

Slido Question

- Active Citizenship Survey

Active Citizenship

- Why active citizenship is needed
 - Increasingly **rapid changes** and **complexity** of governing Singapore in the 21st century
 - Concerns by the govt. about being able to make the **right decisions quickly enough**
 - Increasing **demands** by Singaporeans **to have a greater say** in national affairs as they become better educated and desire more **autonomy** and **discretion**

31 Aug 1991: Opposition parties win four seats in Parliament



End-1991: Cold War ends with dissolution of the USSR



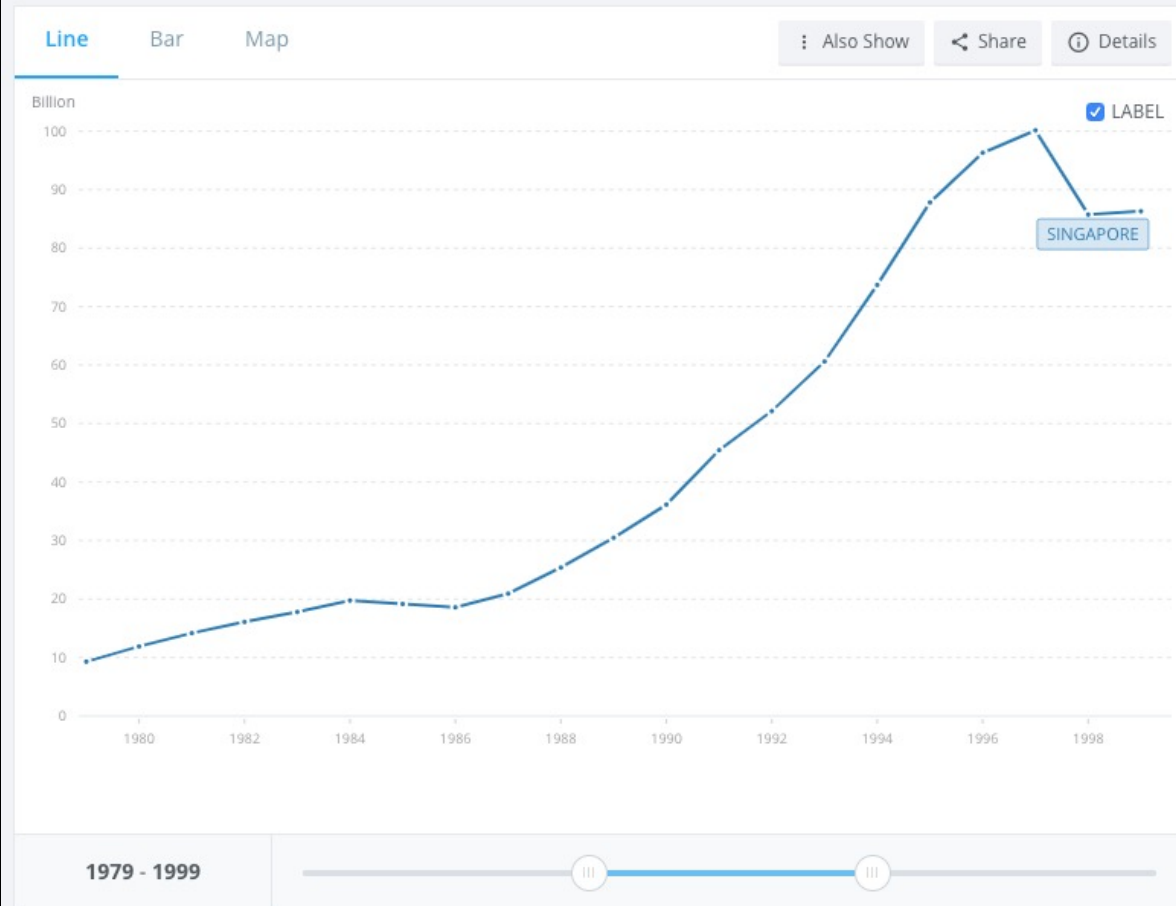


1994: SingNet launched as SG's first public Internet service
1998: Singapore One broadband network launched commercially

GDP (current US\$) - Singapore

World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files.

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1997: Asian Financial Crisis

The Asian financial crisis started in Thailand with the collapse of the Thai baht in July 1997. What began as a currency crisis soon affected the wider economy and spread quickly to the rest of the region, leading to economic downturns in several countries. Singapore was not directly hit but suffered the spill-over effects of the economic slowdown,¹ and fell into recession in the second half of 1998. Realising that stimulating domestic demand was not a viable option in a downturn caused by external circumstances, the Singapore government implemented various measures to help ease the cost burden on businesses and individuals.²

Background

The Thai baht was the target of intense speculative attacks just before it collapsed in July 1997.³ For a while, the Thai government managed to defend the currency, which had been pegged to the United States (US) dollar. However on 2 July 1997, it announced that it would no longer intervene and would allow the baht to float. The sharp depreciation of the baht against the US dollar began that same day.⁴

This immediately triggered panic among investors, and other regional currencies such as the Philippine peso, Indonesian rupiah and Malaysian ringgit also began to experience selling pressure. Soon, foreign investors lost confidence in not only the currencies but also in those economies that had, what they saw, weak fundamentals.⁵ In countries most affected by the crisis, banks and other companies collapsed or had to be rescued, and many others were forced to downsize, resulting in massive unemployment. In Indonesia, the crisis even led to the resignation of then president Suharto.⁶

Impact on Singapore's economy

Given its close economic links with other Asian countries, Singapore could not escape the effects of the financial crisis facing its regional neighbours despite strong economic fundamentals.⁷ From a healthy eight percent growth rate registered in 1997, Singapore's growth fell to a dismal 1.5 percent in 1998.⁸ The impact on Singapore was indirect but wide-ranging.⁹

For Singaporeans to be proud of Singapore, they must **feel a sense of ownership**. All should participate actively in making Singapore a better place, through **community work**, in **charities**, and by **contributing ideas**.

Singaporeans have worked hard, and we have had good leaders who have taken the initiatives to bring the country forward. But for the future, we **cannot depend on just a few people to mastermind the course** for Singapore.

We will always need capable leaders who can think outside the box and see beyond the present. But this is a **different world, driven by globalisation and technology**. Things **change so swiftly**, and the task of governing Singapore has **become so complex** that no small team of ministers or civil servants can **know it all**, or **react quickly enough** to stay ahead of the game.

We need to **tap a wide range of expertise** beyond what we have in the Government. We therefore **welcome constructive views** from Singaporeans, whether or not these agree with the Government's own views. We need feedback, not just knee-jerk reactions and coffeeshop talk, but **properly considered, informed views which can help us to improve our policies**.

- PM Goh Chok Tong, National Day Rally Speech 1997

Active Citizenship

- Why active citizenship is needed (cont'd)
 - Dilemma: how can govt. remain efficient and decisive while building trust and allowing ownership and greater participation?

Active Citizenship

- What active citizenship is
 - **Being well-informed** of issues facing the country
 - **Wanting to make things better** by offering thoughtful feedback and suggestions
 - **Taking action and assuming responsibility** by helping to implement suggestions

Active Citizenship

- How people can participate
 - Give requested **feedback** to the Government (e.g. S21 committee, Our Singapore Conversation)
 - **Voluntary welfare work** (e.g. volunteering with grassroots organisations or other VWOs)
 - **Bringing issues up** to MPs, Town Councils, CCs, RCs and CDCs

Active Citizenship

- What the government should do
 - View citizens/civil society as an asset, be **willing to cooperate** with citizens and NGOs by engaging in open-minded discussion
 - **Share information** and **encourage and facilitate** consultation and feedback
 - **Publicly recognise** contributions that are implemented
 - **Clarify out-of-bound markers** i.e. areas/topics where dissent is unacceptable

PM Lee highlights importance of active citizenship

The recurring theme of this year's National Day Rally was active citizenship and how Singaporeans should all play a part in nation-building. - AsiaOne

Sun, Aug 14, 2011
AsiaOne

SINGAPORE - Active citizenship was the recurring theme for Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's first National Day Rally speech since the May 9 General Election.

He expressed hopes for the government and people to strengthen their relationship in building Singapore, and said that while the government will do its best to find solutions for issues and problems, he also hopes for Singaporeans to take the initiative to come up with solutions.

The PM said that he was very encouraged that Singaporeans are using cyberspace to share their views.

Citing the KTM railway issue as an example, he was pleased that students, architects and design professionals have shared ideas and creative ways of preserving green spaces without affecting development potential of the land.

As the society matures, PM Lee pointed out that the government should not take charge of everything, citing an example of saving cats and dogs to illustrate what he meant. The government will do its best, but there are some problems that may not be best tackled by the government.

In his Mandarin speech, Mr Lee hopes that in future, the government can do less and Singaporeans can do more for the country. He thinks that the more proactive Singaporeans are, the better Singapore will be in responding to unexpected situations.

The aim is to be a "fair and just society that nurtures and inspires the human spirit and a society that encourages our people to go forth to do well for themselves and do good for their community."

PM Lee ended his speech saying, "so let us work together as one people, to continue to build a bright future for Singapore, our home."

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Reflection Questions

Think about the following questions and write your response on your worksheet in OneNote

7. Do you think the S21 Report **went far enough** in its recommendations of how citizens could participate in public life? Why or why not?
8. Consider the reasons that the S21 Report gave for why Singaporeans were not participating actively in public life. Are those reasons **still relevant** today?

Next Lesson

- Capstone Project briefing
 - Read the [Capstone Project Task Handout](#) on Ivy
 - Start thinking about topics you might be interested in
 - Look for a partner (or partners) you can work with
 - You get to choose your partner(s); I will group pairs/trios