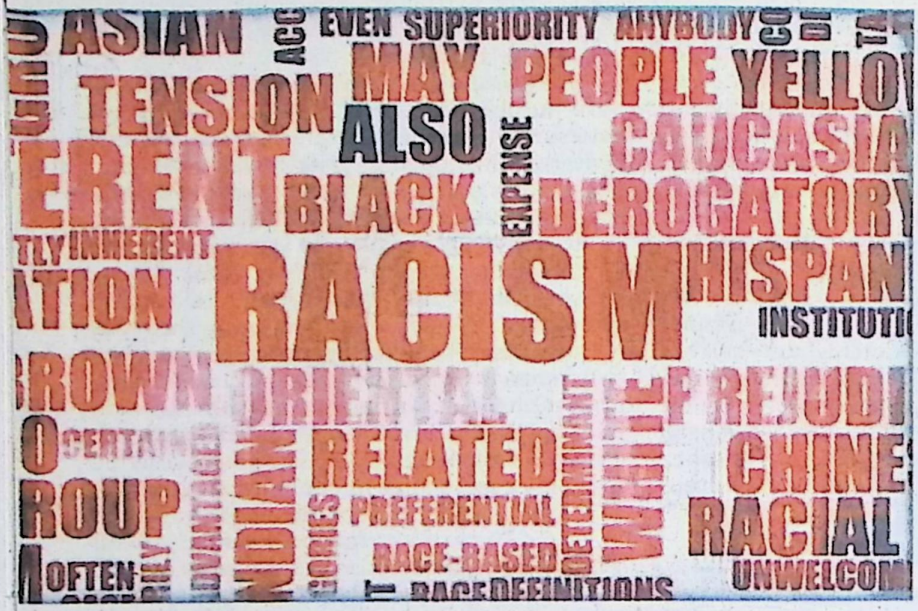


analysis. Bangladesh's crimson has turned into a dirty pink on the racial intolerance map. Another similar claim from Hong Kong has overturned their unenviable champion status too (Google 'badcanto' for more). One netizen recently dubbed Ashirul's work 'one of the most intellectually intégre takedowns of faux science in a while'.

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All this is not to say that we, Bangladeshis, have no prejudices. The WVS data shows an 11 percent increase in racial intolerance over six years. In anecdotal evidence: we venerate white expats, ridicule Biharis / Rohingyas, mock Calcatians, slight atheists, demean mullahs and perceive indigenous / tribal people as second class citizens. But more often than not, our squabbles are limited within ourselves – to the outsider, we are mostly a united, hospitable nation.

The Racial Tolerance map and subsequent episodes are interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it smacks of an imperial frame of reference that presupposes a universal concept of Racism. It's the same with most global issues like development, governance and morality. We've never attempted national-level research on our own and are, hence, unable to foster a robust, home-grown discourse.

Secondly, the Washington Posts of the world are not always right. With free-flow of information and investment in research and analysis – it's possible to invalidate uninformed, high-handed opinions of us. It is possible to positively influence global opinions and depictions without resorting to malice, creating anarchy or playing the victim. A new generation is doing just that. Lastly, let's all give credit to Max Fisher and WaPo for admitting their appalling mistake. We are, after all, quite a tolerant nation.

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The question that immediately comes to mind is: why, in a country of mostly homogeneous, centrist people, would 72 percent respondents appear racist? To understand how we got bathed in crimson, three important dimensions of the map need to be reviewed: (1) what Racism means, (2) how it was measured and (3) how robust the methodology was.

In a thorough analysis, Ashirul showed that from 17.3 percent (1996), racial intolerance had jumped to 71.7 percent (2002). He pointed out "the 54.4 percent (increase) involves tens of millions of people in a generally syncretistic society where appreciation for that heritage has arguably only increased with the younger generations". He didn't stop there. Ashirul went on to demonstrate that in the second year of survey, "yes" and "no" got swapped. What this basically means is that actually 17.7 percent (and not 71.7 percent) don't prefer different-race neighbors.

A week later, Max Fisher's post now has a rejoinder thanking Ashirul and featuring a link to his

Links
Original:
http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/05/15/a-fascinating-map-of-the-worlds-most-and-least-racially-tolerant-countries
Ashirul Amin:
http://sites.tufts.edu/inclusivecommerceblog/2013/05/16/surveys-gone-bad-when-yes-means-no/comment-page-1/#comment-2299
Siddharth Mitter: http//africasacountry.com/2013/05/18/the-cartography-of-bullshit/comment-page-2/#comment-222438
Lakshmi Chaudhary & Sandip Roy:
http//www.firstpost.com/world/painting-india-red-why-the-global-racism-map-is-wrong-789019.html
Badcanto (Hong Wrong): http//badcanto.wordpress.com/2013/05/19/hong-kong-is-not-the-most-racist-region-in-the-world/