**Anton Casey**

**About the incident**

British wealth advisor, Anton Casey, set off a firestorm by publicly insulted Singaporeans who have to rely on public transport. Casey, who holds permanent residency in Singapore, which he calls his adopted home, claims to have received death threats after he referred to public transport users as "poor people" in a social network post. In that post, he had expressed relief that his Porsche was out of the workshop and he could wash off the "stench of public transport". The post went viral, sparking anger online from Singaporeans. He has since left his job and returned to Australia.

Law and Foreign Affairs Minister K Shanmugam deplored the online posts of British wealth manager Anton Casey, calling them "deeply offensive, wrong, and unacceptable".

Singapore - with a modern public transport system - is one of the world's wealthiest societies, with a per capita gross domestic product of S$65,048

**Social media**

* Characteristics of the media

-Pervasive

-Large reach, vast audience

-Information is disseminated at great speed

-Democratisation of access to content production

-Exacerbates and reflects a level of uncertainty that exists in public opinion around the issues of migration, taking advantage of that uncertainty by artificially elevating the topic to crisis-like levels to sell newspapers

* This incident reiterates the need to reassess one’s social media habits
* Misconception that social media sites are one’s own personal space

- Does having the privacy setting allow one to freely make insensitive remarks on social media sites?

* Role of social media in complicating fault lines

-Rich-poor divide

-Racial divide

**Parallel cases**

* Amy Cheong

-NTUC assistant director sacked after posting a profanity-laced post slamming Malay void deck weddings on her personal FB account, which went viral the next morning, sparking a furious backlash on social media. Cheong was forced to leave the country after having received online death threats

* Heather Chua

-A man disguised as a woman became notorious on the Internet for making derogatory comments on Facebook, taking aim at people living in Housing and Development Board flats, Institute of Technical Education (ITE) graduates and those of different races, among others. The police said spreading racially or religiously offensive material may be seen as inciting enmity between the races or religions.

**Extent of punishment (shaming culture)**

* Was the punishment disproportionate to the crime?

- Casey’s private information was revealed online . This resulted in online death threats that forced him to leave the country. Such information included where he worked, who his bosses were, e-mail address for the public to spam his mail boxes and even his home address.

-Similarly, Amy Cheong might have been racist but did she deserve to be hounded online to the point of leaving the country?

-"He has attempted to apologise to Singaporeans. But some feel that the manner of his apology showed a lack of sincerity. And I think there is some basis for thinking that," Shanmugam said. "At the same time, I hope that Singaporeans will not attack or flame his family because of his actions," the minister said. "We, Singaporeans, can be bigger than that."

-Is the shaming culture an effective form of punishment?

-Is this a reflection of Singapore society? Could this reinforce the idea that Singaporeans lack empathy?

**Online community as a watchdog**

* Personal information about Casey was revealed by SMRT Ltd (Feedback), a Facebook page that despite its name is not linked to the official SMRT Ltd, is quickly assuming the role of an online vigilante for Singapore
* Many praised SMRT Ltd (Feedback) for their CSI-like crime scene investigation forensic abilities, ferreting out personal information. It's not entirely clear when the whole "CSI" culture started in Singapore. Elsewhere, notably in China, online vigilante justice has been common for years. A phenomenon called "human flesh search engine" or renrou sousuo, enlists the help of netizens to find and share information about offenders.

The idea is that all your information online can be made public if one digs hard enough, and there exists within the virtual world a "CSI" community which is prepared to name and shame you if in their judgment, you offend others. The online naming and shaming culture has been propagated and abetted by social media and citizenship journalism websites.

**Immigration**

* Divide between locals and foreigners
* Xenophobia

-Two-way thing; locals’ perception of foreigners as well as immigrants’ perception of locals

**Globalisation**

Casey has also grabbed headlines in his home country. British newspapers, including The Guardian, The Independent, The Telegraph and the London Evening Standard, have picked up the story of how Mr Anton Casey's comments had caused a furore in Singapore.