

THE SINGAPORE MODEL

Vision - Mission - Challenges



By Emeritus Professor Dr BR Duncan

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The noun “democracy” the adjective “democratic” and
adjective and adverb “democratically” appear in quotation
marks in the body of the essay.

However, when the words are used directly from a cited
source, they do not appear between quote marks.

The reasons will unfold in the text.

Some grammar within reported speech is edited.

Summary

By adopting the theme of evolution, alluding to Shakespeare's play, *Twelfth Night* (all is not as it appears to be) and by contrasting myths and sentimentality with facts, this academic essay draws on history and researched evidence to introduce the story of modern-day Singapore. After acknowledging the part played by 19th-century British colonialism at the hands of Sir Stamford Raffles, the writer concentrates on aspects of the world-renowned but controversial leadership of Lee Kuan Yew – the maverick entrepreneur and intrepeneur¹ whose creative genius changed a primal swamp into a world-class city-state. The crucial roles of Lee's concept of governance, economic policies, meritocracy and interpretation of democracy also link with his determination to eradicate aeons of corruption. While extolling the unique role played by Lee, the writer critically evaluates his legacy against the post-foundation era challenges of poverty, racism and social unrest. These factors, plus the legal limitations placed on public criticisms of the PAP² government, weaken the influence of the otherwise advantageous ballot box, resulting in a hobbled electorate. Therefore, the author posits that Lee's initial focus on the project, its infrastructure and national survival, resulted in a trade-off that widened the gap between the wealthy and the have-nots. The prevalence of encroaching poverty and the political importance of the shackled opposition groups cannot bypass draconian legislation that, among other things, prevents public criticisms of the PAP government. Nevertheless, and paradoxically, a simple comparison with two other countries suggests that Lee's overall leadership stood head and shoulders above most governments in South East Asia at the time. The final chapter (The "Black Box") reflects the writer's opinions about the challenges now facing those who form the country's power base and suggests that the sustainability of the Raffles – Lee legacy is on a political and social knife edge. Suggestions by the author identify possible changes to accommodate the justified needs and wants of Singaporean's within a "democratic" but liberally enriched environment. The essay infers that the implementation of radical changes in governance would best prevent the likelihood of further civil strife. Quo Vadis, Singapore – not everything is as it appears to be?

¹ Individuals who take responsibility for changes and innovation within a business (Pinchot,1984).

² People's Action Party

Statement and Questions

This paper is not a dissertation or a thesis i.e. a response to a central question, proposition or proving a hypothesis. Contrariwise, this is an academic essay addressing aspects of the topic: The Singapore Model: Vision, Mission and Challenge.

Incidentally, Singaporean growth does not require “proof” but its unique progress does invite answers to – What, Why, When, How, Where and Who. The text will hopefully resurrect some of Rudyard Kipling’s “Six Honest Serving-Men”.

rather

I keep six honest serving-men
 (They taught me all I knew);
 Their names are What and Why and When
 And How and Where and Who.
 I send them over land and sea,
 I send them east and west;
 But after they have worked for me,
 I give them all a rest.

I let them rest from nine till five,
 For I am busy then,
 As well as breakfast, lunch, and tea,
 For they are hungry men.
 But different folk have different views;
 I know a person small-
 She keeps ten million serving-men,
 Who get no rest at all!

She sends 'em abroad on her own affairs,
 From the second she opens her eyes-
 One million Hows, two million Wheres,
 And seven million Whys!

Research from the Archives of correlating history and cited trustworthy studies helped structure the text. The thematic evolutionary background and the historical verification of the facts from sourced scholarship added authority to the content and could encourage readers to think outside their box and perhaps even motivate some to discard preconceptions - and reflect again on all the people of Singapore! It might be that the substance of the literary “Black Box” (Chapter 9) will change viewpoints and offer a better-informed take on this “warts and all” understanding of Singaporean history.

Regardless, Singapore’s Lion still roars – so, let us listen rather than just hear, and critically assess and then ponder – Quo Vadis, Singapore?

Hopefully, this paper will engender discussion and contribute more qualitative content to the essential components of political ideology and to the myriad of filtered strains that define “democracy”. The subsequent outcomes from rational thinking and discussion might enrich development, growth and the availability of equal opportunities for any wanting to reach their attainable pinnacle of success. Clarions calls echo the universal need to improve the warp and woof of sustainable and equitable governance – and a more egalitarian society. Avanti! Let us claw back some lessons from The Singapore Lion.

In addition, our journey will require us also to consider whether the essential components of Singaporean political and social life encourage “free expression³”. Ah, that is the question! Therefore, Kipling’s Six Honest-Serving Men might provide a framework for a greater understanding of the researched facts about the young city-state viz. its governance, money and poverty, trade and industry and corruption. So, let us concentrate on the nuggets of knowledge that authoritative sources bring to the table.

As an aside, personal growth is also about exploring beyond a limited tunnel vision created by unsupportable impressions. However, discarding and then replacing unfounded hearsay with facts will enable serious thinkers to embrace the liberating realities of a better-informed store of knowledge. Therefore, a balanced understanding of the undeniable and admirable aura of Singapore – another example of South East Asian greatness - could open up new areas of thought.

³ Media freedom, free speech and the right of association

In addition, Singapore's evolution epitomises adapting home-grown governance that deserves critical attention.

Governance and challenge

Singaporean governance reflects a business model that continues to meet the needs and wants of the majority of its population. However, will the people's responses to the changing 21st-century social, political and international environment require a fresh look at some of the brittle and fading fibres within the government's "democratically" woven cloak"?

The Product Life Cycle

The continued evidence of the sustainability of Singapore must depend on the government's response to the inroads of the ubiquitous Product Life Cycle vis-à-vis the fabric of Singaporean society. A successful, consumer-driven business models must continually adjust to the needs and wants of the majority of customers.

For example, will governance continue to address the changing needs and wants of:

- Diverse communities?
- Racism, jingoism and xenophobia needs?
- Expanding health needs?
- Critical information needs?
- Self-actualisation needs?
- Political aspiration needs?
- Poverty needs?

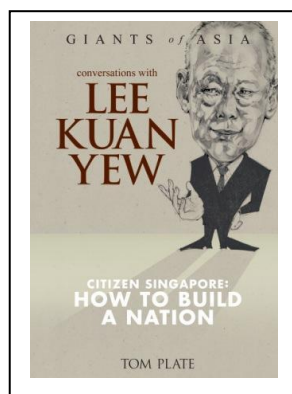
Points to ponder

- Will the Singaporean Government remain in touch with their "market"?
- How will the Singaporean Government stay in contact with its "market"?
- The sun set on the British and other empires; governments change, so ...
- Structures alone do not guarantee sustainability, therefore ...
- What about succession?

“After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb.”

(Nelson Mandela)

Nevertheless, readers might like to bear in mind the general theme of Shakespeare’s fascinating play, *Twelfth Night* where illusion and deception affirmed the truism that “everything is what it appears to be”. Perhaps the twists and turns in this essay might be of interest – and, of course, the information huddled inside the literary “black box” in Chapter 9 invite reflection on Singapore’s journey – so, Quo Vadis Singapore?



“Freedom of the press, freedom of the news media, must be subordinated to the overriding needs of the integrity of Singapore, and to the primacy of purpose of an elected government” (Lee, 2010).

"The final verdict will not be in the obituaries. The final verdict will be when the PhD students dig out the archives, read my old papers, assess what my enemies have said, sift the evidence and seek the truth. I'm not saying that everything I did was right, but everything I did was for an honourable purpose." (Ibid, Lee, 2010)

“I am often accused of interfering in the private lives of citizens. Yes, if I did not, had I not done that, we wouldn't be here today (Ibid, Lee 2010).

Foreword

Singapore - Facts and Figures from Pre-history to the 21st-century

Pre-history

While a thorough knowledge of pre-history Singapore is yet unclear, recent archaeological digs in Laos pinpoint the time of the arrival of Homo sapiens to South East Asia at around 51,000 – 46,000 years ago. Skeletal evidence and scattered artefacts verify the existence of humankind’s common ancestors inhabiting mainland Southeast Asia – and their subsequent migrations to the island now called, Singapore.

People from Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, East Timor, the Philippines, Mongolia, China, Papua, Thailand and Vietnam journeyed across marshland, forested plains and rocky areas to live. Subsequent trade routes linked a network of nations across land and sea. The importing of products and exporting of goods rewarded and enriched human enterprise that also contributed to feeding the needs and wants of other parts of the world (HUGO, 2009) – foreshadowing, the Singaporean trading nexus that would become a prime source of its revenue in the future.

Ancient history

Greco-Roman history also offers a fascinating glimpse into the writings of Ptolemy (90 – 168). This astrologer, astronomer, mathematician and geographer mentions “Sabana” (Hack, 2006) – today’s Singapore. In addition, a third-century account of the country explains the etymology of its name as a transliteration from the Malay word, ‘Pulau Ujong’, meaning ‘island at the end [of the Malay Peninsula]’.



The diamond-shaped island that is home to Singapore city-state abuts the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula - some 85 miles north of the Equator, and comprises some 60 small islets; the main island occupies around 18 square miles of this combined area.

The Johor Strait – a sea-filled channel now crossed by a road and rail causeway that is more than half a mile long, separates Singapore Island from the

Malaysian Peninsula to the north. The southern limits of the state line the Singapore Strait, where outliers of the Riau-Lingga Archipelago that form a part of Indonesia, extend to within 10 miles of the main island.

Modern history

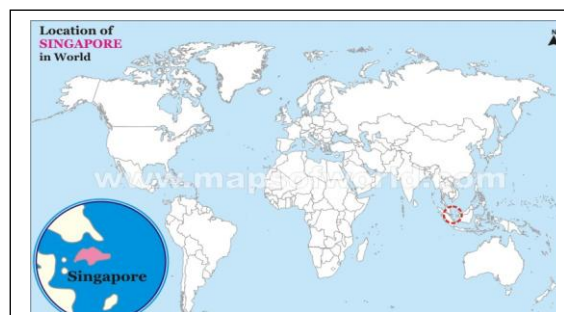
The city of Singapore, in the southern portion of the main island, has, over the last 50-odd years, developed, expanded and urbanised. The sprawl of the population has blurred the pre-1960's distinction between urban, suburban and countryside areas. Built-up areas now cover a large part of the city-state.

The older parts of the city, now substantially refurbished, line the Singapore River. The traditional Malay kampong settlements - consisting of a declining number of stilt houses along the shoreline – now exist only in some rural areas. The once-common Chinese shop-houses, where occupants lived above a commercial establishment, are disappearing (as in many countries around the world). Change is endemic, is it not.

The growing population and the government's expanding housing and business development initiatives have slotted in with its Housing and Development Board's (HDB) relocating of trade and residential districts – the latter providing housing for people with mixed incomes.

About four-fifths of Singapore's population of some 5.6 million inhabitants⁴ now reside in high-rise high-density HDB built flats located in housing estates and new towns. The residents of the relatively new and widely spread developments, Woodlands, Tampines, and Yishun, enjoy easy access to employment and shopping centres.

Singapore also operates the largest port in Southeast Asia - one of the busiest in the world. The city-state owes its growth and prosperity to its advantageous position outside the southern extremity of the Malay Peninsula, where it dominates the Strait of



⁴ In comparison, the 2016 population of London is around 8.6 million (WPR, 2016); Lagos is around 21 million (WPR, 2016) and Cape Town has around 4 million inhabitants (WPR, 2016).

Malacca, which connects the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea.

Before the British colonised Singapore, only about a thousand inhabitants occupied the Sultanate-ruled island. The indigenous tribesmen and some Chinese merchants had engaged in trade, but piracy sailed the seas!

After forcing the British to return all of the East Indies trading ports to the entrepreneurial clutches of Holland (1815), the Dutch ships and ports held almost complete power over the East Indies. Britain, however, competing against the Dutch for trade decided to colonise Singapore – a tactically advantageous move. So in 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles signed a treaty with the ruler, Sultan Hussein of Johor, and founded the colony of Singapore. Thus, under the colonising umbrella of British imperialism, Singaporean nationhood began a new evolutionary journey – and the British colonial office smiled all the way to the bank!

The penultimate step, before independence in 1965, saw Singapore (under the leadership of Lee Keon Yew – the PAP Party leader) joining the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. However, after two years the country disaffiliated to become an independent state on August 9, 1965. The political, economic and cultural differences gave rise to the rift but, as history records, this painful break for Lee was nevertheless an advantageous gain for Singapore.

Edited from sources: Leinbach (2016) and Scriba (2011)

Singapore – Credentials

Official name	Xinjiapo Gongheguo (Mandarin Chinese); Republik Singapura (Malay); Cingkappur Kudiyarasu (Tamil); Republic of Singapore (English)
Form of government	Unitary multiparty republic with one legislative house (Parliament)
Head of state	President: Tony Tan
Head of government	Prime Minister: Lee Hsien Loong
Capital	Singapore
Official languages	Mandarin Chinese; Malay; Tamil; English
Official religion	none
Monetary unit	Singapore Dollar (S\$)
Population	(2014 est.) 5,487,000 Collapse
Total area (square miles)	276.5
Total area (square km)	716
Urban-rural population	Urban: (2013) 100% Rural: (2013) 0%
Life expectancy at birth	Male: (2012) 79.9 years Female: (2011) 84.5 years
Literacy: percentage of population age 15 and over literate	Male: (2008) 97.4% Female: (2008) 91.6%
GNI per capita (U.S.\$)	(2013) 54,040

Source: Britannica (2016)

Singapore's ranking on the list of 2016 Quality City Rankings – globally = 26thSingapore's ranking on the list of 2016 Quality Asian City Rankings = 1st

Source: Mercer (2016)

Introduction

Sorting the wheat from the chaff

There are as many creation stories about how the world began and developed, as there are nations and tribes – a fascinating collage of folklore. Anecdotal legends provide information about the origins of the universe and the earth⁵. However, while beliefs pop in and out of this paper, this essay is not about sentimental mythology. Consequentially, some facts might not provide a palliative reading journey for some readers. Notwithstanding, this article includes factual information about the genesis and development of a country – Singapore, the Lion City.

Progressive, intelligent, investigative space exploration continues to open up the hitherto unknown vistas enshrining previously uncharted galaxies, freshly discovered planets and the mystifying enigma of black holes. Such modern-day discoveries provide indomitable bulwarks against the shallowness of traditional fables, suppositions and ignorance that stimulate and foster emotionally structured and therefore fallible beliefs. However, there are no myths about Singapore’s place in the world! In contrast to many countries, the island “democracy” has advanced, extended and developed its habitat and left a credible trail of easily verified heritage – as sketched in this essay. Understandably, the jury is still out on its opinion of how Singapore’s past will affect decisions about, and actions in the future – perhaps, then, the contents of the literary “Black Box⁶” might be of interest. For example, have the building blocks become stumbling blocks?



Interestingly, the significance of the Singaporean Lion icon flows from mythology, and some readers might find their research of the Sanskrit story fascinating – especially as it links with the many other fables (Sherstyuk, 2012). However, there is a clear line between truthful Singaporean history and passionately flavoured perceptions devoid of substantiating facts.

Of course, the exciting, systematic studies of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world, using science, archaeology, observation and

⁵ A population of some 7.4. billion inhabitants (WPC, 2016)

⁶ See Chapter 9

experiment, continue to disentangle childlike beliefs. Therefore, to best contextualise Singapore's evolution let us refresh our understanding of Darwinian progression – this essay's theme.

- The first strains of bacteria (prokaryotes)
- To the first cells with organelles (eukaryotes)
- To multicellular organisms (algae, seaweeds, sponges, jellyfish, worms)
- To fish
- To plants and fungi
- To the first amphibians, insects and reptiles and plants (that became coal)
- To the first extinction of all life forms (the Permian-Triassic extinction)
- To the dinosaurs
- To the first mammals and birds
- To the first flowering plants
- To the second mass extinction (Cretaceous – Tertiary Extinction: bye bye dinosaurs!)
- To the first modern mammals
- To the first grasses
- To the first hominids (Australopithecus)
- To first Homo sapiens – the first Neanderthals
- To humans who colonised the land masses
- To the extinction of the Neanderthals and Homo sapiens reigns supreme as hunter-gatherer
- To the beginning of agriculture and, ultimately into the 21st-century

Indeed, The Lion City's staged evolution leapt forward from the strains of bacteria to hunter-gatherer to technological innovator – a Darwinian-principled progression that understands the past to live in the present - that is the epic, modern day Singapore.

Analogous to evolution's journey, Singapore's often tumultuous and turbulent history gives further relevance of Herbert Spencer's observation - "the survival of the fittest". So, what is the government's next step to ensure the survival of the nation?

In summary, this essay affirms that Singapore's development is not a myth but a reality of societal evolution. This pen picture outlines Singaporean creativity and illustrates why this relatively small island-nation⁷ continues to stand tall and proud amongst other advancing 21st century nations. However, "Tomorrow" is another day, is it not.

To understand is to know

Singapore's 20th-century leadership exemplifies a disciplined and adapting mission that gave head, hands and feet to the energising of its founding vision.

This essay purposefully skims over civil, religious and international conflicts, foreign occupation, global crises and war. Each destructive hiatus has, thus far, failed to obstruct the triumphant rise of what is now known as the Lion City - a symbol of king-like development and creativity. However, the "Black Box" containing information of interest might offer yet another interpretation of Singaporean history?

History, like love, is so apt to surround her heroes with an atmosphere of imaginary brightness.

James Fennimore Cooper, the Last of the Mohicans

Self-advancement and determination

The literary sources affirm that in contrast to many citizens in ex-colonial nations, Singaporeans have staked their inalienable right to patriotic self-determination. For example, most citizens (unlike some other ex-colonial countries and people) have not used the puerile "blame the colonist" defence mechanism to deflect justified criticisms of endemic national corruption, rationalise religious extremism, excuse sub-standard education, defend incompetent leadership and the mediocrity of the sloth-like, laissez-fair approach to responsibility. In contrast, the governance of the Lion City has identified and challenged the undisputed, notoriously efficient and omnipresent undercover assassins holed up in any nation viz. passing blame and

⁷ Around 5.5 million inhabitants

irresponsibility. In general, Singaporeans, in response to visionary governance objectives, have rolled up their sleeves and dug in.

Furthermore, both history and the literature confirm that Singaporeans have not escaped from their patriotic commitment, social obligations and personal accountability by reverting to infantile, self-pitying whimpers of “poor me”.

Interestingly, the country’s people have not advanced under a blanketed patchwork of ad hoc portrayals of insipid versions of “democracy”. Lee’s governance⁸ did not materialise from rigged elections and cash-stuffed brown envelopes that subsequently allowed the more powerful and influential to wallow in the lap of self-serving oversight – leading to a plethora of “Entitlement Agenda” submissions that then travelled to developed nations.

Singapore’s governance did not notch up progress by living off the proceeds of the emotionally structured begging bowl – or rather the colander that drains away the concerns of donors⁹. The Lion City did not develop from a lattice charity basket filled with undeserved but well-intentioned foreign aid while still engaging in a catalogue of destructively corrupt practices that stymied national development.

Dynamic progress also resulted from The Lion City’s governance decision to eschew placebo-like programmes to tap into critical, primary survival roots viz. vision, mission, and challenge. 21st Century testimony confirms that Singapore’s human capital continues to embrace the pre-eminence of the work ethic, the value of initiatives, the contributions from proactive thinking and the active approaches that give credence to the truism that every person has the right to work, especially those in employment.

Source documentation shows that Singapore’s evolution is an outcome of a hand-in-hand engagement with entrepreneurial vision, hard work, and developing elements of social concern. Furthermore, the subsequent channelling of national wealth into employing science, technology, and innovative enterprise contributed to the development of a country that is now “a cultural melting pot, garden city, and a blend of old-world and new architecture” – earning handsome sociological dividends (STB, 2016).

⁸ Imperfect though it might be

⁹ Consider reading, Broken Vows: Tony Blair - The Tragedy of Power by Tom Bower

Arguably, room for improvement remains – progress is, after all, an evolutionary process and there is much evidence for the need to address yet unmet challenges. Ah, the soon to be opened literary “Black Box” (Chapter 9) might have some interesting facts.

While comparisons with other countries might be invidious, the fundamental building blocks of 21st-century Singapore would certainly suggest that cherry picking some of its current core disciplines could benefit any country – developing or established.

In assessing Singapore’s development, it is imperative that the findings take into account the context within which the city-state developed viz. the global and international factors. In the final analysis, the combination of personal bias, volatile internal and external factors affecting any country require careful analysis before passing comparative judgements.

In summary, this country began from landscaped emptiness and evolved into an economic powerhouse – as we shall soon see. In parallel, commentators have also often sung the praises of Israel as being the country that fulfilled the prophecy in making “the desert to blossom as a rose”¹⁰. South Korea, too, has been lauded as one of the four Asian Tigers that clawed its way to progress and international acclaim after repelling the North Korean invasion (1950 – 1953) and repaying an International Monetary Fund loan in record time (the latter part of the 20th-century). In addition, China’s place on the world’s stage and the dawn of the Japanese revival following its justified World War II humiliation command the admiration and attention of the world.

Amazingly, Singaporean initiative has, to date, ticked up more successes than failures after each attainment.

Welcome to Singapore!

¹⁰ Isaiah 35.1

Chapter 1

Singapore – the Early Visionaries

“Anybody can make history; only a great man can write it.”

(Oscar Wilde)

In 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles (the Dutch East India Company representative) set up a trading post in Singapore - to satisfy British colonial interests. In so doing, his extraordinary and influential leadership pointedly swung the compass in the direction of trade.

The Port of Singapore is a free Port, and the trade thereof is open to ships and vessels of every nation ... equally and alike to all.

Source: Pearson (n.d.)

Colonialism – the plus factors

Despite the motives and actions behind 19th-century Dutch and Victorian era colonisation and trading initiatives, British involvement had played a significant part in moving the then relatively unsophisticated nation forwards; the positive contribution of Sir Stamford had paved the way for some of the successes of modern-day Singapore. His initiatives had helped others build the city on dengue, fever-dominated swamps to offer fresh start prospects also to migrant workers from other East-Asian countries.

As an aside, and before passing negative judgements on self-serving Victorian-era colonisation, let us first rescue the baby born from Sir Stamford's entrepreneurial genius viz. sustainable opportunities for Singapore. After that, let us then discard the questionable, self-serving vestiges of overseas polluted bathwater- not to mention the destructive Japanese occupation during World War II.

Briefly, then:

- After the Dutch gave up all claims to Singapore in 1824, the doorway to the sea had remained open, and Britain took the fragile reins of a country void of natural resources
- Britain retained their colonial hold until the Japanese occupation during World War II.

- The successful WW II launch of Operation Tiderace used the Singapore Harbour as part of its military assault to defeat the armed forces of Imperial Japan and the ultimate execution of the Japanese war criminal, General Itagaki
- After the defeat of the Japanese warmongers, the Union Jack flag replaced the Japanese Nisshōki – and Britain continued to govern Singapore until 1959.

Self-reliance and the rise of a Singaporean achiever

Nevertheless, many Singaporeans had remained disillusioned with the then beleaguered British, who had failed to protect Singapore from the ruthless, imperialistic Japanese invasion. The resultant spirit of independence (Merdeka) gestated amongst the country's residents. The desire for change was in the air, and the Raffles legacy was to provide a fresh battleground for the soon-to-arrive argy-bargy of bruising political party conflicts and a British initiated Brexit from Singapore!

Within the borders of the country, the desire for change was nearing its due date. Lee Kuan Yew was about to write and then live out his story. His pioneer input was to personify a unique leadership style that gave new life to the warp and woof of Singaporean citizenship and the development of the country.

Consequently, in 1965 Singapore become independent and in 1970 Lee Kuan Yew became the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore – The Lion City. A new chapter had begun - led by the Father of the Nation, and his successors proudly carry the leadership flag to the present day. The prior unsuccessful “two-year marriage” with



Malaysia (1963 – 1965) was the penultimate step to Lee's leadership tenure as the country's first native leader - the visionary, mentor and transcendent Chief Executive Officer (Ethoz, 2016).

Warts and all – a leader who led from the front

The unique initiatives, leadership skills and management abilities of both Raffles and the charismatic, Machiavellian and transformational leadership of Lee created and then linked the physical, social, economic and cultural foundations upon which the Lion City was to build. The common denominators of visionary enterprise and a pragmatic mission had tied Raffles and Lee viz. British colonial interests and South-east Asian entrepreneurship. Lee, however, led the island-city further out of the swamps into the world as a whole and gave credibility to the inescapable necessity of planning for the future with commitment, imagination and wisdom - at the head of a motivated and dedicated team.

Of course, as a trailblazing maverick, Lee had opened himself to criticisms, but his spirited leadership and arguably exemplified governance in action accepted the challenge to be more than average. Lee's legacy places him on the same above-standard-level of other leaders who have fought hard to free their country from foreign domination, does it not.

History will bear witness to Lee's methodology, and its scribes will record the opinions of supporters and critics alike. Nevertheless, the people of Singapore will be the pen; their needs and wants will compose the ink that historians will use to interpret the ongoing twists and turns in a uniquely human-sourced narrative - the continuing evolution of Singapore.

Chapter 2

A timeline of Lee Kuan Yew (1923 – 2015)

16 September 1923: Lee was born in British-ruled Singapore.

1936-42: Lee studied at the Raffles Institution, Raffles College, Singapore.

1942: The Japanese capture Singapore during World War II.

1945: The British return to Singapore.

1946-50: Lee studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Cambridge. He was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple (London).

1947: Lee, secretly married Kwa Geok Choo in England. Kwa, a Queen's scholarship winner, who was also studying law at Cambridge.

1950: Lee married Kwa again after returning to Singapore.

1950-59: Lee practiced law, and became a legal adviser to trade unions. He was frustrated by the limited voice for Singaporeans in the Legislative Council. Lee also saw the need for an effective political movement as an alternative to the Malayan Communist Party and other groups.

1954: Lee inaugurated the People's Action Party.

1955: Lee became the leader of the opposition after being elected to the Legislative Assembly.

1957: Lee was part of the team that self-government for Singapore.

1959: Lee led the PAP to victory in the general election, and became the prime minister of the self-governing state of Singapore – he was 35 years of age.

1960: Lee set up Singapore's Housing and Development Board to replace the slums and squatter settlements with apartments. Today, more than 80 percent of the resident population live in government-subsidised housing.

1963: Singapore, Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah became Malaysia, after gaining independence from the British.

1965: Singapore separated from Malaysia. Lee cried after announcing the split.

1965: Lee established the Ministry of the Interior and Defence to build up the army. At independence, Singapore had only two infantry battalions of 50 officers and about 1,000 men and two ships. There was no air force. Today, Singapore's military expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product is higher than that of China, Japan and the U.K., according to World Bank data.

Continue on page 21

Continued from page 20

1967: National Service starts. The then Defence Minister, Goh Keng Swee, said that the government's decision to introduce compulsory conscription of male youths was aimed at establishing a credible defence force and creating a national identity. The move allowed Singapore to build up defence forces without placing a heavy burden on the country's financial and manpower resources.

1968: The Development Bank of Singapore was incorporated. Today, the DBS Group Holdings Ltd. is Southeast Asia's biggest bank.

1972: Singapore Airlines was established. Singapore Airlines Ltd. is now one of Asia's five largest carriers by market value.

The government encouraged smaller families with a "Please Stop at Two" campaign to slow population growth after a post-war boom. The policy was reversed in 1987, with incentives to encourage Singaporean parents to have more children. The country is now grappling with an aging population after fertility rates plunged below the replacement level of 2.1.

1974: The State-owned investment company Temasek Holdings Pte. was incorporated to hold and manage government investments and assets on a commercial basis. Temasek's assets rose to a record S\$223 billion (\$162 billion) for the 12 months ended March 31, 2014. The company's current chief executive officer is Ho Ching, the wife of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Lee Kuan Yew's son.

1978: Lee met Deng Xiaoping in Singapore shortly before Deng becomes China's leader. In a 2011 speech, Lee said Singapore had been a "revelation" to Deng, who saw how an island without resources was able to grow by inviting multinational corporations to invest. After the visit, Deng had opened up seaports as special economic zones and invited investment and trade.

1981: Changi Airport opened its Terminal 1 and has three terminals with plans for two more – and is one of the world's busiest international airports.

1981: Singapore set up the sovereign wealth fund GIC Pte. to invest Singapore's growing reserves. It is the world's sixth biggest today, with an estimated \$315 billion under management, according to the London-based Sovereign Wealth Center. Lee was the chairman of GIC's first board of directors.

1998: Singapore Technologies Industrial Corp. and Sembawang Corp. announced their intention to merge and form Sembcorp Industries Ltd., This enterprise has become the largest utility in Southeast Asia and is the owner of the world's second-biggest builder of oil rigs.

A timeline of Lee Kuan Yew (1923 – 2015)

Continued from page 21

1990: Goh Chok Tong succeeded Lee as prime minister and Lee became Senior Minister.

2004: Lee became Minister Mentor as his son, Lee Hsien Loong, became Singapore's third prime minister.

2005: The younger Lee's administration scrapped a four-decade ban on casinos, clearing the way for multibillion dollar integrated resorts by Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Genting Singapore Plc. Shortly before the decision, the Straits Times cites Lee Kuan Yew as saying that the city-state may suffer economically should it keep the ban as neighbouring countries open up to casinos, even though he was personally "emotionally and intellectually" against gambling.

2010: Singapore's economic growth rose to a record 15 percent after the casinos opened.

Lee's wife, Kwa, passed away on Oct. 2 at age 89, following a long illness. In his eulogy, Lee had said that "without her, I would be a different man, with a different life."

2011: "Lee Kuan Yew: Hard Truths to Keep Singapore Going" was published in January. The book, a collection of interviews with Lee on his key ideas, followed his memoirs published in 1998 and 2000.

Lee and Goh resigned from the Cabinet after the PAP, led by Lee's son Lee Hsien Loong, won the general election with the smallest share of the popular vote since independence. The elder Lee had been a cabinet member for more than five decades.

November 2014: Lee Kuan Yew attended the annual tree-planting event in a rare public appearance - keeping up a decades-old tradition.

Feb. 5, 2015: Lee Kuan Yew was hospitalised, suffering from severe pneumonia.

March 23, 2015: Lee died at the Singapore General Hospital.

Chapter 3
Who was Lee Kuan Yew?
1923 - 2015

Cometh the day – cometh the man¹¹! The snippets hereunder will provide readers with a brief view of the Founding Father of modern day Singapore. The selected quotes from Lee will enable readers to form a cursory assessment of this Father of the Nation.

On hubris.

When celebrating Lee's 80th birthday, a diplomat Joe Conceicao, remarked to Lee that the "people are talking about wanting to build monuments and statues and what-have-you". Lee Kuan Yew, the Cambridge graduate, turned and replied quoting two words from an 1818 sonnet by Percy Bysshe Shelley, "remember Ozymandias" (Jacob, Tia and Chia, 2003).

The reader might be acquainted with the story of the Egyptian pharaoh, Ozymandias, who had a passionate love affair with himself – a supreme narcissist - and had inscribed on the plinth of a self-aggrandizing monument, "Look upon my works". Fair enough, we might comment. Sadly, however, now all that remains in the desert is the statue of Ozymandias half-buried in the sand and broken. Lee, on the other hand, had no illusions or delusions about his lasting image of fame. Lee saw the immediate course of Singaporean history as paramount and appeared to aware of the fickleness of people and the immutable iron hand of destiny (Ibid, Jacob, Tia and Chia, 2003, citing Conceicao).

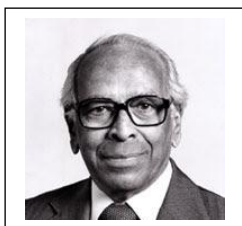
Lee mellowed with age.

In the last 10 to 15 years, he's definitely more patient. He listens to you. Sometimes, he will tell you what he doesn't agree with, sometimes, he will just smile," he adds. "The change is quite understandable. As people grow older, they take things easier. The other reason is that he understands there is a change in the constituency. There are younger people, and you must change to suit their needs."

¹¹ Source uncertain

(Ibid, Jacob, Tia and Chia, 2003).

On delegation – Lee Kuan Yew and some members of the Founding Team



S. Rajaratnam
(1915 - 2006)
First Culture
Minister



Goh Keng Swee
(1918 - 2010)
First Finance
Minister
(1959 – 1965)
and then Defence
Minister
(1965 – 1967)
and
(1970 – 1979)



Toh Chin Chye
(1921 – 2012)
Founding
chairman of the
People's Action
Party (PAP).
Served as
Deputy Prime
Minister, Minister
for Science and
Technology and
Health Minister
before retiring
from the Cabinet
in 1981



Hon Sui Sen
(1916 – 1983)
The first
chairman of the
Economic
Development
Board
(1961 – 1968)
And Finance
Minister
(1970 – 1983)

Another Opinion

Was Lee Kuan Yew, “a myth, a global idea - an intellectual cult built around the idea that not all autocrats are bad; they can be enlightened philosopher-kings too, leading their countries to prosperity and power without the hassle of liberal democracy”?

(Judah, 2015)

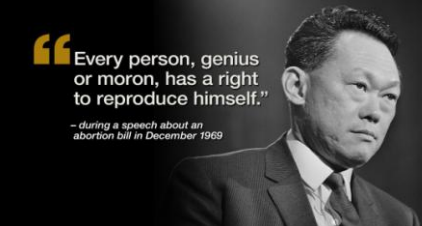







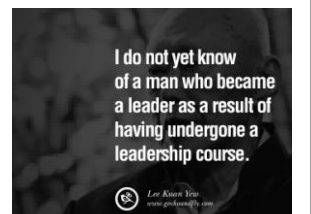
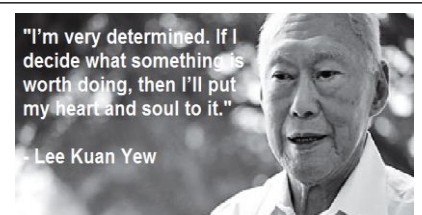
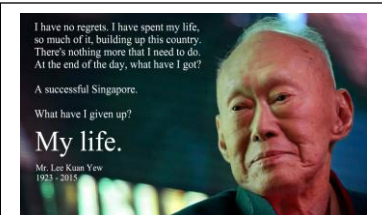


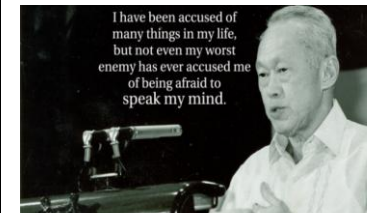




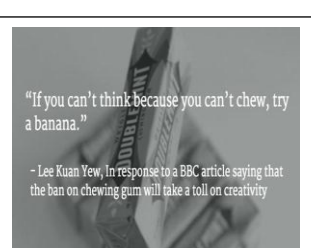
Judah, 2015 writes that Lee’s autocratic leadership slant contributed to the rehabilitation and legitimisation of many Eastern-European leaders including the alleged Georgian despot, Mikhail Saakashvili; the Ukrainian ex-leader, Viktor Yanukovich; Vladimir Putin, of Russia and Almazbek Atambayev the Kyrgyzstan president. However, he has also been a hero to the strongmen of the opposition – and history teaches us that “absolute...

On commitment.

“He remains totally and absolutely committed to Singapore. This is the single most constant thing about him,” says Mr Wee, chairman and chief executive officer of the United Overseas

Bank. "I think he spends his every waking hour thinking of the country, its problems and its future".

Lee Speaks – Cameos of his Leadership

 <p>“ Every person, genius or moron, has a right to reproduce himself.”</p> <p><small>- during a speech about an abortion bill in December 1969</small></p>	 <p>“ Don't change 'No' to 'Yes.' Don't be a fool. If there was a good reason why it is 'No,' it must remain 'No,' but the man must be told politely.”</p> <p><small>- to civil servants in September 1965</small></p>	 <p>Whoever governs Singapore must have that iron in him. Or give it up. This is not a game of cards.</p> <p><small>Lee Kuan Yew www.gohfamily.com</small></p>
 <p>“ I am often accused of interfering in the private lives of citizens. Yes, if I did not, had I not done that, we wouldn't be here today.”</p> <p><small>to The Straits Times in April 1987</small></p>	 <p>“ What I fear is complacency. When things always become better, people tend to want more for less work.”</p> <p><small>- during a speech in June 1970</small></p>	 <p>If Singapore is a nanny state, then I am proud to have fostered one.</p> <p><small>Lee Kuan Yew www.gohfamily.com</small></p>
 <p><i>"When you're Singapore's leader and your existence depends on performance - extraordinary performance, better than your competitors - when that performance disappears because the system on which it's been based becomes eroded, then you've lost everything..."</i></p> <p><small>- Lee Kuan Yew</small></p>	 <p>“ Repression, sir, is a habit that grows. I am told it is like making love -- it is always easier the second time!”</p> <p><small>- to Singapore politician David Marshall in October 1956</small></p>	 <p>I do not yet know of a man who became a leader as a result of having undergone a leadership course.</p> <p><small>Lee Kuan Yew www.gohfamily.com</small></p>
 <p>"I'm very determined. If I decide what something is worth doing, then I'll put my heart and soul to it."</p> <p><small>- Lee Kuan Yew</small></p>	 <p>I have no regrets. I have spent my life, so much of it, building up this country. There's nothing more that I need to do. At the end of the day, what have I got?</p> <p>A successful Singapore.</p> <p>What have I given up?</p> <p>My life.</p> <p><small>Mr. Lee Kuan Yew 1923 - 2015</small></p>	 <p>Without her, I would be a different man, with a different life... I should find solace in her 88 years of a life well lived. But, this moment of the final parting, my heart is heavy with sorrow and grief.</p>
 <p>I was a product of the times, the war, the occupation, the reoccupation, my 4 years in Britain, admiring but at the same time questioning whether they are able to do a better job than we can.</p> <p><small>Lee Kuan Yew www.gohfamily.com</small></p>	 <p>I have been accused of many things in my life, but not even my worst enemy has ever accused me of being afraid to speak my mind.</p>	
 <p>I wish I can meet my wife in the hereafter, but I don't think I will. I just cease to exist just as she has ceased to exist.</p> <p><small>Lee Kuan Yew www.gohfamily.com</small></p>	 <p>I make no apologies that the PAP is the Government and the Government is the PAP.</p> <p><small>Lee Kuan Yew www.gohfamily.com</small></p>	 <p>"I have no headline material to offer you tonight. In fact, I believe that the art of Government is, in part, the art of not creating headlines in the world press."</p> <p><small>- Lee Kuan Yew, In a speech at the Foreign Correspondents Association, 16 Sep 1959</small></p>
 <p>"If you are a troublemaker... it's our job to politically destroy you... Everybody knows that in my bag I have a hatchet, and a very sharp one. You take me on, I take my hatchet, we meet in the cul-de-sac."</p>	 <p>"Not all who oppose the PAP are communists; some are communists, some reactionaries, some opportunists and some merely confused."</p> <p><small>- Lee Kuan Yew, The Wit & Wisdom of Lee Kuan Yew, 1961</small></p>	 <p>"If you can't think because you can't chew, try a banana."</p> <p><small>- Lee Kuan Yew, In response to a BBC article saying that the ban on chewing gum will take a toll on creativity</small></p>

<p>I am often accused of interfering in the private lives of citizens. Yes, if I did not, had I not done that, we wouldn't be here today. And I say without the slightest remorse, that we wouldn't be here, we would not have made economic progress, if we had not intervened on very personal matters - who your neighbour is, how you live, the noise you make, how you spit, or what language you use. We decide what is right. Never mind what the people think.</p>	<p>To straddle the middle ground and win elections, we have to be in charge of the political agenda. This can only be done by not being beaten in the argument with our critics. They complain that I come down too hard on their arguments. But wrong ideas have to be challenged before they influence public opinion and make for problems. Those who try to be clever at the expense of the government should not complain if my replies are as sharp as their criticisms.</p>	<p>I ignore polling as a method of government. I think that shows a certain weakness of mind - an inability to chart a course whichever way the wind blows, whichever way the media encourages the people to go, you follow. If you can't force or are unwilling to force your people to follow you, with or without threats, you are not a leader.</p>
<p>Mine is a very matter-of-fact approach to the problem. If you can select a population and they're educated and they're properly brought up, then you don't have to use too much of the stick because they would already have been trained. It's like with dogs. You train it in a proper way from small. It will know that it's got to leave, go outside to pee and to defecate. No, we are not that kind of society. We had to train adult dogs who even today deliberately urinate in the lifts</p>	<p>Supposing Catherine Lim was writing about me and not the prime minister ... She would not dare, right? Because my posture, my response has been such that nobody doubts that if you take me on, I will put on knuckle-dusters and catch you in a cul de sac...Anybody who decides to take me on needs to put on knuckle dusters. If you think you can hurt me more than I can hurt you, try. There is no other way you can govern a Chinese society.</p>	<p>I started off believing all men were equal. I now know that's the most unlikely thing ever to have been, because millions of years have passed over evolution, people have scattered across the face of this earth, been isolated from each other, developed independently, had different intermixtures between races, peoples, climates, soils... I didn't start off with that knowledge. But by observation, reading, watching, arguing, asking, and then bullying my way to the top, that is the conclusion I've come to.</p>
<p>Political reform need not go hand in hand with economic liberalisation. I do not believe that if you are libertarian, full of diverse opinions, full of competing ideas in the marketplace, full of sound and fury, therefore you will succeed.</p>	<p>He took over, and he said: 'If I have to shoot 200,000 students to save China from another 100 years of disorder, so be it.' - Recalling how former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping dealt with the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests</p>	<p>That was the year the British decided to get out and sell everything. So I immediately held an election. I knew the people will be dead scared. And I won my bet big-time. The gullible fools!</p>
<p>The task of the leaders must be to provide or create for them a strong framework within which they can learn, work hard, be productive and be rewarded accordingly. And this is not easy to achieve.</p>	<p>The Japanese high command recognised the sexual needs of the men and provided for them. As a consequence, rape was not frequent</p>	<p>After trying out a number of ways to reduce inequalities and failing, I was gradually forced to conclude that the decisive factors were the people, their natural abilities, education and training.</p>

<p>The dark ages had descended on us. It was brutal, cruel. In looking back, I think it was the biggest single political education of my life because, for three and a half years, I saw the meaning of power and how power and politics and government went together, and I also understood how people trapped in a power situation responded because they had to live. One day the British were there, immovable, complete masters; next day, the Japanese, whom we derided, mocked as short, stunted people with short-sighted squint eyes.</p>	<p>Here in Singapore, you didn't come across the white man so much. He was in a superior position. But there you are (in Britain) in a superior position meeting white men and white women in an inferior position, socially, I mean. They have to serve you and so on in the shops. And I saw no reason why they should be governing me; they're not superior. I decided when I got back, I was going to put an end to this.</p>	<p>Between being loved and being feared, I have always believed Machiavelli was right. If nobody is afraid of me, I'm meaningless.</p> <p>Anybody who decides to take me on needs to put on knuckle-dusters. If you think you can hurt me more than I can hurt you, try. There is no way you can govern a Chinese society.</p> <p>If you are a troublemaker... it's our job to politically destroy you... Everybody knows that in my bag I have a hatchet, and a very sharp one. You take me on, I take my hatchet, we meet in the cul-de-sac.</p>
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Source: The Telegraph (2015)

A thumbnail summary

The Economist (2016) cites a 2015 article by its data team about Lee Kuan Yew.

Decrying the decadence and welfarism which he thought had sapped the strength of countries such as Britain, he supported tough laws and punishments, making Singapore orderly, clean and disciplined. He was quick to use British-era legislation, including a draconian Internal Security Act, to quell anything that smacked of subversion. Defamation suits were used to tame the press and, on occasion, bankrupt his critics.

(Economist, 2016)

Chapter 4

The Crucial Roles of Governance – Bureaucracy, Meritocracy, and Democracy

Governance is defined as:

The way that organisations or countries are managed at the highest level, and the systems for doing this

Source: Cambridge Dictionary

The 20th-Century Genesis of The Lion City's governance

When Singapore became a republic, their British-structured legacy enshrined a neatly packaged bureaucratic model of governance – the same basic concept as reflected in other independent ex-Colonial states. The sun had continued to set on the once globally dominant British Empire that was to become known as a “nation of shopkeepers!”¹²

However, while Singapore had wisely axed the outdated British monarchical system, a realistic and practical administratively structured legislature remained in place.

Government - today

The single parliament (elected every five years) and the elected president (as Head of State) constitute the Legislature. Opposition MPs occupy nine guaranteed seats in parliament, and the judiciary remains independent of the Executive.

The governing People's Action Party (PAP)¹³, founded by Lee in 1954, remains as the majority party in parliament. PAP espouses aspects of the Third Way ideology – a politically structured socio-political stance developed by a sociologist, Emeritus Professor Anthony Giddens¹⁴. In essence, Giddens taught that the “old class-based divisions of left and right are now redundant ... reformist governments could no longer rely on traditional statist programmes in the face of powerful global financial forces. Instead, political parties could generate significant consensual support by campaigning from the centre, while remaining committed to radical measures” – in effect, synthesising opposing points of view (Mellbye, 2003).

¹² Napoleon borrowing from Adam Smith <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/12650.html>

¹³ The History of Singapore: Lion City, Asian Tiger. Discovery Channel. ISBN: 978-0-470-82320-0

¹⁴ University of Hull, University of Leicester, London School of Economics, University of Cambridge

The Party accepts the multiracial ideal, retains traditional social institutions in the context of culture and civilisation (conservatism), encourages meritocracy and adopts a secular stance. This broad sweep approach maintains the balloted popularity of the majority of voters, and Lee's foundation PAP scored another resounding recall to power in the 2015 elections with 69% of the votes. Hmmm ... where is the "Black Box?"

Other political parties

Opposition to the PAP remains scattered and appears strangely impotent in unseating the government's popular mandate to govern.

The People's Action Party (PAP) secured 83 of the 89 seats against the opposition in most districts by wide margins. The only opposition group to gain seats, the Workers' Party (WP), now has six members of parliament, down from seven.

Source: Holmes (2015)

Reforms

Notwithstanding, Lee's foundation governance adjusted its leadership structure and after 1991, for example, Parliament's appointment of the President gave way to the election to office by the Singaporean electorate and extended the duration of the presidential period to six-year terms. The ceremonial role of the President defines his¹⁵ executive powers in appointing people to public office (DFAT, n.d.).

The 1991 constitutional amendment also allowed for a Council of Presidential Advisors (CPA) and certain specified functions now require their approval before enactment. For example, the vetoing of a government budget (Ibid. DFAT n.d.)

Cronyism/Nepotism?

The Prime Minister¹⁶, Lee Hsien Loong¹⁷ (Lee's eldest son) has held office since 1993 and continues to advise the President on the appointment of Ministers from

¹⁵ The writer failed to find specific information about a female candidate for the Presidency.

¹⁶ See: Thomas White International (2016).

¹⁷ Lee studied at the University of Cambridge, graduating with a B.A. in Mathematics and a Diploma in Computer Science. He subsequently earned a Master in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School.

among the MPs to form the Cabinet. Both the President and the Cabinet are answerable to the Singaporean Parliament (Ibid. DFAT n.d.).

A unique model

The country is now a member of the Asian Tigers, along with Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan (Dorsch, 2010). Some unique features of Singaporean governance have earned descriptive sobriquets from commentators and research studies. The nation's international fame illustrates the outcomes of its reformist government's pragmatic interpretation of the Third Way concept¹⁸. Its synergistic structure represents aspects of:

- A “Socialist Democracy” (Ibid, Hawkshead 2016)
- An “authoritarian, pragmatic, rational and legalistic” legislature (Ibid, Hawkshead, 2016)
- “A highly efficient, honest and flexible meritocracy, with a strong focus on integrated strategic planning and detailed execution” (OECD, 2010)
- “Authoritarian and paternalistic” governance (Yin, 2003)
- A government that generated an “economic miracle [based on] business oriented governance” (Ibid, Sudha 2007)

Foreign Policy

However, governance is not only a national but also an international responsibility. Singapore's foreign policy is a continuation of its businesslike approach to management. The country's foreign policy illustrates a pragmatic approach where:

- There are no illusions about the situations prevailing in its region or the world
- Military defence underpins its strategy and approach to those outside its borders
- Good relations with its immediate neighbours in all spheres is necessary
- Singapore will always stand by those who have stood by them during difficult times

¹⁸ For example, Tony Blair (UK), Kevin Rudd (Australia), partially also by Bill Clinton (USA), Jean Chrétien (Canada) and post-socialist Massimo D'Alema (Italy) – (Stanford, n.d.)

- The country remains fully committed to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- Singapore seeks to maintain a secure and peaceful environment in and around Southeast Asia, especially the Asia Pacific region
- The government will support a free and open multilateral trading system
- Singapore will trade with any state for mutual benefit while keeping an open market economy
- The country will continue actively to support international organisations such as the United Nations

(Edited from source: MoFA, n.d.)

Singapore governance and democracy

Notwithstanding, the continuation of PAP governance requires a brief detour to understand better the concept of ““democratic” elections” as might also be known by Singaporeans and outsiders. Rudyard Kipling’s six friends seek answers, do they not?

As we delve into the next section of this chapter, we must also spend some time trying to understand Lee’s authoritarian leadership style. After all, the legislature was “democratically” elected, was it not – or was it? Let us pause for a while – the “Black Box” continues to send signals. Importantly, however, we need to understand why the opposition parties remain midget-like and politically impotent.

- What has caused the longstanding popularity of PAP the leadership?
- Why are opposition parties seemingly paper tigers¹⁹?
- What is the meaning of “democracy”?
- What is Singapore’s take on “democracy”?
- Are the proponents of a “democratic” system correct in asserting that “democracy” must nest within and function from a flexible, politically structured environment that allows equal rights to all and permits free speech in public spaces within a legally circumscribed environment?

¹⁹ See: Appendix 3

An overview of democracy and Singapore

This essay cannot enter into a lengthy investigation of the etymology of “democracy”. The history of the word would fill many pages and not address the topic of Singapore. However, explanatory comments will provide an understanding of Lee’s approach to “democracy”, “democratic principles” and the all-important ballot box.

Nevertheless, to understand “democracy”, our search must extend beyond semantics to allow us to explore Singaporean “democracy” vis-a-vis the political governance of the country.

To vote or not to vote

- Singaporean democracy requires a Singaporean voter to be 21 years old or above
- The registered voter, must not be disqualified from using the ballot box (by law), and, if overseas, has resided in Singapore for an aggregate of at least 30 days during the three years immediately before an election

(Government of Singapore, 2016)

Nevertheless:

- Does Singaporean “democracy” prioritise a meritocracy that is open to all (as Plato advocates in *The Republic*)?
- What is the Singaporean understanding of the involvement of the “demos” (the ordinary people) in the democratic process leading to the ballot box?
- Would the current Singaporean governance structure continue if citizens had access to an unfettered media and opportunities for free speech – a level pathway to the voting process?

Ancient Athens and a ramble through “democracy’s” journey

Our search for answers must begin before the Athenian experience – the city that some 2,016 years ago coined the maxim that all must have an equal share of power (demokratia) – a concept foreshadowing the idea of consensus. However, the Athens experience was but a milestone along the “democracy” highway because various forms of “democracy” existed before the legendary Athenian cry of “Eureka”

caused many Hellenic citizens to leap from their marble baths in celebratory excitement!

Evidence suggests that democratic government, in a broad sense, existed in several areas of the world well before the turn of the 5th century (Britannica, 2016).

Pre-history suggests that non-literate hunter-gatherer tribes had practised “democracy” (Ibid, Britannica, 2016), and thus added their practice to the ancestral memory – the collective unconscious that formed part of the everlasting database of humankind. While distinct from the unconscious mind of an individual, the collective unconscious is an assortment of inherited concepts familiar to the family hominin (Jung, 1954). So, when pre-history and new communities practised their model of “democracy” that default pattern then filtered into the psychological DNA of Homo sapiens. The concept then resurrected into the light of day in an Athenian huddle, and subsequently emigrated to most parts of the world and, of course, into the warp and woof of Singaporean governance – voila!

Anomalies?

However, what is in a word? Perceptions and interpretations indicate that an understanding of the Athenian-spawned concept of “democracy” suggests that the notion is malleable and therefore confusingly obtuse. This Athenian model appears to have mutated into a plasticine-like concept that easily squeezes into the needs and wants of individual nations. The idea then translates into law and subsequently broadcasts echoes from selective extracts of the Abraham Lincoln “democratic” ideal of “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Epstein, 2011). However, the resulting medley might easily equate with the number of spots on a leopard, would it not – after all, each nation reflects “democracy” in a myriad of different ways. In fact, just as humankind fashioned national and society recognised deities to accommodate their wants and needs, nations now remould a pre-history practice and a subsequent ancient concept entitled “democracy” to fit in with national interests, do they not.

Custom designed “democracies”

Consequently, each nation triumphantly bangs their “democratic” drum. The resultant cacophony subliminally echoes the ambiguity of the word “democracy”. The subsequent, customised, and cherry picked, government-built adaptations illustrate a

filtered practice of the Athenian concept that had drawn on the saved patterns of governance that had contributed to the evolution of management. Governance, stored in the collective unconscious²⁰, blossomed again – albeit somewhat refined and more sophisticated.

An example

Many people wrongly believe that Oliver Cromwell's anti-monarchical crusade had resurrected selected remnants of "democracy" from only the recorded events in archives of 6th-century BCE Greece²¹.

Nevertheless, ironically, and alarmingly, Britain had formally become a "democracy" (as opposed to a monarchy) when Cromwell's minions had signed the death warrant, and the executioner's axe had decapitated King Charles 1 in Whitehall, London. Indeed, the most un-"democratic" way of affirming "people's power"! Nevertheless, it is woefully apparent that Cromwell's military backing and his charisma were the powers that overturned the throne – not the voice of the people – they had not been asked for their opinion because there was no plebiscite in existence! The subsequent Restoration under Charles II returned a Cromwellian dictatorship into monarchical leadership and a somewhat wiser parliament!

Back to Athens where all is not what it seems to be

So, while respecting the right of Solon (600 BCE) to lay claim to "the basis on which "democracy" could be pioneered almost 100 years later by a progressive aristocrat called Cleisthenes ... who championed a radical political reform movement, which in 507/8 BCE ushered in the Athenian 'democratic' constitution' (Cartledge, 2011), the formalised Athenian concept unfortunately and irritatingly lacks a precise definition – and a kaleidoscope of models and aberrations now nestle in many countries.

Establishing the model

How did the Athenians set about instituting their idea? What was their meaning of "democracy" some 2,600 years ago?

²⁰ Sometimes wrongly called the "subconscious" that refers to the part of the aware part of the conscious mind (Miller, 2016)

²¹ See Appendix 5.

Paul Cartledge, the Professor of Greek history at the University of Cambridge identifies three significant aspects of the Athenian-coined “democracy” that deserve attention.

- The literal meaning is “people power”
- However, who were the people to whom the power belonged?
- The Greek word demos could mean either everyone or only duly qualified citizens of Greece (meritocracy in embryo?)

Cartledge also refers to a theory that the enemies of the Athenian concept coined “the word demokratia”. The saboteurs of the new governance package were members of the wealthy and aristocratic elite. They did not like the possibility of the common herd, “their social and economic inferiors” outvoting them (Ibid, Cartledge, 2011). Was this attitude the forerunner of “jobs for those who wear the same school/university tie” approach? The old boys network is not the best example of democracy in action.

Therefore, argues Cartledge:

- “Democracy” must originally have meant something like ‘mob rule’ or the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’. The two interpretations exist in an otherwise apparently casually used noun.

Interestingly, the Cambridge professor then points out that around two centuries later (the 4th-century BCE) Greece comprised “some 1500 separate communities scattered around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea shores ‘like frogs around a pond’ [according to Plato]” (Ibid Cartledge 2011).

- Where power was in the hands of the few richest citizens - or monarchies, called ‘tyrannies’ - where the sole ruler had usurped power by force rather than inheritance (sic)

Nevertheless, Athens had remained the comparatively radical “democratic” city. However, did their model guarantee the freedom of speech to all in Athens? Did they walk the talk? No, there was no carte blanche right to freedom of expression. After all, the same pundits who advocated what was to become known as demokratia hypocritically passed the sentence of death on Socrates for his alleged: corrupting of

youth²² by his teachings and relationships, and for disrespecting the Athenian deities by voicing his opinions of them. Was this a case of “if you cannot destroy the message then kill the messenger”?

So, we find that “democracy” is a subjectively crafted concept as also affirmed in selected examples hereafter. Crucially, the evidence of “democracy” is determined not by the use of the words “democracy” or “democratic” or the “democratically” installed ballot box but also by the legal permissions applicable to the run-up process leading to the vote. Therefore, all is not as it appears to be in Singaporean “democracy” – and most other “democratic” countries!

However, do critics of Lee’s “democracy” live in countries that have so-called pristine “democratic” models?

Really?

Many countries use the adjective, “democratic”. North Korea, for example, entitles itself as the “Democratic” People's Republic of Korea. However, the government structure and practice are the opposite - a dictatorship in the worst Stalinist manner possible. The Kim Family’s dynastic governance now rests in the podgy hands of an overweight, hyperactive, dopamine-empowered despot who runs the closet-imposed nation with an irrational sense of destiny and delusional self-importance - common to many dictators who enjoy “absolute power” (Robertson, 2013). Kim and his cabal of note-taking minions see “democracy” in yet another skewed way, do they not.

Consider, as another example, the “Democratic” Party of Turkmenistan (DPT) - the elected legislature is a “democratic” charade, according to Freedom House (2016):

Turkmenistan’s last presidential election was held in 2012. While Berdymukhammedov had promised that the polls would include opposition candidates and adhere to international norms, all seven of his challengers were minor figures associated with the DPT. Berdymukhammedov was re-elected to a second five-year term with 97 percent of the vote and 96 percent turnout, according to the country’s election commission.

²² Did Socrates have an improper relationship with a handsome Athenian youth? See <http://www.flashq.org/socrates.pdf>. Other sources refer to pederasty – not paedophilia (where an adult could love a boy without permitting the boy to engage in sexual penetration) – with no reference to the otherwise acceptance of homosexual relationships.

What can Singapore and other nations learn from history's archives that preserve the weaknesses and disadvantages of the unbridled dominance of unchecked leadership where "absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely."²³

A devil behind the details?

So, what about the noun, "democracy" and Singapore? Indeed, Singapore allows opposition parties to exist and serve on the executive (c.f. pages 28 - 29). However, does Singaporean "democracy" satisfy the core need to enjoy the freedom of speech and association in an election run-up? Alternatively, does Lee's PAP reflect the hypocrisy of the Athenians who, despite wearing the regalia of "democracy"-loving Athenians, prosecuted Socrates for exercising his freedom of speech – and sentenced him to death?

Nonetheless, it would appear, according to Cartledge's studies that the Athenian model offers a bespoke choice of the power base composition.

So, "democracy" must originally have meant something like 'mob rule' or 'dictatorship of the proletariat'" (c.f. page 35). At best then, modern day democracies in many countries are particular mutations from a somewhat ambiguous Athenian production. Perhaps the Athenian thinkers at the time might have better employed their ponderings in less weighty issues and stuck to architecture! Democracy is not as it appears to be or as the ideal is interpreted to be – there is no precise definition.

So, back to The Lion City

Now, let us return from our detour. Is the evolution of Singaporean nationhood also allowing the freedom of expression – a much-trumpeted reality in many "democratically" labelled nations? Alternatively, is Singapore's selective interpretation of "democracy" open to the cynical charge of tokenism and a placating nod to pluralism – or synchronicity? Conversely, is Singaporean "democracy" also guilty of cherry picking "democratic" ideas to accommodate the restrictive agenda of those who wield power and reflect the rule of the proletariat (c.f. Cartledge, page 34)?

²³ Lord Acton (1834 – 19 June 1902)

The “democracy” issue also revolves around the implications of Singapore’s cherry picked concepts. Every action causes a reaction. The limiting of the freedom of the Press and preventing verbal opinions from the free discussion in the agora before the ballot boxes open for business is noteworthy. Alarming, Singaporean “democracy” suggests that opposition viewpoints are “allowed” provided everyone does not know about them.

Briefly, Singapore, like some other “democratic” countries is not an electoral “democracy”. This anomaly might be one of the reasons why the Singaporean opposition never leaves the starting blocks. The legally allowed Parties do not have unrestricted access to the hearts and minds of Singaporeans opposing the PAP government.

Significantly, Gomez (2008) citing Huntington defines as the evidence of “democracy”, any nation that will hold “Elections, open, free, and fair”. Therefore, electoral democracies require level playing fields for the electorate. Furthermore, the nitty gritty of “democratic” elections must take into account the milieu in which the people vote and, in Singapore’s situation the legislature should, therefore, ensure that the freedom of expression exists for all enfranchised citizens. However, restrictive and punitive laws govern the content of publically accessible criticisms from opposition politicians. In the writer’s opinion, some semblances of the unjust and ridiculous Lèse-majesté law also appear to underwrite the PAP controls of a free media and speech approach.

The critics of Singaporean authoritarian rule allege that the executive body subtly ring-fences any activities that are critical of the government and ranking officials. In their opinion, this reported stance is akin to a dictatorial injunction by a so-called-not-so-benevolent dictatorship – because:

The Singapore government ‘uses civil defamation laws, strict electoral rules, curbs on civil liberties, patronage, and its influence over Singapore’s media to undermine the opposition’s prospects in elections’.

Source: Freedom House, (2016).

In support of Freedom House and others who oppose PAP dogma, critics like Carothers, Diamond, Schelder and Zakaria (cited by Gomez, 2008) have argued that Singapore's holding of elections does not equate to electoral “democracy”.

Other salient factors, including the authoritarian rule under the People’s Action Party, prevent the opposition parties adequately to contest elections – by muzzling speech (Ibid Gomez, 2008 pages 19 – 20).

Apparently, on one side of the Singaporean structured “democratic” coin, elections remain free from irregularities and vote rigging. However, on the flip side, the PAP government dominates the political process by using legal “harassment” to deter opposition leaders from seeking office, as well as actively delineating to redraw (or eliminate) electoral districts to minimise support for the opposition (Freedom House, 2016). Nonetheless, Gerrymandering is common in many countries as, for example, in the USA. The practice ensures that incumbent governments remain in place (Ingraham, 2014). All this takes place under the multi-coloured democratic umbrella!

Apparently, the Singaporean legislature sets freedom of expression boundaries on the media and critics – thus separating the two sides of the coin. Is this a corruption of the “democratic” ideal? It would appear that the proactive, protectionist legislation contributes to keeping the PAP in power - by limiting the voice of the opposition.

Opposition parties are constrained by the ban on political films and televised programs; expressions of political opinion are curtailed by the threat of libel or slander suits; there are strict regulations and limitations on associations, including political associations; and the PAP's influence on the media and in the courts remains strong

Source: Freedom House, 2016

Aha!

While the message calling for freedom of speech and association will never everlastingly remain silent, an alternative slogan might be written on the agendas of the Singaporean legislature, “Silence the Opposition Messengers” – as in some other ‘democracies”. Nonetheless, is Singaporean governance not wise in limiting individual freedoms? Lee argued that such measures were necessary - Singapore’s Father did not tolerate dissension (c.f. the quotes of Lee, pages 25 – 27).

For example, Thailand is a chilling example of a non-functioning “democracy” because the right to the freedom of the media and speech rests in the hands of the military, who, of necessity, keep the outdated concept of a monarchical kingdom in check (yet again!).

Other examples of chaos in emerging countries espousing “democracy” might deter, rather than encourage “democratic” principles that allow individual and media the right to the freedom of expression.

The winds of change - again

Regardless of the pros and cons, and according to Chee Soon Juan, the leader of the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), there is nevertheless a wind of change blowing across the country. However, in this instance, the rustling in the trees contrasts to the independence storm that swept Lee to power in 1965. The intermittent gusts of 21st-century discontent reflect the feelings of many Singaporeans who are tired of living under an authoritarian system - "We have had enough, we want change!" (Chee, 2011). Arguably, Lee’s charisma enabled much of his dictatorial approach to control the warp and woof of Singaporean life. How long will a submissive population endure the top-down management of the country now that Lee is dead?

Chee’s riveting and somewhat alarming story²⁴ allege Government intimidation that possibly mirrors the insecurities under the purges orchestrated by the murderous pogroms of Stalin – not the reasonable controls of authoritarianism.

Open questions

However, the writer is firmly ensconced in a country that allows an enormous amount of media and personal freedom of expression – even to persuade voters! United Kingdom governance allows a significant amount of free speech and allows voters²⁵

²⁴ See Sources.

²⁵ Pressure is growing to change the constituency majority system to proportional representation and the Single Transferable Vote system in parliaments, assemblies and councils is under debate (ERF, 2010)

to decide whether they want to listen, debate or reject an opinion²⁶. Censorship applies when public safety or moral issues come under threat.

- However, would Singapore have reached its progress to date if the executive had allowed the freedom of the media and public speech – civil liberties?
- Does the end now in evidence justify Lee’s concept of “democracy”?

History will record its verdict – and, as evidenced during Singapore’s journey, the people will ultimately decide - just as changing needs and wants overturned Lee’s ban on casinos brought extra revenue into play! According to source documentation (Singapore, 2016), the Lee effect began to wane during his lifetime.

The Lion City is home to two casinos; the Casino at Resort World Sentosa and Marina Bay Sands Casino. Singapore used to have strict attitudes about gambling and casinos (Lee Kuan Yew once said a casino in the city-state was possible only “over my dead body”) but nowadays seems to be warming to the idea²⁷.

2,600 years on

Whether Singapore will add another spin on 6th-century BCE thinking? Do skeins of a concept recorded some 2,600 years old apply today and will societies deem it applicable for tomorrow? The outcomes depend on the people, do they not – or do they?

While The Lion City’s governance operates in a business-like manner, perhaps the elected legislature might find the time to address the reality that the needs and wants of people require the attention and responses of governance – history proves that “people power” cannot be legislated away.

Yes, the jury is still deadlocked in deciding when the people will decide – however, time is on the side of the people, is it not. So, let us now move on to corruption.

²⁶ As an example, the Brexit vote where the people outvoted the entire Parliament – illustrating that the people govern when a referendum is held.

²⁷ Later events in this study suggest that Lee was correct and his son was wrong!

Chapter 5

The Crucial Role of Governance versus Corruption

Lee, the pragmatist, and idealist understood much about human nature. His proactive leadership also possibly illustrated his respect for Murphy's Law viz. "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong". After all, Homo sapiens remains tied to the old and endemic bias not to walk in the path of righteousness, does it not.

Singapore's Founding Father set out to address the centuries-old weakest link in Singapore's sustainability chain viz. the destructive power of corruption.

Corruption is defined as:

Illegal, bad, or dishonest behaviour, especially by people in positions of power.

Source: Cambridge Dictionary

An example

The FMO Entrepreneurial Bank's point of view on corruption states:

- Bribery and corruption are substantial threats to good governance, sustainable development, the "democratic" process and fair business practices
- Bribery and corruption undermine attempts to achieve higher levels of economic and social welfare and impede efforts to reduce poverty
- Corrupt actions also lead to a loss of confidence in the public and private sector
- Bribery and corruption are substantial threats to good governance, sustainable development, the "democratic" process and fair business practices
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- Corrupt actions also lead to loss of confidence in the public and private sector

(Source: FMO, n.d.)

Apparently, Singaporean corruption during the 19th-century remained widespread. Sadly, the initial efforts by the British administration in establishing the first anti-corruption legislation was little more than a paper tiger.

However, after the hijacking of an opium consignment (involving three police detectives) in 1951, the reality of the competent management of legislation dawned on the legislature – a reactive response followed and procedural tightening up took place.

However, in 1952, the colonial government had still not got to grips with the realities of combating sleaze. After all, eradicating corruption depends, also, on the definition of the word, does it not! For example, taking out a client to a business dinner is, for some, a taboo but “why not?” we might argue.

Nevertheless, in 1959, when the Founding Prime Minister, Lee Kuan had led his People’s Action Party (PAP) to victory “they wore the party uniforms of white-on-white [to symbolise] the purity and the incorruptibility of its members. The PAP-led government remains committed to putting an end to corrupt practices in Singapore” (CIPO, 2016).

After putting their feet under the table, the PAP government declared war on corruption. Corruption faced the might of a determined and powerful state, and the results of the successful “be clean” intervention began to permeate all aspects of Singaporean life.

Kaufmann (2005), writing for the International Monetary Fund, cites the May 2005 report by the African Commission, "Good governance is the key ... unless there are improvements in capacity, accountability, and reducing corruption ... other reforms will have only limited impact." Importantly, one of the cornerstones supporting the Singaporean Lion is its comparatively high level of no corruption.

The enforcing power of governance

At the heart of Singapore’s independence, is a powerful executive. For example, after some 40 years into its 50th plus years of growth, history showed the stability given by the firm, steady and visionary pulse beat of governance that arguably places Singapore as one of “the most politically transparent and least corrupt governments in the world” (Sudha, 2007).

- Haque's (2004) study on Singaporean governance notes that one of the contributory factors advancing the island country's growth and development was "corruption-free governance"
- Hawksford's (2016), publicity information brochure declares, "the Singapore government has maintained a clean, corruption-free image" – an essential and supportive nation-building foundation stone and the sine qua non for clean governance
- Ang (2011) cites the wide range of legislative anti-corruption measures in place – a veritable library of both preventative and enforcing measures that demonstrate its efficient and pragmatic control over corruption²⁸
- Crucially, the anti-corruption ethos regulates behaviour and imbues trust between the interactive links governing government performance, commercial and industrial enterprise, and international trade

Singapore's grip on corruption did not happen overnight, but it is apparent that in 1959 after the new self-governing PAP had placed the then known CIPB under the Home Office, that change began. Their subsequent hands-on governance played a crucial role in addressing the reality of corruption in the country. Following an active business-like approach, the Singaporean Government established The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) to tackle sleaze.

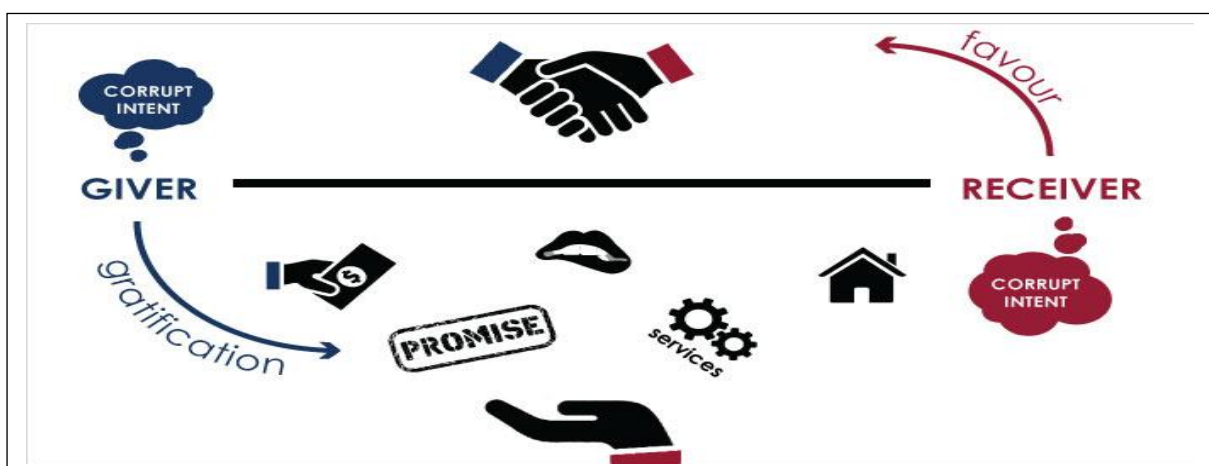


Illustration 1 – Corruption Prevention (CPIB (2016))

²⁸ See Sources.

This vision motivated department has:

- Vision: To be a leading Anti-Corruption Agency that upholds Integrity and Good Governance towards Achieving a Corruption-free Nation
- Mission: To Combat Corruption through Swift and Sure, Firm but Fair Action
- Core Values: Integrity, Teamwork, and Devotion to Duty

Edited from source: CPIB (2016)

Corruption is the oil that greases palms, the brown envelopes that slip across tables and the elixir that deadens the conscience of self-seeking initiatives, is it not. However, “corruption” like “democracy” has subjective interpretations and focus! Nevertheless, Lee was adamant about removing sleaze (as he defined it) and concentrated on eradicating the practice from Singaporean life – as also illustrated in his rebuilding strategy.

There are no haphazard buildings, like in Bangkok, Jakarta or even Kuala Lumpur, where you've got two tall towers and then squatters all around. There's a definite plan, and we stuck with the plan. There is no corruption and nobody can deviate from the plans. A building that is not in accordance with the plan cannot be allowed. Those were the basics, and that's how we started.

A deeply concerning development

Alarmingly, however, recently leaked Panamanian documents from a prestigious and long-standing law firm indicated that individuals across the world had, through its Panamanian offices, avoided income tax payments by sheltering their wealth in the offshore tax haven. Citizens of the United Kingdom and officials in its government were reportedly involved in this illegal recourse to overseas investment.

The revelation, followed by a week-long series of staged rebuttals by the UK's Prime Minister, David Cameron²⁹, about alleged financial gain from his deceased father's investments, dovetailed somewhat ironically but timeously into the Prime Minister's anti-corruption summit in London during May 2016.

²⁹ On 28 July 2016, Cameron had spoken at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore. His topic concentrated on his plans to address corruption (Gov.UK, 2016).

As an aside, this paper notes that the Nigerian President (a proven anti-corruption leader) confirmed his determination to rid his country of sleaze and refused to condemn Cameron for stating that Afghanistan and Nigeria are “possibly the two most corrupt countries in the world” (Busari, 2016).

Recent reports indicated that the bruised Panamanian law firm would, in the aftermath of the leak scandal, close their offices on the Isle of Man, Jersey and Gibraltar (Genova, 2016).

The writer wondered whether Singaporean citizens had also deposited money in the Mossack Fonseca warren of cubbyholes. Would it be credible to believe that despite its “clean” reputation and image, someone had succumbed to the forbidden fruit in the enticing orchard of tax avoidance? Time will tell – all is not what it appears to be!

As an aside but of interest is the fact that the summit produced some agreements which, if activated, could result in governments actively upgrading the fight against corruption. Appendix 4 cites sections from reports on the anti-corruption summit.

Back to The Lion City, rankings and a question

Let us revert to Singapore’s reputation. According to the global collation against corruption organisation, Transparency International (see Appendix 1), the 2015 rankings of 168 countries and territories feature:

- Denmark as the most “clean” from corruption with a score of 91/100
- Somalia registered as the least “clean” at notch 8
- Nigeria slips into 136/168 with a ranking of 26 – near to Somalia
- The United Kingdom at notch 10 is near to Finland

Interestingly, Singapore ranks at notch five away from the “very clean” with a score of 85 and ahead of The United Kingdom (ISSUU, 2015).

[Singapore] must be corruption-free... The basis for that was a non-corrupt bureaucracy, especially the police, heavy penalties for corruption, rigorous enforcement of the law. Today, people accept it as a fact - you've just got to obey the law...

(Ker 2013 citing Lee)

Walking the talk

Tackling the hydra-headed monster of corruption equated to the efforts of Hercules as described in the Twelve Labours of Hercules³⁰; clean governance not only introduced new legislation but began to challenge and eradicate years of criminality³¹.

[Singapore] must be corruption-free... The basis for that was a non-corrupt bureaucracy, especially the police, heavy penalties for corruption, rigorous enforcement of the law. Today, people accept it as a fact - you've just got to obey the law...

(Ibid, Ker, 2013 citing Lee)

Oops

Nonetheless, Singaporean corruption within the public offices realm recently surfaced when recent high-profile corruption cases involving public officers surfaced but, according to a Singaporean Government source, the incidents “had not dented its reputation for fighting graft” (Media, 2016). It is apparent that corruption, like the poor, will always be part of society!

Interestingly, while the initial surge of income into the two casinos operating in Singapore generated income, the anti-corruption drive in China, had impacted on the city-state.

It is believed that spending at the VIP gaming tables will also remain down based on the anti-corruption draft being led by Beijing, where gamblers are being turned away from Singapore and Macau.

(Source: Kelley, 2015)

Will further investigations into the Panama scandal include the all-important “off-shore” tax avoidance investments? Nevertheless, the highly critical and damning article in Appendix 2 merits the readers’ attention.

³⁰ Greek Mythology – see Riordan and Balit under Sources

³¹ See, Corruption.net <http://www.corruption.net/section/politics/singapore-lee-kuan-yew%E2%80%99s-fight-against-corruption/154>

Chapter 6

The Crucial Role of Governance and the Economy

Upon independence, around two million of the three million Singaporeans lacked employment. More than two-thirds of the population lived in slums and squatter settlements on the city's fringe.

Sandwiched between the then unfriendly states of Malaysia and Indonesia and lacking natural resources, adequate sanitation, proper infrastructure, and a sufficient water supply, Lee's PAP faced massive social and development challenges. Some 40 years later, Lee, when reflecting on where the journey began, looked back on his skillfully crafted mission and the outcomes to unashamedly answer the question, "How did this all happen?"

The only competitive advantage this country has is a good government, which has spawned good schools, the rule of law, meritocracy and corporate governance, which have in turn brought high-end investments here. These investments have raised the standard of living for all.

(Ibid, Ker 2013, citing Lee)

Understandably, Lee had initially sought international assistance - mostly unanswered. His political venture into nation building had then stood on a precipice that offered choices: collapse or fight to survive. Lee embraced the latter option and, like the Phoenix of Greek mythology³², Singapore began to rise from the ashes of the past to forge a new future and prospects for Singaporeans.

In one sense, just as the Liver Birds of Liverpool (UK) represent the indomitable spirit of Liverpoolians, and the Merlion alludes to Singapore's roots, the vision of Lee and his PAP reflects in the Phoenix and its triumph over the ashes of the past.

However, vision needed fulfilment in a mission – part of which was financial muscle – to enable the progression of a nation from the Third to the First World³³!

Lee, the visionary, controversial maverick, loved, admired and vilified leader, epitomised the spirit of Hamlet's soliloquy in Act III of The Bard's great work.

³² See Gill under Sources

³³ "From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000" (Lee, 2000).

To be or not to be-that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And, by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep-
 No more-and by a sleep to say we end
 The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to-'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished.

Setting the boundaries of governance

When just hitting his 40th birthday, Lee, at the helm of PAP governance, had engaged in building a modern metropolis from the scattered remnants of an arguably divisive legacy of colonial bedrock and swamps. The relatively new legislature addressed the shattered aftermath of World War II destructiveness. In parallel, Lee's trenchant removal of communist threats to the island's security and the introduction of threads of capitalist ideology gave the fledgeling arms of governance the space to build his unique "democratic" model – in the shadow of a self-defined authoritarian legislature.

... It must be a level playing field for all ... You must have a society that people believe is fair. We have a heterogeneous population - Chinese, Indians, Malays and others - so policy is colour-blind ...

(Ibid, Ker 2013 citing Lee)

Identifying the leaderships' esprit de corps

According to Reubi (2010), the bioethical research of Singaporean governance has established that the development of the country resulted from a particular style of reasoning viz. "the will to modernise" and that this type of thinking and subsequent action had characterised the leadership since independence (Ibid, Reubi 2010).

Strikingly, the core focus on the pioneer vision, enacted in its mission, kept the country moving forward. While gaining their satisfaction from their position, resultant

privileges, delegated power and financial earnings, those at the helm of governance continue to serve the best interests of their country – and the evolving results will remain open to view in the transparent Court of Sustainable Development!

We started rebuilding Singapore, and the two big organisations were the Housing and Development Board, and later on the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)...

(Ker, 2013 citing Lee)

Looking far afield – not to beg but to engage in business

According to Zhou (2016), Lee's driving initiative embraced the benefits offered by globalisation, free market capitalism, and strict pragmatic policies. Furthermore, the visionary focus of the united leadership, followed by the responsible operations of its mission, gave impetus to development without having to rely on foreign aid.

First, you must have an efficient administration... It cannot be one-off. It has to be regularly done, and there must be an organisation or several organisations that see to this.

(Ibid, Ker 2013)

Governance, with flexibility

Singapore's governance exemplifies the will to succeed and in so doing to explore alternative economic models. According to Huff (1995), the government had moved away from "the neo-classical model in development economics" – a concept that tied development to the market or a plan. The legislature had adopted structuralism that allowed "extensive government intervention" without an inflexible central plan and thus encouraged both state and private sector engagement. This parallel partnership found opportunities for a greater share of the foreign market by expanding services and goods to meeting the needs of the external requirement for manufactured products. Thus, national productivity and exports contributed to the nation's development.

Learning by looking and then planning

How then did Lee's drive to remove poverty and build a necessary infrastructure throughout a land previously dotted with swamps become a reality?

The challenge facing the relatively new government suggested that meritocracy was part of the solution – along with mass public housing programmes that soon accommodated many in need.

I learnt from negative examples. Hong Kong has crowded, tall buildings, you seldom get sunshine in the streets, no greenery. So that's something we must avoid. I also watched how the French cities did their underground roads ... and we had teams going out along the equator to collect various plants that will thrive in Singapore so we would have variety ... We are not the only city. There are thousands of other cities and we can see the mistakes they have made. We can also see what they have done right.

(Ibid, Ker 2013 citing Lee)

Furthermore, transport issues received attention; new roads replaced potholed vestiges of the past destructive evidence of colonial neglect and war – and dusty tracks disappeared under 20th-century tarmac.

Unless they are in place, it's very difficult to overcome the obstacles, so they must be in place early. You must have the infrastructure right, and that was made possible because we reclaimed coastal land without paying high compensation and so we had a brand-new airport and a brand-new East Coast Parkway.

(Ibid, Ker 2013, citing Lee)

The application of legal parameters

Firmly entrenched legal parameters provided space for the amalgamation of diverse, racial, ideologically divided, and culturally separated citizens to unite as a Singaporean population – a unification theoretically entrenched in patriotism but in practice, the process disturbed the indigenous citizens.

I think the large influx of immigrants has disturbed the population. But if you don't bring in these people, at the rate we're reproducing ourselves, we will cease to exist in two

generations. So you've got to balance this rate of inflow and the discomfort of seeing unfamiliar faces in crowded trains and buses. So we must have the immigrants to keep the place young, make the economy grow and look after the old. They are willing to sacrifice and work hard, they want to succeed. So they set the pace and the competition.

(Ibid, Ker 2013, citing Lee)

The sky is the limit

What financial provision provided a new cash cow entrance to Singapore? Changi Airport was one answer!³⁴. The inauguration of the Singapore Airlines carried the flag of Singapore from the Changi Airport hub. Some transportation-related subsidiaries covering maintenance, repairs and overhaul facilities linked across nine countries. Also, some other airline affiliates create a portfolio of 27 joint ventures. Notwithstanding the international ties, three subsidiary airlines operate nationally including the two low-cost members of the trio.

We became a hub because of the convenience. For shipping, you have to pass Singapore, it's the southernmost point (of continental Asia) ... We were poor and we were underdeveloped, so we had to work hard ... The chance (to industrialise) came with the British military withdrawal in 1971. They surrendered to us the land they were holding. So we had the Bases Conversion Unit, with (former minister of finance) Hon Sui Sen as the head. He knew all about land, and we entrusted to him the work of planning, where to build what on these vacant spaces.

(Ibid, Ker 2013 citing Lee)

It is not without justification that many hail Singapore as a city of the present. Lee's governance team and solid business acumen gave feet to a vision by energising a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound mission – a credible business model that catapulted the island state into global history. The power of

³⁴ Voted the world's 4th best airport for four successive years – see Changi under Sources

governance had, warts and all, forged a brand new island-city alongside the Johor Strait. How did he do it?

There are no haphazard buildings, like in Bangkok, Jakarta or even Kuala Lumpur, where you've got two tall towers and then squatters all around. There's a definite plan, and we stuck with the plan. There is no corruption and nobody can deviate from the plans. A building that is not in accordance with the plan cannot be allowed. Those were the basics, and that's how we started.

(Ibid, Ker, 2013 citing Lee)

Lee's vision and proactive "sleeves rolled up mission" made the island of nature-endowed "nothingness" into a veritable characterisation of Milton's *Paradise Regained* (Milton, 1671). Arguably, however, Lee's creation surpasses Milton's literary phantasmagoria because the Singaporean enterprise is tangible and not a combination of debatable theological mishmash intertwined with subjective interpretations! Above all, Lee was both the entrepreneur and the intrepeneur³⁵ - not the philosopher who dilly dallies with theories! Lee delivered substantial change within the structures of controversially viewed, authoritarian governance.

You've got to look ahead and forestall or pre-empt the problems. I mean, if we did not introduce the certificate of entitlement (a vehicle quota system begun in 1990) at a time when the public could not afford cars as much, you could not do it now without a big row - because you can't get people to give up their cars. But we did it when the cars were few. Today, it's accepted as a fact. If you want the roads to be free, you've got to pay for the right to use the roads.

(Ibid, Ker 2013 citing Lee)

Growing from the acorn into the tree

During the colonisation years, the island city's economy had focussed on entrepôt trade. However, this open door was partly closed when, on the brink of

³⁵ An inside entrepreneur - see Investopedia (2016) under Sources

Independence, “Indonesia’s policy of military confrontation directed at Singapore and Malaysia had dried up the entrepot from that direction”. Furthermore, after the British left, the city could not expand using the income derived from goods brought for import and export, and for collection and distribution. The most feasible way forward was to “embark on a comprehensive program of industrialisation, with a focus on labor-intensive industries” – the structuralism theory.

I feel that land acquisition is an example of our very creative, far-sighted, unconventional legal system³⁶, which is one of the key factors to our success story. What would you say about that? (The 1966 Land Acquisition Act lets the Government pay compensation for land it acquires based on current value and zoning. Landowners may question the compensation value, but not the acquisition itself).

(Ibid, Ker, 2013 citing Lee)

Creating – not crumbling

However, Singapore had no industrial tradition and its employment-population engaged mostly in trade and services. Individuals with industrial expertise were scarce. Furthermore, Singapore was an island – cut off from a hinterland and its hostile neighbours (at the time) did not relish trading with the Lee creation. Therefore, Singapore was forced to look for opportunities far beyond its borders to spearhead its industrial development (Zhou 2016).

Consequently, Singapore opened up its economic front:

- Despite the absence of natural resources, the government had capitalised on the country’s historically strategic location – a natural harbour. Some 40% of world maritime trade passes the Malacca mouth. Singapore had harvested the potential of the passing trade.
- Visionary insight led to a captivating mission that welcomed overseas trade and investment that resulted in multinationals using the hub to expand their businesses

³⁶ In this instance, too, Lee changed the rules to suit his plan and fulfil his vision,

- Governance remained small, efficient and honest - qualities absent in most of Singapore's neighbours
- Lee, the analytical thinker, had applied his authoritarian style of government to contribute to Singapore's success and had justified his approach by emphasising the island's vulnerability in a potentially hostile part of the world.

(Source: The Economist, 2016)

No monkey on his back

Fortuitously, Singapore was and is not bogged down with having to struggle to repay external debt. The Lion City's economy is not, for example, having to comply with International Monetary Fund rules and New Public Management instructions to dovetail into international aid agency conditions. Lee's "baby" was practically debt free from foreign sources and the legislature could plough money into internal needs and wants (Ibid, Sudha 2007).

Some thoughts on international aid and related charities – a slight diversion!

The comparatively advantageous Singaporean approach finds affirmation from Bruce Scott's (1997) reflections on the failure of Western economic policies for developing countries. Generous aid, investment bonanzas, and privatisation initiatives have done little to provide sustainable answers to meet the varied needs and wants of the targeted countries. The provision of capital to push-start disadvantaged economies failed to plug holes but, it would appear, created a cycle of dependency that kept a hand open and the "Please, Sir, may I have some more ... more ... more ... more and more"³⁷ pleas from supplicants continue to reverberate across the world.

Is charity the answer? Yes, Bob Geldof's "Live Aid" initiative, the cancellation of debt owed by developing countries and other commendable, humanitarian and religious undertaking will undoubtedly continue to serve limited purposes. Charities will stay on the bandwagon to ensure that in addition to their stewardship of donations, each will guarantee that arguably questionable administrative costs do not suffer (sic) – hope springs eternal!

³⁷ Oliver Twist – see Perdue (2016) under Sources

For example:

- Around 75% of donor money (at the most) goes to the “charitable venture or a child” (Charity, 2016)
- The writer suggests that while poverty lasts, most charities will provide employment for their staff, and in this day and age that doorway might be an excellent entry to a sustainable career choice!

Controversially, ambiguously worded and skillfully projected public relations images touch heartstrings but, at the end of the day and according to the words of the Christ, “The poor you will always have with you”³⁸ – this ambiguous statement raises many questions, does it not. Now, and as an aside, we might well wonder:

- Why the God of the Hebrews does not now provide manna and quails for the starving masses in many parts of the world³⁹?
- Why the revered Saviour of the World refrains from now turning stones into bread⁴⁰?
- Why the hungry will not always have fish, today⁴¹?

How, then, can we fallible mortals hope to address the needs of so many – especially when there is no end in sight? The writer continues to ponder the outcomes of Lee’s harsh and restrictive governance, and also the weak and insipid governance of the world by a seemingly distant divinity (set of divinities) – if, indeed such a god or gods exists.

Evidently the Prophet of Islam, in delivering the divine revelations that formed the Quran, believed that Islam must provide for those in need (Zakat). He, too, inferred that those in need will always be nearby. According to an Islamic charity:

Zakat, the giving of alms to the poor and needy, is one of the five pillars of Islam (the others are a declaration of faith, prayer, fasting in Ramadan and Hajj). It is obligatory upon every adult Muslim of sound mind and means. The individual must own a

³⁸ Matthew 26.11.

³⁹ Exodus 16.

⁴⁰ Matthew 4.3

⁴¹ John 21.6

specific amount of wealth or savings (after living costs, expenses etc). This is referred to as Nisaab and is the threshold at which Zakat becomes payable. The amount of Zakat to be paid is 2.5% of Nisaab.

(Source: Islamic Help, 2016)

Briefly, however, Singapore has gone some of the long and winding ways to solving its poverty issue (but more about that issue later), but its governance is a “classic example of the direct relationship between transparency and internally orchestrated regeneration and economic development (Ibid, Sudha 2007).

The wisdom of hindsight

A combination of factors, including the thieving practices of corrupt individuals who pocketed the proceeds of well-intentioned but possibly naïve foreign donors and investors hinder sincere charitable involvement. For example, the “Grandiose, but unproductive projects, propping up over-valued currencies and enriching corrupt officials” (Ibid Scott 1997) and the registered failures “in Latin America, Africa, and Southern Asia” (Ibid Scott 1997) tend to raise questions about the sustainable value of foreign aid. As a consequence, many would-be donors have begun to adopt a strategy of letting underdeveloped countries fix themselves. Potential investors now argue for economic freedom where the investment climate must subject itself to scrutiny. For example, questions are posed about taxation, regulations, licenses and the reciprocity of sending goods and profits back and forth (Ibid Scott 1997) and so on.

Now, let us turn again to Singapore’s financial acumen.

Governance is the driver

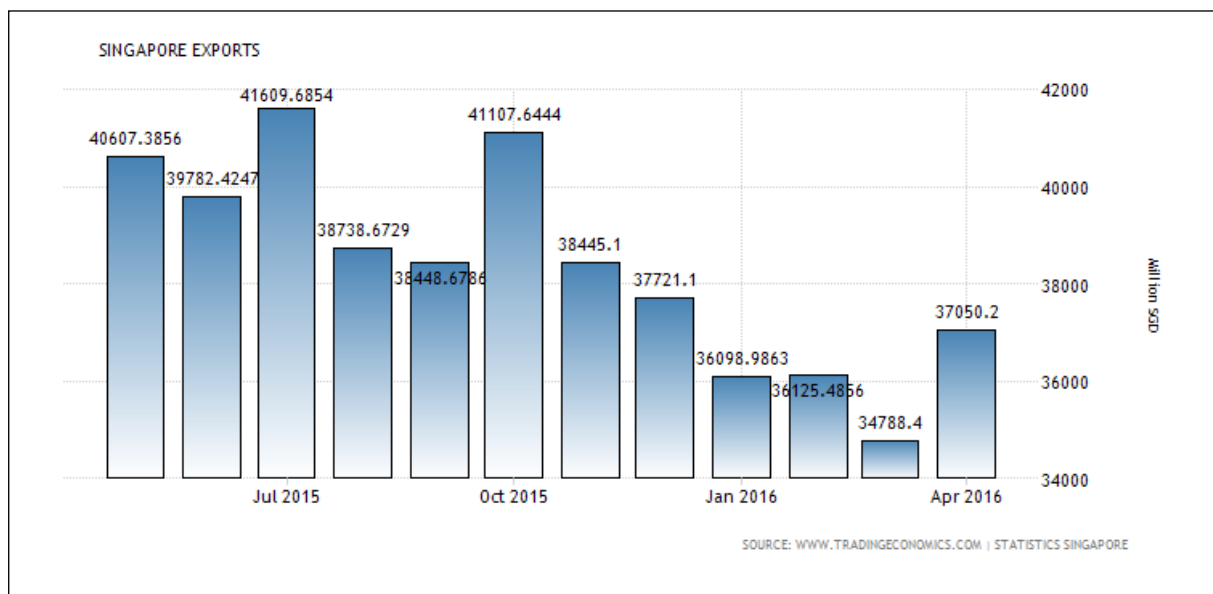
Crucial to development is whether the government is the economic driver and, according to Scott, whether the results provide evidence supporting the transparent, governing role of the legislature – the confidence of the voting majority:

- Hong Kong, Singapore, and Bahrain are at the top regarding economic freedom
- Cuba, Laos, and North Korea are at the bottom

- New Zealand ranks fourth
- The United States comes in at fifth place
- The United Kingdom (seventh) is well ahead of European welfare states such as Belgium (fifteenth), Germany (twentieth), Sweden (twenty-seventh), and France (thirty-first)

Voila! Figures are facts!

Exports in Singapore increased to 37050.20 Million SGD in April from 34788.40 Million SGD in March of 2016. Exports in Singapore averaged 13973.81 Million SGD from 1964 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 45075.52 Million SGD in October of 2013 and a record low of 197.68 Million SGD in July of 1964. (Source: Singapore Exports, 2016).



Graph I. Singapore and Exports

In addition to overseas labour, Singaporean's revenue is highly dependent on exports (foreign trade).

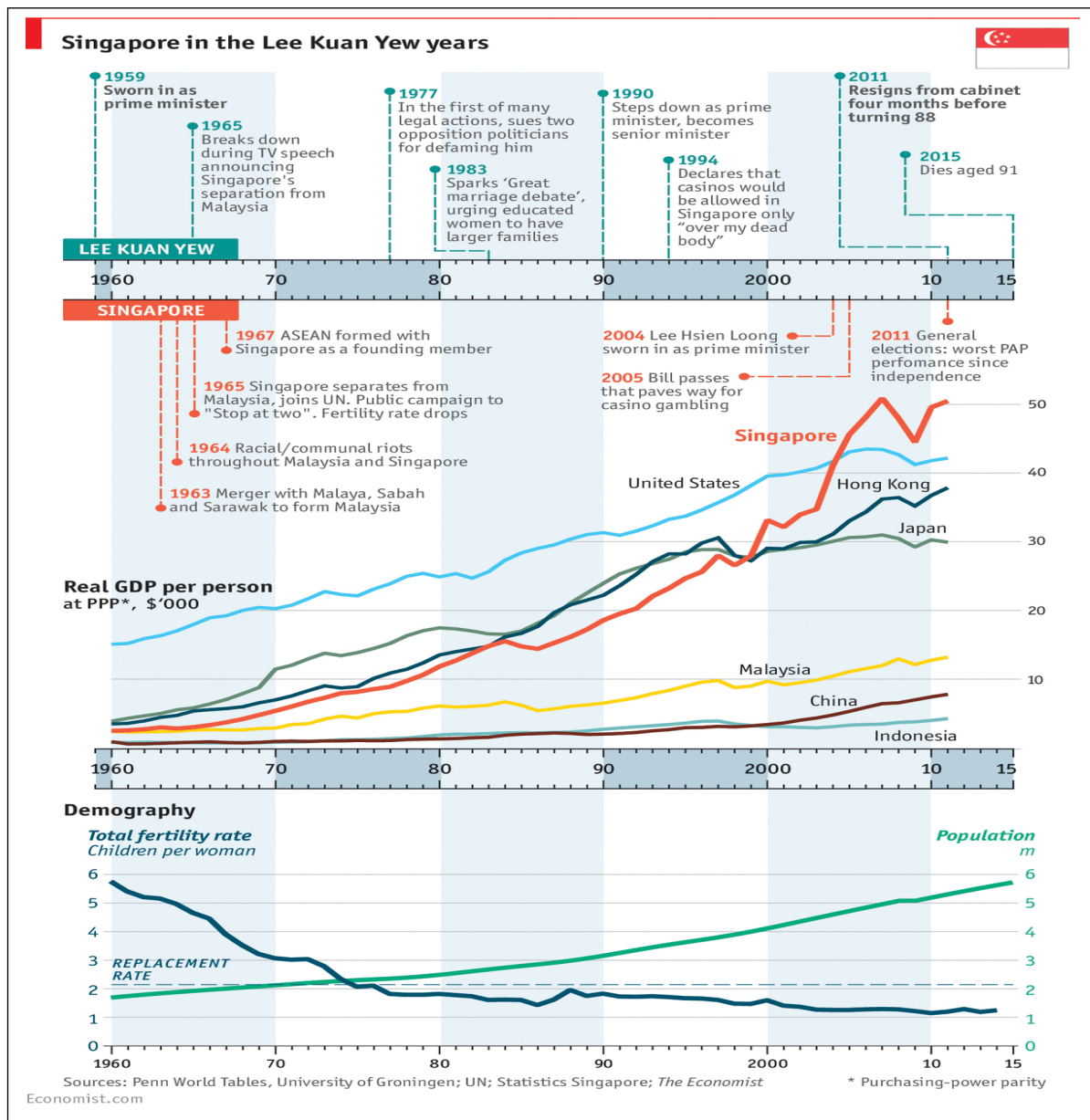
- A 46 percent share is machinery and equipment (with electronics accounting for 68 percent)
- The country also exports fuel (26 percent)
- Chemical products (13 percent)

- Miscellaneous manufacturers (8 percent)

Singapore's main exporter partners are

- China (12 percent)
- Malaysia (12 percent)
- Hong Kong (11 percent)
- Indonesia (10 percent)
- The European Union (9 percent)
- The United States (5.5 percent)

Chart 1. Lee's Economic Progress and Fertility rates (Penn World Tables, 2015)



In the three decades since Lee first became prime minister in 1959, until he stepped aside in 1990, per capita income in the city-state rose by a factor of 29, jumping from around \$435 to more than \$12,700. Nearby Malaysia only managed a ten-fold increase, from \$230 to around \$2400 (Ibid, Singapore Exports, 2016).

Economists remain divided over the causes behind this remarkable take-off. For some, it was the result of inspiration – the ability to import the best technologies from around the world thanks to a liberal economic model. For others, it was the consequence of perspiration – the sheer accumulation of factors of production such as labour and capital, accompanied by little technological growth (Giugliano 2015).

Not all is as it seems to be – for some!

Despite the realities of figures, Lee's economic success drew the attention of critics.

The Nobel Prize winning economist, Professor Paul Krugman, in an academic essay (Foreign Affairs, 1994) wrote a scathing article on Lee's leadership and the manner in which he used the workforce to accomplish his objectives. Krugman wrote:

- Singapore was akin to Stalin's Soviet Union
- The way in which Lee organised mobilisation of forces would have made Stalin proud
- That there was no sign of increased efficiency and "in this sense, the growth of Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore is an economic twin of the growth of Stalin's Soviet Union

Apparently, according to Giugliano (2015):

- Krugman's opinion resulted from the research by a professor at the London School of Economics (LSE), Alwyn Young. The LSE academic tried to understand what had caused Singaporean growth between the 1960s and 1990s
- Young had stated that Lee's model of development during the thirty-year period equated to the Stalinist approach of doubling the labour force. This model would not be sustainable – technology was the better option

Understandably, the article outraged Lee and to crown the criticism, Chang-Tsai Hsieh a Chicago Booth University academic penned his scepticism of the accuracy

of the Singaporean accounts which, he believed “significantly overstated the amount of investment spending which went on in the city-state in the decades to 1990” (Ibid, Giugliano 2015). Armchair critics have their place but ... did anyone research the opinions of the overseas labourers – their opinion matters, does it not.

An ineffectual response

Nevertheless, and in a 1996 response, the Singaporean Government created the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board, whose aim was to “raise productivity as to enhance Singapore’s competitiveness and economic growth” (Ibid, Giugliano 2015). Overall, however, productivity growth remained impoverished (Ibid, Giugliano 2015).

The end justified the means – or did it?

Notwithstanding, Lee countered the statistics by continuing to attract migrant workers and, of course, extending the working hours.

However, for all the government’s efforts at boosting efficiency – and spectacular growth rates, which eventually brought per capita income to hit \$55,000 in 2013 – productivity growth in Singapore has remained weak (c.f. The “Black Box”).

Perhaps, comparatively speaking, Singapore does not match up to the growth of South Korea after the destructive Japanese colonisation (1910 – 1945) when, the Meiji government, the army and business magnates had wanted to integrate Korea both politically and economically into the Empire of Japan (Nahm, 1996).

South Korea, for example, some nine years later, while still licking its wounds from the defeated Japanese occupiers, and the subsequent devastating civil war of (1951 – 1953) had laid great emphasis on labour intensive programmes and entrepreneurship. Did the end justify the means? Arguably, South Korea’s subsequent ascendancy (socially, economically and politically) owed its successes also to interludes of autocratic rule, unbridled nepotism, “jobs for the boys” and bribery linked to its early leadership figures⁴² - but at whose expense?

Is it not wise to be cautious about trade-off actions? Readers will be aware of the Great Wall of China. The Emperor Qin Shi Huang (c 221 BCE), the first emperor of a

⁴² Arguably, the controversial Park Chung-Hee mirrored many of Lee’s attributes and “rebuilt” South Korea.

unified China had his minions demolish the pieces of wall dotted throughout the Kingdom. To then preserve the security of China, Qin's famous general Meng Tian directed the project and engaged the labour of "a massive army of soldiers, convicts and commoners". However, some "400,000 people died during the wall's construction; many of these workers [lie] buried within the wall itself" (History, 2010). Did the end justify the means? After all, after the death of Emperor Qin, much of the Wall fell into disrepair. This wall-building enterprise project went ahead with scant regard for the people who were torn from homes and their families to die. All that is now left is a tourist attraction – ruins built on bones and flesh and watered with the blood of forced and exploited services of labourers. Needless to say, Lee's dominating and dictatorial nature saw the result of his objectives – the in-between bits were not important.

Whoever governs Singapore must have that iron in him. Or give it up. This is not a game of cards! This is your life and mine! I've spent a whole lifetime building this and as long as I'm in charge, nobody is going to knock it down.

(Source: Lee, 1980)

Foreign workers, education, jingoism and xenophobia

Lee's mission depended heavily on foreign workers, as also noted by the critics of his labour-intensive programmes (c.f. Lee, page 60). In addition, Mark Fenn (2014) writes:

- Foreign workers contributed 4 percent of Singapore's growth for the period 2004 – 2014
- In contrast, Singapore's "home-grown" productivity grew by 1 percent
- The outcome resulted in an 80 percent contribution by foreign workers and a 5 percent input by Singaporeans

The bottom line indicates that recession would have hit The Lion City without the labour and skills from non-Singaporeans. The figures would suggest that there is an apparent dearth of talent amongst Singaporeans - after all, the citizens only added a 1 percent productivity ratio.

However, in common with most countries, the presence of foreigners in the workforce polishes the lamp that awakens the resident jinns that then raise sensitive issues such as jingoism, xenophobia, gerrymandering, the lack of employment opportunities for indigenous Singaporeans, destructive social conflict, cultural clashes and racial conflict.

The conflict-ridden side of the immigration issue remains a running sore in the country. For example, Fenn (2014) cites a 2014 incident in the Little India district where Indian and Bangladeshi workers rioted – apparently in protest against “hateful or xenophobic comments, especially online”.

The population has increased dramatically in recent decades thanks to an influx of foreigners, who now make up around two out of five residents. This has put a growing strain on jobs, housing and infrastructure, and raised fears about the dilution of the Singaporean national identity.

(Ibid, Fenn 2014)

Complaints against foreigners also target “highly paid ‘foreign talent’ to heavily exploited labourers from China and the Indian sub-continent” (Ibid, Fenn 2014). The writer wonders whether the same issues shall also continue to fester in other countries. For example, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and parts of the western world.

Nonetheless, the Singaporean government continues to invite foreign investment to ensure that the country continues to grow.

Inspire change: Your dreams and ideas drive our nation.

(Source: Future Ready Singapore, 2016)

These realities raise the need for an answer to “why?” and the answers might offer a challenge to any reader wishing to add a tertiary degree to their wampum belt! However, the issues of l'égalité, de liberté et de fraternité – are for another day - that revolutionary model is not this essay's topic!

Chapter 7

The Crucial Role of Governance and Education

While investigating the status quo of Singaporean education⁴³, the writer realised that adequately to address the issue the content would require a separate academic essay. As a compromise, then, the following is a synopsis of Singapore's education scenario.

In essence, Singapore's education hub reflects many of the challenges common to most countries:

- The inequality of opportunity
- Perceived elitism versus the ordinary people
- The process of reducing non-essential rote learning
- Teaching students to process information as opposed to just testing
- Developing critical thinking
- Manageable class sizes with a constructive student to teacher ratio
- The preparation of students for the ever-changing and volatile marketplace

Education within the context of development

Briefly, during the late 1960s to 1970s, the island was in a survival mode where economic sustenance and critical policies such as education and unemployment stood at 9.2 percent. These issues, juxtaposed with the sacrifice of self-interest for national stability (Boon and Gopinathan, 2006) challenged the fledgeling government. In a similar vein, South Korea's awakening strategy to support its liberating survival after the aggressive early 1950s invasion from the communist north (Nahm, 1996) demonstrates the power of a patriotic nation and the influential support of the USA.

During the British colonial rule of Singapore, "education was a tool to meet political and ethnic primordial interests" (Boon and Gopinathan, 2006). Contrariwise, the Lee

⁴³ Consider, as a foretaste to an interesting journey the link <https://thehearttruths.com/2013/11/21/how-is-singapores-education-system-unequal/>

government saw the value of economics in the role of education and the importance of socialisation as a nation-building process that would develop a Singaporean identity as essential factors. "National integration through a national education system was also seen as crucial for economic survival" (Boon and Gopinathan, 2006).

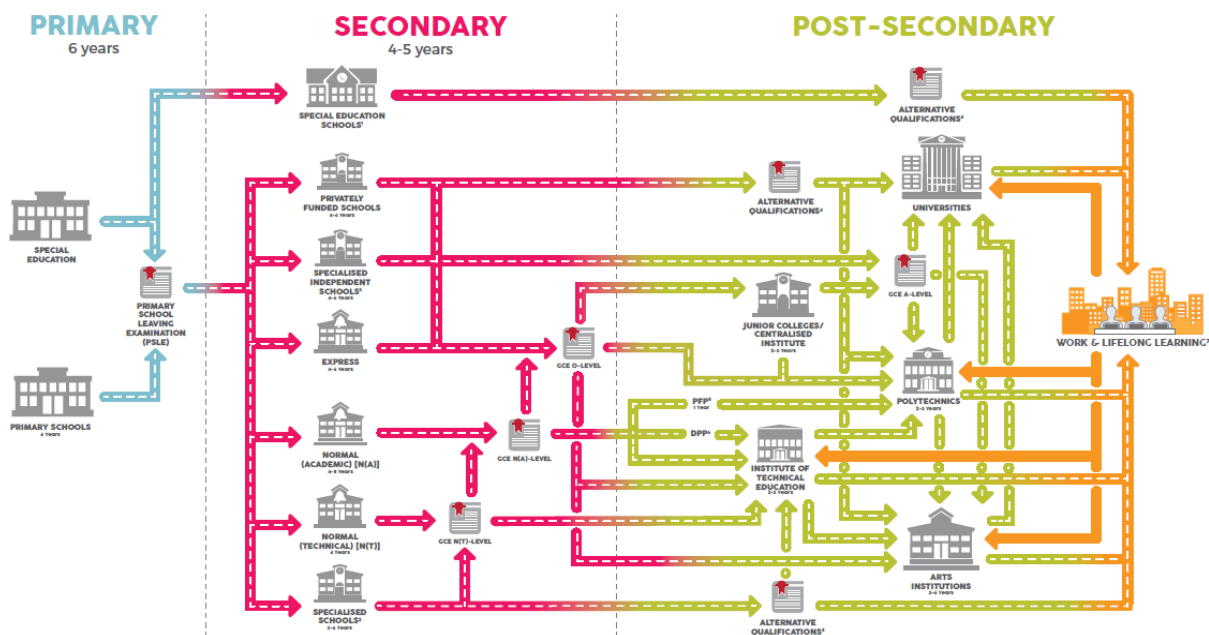
Education is an evolving discipline and Singapore is aware that the sustainability of the city-state's foundation success rests on the shoulders of successful students - the young men and women who will be seeking career opportunities within the country. Heng cited in a BBC report elaborates on the educational focus as, "In sum, our circumstances force us to take education very seriously because it is critical to our survival and success, [because] Education shapes the future of our nation" (Lim, 2012). English is the medium for education but "Malay, Mandarin Chinese and Tamil are also taught" (focussingapore, n.d.).

Overall, education in Singapore is highly rated, and the discipline falls under two main government bodies viz. the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2016) and the Singapore Pre-School Accreditation Framework (SPARK). The MOE is the body that accredits schools, and SPARK sanctions child care and kindergarten centres.

Both the government and private sectors play their respective roles in providing education and international schools, and universities add to the some "365 schools altogether, including primary schools, secondary schools, junior colleges, and mixed-level schools" (InterNations, n.d.).

Singapore's Education System

Singapore's Education System : An Overview



(Source: MOE 2016)

Singapore, like most South East Asian countries, remains wedded to the “traditional images of high-pressure Asian schools - with rows of heads buried in books” (Ibid, Lim, 2012).

Disabilities Education is now rolling out across Singapore. Since 2010, the Ministry of Education began to focus on this area of learning. From January 2010, Singapore had “20 SPED schools, run by 13 Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs), which receive funding from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the National Council of Social Service (NCSS)” (Ibid, MOE, 2016).

Despite a search of the available literature the writer did not find any information about education for exceptionally gifted children – either as a separate institution or within an existing structure.

Most schools have experienced teachers who are capable of taking care of children with minor learning disabilities. However, designated schools offer special facilities for physically or mentally handicapped children. That way, kids who do not benefit from mainstream education receive a viable alternative.

(Source: Ibid, cpe, 2015)

The Private Council for Education (cpe), allows the registration of private bodies but does not guarantee the acceptance of the private school's qualifications, the accreditation of the school or the quality of its courses (cpe, 2015). The graduate's acceptance for further studies or employment is at the discretion of the prospective "employer, education institution or organisation" (Ibid, cpe, 2015). The writer's interpretation of the sourced literature suggests that while allowing non-accredited learning to exist, the practice is passively discouraged. Information about the accreditation rationale did not appear in the reviewed literature.

The provision of 18 junior colleges at the pre-university level provide students with an alternative to the three-year programmes. Two-year programmes are on offer for students wishing to study at a university, and elective programmes include, "humanities, arts, music and language" (ibid, focussingapore, n.d.). International students can fill available places – but Singaporeans come first.

The MOE allocates 20% of its annual budget for the development of educational institutes managed and appropriated by its ministry.

A certain amount of academic freedom exists in both state and private education endeavours – when designing the curriculum. Tuition fees and admission policies, if approved by the government will earn qualified aid, and schools also assist.

As a note of warning, parents who fail to enrol their children in schools at the right age will face criminal charges.

The Singapore Education Landscape

1. Pre-schools (crèche and kindergarten)
2. Primary Schools
3. Secondary Schools
4. Special Education Schools
5. Post-Secondary Schools
6. Pre-University Colleges
7. Private Education
8. Technical Education (ITE)
9. International Schools
10. Universities (Singaporean and International)
11. Polytechnics

“Grades and scoring system

“The categories and their representation are as follows:

“A1/A2 – Distinction

“B3/B4 – Merit

“C5/C6 – Credit/Pass

“D7 - Sub-fail/Pass

“E8/F9 – Fail

“After a secondary education, the students are then progressed to post-secondary education or junior college, depending on their interests.”

(Sources: Ibid, focussingapore, n.d. and MOE, 2016).

Michael Gove, the past, controversial and somewhat discredited United Kingdom Education Minister, reportedly praised the Singapore education system as “the world leading” (Ibid, focussingapore, n.d.).

The Singapore Education Landscape

12. Pre-schools (crèche and kindergarten)
13. Primary Schools
14. Secondary Schools
15. Special Education Schools
16. Post-Secondary Schools
17. Pre-University Colleges
18. Private Education
19. Technical Education (ITE)
20. International Schools
21. Universities (Singaporean and International)
22. Polytechnics

Chapter 8

The Crucial Role of Governance in addressing Poverty

The earlier pages of this essay made reference to poverty and charities. Following that foreshadowing, this penultimate chapter discusses the worldwide presence of poverty and illustrates that governance plays a crucial role in addressing poverty.

A synoptic comparison between Cuba with Singapore and the summarised information provided by Holmes (2015) and Logan (2015) sets out the difference that governance makes.

Cuba 1959 forwards

Wealthy - rich natural resources such as tobacco, sugar and coffee and a thriving tourist industry. An active workforce.

Fidel Castro overthrows Batista in 1959, cuts diplomatic ties with the USA in 1961 – aligns with the Soviet Union and all business is nationalised. Lived on handouts from the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991.

Castro initiates some free market initiatives.

Social unrest in 1994 and mass exodus of the population to the USA.

Poverty rate at 65%. Standard of living drops below that before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

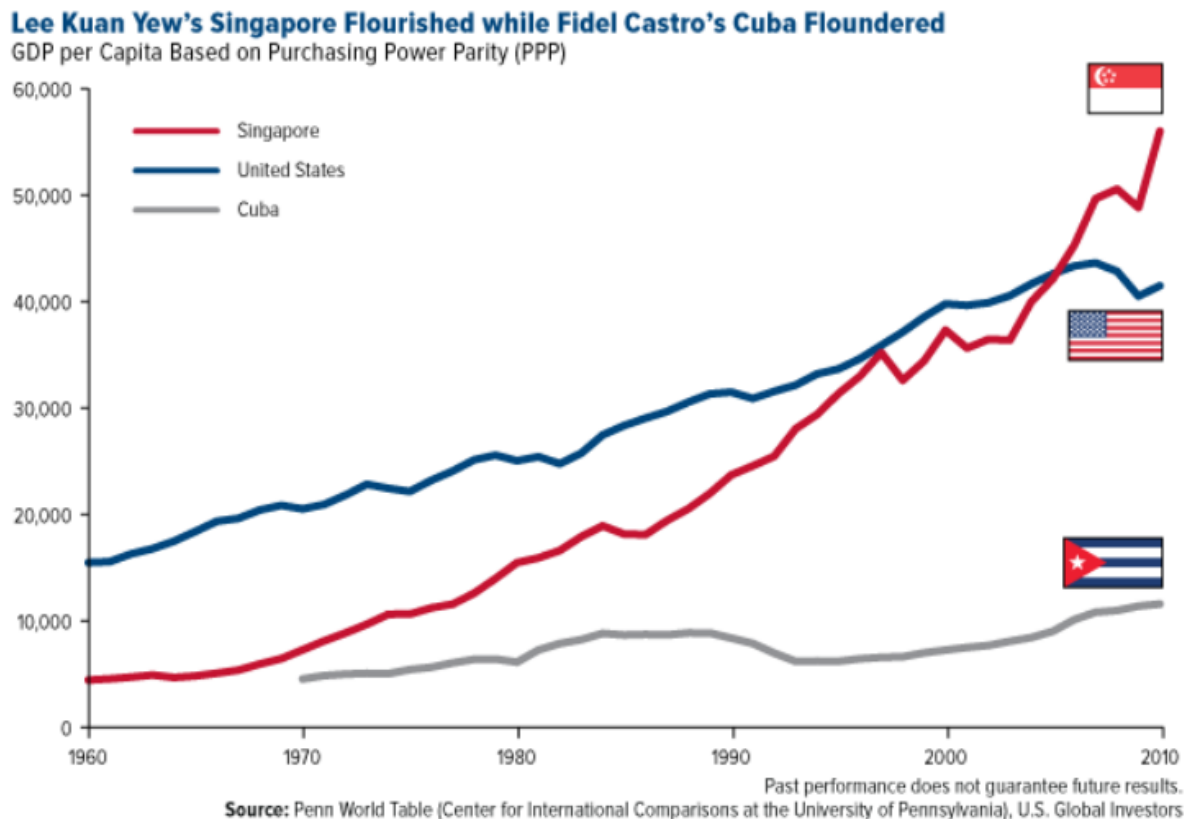
Out of a population of 11.3 million, 5 million take part in the labour force.

A crackdown on journalists.

Fidel Castro resigns and is replaced by his brother in 2006.

Obama removes sanctions as Cuba begins reforms and free enterprise returns to Cuba's streets.

Graph 1. The two Interesting Journeys of Lee and Castro.



The visionary Lee, enriched by a deliverable mission, gave the city-state and a previously battered island, a home to some 5 - 6 million inhabitants.

However, post-2015, “The King is dead – long live the King”. What do Singaporeans, post-Lee Kuan Yew, want now?

The reality of poverty in one of the world’s wealthiest and developed countries raises concerns amongst analysts and others⁴⁴. However, all is not as it appears to be! Like the iceberg, Singapore’s public image is only one part of the Singaporean journey.

Despite holding the world's highest concentration of millionaires, the city-state also boasts the second-biggest inequality gap among Asia's advanced economies.

(Source: Leyl, 2014)

Now, there are many ways in which poverty is determined and measured. So, let us continue with our journey as we try to understand “why?”

⁴⁴ View the BBC video at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-26268500> - a chilling narrative and the power of subjective media reactions and public denial.

The Singaporean government is aware of the poverty anomaly in their country that is also a showcase of splendour to the world. Tan Su Shan, a nominated member of the government and Minister for Social and Family Development, when replying to a question about the “Poverty Line in Singapore” in Parliament (MSF, 2016) stated that:

- The government was stepping up assistance to help needy Singaporeans
- In so doing, defined groups identified by clear criteria received attention and appropriate schemes directed to applicants
- Housing and healthcare, early childhood development and education cover a wider range of Singaporeans – with lower income groups receiving higher levels of subsidy
- The workforce and ComCare programmes provide additional assistance to a smaller group who need extra support
- The government regularly publishes information on schemes and the number of people assisted plus information on the numbers and needs of the lower income groups
- Household and worker incomes are also publicly available

Interestingly, while in 2015, the World Bank updated its international poverty line from \$1.25 per day to \$1.90 purchasing-power parity (World Bank, 2015), and as with some governments⁴⁵, the Singaporean legislature still refrains from setting a “poverty line”.

The estimated minimum level of income needed to secure the necessities of life.

(Source: Oxford Dictionary)

While the writer remains sceptical of Singapore’s avoidance of a poverty line, Ms Tan’s official rationale, despite its woolly argument and a somewhat evasive denial deserves attention.

Ms Tan’s statement argues that a poverty line is not the best tool because:

⁴⁵ For example, South Korea

- A poverty line is one-dimensional and fails to take all aspects affecting different poverty-racked situations
- A poverty line fails to identify the “depth or intensity of needs of low-income families”
- A poverty line is discriminatory because “those below the line are guaranteed a whole range of help and those above receive none, regardless of actual needs” and
- A poverty line stigmatises people as “poor and needy”

Ms Tan’s published reply emphasises the government’s commitment to “do more” and the legislature “will work with community organisations and kind-hearted Singaporeans who have been playing a crucial role in helping the needy in Singapore” (Ibid, MSF, 2016). Hmm! Good politics but a possible denial of reality.

Nevertheless, the published statistics do not add shine to the Singaporean miracle! The Singaporean project appears to have failed to address the endemic poverty in its midst adequately. Consider the following paradoxes cited by Cho (2015):

- Singapore is one of the richest countries per capita and ranked 6th (2012) in the world but ...
- One-tenth of the population lives in poverty – affecting some 105,000 families (one in 10 family homes, or 378,000 people) who have some \$5 to spend every day after earning around \$805 per month and ...
- On the other side of the road, the city-state accommodates the highest concentration of millionaires in the world, however ...
- The gap between the top 10% of the wage-earner households earns as much as 25 times more than the bottom 10% so, ironically ...
- Wages for high earners increased, but those lower down the pile suffered a decrease in salaries and sadly ...
- Between 2015 and 2015, “the price of goods and services rose by 13.1 percent”

Interestingly, globalisation is hurting Singaporean people, and poverty is increasing, despite government efforts currently underway⁴⁶.

Much of the country's poverty is created by the influx of foreign workers taking blue collar jobs that were once held by native Singaporeans. Foreign workers unfortunately mean cheaper labor. There is always a cost to globalization, and this time it has affected Singaporeans in their own home.

(Ibid, Choi 2015)

Furthermore, the World Bank's statement demands consideration (World Bank, 2016).

- Singapore is a high-income, competitive, business-friendly economy with a gross national income of around \$55,150 per capita (Atlas Method), as of 2014 – an entrepreneur's paradise
- GDP, averaged a 7.7% growth since independence – topping 9.2% in the first 25 years
- Per capita GDP grew by 5.4% since independence and peaked at 7.2% after its first 25 years
- Manufacturing drives economic growth
- The manufacturing and service sectors form the twin pillars of the Singaporean economy

Now, let us turn to the “Black Box” – the often buried parts of the Singaporean Odyssey.

As a further comparative source, the reader may care to read an Apple News report about Cambodia – Appendix 5.

Cambodian independence covers some three decades. Governance and development are aeons apart from Singaporean successes.

The major cause for the parlous Cambodian situation reflects on the alleged stranglehold that corruption, nepotism and the bullying influence of greedy, self-serving and powerful authority figures exert on the population.

⁴⁶ Read: ROY NGERNG, <https://thehearttruths.com/2013/10/28/poverty-in-singapore-grew-from-16-in-2002-to-28-in-2013/>

The “Black Box” opened

Two realities, the inexorable march of history and the unavoidable nemesis – the Product Life Cycle – record and affect the changing needs and wants of individuals. Furthermore, adapting to external forces and realigning personal objectives are everyday realities. The imperative of change enshrines the primal DNA of nature and humanity.

The Singaporean government faces new challenges – somewhat different from those encountered during its earlier history but, when focussing on sustainability, the contents of this literary “Black Box” surpass those overcome during the city-state’s early stages of growth.

In consequence, the surfacing of unpredictable external and internal forces requires a steady and pro-active leadership to address the evident, bubbling, societal cauldron. Perhaps, evolution provides a gentle reminder about the necessity to “adapt or die”. Consider, for example, that the lesson of the dinosaurs reminds us of the ever-present winds of change – is Singaporean governance up to the challenge?

Publicised issues

The Prime Minister, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, in his 2009, political address said that Singapore continued to “to renew itself, even in the midst of the recession” (Lee, 2009). Citing evidence of the progressive actions initiated by the legislature, the Prime Minister noted infrastructural development:

- New and well-equipped schools, polytechnics, libraries and MRT lines
- The revitalising of the Marina Bay area would include an integrated resort, bridge and gardens

Arguably, all that glitters is not necessarily gold. Surely, a city is more than just infrastructural requirements, embellishments, glitz and pristine cleanliness! The Lion City is, above all, a home to people. However, it would appear that while the majority prosper, many voters feel left behind.

Importantly, too, is the reassessment by many unhappy people as to how their society must be managed. While the free-market and global cooperation trumped up

the market⁴⁷ over Soviet dictatorships in 1989, a pyrrhic gain for “democracy” was not a final victory for the people. The resultant tunnel vision of technocratic politics concentrated on process and project thus overriding the justified needs and wants of all the people. Voters had no choice but to stay on the newly created “democratic” bandwagon, dip expectantly into the free market and link hopeful arms around the world. However, it would now appear that the economic cost resulted in the trade off of nationalism, and the loss of a significant degree of independence - a mindless attack on culture and entrenched social values.

In the Singaporean sense, too, the dichotomy between the economics of the project requiring the trading off of the needs of the people has left deep scars where, in the interest of Lee’s national objectives, legal structures continue to block dissident public opinion. Social unrest caused by a disregard for specific religious needs and disrespect for ethnicity hits the streets. The trade-off produced unexpected results (c.f. Chapter 7).

Regardless, insensitive meritocracy continues to embrace and cull the skills and talents of international ex-pats and the alternative employment opportunities for local citizens suffer (c.f. page 27). While the merits and demerits of this approach deserve a full debate, the immediate outcomes are evident in pockets of social discontent⁴⁸. All is not as it appears to be in The Lion City graced by tourists and lauded by the bottom line bias of business enterprise.

History reminds us that the majesty of the Palace of Versailles was soon to bow before the sharp blade of the guillotine. Similarly, the once up-and-coming European Union now finds itself knee-deep in financial difficulties and faces a rising tide of discontent from many unhappy citizens from its now 27 member states⁴⁹ – Britain is “out”. A scenario linked to the needs and wants of the majority of voting citizens who had “had enough” of the authoritarian interference from Brussels.

Racism, religion – ethnic ownerships

⁴⁷ No pun intended – but Donald Trump is well known!

⁴⁸ Consider reviewing Lee’s reported statements on pages 25 – 27.

⁴⁹ Reportedly, The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Austria are apparently eyeing the Exit door

However, according to Prime Minister Lee, attention to emerging challenges weighed heavily on the country because of religious and racial disharmony (some 300 reported incidents a year). Indeed, how will the needs and wants of the voters be met when it comes to the thorny and contentious issues around the hydra-headed icon of culture?

In parallel, the core cultural realities of many British people surfaced after the recent decision by the plebiscite to leave the European Union. Bagehof (2016) writing in the Economist adds a sobering slant to one reason by some who voted “Leave” viz. the overwhelming presence of foreign workers in many parts of the country.

The town has a higher proportion of EU [earners] among its population than any other in Britain (13%), mostly Poles and Lithuanians who work on the surrounding vegetable farms.

No one would talk Brexit without mentioning immigration. “I have a family that comes here, they don’t speak a word of English,” one stallholder told Bagehot. “Rents are going up, schools, hospitals,” riffed Ann, a pub landlady. Several drinkers in The Eagle talked of petty crime and reckless driving: bangers with Polish plates bombing along the Fen roads, their drivers clipping the boggy curbs and flipping into drainage ditches.

(Source: Bagehof, 2016)

Nonetheless, elements of racism and the “Korea for the Korean People” slogans surface also in South Korea (Hyams, 2015). Similarly, the ongoing Uyghur resentment against the Chinese government (Siddiqui, 2015) and, of course, Donald Trump’s take on American society including his grand scheme that includes the corralling of all Muslims under a blanket ban. Apparently, Trump views each Muslim as either a terrorist or a potential threat to national security. However, this alarming proposal nevertheless appeals also to his vociferous and large following – some of whom come from Bible thumping religious groups (Rappeport, 2016). Notwithstanding, the reactionary evidence is notable also in many European and African countries – often resulting in civil wars and related atrocities (Shah, 2016).

Singapore's challenges are not localised issues but also paralleled in other parts of the globe. However, will Singapore learn any lessons?

In essence, the possibilities of Singaporean liberalism might result in more severe and societally damaging outcomes as in situ nationalism reacts against the viscous spread of the enforced and unwelcome integration-come-what-may approach.

Disgruntled voters seek scapegoats when the Establishment appears distant, uncaring and insensitive to their needs over and above its imposed national philosophy in pursuit of international expat skills to run the country. The subsequent reaction that buries justified nationalism under the label of jingoism, extreme patriotism or right-wing views, is unhelpful and counterproductive and an evidence of a lack of emotional intelligence by the government and proponents of the preservation of cultural identity. Disquiet and unhappiness cannot remain buried under the defensive rhetoric of the otherwise valuable liberal agendas of those in power.

Perhaps, more educational efforts could further prepare and develop younger Singaporeans – the future adults – to strengthen the country's independence and reliance on home-grown talents and abilities (c.f. education).

The writer wonders whether the apocryphal story of the Tower of Babel in the Old Testament holds a message for today viz. language (an element of culture) is also meant to keep different people apart from each other. If so, then globalisation and internationalism fly in the face of an alleged divine institution, do they not. However, the answer to the conundrum depends on whether myths have a place in history!

Quo Vadis, Singapore?

Meritocracy and the guarded road to the ballot box

Would Singapore have arrived at its current destination if there were no limitations on the freedom of speech? The writer believes that the question is academic and serves only to muddy the waters. Circumstances have changed and times are different. The reality demands more than using the ridiculous and counterproductive "what if" defence.

Alarming, there is an apparent upsurge of discontent amongst many Singaporeans who are not prepared to accept the limits also placed on the freedom of speech, association and expression (c.f. pages 36 – 39).

Furthermore, 21st-century citizens are better educated, and many have a wider span of knowledge than their predecessors. Is it not a matter of time before the people will demand open access to the ballot box?

Time erases the aura of sentimentality

There is no doubt that Lee Kuan Yew was a leader who stood head and shoulders above many others in the land of giants, but his name will soon become just that – a name in history but void of the three generations of sentimentality that guarded him and lived in his shadow⁵⁰.

World leaders have come and gone – some renowned and others notorious. Each has left their stamp on the nation, and all had followers and protractors. As time marched on their names filled the niches of history. Mandela, for example, led South Africa to freedom but his successors ...

Few in the world know of Sir Stamford Raffles – a hotel carries his name and his statue stand on a plinth in The Lion City. Lee, the mover and shaker who gave Singapore flesh and blood has gone – the King is dead, long live the King!

While petitions circulate asking the Government to honour the nation's Founder with a statue, resistance from some of his family appears to delay a response. Lee was not an Ozymandias (c.f. page 23) who carved his ego in stone that was to crumble in the desert. Lee did, however, engrave his powerful and charismatic image in the hearts and minds of the generations who knew him ... but they, too, will follow his funeral cortege until their death. However, hunger is not sated and deprivation is not satisfied by nibbling on dollops of sentimentality and from yesterday's manna.

The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy now perpetuates his philosophy. However, a new generation is mushrooming and even Margaret Thatcher's coined

⁵⁰ One generation = 25 years.

“Thatcherism” receives scant 21st-century acknowledgement and the country she led is moving away from her ideals and influential thinking.

Perhaps the explosion of Singaporean initiative and governance has a lesson for every nation. Political drive sets its wheels of progress turning but will the driver now change gear?

So, as we decode the Black Box let us turn to the engulfing sweep of liberalism sweeping the world – a philosophy that, if applied in a balanced manner will address the issues facing Singaporean governance (Gaus,2014).

Post-Lee Kuan Yew governance holds the key, does it not. The needs and wants of a rising number of people whose voice remains unheard in mainstream politics cry out for attention. The Singaporean legislature is not alone in its position. Consider the following leaders who represent a growing number of followers and who are seeking political redress against the inroads of a one-sided liberalism that ignores the individual (Time Inc, 2016):

- Donald Trump (USA) – immigration, religion and liberalism
- Marie Le Pen (France) - immigration, protectionism
- Siv Jensen (Norway) - immigration, free market, law and order
- Nigel Farage and the Brexit voters (Britain) – immigration, sovereignty, Euroscepticism, cultural identity
- Heinz-Christian Strache (Austria) - Euroscepticism, immigration, cultural identity
- Bruno Valkeniers (Belgium) - Flemish independence, multiculturalism, traditional values
- Geert Wilders (Netherlands) - anti-establishment, Islam, Euroscepticism, law enforcement
- Gabor Vona (Hungary) – the Roma minority
- Pia Kjaersgaard (Denmark) - immigration, Euroscepticism, traditional values
- Umberto Bossi (Italy) - Immigration, devolution
- Udo Voigt (Germany) - Capitalism, globalisation, Islam
- Timo Soini (Finland) – Euroscepticism, Euro bailouts, immigration

Lee Kuan Yew had learnt much about British politics and culture during his years of study at Cambridge University. He built his country on many core British political concepts. In a similar vein, for example, South Korea has modelled much of its political governance on America.

Because news travels at the click of a button and ideologies spread, Lee's straight jacketed authoritarian governance structure is now up against a more outspoken local and international group of critics (c.f. page 38) whose unmet needs and wants clamour for recognition. The echoes will filter across the Ethernet to Singaporeans.

Both the advantages and disadvantages of Singaporean meritocracy, the existence of poverty and the limit of personal and media freedoms are issues suggesting that the government has many cases to answer. Perhaps a balanced liberal approach might offer some solutions.

Liberalism. A political doctrine that takes protecting and enhancing the freedom of the individual to be the central problem of politics. Liberals typically believe that government is necessary to protect individuals from being harmed by others; but they also recognize that government itself can pose a threat to liberty. As the revolutionary American pamphleteer Thomas Paine expressed it in "Common Sense" (1776), government is at best "a necessary evil." Laws, judges, and police are needed to secure the individual's life and liberty, but their coercive power may also be turned against him. The problem, then, is to devise a system that gives government the power necessary to protect individual liberty but also prevents those who govern from abusing that power.

(Source: Girvetz, 2016)

Poverty, an egalitarian approach and economics – a time to ponder

What if Singapore:

- Analysed, and then revised their political strategy after noting the disastrous decisions that flawed technocrats made about the stumbling European currency, the subsequent stagnation of enterprise and the unemployment fiasco that is driving Europe apart
- Accepted that while globalisation is beneficial and trade with China has benefitted many, the process also decimated the steel industry in the United Kingdom
- Address the anomaly that many potential citizens face unemployment because of the influx of foreign nationals who work for a lower wage under a zero hours' contract – this practice flies in the face of ethical business sense, motivation and sustainability
- Analysed and considered the fact that GDP does not necessarily reflect growth in take-home pay. For example, during the period 2001 - 2015, “American GDP per person grew by 14% but median wages increased by only 2%” (The Economist², 2016) – as Mark Twain said, “Lies, damned lies, and statistics”
- Accepted that “Liberalism has been challenged by market interests before. At the end of the 19th century, liberals embraced a broader role for the state, realising that political and economic freedoms diminish if basic human needs are unmet. In the 1970s, liberals concluded that the embrace of the state had become smothering and oppressive. That rekindled an interest in markets” – but at what cost (Ibid The Economist², 2016)
- Understood that every Singaporean deserves the right to be heard and to express an opinion in a public forum without fear of retribution and reprisal. The Biblical story of Moses records the cry of Moses to Pharaoh, “Let my people go”⁵¹ – and we all know about Pharaoh’s heart-breaking response! However, is that a myth or a proven event?

⁵¹ Exodus Chapter 9.

So, Singapore's story comes to a close, but it is not yet the end – the journey continues! Quo Vadis, Singapore?

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Appendix 1

Table of Results: Corruption Perceptions Index 2015

A country or territory's score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). A country's rank indicates its position vis-à-vis the other countries in the index. This year's index includes 168 countries and territories. Note that N/A means a country was not included in the index during a particular year.

Rank	Country/territory	2015 Score	2014 Score	2013 Score	2012 Score
1	Denmark	91	92	91	90
2	Finland	90	89	89	90
3	Sweden	89	87	89	88
4	New Zealand	88	91	91	90
5	Netherlands	87	83	83	84
5	Norway	87	86	86	85
7	Switzerland	86	86	85	86
8	Singapore	85	84	86	87
9	Canada	83	81	81	84
10	Germany	81	79	78	79
10	Luxembourg	81	82	80	80
10	United Kingdom	81	78	76	74
13	Australia	79	80	81	85
13	Iceland	79	79	78	82
15	Belgium	77	76	75	75
16	Austria	76	72	69	69
16	United States	76	74	73	73
18	Hong Kong	75	74	75	77
18	Ireland	75	74	72	69
18	Japan	75	76	74	74
21	Uruguay	74	73	73	72
22	Qatar	71	69	68	68
23	Chile	70	73	71	72
23	Estonia	70	69	68	64
23	France	70	69	71	71
23	United Arab Emirates	70	70	69	68
27	Bhutan	65	65	63	63
28	Botswana	63	63	64	65
28	Portugal	63	63	62	63
30	Poland	62	61	60	58
30	Taiwan	62	61	61	61
32	Cyprus	61	63	63	66
32	Israel	61	60	61	60
32	Lithuania	61	58	57	54

Rank	Country/territory	2015 Score	2014 Score	2013 Score	2012 Score
35	Slovenia	60	58	57	61
36	Spain	58	60	59	65
37	Czech Republic	56	51	48	49
37	Korea (South)	56	55	55	56
37	Malta	56	55	56	57
40	Cape Verde	55	57	58	60
40	Costa Rica	55	54	53	54
40	Latvia	55	55	53	49
40	Seychelles	55	55	54	52
44	Rwanda	54	49	53	53
45	Jordan	53	49	45	48
45	Mauritius	53	54	52	57
45	Namibia	53	49	48	48
48	Georgia	52	52	49	52
48	Saudi Arabia	52	49	46	44
50	Bahrain	51	49	48	51
50	Croatia	51	48	48	46
50	Hungary	51	54	54	55
50	Slovakia	51	50	47	46
54	Malaysia	50	52	50	49
55	Kuwait	49	44	43	44
56	Cuba	47	46	46	48
56	Ghana	47	48	46	45
58	Greece	46	43	40	36
58	Romania	46	43	43	44
60	Oman	45	45	47	47
61	Italy	44	43	43	42
61	Lesotho	44	49	49	45
61	Montenegro	44	42	44	41
61	Senegal	44	43	41	36
61	South Africa	44	44	42	43
66	Sao Tome and Principe	42	42	42	42
66	The FYR of Macedonia	42	45	44	43
66	Turkey	42	45	50	49
69	Bulgaria	41	43	41	41
69	Jamaica	41	38	38	38
71	Serbia	40	41	42	39
72	El Salvador	39	39	38	38
72	Mongolia	39	39	38	36
72	Panama	39	37	35	38
72	Trinidad and Tobago	39	38	38	39

Rank	Country/territory	2015 Score	2014 Score	2013 Score	2012 Score
76	Bosnia and Herzegovina	38	39	42	42
76	Brazil	38	43	42	43
76	Burkina Faso	38	38	38	38
76	India	38	38	36	36
76	Thailand	38	38	35	37
76	Tunisia	38	40	41	41
76	Zambia	38	38	38	37
83	Benin	37	39	36	36
83	China	37	36	40	39
83	Colombia	37	37	36	36
83	Liberia	37	37	38	41
83	Sri Lanka	37	38	37	40
88	Albania	36	33	31	33
88	Algeria	36	36	36	34
88	Egypt	36	37	32	32
88	Indonesia	36	34	32	32
88	Morocco	36	39	37	37
88	Peru	36	38	38	38
88	Suriname	36	36	36	37
95	Armenia	35	37	36	34
95	Mali	35	32	28	34
95	Mexico	35	35	34	34
95	Philippines	35	38	36	34
99	Bolivia	34	35	34	34
99	Djibouti	34	34	36	36
99	Gabon	34	37	34	35
99	Niger	34	35	34	33
103	Dominican Republic	33	32	29	32
103	Ethiopia	33	33	33	33
103	Kosovo	33	33	33	34
103	Moldova	33	35	35	36
107	Argentina	32	34	34	35
107	Belarus	32	31	29	31
107	Cote d'Ivoire	32	32	27	29
107	Ecuador	32	33	35	32
107	Togo	32	29	29	30
112	Honduras	31	29	26	28
112	Malawi	31	33	37	37
112	Mauritania	31	30	30	31
112	Mozambique	31	31	30	31
112	Vietnam	31	31	31	31

Rank	Country/territory	2015 Score	2014 Score	2013 Score	2012 Score
117	Pakistan	30	29	28	27
117	Tanzania	30	31	33	35
119	Azerbaijan	29	29	28	27
119	Guyana	29	30	27	28
119	Russia	29	27	28	28
119	Sierra Leone	29	31	30	31
123	Gambia	28	29	28	34
123	Guatemala	28	32	29	33
123	Kazakhstan	28	29	26	28
123	Kyrgyzstan	28	27	24	24
123	Lebanon	28	27	28	30
123	Madagascar	28	28	28	32
123	Timor-Leste	28	28	30	33
130	Cameroon	27	27	25	26
130	Iran	27	27	25	28
130	Nepal	27	29	31	27
130	Nicaragua	27	28	28	29
130	Paraguay	27	24	24	25
130	Ukraine	27	26	25	26
136	Comoros	26	26	28	28
136	Nigeria	26	27	25	27
136	Tajikistan	26	23	22	22
139	Bangladesh	25	25	27	26
139	Guinea	25	25	24	24
139	Kenya	25	25	27	27
139	Laos	25	25	26	21
139	Papua New Guinea	25	25	25	25
139	Uganda	25	26	26	29
145	Central African Republic	24	24	25	26
146	Congo Republic	23	23	22	26
147	Chad	22	22	19	19
147	Democratic Republic of the Congo	22	22	22	21
147	Myanmar	22	21	21	15
150	Burundi	21	20	21	19
150	Cambodia	21	21	20	22
150	Zimbabwe	21	21	21	20
153	Uzbekistan	19	18	17	17
154	Eritrea	18	18	20	25
154	Syria	18	20	17	26
154	Turkmenistan	18	17	17	17
154	Yemen	18	19	18	23

Rank	Country/territory	2015 Score	2014 Score	2013 Score	2012 Score
158	Haiti	17	19	19	19
158	Guinea-Bissau	17	19	19	25
158	Venezuela	17	19	20	19
161	Iraq	16	16	16	18
161	Libya	16	18	15	21
163	Angola	15	19	23	22
163	South Sudan	15	15	14	N/A
165	Sudan	12	11	11	13
166	Afghanistan	11	12	8	8
167	Korea (North)	8	8	8	8
167	Somalia	8	8	8	8

(Source: Transparency International, 2016)

Appendix 2

Britain is the Most Corrupt Country in the World

The author of international bestsellers *Gomorra* and *ZeroZeroZero* has lived under police protection since publically denouncing members of the Camorra, a powerful Neopolitan organised crime syndicate, in 2006.

On Saturday he made a rare historic appearance at the Hay Literary Festival flanked by several security guards.

He warned the audience in Hay-on-Wye that financial institutions were allowing 'criminal capitalism' to thrive through offshore holdings. Moreover, he warned that a vote to leave the European Union would leave Britain even more exposed to the organised crime.

"If I asked you what is the most corrupt place on Earth you might tell me well it's Afghanistan, maybe Greece, Nigeria, the South of Italy and I will tell you, it's the UK," he said.

"It's not the bureaucracy, it's not the police, it's not the politics but what is corrupt is the financial capital. 90 percent of the owners of capital in London have their headquarters offshore.

"Jersey and the Cayman's are the access gates to criminal capital in Europe and the UK is the country that allows it. That is why it is important why it is so crucial for me to be here today and to talk to you because I want to tell you, this is about you, this is about your life, this is about your government.

"Leaving the EU means allowing this to take place. It means allowing the Qatari societies, the Mexican cartels, the Russia Mafia to gain even more power and HSBC has paid £2 billion Euros in fines to the US government because it confessed that it had laundered money coming from the cartels and the Iranian companies. We have proof; we have evidence."

Saviano first started writing about organised crime in Italy in the early 2000s following the death of his local priest who had written an essay criticising the dealings of the Camorra.

After publishing Gomorra, a non-fiction novel which named members of the clan and exposed its business connections and criminal activity, his life was threatened and a plot put in place to eliminate him and his police escort with a bomb.

The death threats led to a public outcry from fellow writers, including six Nobel laureates including Desmond Tutu, Mikhail Gorbachev and Orphan Pamuk, who warned the Camorra were becoming a threat to security and public order.

Signatures were also collected on the website of the Italian Newspaper La Repubblica calling for the government to protect him.

Saviano said: "I was 26 years old when I got myself into this situation, and I could not imagine that it would end like this because many books have been written on the Mafia, but it was my book that made them so angry.

"I was telling real facts. I was naming names. My life is unique. I am followed by two bullet proofed cars and by more than five officers, and that brings about a feeling of guilt sometimes because you exposed yourself too much, you were not cautious enough.

"But the freedom of expression that you enjoy is not to be taken for granted and there is always somebody who fights for it, and if it is not you it is someone else in your place.















"I consider myself lucky that I was not killed. When you start telling these stories you know that your life is at stake, you know you might be killed, but what scares you the most is defamation".

Journalist and author Ed Vulliamy, who chaired the session, added: "We want the people to try and understand the phenomenon of organised crime in a different light which delegitimizes the system.

"The people about whom Roberto writes use and abuse this word honour which is, of course, a complete inversion and the reason why this is such a historical event is that every day Roberto lives, the fact that he is here, is a dishonour to them."

(Source: The Telegraph, London, 30 May 2016).

Appendix 3

Singapore Parties in Parliament				
				
People's Action Party		Workers' Party		
<p>83 seats</p>		<p>6 seats + 3 NCMP seats</p>		
Active parties				
				
"democratic" Progressive Party f.k.a. Singapore United Front		Justice Party, Singapore	National Solidarity Party	People's Power Party
				
Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Singapura f.k.a. United Malays National Organisation		Reform Party	Singapore "democratic" Alliance	Singapore "democratic" Party
				
Singapore People's Party		Singaporeans First		

Other registered parties



[Angkatan Islam Singapura](#)
f.k.a. [Pan-Malayan Islamic Party](#)



[Alliance Party Singapura](#)
f.k.a. [Singapore Alliance](#)



[Barisan Sosialis](#)



[National Party of Singapore](#)



[Partai Rakyat](#)



[People's Front](#)



[People's Liberal "democratic" Party](#)



[People's Republican Party](#)



[Persatuan Melayu Singapura](#)


















[Singapore Chinese Party](#)
f.k.a. [Malayan Chinese Association](#)



[Singapore Indian Congress](#)
f.k.a. [Malayan Indian Congress](#)



<u>Singapore National Front</u>	<u>Socialist Front</u>	<u>United "Democratic" Party</u>	<u>United National Front</u>	<u>United People's Front</u>
	 UPP		 USD	
	<u>United People's Party</u>			<u>United Singapore Democrats</u>
Dissolved parties				
 CP	 DP	 KURA	 LF	 LP
<u>Citizens' Party</u>	<u>"Democratic" Party</u>	<u>Katong United Residents' Association</u>	<u>Labour Front</u>	<u>Labour Party</u>
 LSP	 MU	 PP	 SC	 SPA
<u>Liberal Socialist Party</u>	<u>Malay Union</u>	<u>Progressive Party</u>	<u>Singapore Congress</u>	<u>Singapore People's Alliance</u>
Non-party candidates				
				
	<u>Independent candidate</u>		<u>Presidential candidate</u>	



(Source: Singapore Parties in Parliament, n.d.)

Appendix 4

Extracts from the London Anti-Corruption Summit – May 2016

“David Cameron and John Kerry have warned that corruption and terrorism are dual threats to the world’s economy and security, at a summit aimed at tackling graft featuring heads of state and business leaders.

“Six countries, Britain, Afghanistan, Kenya, France, the Netherlands and Nigeria, have agreed to publish registers of who owns companies in their territories, a so-called register of beneficial ownership. This is a key goal of anti-corruption groups. Six more, including Australia, will consider doing so.

“Eleven countries will join the now 29-strong group where lists of beneficial owners are drawn up and shared between governments, although not publicly. Those countries include Cayman Islands, Jersey, Bermuda, the Isle of Man and the UAE.

“The British prime minister used his opening speech to warn foreign companies that own around 100,000 properties in England and Wales that they will be required to disclose their ownership, one of some measures aimed at cleaning up London as an international centre for money laundering.

“The US is one of the countries which did not sign up to the pledge to share registers of beneficial ownership. Nevertheless, Cameron said he would keep pushing the Americans to be more accountable, as well as efforts to improve transparency on island tax havens like the British Virgin Islands, which also did not sign up to sharing information.

“This concern was echoed by Allan Bell, chief minister of the Isle of Man, which has signed up to the information sharing, who said there wouldn’t be real progress unless the United States made its tax havens, such as Delaware, more open.

“US secretary of state John Kerry said he had been shocked at the extent of corruption in the world since taking on his role in the Obama administration. We are fighting a battle, all of us. Corruption, writ large, is as much of an enemy, because it destroys nation states, as some of the extremists we are fighting or the other challenges we face.

“Cameron called corruption “ cancer at the heart of so many of the problems we need to tackle in our world”. He said that tax-dodging holds back growth and undermines security by making poorer citizens more vulnerable to “poisonous ideology of extremists”.

“Nigeria’s president Muhammadu Buhari, who has made tackling corruption a key part of his leadership, called for the conference to agree swifter measures to return stolen assets. Cameron announced he would require overseas firms to sign up to a new public register if they own or buy property or if they want to bid for central government contracts.

“Afghanistan’s President Ghani said corruption was fuelling his country’s political violence, and the fight against wrongdoing “should not be a fashion that is discarded with the next set of elections.

“Cameron last month announced that the overseas territories and Crown dependencies - such as the British Virgin Islands and Jersey - had agreed to provide UK tax and law enforcement agencies with full access to company ownership details.

“But campaigners say they are disappointed that the offshore territories are not pledging to create a public register, like the UK, and others have promised to do. Adrian Lovett, deputy chief executive officer of anti-poverty campaign ONE, said, “ONE call on countries who attended the anti-corruption summit to implement urgently gold standard policies that ensure fair play. To root out corruption, we need committed and robust action, crucially including the public disclosure of beneficial ownership of companies and trusts”.

“There were some notable omissions on the conference guest list, including any representative from Fifa during a plenary discussion on corruption in sport, while the organisation is plagued by a deep-seated bribery scandal.

“Bermuda and the Cayman Islands were represented at the summit but others, such as the British Virgin Islands and Panama were not.

“Cameron is asked about the need to push overseas territories and crown dependencies to do more to be open and transparent over the registers of beneficial ownership.

“He says the territories have come a long way in agreeing to the automatic sharing of information, and says that goes further than what the United States and some European countries have agreed.

“If you think how far they have come in the last few weeks and months, I am convinced we will get them all over that bar [of automatic sharing of registers, which the British Virgin Islands has not signed up to do].

“The gold standard which I will push for as long as I have breath in my body is public registers.

“That is not just for small islands; it is the United States, China, India that I want to sign up as well.

“Cameron admits there are challenges with the US, which the state of Delaware also has a lack of transparency. ‘We just have to work with all these countries to convince them to raise the bar’, he said.

“He says there is “nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come” and that there are now 129 jurisdictions who have committed to implementing international standards to give tax information on request. He says those new standards have led to £50bn in extra tax revenue, ‘think of the roads, schools and services provided with that money’.

[Cameron said that] “Today’s summit is not just about securing the agreements, it is been a different kind of events, not having speeches and talking to ourselves, having open, challenging conversations asking tough questions.

“Cameron said there is a need for every country to reach a gold standard of a register of beneficial ownership made public, and he says that he includes crown

dependencies and overseas territories in that. This cannot be a fashion; we have to stay the course for the next ten years and beyond. We are talking about stopping the corrupt hiding their loot from authorities. When people steal from your country and hide it in mine, we can find it and return it to you.

“President Santos [said]. “sisters and brothers of corruption are terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal mining”, which are all part of the same chain. He says heroin from Afghanistan and cocaine from Colombia can be connected to one drug dealer in the UK, and that is why an international approach is necessary. Santos says the Panama Papers show how corruption is “scared of the spotlight” and urges new protection for whistleblowers whom he says are under great danger in many countries. Prosecution is also essential, he says, because people have to know the process works.

“Spanish Justice Minister Rafael Catala says that tackling corruption must go beyond laws and regulation, and become part of the culture. It is not enough to have laws and values; we need resources to change habits, he said. He says organised crime intensively uses technology, anyone defending the rights of citizens also needs access to those tools. Society as a whole needs to foster transparency as a value; he says, as do private companies. Corruption is not something that belongs to any country; it is an international scourge, and the fight has to be based on international co-operation.

“Baroness Scotland, secretary-general of the Commonwealth announces she will create an office of criminal and civil justice reform. I intend to be a magpie for every single good idea to put into a toolkit for implementation and change. She also says she plans to create a Commonwealth standard of anti-corruption best practice so that companies can apply for a mark.

“Perhaps another pointed comment at Cameron here from Maltese prime minister Joseph Muscat. He says we should not speak about “corrupt countries” but of individuals.

'We inherited 'fantastically corrupt' system' says Afghan official. An Afghan official, tasked with tackling government corruption, is the first to make a jibe at Cameron for his gaffe when speaking to the Queen. We inherited, and I quote, a ‘fantastically corrupt’ system. He says that in his country for the past decade “there has been

enthusiastic international community partnerships willing to pour billions into a country without thinking about the safeguards that were needed to ensure that money would be spent transparently and more efficiently. He says the country is now saving \$200m dollars a year from anti-corruption efforts which “otherwise would have gone into the pockets of the mafia and corrupt companies. Without political will, there is no way we can fight corruption. No impunity for officials or businesses is a must. He says Afghanistan is blacklisting on the average one company a week, with the list published online and updated every week, and he invites the UK to publish a blacklist of corrupt companies as well.

“Barry Johnston, head of advocacy at ActionAid, said the summit would be remembered for what it will not achieve. It is good news that Nigeria, South Africa, France, Afghanistan and the Netherlands have used the summit to take action to reveal the owners of secretive shell companies publicly. David Cameron still hasn’t managed to get British overseas tax havens to meet the same standards.

“Oxfam GB’s chief executive, Mark Goldring, adds his voice to concerns that the communique from the anti-corruption summit does not go far enough. If corruption is cancer, then this summit has delivered some pain relief but not the major surgery needed to heal the global economy. Until tax havens are required to publish public registers showing who profits from shell companies, the corruption and tax dodging revealed by the Panama Papers will continue undisturbed, and millions of people in both the UK and the world’s poorest countries will pay the price.

“Laura Stefan, the Romanian anti-corruption campaigner, says a culture change is not easy in places where economic circumstances force corruption. ‘We tend to think that anti-corruption is something everybody wants. The establishment, in many of the problem countries, does not want it,’ she said. ‘Because they risk losing their assets.’”

(Source: Elgot, J (2016).

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Appendix 5

'Stranglehold': Hun Sen rules Cambodia and his family own it, says report

“Relatives of autocratic PM control economy’s most profitable sectors from mining to gambling and property, according to findings of Global Witness project

“A transparency watchdog has alleged a “stranglehold” on the Cambodian economy by the family of Hun Sen – one of the world’s most notorious autocrats, who has ruled the south-east Asian country across three decades.

“Investigators from UK-based Global Witness who traced corporate ownership said they had uncovered numerous examples where companies linked to members of the Hun family managed to secure lucrative public contracts and state concessions to amass vast fortunes.

“Firms associated with the Hun family span the majority of Cambodia’s most lucrative business sectors, including trade, finance, energy and tourism, according to the report, while also operating within a number of sectors notorious for corruption including gambling, construction, agriculture and mining.

“In some cases these companies have driven “devastating impacts for Cambodian citizens and the environment, including land grabs that have caused mass displacements and destitution among Cambodia’s rural poor”, Global Witness says.

“The report found the Hun family owned or part-controlled companies with capital of more than US\$200m, including firms with links to major international brands such as Apple, Nokia, Visa, Unilever, Procter & Gamble, Nestlé, Durex and Honda.

“Global Witness said this was likely just a fraction of the true value of the family’s business holdings as they were said to obscure their commercial interests.

“These revelations point to a cruel irony of Hun Sen’s model of dictatorship – his family has Cambodia’s economy so sewn up that Phnom Penh residents are likely to struggle to avoid lining the pockets of their oppressors’ multiple times a day,” said Patrick Alley, Co-Founder of Global Witness.

“Foreign investors, on the other hand, can and should opt out of bankrolling a regime that kills, intimidates or locks up its critics.”

“Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge commander, has marketed his country to overseas investors as an attractive investment destination with very little regulation and cheap labour”.

“Yet despite overall economic growth, six million Cambodians, 40% of the population, still live below or close to the poverty line. And in 2015 Cambodia ranked 150th out of 168 countries in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, the lowest score in south-east Asia.

“The leader’s tenure has been characterised by electoral fraud and the brutal suppression of political opposition. In 2011 Hun said that if anyone tried to hold a demonstration against his rule “I will beat all those dogs and put them in a cage.”

“In May 2016 journalists were instructed to use his full title “Lord Prime Minister and Supreme Military Commander” when writing about Hun Sen.

“In 103 of the 114 private companies where Hun Sen’s immediate family have declared interests, the relative is a chairperson, director or has a shareholding of more than 25%, meaning they exercise total or substantial control, the report says.

“Stephen Peel, a former senior partner at private equity firm TPG Capital and member of the Global Witness board, said: “[Doing] business with companies that are owned or controlled by the country’s ruling family not only raises ethical questions, it also carries significant legal, financial and reputational risk.”

“The UK is the second-largest foreign investor in Cambodia after China, while the US is Cambodia’s biggest trading partner, receiving a third of Cambodian exports, worth almost US\$3bn a year.

“Hun Sen’s eldest daughter, Hun Mana, has the largest number of business holdings of any member of the family, the report finds, with interests in 22 companies with listed share capital of more than \$66m.

“She owns 100% of the shares of media company Bayon Media, which broadcasts three TV stations, and also Bayon Radio, which is considered to be one of the leading mouthpieces of the ruling party.

“Hun Mana chairs Moon Media, an advertising firm behind a large proportion of the billboards around the country. The company’s client list on its website includes Visa, Unilever, Proctor & Gamble and Honda.

“She is also a director and shareholder of K Thong Huot Telecom, which was founded in 2002 to distribute Nokia phones in Cambodia. The firm is the local business partner of Lenovo-IBM and holds exclusive distribution licences for Pioneer and Electrolux products.

“The prime minister’s office, Moon Media and Bayon Media did not respond to Guardian requests for comment. The Guardian was unable to reach K Thong Huot Telecom.

“Other prominent family members with business links include Hun Sen’s son-in-law Sok Puthyvuth, the CEO of the Soma Group, which signed a \$3m biomass power deal with US conglomerate General Electric in 2012.

“Soma Group, which did not respond to a request for comment for this article, is also linked to an urban land grab, Global Witness says, as the firm is expanding Phnom Penh International Airport.

“The project threatens to displace approximately 165 households without providing compensation. In 2012 eight protesters from the community were arrested by armed police and detained for 12 hours after painting SOS signs on the roofs of their houses in the hope that President Obama would see their cries for help as he flew in to attend an Asean summit.

“Global Witness said Sok Puthyvuth was the only Hun family member to reply to its requests for comment.

“It quoted him as saying that his family had objected to his taking a role in politics so he entered the private sector “to test my ability to build an effective organisation”.

“I can understand your assumption that I have abused my power to get to where I am today, but I can assure you that I take seriously the challenge of building a responsible and respected private sector group. I admit it is a work in progress.

“I understand that I live in the shadows of my family.”

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/07/stranglehold-hun-sen-rules-cambodia-and-his-family-own-it-says-report#img-1> (7 July 2016).