Governmental influences on Social Cohesion
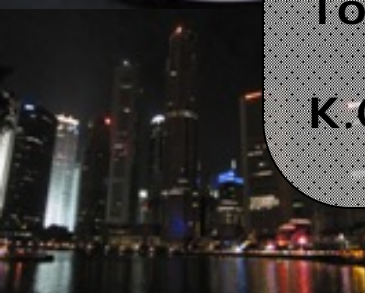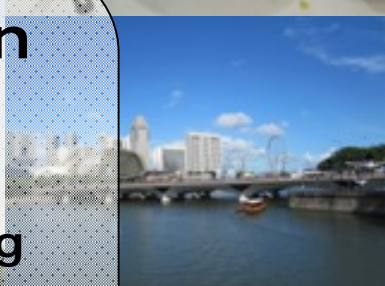
Assessing Singapore's Nation Building Tools

K.C. Lau

To my grandfather (爷爷)

I have finally finished...

Governmental influences

on Social Cohesion

Assessing Singapore's Nation Building Tools

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Thesis submitted for the completion of the Master
'Cultural Anthropology: Multiculturalism in a Comparative Perspective'

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University of Utrecht

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Preface

There is a common misperception that Cultural Anthropologists are always interested in tribes living in jungles. As Cultural Anthropologists, we regularly downplay ourselves to that role. However I reject this common perception. We always look at developing countries, and try to figure out, how "those" people experience globalization, but developed countries deserve equal attention. It was one of the reasons I choose to do research in Singapore. I really felt that we as Cultural Anthropologists should broaden our scope of the world.

So, finally after all these years, with many detours in my life, I am finishing up on my studies. As my father said: *" You are like someone trying to swim across a river, usually people swim in a straight line, but you seem to be playing in the river, never wanting to cross it"* I would like to thank my parents for their patience and support these years, without them this would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank Roy and Kristle for providing me with a place to stay the first month in Singapore. I also want to thank all my informants for their input.
Last but not least Diederick Raven for giving me the freedom to do my research in the way I wanted and for supervising me.

Utrecht, June 2010
Kwok Lau (劉國祥)

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Abbreviations

CPF	Central Provident Fund
HDB	Housing Development Board
MRT	Mass Rapid Transport
NUS	National University of Singapore
NS	National Service
PAP	People's Action Party
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
SCDF	Singapore Civil Defense Forces
SPF	Singapore Police Force

One Singapore,
One people strong and free
With One heart,
One voice
We make our history,
We are a Rainbow of a thousand colors
Lighting up the sky
We share the Singapore heartbeat
Together you and I, we are

One Singapore,
One Nation strong and free
A thousand different voices
Sing in harmony
We will stand together
Together hand in hand
As One united people
For Singapore, my homeland

My Singapore,
Our Island in the sun
This is my homeland
It's where my strength is from
A rainbow of a thousand colors
Lighting up the sky
We build a brighter future
Together you and I, we are

One Singapore,
One Nation strong and free
A thousand different voices
Sing in harmony
We will stand together
Together hand in hand
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Together hand in hand
As One united people
One united people
One united people
For Singapore, my homeland[1]

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[1] National Day Parade 2003 Theme song

1 Introduction

Singapore an island in the South Pacific Ocean, celebrates its birthday every year on the 9th of August, by having a great festival called the National Day Parade (NDP). This multiethnic, multilingual, and multireligious nation-state is on its way to its 45th birthday. Where it was once an island with citizens living in small huts and villages and part of Malaysia, it has now become independent and is considered Asia's economic hub. As we see on the lyrics of the NDP song, like many other songs, it portrays Singapore as a success story on the economic and social level. Three ethnicities varying from Chinese, Malay and Indian, forged into one harmonious union. For a nation-state so young of age, I cannot but wonder why integration between several ethnicities works in Singapore and not in European countries especially when we take a look at the struggles currently in these countries. Could the Singaporean model which deals with multiculturality be exported to Europe? In Europe many nation-states deal with the struggles of multiculturality, where in some countries it has actually led to the emergence of (extreme) right wing parties. These struggles include xenophobia, anti-Muslim behavior post 9/11, closing one's border and focusing on the own nation-state. This process can be seen as the reversal of globalization, where interconnectedness is reversed and Nation-States are slowly unplugged of the world. Many European or Western[2] countries have through migrations and the acceleration of processes of globalization (Wolf, 1982) to deal with multiculturality. Everything happens in a faster pace (Harvey, 1989). That is why it is important to look for alternatives throughout the world to deal with this matter. Globalization has not only brought an increase of pace throughout the world, but it has also created The Internet, a shared knowledge base for the world. Topics we want to learn more about can be *googled* within a couple of seconds. Why do European or Western countries not look further and see how other nation-states in Asia deal with this fact. According to Mahbubani (2008), we should consider Asia as the upcoming hemisphere. The 12% of the World, considered as the West, cannot continue dominating the 88% of the World. In his book *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Power to the East,* he criticizes the West for not being pragmatic enough, where they start missing out on chances and are slow in adapting to new situations. In a way he is right. It is my belief that one of the building stones of western societies, democracy, is leading to an unwanted side effect. If we consider globalization and interconnectedness as processes that bring things closer and on a much higher

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[2] The West does not actually exist, see Bonnet 2004.

pace than it was, we cannot be acting on the same pace the world was going. Western governments need to be more pragmatic and need to initiate action when needed. Consider Western governments with a democratic system as having several captains sailing on a journey traveling at an accelerating speed on the same ship. Whenever a choice has to be made, whether or not to anchor near an island to replenish the supplies, all need to concur or else nothing happens. After a long debate, trying to convince others, and consensus is finally reached, the opportunity to anchor near this island has already passed. This process of decision making I consider as saturated democracy, where democracy loses its effectiveness and value. Where it stands for making a choice for the benefit of the many, it loses its value because the benefits are missed out on every time. When we take a look at multicultural policies employed and enforced by governments, we see the same thing happening. Some policies are outdated or governments are not pragmatic enough to deal with the changing situations induced by globalization.

If we take a look at Singapore and its multicultural policies, we can clearly say that on paper Singapore is a good example of how other multi-ethnic nation-states can be successful through a pragmatic approach concerning multiculturality. The question we can ask ourselves is: Is this really true? Do these multicultural policies of Singapore and more importantly the strong regulations of it lead to a unified Singapore nation? Considering the given context, the following research question is formulated:

Is a strong state able to enforce social cohesion within Singapore?

Given this research question, I shall propose a research into the effects of strong state regulation in order to see if it actually contributes to the enforcement of social cohesion within Singapore. If this fact is actually true, then the same approach could be implemented in Europe. This will eventually lead to a merger of a Nation, where the scattered ethnic groups are made one. If the Nation is merged into one, then one State can easily regulate a Nation, thus leading to the disappearance of the gap between Nation and State in Europe.

But before we start we have to define two elements, namely what a strong state is and what social cohesion is. When I talk about a strong state, I consider it a government that acts where needed; a government that enforces and applies rules and is pragmatic in its approach for the benefit of the nation-state and is not afraid to use its power to achieve a certain goal. Although this may sound like dictatorship this thesis will not discuss whether or not it is. It is important to

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stipulate that enforcement of rules is of necessity. Why else would regulations be made, if they are not enforced?

The second element is social cohesion. As a term it can be seen as very vague. What is social cohesion exactly? According to the report of the communities and local government in the United Kingdom, who published a report *State of the English Cities – social cohesion*[3] in 2006, social cohesion can be defined in several terms. Their preferred approach in order to define Social Cohesion is the following. At the core they define three dimensions of their definition of social cohesion. These dimensions have a dichotomous character. It can either be positive or negative of character. First there is the social relationship, a dimension which is described as a state of order, stability and security. This dimension focuses on the acceptance of difference within and between communities. The second dimension is social inclusion; this dimension basically refers to the active involvement of disadvantages or minority groups within society. The elements where they can participate are for example, mainstream economic, political and social institution, including work, schools, media, culture and sport. Not only does it encompass the degree of civic engagement and representation among elected and appointed civic leaders, but also the people's sense of belonging to a certain place. Finally there is the dimension of social equality, which refers to the disparity of access to opportunities and needs. The needs for example can be income, health or quality of life. It represents chances for everyone to have a good quality of life, through opportunities and possibilities. These three dimensions have been placed in a pyramid of needs and results, which can be compared to Maslow's pyramid of needs[4]. Without the most basic elements, employment, basic income, health, education and housing, it is nearly impossible to have social cohesion. A level further we can see passive relations which represent tolerance, order, peace, low crimes. If these are not available people will not engage in active relationships or positive social interaction.
Once this is achieved, we can speak of social integration. There is communication and interaction between various communities. The main goal is equality, where everyone is equal. Although this model is a more complete model, I will try and derive three elements in order to measure social cohesion within Singapore.

The first element is ethnic harmony, which can be linked with passive relations. Without ethnic consensus there is no way to fully have equality throughout

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[3] http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/citiesandregions/state5 seen on 1 June 2010
[4] Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist, who wrote a paper in 1943 called *A Theory of Human Motivation*, where he came up with the idea of a pyramid of needs.

society. The second element is lingual harmony. In my vision without lingual harmony people cannot interact with each other and communication fails. Once this is achieved we can make way for the third element, religious harmony to achieve inclusion or social integration. Once these three elements are achieved, we can say social cohesion has succeeded. However, we cannot forget basic necessities, like housing, basic income, health, and education.

Now I have elaborated and stated the elements in the research question, I will discuss more about the approach in the field and the research in the next section.

1.1 Research

In the previous section I discussed the importance of this research, namely the assessment of the Singaporean Model on the matter of social cohesion. If it is effective enough, perhaps it can be exported to other nation-states. The research was conducted in Singapore in the period of December 2009 till March 2010.

1.1.1 Research population

The research population is the citizens of Singapore as a whole. Although it seems quite undoable, the island is pretty small so the area is easily coverable. I made a distinction between local populations and students at the National University of Singapore (NUS). The local population or remaining adults, usually older than the students, can be seen as the old generation. Students in average have a more global sense of the world and represent the next generation within Singapore. An exception is made for the working professionals. These are considered the future students.

1.1.2 Methodology

In general the citizens of Singapore are very suspicious of the government and refrain from being interviewed. This was a bottleneck for my research. Usually taxi drivers were willing to talk about the matter. Participant observation was therefore a key in my research, since not many people were willing to be interviewed. My Chinese background made it easier to experience Singapore life as Singaporeans would. In Singapore I received the Singaporean treatment, which differs from the tourist treatment. I had to find other methods to gather my data. I read the newspaper daily and watched television every day. Regularly I had informal talks about Singapore life with several people, however these were usually taxi drivers. The best way to have these conversations was to start how I

experience Singapore society and they would easily confirm or deny facts. On many occasions I was thought to be Singaporean, because of my ethnic background, until I said otherwise. Taxi drivers are the people who are willing to talk the most about Singapore matters. Through a friend I came in contact with many other sources. At the University I met a student from the sociology department. He introduced me to other people within NUS. The advantage of these students is that they have a good idea about their own society in retrospect with the material and theories available. They were also my input on matters I did not understand about Singapore society. Next to that there is a lot of literature already written on Singapore society that gave me the opportunity to confirm other sources to triangulate my data. The informants I had will remain anonymous, because of the political content.

1.2 Thesis layout

In this thesis, I will try to give a clear overview about the Singaporean way to deal with multiculturality and try to draw a conclusion on its effectiveness. In the next chapter I will discuss power and usage of power into the tools chosen to build a nation within Singapore. These nation building tools are considered as communalities within Singapore to create social cohesion. In addition some multicultural policies will be mentioned. In the chapter that follows, I will thoroughly discuss the effectiveness of the chosen methods to build a nation. Reviewing them with fieldwork experience and whether or not connections can be made. But I will also try to discuss the effects of these tools, where I will try to extrapolate my findings to the near future. In this way I will try to make some predictions for Singapore. I will finish with the final chapter where I will give a conclusion of my findings and thus answering the research question, whether or not the Singaporean model is as effective as portrayed.

2 The Theory: The Singaporean Model

"There have been differences between the central government and the leaders of the Singapore state government and these differences take so many forms and are of so many kinds that it has not been possible to resolve them, and so we decided that we must part company."

> Malaysia's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman

"You see the whole of my adult life I..I have believed in Malaysian merger and the unity and the unity of these two territories. You know its people connected by geography, economics, and ties of kinship. Would you mind if we stop for a while."

> Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew[5]

After the expulsion of Singapore in 1965, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew never stopped after his speech. He and the People's Action Party[6] (PAP) took matters in hands and created a Singapore nation. Its leaders found themselves in possession of a state without a nation (Hill & Lian, 1995:18). With its great diversity of ethnicities, creating a Singapore nation is not an easy task.

To create a cohesive nation, we first have to question ourselves what a nation is. Some claim it is an immutable relationship between citizens and their country (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:14). Others claim differently, but nowadays scholars prefer a more modernist approach, where the nation is, considered as a social construct, rather than deeply embedded primordial loyalties, where nationalism and nation building are synthetic processes (Alter, 1989:21) where nationalism can be manufactured.

When talking about nationalism we consider two of the foremost standing intellects in this field. Anderson (2006:9) considers a nation as an imagined political community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign; and in this nation Anderson states that a nation can have nationalism through the feeling of a horizontal comradeship. Gellner (2006:1) describes nationalism as a political principle where political and national units should be congruent. Hill & Lian (1995) add an extra dimension to it, which they call the Return to Sender concept (Hill & Lian, 1995:13). This is a process where the role between the state and citizen is repeatedly renegotiated and thus improving its definition and relation. A precondition for this process is that the citizens are conscious of themselves as citizens. If this is a fact, this will eventually lead to the basis of their negotiation, where citizens are allowed to interact with the state. Without this mechanism nation building will have no grounds to even exist. To view nationalism as social constructs we can say that nationalism is a political tool,

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[5] Broadcasted on 9 August 1965 on Singapore television
[6] The PAP and government will be used interchangeably, since the PAP is still the current government in Singapore

where the result of this tool is to affect different strata within a society to sustain a national imaginary (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:7).

Singapore leaders of the PAP needed to use power, which can be distinguished into three forms namely the economic, ideological and political power (Hill & Lian, 1995:22), to construct a nation and still do. These powers are to be exercised and cannot be possessed (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:11), therefore the repeated renegotiation with the citizens and the recognition as legitimate state are needed to change the objectives of nation-building. This is aided by goals chosen by the state which are meaningful for its citizens. Without recognition of its state by its citizens, nation building is a lost project. Eventually the state is representing its citizens and serving them. A clear example is that of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's at the National Day Rally Speech 2009:" *In the course of the next 50 years, we developed our economy, we created jobs for Singaporeans we housed and educated our population and we forged our different communities into one united people.*" [18] The establishment of legitimacy as a state is necessary for internal as well as external recognition. In this way securing internal stability is guaranteed, but also to demonstrate that a state has certain sovereignty over a specific given territory. The latter is particularly important, since the neighboring states of Singapore, like Malaysia, consist out of linguistic and religious groups which are dominant in their own nation-state. In Singapore however the Malay are the minority. This will inevitably lead to the necessity of creating a "national" identity to distinguish Singapore from its neighbors to prevent the local population of feeling more associated with the nation of origin.

In this chapter I will discuss the measures the PAP has undertaken to create a nation with only a state. First I will discuss the communalities that have been created in order to create this nation. Next I will discuss some multicultural regulations that have been enforced in Singapore so a better overview can emerge to view Singapore regulations as a whole.

2.1 Creating communality

So how did the leaders of the PAP create a nation of multilingual, multireligious and multiethnic citizens? To create a united Singapore, we turn to the *common denominators* (Eriksen, 2002). Where ethnicity in some nations can be a common denominator, as in "we are all Chinese" or other ethnicity, in the case of Singapore it is not a viable solution due to its diversity of ethnicities. Multicultural policies seem to be the most peaceful solution and were the starting point of building Singapore nation. As mentioned before the situation in Singapore is at

this moment a delicate one. Where before the separation, the Chinese in Singapore were a minority in Malaysia, they had now become the majority. To follow multicultural policies, which are based on Chinese cultural traditions, could be an unwise decision. Especially after the race riots in 1969 between the Chinese and Malay, where several hundred people were wounded due to an ethnic conflict, it is not a recommended choice. In order to create a unity between these different ethnicities, language, religion, or ethnicity, could not be a decisive factor. The government of Singapore had to create common denominators that supersede these three factors. The PAP's philosophy had then been defined into three tenets, multiracialism, pragmatism and meritocracy (Hill & Lian, 1995:62). These tenets were the basis for the pillars to construct a Singapore nation. Thus Singapore focused on four pillars, which they considered as common goals for unity. These are economic development, common education, National Service, and housing (Suryadinata, 2000:71).

2.1.1 Economic growth

Singapore is an island that does not have many resources to export, therefore other resources are needed. Hence it is dependent on other countries for business and economic growth. The outcome of this obstacle was to employ meritocracy and create a healthy working force, which proved an ideal combination with multiculturalism (Barr & Skrbiš, 2008:87). Everyone has equal rights and equal opportunities (Hill & Lian, 1995:101). However it has an internal conflict built into it. Especially when you grant equal rights that could grant rights for certain ethnic communities to be recognized that eventually leads to inequality. Yet we cannot deny that this meritocratic society has achieved tremendous economic development throughout the years.[7] To name one of the accomplishments of Singapore, we can take a look at Singapore Airlines. For a small island, Singapore Airlines has achieved multiple awards of being the best airline of the year[8]. Recognizable by its flight names starting with SQ, which stands for Service Quality, Singapore Airlines belongs to the top airlines in the world. Next to that Changi Airport is the winner of the best Airport of 2010[9]. Although winning several awards is very impressive, more and more multinationals invest in Singapore. They set up their Asian (head) office in Singapore. This helps Singapore develop economically. Economic growth is one of the most important pillars, since the Singaporeans who were already in Singapore did not have much

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[7] http://www.singstat.gov.sg/stats/themes/economy/hist/gdp2.html seen on 25 April 2010
[8] http://www.worldairlineawards.com/ seen on 1 May 2010
[9] http://www.worldairportawards.com/Awards_2010/Airport2010.htm seen on 1 May 2010

wealth. As will be seen further in this thesis, creating economic wealth is the primary drive for the PAP's legitimacy as ruling party.

2.1.2 Education

Education is a way to guide the future of Singapore in their moral values. In the *Goh report*[10] it is stated that foreign tongue risks losing traditional values or Asian values, which are based on Confucianism, a Chinese ethical and philosophical system that focuses on how to be human and how to live. Although it had resistance in the beginning, since it was "Chinese" system, it was adopted by other ethnicities. (Barr & Skrbiš, 2008:95). Confucianism does not care about doctrinal niceties, which makes it compatible to deal with religious diversity in Singapore and its focus on moral values to remain cohesive. A measure to counteract the contamination of Confucian values that will lead to deculturalization is to educate the young children about the historical origins of their culture. It is similar to creating a hybrid culture, which incorporates the strengths of both *Western* and *Asian* values. The four key values would be hard work, honesty, loyalty, and justice, which were to be upheld by Singaporeans. Meritocracy has had unintended side effects on education in Singapore creating a *kiasu* education system, which is characterized by a stratification based on race, grades and wealth; conformist thing; an obsession with performing at school. Above it all this was a system which considers private tutoring as a normal and necessary part of education. The express purpose of this report was to get rid of 'education wastage' in Singapore school systems on four phenomena. These levels were determined as failure to achieve the expected standards, prematurely leaving school, repetition of grades and unemployable school leavers. The implications of this system created the *kiasu* (afraid to fail) parent that would enforce the *kiasu* spirit among children and thus taking away their childhood. Another fact is the underground trafficking of exam papers. On some occasions the students were even told to ask their tutors if they did not understand the material in class. (Barr & Skrbiš, 2008:114). One of the common denominators is to employ a language that supersedes the three languages (Chinese, Malay and Tamil) already available in Singapore. It was decided to employ English as *lingua franca* rationalized entirely on the basis of its utility for science, technology, and commerce. The function of the own ethnic language was purely seen as an agent for the transmission of "Asian values" to counterbalance undesirable Western Values like materialism and individualism (Hill & Lian, 1995:188). It was one of the reasons why bilingualism was introduced in the Singapore educational

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[10] Report on the Ministry of Education in Singapore in 1979

system. It was seen as the key to worldly success, which fits perfectly in the mindset of the Confucian values.

2.1.3   National Service

National Service (NS) is the mandatory two years service for Singapore men. There are no class distinctions. The elite of Singapore society and the less fortunate are obligated to fulfill these two years of service. There are three options of Singaporeans when doing the NS. One can be assigned to the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), Singapore Civil Defense Forces (SCDF) or Singapore Police Forces (SPF). The purpose of NS is not only to serve your country and bolster patriotism, but also to create bonds among Singaporeans and be a catalyst for nation-building, irrespectively of the Singaporean men's race, class and education. This fact was supported by the former Prime Minister Goh Chock Tong in 1997 with his speech *"They say that in National Service, everyone – Whether Chinese, Malay, Indian or Eurasian – is of same color: a deep, sun burnt brown!"* It is also considered a good catalyst to teach the core values of the Singapore society, namely the meritocracy, equality, racial harmony and discipline to its conscripts (Ng, 2007:29). Collective punishments are not uncommon to be used as a tool. It reminds of Chinese proverb: *the enemy of my enemy is my friend.* The state is considered as the enemy for the collective punishment so it aids in the bonding. NS is a non-negotiable part of Singapore citizenship and it gives opportunity to share experiences with other citizens. This is quite necessary as Singapore is becoming more and more a cosmopolitan global city-state, where individualism and liberalism are key pillars (Ng, 2007:36).

2.1.4   Housing market

After the independence of Singapore, the principal goal of the PAP government was to provide living spaces in an era where there was a deficiency of houses and a rapidly growing infrastructure, due to the economic growth. The main reason for the PAP was to show that they were capable of showing their citizens that they had the competence to build shelter for everyone. In doing so, it aided in their legitimacy. Next to the functional use of the houses by Singaporeans the Housing Development Board[11] (HDB) estates are used to facilitate social and ethnic integration. Their primary objective was to build as many housing units as possible within a short time. One of the core activities is to distribute HDB estates

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[11] The HDB is not a government institute, but has close ties with the PAP government.

among the different ethnicities so that the existence of ethnic enclaves is not possible. The composition of an HDB flat is representative to the population. The HDB estates are cheaper and every citizen in Singapore can own an HDB house. These estates are provided at subsidized rates by the HDB. This is a good way to control the housing market. (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:94). The HDB plays an important role in nation building. Without a permanent place to live there is no place for Singaporeans to have a sense of place and belonging. With it Singaporeans would have the feeling of owning a piece of Singapore. It has also helped in helping to create a focus for Singaporeans of economic growth and survival. This is done in three ways. First of all it attracted multinational investor, because it is much cheaper for operational costs, since it is very subsidized. The second way is that HDB estates are a good way to control inflation within Singapore. Singaporeans have Central Provident Fund (CPF)[12] savings to use it to pay down payments for their HDB house. If inflation is high then the state can reduce the supply of HDB houses to control supply of financing. Third but not least, building HDB blocks provides work employment in the construction sector. This was of extreme importance in the 1960's. The advantages of HDB estates are that it gives people the opportunity to own a private house at a lower price. They can easily own such a house, because their CPF savings can be accessed only for this purpose besides when they retire of course. Having an own house will alleviate the problems we can see at rental places. People look better after their own house than they would after rental places. Another advantage is that Singaporeans are willing to work hard to pay the mortgage of their own house, thus creating a disciplined work attitude (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:99). The HDB estates project has led to fulfilling the objective of the state, to become a progressive "nation" which is committed to and realizing economic development. Not only do these HDB estates create communality among Singaporeans, it also helps with the integration of the ethnic groups. In each HDB block there is a common space or void where residents can rent the void for e.g. weddings or funerals, thus creating a common space for the ethnic groups. When I lived in an HDB block sometimes I saw children play soccer, on another day it is occupied for a Malay wedding[13]. The National Rally Day speech of 2009 by the Prime Minister confirmed the latter.[18]

These communalities are the tools the PAP choose to create a nation within Singapore. Focusing and creating common denominators are the PAP's main goals

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[12] CPF is state-operated savings and pension scheme. CPF contributors can use their savings in this fund for down payments as well as installment payments for the purchase of HDB flats.
[13] Malay wedding preparation at an HDB block seen on 5 December 2009, picture included in appendix

to ensure a united Singapore. As we have seen economic growth as a common goal, focusing on educational programs, enforcing national service, and investing in HDB houses are the tools to create these communalities. We should however not only focus on creating communalities, but also on regulating differences. In the next section we will discuss how these differences are regulated.

2.2 Regulations of multiculturalism

As we have seen the PAP has created four pillars to create communality among the ethnic groups within Singapore. However creating commonality is not enough. Some factors cannot be placed under the common denominators, therefore close regulation of these factors are of necessity to avoid conflict. Next to that it is an important part for nation building. Multinational states cannot survive unless the various national groups have an allegiance to the larger political community they cohabit (kymlicka, 1995:13).

These multicultural regulations are to accommodate the several ethnic groups. According to Kymlicka (1995) this can be done through three mechanisms, namely through self government rights, polyethnic rights[14]., special representation rights. The first way to accommodate national and ethnic difference is self government rights, where people claim political autonomy or territorial jurisdiction with as end goal to fully and freely develop their cultures for the best interest of their people. Although it is impossible to grant these groups full rights for self government, they are given limited rights for self determination. The second way to accommodate these differences is with polyethnic rights, which are aimed at helping ethnic groups and religious minorities to express themselves culturally without having a setback in economics or political institutions in the dominant society of other groups. It ensures that their culture is protected and not eliminated by the majority within a nation, with the intention to promote integration within a larger society. The last way is to give special representation rights. This is a way to accommodate in way to involve certain ethnicities or minorities in politics, thus a good way to distribute power and representation within a society. In Singapore we can see all these mechanism at work in a lot of fields. These will be highlighted an elaborated throughout this section. One could ask why we should accommodate all ethnicities; the answer can be traced back in Taylor's (1994) essay on the politics of recognition. There he says that nonrecognition or misrecognition of certain groups, for instance

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[14] Kymlicka uses polyethnic rights and not multicultural rights, since he does not want his point to be mistaken with polyethnicity within French or English institutes.

ethnic groups, can lead to conflict. People in that certain group can feel oppressed. This in return will defeat the whole purpose of nation building. That would imply that people are unwillingly changed into a certain identity. With this as a starting point, failure is imminent. In this section I will discuss multicultural regulations in religion, language and law.

2.2.1 Diversity in Religion

Religion is a main aspect of ethnicity and due to the ethnic variety of Chinese (77%), Malay (14%), and Indians (8%) in Singapore[15], there is also a variety in religions[16], which includes Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and many more. Therefore governmental influence on religion in a multicultural state is of great importance. Without acknowledging everyone's religion it is not possible to create a society in which everyone is equal. It is hence that the PAP created laws to preserve this harmony. The Religious Harmony Act[17] was passed in 1989-1990 and ensures religious harmony within Singapore. I consider this as a preemptive strike to ensure religious harmony. A good question to ask is why Singapore has to make a distinction between the available religions. The answer lies within the fact that Singapore has chosen to become a multicultural nation-state. The political reason was the sensitive matter to turn Singapore, after the expulsion of Malaysia, into a "third China". This would be quite unacceptable for Indonesia and Malaysia (Hill & Lian, 1995:37). The practical reason was that it created a good basis for ethnic relations between Malaysia and Singapore especially after the race riots. Regulating different ethnicities was the most practical reason to prevent this unfortunate event of ever happening again (Hill & Lian, 1995:99). Another fact is that Singapore aspires to be a modern nation-state. This has to the fact that the PAP wants to be a secular state (Asad. 2003:182), which was overly stipulated by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's at the National Day Rally Speech 2009: *"... this is what we have to do in Singapore. Maintain these principles: tolerance, keep religion separate from politics, keep a secular government, maintain our common space."*[18] A secular state in Singapore is one in the sense that there is no state religion whatsoever, contrary to Malaysia, where Islam is officially the state religion.

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[15] http://www.visitsingapore.com/publish/stbportal/en/home/about_singapore/demographic_and_geographical/people__language_.html seen on 6-Sept-2009

[16] http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/papers/people/c2000adr-religion.pdf seen on 12-Oct-2009

[17] http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/non_version/cgi-bin/cgi_retrieve.pl?&actno=Reved-167A&date=latest&method=part seen on 25 April 2010

[18] http://www.news.gov.sg/public/sgpc/en/media_releases/agencies/pmo/transcript/T-20090816-2.html seen on 25 April 2010

This process of secularization occurs on three levels. According to Casanova's *secularization thesis* (1994), he describes three interlocked processes towards a secular and thus a modern society. The first process is the separation of religion from politics, economy and science. The second process is to privatize religion in the own sphere. The third process is the decline in social significance of religious belief. In Singapore we can see these processes actively. Secularism is not an uncommon effect when nationalism is created. Anderson (2006) explains this phenomenon in his book. People revoke the belief of divine rule by kings and emperors, who are supposedly blessed and have the right to rule. Whenever this thought has been abandoned and populism takes over, religion is often separated from politics and it is something that reminds the people of the old situation of divine rule.

Singapore wants to be seen as a modern nation-state and wants to remain a multicultural nation-state, thus strong regulation concerning religion is necessary to maintain this quest. And so, every ethnic group is allowed to practice its own religion and that is why throughout Singapore we can see several temples of Buddhism and Hinduism, but also mosques and churches. The religious diversity in Singapore is enormous. The most important thing is the tolerance among these religions. Therefore it was not uncommon to see a Hindu temple next to a Christian church during my fieldwork there[19]. Because the government is the protagonist of all citizens, it cannot favor a certain religious group. Hence it has to regulate all religion, and according to the Confucian values it has pushed. This is generally accepted among the Singaporeans especially when Confucian values are taught in schools thus giving room for religions to coexist. All citizens are equal and discrimination on basis of religion is strongly prohibited (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:76). The government shows its power that it endorses a multicultural nation and this provides evidence of commitment towards multireligiousity as a component of multiculturalism (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:88).

Leaders of religious groups can keep religious harmony between other religious groups, although they are not to interfere with politics. Religion is seen as a great source for spiritual, moral and social well being. A very important part stipulated is the sense of putting the nation before the self. It regularly happens that religious buildings have to make place for other structures that is in need of the many; for instance for Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) stations, new housing projects and other symbols of modernization and development. (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:81).

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[19] Catholic Church next to a Hindu Temple seen on 7 January 2010. Picture included in the appendix

This fact corresponds with religious belief to take care of your close ones. There is no religion that proclaims one should be selfish and only think of one self. Although everyone is equal within Singapore, the Malays do receive special treatment. According to article 152[20], which focuses on minorities in Singapore, Malays are to receive care for the interests of the racial and religious minorities in Singapore. This is mainly because the Malays are considered the indigenous people of Singapore (Kong & Yeoh, 2003:77).

2.2.2 Diversity in Language

Forth flowing out of the previous section to regulate different religions, I will discuss lingual regulations. Within Singapore in public spaces almost everything is quad lingual. English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil are the most commonly used languages for signs.[21] Even the announcements of stations in MRT trains are presented in the four official languages[20]. There is also a great variety in radio and TV channels. Every group has one or more channels to provide them with news or entertainment in own language.[22] These channels can have English subtitles depending on the program. Some shows are the same, but translated in every language. For instance the show Crime Watch[23] is broadcasted on every channel. Each time a different spokesman is used and the show is presented in native language with English subtitles. Although English is the primary language in Singapore, a note should be made when we discuss Chinese language in Singapore. Due to the size of China, there are different kinds of Chinese people with their own dialect in mainland China. However migration has caused these Chinese people, varying from Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese and others, to settle in Singapore. They all speak their own dialect. Singapore has enforced a Speak Mandarin campaign in 1979 and has now passed its 30th anniversary. The purpose of this campaign is *".. collaborates with community partners to develop activities and programs that promote the use of Mandarin and appreciation of Chinese culture and language."* [24] It can be said that is a tool for the government to create a homogeneous Chinese community that could be categorized to make regulations easier. This is a unique element of Singapore society.

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[20] http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/non_version/cgi-bin/cgi_getdata.pl?&actno=1999-REVED-CONST&date=latest&method=part&segid=931158661-003585#931158661-003588 seen on 26 April 2010
[21] Sign at MRT station Sembawang seen on 9 December 2009. Picture included in the appendix
[22] http://www.mediacorp.sg/index.php seen on 1 May 2010
[23] http://www.spf.gov.sg/crimewatch/ seen on 1 May 2010
[24] http://www.mandarin.org.sg/2009/index-en.html seen on 14-May-2010

2.2.3   Diversity in Law

Singapore is known for the strong measures undertaken by its government when crimes are committed. Penalties are much higher than in other countries. Some penalties are considered as barbaric or outdated. Drug trafficking is punishable by law with the death penalty. Caning is still allowed as corporal punishment[25]. On 1 May 2010 a man was sentenced to 13 years in jail and six strokes of the cane for the statutory rape[26]. Another would be the penalties at MRT-stations for smoking, eating or misuse of the emergency system at MRT stations.[27] Singapore law has its roots in British law that cannot encompass all laws needed within Singapore. Islam has an own built-in law system imbedded, which accommodates the Muslims. Therefore Singaporean law based on British law cannot accommodate all ethnicities in Singapore and creating a Syariah court was inevitable[28]. In this way the PAP can accommodate all ethnicities within Singapore.

As we have seen regulating a multicultural environment in Singapore takes a lot of effort for a good result that fits in the goals of the PAP, especially in the field of religion, language and law. Managing these differences and maintaining Confucian values is a great task especially when it comes to accommodating so many different ethnicities. We have seen some fields where special regulations and laws are necessary to maintain harmony within Singapore.

2.3   Summary

After the expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia the People's Action Party (PAP) undertook strong measures to create a nation where there was none. It had a state without a nation. After the PAP's promise to help this island to prosper and actually achieved it that was the basis for its legitimacy to rule. The outcome of these four pillars would be a tool that forges the three ethnic groups as one, creating communality throughout the Singapore society on the basis of a Confucian values. The PAP introduced four pillars to create communality to bring the three ethnic groups of Chinese, Malay, and Indian together. This was necessary, because of the ethnic, lingual, and religious obstacles. These four pillars are; economic growth, education, national service and the housing market. The first pillar also aided in justifying the legitimacy of the PAP. These chosen

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[25] http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/non_version/cgi-bin/cgi_retrieve.pl?actno=REVED-224 seen on 1 May 2010
[26] http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_521439.html seen on 1 May 2010
[27] Signs at MRT station Sembawang seen on 17 December 2009. Picture included in the appendix
[28] http://app.syariahcourt.gov.sg/syariah/front-end/SYCHome_E.aspx seen on 1 May 2010

pillars can reach all the ethnicities, however some properties of ethnicities require more regulation. In this chapter I have also discussed three of these multicultural regulations on the fronts of religion, language and law.

The creation of the four pillars and the multicultural regulations the PAP uses, gives a clear view on how the PAP has influence on the Singapore society. The PAP and especially Lee Kuan Yew as the protagonist of Singapore, makes the Singapore story complete. In this chapter we have portrayed the PAP as a strong state and its nation building tools, however the question remains on what kind of effect this had on Singapore society? How effective were these implementations of tools and rules. In the next chapter I will discuss the outcome of these tools and rules on Singapore society.

3 The Theory in practice

"Religious tolerance was a key principle underpinning peace and social cohesion here, he said, which is why the Home Affairs Ministry had to act firmly when insensitive comments about Buddhism were made recently by a Christian pastor"[29]

"It is understandable for Singaporeans to be concerned about this development in our neighboring country [Malaysia] but our people have reacted with calm and composure. We must continue to do so,"[30]

These are two incidents that have happened in Singapore. The first is the discrimination against other religions, the second one is about an inter-religious tension in Malaysia that started after a High Court ruling that allowed a Catholic newspaper to use the word 'Allah' to refer to God. These incidents present the current situation in Singapore. In the previous chapter we have seen what the PAP has done for Singapore to create a nation. The question however is how effective these policies actually have been. Thus this chapter will be discussing the effect of the policies and actions undertaken by the PAP. Does the Singapore Model with its strong regulations and enforcement of rules actually lead to social cohesion in Singapore or just the opposite? First I will start with the effects of the pillar of economic growth that has led to a consuming society. After that I will discuss the effect that flows forth out of the consuming society, namely the rise of religion. I will close this chapter with a section dedicated to ethnic struggle within Singapore, where I will discuss the effects of the remaining nation building tools and the multicultural policies.

3.1 Economic growth – Consuming society

On a hot sunny day, I walk on Orchard road. I stop to quench my thirst and buy a coke at McDonald's. As I continue my walk, I am overwhelmed by all the shopping potential there. Signs with sale are flashed everywhere. A shop with its clean shiny windows and sparkling lights catches my eye. On it I see letters taller than I am written in italic, curved in a decadent style that spells Cartier. Opposite of the shop I see another shop with a different font Giorgio Armani. A family with children passes the shop, but never looks inside, while a group of girls with an ice cream look inside and try to convince each other to go in for a look. I wonder if they could afford it as I continue my walk. The tall shopping malls and the streets filled with people and shiny colorful lights create a comfortable

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[29] http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_490309.html
 Seen on 13 February 2010
[30] http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_478599.html
Seen on 17 January 2010

environment as I see a Nike shop where even I was lured in by the Sale sign to make a buy.[31]

I have already discussed economic growth being utilized as a common goal for Singaporeans. However in this section I will disclose some of the effects it has had on its society. Global capitalism has more influence on Singapore. The more economically developed Singapore becomes, the more people have to spend. Singapore today is a place where many improvements of Singapore life can be found. Especially on the material ground they are fulfilled within their needs. Almost every internationally well known fashion brand is available. Not only do we see the Gucci, Versace or Tiffany's & Co stores, we also see fast food chains scattered at multiple locations within Singapore. These 24/7 fast-food chains like, Burger King and McDonald's, which will highlight further in this chapter, are highly visible. Not to mention the coffee shops, like Starbucks and Dome that may not have the high visibility like the fast food chains, but are ever more present. Above it all, all these places have free wireless internet to attract customers. Living in a dynamic environment as Singapore, Internet is indispensible. These global marketing strategies undertaken by multinational corporations have penetrated throughout Singapore and with the current telecommunications and Information Technology infrastructure, and transport facilities, resulted in good economic development of global capitalism.

Culture of consumption or consumerism is nothing more than massive improvements in material life and the attended cultural practices. Consumerism stops being regular consumption when it is not the physical commodity one is trying to consume, but the symbolic aspects of that commodity that are being consumed. According to Featherson (1995:75) we are talking about commodity signs. These commodity signs can be adapted within a certain cultural terrain. This consumption is to supply demand for the local Singaporeans and to accommodate the tourist visitors, portraying Singapore as a Shopping Walhalla. In this section I will discuss more about Singapore society as a consuming society.

3.1.1 The emergence of consumers

Singaporeans did not become mass consumer over night; it has been a gradual process. Chua (2005) considers describing Singapore consumer society as something ungraspable and too complex to be described as a whole. Thus he chooses to explain Singaporeans transformation into consumers in three features. The first feature is globalization of commodities, the second is consumption and

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[31] A day at Orchard Road

social class and the third is consumption and domestic economy. These are the three features that determine the development of consumerism which is a significant part of Singaporeans nowadays.

The first feature is that Singapore is filled with global commodities and exports these commodities. For a commodity to be global it has to have certain elements which are among the following. Firstly, it has to be a global product that is sold everywhere, not from a specific (Western) location. Secondly, it has to be incorporated in daily life. These products have to be indigenized or else it would only be something that would be aspired to and therefore it would be constricted to a limited place. If this happens it would take away the global aspect of the commodity. Thirdly, global commodities should be reconfigured through marketing channels to let them be perceived as products of cosmopolitan culture. Therefore Singapore is transforming its commodities into cosmopolitan commodities.

Consumption and social class is the second feature, where capitalism sets in there will inevitably be social class differences. The equal distribution of improvements of material life can never be realized, because people of higher social classes have more to spend and therefore more to consume. This difference was already anticipated by the PAP and it was defended in the idea of meritocracy and the idea of race. Eventually the PAP could always say that it is one's own efforts that achieves success within Singapore, therefore success was never race related but a lack of own effort. Nevertheless consumerism does display difference, because of its visibility that accentuates the class difference through commodities.

Consumption and domestic economy is the final feature of a consumer society. Consumption is good for the domestic economy, because it can increase the demand for shopping malls or other outlets that can create more demand for a workforce. This consumption is not limited by domestic consumption but also foreign consumption. Especially when we take a look at the tourist branch within Singapore that has brought great economic development in the 1980's by Japan. Even today Orchard road is still the most appealing consumer street for locals and tourists with its many outlets and malls.

Now we have seen the requirements and features of this consumer culture we can take a look at the effects of it, namely the consequences and some observations of it.

3.1.2 The moral discourses on consumer culture

After the political independence of Singapore in 1965 it has undergone a dramatic change. It has changed from a place with lack of resources and material deprivation, to a place with material excess. This was initiated by the rapid economic growth of Singapore that started out by the economic policies initiated by multinational companies in the US, Western Europe and Japan. To lower the production costs, they were looking for countries where they could invest in and move their production platforms to in Asia. At the time Singapore profited of this labor intensive need for these corporations. And through time it has changed from a labor intensive economy to an increasingly service based economy. By encouraging higher-tech industries, pushing low wage or low tech investments off-shoe (e.g. Southern Malaysia or Indonesia), promoting Singapore capital into low wage economies, ensuring the headquarters back in Singapore, and recruiting and pursuing more skilled personnel to increase the workforce in Singapore, it has achieved this strong economic position. Eventually the growth in wages was through continuously reevaluating national education. This created a more skilled work force to meet the demands of new industries. The result of this continuous income increase had resulted into a change in consumer patterns. Now Singaporeans had more income to spend and so the consumption levels continuously rise. However this change has not been freely accepted. It has led to conflict resulting into an ideological/moral discourse. This discourse consists out of two dimensions. The first one being is the criticism against the 'excess of affluence', where not so long ago, Singaporeans were dealing with material deprivation, they now had excesses and bluntly showing these to others. The second dimension is the critique against 'westernization' or the variant 'Americanization', where Singapore is believed to be a place where consumer goods are of more significant than Confucian values taught in schools.

In the next sections I will discuss the three strands of moral/ideological discourse of consumption. (Chua, 2005:21). Firstly, there is the theme of excessive consumption or differently conceptualized as excessive materialism in society. Secondly, there is the fear of westernization or Americanization within Singapore. This is primarily accentuated by the PAP. Thirdly, the displacement of two themes where the young generations are westernized materialistic consumerists.

3.1.2.1 Excesses of consumption culture

The common conception that the whole Singapore society has turned materialistic has also had its influence on the youth. There is however a question to be asked.

The old generation Singaporeans is questioning the youth consumption pattern, because when they were young they did not have a lot and only bought things for pure survival. One could question this old generation, whether or not they would have consumed less, if they had more to spend.

National surveys have proven that the youth would save up if they wanted to buy an item they had no funds for at the moment. One could ask how much more the youth has to spend. Of course they do earn more and therefore can spend more, however when we take a look at the costs for fixed spending, like cars or houses, we can see an increase in costs. Combine higher wages with higher fixed costs we can see the spending limit is not as broad as one would think. However people do spend more at cost of household savings and consumption is expanding (Chua, 2005:30).

3.1.2.2 Westernization is bad?

Western cultural imperialism and therefore the fear that Singapore will become fully Westernized is still high on the political agenda of the PAP. Although cultural imperialism nowadays has few adherents among academics, the PAP still considers it as a real threat to utilize it in generating national sentiments and identities (Chua:2005:22). The PAP holds an anti-Western, and particularly anti-American attitude towards the US, polluting Singapore society with its commodities.

It is true that there are many American commodities within Singapore, but in comparison with other commodities, for instance in Japan, there is no difference in the quantity. It is the cultural content of these American commodities comes in along conflict with the PAP, especially the American television that propagates the Western/American 'liberal' values, based on individualism.

These values would accordingly lead to misbehavior and loss of 'traditional' Confucian values, which the PAP is so determined to preserve. Contaminating these values where ideas of criminals who are turned into folk heroes with their rap songs and promiscuity in sex and drugs are something one should be proud of.

This however is unacceptable for the PAP, since it is trying to build a nation from the moment that Singapore became independent in 1965. The spread of these Western/American values could therefore be the destroyer of the nation, where the individual is put above the benefit of the group. But not to say the least, America does serve its function within Singapore. Its effect is twofold, America is a place where democracy and freedom are key factors for its success, however its

moral decadence causes repulsion. America therefore creates mixed feelings within Singapore.

3.1.2.3 The next generation

How does the next generation deal with these influences? The youth focuses on visible commodities that ensure them of a position within Singapore society. All apparels are visible with designer names and brands flashing around. As I was walking through Singapore, I saw youth dressed fashionably and flashing their expensive phones. The problem however is that this behavior elaborates the vision of the public that globalised consumerism has actually transformed the youth into icons of consumer lifestyles that are presumably interconnected with Western/American decadence. This however is a misconception. Although the westernization/Americanization has taken place on commodities, it does not mean that Singaporean youth is participating in all the criminal activities one would associate bad behavior in America with. Singaporean youth use the American products and transform them for their own purpose. It is a sign that these commodities can be hybridized to serve the Singaporean youth. Fashion is all about individuality. So the fear of the youth being more individualized by the consumption is false.

Now the discourses have been discussed, I will take a look at the observation of the consuming culture.

3.1.3 Consuming culture observed

Dark blue, pink, light blue green and yellow squares filled with the word Funan. I am near City hall at the digital market of Singapore. A whole shopping center filled with cameras, computers, televisions, and many more things. As I am walking around in my shorts, plain t-shirt and slippers to find the camera I want to buy, I see no prices displayed. As I pass the glass cases I try to find if they sell the Canon Ixus 120. Finally I found a shop that sells it. I ask the salesman how much the camera is, he looks at me, first my face then my shirt and slippers. As he turns his head away he says:"400". I tried to make a bargain and asked him:"If I buy a memory card and an extra battery pack, do I get any discount?" he looks back, frowns and says "no". As I walk to other shops I receive the same treatment every time… I wonder if this is the Singaporean way. A week after I went back there with a Dutch friend. I was astonished by the treatment we received. When we went into a shop, a man walked towards us and smiled as he asked:" How can I help you?" As we continued that day through the hot streets of Singapore we stop to get a nice refreshing beverage at a 7 Eleven, the cashier smiles and welcomes us. I was baffled by the treatment I received. Was my Chinese appearance actually working against me?[32]

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[32] A day at City Hall, Funan DigitaLife Mall

We have discussed some consequences of consumer culture and the moral discourses around it. There are some observational studies performed in the past that can give great insight. I will discuss the effects of this shopping culture and focus on the material consumption especially in buying commodities. After that I will discuss another part of consumer culture, namely food consumption.

3.1.3.1 <u>Buying Commodities</u>

Chua (2005) describes several processes in ethnographies on consumer culture in Singapore. In one of these he claims that shopping freedom is not actual freedom. Economic growth is presumably a catalyst for gaining more economic freedom; however the paradox is that it is actually not leading to more freedom. I will elaborate this further. The freedom to shop eventually leads to social class differences surfacing. Chua does so by describing bodily behaviors of visitors. This observed behavior describes emotional effects during shopping which can elaborate the case. Firstly there is the consciousness of the visitor. One is fully aware of their role in the world. Thus it can choose to be a part of the fashionable world. Displaying oneself to be recognized by others or to have the more inconspicuous behavior, and retreating to one's own world. Secondly, there is no unrestrained freedom towards commodities on display. Two factors play a role aside of cues. How things are displayed is one factor, and the shoppers' awareness of their financial ability to afford these commodities. The second factor has an unintended side effect for the more expensive shops that works in their advantage. This awareness keeps shoppers who actually do not have these funds, to stay out of these high priced stores and enforcing the luxurious and high classed state of the store. The third thing is the self-discipline shoppers employ on their selves. Self-discipline does not sound an evident effect in this case; however it does take away ones freedom, even though it is a free choice. In addition there are many (hidden) surveillance cameras installed which supervise the whole shopping area and other panoptic methods to ensure social order within a shopping mall. Therefore these, in combination with awareness of the shopper, can strengthen self-discipline. Here we clearly see the effect it has created. Not only does economic growth lead to more money to spend on luxurious commodities, but it has created awareness during the shopping ritual. This awareness leads to self discipline; however it has also made the consumer aware of its financial position within Singapore society. In this meritocratic society where everywhere has an equal start, people are thus aware of their (economic) achievements. This is a good example how capitalism has its influences on a

society. In a society where equality is a primary foundation, horizontal movement is interfered. One can only move vertically, and this is the cause for creation and movement in social classes.

3.1.3.2 Consuming Food

Another important element of this consumer society is the consumption of food. We have already seen many fast-food chains make their entrance in Singapore; however we should not forget the indigenous food available in Singapore. With its blend of different ethnicities so is the Singapore cuisine. The Singapore Tourist Promotion Board promotes Singaporean food as one of the reasons to visit Singapore[33]. When looking or observing at the food sold in food courts or hawker centers[34] we can noticed they are ethnically codified. Food has ethnicity inscribed as a part of it (Chua, 2005:93). Codification and inscription of food can occur in two ways. Firstly, it already starts when we go receive the menu at the place or see it. The name and the pictures, already give an idea what kind of ethnic food it is. Next to that we can take a look at the person cooking it and which style of cooking is being used to prepare the food. Food is an extension of the cook's ethnicity in Singaporean food. Secondly, it appears in cooking books, where recipes are available for everyone willing to produce the food. Its codification and inscription of the ethnic food are clearly present. As used in many commercials everyone can prepare that certain *ethnic* dish if they are willing. The food is ethnically infused, detaching it from the ethnic people cooking it, but recognized as the "original" ethnic food.

In Singapore there is a focus on three ethnic foods, Chinese, Malay and Indian. However there are some famous dishes available in Singapore that do not belong to any of these groups. The *Peranakan* or *Nonya* cuisine consists out of a blend of Chinese and Malay food. This hybridization of food is not unlimited, because we cannot tell how far hybridization can take place until it loses its original form and it turns out to be something different, which cannot be categorized like *Peranakan* food. Although the ethnic foods in Singapore are still considered traditional ethnic foods a process of hybridization has occurred. This form of misrecognition leads to own essentialized versions of ethnic representation in Singapore (Chua, 2005:95).

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[33] http://www.yoursingapore.com/content/traveller/en/browse/dining.html Seen on 8 June 2010
[34] Hawker centers are the prequels of food courts. In the past every food stall was on a mobile cart. The government provided a common place where these sellers could occupy. These are called hawker centers.

One effect would be that in a lot of Singaporean cuisine *Helal*[35] food is used. One could say that it is simply a marketing strategy to provide for all customers, however limiting to certain ingredients that are *Helal*, can lead to different recipes that actually are not the original ethnic foods anymore. This form of adaptation of food to accommodate several ethnicities, especially to Muslim customers is known as the Islamization of food (Chua, 2005:107). This Islamization of food does not only occur in restaurants but is making its way towards Hawker centers as well. An example would be the Chinese Chicken Rice; although the Malay/Muslim version closely resembles the original one, it uses *helal* chicken. The latter is used in many Chinese dishes; noodles with meat are replaced with chicken. Pork and lard are replaced by *helal* chicken variants.

Hybridization of food is seen throughout Singaporean cuisines and is therefore not an uncommon phenomenon. I use the term Singaporean cuisine as it can clearly be said that the original recipe for the food is being adapted to Singaporean standards and therefore not the original ethnic food. It is something one could say only available in Singapore. Although the government still makes these clear distinctions, awareness of these dishes as "Singaporean food" could induce nationalism. To follow up on Anderson's (2006) imagined communities, imagined cuisines (Chua, 2005:113) are also very possible. They are imagined in two ways. But firstly let me explain a concept. We know that a status can be achieved or ascribed. This fact can be extrapolated to cuisines as well. One could ascribe certain foods to a realm of an imagined cuisine. For instance one could recognize food, like Chicken rice with *helal* chicken that is actually not from a certain ethnic community, yet it is ascribed to that certain community and in this case the Chinese cuisine. In the case of misrecognition one ascribes it to a certain community or cuisine. This ascription is done by Singaporeans. The other side of this imagined cuisine is the feeling that Singaporeans have a common cuisine, this actually happens when there is a correct recognition of the cuisine, recognizing that the Singaporean ethnic foods are actually hybridized forms of the ethnic foods and therefore actually Singaporean dishes. The latter can induce nationalism once awareness is reached.

3.1.3.3 McDonaldization

We have seen hybridization of ethnic foods in Singapore, but as mentioned before Singapore does not only have its ethnic foods. A lot of fast-food chains have

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[35] *Helal* is a term used in the Islamic religion. It is considered as legal or lawful, the opposite is *Haraam*, which is illegal or unlawful. It reflects on the *Syariah* that predicates Islamic law

made their way into Singapore. However I will focus on McDonald's, because it is an icon Western capitalism, liberalism, prosperity and much more. The entrance of this global food chain with its golden arches in Singapore can be seen as a threat, because it would imply imposing Western culture upon Singapore society so that cultural imperialism takes place. This is an exaggerated sense of cultural invasion (Chua, 2005:121). The PAP takes this threat seriously, however there is a love-hate relationship between them. Firstly, we have to ask ourselves if this threat is just. Secondly, the love-hate relationship between a global company and the government can be explained as followed. The government is afraid that cultural imperialism takes place and uses Westernization as a bad element that would impose Western culture upon Singapore society. It also uses it as a political tool by creating an *Other* that poses a threat to Singapore, in order to create national sentiments. However the economic growth, capital, and employment it brings along are not rejected by the government but embraced. This weakens the argument that Westernization is a bad for Singapore.

The question that can be asked is, if these claims are valid. McDonald's has its core products that are being sold around the world like the hamburger or Big Mac, however it uses a global marketing strategy that is called *glocalization*. This strategy incorporates to follow a global strategy and employ it locally using cultural themes to achieve this global strategy (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2007:202). As an example we can offer a TV advertisement of McDonald's in Singapore, where no Western cultural imperialism can be found as the central theme[36]. The setting is as following. A girl is leaving home while dialing a number, and tells the viewer that she thinks Lunar New Year is an important happening in her life. She loves the moment in the year, because it is a time in the year where everyone is rewarded for their hard work. A time where family comes traditionally comes together to celebrates it and share a meal together. However for her it is a different story. This is the time of the year where her parents are the busiest, because they run a flower shop. Therefore they are not able to enjoy this Chinese tradition. A sad mom gasping for a little rest is surprised when a McDonald's courier arrives and hands her a bag of food. Behind her the girl accepts the bag and tells her mom it is "*time for reunion*". The advertisement ends with the family sitting at a table sharing dinner.
In this advertisement no Western culture is displayed. In fact the actual opposite is happening, because only Confucian values are shown. Firstly, we see the girl really taking care of the family. Secondly, we see that the family is very hard

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[36] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5HQxDoaITU& seen on 14 May 2010

working, which fits in the meritocratic society of Singapore. Thirdly we see the importance of Confucian traditions in this advertisement portrayed as the *"Reunion Dinner"*. To the Chinese the *"Reunion Dinner"* is very important that can aid in prosperity. This dinner is to be shared on Lunar New Year's eve with family. Finally the advertisement is broadcasted in Mandarin Chinese, the official language for the Chinese people in Singapore. The general idea it gives is, that McDonald's is actively involved in Singapore society and embraces Confucian values.

The starting point of the government that Singapore society would be corrupted by Western individualistic values, because of multinational companies is unjust. We have actually seen the opposite is happening. As many multinational companies' global strategies are set on maximizing profit, the local implementation of these strategies is tactical of nature. Therefore it needs to consider cultural elements to represent their products.

Singapore government counteracts this misinterpretation Western "invasion" in a way that emphasizes on the Confucian values and on communitarianism. Where in Western countries liberal democracy is seen as something selfish, the government feels that liberal democracy will destroy all the government has worked for, namely creating a cohesion within Singapore. Communitarianism and Confucian values are deployed as a tool to create this unity. The emphasis lies on the fact that the collective is more important than the individual. The government considers all Western products and the consumption of these products through any medium as incorporating Western values, where individualistic rights and differences are valorized. This will eventually lead to the imaginary habitation of the Other's space which the government tries to avoid (Chua, 2005:137).

None of this has actually happened, but there is another side to it that could affirm the governments fear. When we consider cultural identities as constructible through ones agency (Ong, 1999:3) and we cannot say no one will ever be exposed to other cultures, Singaporeans no matter how hard the government tries can have the ability to construct an own cultural identity with elements they are exposed to. The availability of commodities and the social activity of shopping with your friends has become a life style, which could not be erased from one's mind. Some Singaporeans who embrace consumerism can set the following life goals. These five goals are called the 5 C's, namely Cash, Cars, Condominiums, Credit cards and Club memberships (Chua, 2005). These are all goals that could elevate ones social status and not so unimaginable in a meritocratic society based on Confucian values. If you work hard you can achieve all of these to elevate your

status. If people decide to construct their own identity based on consumerism, then the government's fear could be correct. I am simply pointing out that the government's fear could be partially real, but is classifying the wrong initiator. It is the will of the Singaporean.

3.1.4 Summary

Now we have seen some moral discourses on consumption culture, we have a better idea of this society. Consumption is rising and Singaporeans have more income to spend. However the claims that there should be fear among Singaporeans, as they would succumb under Westernization/Americanization are, to say the least, a bit exaggerated. This especially when we take a look at one of the largest Western multinationals in Singapore that actually in its advertisements is embracing Confucian values. It is however a good tool in the process of *Othering*. Creating a common enemy can bring the people closer, whether it actually does is a question. Therefore the PAP still uses this tool, since the nation building process never stops. Food plays an important role in Singapore life, especially the consumption of it. We have seen that there is a hybridization of cuisines in Singapore due to its diverse citizens. We do see that it can aid in nationalism once these imagined cuisines are correctly recognized and awareness is achieved. However at the end of this section we have seen that the government's fear of Westernization could be valid, when we consider Singaporeans can construct their own identity through their own agency. However the economic growth of Singapore and the emergence of consumption culture have led to an unintended side effect. Firstly, the creation and the constant movement of people in social classes, infused by capitalism. Secondly, the increase of religion that is growing vastly in Singapore. In the next section I will discuss this fact in further detail and emphasize why religious diversity must be maintained through multicultural policies in order for Singapore to survive as a nation-state.

3.2 Economic growth – the catalyst for religion

It's a rainy humid day at the National University of Singapore, I arrive at the university and see with clothes used as banner with painted text on it: "Religious Awareness Week". As I walk around I see more tables filled with students trying to talk with other students about Christianity. As they fill their tables with magazines, I see them talking with curious students. Surrounding them with good intentions and willingness they explain more about Christianity. A week later it was another religious awareness week. This time Islam was the central theme. When I walked into the library of

NUS, I saw several blackboards with things about Islam. Girls with hijabs standing next to it explain more about Islam to other students as they enter the library. When I was observing this, my Malay friend asked me:"Do you want to take a look too?".[37]

In the previous section we have seen the result of economic growth on Singapore society. Economically, Singapore has grown so much that it has created a consumer society. More and more international commodities and multinational companies are available in this island. As a result of this Singaporeans are more exposed to international commodities that have commodity signs inscribed in them. The agency of the Singapore citizen can lead to its ability to construct its own identity, with all the cultural elements available that are collected through various media. This is the common idea of a Singaporean life. One that pursues the 5 C's and actually accomplishes these, can feel lost and without a purpose. This material prosperity through consumerism can lead to increased religion. According to Barber[38] this McWorld will eventually lead to an internal conflict by people. In a McWorld where people are simply seen as consumers of products and nothing more, can lead to a self search of values and people's own identity. It is like Newton's third law of physics. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This principle can be extended in the field of social sciences. Where in this McWorld, religion plays no role and everything is about capitalism and consumption, because its actors are considered as infantile consumers, an increase of religion is an opposite force. The world is eventually and inevitably being McDonaldized (Ritzer, 1993) and this unstoppable force will lead to another unstoppable force of religious increase in McWorld. A documentary interview with a young man who attends church on Sunday clearly stipulates this fact by *"I was in a point where I had pretty much what I asked for, had a pretty house and had a job waiting for me. I had money I was doing things I loved, but still felt empty. But in the end when you have everything it doesn't mean you have everything"*[39]. After seeing the consumption society within Singapore it is not uncommon to see a religious growth[16]. One of the upcoming religions is the Christian New Creation Church led by Pastor Joseph Prince. This church has made an explosive growth, although Buddhism is still the largest religion. If religious growth is correlated with economic growth we can expect some conflicts in the future, especially when it comes to religious diversity. In Singapore the Singaporeans are expected to be tolerant towards other religions as always proclaimed at National Rally Day speeches: *"But you must accept that other groups may have different views, informed by different beliefs and you have to accept that and respect that."*[18],

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[37] Religious Awareness weeks at National University of Singapore
[38] http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/199203/barber seen on 15 May 2010
[39] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1FBjFGdBWY seen on 15 May 2010

things do go wrong and conflict occurs. In 2007 a Chinese couple distributed anti-Muslim pamphlets on Allah. They were trialed and found guilty. However they were not trialed on breaking the Religious Harmony Act, but they were trialed for sedition. The government claimed it to be an attempt on causing religious riots that would undermine the government[40]. Especially after 9/11 there are some fears about Islam. Singapore with the two largest Muslim countries in the world, Malaysia and Indonesia, as neighbors and direct an economic hub to the West, was likely to be a target for fundamentalist terrorist attacks. In January 2003, the government of Singapore released a white paper on the terrorist group *Jemaah Islamiyah*, where all the arrests of this terrorist group were made[41]. There were several plans made by this terrorist group to attack targets in Singapore. One of these targets was to plan to mount multiple truck-bombs against US-related targets. Another plan was to attack US personnel in Shuttle Bus at Yishun MRT station. After the publication of this group, one can imagine the distrust and fear among Singaporeans, especially towards their Malay citizens, of which almost everyone has a Muslim religion. Another incident was that of Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE)[42] was infiltrated by Christian movement that was strongly against homosexuality.[43] [44] The Singapore government is therefore more alert than ever to maintain this religious harmony within Singapore and put it on the agenda, to achieve their goal to build and keep a nation. As we can see by these short examples, keeping religious harmony is a difficult task.

In this section I will discuss religion in Singapore and its different aspects, where I will question religious pluralism that is known for Singapore. However I will not discuss all religions. The focus will be on Christianity and Islam, because Christianity and Islam have Holy books (Bible and Quran) that care about doctrinal niceties. Therefore a religious follower can always consult its Holy book for reference. The added difficulty is that both religions have the same God, but differ in scripture. Where for example, in the Bible Jesus is viewed as God in the Quran he is a prophet. When both books are Holy, who is right and who is wrong? I will argue that this will eventually lead to a conflict in Singapore that will spread throughout Asia.

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[40] http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/432444/1/.html seen on 15 May 2010
[41] http://www.mha.gov.sg/publication_details.aspx?pageid=35&cid=354 seen on 15 May 2010
[42] http://www.aware.org.sg/ Seen on 15 May 2010
[43] http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/425035/1/.html seen on 15 May 2010
[44] http://www.sgpolitics.net/?p=3533 seen on 15 May 2010

3.2.1 Christianity

According to Tham (Lai, 2008:3-27) a discourse on religion should consider three institutions, society, state and religion. In his article he also states that there is a rise of what he calls *new religions*. These are revitalized old traditional religions like the New Creation Church. Although the rise of religion does not encompass all religions, there is a rise in religion in Singapore, especially in the *new religions*. There are two views that could elaborate this fact and probably enforce each other. He sees it as a counter reaction on secularism and modernism in Singapore to be an emotional exhaust or catharsis for the hardworking people in this meritocratic society. In combination with the traditional religions unable to provide this catharsis, *new religions* provide a solution because they are fundamentally grounded on emotional needs. These *new religions* make great use of modern techniques to spread religion. For Christianity this would be the rise of mega churches where more multimedia technologies are used for mass on Sunday. One of these *new religions* is evangelical Christianity, which is one of the most important social movements of the last two centuries, because of its numerous missionaries to convert people into Christianity. In Singapore, the state should be more an arbiter in the field of creating and maintaining a social cohesive structure in order to create religious harmony in the society. Thus the three institutions must always and continuously renegotiate the terms of their co-existence. If however this renegotiation takes place in an inadequate pace, one could predict conflict. The role of the arbiter and in this case the state is crucial, especially when we take a look at the religious decline of Taoism[45] and the religious increase of Christianity. The reason for this is a matter of the ambiguity of Taoism. This religion leaves a lot up to the follower and mostly their interpretation of Taoism. Chinese Singaporeans who practice Taoism are struggling with the fact of their interpretation of it, thus inducing a shift in the religious landscape to a more "solid" religion where the religion is clearly stated in for instant code of conduct (Tong in Lai, 2008:28-50). One of my informants confirmed this *"you know when we Chinese go to the temple and pray; we have to give something to receive something, we pray for winning the lottery right? So we burn incense for Buddha hoping to win and make money contribution. But Jesus already loves you no matter what; you don't have to give him anything. He will care for you."* [46] Although this shift does not involve great numbers, it is remarkable that it concerns the youth of Singapore. An effect of this would be that in the coming years Singapore will become more and more a Christian

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[45] Although Buddhism is the larger religion, this is a misrepresentation of the religious divide in Singapore. Buddhism has a higher social perception than Taoism. Chinese Singaporeans are more inclined to answer to be Buddhist.
[46] Informal interview Chinese Singaporean week 6 - 2010

landscape. As Joseph Prince, believes: *"In terms of a small country with no natural resources it is amazing that God has prospered our country for this purpose, So that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can go forth from this tiny island."* [39] This is not the only effect we can notice. Although we can say that religion is ethnically linked with one and other, the shift in the religious landscape has an influence on roughly 70% of the Chinese Singaporean population. The conversion of Taoist to Christians is not the only product of modernization; it has also made a distinction in the spread of the religions. Where people in the lower social classes remain and stay more Taoist, people in the higher social classes become more Christian. It is too soon to say that we can conclude that economic prosperity will lead to the rise of Christianity, but it is not uncommon. The phenomenon does not predict peaceful religious landscapes among the Chinese either. Or does it? Popular Chinese religion in Singapore is a syncretic mix of Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and ancestor worshipping. Thus it can be said that the Chinese Singaporeans are already familiar with "blending" religions. However when there is a Holy book available that cares about doctrinal niceties it can lead to conflict, because it is one Holy book's word against the other. Nevertheless the rise of religion in combination with globalization has made many religious followers to be part of an imagined global religious community (Tan in Lai, 2008)

3.2.2 Islam

Now we have seen the Christian development and role within Singapore we will discuss the Islam in Singapore. Aside from the traditional practices of Islam there are four strands that are of importance for Muslim within Singapore at the moment. These strands are religious traditionalism, *dakwah* revivalism, religious reformism, and Sufi Spiritualism (Ibrahim in Lai, 2008). The first two strands are the most dominant within Singapore. Religious traditionalism, as the name already states, is a strand that focuses on traditional practices where one refers to the old ways of life or to remain conservative with fear of innovation. Doctrinal affirmation (*aqidah)* and not deviating from it, the meanings of Prophetic traditions, *helal* food, covering the female body parts with *hijab* or *tudung* are some of the main concerns. These traditionalist claim to practice the true Islam as it was predicated and their main objective is to spread Muslim piety at individual and public levels. The spread is not easy, for they believe it can only take place if the environment in which they promote is free of un-Islamic elements. In a secular cosmopolitan state with multi-religious and multi-ethnic citizens, spreading Muslim piety in the public sphere poses an enormous

challenge to display "correct" Islam. It is especially difficult when these traditionalists encounter Islamic youth who have been corrupted by the "yellow culture" and have drug and alcohol addictions causing Islamic erosion. It is therefore seen as an incentive by these traditionalists to promote Muslim piety to reeducate the Muslim youth and mind them of the Muslim moral values. Although we talk about traditionalism, it can be said it resembles fundamentalism. However let me state clear that fundamentalism is not something evil. It is one's choice to revert to the traditional values of a religion. This distinction between fundamentalist portrayed as terrorist fundamentalist and a fundamentalist who reverts to tradition must be made.

The second strand is the one of *dakwah* or revivalism. This strand refers to a more modern approach of Islam, where Muslims are opted to improve their lives and live towards a progressive life through an Islamic framework. Although this differs from the traditionalist point of view, it is considered and perceived by its followers as authentic. Even though frowned upon by the old generations of reformists, for the *dakwah* to be un-Islamic, they do commit the same faults. Their accommodation of Western technology and scientific achievements are not limited. The young Islamic generations practice *dakwah* Islam. This is not so hard imaginable for the younger generations are approached by other young people at universities or other meeting places for the young generations. This specific strand does not pay attention to the cultural heritage or historical context that are involved in the practice of Islam. Neither is the condition of certain practices, much to dislike of the older generation, but the young generation use their own *agency* within an Islamic framework to create a more suitable way for them as Muslim. This concept can be compared to what is actually happening with the Christian communities, where Christianity is modernized and is being transformed to contemporary standards within the Christian framework.

These are the two mainstreams of Islam within Singapore that should be considered. Although it is hard for the "outside" world to understand that these are two different streams, they are often considered part of a monolithic Islamic discourse. This ascription that all Muslims, traditionalist, revivalist, or even in worse cases terrorists, are the same post 9/11 can have malevolent consequences for Singapore society. This can take place in two ways. First of all, without enough dialogue between (non)-religious groups, assumptions are made by its perceivers. This can be a major enforcer to induce fear. Especially after 9/11 and the arrests of *Jemaah Islamiyah* fear has grown within Singapore society. Even though Singaporeans are not allowed to make comments towards

Muslims about their fear of Islam, the threat to them is real. It traditionally follows Thomas Theorem. The fear the Singaporeans experience is real and that will and does have consequences in the way they treat the Malay Singaporeans. Several Chinese Singaporeans I have spoken with expressed in confidence their fear. One Chinese man said: *"We are afraid lah, we are surrounded by Islam. Malaysia and Indonesia are our neighbors."*[47] Another Chinese man commented me on my remark that many people I have talked to, wanted the Malay to leave Singapore said: *"I cannot say like you lah, but there are some troubles, but no immediate horrible things now, not like 40 years ago[referring to the ethnic riots], so ok lah"*[48] Another Chinese Singaporean having lunch at a hawker center lowered his voice not to be heard by anyone else when he said: *"you know their book [Quran] says to kill all Christians. They are no good."*[49] The following threat assessment confirms his fear, where Orchard MRT was recently targeted for a terrorist attack.[50] The government's involvement does not help either. Singaporeans are urged to pay close attention to threats in national security at MRT and other public places. It can imprison Singapore society in the fear of terrorist attacks and inadvertently Islam. This is because inherently Islam is linked to terrorism in the mind of the Singaporeans. Without good dialogue on religion which is forbidden by the secular government, this feeling of mistrust and xenophobia exists. Even on speaker's corner, where the British variant allows all matters to be outspoken and discussed, is not a safe haven to talk about religious matters. As I was walking there, there was nothing to see, no speakers at all. I was dazzled by the sign with all the rules. One rule that caught my eye was. *The speaker does not deal with any matter, which relates directly or indirectly, to any religious belief or religion generally*[51]. This is another way that keeps the xenophobia intact. There is a common misperception because of the prohibition about talking about religion. The presumption made will eventually lead to discrimination and exclusion of the Malay or Muslim Singaporeans. An incident that happened in Singapore clearly displays the way these suppressed dislikes are present was the McDonald's lucky charm incident.[52] After a wrong interpretation of Islam by McDonald's considering the pig as *haraam*, a whole discussion broke loose. In the mind of McDonald's Muslims are all traditionalists and decided to extend the boundary of what is *helal* or *haraam.* They omitted the pig charm, which is one of the Chinese zodiacs. McDonald's thought it would offend the Malay

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[47] Informal Interview with Taxi driver to Vietnam Embassy in Week 5 - 2010
[48] Informal Interview with Taxi driver from Orchard in Week 3 - 2010
[49] Informal Interview with Taxi driver at Hawker center week 1 -2010
[50] http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_528462.html Seen on 20 May 2010
[51] Sign at Speaker's Corner on 7th January 2010. Picture included in the appendix
[52] http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_475296.html Seen on 11 January 2010

or Muslims in Singapore and replaced it with a cupid version of the charm, much to dislike of the Chinese population. They expressed their dislikes on the online forum of the S*traits Times,* with quotes like: *"then hor mineral water how? halal or not? pigs sure got pee n sure some of it will evapourate n go into the sky n then when rain collect in the mountain springs n become mineral water confirm not halal also liao[Urine] lor...likewise, rain is not halal also liao [Urine] mah...raining time in spore how?"*[52] This clearly represents the misinterpretation of *helal* and it is being ridiculed as something backwards. An Islamic poster complimented McDonald's for being customer friendly, which heated the debate. Clearly there are unresolved religious issues among Singaporeans.

3.2.3   Summary

As we have seen religion plays an important role within Singapore life. The most interesting thing we can see is the increase of Christianity within Singapore, through a shift of Taoism. Especially when we see that these Christians perceive themselves as the starting point of Christianity within Asia and Singapore serves as a hub to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is remarkable to see that the Chinese youth is becoming more Christian. As for Islam we have seen two strands of which the second strand of revivalist Islam is the more popular among Malay youth and also vastly growing. With this in mind we could predict or extrapolate that the future of Singapore will be slowly become a landscape of Christianity and dominating Islam. This is realistic since the Chinese are the majority in Singapore. In the meantime Singapore Christians surrounded by Islamic countries would send out missionaries to China and India to convert people to Christianity. If these countries are Christianized, the final battle will take place in Singapore. This will then be the final battleground for, to borrow Huntington's term and book, *the clash of civilizations.* If however this battle takes place before China and India are converted, then Singaporean Christians would lose the religious battle, because of numbers. With extra followers from China and India, it is not unimaginable that it will end up into religious battle in Asia. Although this situation sounds very extreme, it is a possible outcome, especially since the both religions have books proclaiming the one and only truth. There is a way to prevent this event of happening; Singapore should be more considerate when talking about religion and race. Without dialogue assumptions are made and people will act on their perception and assumptions on other religions and ethnicities. The xenophobia about other ethnicities will stay intact and that will lead to discrimination and mistrust. In the next section I will discuss the ethnic

harmony part of Singapore, where I will show that Singapore is not as harmonious as portrayed.

3.3 Ethnic struggle

"Euhm I would like plate nr 3 please", I could not understand what the man said, since I can't understand Mandarin Chinese. His face was surprised that I didn't respond in Mandarin Chinese in spite of me being Chinese. I found an empty spot to sit and have my lunch. Here I was sitting in the food court. I had my plate in front of me with Hainanese chicken. As I was eating and looking around, I could see other people eating, but I noticed that it was barely mixed. The Chinese people are sitting next to each other eating, as well as the Malay and the Indian people. As I was on my way to the bus stop, I realized that I didn't see any other mixing even on the streets. It didn't just stay there. At the university canteen I saw the same. There were barely people mixing. They all seem to stick to each other.[53]
The other night I decided to go out. I was in the Dbl O club. The music was playing loud through the speakers. There was a separate entrance guarded by a bouncer, which could only be accessed from the outside. I asked my friend:" Hey there are a lot of Malay people here, where are the Chinese people?" He responded:" Yeah that's true. The Chinese are usually sitting upstairs, they don't come down here as much, and the Malay don't go up. Usually we sit upstairs" Is this the Singapore social cohesion?[54]

In Singapore there are three main ethnic groups as mentioned before, namely the Chinese, Malay and Indian. However in this section I deliberately focus on the ethnic relations between the Chinese Singaporeans and the Malay Singaporeans because of its importance. First of all ethnicity in the context of Singapore is linked with religious beliefs. Although this is a general representation, it still serves its purpose. As we have seen in the previous section, the absence of dialogue between different ethnicities can lead to assumptions that lead to xenophobia and discrimination. In this section I will discuss the ethnic harmony within Singapore between the Chinese Singaporeans and the Malay Singaporeans. It will become clear that these two groups may seem to live in harmony on this tiny island, but this is just an image created by the PAP through the adoption of strict rules. A simple rule that predicates one should not discuss about other ethnicities in a bad sense. So for the outsider of Singapore, this seems like a harmonious society. The real truth which lies beneath is less harmonious. I will discuss the nation building tools, HDB and National Service in Singapore to prove my point that the government is biased. This is not a surprise. After the expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia, the PAP may have found it necessary to counteract

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[53] A day at the food court
[54] Clubbing in Clarke Quay

this expulsion to show their worth towards Malaysia. It can be interlinked in Bonnett's (2004) book *The idea of the West*. In his book he states a counteraction of Asian countries to prove themselves towards the *imagined West*. The West excluded Asia as they would have been seen as backward. As a reaction, industrialization within Asia took place to prove they were worthy to be part of this West they imagined. The unintended byproduct of this expulsion of Singapore has led to the same result as it did in Asia. Singapore just like Asia has become the most important competitor. It seems like Singapore has tried to prove itself by growing economically to show Malaysia what they have done, that is the expulsion of an important ally they could have used for economic growth. This grudge has affected policies concerning nation building in Singapore.

3.3.1   National Service revised

As we have previously seen, National Service in Singapore is being used as a nation building tool. Here there is a division in Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), Singapore Civil Defense Forces (SCDF) and Singapore Police Force (SPF)[55]. However the distribution of Singaporeans is not according to the representation of the ethnic groups within Singapore. In the SAF, many Malay Singaporeans are excluded. They are sent to do their mandatory NS in Civil Defense or Police Force. Where in the past Malays were even excluded from NS they are now excluded from SAF (Barr, M.D. & Skrbiš Z, 2008:218). Not all Malays are excluded from the SAF; those who are assigned to SAF have lower functions within the army. They are sent to be drivers or cooks in the Army and Airforce (Barr, M.D. & Skrbiš Z, 2008:230). The reason for this was publicly admitted by Lee Kuan Yew. They question the Malay men's loyalty when it comes to war with Muslim countries (Barr, M.D. & Skrbiš Z, 2008:218). However the local version of this matter was spoken out during my drive to Changi Airport, there I heard that the Singapore government is afraid for a *coup d'état* if a Malay Singaporean is a high officer in the SAF. It was said that, that's why there is no Malay general in SAF. This fact can be contradicted by the fact that in June 2009 the first Malay was made general in SAF[56]. However the story is still perceived as real. Another fact was that no Malay can ever fill the position of Minister of Defense for the same reasons. Till today there has not been a Malay Minister of Defense in Singapore.[57] Malays in Singapore have in fact almost completely been excluded from

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[55] http://www.ns.sg/ seen on 20 May 2010
[56] http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking+News/Singapore/Story/STIStory_395444.html seen on 20 May 2010
[57] Informal interview with Taxi Driver to Changi Airport Week 1 - 2010

responsible and sensitive positions in the military, of course with the only exception of the Malay general that was appointed last year.

Another flaw of NS is the fact that women are not allowed to do NS. With the current population this would omit more than 50% of the population[58]. How can we say that this tool is to be an effective one? We could imagine if the NS was a period of two years with limited leave. When I lived at Normanton Park in Queenstown[59] across the army base, I regularly saw army people go on leave to visit their parents. If the PAP is trying to build a cohesive social structure that holds together the people. How can we be sure that it happens when they are sent into society on every leave they have. That would result in the contamination of the whole process. The society is not fully harmonized yet and there are a lot of younger people who have not been through NS. When I observed them on several occasions, they were happy to get home. Because of the mandatory part of national service, it portrays an image to that one should bear with it for the next two years. A Chinese Singaporean NUS student said to me: *" Once you are out of the army, you barely have contact with them [fellow NS-ers]"*[60]

3.3.2 HDB blocks revised

The HDB blocks are government houses with a great divide in social class and ethnicity. The flats represent the population of Singapore. The purpose of these flats was to prevent ethnic enclaves and hoping that the people in these flats would interact with each other. The latter never took place. People are so concerned with work that they do not have time for social activities to know your neighbors. During my visit to the National Museum of Singapore, I have seen the project of HDB blocks. Some Singaporeans like it better in the village they used to live in. Citizens were opted to pick up their HDB apartment key. If however they did not pick up the key after three reminders, a moving crew would come to their home and gather the belongings of the citizen and "help" them move.[61] People I have spoken agreed it was better in the villages as one said*: " When we lived in villages, you could leave your door unlocked and come back and nothing was gone. Living in a village is much better, now we all have metal gates to protect ourselves"*. When I asked him from whom, he laughed: *"we don't know lah hahaha, I told you there is no trust, we don't trust our neighbors."*[62] When I lived in an HDB block the first month I experienced the same. When I was

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[58] http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/reference/yos09/excel/topic3.xls seen on 20 May 2010
[59] Former Officers complex now built into condominiums for civilians.
[60] Informal interview with a Chinese student at NUS week 1 - 2010
[61] Video interview at the National Museum of Singapore
[62] Informal interview with Taxi driver coming back from Changi Airport Week 5 - 2010

standing in the elevator and upon leaving it, it is customary for me to say goodbye. However when I did so I was frowned upon, receiving a reaction that was to be called feared. The same experience happened to me when I was sitting in the shuttle bus at NUS and the girl next to me sneezed. I said: *"Bless you."* She frowned upon me and moved a seat farther away from me. During a lecture from Dr Goh at the National University of Singapore, this matter was brought up as well. The whole class laughed, whilst these facts were mentioned. Singaporeans are strangers to each other in the HDB blocks; *" With the HDB everyone is a stranger, it is like living in a hotel! My friend who I know for 3 years was living up stairs from me and I didn't even know!"[63]*

Not only are residents in the HDB's strangers to each other, but the idea of preventing ethnic enclaves has not been successful. Regularly I saw posters for activities around the HDB blocks. For instance *Tai Chi* classes or *Silat*[64] classes that were arranged consisted out of one ethnic group. I did not see any Chinese or Indian Singaporeans attending the *Silat* class. I have rarely seen youth of every ethnicity playing soccer together in the common spaces of an HDB block. The project of the Housing Development Board and the PAP to create a common space and unity within Singapore through HDB apartments did not have the intended result. The PAP has actually been accused of using the HDB as political tool, which could cause this resistance. Kong & Yeoh, 2003:106)

3.3.3 Education revised

The unintended *Kiasu* effect through education has led to different outcome of society. First of all it has lead to society with a workforce that is focused on performing. Working hard will get you somewhere in this meritocratic society. This had led that no one has time for social things, only about making money and securing ones economic position. Especially the Chinese Singaporeans have this work ethos. One night I was attending a show of Kumar[65], he joked about the stereotypes of all three ethnicities in Singapore. The Chinese Singaporeans have the image to only be concerned about economic prosperity; *"Government made us like this, hard working no time for social things"[62]* This was confirmed by another Chinese Singaporean *"First you have some friends, but when you have an own family you are only concerned about surviving in Singapore, all you do here is get bills for this bills for that bills and more bills."* [63] The Singaporeans

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[63] Informal interview with Taxi driver going to Changi Airport week 8 - 2010
[64] Martial arts from the islands of Indonesia.
[65] Kumar is a Singaporean comedian who dresses as a drag queen. Kumar regularly speaks about the sensitive issues within Singapore in his shows
http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=4263016&page=1

experience a huge workload in order to survive. This idea was already imprinted during their educational period.

On the matter of language, we can truly say that it has helped Singapore prosper and help to communicate to each other for all ethnicities. Although English is the official language, it is used and pronounced in a manner that is unique for Singaporeans. This English which is commonly known as Singlish (Singapore English) uses Malay and several Chinese phrases. For instance, the Singaporeans would add the "lah" at the end of almost every sentence they finish. This word is not uncommon for Chinese people to use. Another thing is that some Chinese phrases are literary translated. An example would be the term *TCSS*[66].I was very surprised, because I had no clue what this actually meant. Then the Chinese Singaporean explained it and said that this meant:*"Talk Cock Sing Song"*, which is an expression unknown in English, however if translated literally in Chinese the phrase does exist. Singlish is hybrid version of English and the Singaporean ethnic languages. However it is imagined as the 'real' English. We have already discussed the *imagined cuisines*, now we see that it has also taken place on the lingual field an *imagined language*.

English is the primary language in Singapore, in almost all cases we can still see that all the languages are used[67]. Even the national rally day speech is in the official languages of Singapore[18]. It is understandable to do so, because the old generations might not be as well educated as the young generation of Singapore. Maybe this is not needed anymore in the future and English will be used as the only language. Several students I spoke with considered English as their only language.

Although in all pre-university schools an ethnic language is taught, it has had a disadvantage for the Chinese population in Singapore. The PAP enforced the 'speak Mandarin' campaign that has led to Mandarin Chinese as the only Chinese language taught in schools. However this has led to an estrangement of one's children. One time in the MRT, I observed a Chinese man watching his children. He asked them in Cantonese Chinese to sit down, yet his children responded in Mandarin Chinese. Could this be cultural loss? The facial expression of the man was to say the least disappointed. A Chinese man mentioned this in the context that he considered Singapore to turn into China*:" We cannot talk about things without PAP looking for us, it looks more and more like China even Mandarin Chinese we must learn"*[57] It is even common to address people with Chinese

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[66] Mentioned during a dinner on Week 52 - 2009
[67] Visit at the National Museum of Singapore, where the oath was written in 4 languages. Pictures included in the appendix.

appearance in Mandarin. This incident happened to me numerous times, and I was frowned upon if I responded in English.

3.3.4 Multicultural policies

In the previous chapter we have also seen how diversity in religion, language and law is regulated. These regulations are aimed to service different ethnicities. Every ethnicity can have the right to do what they want to express their culture as long as others are not bothered by it. In this way the government is providing group rights to the communities, providing all the necessities to survive in Singapore. However these policies do not bring the communities together. On the contrary they push them farther away. Dialogue is prohibited, where people turn to their own community *"I don't care, they [Malay] do their business we [Chinese] do our business ok lah…"*. It seems like the result of these policies are turning Singapore in to a plural society instead of multicultural society. People are given special rights to perform their cultural activities, next to that the meritocratic society keeps citizens more confined in their own lives: :*"I don't care lah about racial issues. I think government is most important if they provide economic security"*[48] or *"how can I think of that? In these times I am only busy concerning on my own survival. I don't think about races. The government only cares, but we don't"*[68] We clearly see that the government stresses out the social harmony within Singapore, yet people do not put many concerns on it. Meritocracy dominates the feelings to socialize with others.[62] This will not state that no interaction occurs. It has come to my attention that there is voluntary segregation within Singapore. People are given the choice to go to for instance Muslim schools and choose to be part of this community. As an example I was sitting in the MRT on my way to Changi Airport, where I saw a girl wearing the *hijab* of her school. When she got off of the MRT she poked at a girl from her school that fell asleep. This girl was not a friend of hers; she only attended the same school.[69] This is an example how Singaporeans actually involve in communities. When we take a look at the workforce we do see similar things. The workforce in a company, except the large chains (McDonald's, Burger King etc) is mono ethnic. If extra employment is needed, I regularly see in newspapers that help is needed, however they would add *Chinese speaking preferred* or any other language. In this way they 'legally' avoid discrimination towards other ethnic groups, while helping their own community. Another similar case happened to me

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[68] Informal Interview with Taxi driver from Aljunied in Week 3 - 2010
[69] Observation MRT to Changi Airport in week 7 - 2010

when I was looking for a new place to stay[70] I saw several advertisements where it stated *"no Indian / no Malay"* or *"Malay only"*. There is a duality here in Singapore. Meritocracy and multicultural regulations have led to a society where people take care of the communities, as it would through the Confucian values taught, but also an individualistic one, because of meritocracy. A clear example would be something commonly known in the MRT of Singapore for Singaporeans. People are sitting in the reserved seats who are not supposed to be in those seats, pretend to sleep when people, pregnant women or the elderly, are in need of a seat. Although this has not happened every time, I have seen people give up their seats. However the numbers are very limited.

Because of the multicultural regulations food has to be separated. As previously mentioned there are food stalls in food courts. However not everything is *helal* therefore plates and cutlery have to be cleaned separately. Plates and cutlery that have been in contact with *haraam* food is not allowed. At the National University of Singapore there are separate places to put your plates and cutlery when you had food from the Muslim stall. These plates have a different kind of color. The result would be that people, who eat Muslim food, would end up clearing their trays at the same place. Next to that when going to a food court or hawker center, you see a clear distinction between the stalls. It has come to my attention that the "minority" stalls are always together. The Muslim and Indian foods are secluded at the end. One could say this is a coincidence; however I have noticed it almost throughout Singapore. The logical result of this placement would be that the minority groups would sit next to each other. It would be absurd to get food at a stall and eat farther away from it. Is this an inconspicuous way to segregate the minorities in one group?

Multicultural regulations have actually given community rights to ethnicities in Singapore, however it is so strongly regulated that it has given birth to a plural society. That in combination with meritocracy has created a society that is more concerned about the individual. So ironically all the hard work the government has done to keep Singapore an Asian country, has eventually led to the opposite and created Westernized Singaporean Culture (Chua, 2005:20).

3.3.5 Ethnic harmony

As mentioned before I will only focus on the two major ethnic groups; the Chinese and the Malay Singaporeans. The history of these two groups and work ethics are causing struggle. The Singaporean society is not harmonious, it only

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[70] www.easyroommate.com.sg seen on several occasions

take an incident to reveal the true feelings among that society. In the case of the McDonald's Pig Charm we can find quotes on the forum of the Strait Times like:*"Why are they only sensitive to the muslims. This shows that they are not sensitive to the Chinese and other races. The 12 zodiac signs are related to the Chinese, why are they obliging the muslims for chinese customs. For sure I am not eating the junk food and will encourage my children and friends the same."*[52] or by ridiculing Muslims:*" Take out the Dog too... Muslims don't like dogs and Muslims form a big part of Singapore's population. So Mcdonalds, please be sensitive to Muslims and take out the Dog Doreamon too... hopefully do it by next week. Thank you. :D"*[52] I have noticed much friction between the Malay groups and the Chinese groups. One informant said:*" We always marry with each other, Chinese and Chinese, Chinese and Indian maybe, but Chinese Malay very few, because we have to become Muslim, very hard to mix ...Chinese are always thinking for long term. The Malay always spends money. If today they have money, then it's gone. They will start working again if they need money. So they don't always work. We work very hard for the future, they live one day and then see. It's not our way so very hard, we do our things they do their thing"*[62] He clearly states the incompatibility of the two ethnicities, because of the Chinese work ethos and backwardness towards it. This idea was enforced by an article about helping Malay Children study, as they needed a different approach to learn things. The amazing thing is that is has been publicly announced[71]. Another incident was the whole issue that at Singapore Idols another Malay Singaporean won the contest. This has caused much publicly annoyance, because it was the third time in a row. With quotes like:*"Next season call it singapura idol."*[72] A lot of Chinese Singaporeans felt that the Malay Singaporeans were favored. Not only are the Malay being discriminated by their fellow citizens. They have also been publicly discriminated by the PAP government. (Barr & Skrbiš, 2008:11).

There is another struggle in Singapore, namely the mainland Chinese people and the Singaporeans. These Chinese would come to Singapore to "steal" all the jobs. This is untrue. Through educational policies of the PAP the Singapore workforce is higher educated, leaving the low-level jobs unfilled. This causes friction within Singapore society. They see it as an invasion. Although the Chinese Singaporeans are ethnic Chinese as well, they do differentiate themselves. During my visit at Kumar's show this matter was discussed as well. There is certain discrimination towards the mainland Chinese:*"oh my god they shower once a day and they*

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[71] http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_471865.html
Seen on 29 December 2009
[72] http://www.trevvy.com/sgboyx/index.php?showtopic=31796 seen on 4 January 2010

stink, the other day I was in the elevator with three of them and I smelled them, disgusting! I thought it was me because I am Indian and we also smell, but aarrgh I almost passed out."[73]

Some see the arrival of mainland Chinese as a good thing to counteract the fertility rate of the Malay Singaporeans[74]: *"We have to import Chinese workers, or else in 10 or 15 years we will turn into Malaysia again. In this way we can keep the balance!"*[49]

It seems like it is a choice between the Malay Singaporeans or the mainland Chinese.

3.3.6   Summary

As we have seen there is a lot of ethnic struggle within Singapore. In this section we discussed the four pillars to create common denominators in Singapore. Yet these seem to be ineffective when it comes to create a nation. The economic growth as a pillar has brought unintended side effect. The effort of the PAP to create communality by focusing on communitarian Confucian values in the educational pillar is clearly overrun by the economic growth the PAP has brought Singapore. This fact is not a surprise. Providing economic growth is the main form of legitimacy of the Singaporeans to accept the PAP as ruling party, however this growth has lead to the rise of a consumption culture within Singapore, where it revolves around the 5 C's (Cash, Cars, Condominiums, Credit cards and Club memberships). A result of this consuming culture is give rise to an increase of religion. Especially when we take at the shifts in the religious landscapes, we see that Christianity is uprising. Singapore youth sways away from the syncratic religions and become more Christian or revivalist Muslim. As I stated, I believe in the future this will lead to the *Clash of Civilizations* and a religious battle will take place in Asia. Singapore is far from the social cohesion the government portrays it to be. As it seems out of the report on the Youth in Singapore (Ho & Chia, 2006), which portrays a better image, with more intercultural interaction and a social harmony, it can be said it is misrepresenting the real Singapore. When presenting this report to students at NUS and discussing my experience, they laughed and said: *"haha, yes because it is from the government youth DOT sg!"*[75]. We have also seen that that the other pillars and multicultural policies in Singapore do not have the desired effect. Strong regulation and the targeted economic growth have lead to a change in Singapore. It is changing it from a multicultural society to a plural society. How this happened is easy to answer. The PAP underestimates the

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[73] Kumar's show at Orchard Towers week 3 - 2010
[74] http://www.singstat.gov.sg/stats/themes/people/popinbrief2009.pdf seen on 23 May 2010
[75] Lunch at National University of Singapore Week 3 - 2010

power of *agency* of Singaporeans. This leaves citizens to operate within the boundary of the rules given by the government to live their life in Singapore. Eventually the process of nation building requires the corporation of the citizen. In the next chapter I will give an overview of my findings and answer the research question.

4 Conclusion

This thesis has been about nation building in Singapore and the feasibility of the government's nation building tools. If the outcome of these tools proved to be effective, then it would open a door to incorporate these tools in European countries for nation building and create a harmonious society. Nowadays these European countries have to cope with extreme right wing parties emerging. For instance as of 10 June 2010 the Partij van de Vrijheid (PVV)[76] is the third largest party in the Netherlands.[77] These tools could probably be implemented in these countries to create social cohesion in the form of harmony on lingual, ethnic and religious level. Let us turn back to the original research question:

Is a strong state able to enforce social cohesion within Singapore?

Firstly, I have discussed how Singapore's government the PAP regulates the four pillars of communality, being economic growth, education, national service and the housing market. The first pillar gave the PAP its legitimacy to be the ruling party. It kept its promise when Singapore was still underdeveloped. The PAP lifted Singaporeans from poverty and created a prosperous Singapore. Next to these communalities, the strong measures concerning multiculturality in Singapore had to be maintained and enforced by the government to maintain the social cohesion, especially after the race riots in 1969. Thus strong regulations had to be enforced to regulate diversity in religion, language and law.

Secondly I have shown that these regulations and the enforcement of these regulations have not worked for social cohesion in Singapore. The main basis for the legitimacy of the PAP as a ruling party, namely economic growth has led to the opposite of the intended outcome. It has created an economic difference and therefore creating social class differences for one. The other effect is that it had inadvertently led to the creation of a consumer society, which in turn has caused an increase of religion in Singapore. The main religions I have put my focus on are Christianity and Islam. The struggles between these two religions are explained in the Holy books they possess. Where they both started out of the same position, they now had taken their own turns. Next to these religious struggles I have shown that it leads to ethnic struggles as well, as the nation building tools that are employed by the PAP are not as effective as they would

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[76] Dutch right wing party in parliament
[77] http://nos.nl/artikel/163227-prognose-vvd-en-pvda-even-groot.html seen on 10 June 2010

seem on paper. These struggles have created a plural society instead of a multicultural society.

So is this project of nation building by Singapore a flawed way of dealing with multiculturality to create social cohesion? In a way it is flawed, but there are some good qualities that come forth out of this thesis. The power of imagination, not in the sense of conjuring things, is of great importance to create social cohesion. The government's continuous emphasis on the distinction of the three ethnic communities of Chinese, Malay and Indian people in Singapore, forces the Singaporeans to be aware of this difference. Confucianism as basis for Singapore society has also brought a secular playing field for all religions to be accommodated in. I have shown when this awareness of being Singaporean emerges and Anderson's *imagined community* is acknowledged by the people, as it did with food and language, it brings the goal of creating nationalism a bit closer. Through dialogue, which is now forbidden, xenophobia can be reduced and people are willing to accept the cultural diversities in Singapore with interaction between other communities.

So not only does the enforcement of government policies help in creating social cohesion, the acceptance, the willingness and most of all the awareness of the Singaporean is of equal importance. Government and its citizens have a symbiotic relationship. They need each other to survive, and therefore I turn to one of the famous quotes in the world by John F. Kennedy*:"Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country"*[78]

In the end creating a nation by the PAP is creating a ball of sand with your hand, when you take a walk on a sunny day at the beach. Grab some sand that is lying around, small grains, bigger grains, some broken shells and close your fist to make a ball. Squeeze to hard and it will slip through your fingers creating a plural society. Squeeze to soft and it will never become a whole and you still have different grains in your hand. The right amount of squeeze is needed for a certain time and when you open your hand there is your ball of sand.

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[78] John F. Kennedy inaugural speech 20 January 1961

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5 Appendix

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5.2 Pictures

Malay wedding preparation in at an HDB block

Church next to a Hindu temple

Sign at MRT station Sembawang in four languages

Value Life. Act Responsibly

生命要珍惜．行为要负责
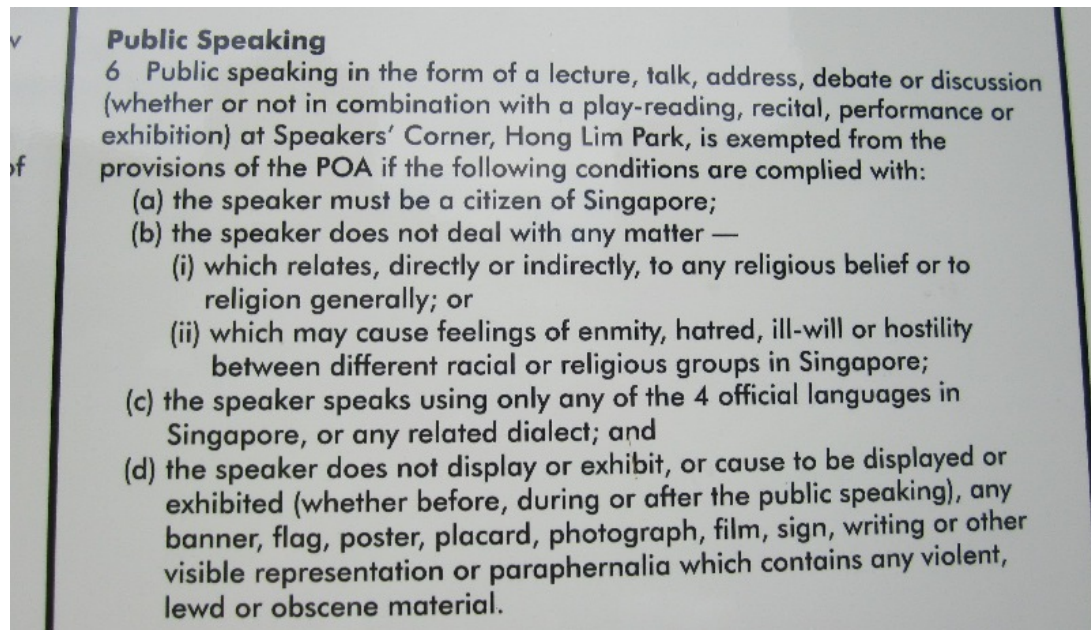
Hargai Nyawa. Bertindak Dengan
Tanggungjawab

உயிர் மதிப்புமிக்கது. பொறுப்புடன்
நடந்து கொள்ளவும்

Signs at MRT station Sembawang about misuse

Sign at speaker's corner

Public Speaking

6 Public speaking in the form of a lecture, talk, address, debate or discussion (whether or not in combination with a play-reading, recital, performance or exhibition) at Speakers' Corner, Hong Lim Park, is exempted from the provisions of the POA if the following conditions are complied with:

(a) the speaker must be a citizen of Singapore;

(b) the speaker does not deal with any matter —

(i) which relates, directly or indirectly, to any religious belief or to religion generally; or

(ii) which may cause feelings of enmity, hatred, ill-will or hostility between different racial or religious groups in Singapore;

(c) the speaker speaks using only any of the 4 official languages in Singapore, or any related dialect; and

(d) the speaker does not display or exhibit, or cause to be displayed or exhibited (whether before, during or after the public speaking), any banner, flag, poster, placard, photograph, film, sign, writing or other visible representation or paraphernalia which contains any violent, lewd or obscene material.

Oath at National Museum of Singapore in several languages

We, the citizens of Singapore,
pledge ourselves as one united people,
regardless of race, language or religion,
to build a democratic society
based on justice and equality
so as to achieve happiness, prosperity and
progress for our nation.

信约

我们是新加坡公民，誓愿不分种族、言语、宗教，团结一致，建设公正平等的民主社会，并为实现国家之幸福，繁荣与进步，共同努力。

Kami, warganegara Singapura,
sebagai rakyat yang bersatu padu,
tidak kira apa bangsa, bahasa, atau ugama,
berikrar untuk membina suatu masyarakat yang demokratik,
berdasarkan kepada keadilan dan persamaan
untuk mencapai kebahagiaan,
kemakmuran dan kemajuan bagi negara Kami.

சிங்கப்பூர் குடிமக்களாகிய நாம் இனம், மொழி, மதம்
ஆகிய வேற்றுமைகளை மறந்து ஒன்றுபட்டு, நம் நாடு
மகிழ்ச்சி, வளம், முன்னேற்றம் ஆகியவற்றை அடையும்
வண்ணம் சமத்துவத்தையும், நீதியையும்
அடிப்படையாக கொண்ட ஜனநாயக
சமுதாயத்தை உருவாக்குவதற்கு
உறுதி மேற்கொள்வோமாக.