



LUND UNIVERSITY  
School of Economics and Management

Master in Economic History

## Authoritarian Institutions and Economic Growth: The Case of Singapore

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*Abstract:* Singapore grew from a new underdeveloped nation in the 1960s to one of the most economically powerful nations in the current era. Economically the nation is free, but politically it is authoritarian, limiting such rights as freedom of speech. Much is known about how the nation achieved its economic growth, but little is known about how it manages to maintain its economic growth despite its authoritarian rule. This study takes ideas from institutional economics and nationalism studies to discover what is Singapore's model which keeps its authoritarian rule in power, enabling the economy to function effectively. Using qualitative methods with population and government budget data a model is developed. The results of the study reveal that social welfare programmes in the nation keep the quality of life high, while the government also makes a marked effort to develop a national identity which prides diversity and the progress of the nation. This indicates that Singapore keeps support of its government high with the people's reliance on its social policies and developing devotion to the continual progress of the nation. This limits revolt and need of cost for repression, allowing for the economy to function.

*Key words:* authoritarianism, institutions, social welfare, nationalism

**EKHS11**

Master Thesis, First Year (15 credits ECTS)

June 2018

Supervisor: Tobias Axelsson

Examiner: Jaco Zuijderduijn

Word Count: 14400

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Research Overview .....	2
2.1. Research Aim .....	2
2.2. Research Questions .....	2
3. Literature Review.....	3
3.1. Democracy and Economic Growth .....	3
3.2. Institutions.....	5
3.3. Authoritarianism.....	7
3.4. Nationalism .....	8
3.5. Singapore.....	8
3.6. Research Gap.....	11
4. Theory .....	11
4.1. Theoretical Framework .....	11
4.1.1. North, Wallis, & Weingast.....	11
4.1.2. Acemoglu & Robinson .....	13
4.1.3. Nationalism.....	14
4.2. Analytical Framework .....	15
5. Data .....	17
6. Method .....	18
7. Analysis.....	19
7.1. Variable A: Quality of Life.....	19
7.2. Variable B: Government Welfare Policies.....	28
7.3. Variable C: Nationalism and National Culture.....	33
7.4. Authoritarian Sustainably/Singapore’s model.....	35
8. Discussion .....	38
9. Conclusion .....	38
Reference list .....	41

## List of Tables

Table 1, Singapore’s Ministry of Health Expenditure 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017) .....	29
Table 2, Singapore's Ministry of Education Expenditure 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017) .....	29
Table 3, Singapore's Ministry of Manpower Expenditure 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017) .....	30
Table 4, Singapore's Ministry of National Development 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017) .....	30
Table 5, Total Expenditure of Singapore 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017) .....	31
Table 6, Singapore's Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth Expenditure 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017) .....	34

# List of Figures

Figure 1, Gini Coefficient in Singapore based on household income from work per household member before accounting for government transfers and taxes, 2000-2017 (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2018).....	20
Figure 2, Median Monthly Household Income from Work including employer CPF contributions, 2000-2017 (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2018).....	22
Figure 3, Life Expectancy by birth in Singapore, 1960-2016 (World Bank, 2018).....	23
Figure 4, Crude Death Rate (per 1000) in Singapore, 1960-2016 (World Bank, 2018).....	24
Figure 5, Freedom of Life Choices Survey in Singapore, 2006-2016 (World Happiness Report, 2017) .....	25
Figure 6, Perceptions of Corruption in Singapore, 2007-2016 (World Happiness Report, 2017)	26
Figure 7, Confidence in National Government in Singapore, 2006-2016 (World Happiness Report, 2017) .....	27

# 1. Introduction

Singapore is a success story in economic development, going from a poor country to one of the richest in only a generation. It is one of the first economically influential nations within Asia and continues to be a hub for multinational corporations. Singapore's economic model has been studied extensively by past researchers, however, what is not certain is how the authoritarian political institutions of Singapore have kept its economy in place, and neither has it needed to transition into a democracy. These are the major reasons why Singapore was chosen for this study, however, there is another interesting characteristic of Singapore. It is a micro-state, and a significant amount of these states develop to be exceptions to standard politics and economic practices. This research intends to further develop knowledge regarding economic growth in Asia, micro-states, and most importantly how authoritarian political institutions and economic growth can coincide.

Interpreting from a western perspective, people prefer to believe that democracy helps support economic growth and that authoritarianism disrupts it. This idea which is supported by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson's book *Why Nations Fail* sees inclusive political institutions as the gateway to economic institutions which greatly develop an economy—typically by political institutions which promote democratic ideals (2012). However, the small island nation of Singapore is one of the richest countries in Asia despite much criticism of its government being authoritarian.

This study intends to develop the understanding of how nations can have strong developing and stable economies despite their political institutions, and challenge the idea that democracy is a requirement to create economic growth. Singapore being an authoritarian state which has developed and grown economically at an exceptionally increased rate is what challenges this idea. By examining the authoritarian political institutions in Singapore, why Singapore's government was successful in creating and sustaining economic growth despite its authoritarianism will be understood. The premise of this study is that understanding Singapore's unique economic situation in the world can help us better understand what effect political institutions have on economic growth and how authoritarian governments can function economically. On a societal level, an understanding of what's most important for societies will be discussed: Can economic

development be more desirable than personal and political freedom? The research in this study hopes to successfully answer these uncertainties.

## 2. Research Overview

### 2.1. Research Aim

There are many theories why some nations can continue growing their economies and others not. Many economic historians point towards the political institutions of nations which allow them to succeed or not. A recent example of this is in Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson's *Why Nations Fail*, which argues that what causes nations to prosper, or not, are their political institutions, which lead to economic institutions which create more development (2012). Generally, it is believed best political institutions which allow for economic growth are democracies. This idea was perhaps more valid in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, but many countries, especially in Asia, have been able to catch-up and become significant economies in the world with forms of authoritarianism rather than democracy. This study focuses on the unique case of Singapore, which its economic history has shown that it can still achieve modern economic growth and continue to grow today despite its form of authoritarianism with single party rule.

This study seeks to use Singapore as a case study to understand how authoritarian political institutions can allow for economic growth. Or more importantly, how can these authoritative governments continue to have economic growth and maintain political power. In addition, there will be a brief comparison with other Asian economic powers. It will be examined how Singapore has inclusive economic institutions while being an authoritarian government, and how they are upheld in the Singaporean society. This study does not intend to use Singapore to prove authoritarianism is better for economic growth than democracy, but instead discover how economically developed authoritarian regimes can legitimize themselves to the population of that nation, allowing them to further continue their growth. Singapore is arguably the best example of this.

### 2.2. Research Questions

The research question will be the following:

How can authoritarian political institutions sustain economic growth while maintaining political stability?

This leads into the questions which will be focused on regarding Singapore:

- What allows Singapore to be a rich nation with continual economic development and have authoritarian political institutions?

By establishing an answer to this question, which will give an idea of how Singapore's authoritarianism is modelled, it then leads into how the authoritarian model is maintained. This leads into the second question:

- Why hasn't Singapore transitioned into a democracy such as other Asian countries, for example South Korea and Taiwan?

### 3. Literature Review

To understand the background for this study, a variety of literature must be discussed. This includes many different fields going from political science, history, and of course economic history. This is to establish how politics affect economics. In addition, the theory will include ideas which extend outside of economics. Most of the economics literature will discuss institutions, and finally Singapore itself. This together shows the literature background of the study.

#### 3.1. Democracy and Economic Growth

An important early study into the political institutions which caused and maintained economic growth and development in nations was *Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy* by Seymour Martin Lipset in 1959. As seen from the title, the work primarily dealt with democracy and saw that economic development and democracy were entwined. He primarily came to this conclusion by analyzing the characteristics of various countries, and typically the ones which were the most economically developed were the most democratic. It is also important to note that Lipset defined democracy as “a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials” (1959). Furthermore, Lipset—who appeared to have been quite a fan of Max Weber—believed that democracy was a result of various historical, cultural, and educational circumstances. After stating how democracy was formed, he analyzed what maintained democracy, which he saw first as a combination of legitimacy and effectiveness. Nations which are high in legitimacy and effectiveness maintain their democracy, while ones which are low fall into authoritarianism. While nations can be high in one and low in another, it makes them easier to fall into

authoritarianism once the other drops. Lipset explains therefore why the Weimar Republic fell to Nazi Germany: The Republic was not effective, and the Nazi party was able to undermine its legitimacy through democracy (1959). Creating this legitimacy for developing and new democratic nations is much harder, since the government must prove its effectiveness for a period. Lipset then stated that tolerance was also an important factor, since opposing parties must be willing to live alongside and tolerate each other. Lastly, Lipset believed that for democracies to be successful they needed to be proportioned correctly. Specifically, Lipset believed that multiparty systems were bad for democracy. They were unbalanced and could allow minority groups to affect vote outcomes. He saw dual party systems as a more stable democratic system (Lipset, 1959). This is important, as he obviously believed that for democracy to be successful it needed to be limited. While Lipset's argument is outdated, being written during the Cold War and before many Asian nations began to catch up, it still contains important insights into political institutions, economic growth, and their stability.

Carles Boix continued Lipset's analysis on economic development and democracy. Through a series of tests, he examined if per capita income was positively correlated to an increase in democracy. Primarily, he discovered there was generally a positive correlation between income and democracy. However, there were some complications which didn't always make the two have correlation. This was due to many factors including historical time periods, political unities, and others. First, income influences democratic transition, but once a nation has become a democracy, increase in income does not mean that its democracy will increasingly get better (Boix, 2011). In this sense, it is not always positive. However, it can have a positive impact of the consolidation of a nation's democracy. Furthermore, other factors which could affect democracy are generally supported within the country. This can be due to many factors including inequality, repression costs which allow politicians to favor democracy or not, and so on. Finally, the final factor is international support. As was the case with the Soviet Union, a large authoritarian power can spread its power to support and create authoritarian regimes. Another example is a mixed one, where democratic countries could support either democracy or authoritarianism in a country depending on the democratic country's own benefit. Lastly, democratic countries can support the spread of democracy. This is seen with the USA and its support on the spread of democracy and its consolidation in recent decades (Boix, 2011). Boix's study showed that economic development does correlate to democracy, but there are many other important institutional and political factors

which can also affect the development of political rule. These ideas were further developed in institutional economics which believe that institutions which favour democracy and economic freedom create economic growth.

### 3.2. Institutions

Acemoglu & Robinson are some of the biggest figures in institutional economics who wrote *Why Nations Fail*. The book argued that the reason why some nations fail and other succeed (the determinant being sustained economic growth) is due to inclusive economic institutions, which are supported by inclusive political institutions. These inclusive institutions allow for creativity, entrepreneurship, and various economic freedom which overtime develops economic growth (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, pp.78-84). From their view, extractive political institutions create extractive economic institutions which thus results in low economic growth. They mentioned the economic growth of South Korea—another Asian tiger—stating that early on in its development it did have extractive political institutions while still having large economic growth, but eventually transitioned into inclusive political institutions in the 1980s (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, pp.71-74). According to Acemoglu & Robinson, extractive political institutions can create economic growth, but only for a short period of time. Even mentioning authoritarianism, stating it won't necessarily lead to democracy and sustained economic growth in the long run. In relation to China, they predicted that it's growth would eventually stall (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, pp.469-470). To Acemoglu & Robinson, the institutions in nations were fundamentally important and either lead to a nation's success or downfall. This book focused on the economic end of their theory, but other works by them focus more on the political side.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson's *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* attempted to develop an argument as to why dictatorships develop into democracies and the other way around. Their model was primarily based on inequality and cost of repression. This argument went by the premise that a government would want to act in its own interest. In a dictatorship, if inequality is high and the cost of repression is high, then a country is likely to transition into a democracy because it is too costly for the government to maintain the dictatorship. For this case, Acemoglu & Robinson mentioned Britain. In another case, if a dictatorship has high inequality but a low cost of repression, then the dictatorship will maintain as one. The last scenario is if there is low inequality then repression is irrelevant and there is no challenge to a dictatorship's existence (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006, pp.43-46). Nations with this last case could eventually develop into

a democracy if the will of the people became great enough. In this case, the government may not choose to repress the people since the cost could be high (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006, pp.43-46). Acemoglu & Robinson's further theories with political institutions give an idea to how political institutions which are less favourable for economic development could transition to better ones. However, this theory only gave a two-sided explanation and didn't go too deep into hybrids of the two spectrums. Other institutional economic works could help further explain their issues.

*Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History* by Douglass North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast attempted to compile a framework which explained which governments create the best economic growth. In their framework, they saw social orders as a primary cause of why states develop the way they do. Social orders being a way to limit violence in society. In their study they labeled two forms of states: *Natural States* which are the most common form of state and are comprised by limited access orders, and *Open Access* states which generate the most economic growth through its open access orders, leading to better organizations and institutions. The authors also detailed how a natural state transitioned into an open access state through the door step conditions (North et al, 2009, pp.150-151). A natural state is one which property rights and organizations are limited to a selected number of elites. It is known as a "natural" state since in most cases in history, this was how societies limited violence. However, the down side to natural states was that their tight control to maintain order limited access to organizational forms and had control over trade. Open access orders, on the other hand, contain five characteristics: A general value of equality among citizens; no restrictions to political, economic, educational and religious activities; organizational support in the activities; law enforced objectively on citizens; and impersonal exchange. They typically contain generous social welfare systems, competitive economic markets, and are democratic with citizen involvement (North et al, 2009, pp.112-114). North et al's ideas further developed our understanding of how institutions could contribute to sustained economic growth. Their structured framework also made it easy to test.

North et al's framework of Open access orders has been argued against its benefit on developing/non-western nations. This was exactly what was done in a study by Guanghua Yu titled "Open Access Order and Interconnected Institutions: The Case of India" (2016). Yu used North et al's framework in the case of India as an example that it is not always effective for developing

nations to focus on strengthening their political institutions first. The results of Yu's study revealed that if India had first focused on open access orders in its political institutions, it would have not had grown as fast. Instead, it was better for India to focus on developing open access in its economic institutions first. This idea could also be spread to other countries who are or were developing. For these nations to compete with the Western sphere, it is best they focus more on developing economically than politically (Yu, 2016). This could mean undermining democracy to better work on economic growth. However, Yu does state that India began working on its political Institutions later (Yu, 2016). Yu's research gives an idea of how North et al's theory has been tested, which can benefit this study. Other political factors will need to be further developed, however.

### 3.3. Authoritarianism

It is also important to investigate the relation between authoritarianism and economic growth. A framework for analyzing authoritarian governments by Stephen Haber titled "Authoritarian Government" suggested a mix of sociology and economics to answer why some authoritarian governments could have sustained economic growth while others did not. One of the primary reasons which causes lack of economic growth in authoritarian governments is the power struggle; when there is only one person on top people want to compete for that position. This causes strain on economic development, since the dictator will have to use more resources to not be overthrown (Haber, 2008). A stationary bandit—or benign dictator—is suggested to solve these problems of power struggle, but Haber noted that there are a significantly larger portion of predatory dictators. A way which has been used to solve issues of power struggle has been terror, but these economies don't do well since the governments lose legitimacy. Furthermore, lack of property rights in society causes lack of investment, as banking sectors are important for economic growth. On the other hand, authoritarian governments which use organizational proliferation to overcome power struggle are generally more successful. By creating many organizations which work alongside the dictator, property rights become more distributed across the society. This generally leads to higher and faster economic growth and a higher chance of democratic transition in the future (Haber, 2008). Haber's study showed there are various forms of authoritarian governments which can affect economic growth in different ways. Understanding how authoritarian, as well as democratic, policies affect economic growth is key to this study, but other studies outside of economics can also be key.

### 3.4. Nationalism

This thesis intends to delve outside of economic studies to explain how authoritarian economic models can withstand time. For this, studies on nationalism will be referred to. An important work in nationalism studies is *Imagined Communities* by Benedict Anderson. As suggested by the title, Anderson saw nation-states as communities with an imagined identity. Throughout his book, he referred to how the government, as well as other factors, overtime had created an identity for a nation. Referencing important factors such as language, culture, and geographical identity. He went through various nationalist movements in history, starting with some of the earliest movements in Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the development of the printing press (Anderson, 1983, pp.37-46). He then went on to colonial nationalist movements which were forged from the influences of the colonizers themselves, or the creoles who ran these colonies—typically through education (Anderson, 1983) Nationalism studies could be an important tool to understand authoritarian economic models. The national identity which has been created for a nation could be an important factor to how an authoritarian state is trusted and can maintain power.

### 3.5. Singapore

The theory that authoritarianism could be more effective at economic growth is sometimes referred to as the “Lee Thesis” or “hypothesis”, which is named after Singapore’s past prime minister Lee Kuan Yew. While tests on authoritarianism and economic growth overall have shown that there is no significant effect, some argue that in Asia authoritarianism is more effective than democracy. One of the arguments for this has to do with Asian culture, which typically has a hierarchical structure in the family and society. Another is their developmentalist autocracy, which usually puts economic factors before anything else. Authoritarian states are argued to better generate economic growth because they can much more easily implement policies and practices which boost the economy better than democracies, primarily because no one can veto or argue against the decisions. Various quantitative tests have been conducted on the matter, but results are generally quite mixed and don’t necessarily deny or confirm that authoritarianism is good for economic growth in Asia (Knutsen, 2010). Various Asian countries’ successes with authoritarianism, such as Singapore, still leave the “Lee Thesis” up for debate.

Furthermore, it is important to understand Singapore’s history. During much of the 19th and 20th century, Singapore was an important trading colony for Great Britain. During WWII, the island was occupied by the Japanese in a period marred by violence and brutality. After the war,

the Singaporeans declared independence from Britain, and attempted to merge with Malaysia. However, political and social differences caused Malaysia's rejection of Singapore's merger. In 1965, Singapore was forced to become its own independent nation (Booth, 2016). Despite these bleak beginnings, under the leadership of The People's Action Party (PAP) and Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the country has experienced rapid economic growth and has become known as one of "the miracles of Asia". Singapore's GDP has grown from 704,462,302 USD in 1960 to 296.976 Billion USD in 2016 (World Bank, 2018): it has become a prosperous and wealthy country. Its growth has widely been contributed to by the state's policies, who run on the premise of free-trade and create an environment which promotes multinational companies to do business there. The government puts a marked effort into the public sector and intervenes in the private sector to encourage business. This is seen in various policies and practices, such as state-promoted companies (such as Singapore Airlines), and state-funded housing and savings (Huff, 1995). However, Singapore's degree of government intervention has often been regarded as somewhat authoritarian and undemocratic (Haque, 2004). The government uses threats and other methods to obtain a majority rule, as well as strict regulations which restrict freedom of speech. Singapore is also known for its brutal punishments and strict laws, most famously its ban on chewing gum. Singapore is an economically successful country which has blatant authoritarian tendencies. This is what makes it a perfect case study for economic growth in authoritarian states. Singapore has been a power in the world economy for decades despite its lack of democracy, yet its authoritarian institutions have failed to end.

W. G. Huff's "Turning the Corner in Singapore's Developmental State?" examined the economic development of Singapore in relation to its government and compared the Singaporean economy to those of Korea and Taiwan. Huff used a set of variables to outline how the state achieved economic development. The first is initial conditions, and for Singapore, this was its colonial legacy with the British, which gave it a jump-start for success. The next is reputation building, in which the government needs to build a reputation (support from its citizens) to keep power (Huff, 1999). Singapore did this with its promise to become involved in economic growth, and the state did this through attracting Foreign Direct Investment and multinational enterprises. The government's investment in tax incentives, infrastructure, and education allowed wages in Singapore to increase to high levels, competing with those found in the United States. Through reputation, the government hoped to achieve legitimacy, the underlying idea being that legitimacy

promotes investment and growth through stability. However, the Singaporean government didn't just achieve this through accomplishing its promises, but also through state involvement in the press, and other dubious activities which led many to question the validity of Singapore's democracy. According to Huff's view, similar states such as Korea eventually shifted to more democratic practices after passing development, but in the case of Singapore, the government still has strict control. The government's controlling nature has had negative results with the private sector, showing low Total Factor Productivity growth (Huff, 1999). Huff's ideas of legitimacy are important but need to be further developed.

A notion to how the Singaporean government legitimizes itself is by how authoritative it is. While an authoritarian state, Singapore also grants more rights than most harsh regimes. Singapore's situation can be quite conflicting, as it is not as authoritative as North Korea, but it is not as democratic as countries such as the United States and Sweden. On the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy index 2017, Singapore obtained an overall rating of 6.32, putting in at a rank of 69. For comparison, Norway (number one on the list) had a rank of 9.87 and North Korea (the bottom of the list) had a rating of 1.08 (EIU, 2017). Singapore is thus in a middle realm, where it has some aspects, such as its electoral processes, which are very undemocratic, but at the same time the people of Singapore have many freedoms. Singapore throughout the research presented will be recognized as a type of semi-authoritarian state and not as a dictatorship. It has political institutions which according to various frameworks, such as those by Acemoglu & Robinson, can be damaging for sustained economic growth. It is also important to define democracy itself in the context of this study. There is, however, not a simple way to define a democracy. Most people's initial thought on what a democracy is usually think of a government with a fair society in which everyone can vote and the majority rules. However, Amartya Sen argued that democracy also "requires the protection of liberties and freedoms, respect for legal entitlements, and the guaranteeing of free discussion and uncensored distribution of news and fair comment" (1999). Also seeing it as a sort of universal value, rather than just politics (Sen, 1999). This is important to define, as if elections were the only thing which defined democracy, then Singapore would technically be one. This study goes by the concept that Singapore is not a democracy, and many others also agree that it is not one.

In literature regarding political institutions and economic growth, there are many analyses as to why authoritarian or democratic states produce the economic results they do and why they eventually transition. The consensus of much of the literature tends to favor the benefits of a democratic political system for economic growth. However, when taking Singapore as an example a gap appears. Singapore politically is authoritarian but regarding *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Singapore should be transitioning to a democracy by now. However, as of 2018, Singapore's PAP seems stably in charge. Acemoglu and Robinson stated that this is because Singaporean society is quite equal (2006, pp.43-46). However, they didn't go into much detail about how Singapore is able to balance and maintain its equality and economic growth. In *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, more confusion is created when putting Singapore into the framework. Singapore has many of the characteristics as open access orders, such as equality, economic freedom, and social welfare. But by not having full political freedom, is Singapore a natural state instead? Singapore doesn't quite fit into these frameworks and has perhaps found a system which doesn't fit into their logic. The study intends to find Singapore's framework with the help some of the other literature mentioned.

### 3.6. Research Gap

The primary gap within the literature is there is no proper explanation for how there can be an economically successful authoritarian government that doesn't transition into a democracy. Is democracy as necessary as many academics think? Do all successful nations eventually become democratic? This puzzle of democracy is one that is up for debate still, and Singapore's unique position can hold answers. So far it seems no one knows why Singapore is still as authoritative as it is. Many could believe that all successful authoritarian regimes become democracies because none have proven to become an exception. Singapore can perhaps be the first exception to this puzzle. This is what the study intends to answer.

## 4. Theory

### 4.1. Theoretical Framework

For the first section of the theory, the three most influential theories for this study will be discussed in detail and how they can help in understanding Singapore.

#### 4.1.1. North, Wallis, & Weingast

One of the theories which will be applied to this study will be North, Wallis, & Weingast's (NWW) *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human*

*History* on open access orders. Taking NWW's ideas on what constitutes an open access order, the study seeks to see if Singapore fits into the idea of what an open access order society is. By collecting the relevant data on Singapore which relates to the theory and plugging it in the results should be determined.

NWW's framework will be defined by the five characteristics they list which define open access societies. These five characteristics will be labeled as the following:

1. A general value of equality among citizens

This means that the population of the open access society all have similar beliefs in the relative functioning of the society and how everyone can benefit from it. Equality is common since many societies today value everyone to have the same opportunities and treatment.

2. No restrictions to political, economic, educational and religious activities

3. Organizations which support these activities

These two factors are fundamental to "open access" as they run independently from the state. Specifically, in terms of organizations which can run freely and have competition; competition creating democracy. Activities are not restricted, are organizations are free to engage in the market of these activities.

4. Objective enforcement of law on citizens

This as well as point two refer to people having the freedom to pursue their own interests without regulation from the government.

5. Impersonal exchange

"Impersonal" meaning that people can get exchanged help and support without the reliance on charity. This basically means support from the government in welfare. For example, if an individual is out of work, they can receive unemployment aid while they seek work. This of course varies between the open access societies but is a characteristic which is present (North et al, 2009, pp.112-114).

If Singapore contains all five of these characteristics it is an open access society, but if not then it will have to be defined where Singapore stands politically. This framework will help to

understand the opportunities and abilities which Singaporeans have, despite being in an authoritarian state.

This framework has primarily been chosen because it contains an organizational and societal structure in how to keep a society together as one without disorder. It is about the organization of the society which allows for economic development, as well as institutions since they are needed to keep all the five factors in place (North et al, 2009, pp.115). This is important in Singapore's case since despite being authoritative, it obviously contains characteristics which are desirable within the society which allow the economy to thrive and keep crime and violence low. It goes into more detail than only economic factors.

#### 4.1.2. Acemoglu & Robinson

North et al's work is focused only on open access orders, and it is important to take in more institutional characteristics from others' ideas. The second aspect of the theoretical framework for this study is the use of Acemoglu & Robinson's theory of inclusive and extractive institutions in *Why Nations Fail*. Acemoglu & Robinson's framework has some similarities to North et al's but Acemoglu & Robinson approach institutions on a slightly different perspective, which is how people are incentivised to do activities which further economic development. By taking the characteristics of extractive and inclusive institutions, gathered data from Singapore will be plugged-in to observe what kind of political and economic institutions Singapore has. First the "Extractive" and "Inclusive" institutions will have to be defined. First Inclusive economic institutions will be defined in Acemoglu & Robinson's words which contain four characteristics:

1. secure private property
2. an unbiased system of law
3. a provision of public services that provides a level playing field in which people can exchange and contract
4. the entry of new businesses and allow people to choose their careers

All these factors allow people to be incentivised to be entrepreneurial and creative overall benefiting the economy in the long-run. If individuals have benefits for being creative and successful, they are more likely to do so, benefiting not just themselves but the society (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, pp.78-84).

Inclusive political institutions, on the other hand, will be defined with two characteristics:

1. Centralization
2. Pluralism

Centralization meaning that the government has good control over the state creating law and order and preventing the society from descending into chaos (An idea which is like North et al's framework). Pluralism meaning that everyone can be involved in the process of the government (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, pp.80-84). Simply, this is democracy. The government needs enough control and power to keep society together, while not too much so that the society is still democratic. This then allows for the inclusive economic institutions, as previous mentioned, which allow for entrepreneurial initiative. Extractive institutions would be the opposite of all these characteristics.

These two frameworks will allow us to understand Singapore's place in its political and economic system. Since both are institutional frameworks, they both have a similar perspective. They both believe its political institutions which support ideals creating economic freedom which enable nations to further develop economically. However, both frameworks combined miss out on some other key aspects which could also be quite important, and thus one more framework will be added.

#### 4.1.3. Nationalism

Anderson's analysis on Nations and Nationalism will be considered as well. Primarily what contributes to the Singaporean national identity and how it is upheld within its political institutions. To further develop these statements, it will be interpreted what makes a person from Singapore feel Singaporean and a member of society. These are values and ideas which are typically spread through historical and cultural background. However, since Singapore became a nation so quickly and suddenly, Singapore may have some interesting characteristics to its national identity. The second half refers to how the government supports and continues these values. These values of national identity are what keep the society together, so many programmes and other such governmental actions are created to support it. Why nation building, and the culture of the nation, are being considered in the framework is because they're also important elements in the organization of a society. The other frameworks by North et al and Acemoglu & Robinson leave

out these ideas despite their importance. All these frameworks can help lead to a model to analyse Singapore's position.

#### 4.2. Analytical Framework

To conduct the analysis for this study, various characteristics will be taken from these previously mentioned frameworks which will be put together into our own analytical framework. Several characteristics will be used to interpret what traits Singaporeans have which fulfill their needs; this is basically their quality of life. Why factors which contribute to quality of life are being analysed is because if the population has a good quality of life, or can obtain it, then generally people will be more content within the nation. In this case being Singapore. First, a characteristic will be taken which belongs to both North et al's and Acemoglu & Robinson's frameworks. This first characteristic will be the levels of freedoms and rights in the society. This can be a multitude of things including equal opportunity, personal freedoms, access to private property, and ability to increase social economic status. This can be seen in the first characteristic of North et al's framework which calls for general values such as equality, and the second one which calls for no restrictions in activities (North et al, 2009, pp.112-114). In Acemoglu & Robinson's framework this can be observed in the points of secure private property, unbiased system of law, and pluralism (2012, pp.78-84). These are all things which are valued today and having these in a country is important for the people to be content with the political regime and legitimize it. Data will be collected which tells us which characteristics are in Singapore, and it can be deduced how well a quality of life Singaporeans have. For the framework, the first variable will be listed as:

##### *A. Quality of Life*

This can be interpreted with a variety of available data. Primarily, what is being looked for is how content are people living in the country. Do the country's policies fill their needs or not? An easy way to interpret this is to look at survey data taken within Singapore. However, there is only a limited amount of these surveys. In addition to this, data can be found with how healthy people are, life expectancy, birth and death rates, education, and possibly more. All these together can help interpret and create an understanding for the quality of life Singaporeans have.

Next is what the government does to enforce the quality of life and the characteristics which make it up from variable A. This second variable will be derived from government programs and welfare. This means how much of a role the government has in maintaining the quality of life. This

is important since the government must have an important role in maintaining its power, and typically a nation's policies effect the quality of life within it. It is important to define what is meant by welfare policies in this context, and for this study it will be defined as policies which the government implements to help support the people and care for them. They could be simpler policies, as a form of safety, or policy implementations which everyone uses and has access to. North el al's framework fits into this with their idea of organizational support for activities, but also by their ideas that open access orders have social welfare (2009, pp.112-114). In Acemoglu & Robinson's framework, this refers to their idea of political institutions with centralization (2012, pp.80-84). These policies can be various things such as healthcare coverage, state funded universities, social securities, state housing, and many other policies. This variable is used because it is primarily believed in this study that the benefits which the government grants the people creates trust. However, the government's success in achieving economic growth and prosperity can also contribute. This second variable in the framework will labelled as:

### *B. Government's Social Welfare Policies*

To measure this, various government policy papers which detail the policies of Singapore will need to be observed. Various secondary sources which focus on Singapore's welfare policies will also be observed to further illustrate the polices. Lastly, data on government spending can give an idea to what the Singaporean government is putting money into to help support the people.

For the third variable, ideas of cultural and national identity will be analyzed. This is also very important, as cultural values and national ideals can determine what's acceptable and what's not to the citizens, as well as trust to the government and higher officials. As mentioned in the literature review of Anderson's work, a national identity is usually fostered through the state. We will analyse what makes up the Singaporean national identity, what state mechanisms support it, and its roles in legitimizing the political system. This can be done through various institutions and activities such as education, military, and other celebrations which uphold the Singaporean identity (Anderson, 1983). This variable will be listed in the framework as:

### *C. Nationalism*

Perhaps the most ambiguous factor to interpret. However, knowledge on nationalism can be gained through a multitude of data, such as announcements on government supported events, documents,

and even forms of art. Also, secondary sources can help us gain knowledge on Singaporean nationalism.

These three variables together will equal what the study seeks to accomplish: what is the model which sustains and legitimizes Singapore's Authoritarian government? This result factor can be labelled the following:

#### *D. Singapore's Authoritarian Model*

With all the contributing variables and the resulting variable established, the whole analytical framework can now be mapped out. This will be done quite simply with the results from A, B, and C all equalling together to create D, which is the overall model. The framework will be written out as so:

$$A_{Quality\ of\ Life} + B_{Welfare\ Policy} + C_{Nationalism} = D_{Authoritarian\ Model}$$

This analytical framework will lead to the conclusion and purpose of this study.

## 5. Data

The data which will be collected to perform the study will be primarily a collection of written works and numerical data to explain Singapore's situation. First, some of the secondary sources used will be mentioned. Works from Singaporean scholars, as well as political and economic thinkers will be used to help fill in knowledge gaps and gain more perspective about Singapore. These secondary sources will be acquired from official electronic sources with permission and possibly in physical from libraries.

Primary sources will be used to support the arguments. Some of these will be through writings from the Singaporean government. Empirical data will primarily be displayed to support claims, such as from the GINI coefficient, income and wages, and various other statistics. Data will be collected from various sources including the World Bank, the United Nations, and the government of Singapore. The government of Singapore has released population and economic statistics throughout the 2000s. In addition, the government within the same period releases budget data detailing its revenue, spending, and programmes. Lastly, the Singaporean government has information relating to its practices and culture online. All this data will be collected and used in the way mentioned in the methods.

## 6. Method

The form of method used in this study will be qualitative. The data collected from the written sources mentioned previously are examined and it will be deduced what fits with Singapore's model of authoritative regime and what does not. In addition, it will be examined what aspects of economic growth through institutions fit with Singapore. Then it will be decided what does not represent Singapore and what does. This will inherently create the theory inductively, instead of deductively.

The idea of this study is that by the end a model which fits Singapore's situation will be created. Since the country is an exemption to some models, and many works on authoritarian and democratic economic growth lack involvement of Singapore's case, a theory which explains it is needed. Once this is accomplished, this theory can tell how authoritarian governments, such as Singapore, are able to manage economic growth while having stability in their power.

This method has been chosen due to the nature of the study. Unlike a lot of other studies in the field of economic history, this study is not dealing with specific numerical or price calculations, or even statistical percentages. In this instance, a quantitative approach is unnecessary. Perhaps it could be done if an economic historian wished to do so, but for this study there is no need. The idea is a more analytical and narrative understanding of what allows the authoritarian system to uphold itself through the Singaporean society, which is primarily a cause to its economic success. If the people of Singapore revolted, then Singapore wouldn't be the Asian economic powerhouse it is today. This leads to why a qualitative and narrative approach is being taken, to explain why this has occurred. Finding available data which can explain why this occurs is far more valuable for this study than finding statistical significances. Furthermore, other people's ideas and theories can help put together Singapore's scenario.

The result of using this qualitative method which will be inductively done through available data and resources is a model which answers the research questions. Numerical data can explain the questions, but theoretical and observational studies by other scholars—or even statements made by important individuals within Singapore—will also contribute to answering these questions.

## 7. Analysis

This analysis section will address each variable of the model separately, starting with the quality of life which is found in Singapore, then moving on to the social welfare policies implemented in Singapore and how they influence the previous part, and then discussing nationalism in Singapore. All three of these variables will then be brought together fully developing the model. Fundamentally, all three of the variables mentioned can explain why the Singaporean citizens choose to support the authoritative nature of the government, and why revolt or political counters to the regime are non-existent.

### 7.1. Variable A: Quality of Life

The first variable of this model, as mentioned previously, is quality of life. The quality of life in Singapore is being examined due to the belief that if life is good in a nation, an individual is more likely to support its government—if the government does have a large role in supplying this high quality of life. If people are safe, have access to their needs, and can live their lives as they wish, they will likely have no reason to want to leave or revolt against the political regime of the country. The data reviewed will detail that the quality of life is high in Singapore, having access to quality healthcare and education, as well as having a lot of economic freedom and being a moderately equal society.

First inequality in Singapore will be examined. Mostly from the GINI index, which is a common measurement of income inequality. The Index goes from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning complete equality and 1 meaning complete inequality. However, not much income data is available in Singapore, which makes finding this data difficult, but some GINI estimates are available from the 2000s onwards. The available data shows that from 2000 onwards Singapore's GINI index has been in the 0.4 range, meaning that it is in an average range. A similar rating for countries such as the United States and the UK, as well as the other Asian Tigers. Singapore's GINI index had increased from the years 2000 through 2007. In 2000 it was 0.442 and in 2007 it had increased to 0.482.

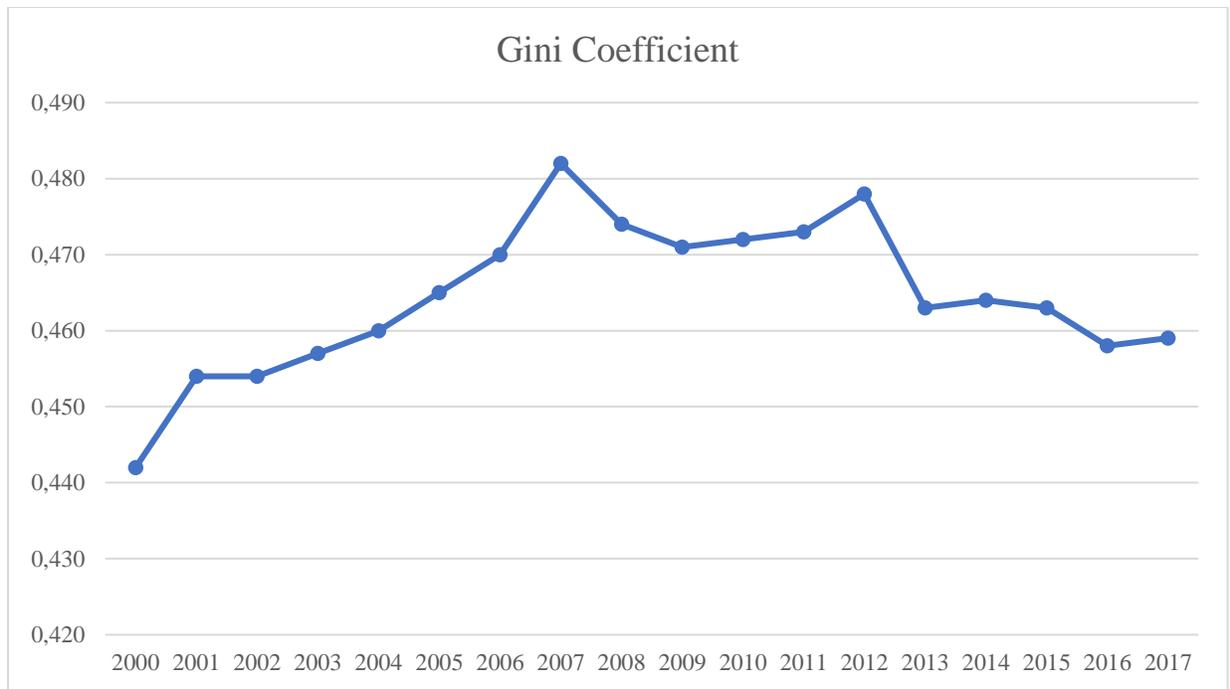


Figure 1, Gini Coefficient in Singapore based on household income from work per household member before accounting for government transfers and taxes, 2000-2017 (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2018)

Figure 1 displays the GINI coefficient for Singapore from 2000 to 2017. After the height of the coefficient in 2007, it then dropped slightly until in 2012 when it rose to 0.478. It has declined since, and in 2017 is was at 0.459 (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2018). Current Gini data hints that inequality in Singapore is more stable than scholars have stated, but the lack of data from before 2000 causes difficulty in concluding. Donald Low believes that data does show that Singapore’s inequality is rising, stating that Singapore was more equal 10 years before 2012 (Low, 2014, pp.118-119). However, with current data it is hard to know how equal Singapore was in the past during its developing years.

Empirically Singapore is moderately equal, but not completely equal. Considering some of the wealthiest countries aren’t completely equal, there shouldn’t be an expectation that Singapore should be. However, Singapore’s increasing inequality could be problematic. What the GINI index informs is that since Singaporeans experience at least an average degree of equality for this current time, wage gaps are not too high, and that people mostly can achieve liveable wages. This keeps class divide lower and less issues of revolt and need of repression.

Next various forms of economic freedom are measured with data collected from the Heritage Foundation’s Index of Economic Freedom. This index rates countries’ economic freedom

based on various factors on a scale of 1 to 10: 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. Singapore consistently ranks high within all the categories. Singapore's overall Economic Freedom score as of 2017 was 8.86, which is one of the highest in world next to Hong Kong. There are also other individual factors which are important to take note of. In property rights Singapore has a score of 97.1; in business freedom 95.1; in Labour Freedom 90.8; in Monetary Freedom 84.3; in Trade Freedom 90.0; Investment Freedom 85.0; and in Financial Freedom 80.0 (Heritage Foundation, 2018). This data has been collected since 1995 and the scores have either risen or decreased slightly since, however, it is best said that the scores are relatively consistent. What can be deduced from these numbers is that Singapore's government allows Individuals who live or work in Singapore little limitations in what work they can do and how they can use their money. In this sector, Singaporean's are quite free, or those that come from abroad to work in Singapore. However, there are also many other social factors that need to be considered, as well as other forms of freedom, to obtain an overall idea of the freedoms which citizens have access to within Singapore. Economic freedom alone is very important, as if people can choose how they want to invest and make their money then people are more likely to be content with their lives in the country.

Next to observe the quality of life in Singapore will be income levels. Typically, countries with high and growing incomes have a good quality of life. However, incomes alone can't reveal everything. Preferably prices would have to also be gathered to find the purchasing power in the country, also known as real wages. For simplicity we will only observe the incomes, which can also tell us about quality of life. Especially since it is already acknowledged that Singapore is a wealthy county. This is to understand how much money the average Singaporean makes a year.

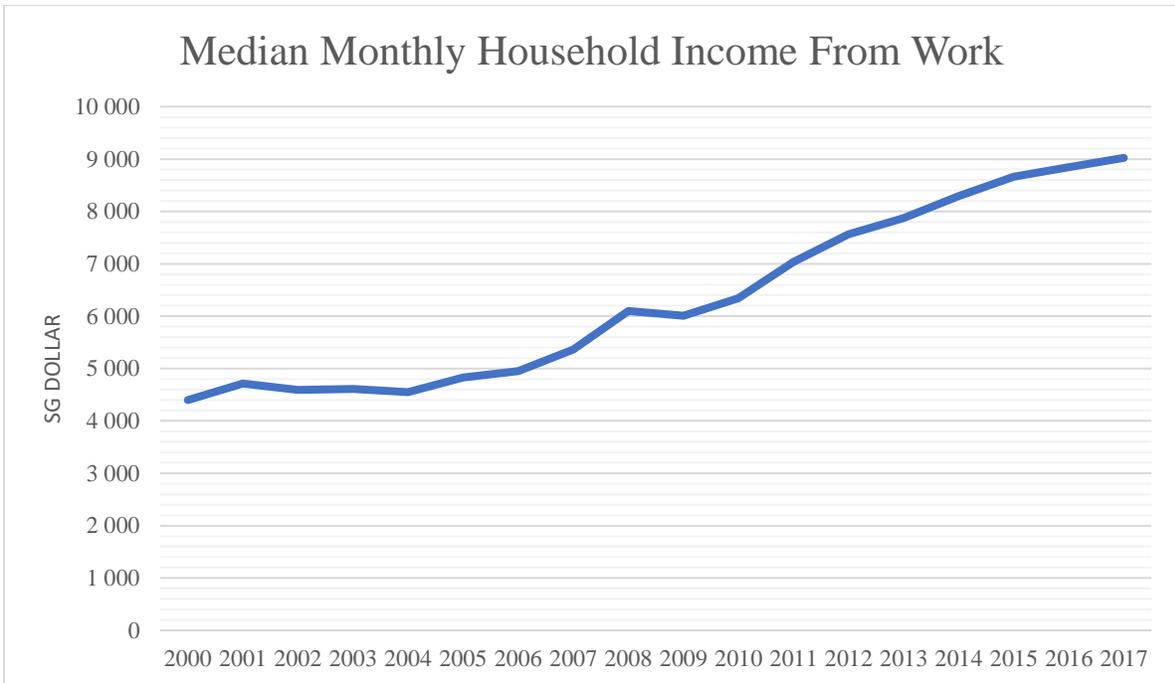


Figure 2, Median Monthly Household Income from Work including employer CPF contributions, 2000-2017 (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2018)

Figure 2 displays the median monthly incomes from 2000 to 2017 (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2018). There is a clear rise in incomes from 2001, with the median being below 5,500 dollars and by 2017 the median being above 9,000 dollars. While it is unclear about wages before 2000 it is certain that as Singapore has grown its people have also grown richer, indicating that many people have access to good work. This further illustrates that Singaporeans have a high quality of life.

Life expectancy will be observed to help further interpret quality of living in Singapore. Observed from World Bank data the following about Singapore's life expectancy can be observed.

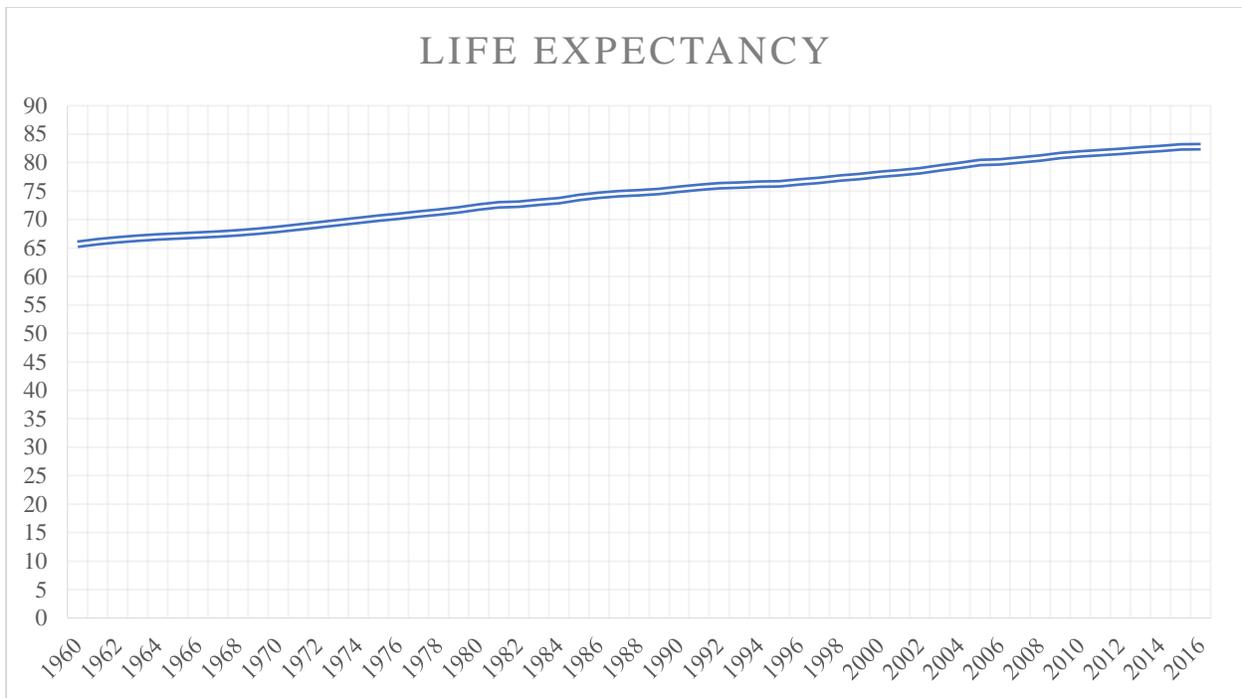


Figure 3, Life Expectancy by birth in Singapore, 1960-2016 (World Bank, 2018)

Figure 3 details Singapore’s life expectancy from birth in the overall population from 1960 to 2016 (World Bank, 2018). In 1960 the life expectancy was about 65 years of age, but since 1960 it has continued to rise. In 2016 the life expectancy was about 82 years of age. Singapore’s life expectancy is not far from some of the countries with the highest. These include Japan at 83 years and Hong Kong at 84 years (World Bank, 2018). What the life expectancy of Singapore tells us is that since its quite high, the average person has at least basic access to health services and lives in a suitable environment. The average person lives in healthy living conditions and can get taken care of, thus they are quite healthy. Good health conditions and care is essential for a high quality of life and for people to be comfortable and happy with living conditions.

Health in the country can continue to be observed with the Crude Death Rate (CDR), which is the death rate by 1,000s for the specific year. The CDR data for Singapore was collected by the World Bank for the years 1960 to 2016.

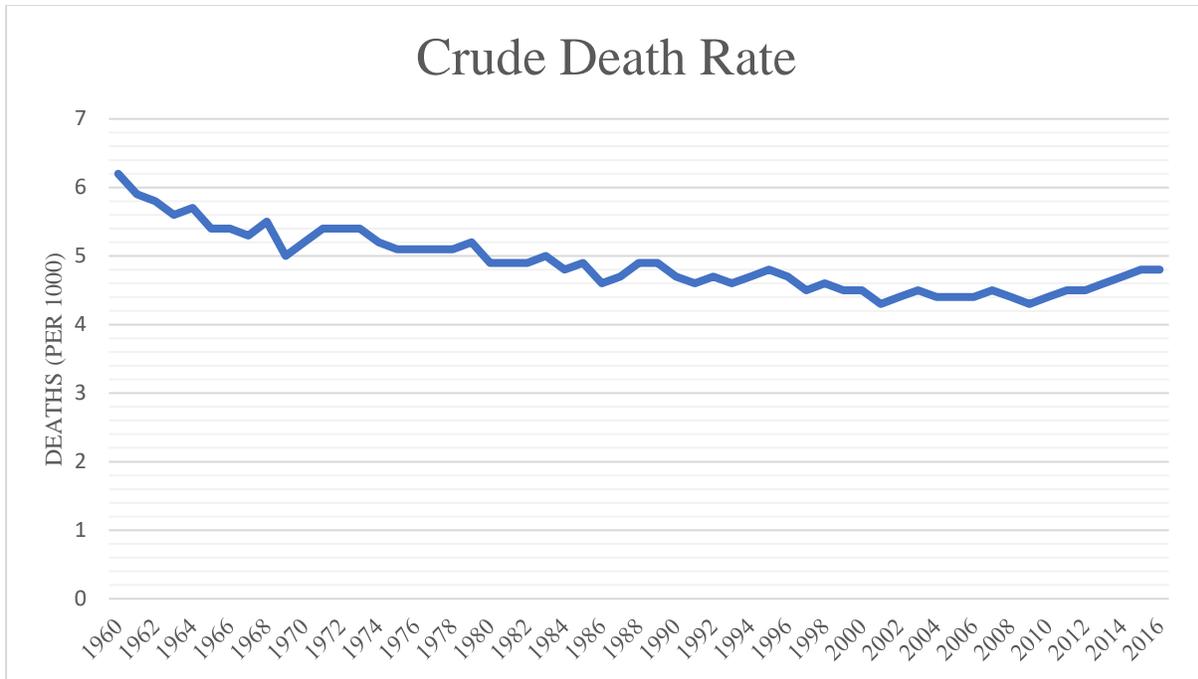


Figure 4, Crude Death Rate (per 1000) in Singapore, 1960-2016 (World Bank, 2018)

Figure 4 displays the CDR data (World Bank, 2018). A large drop in the CDR occurred from 1960 until 2009. In 1960 the CDR was 6.2 thousand and by 2009 it had dropped to 4.3 thousand. Since 2009, the CDR has begun to rise to 4.8 thousand in 2016. However, this is quite common, as life expectancies get higher more people begin to die of old age rather than other factors. The end of this graph shows this. Overall, the CDR has dropped to low levels as Singapore has become richer. This is another factor which further illustrates people in Singapore have good access to healthcare and live in suitable environments. Singaporeans are healthy which contributes to their quality of life.

Education can also tell us a lot about the quality of life in Singapore. If the average level of education is quite high, it means that most people have access to high levels of education and could attend education at the university level. The data on mean years of education was collected from the Human Development Report (HDR) 2016. In 2015, countries such as the United States and Sweden had their mean years of education levels at around 16 years. Singapore's during 2015 was 15.4. This has risen from 1990, which was 10.6 years (Human Development Report, 2016). This shows that people in Singapore are getting more and more educated. This doesn't just enrich their own mental development, but also job opportunities and ability to reach higher social

economic statuses. Overall, it can be deduced that the high education levels in Singapore contribute to the average Singaporean’s quality of life.

To further observe the quality of life that the citizens of Singapore have, we will look at survey data which consists of the life choices which they perceive they have. The data shown is Gallup World Poll (GWP) data which was found in the 2017 World Happiness Report (WHR). It is derived from a yes or no question which asks if the person believes they have the ability to make the life choices they want. They either had to respond 0 (no) and 1 (yes). The averages were then taken and displayed for the year the survey was taken. In the GWP data collected, the years 2006-2016 are available.

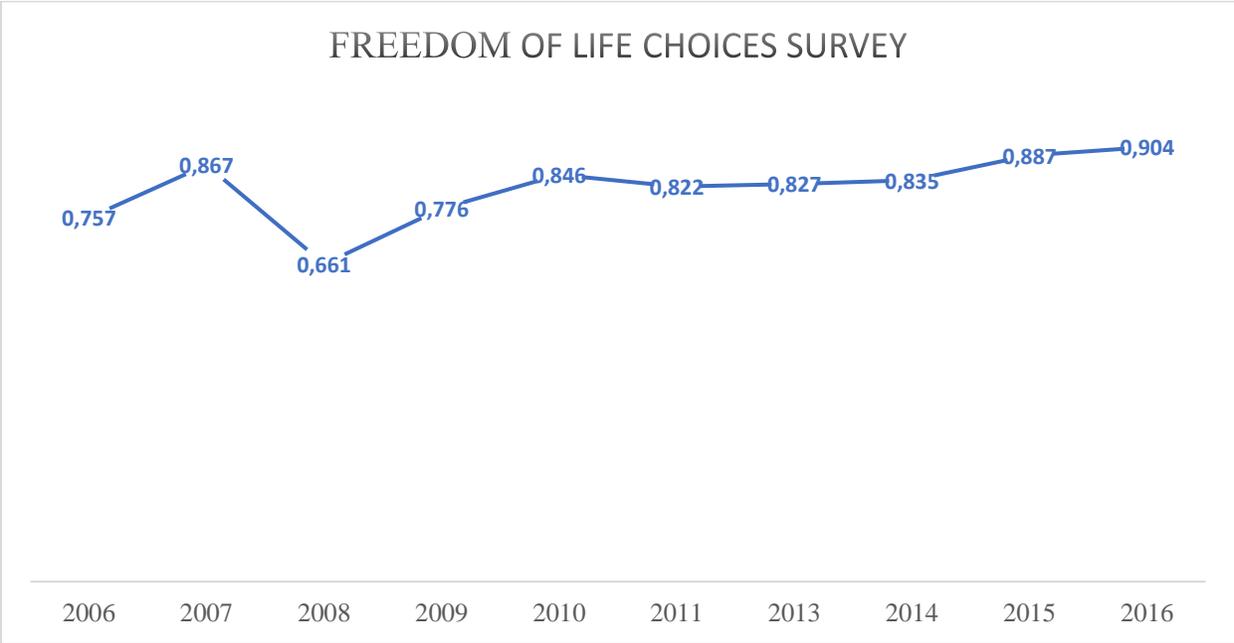


Figure 5, Freedom of Life Choices Survey in Singapore, 2006-2016 (World Happiness Report, 2017)

Figure 5 displays the Freedom of Life Choices data (World Happiness Report, 2017). The results have been relatively high since 2006, with only a drop in 2008. However, since 2010 the average has stayed in the 0.8 range and was its highest in 2016. These results are not much different from equal countries such as Sweden, which have very high averages in the 0.9 range (World Happiness Report, 2017). What can be deduced from Singapore’s scores is that from this data, most Singaporeans have in recent years felt quite free to live their lives how they please—at least in terms of their career. This can be further backed up by the economic freedom data observed previously. The ability to freely choose how oneself wishes to live their life is undoubtedly

important for people being satisfied. This point further explains how Singapore has a high quality of life.

Perception of Corruption survey data can also inform about the quality of life in Singapore. This comes from the same Happiness index data as before. For this survey there were two 0 or 1 questions: if they perceived corruption to be in the government, and if they perceived it in business.

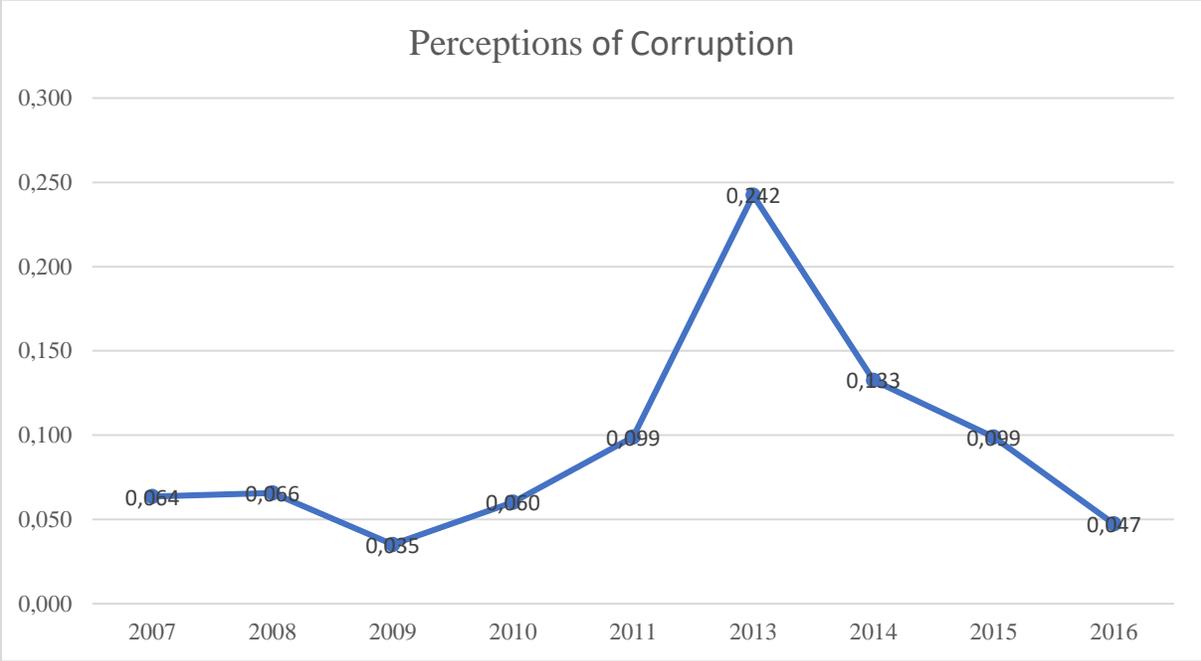


Figure 6, Perceptions of Corruption in Singapore, 2007-2016 (World Happiness Report, 2017)

Figure 6 displays the averages of the corruption survey questions (World Happiness Report, 2017). The data shows that primarily Singaporean’s perceive corruption in their country to be very low. The scores from 2007 have been in the 0,0 range. However, there was a rise in 2013, but this brings its average to a similar level as Sweden (World Happiness Report, 2017). This means that Singaporeans believe there is less corruption in their country than the citizens of Sweden. This data is starting to portray that many Singaporeans have a level of trust in their country’s government. While not a traditional measure in standard of living, arguably trust in one’s government is important for being content with the life in one’s country. Thus, since Singaporeans are quite trusting of their government, this further establishes they have a high quality of life. If they didn’t trust their government, there would be greater demand for the overthrow of the current government.

Next a survey on confidence in the national government will be analysed. Also, from the GWP in the WHR and with a binary answer of 0 or 1 for no and yes. The question was simply if they had confidence in the government or not.

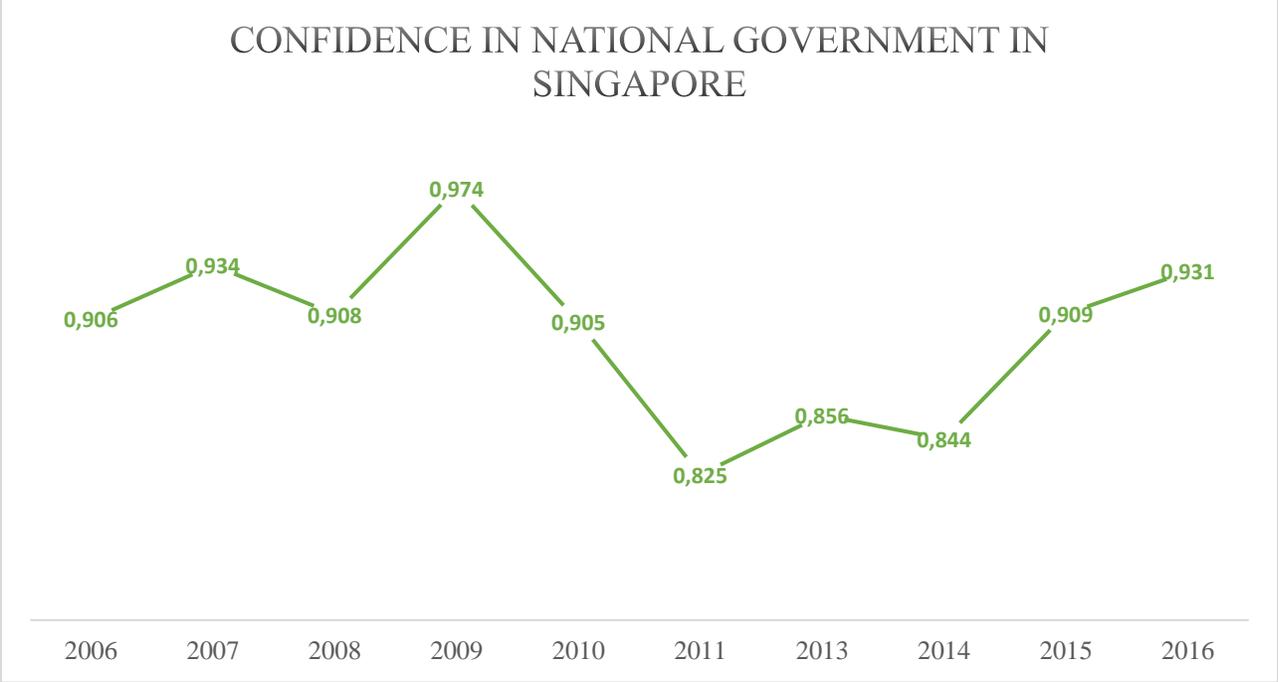


Figure 7, Confidence in National Government in Singapore, 2006-2016 (World Happiness Report, 2017)

Figure 7 displays the averages of the 0 and 1 answers from 2006-2016 (World Happiness Report, 2017). Relatively, Singapore has had high scores in the 0.9 range, with some dropping to 0.8 in the past decade. As of 2016, the score was 0.931. This means that Singaporeans are confident in their government’s abilities. Confident in exactly what about the government is not explained, as the question is too simple. Possibly in the government’s ability to bring the country to success and secure good lives for the people. Whatever the specifics of this confidence, these scores are another factor which shows that most of Singaporeans support and trust their government, which means a high life quality and further establishes the continuation of the current governmental power.

This data on quality of life has shown that Singaporeans are equal and that most experience good living and work conditions. This has been seen in their growing life expectancy and declining death rates, as well as their growing incomes. We’ve also discovered that Singaporeans have a lot of freedom economically. This was first seen in the economic freedom index, but then also further supported in survey data which displayed that many Singaporeans felt they could make the life

choices they wanted, had low perceptions of corruption, and high confidence in the government. This data together proves that quality of life in Singapore is well and that Singaporeans in many ways can support and trust their government based on the benefits they receive and have access to. Now that this is established, what the government does to keep this quality of life, equality, and trust so high through welfare and over forms of policies can be moved on to.

## 7.2. Variable B: Government Welfare Policies

To continue from the analysis of citizen's quality of life in Singapore, now what will be analysed is the government's policies and support which allows for their quality of life. The conclusion from variable A was that Singaporeans in general live high qualities of life, so through observing government policies it is hoped that the government will invest heavily in maintaining the high quality of life. If the government is a large factor in supporting the quality of life, then the citizens of Singapore can develop a trust and reliance on the government. This means that the citizens could find it risky to revolt or change government, as they could potentially lose the benefits they have. This keeps the political party in power. First, to observe what the Singaporean government is doing to achieve the high quality of life for its people is to look at the government's investments in the public sector. The Singaporean Government has put its budget estimates and spending online each year for the past decades, for the purposes of this study the 2017 budget is examined since it's the most recent completed year (Ministry of Finance, 2018). The tables displayed below detail the total of each of the significant ministries expenditures as well as their top programmes in 2017 which are relevant for the discussion. The prices are shown in Singapore Dollars (SGD). The government's revenue for its expenditure is through various taxes, the most significant taxes which generate revenue are the corporate income tax, the personal income tax, and the goods & services tax (Ministry of Finance, 2018). Looking at the government's spending, specifically by programme and sector, can tell how much the government gives to its people.

First the government's spending on Health will be analysed. The previous section concluded that Singaporeans lived quite healthily, in line with many other rich countries, so it is expected that the government will invest a lot into health. Table 1 contains Singapore's 2017 expenditures from the Ministry of Health. It displays the expenditure from each programme plus the total amount. The total expenditure is almost 11 trillion Singaporean dollars, which means that the country does indeed spend a lot on its health. Most of the money is going into services, almost

7 trillion Singaporean Dollars. The Ministry of Health even states in its desired outcomes that it wishes to supply affordable and accessible healthcare to Singaporeans (Ministry of Health, 2017).

Ministry of Health Expenditure 2017	SGD
Headquarters	\$3,577,288,100
Services	\$6,903,395,000
Promotion	\$254,214,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,734,897,600</b>

*Table 1, Singapore's Ministry of Health Expenditure 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017)*

Singapore's healthcare spending shows that it contributes heavily to the healthy nature of its people, which also means that Singaporeans must rely on the government to obtain quality healthcare.

Next the government's spending into Education will be observed, specifically paying attention to what aspects of education they put money into. As shown in the previous section, Singapore has a high mean year of schooling, and has quite high-ranking universities. Singapore has become known for its higher education, so the expected result is high spending into education.

Ministry of Education Expenditure 2017	SGD
Government Schools and Junior Colleges	\$4,885,859,000
Government-Aided Schools and Junior Colleges	\$1,324,493,800
National University of Singapore	\$1,154,052,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,900,000,000</b>

*Table 2, Singapore's Ministry of Education Expenditure 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017)*

Table 2 shows more 2017 expenditures. This one shows education. The Government spends almost 13 trillion Singapore Dollars in total on its Education. A majority of the money, almost 5 trillion, goes into government schools. Through the General Education Programme, the country hopes to give every child the opportunity to have 10 years of education (Ministry of Education, 2017). Singapore has tuition fees for its universities, however, the government still spends a lot of money into the universities to help in reaching its education goals and assist in research. The education spending of the government shows a high interest in creating educated individuals in the country, likely to benefit their economy, this also correlates with the high years of education mentioned in the previous section. The government is thus responsible for the education given to its people, which improves their well-being. This further increases the citizens' reliance on the government.

An important aspect in welfare states is the security of its workers, or what the government does to insure safety to the labour force of the country. Spending data on Singapore’s labour policies were collected from the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).

Ministry of Manpower Expenditure 2017	SGD
Financial Security for Singaporeans	\$1,119,337,700
Corporate Services	\$139,786,800
Productive Workforce	\$282,625,900
Progressive Workplaces	\$185,870,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,727,620,600</b>

*Table 3, Singapore's Ministry of Manpower Expenditure 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017)*

Table 3 displays the expenditures for the Ministry of Manpower in 2017. It shows that in total the ministry spends just under 2 trillion Singaporean dollars. Most the money goes into the programme “Financial Security for Singaporeans”. The MOM describes the intent of the programme “to help Singaporeans achieve financial security and peace of mind in retirement. This is done through the CPF system, lifelong employability, and financial education and planning” (Ministry of Manpower, 2017). Overall, the government invests into making sure its people have secure jobs which will lead them to retirement. Job security is an important aspect in the keeping people satisfied with their life in the country. Since the government keeps people employed, people are reliant on the government’s ability to keep their employment.

To investigate additional policies, the spending through the Ministry of National Development, which intends to develop many things in Singapore including infrastructure, environment, and community will be observed.

Ministry of National Development 2017	SGD
Public Housing Development	\$3,539,820,300
Housing Estates Management	\$230,139,600
National Parks Board	\$459,149,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,800,385,100</b>

*Table 4, Singapore's Ministry of National Development 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017)*

Table 4 shows the 2017 expenditure for the Ministry of National Development. The total spending from this ministry being about 4 trillion 800 million Singaporean Dollars. Easily the most invested programme within this ministry is the development of Public Housing at about 3 trillion 500

million (Ministry of National Development, 2017). This housing is supervised by the Housing Development Board (HDB). In 2015, about 3.2 million people lived in HDB flats, and the total population living in Singapore at the time was 3.9 million. That means in 2015, 82% of the population lived in public housing (Housing Development Board, 2015). The population's reliance on the nation's public housing has only increased as Singapore has grown, and only in the past decade has it begun to drop. The efforts of the HDB go back to the government's idea that everyone should be able to afford housing, especially those who come from lower or middle-income families. In fact, families below a certain level of income have options to rent and can receive grants (Low et al, 2014, pp.104-106). From the previous spending data, the government invests heavily in supplying its citizens with homes, and its citizens appear to rely heavily on it since it is where most of the population lives.

Finally, the total spending of the government will be observed to see how other sectors compare to one another. This can tell how important social policies are for the government. Table 5 shows Singapore's entire expenditure budget for 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017). The total expenditure was just above 75 trillion Singaporean dollars. The table reveals that 50.3 percent of the total expenditure went towards the Social Development sector, mostly Education and Health. Security comes in second at 27.3 percent (Ministry of Finance, 2017). This proves that social programmes are very important for the Singaporean government, and it makes a high

Total Expenditure of Singapore 2017	SGD	%
Social Development	\$37,751,827,900	50.3
Security and External Relations	\$20,485,354,100	27.3
Economic Development	\$14,095,460,300	18.8
Government Administration	\$2,739,746,000	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$75,072,388,300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Table 5, Total Expenditure of Singapore 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017)*

effort to make a good quality of life for its people. While it has become an incredibly rich country, it puts most of its money into greatly benefiting and improving its people. This also means that this high effort from the government to supply this quality of life makes the people reliant on the government's programmes. This creates a predicament where the Singaporeans need their government, and anything that could change the current political model could create risk to their well-being.

Donald Low further supports this notion that the government's support of social programmes which help support its people contributes to legitimizing the government's policies used to generate growth, which are authoritarian. Low states:

Our public housing programme, a heavily subsidized basic education system, and the large investments in public health, water, and sanitation were all public programmes that were universal or near universal, rather than targeted or means-tested. They fostered a sense of citizenship and helped to create the societal conditions that legitimized growth-enhancing policies (Low, 2014, pp.118-119).

The budget data which has been displayed previously further proves this statement. However, this doesn't just form a sense of citizenship—as this will be further established in the next section—but creates dependence. Low's words also inform that these programmes are quite generous due to being near universal. This backs the data reviewed.

The Singaporean social security system is quite generous; however, it is not as generous to a degree as other welfare states. Donald Low describes the system of government support as a last resort, and promotes individual, family, and community support first. The government takes a large role in housing, healthcare, and securing the retirement futures of workers (Low, 2014, pp.120). Other than these aspects, the government plays less of an important role, but still does enough to keep up the quality of life, as can be seen with education. Perhaps this approach can seem obvious due to Singapore's value of economic freedom. While granting these freedoms the country spends a lot to insure various life necessities are met, such as good healthcare, education, housing, and job security. It thus appears that the Government's welfare policies are very important in supplying the high quality of life in Singapore. There's no doubt that because of this that Singaporeans have a trust and indebtedness to the government and trust its decisions. The social security system of Singapore is important to its authoritarian model. If the Singaporean government didn't spend so much on social welfare policies then it is possible that Singapore wouldn't have the same high quality of life, thus meaning that Singaporeans would have little reason to support the existence of the current regime. Since this is not the case, it is more likely that the idea of revolting against the government can be too risky for their well-being; they could lose more than gain. However, Singapore's welfare policies do not explain everything, which is why the formation of nationalism will be examined.

### 7.3. Variable C: Nationalism

The final variable of the proposed model will find various factors which uphold national heritage and belonging within the Singaporean society. As mentioned in the literature review, the primary inspiration for this variable of the model derives from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, where Anderson described the ways in which nationalism was created to form a nation and how it was upheld. This is primarily done through the state, but other societal factors also play a role. We will look at various examples which detail Singaporean nationalism, however, first the State's role in creating nationalism will be analysed. This is relevant because if the state has a large role in creating the nationalism—which Anderson's work states that the state normally does—then it could give another means of how the government of Singapore keeps support of its government high and revolt from it low. The characteristics of the national identity are also important, as it shows what the people are proud of and support. What is seen as part of being Singaporean can ideally legitimize actions which may not be supported in other nations. If one were to reject an idea, they could become un-Singaporean and not fitting in to the image of the society. Furthermore, National identity keeps people unified, which can lower violence and revolt. The data below details the Singaporean government is influential in creating its national identity and that the identity itself can easily be influential in keeping Singapore a stable society supportive of the government.

To reveal the government's role in creating and maintaining nationalism within Singapore, again the Government's spending will be observed. Primarily into cultural and other nation building activities. Table 6 depicts Singapore's expenditure from the entire Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth (MCCY). In total the ministry spends about 2 trillion 100 million dollars, however these include many things such as sports. A few programmes need to be carefully paid attention too. There is a National Identity and Resilience programme which 16 million dollars goes into. Another programme is the National Heritage Board. The MCCY states the programme "seeks to foster pride in our heritage, and a strong national identity through creative heritage and cultural development" (Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth, 2017). The People's Association programme is the most spent on, and it is described as trying to achieve "One People, One Singapore" and one of its missions is to create "racial cohesion" (Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth, 2017). These programmes are clearly made to maintain and create national identity within the country. However, the others are also important, as following Anderson's ideas, arts and

Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth Expenditure 2017	SGD
Arts and Heritage	\$184,204,000
National Identity and Resilience	\$16,276,400
National Heritage Board	\$144,629,500
People's Association	\$842,488,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,159,786,200</b>

*Table 6, Singapore's Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth Expenditure 2017 (Ministry of Finance, 2017)*

sports also play a large role in fostering nationalism. The Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth's expenditure showcases the Government's large efforts to uphold the culture and identity of Singapore. Clearly the nation sees the creation and continuation of its identity as crucial to its continued sustainment and success. A point which is clearly seen from its spending. The country continues to spend sums of money on culture and heritage, so Singaporeans stay devoted, allowing the government to remain in power.

In addition to the government's spending on Nationalism is what is created from its efforts: the national identity. The National Heritage board has a lot of information available about Singapore's heritage and national identity. Outside of what is taught to children throughout their schooling years, there are many museums, monuments, and heritage trails spread throughout the city (Roots, 2018). This enables everyone to learn and remember what Singapore is and its story. Observing more of the national boards information, it is obvious that Singapore's national identity derives from multiculturalism. Specifically, from the main cultures which live in the country, including Chinese, Malay, Indian, and so on. This is seen from the foods, celebrations, and arts which are depicted as being Singaporean, which all come from these cultures. Furthermore, are the anthems and pledges of the country which are translated into the four official languages of the country: English, Chinese, Malay, and Tamil. The national pledge which was just mentioned, is perhaps a great example of the national identity which is promoted in Singapore. In English the pledge is as follows:

### **Our Pledge**

We, the citizens of Singapore,  
pledge ourselves as one united people,  
regardless of race, language or religion,

to build a democratic society  
based on justice and equality  
so as to achieve happiness, prosperity  
and progress for our nation (Roots, 2018).

This pledge calls for many key national traits including unity of people through multiculturalism, various values including democracy and equality, and progress. This is taught to kids at an early stage and is commonly recited at ceremonies. Reportedly, during the early stages of the country it was recited in school everyday (Roots, 2018), similarly as in the United States with their pledge. The ideal of progress is important, as economic progress is an important value to the Singaporean government and making it a national value makes the public interested in the country's progress also. Basically, if progress is rooted in the national identity, various actions of the government can be undermined by the people if it is in the name of progress. These above activities, symbols, and ideals demonstrate the national identity which has been created in Singapore.

The above analysis into the national identity and nation building of Singapore has revealed many things. Firstly, the government spends a considerable amount of money on educating its national identity and heritage to the population. This can be seen through the government's spending in various heritage programmes in the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth. Secondly, the various ways in which the heritage of Singapore is displayed and educated in the country through the National Heritage board were discussed, as well as some of the ideals of the national identity including multiculturalism, equality, and progress. The government has created this identity through the many cultures which are present within the country and ideas which go along with the interests of the government. The Government then clearly put money into keeping these ideals and identity of the society going. From the data gathered, nationalism is also important to the sustainability of Singapore's authoritarian government, especially in the ideals of progress and the government's efforts on nation building.

#### 7.4. Authoritarian Sustainability/Singapore's model

All three variables of the equation can now be put together to understand a model for Singapore's authoritarian stability and functioning as an economic power. The foundation of the model is the combination of the high quality of life in Singapore, the social welfare policies that the country implements and how much of a role they have in creating the quality of life, and lastly

elements of nation building which further support stability in the country. The combination of all three show how Singapore's government is trusted and supported, causing it to be unchallenged by the people. The high quality of life is the first important variable because it sets the foundation for what brings citizens contentment. People want to have various freedoms and access to needs such as healthcare and education. Through the analysis of the quality of life in Singapore, the conclusion was that due to the high health attributes of the citizens, the high education levels, level of equality, and economic freedom, that Singaporeans have many benefits for living in Singapore. Furthermore, surveys detailed the citizens contentment and support of the lives they have.

Social Welfare polices in Singapore is the second variable, going by the premise that for there to be support for the government the people would have to rely and trust it. This can be done with social welfare polices, as it can be a primarily factor which gives them their quality of life. If the government supplies these benefits it can be risky to want to overthrow it. The second part of the analysis thus examined how much effort from the government went into social welfare polices. By looking at Government spending data it was observed that the Singaporean government spent a lot on healthcare, education, job security, and public housing in 2017. This spending correlates with the quality of life in Singapore. Furthermore, the data also revealed that the government spent over 50% of its spending on social development programmes in 2017, which meant that Singapore regarded benefits for its people as a top priority. From the first two factors alone, one could argue that this is what keeps Singapore's authoritarian structure together, however, these two factors don't explain everything. There are many over countries which have these benefits and more, as well are less authoritarian structures. Singaporeans aren't forced into the boundaries of their country, so why don't they leave or demand more? This goes into the third variable.

The third variable of the model is nationalism. Nationalism was chosen because it unifies people by creating a common identity and background linked to a specific state. This idea of nationalism is inspired by Benedict Anderson's ideas, and how nationalism is created from the top down by governments choosing a standardized language and a set of cultural traditions. These are backed by education in schools, public celebrations, and symbols. This is important to Singapore's model as it is a relatively new country and was forced into independence from Malaysia. This caused the country to have to quickly develop what made the national identity of Singapore. It is also believed that the national identity which Singapore created would have to follow the ideals of

the government, which helps legitimize its authoritarian structure. The government's contributions in creating a national identity could be seen in their spending data from 2017, which they spent considerable amounts of money on national identity, building programmes such as the National Heritage Board. This showed that Singapore has a high desire to create and continue ideals of Singaporean identity. Next that characteristics of the identity showed multiculturalism, which helps develop unity between the diverse people which have come to Singapore. Next were ideas of equality, which also creates ideals of unity among the people. Lastly, as seen in the pledge of Singapore, was the idea of progress. This means that an important characteristic of the Singaporean identity is to strive for the progress of the country. This could mean many things, but likely that the people must do their best to help Singapore progress, but also that anything that leads to progress is good. Even if the political structure of Singapore is quite authoritarian, if the people believe that the government is helping Singapore reach continued progress, then the actions of the government are legitimized. This collected data on nationalism shows that it can be an important tool for the upholding and functioning of Singapore's authoritarian state.

These three variables are what keep Singapore's authoritarian government stable and in power, further allowing it to be an economic power. The quality of life, the social welfare which supplies this quality of life, and lastly the nationalism which keeps the people devoted and belonging to the country. Singapore continues to achieve economic growth while being an authoritarian government because these variables keep the people unified and reliant on the government. If these variables weren't in place, then it's likely that people would rebel. Political instability would cause the government to have to focus on ways to repress the people to keep them in power, or transition into a democracy. As a result, the economy would begin to fail or weaken to do the political changes. Since the people are well and trusting to the government, the government can peacefully do its desires to grow the economy in its authoritarian way. This model also could explain why other Asian Tigers have had to transition to more democratic systems, as it's likely they didn't have strong enough social welfare programmes and nationalism to keep citizens supportive of their past authoritative government. However, to better understand this model would have to be applied to other Asian Tigers.

## 8. Discussion

The complete model of Singapore's quality of life, social welfare programmes, and nationalism explains the research questions of this study. Regarding the first question, Singapore can have both authoritarian control and economic development because this model keeps the citizens under control, as they are reliant and nationally devoted to the country. Since the government has obtained this control over its citizens, it can continue its economic activities without having to put effort and money into repression or political change. In addition, the economic freedoms which the citizens of Singapore have help the economy further grow. Regarding the second question, the citizen's reliance and national pride in the nation and government have not given the elites any need to have to transition into a democracy. If the authoritarian model works and there is no pressure to change it, then it is likely to stay. It can thus be assumed that the other Asian Tigers had to lesson their authoritarian governments due their lack of control and obedience over its people and did not incorporate a similar model. Since it's possible that efforts on repressing the people could have been detrimental to the economy, they chose to integrate more democratic policies into their government to lesson rebellion for the citizens. This is quite like Acemoglu & Robinson's ideas on democratic transitions (2006). Further research will have to be done to create a better understanding on the other Asian Tigers and their specific circumstances.

## 9. Conclusion

The purpose and objective of this study was to develop what kept Singapore's authoritarian government and country together and stable while also being as successful of an economy as it is. Singapore since the beginning of its independence in the 1960s has achieved tremendous economic growth and has one of the highest GDPs in the world, and while this occurred it was under an authoritarian single party state which lacked freedom of speech and expression. Many authoritarian regimes have inner struggles which eventually cause the government to crumble, and at the same time achieve little economic growth. In addition, other successful Asian economies which grew in the same time known as the "Asian Tigers" began similarly as Singapore, but later reverted into more democratic practices. There is something specific about Singapore's political and economic model which has allowed its status to have gone for so long. This status being both an economic powerhouse and authoritarian regime.

After observing the literature present on democratic transitions, economic growth in both democratic and authoritarian states, and institutional economics there was nothing which specifically answered what Singapore's model was. However, North et al and Acemoglu & Robinson's works contained frameworks which helped answer the research gap. Both pertaining to institutions and economic development. North et al's book focused on open access orders within state societies. These societies have ideals such as equality, have many political and economic freedoms, organizations which could freely compete, a fair law system, and government support for its people. In addition, Acemoglu & Robinson's argument on the importance on institutions which encouraged entrepreneurial initiative was an inspiration. It was believed that by taking pieces from these two frameworks that a form of analytical framework could be used to find where Singapore resided within an institutional context allowing for its authoritarian and economic stability.

The analytical framework which was devised took many traits from the two frameworks of North et al and Acemoglu & Robinson. The Framework was put into three variables with the first being quality of Life, the second being government social welfare programmes, and third being nationalism. The framework was made this way because it was believed that if first the aspects which made life worth living in Singapore were discovered, such as health, education, income, and so on, then by looking at Government spending and programme data it could be seen how their efforts on spending resulted in the outcomes with the people. Lastly, Nationalism would be the final seal. Which was how the government helped form a national identity which kept the Singaporeans as one group of people despite their relatively new history and multiple backgrounds of people.

The results gathered from the analysis using the model revealed how Singapore is kept together. From the data gathered about quality of life, it was obvious that in general many Singaporeans live prosperous lives; they are healthy, educated, and free to study and work as they please. In addition, they have support for their government. The second section regarding programmes showed that the Government's spending compares with the quality of life of the people. The Government is responsible for what makes Singaporeans have a great quality of life. In fact, Singaporeans are quite reliant on them. This is especially true for housing, as the government spends large sums of money to develop its public housing, and to this day a majority

of the population lives in them. The government makes sure every citizen has a place to live. This creates a reliance, as well as a trust for the government. Even if a Singaporean is sceptical of its government's power, they could not deny that they rely on the government for so much and that it also benefits them greatly. Furthermore, while the government has a strong hold, it also lacks in others, allowing people to have a lot of economic freedom. This isn't just beneficial for the state, but also the people, as they can strive for whatever they wish professionally. The last section on Nationalism showed that by its spending, the government sees its national identity as very important. In addition, it was seen that Singapore has an identity celebrating its multiethnic population, but also containing common western values such as equality. Lastly, they value progress, which is something Singapore has achieved throughout its history, and likely will continue doing so. This created national identity unifies the people, allowing them to become a collective group, but it also makes them proud of development and progress. This could mean that actions could be undermined in the name of progress, specifically in terms of the government.

This study thus reveals that what keeps Singapore's authoritarian and economically successful state functioning and stable is the people's reliance on the government, which supplies them with a high quality of life, as well as a fostered identity celebrating unity and progress. The government thus supplies good lives to its people, so it can focus on its economic interests. At the same time, the country's high levels of economic freedom allow the country to further develop, while also contributing to the people's quality of life. It's a perfect combination of dependence, freedom, trust, and devotion which allows Singapore to continue its economic trajectory as an authoritarian state and remain as one. The citizens' reliance and need for the system in place by the government, in addition, creates no need for the transition into democracy, as there is no pressure on the government to do so. Therefore, theoretically an authoritarian government can be successful if it follows the ways of Singapore. However, what allowed for Singapore to develop this way was by specific historical circumstances, which can't be easily replicated. If Singapore continues these features of its political model, it is likely to continue as it is, but there's no way of knowing what could occur in Singapore in the future.

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