

## **Part 3: Responses to Diversity**

# Multiculturalism

- Can refer to either
  - The **existence of multiple cultures** within a particular society (because of ethnicity or nationality)
  - **Policies that seek to promote and maintain cultural diversity** vs. policies that promote assimilation, segregation, exclusion or annihilation

# Multiculturalism

- Another perspective:
  - **Understanding** and **valuing** one's own cultural heritage and having **respect** for and **interest** in the cultural heritage of members of groups other than one's own (Blum, 1994)
  - In other words: **recognising** and **celebrating** difference; embracing diversity and **being inclusive**

# Managing Cultural Diversity

- Two main approaches:
  - **Assimilation** (“melting pot”): minority cultures expected to adopt beliefs and practices of majority culture; end goal is conformity and preservation of cultural homogeneity
  - **Integration** (a.k.a. **multiculturalism** or **pluralism**; “mosaic/salad bowl”): different cultures are preserved and allowed to coexist with each other
- Government can play an **active** or **passive** role in either approach (through use of laws and policies or absence)

# Slido Question

- Why do you think Singapore practices integration instead of assimilation?

# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

Singapore's three strategies:

1. Ensuring representation, protecting rights, and preserving culture
2. Legislation for security and public order with regard to race/religion
3. Creating common spaces and shared experiences

# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

- Ensuring representation, protecting rights, and preserving culture:
  - **Group Representative Constituencies:** ensures minority representation in Parliament with candidate quotas
  - **Amended Presidential Elections Act (2017):** ensures representation of minority groups in office of the President
  - **Presidential Council of Minority Rights:** ensures that laws passed by Parliament do not discriminate against minorities

# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

- Ensuring representation, protecting rights, and preserving culture (cont'd):
  - **Bilingual Policy:** ensures that mother tongues are preserved through compulsory 2<sup>nd</sup> language education
  - **Ethnic self-help groups:** Mendaki (1982), SINDA (1991) and CDAC (1992) address community-specific challenges with direct support from respective communities

# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

- Legislation for security and public order with regard to race/religion
  - **Penal Code** (cap. 224): sections 298 & 298A prevents deliberate “wounding of the religious or racial feelings of any person” or acts “likely to disturb the public tranquility”
  - **Sedition Act** (cap. 290): prevents promotion of “feelings of ill-will and hostility between different races or classes”
  - **Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act** (cap. 167A): prevents misuse of religious authority to cause “feelings of enmity, hatred, ill-will or hostility between different religious groups”

Penal Code (cap. 224)

**Uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious or racial feelings of any person**

**298.** Whoever, with deliberate intention of wounding the religious or racial feelings of any person, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person, or makes any gesture in the sight of that person, or places any object in the sight of that person, or causes any matter however represented to be seen or heard by that person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years, or with fine, or with both.

*[51/2007]*

*[Indian PC 1860, s. 298]*

**Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion or race and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony**

**298A.** Whoever —

- (a) by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, knowingly promotes or attempts to promote, on grounds of religion or race, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious or racial groups; or
- (b) commits any act which he knows is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious or racial groups and which disturbs or is likely to disturb the public tranquility,

shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years, or with fine, or with both.

*[51/2007]*

*[Indian PC 1860, s. 153A]*

# YouTuber Amos Yee charged, bail set at S\$20,000

By [Loke Kok Fai](#) Posted 31 Mar 2015 10:17 Updated 31 Mar 2015 23:44



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SINGAPORE: Amos Yee Pang Sang was on Tuesday (Mar 31) charged in the State Courts with multiple charges.

The 16-year-old, [who was arrested on Sunday](#), had his charges read out to him in Court, and asked for a lawyer to represent him. The three charges were under Section 298 and Section 292(1)(a) of the Penal Code, as well as Section 4(1)(b) of the Protection from Harassment Act.

## Sedition Act (cap. 290)

3.—(1) A seditious tendency is a tendency —

- (a) to bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the Government;
- (b) to excite the citizens of Singapore or the residents in Singapore to attempt to procure in Singapore, the alteration, otherwise than by lawful means, of any matter as by law established;
- (c) to bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the administration of justice in Singapore;
- (d) to raise discontent or disaffection amongst the citizens of Singapore or the residents in Singapore;
- (e) to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different races or classes of the population of Singapore.

4.—(1) Any person who —

- (a) does or attempts to do, or makes any preparation to do, or conspires with any person to do, any act which has or which would, if done, have a seditious tendency;
- (b) utters any seditious words;
- (c) prints, publishes, sells, offers for sale, distributes or reproduces any seditious publication; or
- (d) imports any seditious publication,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction for a first offence to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or to both, and, for a subsequent offence, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years; and any seditious publication found in the possession of that person or used in evidence at his trial shall be forfeited and may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of as the court directs.

SINGAPORE,  
CRIME

# Man probed for making racially insensitive remarks under 'Heather Chua' account

ASIAONE, THE NEW  
PAPER

Friday, Jan 10, 2014

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SINGAPORE - Police are investigating a 22-year-old man for making racially insensitive remarks on a social networking website using the moniker of "Heather Chua".

# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

- Other examples:
  - May 2008: 24-y.o. Chinese man charged with sedition for making racist comments on his blog about another commuter on MRT train
  - Apr 2008: Christian couple charged for distributing evangelical tracts that were offensive to Muslims to Muslim recipients
  - 3 other cases in 2005 and 2006 of bloggers being charged for posting racist or religiously offensive comments

## Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (cap. 167A)

### **Restraining orders against officials or members of religious group or institution**

**8.**—(1) The Minister may make a restraining order against any priest, monk, pastor, imam, elder, office-bearer or any other person who is in a position of authority in any religious group or institution or any member thereof for the purposes specified in subsection (2) where the Minister is satisfied that that person has committed or is attempting to commit any of the following acts:

- (a) causing feelings of enmity, hatred, ill-will or hostility between different religious groups;
- (b) carrying out activities to promote a political cause, or a cause of any political party while, or under the guise of, propagating or practising any religious belief;
- (c) carrying out subversive activities under the guise of propagating or practising any religious belief; or
- (d) exciting disaffection against the President or the Government while, or under the guise of, propagating or practising any religious belief.

(2) An order made under subsection (1) may be made against the person named therein for the following purposes:

- (a) restraining him from addressing orally or in writing any congregation, parish or group of worshippers or members of any religious group or institution on any subject, topic or theme as may be specified in the order without the prior permission of the Minister;
- (b) restraining him from printing, publishing, editing, distributing or in any way assisting or contributing to any publication produced by any religious group without the prior permission of the Minister;
- (c) restraining him from holding office in an editorial board or a committee of a publication of any religious group without the prior permission of the Minister.

NEWS



Photo: Youtube

Yen Feng

Tue, Feb 09, 2010

The Straits Times



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## ISD calls up pastor for insensitive comments

THE Government called up a Christian church leader yesterday after receiving complaints about online video clips that show him making insensitive comments about Buddhism.

The Internal Security Department yesterday met Senior Pastor Rony Tan, founder of the Lighthouse Evangelism independent church, and told him that what he did was wrong.

Last night, he posted an apology on the church's website, promising to respect other faiths and 'not ridicule them in any way, shape or fashion'.

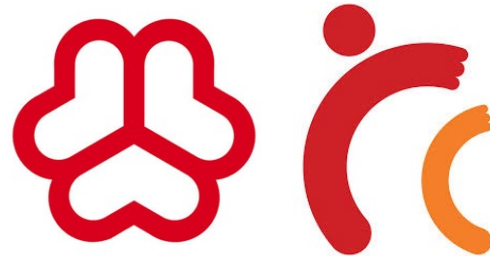
# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

- Creating common spaces and shared experiences
- **National Service** (1967): meets defence/security needs and also provides platform for S'poreans from different ethnic groups and of different SES to work together
- **Ethnic Integration Policy** (1989): prevents formation of ethnic enclaves in HDB estates with quotas on households of particular ethnicities

**17 JULY 1967**

# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

- **Grassroots organisations:** promote community bonding through events and activities via the People's Association (e.g. Citizens' Consultative Committees, Community Clubs, Community Development Councils, & Residents' Committees, etc.)



# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

- **Community Integration Fund (2009):** encourages initiatives by NGOs that promote community bonding

Criteria	Examples (but not limited to)
Provide information and resources on Singapore	Learning journeys, field trips, seminars, publications, and productions that provide information on local history, cultures as well as social norms.
Encourage social interaction between locals, immigrants and foreigners	Activities that offer platforms for people to interact and build relationships around common interests, like sports or arts.
Encourage emotional attachment to and involvement in Singapore	Projects that introduce immigrants to volunteerism opportunities and ways to connect with the wider Singaporean society.
Promote a positive mindset towards integration	Projects that deepen mutual understanding, like diversity workshops, cultural programmes and media productions.

# Addressing Sociocultural Challenges

- **Singapore Citizenship Journey:** mandatory programme that helps naturalised citizens learn more about Singapore's history, culture and values; comprises Singapore Citizenship e-Journey, Community Sharing Sessions, and Singapore Experiential Tour





# Slido Question

- What more do you think can be done to integrate Singapore's new immigrants?

# Next Lesson

- Addressing socioeconomic challenges
- Meanwhile, work on your Creative Task
  - Submit draft CT (text only) via Ivy assignment by next Fri 2/4