Section 377A: Moving beyond slippery slopes to a rational consensus

**Take a hard look at the science on homosexuality, and monitor public opinion closely, before deciding whether to repeal law criminalising gay sex**

**Constitutionality?**

In the Constitution and penal code of Singapore, there is no clear-cut answer on the constitutionality of Section 377A. The Constitution provides a general framework, but the specifics are left to Parliament and the courts to determine. The penal code contains the specific offence, but the constitutionality of that offence is not addressed. The courts have not weighed in on the constitutionality of Section 377A, leaving it to Parliament and the public to decide its fate.

**Changing minds?**

Changing public opinion is a significant challenge. Singapore is a multi-religious society, and even those who do not share the faith of the majority may have cultural or personal ties that make them resistant to change. The courts – can and should take public views into account. Parliament – unlike the courts – can and should take public views into account. The challenge facing the revision of the Constitution and make up of the Constitution is to ensure that it is inclusive and reflective of the values and morals of the country. But there are significant differences between the immediate issue of de-criminalisation and possible future amendments.

**Fear mongering**

Fear mongering, otherwise slippery slopes – the broad agenda to normalise same-sex relationships. Much depends on how we frame the issue. For some, this is about protecting children from being harmed. For others, it is about preserving traditional values and morals. The courts have already rejected the argument that the Constitution is not inclusive and reflective of the values and morals of the country. But fear remains a potent weapon.

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In another lab, Mr Rick van den Goor, the university’s professor of agriculture and production, is working on new approaches. We invested in the University of California – which is in its centenary year – to grow crops more efficiently, and in the University of Minnesota – which is in its 100th year – to develop new technologies.

The challenge facing the research and development of new technologies is to ensure that they are inclusive and reflective of the values and morals of the country. But the courts – can and should take public views into account. Parliament – unlike the courts – can and should take public views into account. The challenge facing the revision of the Constitution and make up of the Constitution is to ensure that it is inclusive and reflective of the values and morals of the country. But there are significant differences between the immediate issue of de-criminalisation and possible future amendments.

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