

CAT-ALOGING

ATTITUDES TO STREET CATS IN SINGAPORE, MEDIATED BY BELIEF SYSTEMS

This study explores how attitudes to street cats and animals in general are shaped by the lens of belief systems in the complex multi-faith, highly urbanised context of Singapore. Street cats in Singapore exemplify the complex entanglements of Anthropocene urbanism, subjects of biopolitical management and indices of shifting moral orders around species, space and care. How does Buddhism, Non-Religious thought, Christianity and Islam—shape and mediate the behaviours of Singaporeans towards this ubiquitous urban animal? What are the convergences and divergences at work here?

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Research Questions

How do principal belief systems in Singapore shape attitudes and perceptions towards street cats?

Secondary Questions:

1. In what ways do individuals interpret their experiences with street cats through cultural or religious lenses?
2. What common and divergent themes emerge within specific belief communities regarding street cats?
3. Are there broader anxieties or social issues tied to street cats in Singapore that intersect with belief systems?
4. To what extent are attitudes a product of religious values versus other social factors?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



METHODOLOGY



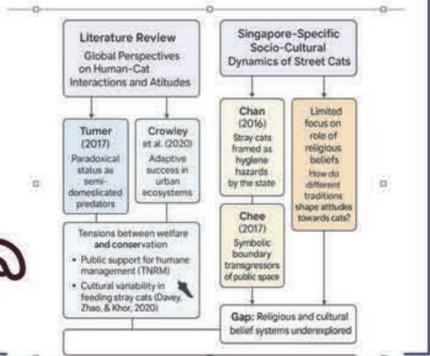
Semi-Structured Interviews - Primary Method

16 interviews - 4 per belief group (n=16)

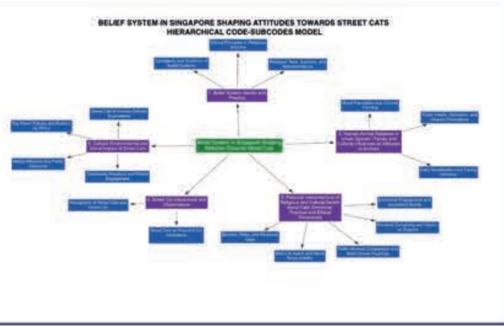
Desk research, literature review (and expert interview)

Observation Studies

LITERATURE REVIEW

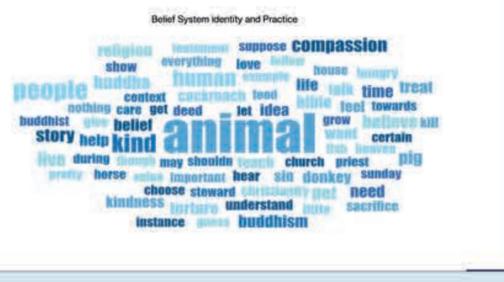
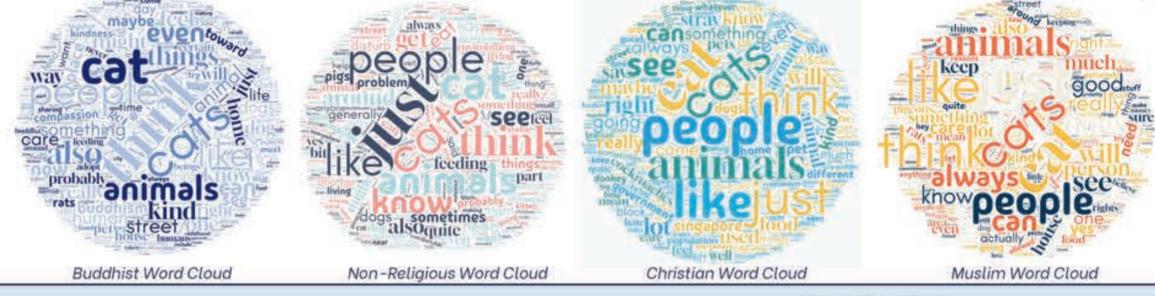
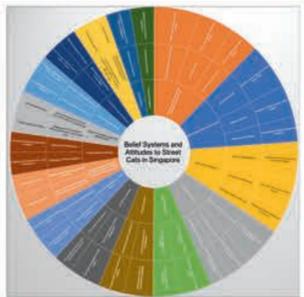
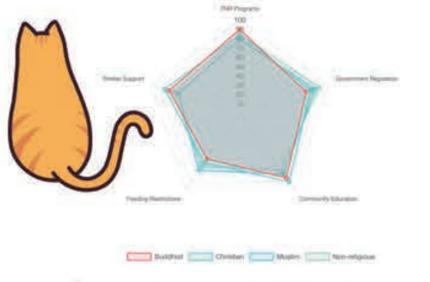
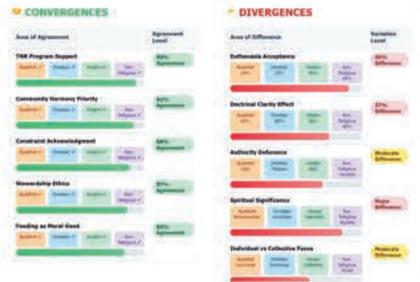


Themes and Sub Themes



Analysis

Religions like Buddhism and Islam with clear and specific doctrinal teachings about animal welfare exhibited high alignment, multi-denominational systems like Christianity and Non-Religious participants had more diversity. The Singapore environment had a moderating effect on attitudes, there was strong convergence over both Government intervention (85%) as well as the Trap, Neuter, Release, Manage (TNR) program (95%), although for a variety of reasons, mediated by the individual belief perspectives.



Conclusion

ONE UNIVERSAL AND INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION

THE ANTHROPOCENE IS ANTHROPOCENTRIC ACROSS BELIEF SYSTEMS

Anthropocene's Anthropocentrism
Religious diversity doesn't challenge it but provides multiple justifications * Multicultural tolerance can strengthen rather than weaken human-animal hierarchies * Urban sophistication creates more comprehensive animal control * Policy progress often represents more sophisticated domination rather than genuine liberation

Theoretical Frame of Anthropocentrism

1. Calarco's Binary Ontology:
 - Demonstrates how "binary human/nonhuman ontology coupled with hierarchical value system centered on human privilege" operates across Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, and secular frameworks
2. Gross's Absent Presence:
 - Shows how Singapore's street cats receive extensive attention while remaining fundamentally excluded from genuine moral consideration
3. Derrida's Critique:
 - Reveals how even sophisticated ethical systems reproduce anthropocentric exclusions through foundational assumptions

The Violence of Care

- Feeding creates dependency rather than autonomy
- TNR represents comprehensive, invasive bodily control
- Rescue mindset maintains human authority over life/death decisions depriving agency
- Emotional bonds serve human psychological needs while constraining animal freedom
- Designated feeding areas = spatial and territorial control
- Community volunteer networks = unpaid labor maintaining anthropocentric systems
- Legal recognition = human administrative control
- Policy as Anthropocentric Governance:
 - HDB cat policy = management not rights recognition
 - TNR consensus = multicultural agreement on human authority over animal reproduction
 - Microchipping = digital surveillance and tracking

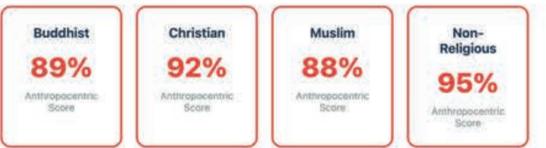
Universal Value Hierarchy

All religious groups demonstrated identical prioritization patterns, placing human concerns at apex



Universal Anthropocentrism:

- Buddhist "compassion" = instrumental karma-making using animals
- Islamic "mercy" = prophetic hierarchy, maintaining human authority
- Christian "stewardship" = explicit dominion with care obligations
- Secular "ethics" = rational management maintaining human privilege



THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC LENS

PRESENTATION

- Belief system differences and multicultural cooperation
- Successful animal welfare policies
- Compassionate care and rescue
- Progressive TNR programs

REALITY

- Universal anthropocentric convergence across all belief systems
- Sophisticated systems of anthropocentric control
- Violence masked as care, dependency creation, management paradigms
- Comprehensive bodily control and reproductive management