. WP and CP are racialised forms of privilege. Does intersectionality involving various reinforcing inequalities (especially class and gender) downplay racialised privilege? Not so in the face of clear evidence of racial bias and discrimination, individual and structural, exercised by a majority ethnic group over ethnic minorities. How does CP operate when the Chinese is a 'majority' in Singapore but a 'minority' in the region? And when the 'Chinese majority' has been made and remade through the decades, and within the framework of 'multiracialism'? Does CP discourse grow out of and solidify racial categories and erase diversity within groups and commonality across groups—and therefore elide issues of justice and rights? In raising such questions, we also develop a comparative perspective, including looking at Chinese as significant minorities in Southeast Asia.

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Who's Chinese? 'Chinese-ness' and Class Privilege in the Immigrant City of Singapore

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Chinese-Singaporeans' Chinese privilege is one that benefits from the systems of dominance imposed by the Singaporean state. However, their privilege as 'Chinese' has been disturbed by the recent immigration of large numbers of mainland Chinese migrants. Certainly, the concept of naturalness as used frequently by Chinese-Singaporeans to espouse their privilege has been interrupted by the 'more authentic' and indicatively 'natural' Chinese from the mainland. Peggy Macintosh suggested that most White people are unconscious of their privilege because they have never faced the experience of lower-status people. What happens when a Chinese-Singaporean is mistaken for a newly-arrived mainland Chinese migrant—one whom in the Chinese-Singaporean's imaginary embodies the 'backwardness' of China? How does a context of intense immigration and new migrants' ethnic proximity disturb Chinese-Singaporeans' privilege? While this may not have brought Chinese-Singaporeans into a shared consciousness with Singaporeans of minority races, it has produced co-ethnic politics where a unique production of difference has occurred. This paper seeks to complicate the concept of Chinese privilege in destabilizing what constitutes the 'Chinese' as well as highlight how 'Chinese-ness' and class privilege intersects in an immigrant city with an increasingly precarious middle class.

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Understanding Brahmin Privilege in Contemporary India

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The caste system in India, one that traditionally confers great prestige to the upper caste 'Brahmins' and severely curtails lower caste groups, is a marker of privilege by birth. Studies in the post-colonial period highlighted the visible aspects of this hierarchical system. However, the privilege that was once justifiable in the name of religion, is threatened today by macro shifts in the economy (economic liberalisation), state practices (affirmative action to support lower caste mobility), legal systems (abolishing untouchability) and increase in educational levels. How then, amidst the weakening of visible barriers of caste hierarchy, do Brahmins maintain their privilege today? In my study I use individual social networks to demonstrate the more subtle ways in which Brahmins maintain their status and dominance.

Examining network patterns of 185 respondents (village residents and rural migrants in the city) suggest that *first*, caste homophily is palpable in networks—e.g., Brahmins tend to know more Brahmins as is with other caste groups. However, Brahmins are relatively better networked with non-Brahmins than vice versa. Second, Brahmins are better networked with instrumental relations, that is, formal relations. The paper discusses that having substantially higher number of formal relations compared to other caste members puts them at an advantage. However, in the city where the structural environment changes, the picture is more complex. Privilege here is garnered differently by Brahmins from different educational, occupation and gender backgrounds. Overall, I argue that diversification of ties with different others enable Brahmins to maintain their status and privilege. In doing so, caste inequality still persists but takes a different form.

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Interrogating Causes and Consequences of Changing Privilege in Cambodia

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This essay begins with a brief historical contextualization of the colonial and post-colonial conditions responsible for networks of racialized privilege in the former Indochine area of Southeast Asia. It then foregrounds the changing socio-economic and political conditions that are fostering a field of contesting networks of racialized privilege in contemporary Cambodia.

The origin of "White Privilege" is historically situated in the colonial enterprise of the British Empire beginning with the militia style expansion of the East India Company (1600) during the age of Imperialism. Less examined is the formation and impact of racialized Japanese privilege during its emulation of "Western colonial expansion and militarism" from the late 1880s. The Japanese military began its invasion of Manchuria and China in 1931 with periodic fighting until 1945. During this time (1931-42) their military advanced across Southeast Asia—in some countries with a heavier hand than others—while disrupting western political power embedded in governmental bureaucracies. In Indochine, the Japanese replaced French 'white privilege' with a Japanese version at the top levels of government.

In Indochine, unlike other areas of Southeast Asia, the Japanese exerted a somewhat benign transference of political privilege from the French to themselves. In "pre-colonial" Cambodia of the 17th and 18th centuries, privilege—defined narrowly here as the symbolic power to maintain political control—was maintained by a network of patron-client privilege with the king at the apex of the power hierarchy. During their colonial control of Cambodia, the French usurped this privilege to some degree but not completely. Hidden networks of Cambodian patron-client privilege remained and re-emerged more strongly after Cambodia achieved Independence from France (1944). This "traditional" pattern persisted until the Khmer Rouge era (1975-9) when Chinese privilege in terms of advisory influence on Khmer Rouge leadership replaced traditional networks, which would reify as contesting networks of power among political parties during the 1990s. This paper concludes with an assessment of the current configuration of contesting networks of privilege in 2018 including the further decline of French and Korean privilege as Chinese and Japanese expertise and financing emerge as factors for contending networks of privilege in Prime Minister Hun Sen's Royal Kingdom of Cambodia.

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Critiquing Race Privilege:
Comparing the Limitations of White and Malay Privilege

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Sociological theories of racism are often limited in explanatory value when considering non-Black peoples of colour (Kie-Jung, 2014). This is apparent in Malaysia, where notions of 'Malay privilege' are confounded by inherent contradictions. On one hand, the state accords the Malay population clear advantages in terms of resources, accolades and systems of support. On the other, Malays also possess entrenched wealth disparities with the relatively richer Chinese (Khalid, 2014), suffer labour market discrimination (Lee & Khalid, 2016), and are associated with the historical stigma of laziness (Alatas, 1977).

This paper interrogates the notion of 'Malay privilege' using comparative historical sociology and semi-structured interviews. The history of Malay-ness and Malay privilege is discussed in relation to the development of white privilege. As David Roediger argued that white workers attitude towards race are underpinned by psychological and ideological mechanisms which configure how they perceive others (1991), I use interviews to uncover how these 'psychological and ideological mechanisms' influence how Malay and Chinese Malaysians conceptualize race privilege. Through understanding how Malay or Chinese race privilege manifests itself in the everyday lives of my interviewees, I draw connections between this micro-sociological account and the macro-level institutions and structures of the Malaysian racial regime. This paper aims to make an original contribution to race theory in terms of understanding how race privilege operates in plural societies with more fluid racial hierarchies. This has theoretical significance for understanding race privilege in Singapore, given the two nation's intimate connections across borders, languages, ethnic groups and historical ties.

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Making "Invisible Privilege" Visible: Mapping the Interaction between Inequality and the Ethnic Integration Policy in Singapore

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The Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) in Singapore functions to socially engineer ethnic desegregation in public housing. Aside from investigating if the EIP has truly achieved its stated goal, urban researchers have also devoted much attention to investigating the EIP's secondary effects, such as how it has facilitated the creation of divergent resale housing markets for different ethnic groups (Leong 2018). Most of these studies focus on the EIP's effects at a household level. Little attention, however, has been paid to the straightforward question of how and to what extent the EIP contributes to geographic stratification in Singapore. Anecdotally, Singaporeans find it easy to name which neighbourhoods contain clusters of rich or poor households or which neighbourhoods are popular ethnic enclaves, but researchers have yet to develop a formal model of how the EIP and social-economic inequality interacts. Using a mix of planning area and survey data, this paper adopts a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) approach to mapping out the spatial relationships between the EIP and ethnic and socio-economic clusters in Singapore, thereby making "invisible privilege" literally visible.

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Chinese Privilege in Politics: A Case Study of Singapore's Ruling Elites

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This article aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of privilege as a conceptual category through the case study of Chinese privilege in Singapore politics. It does so through two main ways. The first is by foregrounding the salience of race in the analysis of privilege. We argue that the existing focus on class privilege within the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) should go hand-in-hand with the study of Chinese privilege since the PAP hegemony has significant implications on the very nature race is constructed, understood and implicated in Singapore politics and society. Furthermore, PAP's race-based approach to politics inadvertently perpetuates Chinese privilege. The second way is by analysing political privilege through an intersectional lens in order to show that 'political privilege' is neither a homogenous nor a monolithic category. In discussing how Chinese privilege manifests in politics, we highlight several contradictions that have emerged as a result of its persistence. These include the paradox of minority representation in parliament, the tension between Chinese hegemony and the government's system of meritocracy, as well as the differentiated experience of PAP's parliamentarians due to their intersecting identities.

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Speaking of Privilege, Privilege of Speaking:
Educational Language Policies and Racialized Linguistic Privilege in Hong Kong

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Hong Kong provides an intriguing context to understand racialized privilege as 92% of its 7.3 million population is ethnic Chinese, while the 8% of non-Chinese is stereotypically categorized in everyday language and practices: Westerners, Japanese and Koreans are called expatriates; Indonesians and Filipinos are referred to as migrant workers; and South Asians and Africans are known as ethnic minorities. These labels reflect racialized privilege and the inequalities it embeds. This paper posits that the education policies relating to non-Chinese students contribute to such discrimination.

South Asian students, the largest group of non-Chinese students in Hong Kong, are well-documented to be challenged by disproportionate academic underachievement and unequal access to career opportunities. Although research has suggested structural constraints to be a significant cause, government interventions often downplay structural barriers and instead highlight South Asians' "language deficit," creating a linguistic hierarchy and leading to exclusionary practices and segregation at schools. For instance, the Education Bureau officially names them "non-Chinese speaking" students and prioritizes a Hong Kong-centric assimilationist approach which upholds Chinese as the linguistic and cultural standard. Such monocultural assumption sets desirable Chinese proficiency as a pre-requisite of social integration. Through the lens of South Asian students in Hong Kong, this paper unravels how educational language policies serve to reify and racialize privilege in linguistic terms. Data are drawn on critical analysis of educational language policies in Hong Kong.

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Chinese Privilege in the Production of Knowledge and Culture in Singapore Mainstream Media

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Of late, the Singapore mainstream media outlets belonging to MediaCorp and Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) have attempted to tackle race, a taboo topic that is often broached carefully in mainstream discourse. However, their narratives channel the colonial/Orientalist theme of ascribing cultural deficit to the Malay and Indian communities. Headed by elite and educated Chinese, these media institutions manufacture such knowledge of Singapore's minorities as an extension of Chinese political and economic power.

We uphold that to speak of Chinese privilege in controlling public discourse in Singapore is to address how the media perpetuates racism by emphasising cultural deficiencies of minorities in socio-economic spheres such as health, crime, security and education. Here, the mainstream media is complicit in reproducing minority communities as the Other. This can be seen, for instance, in *The Straits Times*' reports on Malay drug offenders, which places the blame on the Malay community and culture. This Othering process is worsened by the lack of representation of minorities not just in front of the camera, but also behind it. Documentaries on race or its policies often exclude minority voices in the editorial process.

In this paper, we examine how Chinese privilege is maintained and perpetuated through knowledge and cultural production in the mainstream media through (i) the perpetuation of the cultural deficit thesis by way of the lack of representation and perspectives from minority communities, and (ii) the ways in which minorities are made to mostly perform menial labour offscreen as information gatherers and producers, but not at the level of agenda-setting and narrative construction. These questions will be analysed through theories from decolonial social sciences, such as in Alatas and Sinha (2017) and Edward Said's *Covering Islam* (1981).

Nurul Fadiah Johari received her Masters' degree in Malay Studies from NUS in 2017. She has since then worked as a researcher, and also been active in local groups promoting gender equality within the Muslim community. Her writings have been published in local publications such as *Perempuan: Muslim Women Speak Out* (2016), *Growing Up Perempuan* (2018) and *Budi Kritik* (2018).

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Institutionalizing Privilege: Interrogating Indian School Textbooks

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The paper interrogates school textbooks to conceptualize privilege in pedagogic space where it functions through selective inclusion and simultaneous exclusion of knowledge and corollary its contribution to reinforce already existing structural privilege and inequality. It is a critical analysis of the representation of Muslims in Indian school textbooks to understand the subterranean premises on which it is founded. The paper will describe the visible pattern in their representation where Muslims are often reduced to stereotypes and only become worth mentioning through their religion. Textbooks construct Muslims into a category of 'other' that is defined in opposition the Hindu 'self'. There is a conscious effort to hyper-problematize Muslim existence and frequently appears in reference to violence.

It will be argued that school textbooks being an 'authorized' entity with its own field of circulation institutionalizes privilege. To be represented as obvious normal being in a most dispassionate manner is a privilege. At the same time selective representation in the textbooks in order to produce a suitable meaning keeps privilege of the dominant group intact. Privilege is about being qualified as knowledge in the textbook and gets represented as the group identifies themselves, knowledge that do not disturb their regularity and simultaneously make the 'other' seem natural. The institutional character of the textbook give currency to such content and ensure its circulation thereby reinforcing privilege. This paper will unveil the institutional and structural power underlying privilege in the context of school and its intertwining relation with the larger society.

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