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# AS A THINK-TANK DEDICATED TO THE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF DOMESTIC POLICY ISSUES,

IPS focuses its research primarily on Singapore-centric subjects. But because of Singapore's interconnectedness to global economics and politics, there is also an international outlook to its research agenda. In addition, IPS tries to bring a multi-disciplinary approach to its research to better inform policy making and attempts to engage in strategic thinking rather than operational details. While most IPS projects deal with current concerns, there are also long term studies contemplating future developments in Singapore.

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## IPS CURRENT AREAS OF RESEARCH INCLUDE:

*Arts, Culture, and Media*  
*Demography and Family*  
*Economics and Business*  
*Politics and Governance*  
*Society and Identity*

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SECTION

01

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*"Informed debate, therefore, sets a tone of the national discourse, helps to shape the broad understanding of issues among the population and thus enables the society to consider more options and to make more informed choices. The IPS is independent of the government but it is useful for the public sector to cooperate with the IPS and to be forthcoming with information and access, for example, when IPS holds public forums or conducts policy research. This way, the government can consult more widely and develop better thought-out policies, and IPS will be more effective in fostering informed discussion of policies outside government."*

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**PRIME MINISTER LEE HSIEN LOONG,**  
*IPS Singapore Perspectives 2010*

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# MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR

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This biennial captures the essence of the work of the Institute from 2009 to 2010, two years after the merger with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore.

As part of the re-alignment of our mission and objectives to the School, we reviewed the areas of policy research that IPS undertook and came up with five key clusters. We retained Arts, Culture and Media; Demography and Family; and Politics and Governance, enhanced Economics to relate it more closely to business so it has been renamed Economics and Business and reframed our interest in multiculturalism and identities within a larger canvas of looking at issues pertaining to Society and Identity.

In the preparation of this new biennial, I have encouraged my colleagues to highlight their work over the last two years so that our readers can get a better understanding of what we do and the modest contribution we make. As Society and Identity is a new team, they have presented the new work they will do.

It has been an eye-opening journey for me as I get to know what academics do and their perspectives on policy matters in Singapore. I have learnt much in my stint as Director of the Institute.

The best is yet to be. I am sure my colleagues will continue to dig deeper and look further as they contemplate the policies for Singapore's future. I take this opportunity too to express my appreciation to our Dean, Professor Kishore Mahbubani; Special Adviser, Professor Tommy Koh; Members of the IPS Academic Panel, Prof Kwok Kian Woon, Assoc Prof Simon Tay and Mr Yeoh Lam Keong; our Corporate Associates, donors and my colleagues at IPS, for their counsel and support.

**Ambassador Ong Keng Yong**  
*IPS Director*

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*Amb Ong served as IPS Director from June 2008 to June 2011*

# MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

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Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) was established in 1988 as a think-tank dedicated to fostering good governance in Singapore through strategic policy research and discussion. An autonomous research centre in the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, IPS focuses on domestic developments in Singapore and on external relations. It employs a multi-disciplinary approach in its analysis with an emphasis on long-term strategic thinking.

To achieve its objectives, IPS undertakes research projects, generates publications and organises conferences, lectures, seminars and closed-door discussions.

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## **OUR MISSION:**

### **Analysis**

*To analyse policy issues of critical concern to Singapore and contribute to policy development.*

### **Bridge-building**

*To build bridges among diverse stakeholders, including government, business, academia and civil society.*

### **Communication**

*To communicate research findings to a wider community and generate a greater awareness of policy issues.*

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SECTION

02

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**IPS CURRENT AREAS  
OF RESEARCH ARE:**

*Arts, Culture, and Media  
Demography and Family  
Economics and Business  
Politics and Governance  
Society and Identity*

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*The IPS Arts, Culture and Media (ACM) cluster is headed by Deputy Director Arun Mahizhnan and also includes Senior Research Fellow Tan Tarn How, Research Associate Tan Simin and Research Assistant Cheong Kah Shin, and Adjunct Senior Research Fellow Cherian George. The development of arts and culture in Singapore has become an economic as well as a social and political factor in recent times. In addition to dealing with socio-political issues of cultural development and artistic freedom, policy frameworks now have to address arts education, the development of creative industries and the globalisation of Singapore arts from economic perspectives as well. IPS continues to examine these frameworks and investigate how they are evolving in relation to each other.*

*In the media world, we are constantly challenged by the breakneck speed at which information technology is developing and how it is redefining the concept of media both from production and consumption perspectives. Old dispensations on media's role and responsibilities are becoming anachronistic in the face of new media such as the Internet and mobile telephony. Their use and impact are creating pressures for a paradigm shift in our policy discourse. Policy makers need a new media literacy to cope with the vagaries of the new communication technologies and the vitality of citizen-generated media. Regulators need to reconcile the variances between old media rules and new media rules. Society has to struggle with multiple digital divides between the haves and have-nots.*

*Moreover, the Internet and the mobile telephone are not mere media channels but have also become platforms for public service delivery. E-government is the new paradigm in public administration. Engaging the active citizen would not only call for greater participation by the public but also for greater transparency, accountability and inclusiveness.*

*The cluster is monitoring and analysing such issues from a policy perspective.*

#### **STAFF**

*Mr Arun Mahizhnan (DEPUTY DIRECTOR)*

*Mr Tan Tarn How (SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW)*

*Ms Tan Simin (RESEARCH ASSOCIATE)*

*Ms Cheong Kah Shin (RESEARCH ASSISTANT)*

*Assoc Prof Cherian George (ADJUNCT SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW)*

RESEARCH

AREA

01

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# ARTS, CULTURE AND MEDIA

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# CURRENT PROJECTS

## HANDBOOK OF RESEARCH ON E-GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: CONCEPTS AND CASES

The powering up of grassroots organisations and local citizenry has been an enduring though not always an intended aspect of what is called the Information Communication Technology (ICT) revolution. Where once politics was merely about electing officials and leaving it to them to do what is best for the country until the next election, the contemporary political landscape in many countries is now a two-way street whereby communication and consultation between the electorate and the elected is an ongoing process. The ability of local citizens to provide feedback to those who are elected and to deal with government bureaucracy in more efficient ways is now greater than before. Electronic government or e-government is leading to the transformation of governmental systems worldwide.

This book explores e-government through the lens of social inclusion. The conceptual volume aims to look into issues of the digital divide and challenges in developing a citizen-centric government while the case study volume will outline the outcomes of e-governments in developed and developing countries in different parts of the world. Accessibility, affordability, interactivity, e-literacy, instant communication and online community are some of the issues addressed in the two volumes.

### FORTHCOMING IN DECEMBER 2011

*Dr Scott Baum, Research Fellow, Urban Research Program, Griffith University, Australia, and Arun Mahizhnan, Editors*

## MEDIA USE SURVEY

The nationwide survey, conducted in late 2010, will reveal the political traits of Singaporeans and their use of new and old media. The study will test for variables such as political interest, political knowledge, political self-efficacy and political cynicism, and the use of different kinds of online and offline media by type and intensity. A report of the survey is being prepared.

### RESEARCHERS:

*Mr Tan Tarn How; Assistant Professor Zhang Weiyu, Communications and New Media Programme, National University of Singapore (NUS CNM); Dr Chung Siyoung, Visiting Fellow, NUS CNM*

## INTERNET AND THE ELECTION: A STUDY OF NEW MEDIA USE AND ITS IMPACT

IPS and the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) have started on a multi-study project to investigate the role of new media in the coming election, which is due by February 2012. The project brings together a dozen researchers from Singapore, Taiwan and the United States. The aim is to examine the impact of the use of new media by different players such as parties and candidates, bloggers, mainstream media, opinion makers, ordinary voters and the youth on the political process. A nationwide post-election survey will also be conducted. The results of the studies will be presented at a one-day conference aimed at policy makers, community leaders and academics and published in a book for general readers. Researchers will also write academic journal papers from their studies.

### LEAD RESEARCHERS:

*Mr Tan Tarn How; Mr Arun Mahizhnan; Professor Ang Peng Hwa, Director, Singapore Internet Research Centre, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI), Nanyang Technological University (NTU)*

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

### IMPRESSIONS OF THE GOH CHOK TONG YEARS

PUBLISHED IN 2009

*Dr Bridget Welsh, Dr James Chin, Mr Arun Mahizhnan  
and Mr Tan Tarn How, Co-editors*

Together with Dr Bridget Welsh of United States and Dr James Chin from Malaysia, Arun Mahizhnan and Tan Tarn How edited Impressions of the Goh Chok Tong Years, an anthology of essays assessing the contribution of Goh Chok Tong and his administration to Singapore during his tenure from 1990 to 2004. Coming after Lee Kuan Yew, Goh faced both domestic and international scepticism about his own durability. However, he confounded most critics by staying in power much longer and performing much better than expected. The 45 essays review a range of issues from domestic politics and foreign policy to economic development, society, culture, the arts and media. The Singaporean and overseas authors are drawn from academia, business, journalism and civil society.

### ASSESSING MEDIA COVERAGE: THE AWARE CONTROVERSY AS A CASE STUDY

PUBLISHED IN THE IPS UPDATE,  
DECEMBER 2009

*Mr Tan Tarn How*

The report looks at how media coverage of nationally important issues ought to be assessed. It focuses on the AWARE (Association of Women for Action and Research) controversy of 2009 as a case study. The aim was to use the particulars of the case to illustrate more general principles that should be engaged in critical appraisals of the media. In addition, the report makes the point that a full and proper assessment of media coverage needs to focus not just on what the media does, but also on – for reasons of its own failings or otherwise – what it does not do.

### SUBVERTING SERIOUSNESS AND OTHER MISDEMEANOURS: MODES OF RESISTANCE AGAINST OB MARKERS IN THE 2006 SINGAPORE GENERAL ELECTION

PUBLISHED IN MEDIA ASIA  
VOL. 35 NO. 4, 2008.

*Mr Tan Tarn How and Mr Arun Mahizhnan*

This paper looks at the activity of some key political bloggers during the 2006 Singapore general election, which has been called the first “Internet election” for the country, and was particularly significant in the light of the Government relaxing certain laws governing freedom of expression. The paper explores the extent to which the Singapore blogosphere was able to serve as alternative media, and analysed the means that bloggers used to express their views.

# EVENTS

**The ACM cluster organises a number of events to engage various stakeholders in dialogues on culture and media issues relevant to the time. These events, in the form of forums, seminars or closed-door discussions (CDD) are often self-initiated by IPS but are also held in conjunction with partners such as the Civil Service College or The National Art Gallery, Singapore (TNAGS). The principal purpose of these events is to facilitate a meeting of the minds among stakeholders and to explore policy options.**

## IPS- TNAGS CLOSED DOOR DISCUSSION: “SOUTHEAST ASIA VIA SINGAPORE: MUSINGS ON A NEW MUSEUM”

**1 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**SPEAKER:** Mr Kwok Kian Chow, Director, The National Art Gallery, Singapore

**DISCUSSANTS:** Associate Professor Goh Beng Lan, Head of the Southeast Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore; Dr Charles Merewether, Director, Institute of Contemporary Arts, LASALLE College of the Arts

The National Art Gallery, Singapore (TNAGS), a museum focused on Southeast Asian art, is due to open in 2013. It is envisioned as a civic and creative space for the enrichment, enjoyment and engagement of Singaporeans and visitors from all over the world. To help sharpen and deepen the planning of the museum, IPS organised at TNAGS' request a closed-door discussion on the museum and its mission. Participants tackled fundamental questions about what “Southeast Asia” would mean for the museum's curatorial practice and also spoke passionately about the need for TNAGS to be part of a broader art education network. The use of the historic City Hall and former Supreme Court buildings for its premises also attracted comments and suggestions from the audience. The event was attended by academics, artists and policy makers.

Further to the discussion, IPS and TNAGS will host an international conference in July 2011 to explore in greater depth the issues brought up and also to engage stakeholders in the unfolding project.

## IPS CLOSED DOOR DISCUSSION: “TOWARDS A MEDIA INDUSTRY FREELANCERS' GROUPING”

**17 AUGUST 2010**

**SPEAKER:** Ms Audrey Wong, Nominated Member of Parliament and Programme Leader, Masters of Arts and Cultural Management Programme, LASALLE College of the Arts; Mr Kenneth Cheong, Filmmaker; Ms Goh Su Lin, Six Degrees, a community of arts practitioners; Mr P Balachandran, Vice-Chairman, Robert Wang & Woo LLC; Mr Teo Thiam Chye, Programme Director, Media Development Authority

Freelancers make up an estimated 30% of the creative industries workforce. They face a host of issues, ranging from professional rights protection in cases of non-payment, to insurance, welfare, training, networking, industry development and representation. These recurring issues raised the question of whether it was time for freelancers to form a grouping in the form of a professional association, guild or union to look after their interests.

At the request of the Media Development Authority, IPS organised a closed-door discussion to explore the possibility of setting up this freelancers' grouping. The event was attended by freelancers, staff from the Ministry of Information, Communication and Arts, the Media Development Authority and the National Union Trades Congress. Participants discussed various grouping models and broader issues of industry education and standards.

## IPS-CIVIL SERVICE COLLEGE FORUM: “ENHANCING THE PUBLIC SERVICE THROUGH POLICY AUTOMATION”

**17 AUGUST 2010**

**SPEAKER:** Ms Ang Mui Kim, Director, Information Systems and Technology Development, Ministry of Manpower; Mr Ho Khai Leong, Group Director, Integrated Health Information Systems (IHIS) Pte Ltd; Mr Kerry Holling, Chief Information Officer, New South Wales Department of Human Services; Mr Lai Weng Yew, Senior Director (Public Sector), Oracle Corporation; Mr Kenneth Lim, Senior Vice President, Market Operations and Information Technology, Energy Market Company Pte Ltd

Policy automation is a term referring to the employment of information technology to translate policy guidelines into easy-to-follow rules for implementing the policies. It may offer promising leads for the public service of the 21st century as populations become more demanding and diverse and public service delivery becomes even more complex. IPS and the Civil Service College co-organised a half-day forum to explore how policy automation could improve areas of service delivery in the public sector. About 50 participants from government, academia and business heard from speakers giving case studies of policy automation in complex government processes. The forum helped to identify future research agendas for policy automation in Singapore's government sector.

## IPS CLOSED DOOR DISCUSSION: “SINGAPORE’S CULTURAL POLICY: AUTHENTICITY, STRATIFICATION AND REGULATION”

11 AUGUST 2010

**SPEAKER:** Associate Professor Ooi Can-Seng,  
Creative Industries Research, Copenhagen Business School

Singapore has made significant strides in its goal of becoming a “Renaissance City” and “Global City for the Arts”. Dr Ooi Can-Seng outlined these developments in Singapore’s arts and culture and discussed impediments to forging an authentic cultural identity from the ground up. Dr Ooi also proposed a new arts funding system where an artist-governed council could be in charge of allocating government-disbursed funding for the arts. The seminar was attended by over 50 participants from Government, academia and the arts.

## IPS ROUNDTABLE: “JOURNALISM’S UNCERTAIN FUTURE”

27 APRIL 2010

**SPEAKER:** Associate Professor Cherian George, Adjunct Senior  
Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies and Faculty of WKWSCI, NTU

At this roundtable, Dr George discussed the challenges professional journalism was facing due to changes in news consumption patterns and technological advancements. A sustainable journalism profession, he said, was important for the public sphere. He subsequently discussed possible future models for journalism, and also the specific challenges journalism was facing in the Singapore context. The participants of the roundtable included academics, policy makers and media practitioners.

## IPS SEMINAR: “GETTING THEIR HANDS DIRTY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SINGAPORE’S POLITICAL BLOGOSPHERE”

4 MARCH 2009

**SPEAKER:** Mr Tan Tarn How; Ms Tan Simin

In the seminar, the speakers conducted a review of Singapore’s online socio-political landscape, and discussed the latest developments, which saw sites such as *The Online Citizen* and the then-*WayangParty.com* moving beyond armchair commentating and reacting to the news to proactive news-

gathering and other activities in the offline world. However, there were also concerns that while online content had developed by leaps and bounds, the existence of an online-offline “firewall” may have prevented a broader dissemination of such content to a broader segment of society. The seminar was attended by approximately 40 participants from academia, civil society and government, and attracted vigorous commentary and discussion from the audience that continued online after the event.

## SELECTED PAPERS

TAN TARN HOW

**“Role of Social Media in Contemporary Southeast Asian Politics”**

Presented at the 60th Annual Conference of the  
International Communication Association,  
22-26 June 2010, Singapore.

TAN TARN HOW

**“Some Questions on Technological and Social Determinism”**

Presented at the 19th Asian Media and Information  
Communication Centre Conference on “Technology  
and Culture: Communication Connectors and Dividers”,  
21-23 June 2010, Singapore.

ARUN MAHIZHNAN

**“Emerging Media: The Singapore Case”**

Presented at “The Business of Emerging Media:  
Research and Practices” at Tsinghua University,  
21 April 2010, Beijing.

ARUN MAHIZHNAN


**“Impact of New Media: the East Asian Experience”**

Presented at the Communication University of China,  
22 April 2010, Beijing.

ARUN MAHIZHNAN AND TAN TARN HOW

**“New Asia: Projecting Soft Power”**

Presented at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts  
International Symposium on “New Asian Imaginations”,  
1-2 August 2008, Singapore.



*In this broad area, the Demography and Family (D&F) Cluster at IPS has researched demographic trends, their implications, and the Singapore government's response in terms of policy-making. The fields of study include determinants and impact of fertility changes; the ageing population; in-migration, and out-migration.*

*Singapore's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is currently among the lowest in the world and the population is projected to age rapidly over the next 20 years. In-migration, both permanent and transient, has grown such that about one-quarter of Singapore's population and one third of its workforce are foreigners. Out-migration is apparently rising, though the number is small compared to in-migration. These demographic trends will shape the economic, political and social landscape of Singapore.*

*The cluster analyses such trends and their implications for policy making. Major areas of study include the causes and consequences of the low TFR and the policy responses; the characteristics of the ageing population and the needs and support systems required for the older citizens and residents; immigration and labour mobility policies, and projection of future demographic scenarios, looking at the future size and structure of the country's population under various assumptions of fertility, mortality and net migration. Periodic surveys are conducted to gauge the attitudes and behaviour of the people to the changes in demography and the policy frameworks instituted to manage the impact.*

*The projects implemented, from 2009 to 2010, comprised commissioned research as well as work carried out for academic conferences and publication in books and journals. The research areas covered during this period included low fertility, population ageing as well as the issues and challenges faced by the family in Singapore. The key milestones are highlighted here.*

#### **STAFF**

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*Dr Yap Mui Teng (SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW)*

*Dr Kang Soon Hock (RESEARCH FELLOW)*

*Mr Chua Chun Ser (RESEARCH ASSISTANT)*



RESEARCH

AREA  
02

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# DEMOGRAPHY AND FAMILY

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# MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD

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Extremely low Total Fertility Rates (TFR) have prevailed in Singapore despite measures put in place by the government to engender a pro-family environment that support marriage and parenthood. Pro-natalist measures have been available since the late 1980s when the then anti-natalist policy was reversed. Measures such as the Baby Bonus and the Third Child Maternity Leave schemes were added on over the years. In 2004, the government undertook a 360-degree review of the existing measures and put a comprehensive package, Marriage and Parenthood package 2004, to encourage and support marriage and parenthood decision of Singaporean couples.

More recently, in 2008, a series of pro-natalist, pro-family measures introduced by the government as an enhancement to the package first introduced in 2004. As part of the cluster's ongoing research into policy initiatives that seek to encourage fertility as well as to inform policy makers on the target reproductive age group's, 20-49, perceptions towards the package, the cluster polled married Singapore citizens and permanent residents of reproductive ages, 20-49 years, to gather their views on the 2008 Marriage and Parenthood (M&P) package a year after its announcement and implementation in September 2009. Apart from this, they were asked about the desired number of children they would like to have as well as whether the recession in 2008/09 had influenced their childbearing decisions.

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*The results from POPS(2) provided an important snapshot of the perceptions of the reproductive ages towards the enhanced package. POPS(2) observed positive reactions from that the majority of those surveyed (62 percent) felt that the package was adequate, while the minority (13 percent) felt that it was not adequate. Delving further with regard to whether the 2008 package would encourage childbearing decisions, 79 percent of respondents felt that the package was conducive for Singapore couples to have children. When asked if it was conducive for themselves to have children, 53 percent felt that it would be.*

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## POPULATION AGEING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN SINGAPORE

The ageing population is another area of interest, which the cluster has made research contributions. In 2009, Dr Yap Mui Teng, Senior Research Fellow, IPS and Dr Angelique Chan, Department of Sociology, NUS were involved in a joint study on baby boomers in Singapore commissioned by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), this group who will increasingly dominate the ranks of the elderly over the next two decades. This study was timely as it provided an insight into the general profile of this important and large unstudied segment of the future elderly population. Several pertinent observations were made. These included, the demographic diversity present in this group, differing support preferences and strategies as well as diverging perceptions towards retirement. Indeed, these observations suggest that a “one size fits all” approach to policy for this segment of the population is not possible.

MCYS also commissioned Dr Yap Mui Teng, to compile the State of the Elderly Report. The report was a comprehensive review of the current state of Singapore’s elderly population. The data presented in the report included the most updated official statistics available at that time, specifically from the censuses, government surveys, and other relevant information. The report covered the following areas namely, “Trends and profile of Singapore’s Ageing Population,” “Employment, Income & Assets of Seniors,” “Social Wellbeing: Ageing-in-place and Active Ageing.”

The information from this report was made available to the public by MCYS through the public release of the document via their website as well as three public sharing sessions of the report. The three sharing sessions were organised by the Council for Third Age (C3A) with presentations by Dr Kang Soon Hock, IPS Research Fellow, that looked into the following three areas: “Employment, Income & Assets of Seniors,” “Ageing-in-place,” and “Active Ageing” respectively.

The cluster also worked closely with other stakeholders in the field ageing in Singapore to organise important conferences and closed-door discussions on ageing issues concerning Singapore. In 2009, it co-organised the inaugural Asian Gerontological Experience (AGE) symposium with C3A. It provided a platform for stakeholders from the public, private and civil society sectors to survey and discuss the state of training and research in Gerontology in Asia. A total of 100 participants from ASEAN and East Asia and local observers attended the two-day symposium.

At the symposium, participants highlighted the need to formalise and professionalise Gerontology in ageing, and soon-to-be ageing, societies such as those in Asia. This is in order for it to be accepted as an academic discipline and for it be attractive to students and professionals. There were also calls for more comparative and interdisciplinary research on ageing in the Asian countries and more sharing of information. Participants also highlighted the need for translational research for development of evidence-based policies and programmes. A follow-up to this symposium has been planned and is slated for 2011.

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# RESEARCH ON THE FAMILY IN SINGAPORE

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The family is an integral part of Singapore, as the basic unit of society in which procreation and the provision of support for the young, the old and the needy take place, MCYS initiated the Family Research Network (FRN) in 2008 to promote research that could be used for evidence-based policy-making. IPS has been managing and conducting the closed-door forums since 2008 where government, academics and family practitioners have come together to share research findings and stimulate further research in the field.

A total of four FRN forums have been organised from 2009 to 2010. The themes that have been covered during this period include: "empowering vulnerable families," "child development and resilience," "effective social programme evaluation," and "child/youth development and delinquency prevention." In each of these sessions, participants were exposed to the research landscape in each area. Further, in each of these sessions, the expert panels assembled provided stakeholders with valuable opportunities to discuss and raise issues critical with experts in the field.

The fifth FRN forum held in December 2010 was an excellent example of this interactive exchange. One of the main learning points identified by participants following the forum was that the first step towards tackling youth delinquency and its prevention was to acknowledge and seek to understand the youth culture present. The forum also highlighted the different notions of deviance and alternative intervention measures available. The forum also spotlighted further areas of research, for example the effect of socio-economic status on the incidence of delinquency, which stakeholders should look into.

In 2010, the International Conference on Economic Stress, Human Capital, and Families in Asia: Research and Policy Challenges. The conference was organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore in collaboration with MCYS, NUS' Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and the IPS. The objective of the conference was to discuss the consequences of economic stress, adaptation behaviour and the policy implications for human capital development and family well-being specific to the Asia Pacific countries.

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## CROSS LABOUR MOBILITY IN EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

Migration issues are another important area of research that the cluster looks into. IPS and the World Bank co-organised a workshop in 2009 and a conference in 2010 to look into the issues of cross labour mobility in Singapore as well as the East Asia and Pacific region. The objective of the workshop and conference was for an edited volume that would look into the challenges and issues of cross labour mobility. Dr Yap Mui Teng, examined the issues of foreign manpower and management framework for Singapore. The research identified not only the past trends of labour mobility; it also highlighted the other compelling reasons for the continued reliance on migration. Further, the research also touched upon the changing administrative framework in the management of foreign labour in view of Singapore's position as a receiving country.

## COLLABORATIONS: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

Collaborations internally have focused on the issue of fertility, immigration, and the ageing population. Recently completed publications include "Bolstering Population Growth: From Babies to Immigrants" in *Impressions of the Goh Chok Tong Years in Singapore* edited by Bridget Welsh, James Chin, Arun Mahizhnan and Tan Tarn How; authored by Dr Yap Mui Teng. "The Greying of Singapore's Population: Prospects and Challenges" in *Panorama* and "Population Ageing in ASEAN: Prospects and Implications" in *ASEAN Matters!: Reflecting on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations* edited by Lee Yoong Yoong; co-authored by Dr Yap Mui Teng and Dr Kang Soon Hock. The book chapter "Demographic Trends and Social Security" by Dr Yap Mui Teng and Dr G Shantakumar is also slated for the forthcoming *Singapore Futures: Scenarios for the Next Generation* by Gillian Koh.

The cluster is also actively involved in authoring collaborations outside of the Institute. These include publications by Dr Yap Mui Teng, "Ultra-low fertility in Singapore: Some observations" in *Ultra-Low Fertility in Pacific Asia: Trends, Causes, and Policy Dilemmas* edited by Gavin Jones, Paulin Tay-Straughan and Angelique Chan and "The Ageing Population" in *Management of Success* edited by Terence Chong. Most recently, Dr Yap Mui Teng was part of a group of collaborators that examined the current health situation in Southeast Asia. The regions are themselves diverse, socially, culturally, and economically. This has resulted in a wide range of health systems present in the Southeast Asian countries. The region is itself experiencing an epidemiological transition, where chronic diseases will be more prevalent compared to infectious diseases. However, this development is tempered by the rising rates of urbanisations may in the continued prevalence of infectious diseases like the reported outbreaks of avian flu in the region. The paper has been accepted for a forthcoming issue of *The Lancet*.



*Economic and business issues constitute a key area of research and analysis for IPS, in particular those relating to the domestic and international economy. Given Singapore's high dependency on external markets, the constant challenge for policy makers is to be ahead of competitors and global forces. In this regard, Singapore's economic policies have to be reviewed and changed from time to time to take advantage of the significant shifts in the world economy and the emergence of new markets and opportunities. This is where IPS' research and analysis are useful in highlighting changes and adjustments in Singapore's economic strategies.*

*From 2009 to 2010, the Economics and Business (E&B) Cluster, through the twice-yearly Singapore Economic Roundtable (SER) series and other related seminars and workshops, has gathered industrial sentiments and highlighted new developments, considered relevant recommendations and engaged stakeholders to provide an informed picture of the economy.*

#### **STAFF**

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*Mr Manu Bhaskaran (ADJUNCT SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW)*

*Dr Faizal bin Yahya (RESEARCH FELLOW)*

*Mr Lee Yoong Yoong (RESEARCH FELLOW)*

*Ms Rachel Hui (RESEARCH ASSISTANT)*

RESEARCH



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# ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

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# THE SINGAPORE ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE SERIES

Started in 2003, the Singapore Economic Roundtable (SER), which IPS co-organises with *The Business Times*, has been a relevant platform in bringing together selected group of private economists, academics, business leaders and policy makers to discuss important issues facing Singapore's position in the global economy. The SER assesses current monetary and fiscal policy in the light of changing economic challenges, and provides a forum for non-policy makers to air their recommendations. The Roundtable is conducted along Chatham House rules, and intends to generate a frank exchange of ideas and concerns. Proceedings from the SER are reported in *The Business Times* and consequently published as an IPS publication.

The themes of the 11th SER in June 2009, 12th SER in December 2009 and the 13th SER in June 2010, were as follows:

- *11th SER: Review of the Singapore Budget 2009*
- *12th SER: The economics of climate change and its impact on policy*
- *13th SER: Labour productivity in Singapore*

The 2009 Budget was a crucial one because it aimed to mitigate the impact of the global economic crisis on Singapore's economy. The government's introduction of two new policies was of particular interest: the Job Credit Scheme to encourage companies to preserve jobs over the downturn, and the Special Risk-Sharing Initiative, which ensured that companies had access to credit to sustain their operations. These two policy measures were considered integral to the government's "Resilience Package" to help Singaporeans cope with the economic downturn in 2009.

In the run up to the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, the implications of climate change on Singapore's economy was selected as a special topic of focus at the 12th SER. There were concerns that policies undertaken by some countries such as carbon emissions targets and the imposition of carbon taxes could undermine Singapore's cost competitiveness. However, there was general consensus on the need for policy makers and businesses to pursue "green investments" in technology to boost energy efficiency, towards the goal of "low carbon growth" as recommended by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Even though Singapore's response to climate change as a member of the global community might be limited by our size, the costs of climate change on our economy would be very high. Future policy directions identified at the SER included contributing to clean development in other Asian

countries through technology transfers, project investments and research grants. In fact, the global recession had provided an opportunity for many countries to transition to greener growth, as governments encouraged "green investments" as part of various stimulus packages.

The 13th SER addressed a long standing structural challenge facing the Singapore economy - how to raise declining labour productivity. Debates arose with regard to Singapore's latest productivity drive, as laid out by the Economic Strategy Committee's (ESC) key recommendations in February 2010. Issues included the optimal level of real wages in Singapore, how to ensure that foreign labour inflows complement local manpower, and the use of information and communications technology (ICT). While the economy's high dependence on a non-resident labour force is facing some level of policy reform, foreign talent and investment is still recognised as crucial to the generation of new ideas and innovation. Policy solutions must be carefully prescribed due to diverse dynamics across different industries and varying levels of productivity performance.

## REVIEW OF THE ESC

In the wake of the global economic crisis, the government admitted the necessity for Singapore to consider pursuing less export-centric growth strategies, diversify the economy and explore other possible avenues for economic development. Chaired by the Finance Minister, the ESC had been convened to make recommendations for future policy direction.

In May 2010, IPS organised a workshop to review the ESC strategies with a particular focus on their impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The workshop featured perspectives from the government, the industry sector, a think-tank, and the SME community. Participants discussed the strategies put forward for Singapore's future economic growth, the need for policies to accommodate new structures of competitiveness, and the implementation of an effective social safety net. ESC recommendations were also evaluated with the challenges facing Singapore's economic direction duly assessed. The ESC's priorities and goals were centred on issues that would concern higher-skilled Singaporeans, such as the creation of an innovative economy and ensuring Singapore's development as a distinctive global city. However, it was also highlighted that GDP growth must be balanced by a broader set of policy goals which would improve Singaporeans' skills and productivity to ensure employment resilience and social safety nets for a rapidly ageing society.

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# CLIMATE CHANGE AND BUSINESS INNOVATION

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IPS was pleased to invite Tejas Ewing, a leading expert on voluntary carbon markets to a roundtable to share his research on how organisations and businesses can develop innovative strategies to respond to climate change. This roundtable addressed two of IPS' research and policy focuses: how SMEs could build capacity for growth, and how businesses could be encouraged to go green. Mr Ewing cited examples of regional companies who had capitalised on opportunities from green growth and explained how companies could essentially streamline carbon-friendly processes into their operations, in line with policy changes and consumer demands. Despite the high initial costs of seeking sustainable solutions, investments into green technology would be a prudent investment for companies as climate change remains an inevitable future. Decisively and responsibly tackling global warming would require commitment and cooperation between government, non-governmental organisations, businesses, and consumers alike.

In view of the importance of SMEs in employment and enterprise creation, policy frameworks have been designed to increase their creativity, innovation and productivity. Yet, SMEs find a variety of difficulties in fulfilling such strategic goals. Businesses are also concerned with global phenomena such as climate change and technology advancement. Going forward, IPS will continue to raise awareness of policy developments and preparedness in dealing with such challenges.

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***Clean and green matters are staying on the agendas of businesses, stakeholders and regulators notwithstanding the recent economic downturn following the global financial crisis. The truth is that everyone benefits from a cleaner and greener business environment. The business case of going clean and green has never been stronger. Businesses that adopt clean and green practices will gain a competitive edge by being ahead of the curve as and when emission-related laws are eventually tightened. By virtue of their smaller size, SMEs can be nimble in their responses, something the larger companies cannot do easily. Promoting innovation and adoption of clean and green technologies would enhance the competitiveness of SMEs. SMEs that can find their niche and identify new and creative ways of meeting market needs will be the ones that are well set to prosper when the economy turns buoyant again.***

- IPS Research Fellow, Lee Yoong Yoong, "Clean and Green Technologies: Prospects for SMEs in Singapore", *Asia Pacific Tech Monitor*, Jul-Aug 2010.

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## ENHANCING SOCIAL MOBILITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

To complement the work of other clusters in IPS, research is also conducted on the effects of a high-growth economy on Singapore society and how the non-economic sectors are coping with such challenges. In this respect, IPS has examined the development of a micro-loan facility for low-income Singaporeans, as well as the integration of local and foreign manpower in the workplace, as ways to explore how such initiatives can lead to the pursuit of a truly inclusive society.

IPS has been aware of increasing interest on the impact that economic policies have on social welfare and particularly on low-income Singaporean households. While there has been a dramatic improvement in the living standards of Singaporeans over the past four decades and Singapore's per capita income is one of the highest in the world, struggling to meet the rising costs of living remains a reality for many low-income Singaporeans. It has become evident that access to credit is a concern among Singaporeans facing financial difficulties. There is increasing concern over cash-strapped Singaporeans who are unable to meet the collateral regulations of banks and licensed moneylenders and turn instead to illegal moneylenders, otherwise known as loansharks. The repercussions of loan defaults among borrowers and subsequent loanshark harassment have since been well documented by the media as a serious social ill. With families and individuals requiring emergency assistance funds and funds to tide over small businesses in mind, IPS has considered new and sustainable means of extending access to credit to Singaporeans aiming to become financially independent.

Inspired by the success of the Grameen Bank model, initiated by Dr Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh, many have wondered whether such a model of providing micro-loans to the needy is applicable in Singapore. Dr Yunus' solution to alleviate poverty is founded on the belief that credit is a fundamental element that paves the way to financial and social independence: lend the needy money on terms that are suitable to them, teach them sound financial principles, and they will help themselves. Today, more than 250 institutions in about 100 countries operate micro-credit programmes based on the Grameen Bank principles. However, many of these programmes have targeted rural communities, and in recent times, some have also come under scrutiny for inadequate regulation and improper management.

Given Singapore's specific circumstances, IPS launched a roundtable in July 2010 to discuss whether there is a need for a micro-loan facility in Singapore, and whether it would be feasible to establish one. Several invited speakers with experience in the field of microfinance shared their insights into its challenges and successes, while participants included representatives from Voluntary Welfare Organisations in Singapore who voiced the needs and concerns of Singaporeans with needs. Discussions centred around how the Grameen model could be adjusted for feasibility in Singapore, what kind of organisational body would be able to effectively administer and manage a micro-loan facility locally, and whether access to micro-credit could truly change the lives of struggling Singaporeans in a sustainable and empowering way.

Professor Richard Wilkinson, co-author of the book, *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone* (2009), was invited to IPS to share his findings on how societies which experience high income inequality exhibit lower levels of trust, mental health, life expectancy, educational achievement, and higher levels of crime and incarceration rates, resulting in a weaker society for both rich and poor. These findings kicked off a discussion on the relevance for Singapore's socio-economic model, and the ways in which the government and public institutions could mitigate both the causes and effects of wide disparities in income to ensure healthy levels of social mobility. In the wake of this discussion, IPS convened a roundtable in November 2010 to examine the policy options of balancing growth and equity in Singapore. In reference to research into the developments of wage and social safety systems abroad, insights were shared to explore ways of achieving economic competitiveness while ensuring that Singaporeans gained equitably from growth. The specific challenges faced by policy makers, businesses, unions and low-wage Singaporeans were also discussed.

## ASIA AFTER THE CRISIS

Taking stock of lessons learnt from the global economic crisis and examining the changing dynamics of the global economy have formed the crux of many IPS Seminars in the past two years. Leading experts from international and regional institutions such as the World Bank, APEC and ADB have been regularly invited to provide updates and analysis on the impact of the global crisis on Asian economies and their impressive recovery vis-à-vis the economies of more developed countries. For emerging economies in the region, forging policies to ensure sustainable economic recovery as well as socio-political stability and development will remain challenging. As a small and open economy, Singapore must be vigilant of the processes of structural changes taking place in its neighbours. Singapore remains committed to building a strong and inclusive ASEAN Economic Community by 2015, as well as towards trade liberalisation amidst the global economic crisis. To this end, IPS aims to forge strong ties with international and regional partners who share similar goals via opportunities for cooperative research and information sharing.

## CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Between 2009 and 2010, IPS Economics and Business Cluster Research Fellows also presented papers at and/or attended the following international seminars and conferences:

- ***"Principles of Economic Competitiveness"***, paper presented at the *Corporate Governance Workshop organised by the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 7 October 2009, Bangkok, Thailand*
- ***Conference on Alternative Energy and Energy Efficiency: Fuelling Economic Growth and Diversification for Brunei Darussalam***, organised by the *Centre for Strategic and Policy Studies of the Prime Minister's Office, 14 to 15 June 2010, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei*
- ***Pacific Economic Outlook Structure Specialists Meeting on Macro-financial Linkages and Financial Deepening***, organised by the *Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, 11 to 12 September 2010, Osaka, Japan*

Besides helping to cultivate ties between IPS and think-tanks, and members of academic and policy making circles abroad, these overseas conference have been valuable to IPS research work in areas that are of increasing importance to Singapore and the international community.

*Since Independence, the People's Action Party has dominated Parliament, and firmly entrenched the principles of integrity, meritocracy, multi-racialism, social cohesion and political harmony in Singapore's governance system. Nevertheless, there has been an evolution of the political system to accommodate greater social and political diversity, and public participation in policy-making. The civil service has developed its capacity in strategic futures thinking and whole-of-government, multi-agency action to anticipate change and uncertainty thrown up by local, regional and geopolitical developments.*

*IPS provides a national platform for greater public participation in the process of policy development and continues to research and explore models for effective engagement of citizens and civil society for policy making. With greater political pluralism, an on-going challenge is for public leaders to decide who, when and how they should engage in the governance process. This is to ensure that the process is inclusive, responsive, and benefits from the resources and wisdom from all possible sources. Participation also strengthens the sense of ownership and citizenship.*

*IPS Politics and Governance (P&G) Cluster also tracks the trends in Singaporeans' sense of identity, national pride, and rootedness. Given rapid changes in the social landscape due to economic development, immigration and other reasons, the resilience or the ability of a community to hold together in bonds founded in trust, reciprocity, common identity and civility, is critical and a major factor of political stability. All these elements have an impact on voters' attitudes and electoral politics. IPS synthesises the various perspectives and deepens the understanding of how Singapore operates as a democracy.*

#### **STAFF**

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*Dr Gillian Koh* (SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW)

*Dr Leong Chan-Hoong* (RESEARCH FELLOW)

*Ms Debbie Soon* (RESEARCH ASSISTANT)

RESEARCH



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# POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

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# IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION

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*Over the past two years, the Politics and Governance cluster has given greater focus to the issues of rootedness, identity and integration in its work. This has arisen from a keen awareness of the important demographic changes that have been taking place in Singapore and the need to pay heed to how this might affect social cohesion and the sense of nationhood.*

*The other area of focus has been on the more general but no less critical question of personal and financial resilience as Singaporeans faced a severe economic downturn as a result of the Global Financial Crisis. Understanding how people coped would provide us with a measure of the efficacy of governance and specifically, social assistance programmes in challenging times.*

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Census 2010 revealed that the total population of Singapore had risen from 4,027,900 in 2000 by 26% to 5,076,070. While the number of citizens grew between 0.6 to 0.8 percent in each of the years of the decade, the number of permanent residents grew by a greater range of 0.2 to 1.1 percent. The changes in the number of non-resident foreigners swung from -1.1 in the year of the SARS crisis of 2003, to a high of 4.2 in 2008 just before the full force of the Global Financial Crisis was felt in Singapore. The trends in the presence of non-resident foreigners seem to track the economic performance and prospects of the country fairly closely. The numbers are also fully within the control of the government.

The cluster set out to better understand the social implications of these demographic changes on social cohesion and sense of nationhood.

With the arrival of Dr Leong Chan Hoong to the team, the cluster conducted discussions and research on the experiences of foreign expatriates of life in Singapore, as well as the views of Singaporeans to the greater presence of foreigners in the country. He has also delivered several lectures on the challenges of Integration to different audiences.

The initial focus group discussions and research have culminated in a large research project on the issue of Integration in Singapore. It is being organised in collaboration with staff from other research clusters at the Institute. It also taps research input from staff of other academic institutions and that of one independent researcher.

Dr Leong's contribution is a survey of 2000 citizens - half Singapore-born and half foreign-born immigrants - that seeks to understand what they consider key markers of being Singaporean. The survey also gathers views on a range of public policies on immigration and integration. The findings of the project will be available in mid-2011.

While Singapore seeks to attract foreigners to augment its labour force, it is also important to consider how best to retain as many Singaporeans in the country as possible. In 2008, Deputy Prime Minister Wong Kan Seng revealed that an average of 1000 citizens gave up their citizenship each year for the period between 2005 to 2007. This was on top of the estimated 3,400 Singaporeans who had applied for overseas permanent residency during that time. The cluster conducted a survey of young Singaporeans' attitudes to emigration to explore how such trends might develop over time. It polled 2013 Singaporeans between 19 to 35 years of age on questions of rootedness, their thoughts on emigration, how they viewed the status of people who had emigrated, their perception of the socio-economic security enjoyed by overseas Singaporeans, the impact of foreign talent on the estimation of their job and life opportunities in Singapore, along with other measures of their personal well-being and the strength of their social ties. This study was a replication of research conducted in 2006.

On the intent to emigrate, the study found that 21.2% of the sample had thought about emigrating "very frequently" or "all the time". 26.4% of the sample said they would actively examine the possibility of emigrating in the next five years. Respondents who hailed from higher socio-economic backgrounds seemed more likely to consider emigrating. Those who were better educated were more concerned about the impact of the presence of foreign talent in Singapore.

We found therefore that the desire to relocate abroad was predicted by a positive view of emigration, the view on the social status of emigrants, the socio-economic security enjoyed by emigrants, the self-rated ability to emigrate, and whether someone held liberal social values. A perceived lack of social mobility in Singapore would reinforce the desire to relocate.

Meanwhile, Dr Gillian Koh with IPS Faculty Associate, Associate Professor Tan Ern Ser conducted the fourth in IPS' series of surveys on Singaporeans sense of identity and national pride - the National Orientations of Singaporeans Survey (NOS). The survey was completed in March 2009 and the report finalised in March 2010. In spite of the inflow of foreigners, and changing economic conditions, and generally, the idea that globalisation erodes the sense of nation, the scores for citizen-nation ties, and the sense of National Pride have held stable through the four waves of the survey from 1993, to 1999, 2005 to the latest survey. While this

is admirable, the researchers highlighted the fact that a good deal of effort through citizen education in schools and public projects and events have been put in over the years to shore up the sense of national identity.

In this fourth survey, the occasional section focused on Political Participation. Questions were posed to gather citizen's views on their role in governance, either in giving views in policy discussions or through membership in civic organisations. The results suggested that there has been a greater adoption of the values of active citizenship - respondents were more likely to say that they expected a greater level of involvement in policy discussions compared to a decade ago when the same questions on political participation were asked. It was interesting to note however that when respondents were asked if they had engaged the government in sharing their views on policy issues only 8% of the 2009 survey said they had done so, similar to figure for those said they did the same in the 1999 study. There was no change in the actual practice of political engagement between citizens and government. This is even as there have been more channels and processes for citizen engagement over the last ten years.

The study also sought to ask in two questions about citizens' view of the impact of foreigners in Singapore. In the first, 34% of the respondents in the 1999 survey disagreed that the policy to attract foreign talent to Singapore would weaken Singaporeans' feeling of 'one nation, one people'. In the 2009 survey, 37% felt the same. However, in the latter survey, when the neutral answer category of 'neither agree nor disagree' with the statement was not read out 63% said they agreed that the foreign talent policy would erode the sense of nationhood or unity. Interestingly, 66% said that they would nevertheless welcome foreigners working in Singapore if the economy needed it. Many more accept the economic case for the presence of the greater number of foreigners in Singapore for the economy even if they might be ambivalent about its impact on the sense of nationhood.

## RESILIENCE IN THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

The second big area of work for the cluster has been in the area of resilience. While the American sub-prime crisis had been unfolding since late 2008, it was not till the Wall Street Crash in late 2009 that Singapore began to feel the effects of the economic downturn and uncertainty. The government was decisive in implementing programmes to keep workers in jobs, keeping credit flowing and taking advantage of the slowdown to build up the capacity of workers and businesses. Nevertheless, the sudden brake in global demand led to a slump of -9.4% for the first quarter gross domestic product (GDP) of 2009, the nadir of the downturn in Singapore and an overall -0.8% decline in the GDP for the year.

With that, the Politics and Governance Team launched a snapshot poll based on 817 responses on how Singapore citizens and permanent residents were coping in the downturn. The study threw up four clusters of people who managed differently. The first, called The Resourced, 31% of the sample were of people who were more well-off and not much affected by the downturn. The second, called The Resourceful comprised 23% of the sample were people who among the poorest of the four clusters, were very much affected by the downturn, made adjustments to their lives and said they could cope as many months without a job as those in the Resourced category. The third group was The Pinched that made up 17.9% of the sample. These people were almost as poor the Resourceful but would not be able to cope if they lost their jobs. The final group was The Unprepared, which was just behind the first group in terms of their income level, were hardly affected by the downturn but would cope just as badly as the poor in The Pinched should they lose their jobs.

Overall, 33% of the respondents said that they were better off as a result of the government measures to help them cope with the recession, with the largest proportions saying this among those who were 50 years old (42% of the segment) and above, those in the lowest household income bracket (41% of the segment). 52% of the sample said that Singapore was better off as a result of government action to deal with the recession.

The pick-up in the economy began in mid-2009, and by the end of the year GDP for the final quarter had bounced to 0.9% growth. The Team repeated the polling this time with a larger sample of 2109 citizens and permanent residents. This time around, only three clusters emerged - The Resourced comprising 54.1% with

the same profile as the first survey. The Resourceful now comprised 30%, a larger group from 23% in this profile. The group in this second survey said they could cope for a shorter period. The Pinched group in this round comprised 15.9% but the good news is that people in this profile could cope on average, a longer period than people of the same profile in the previous study.

With the recovery, a marginally smaller 31% said that they were better off as a result of government measures, with the 30-39 year old band with the largest proportion of those saying this (34% in the sample), and again, the highest proportion found in the lowest household income bands (36% in the sample). A larger proportion of 57% of the sample said that the country was better off as a result of the government measures to cope with the recession.

The two studies were instructive in giving policymakers and other stakeholders a sense of how long workers could hold out if they lost their jobs and how large a wage cut they were prepared to accept in order to take on the survival job.

IPS also participated in the 2010 wave of the Asian Barometer survey under research leader Prof Chu Yun-han who is Distinguished Research Fellow of the Institute of Political Science at Academia Sinica and Professor of Political Science at National Taiwan University. The survey was conducted among 1000 Singaporeans on their views on the political system here. As the study currently covers thirteen countries, the results of this important comparative study are not expected to be ready till the end of 2011.

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# YOUNG SINGAPOREANS CONFERENCE

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As part of the larger IPS research team, the Politics and Governance cluster organised the Young Singaporeans Conference (YSC), titled 'Future.Identity.Talent@Singapore', held on 11 November 2010. The Institute was very pleased to have been able to feature global thought-leader Stephen Roach, non-Executive Chairman, Morgan Stanley Asia, kick-off the conference that focused on engaging 80 25 to 40 year olds about Singapore's future in the post-financial crisis world. Participants found the other chairpersons and Singaporean thought-leaders extremely engaging.

Specifically, YSC 2010 aimed to: **(1)** *explore the economic scenarios that Singapore faced in the post-financial crisis world, given the rise of Asia and the deep uncertainty in developed Western economies;* **(2)** *explore whether Singaporeans needed a cultural re-orientation to take advantage of the opportunities presented by these scenarios or a reinforcement of the sense of national identity instead; and (3), explore how talent flows and macroeconomic policy discussed in the first session would affect wealth creation and distribution in the country.*

Participants were divided into discussion groups to flesh out specific ideas and actions to address particular challenges Singapore faced. They presented their conclusions to the Guest-of-Honour, Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Teo Chee Hean at the closing dialogue session. Participants argued for the need to find ways in which Singaporeans could be given more opportunities at various stages of their life journey to find their passion and purpose. In this way, it is hoped, as many as possible will achieve excellence and take Singapore from being good to great all respects. The full report can be read on the IPS website.

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*Singapore is a diverse society featuring a multiplicity of identities. Since Independence, policies have been developed to promote a meritocratic society while recognizing and maintaining its multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious characteristics. Globalization and recent waves of immigration add new norms, values and worldviews into our cosmopolitan society. Individuals and groups respond to national, racial, professional and familial identities expected of them and at the same time, exploring their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and political roles. These roles and identities often carry complex, and sometimes, competing social meanings. It becomes pertinent that policy development facilitates harmonious interactions in everyday living, as well as enhances social cohesion and inclusion for national development.*

*The Society and Identity (S&I) Cluster examines the dynamism of identity formations and the ways policies manage these diverse identities and social meanings for an inclusive society. It also engages the perspectives of relevant stakeholders to help policymakers meet the challenges in strengthening the "Singapore-ness" in a mosaic display of identities, affiliations and attitudes in an open city-state.*

*Relevant research in this respect takes on longitudinal perspectives to examine social changes in society and identity, and to identify emerging trends. In particular, IPS investigates trends in the family, studies social integration efforts, analyses developments in education and language management, as well as documents the impact of policies on various social aspects of everyday living.*

#### **STAFF**

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*Dr Chiang Wai Fong (RESEARCH FELLOW)*

*Dr Mathew Mathews (RESEARCH FELLOW)*

*Dr Quek Guan Cheng (RESEARCH FELLOW)*

RESEARCH

AREA

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# SOCIETY AND IDENTITY

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## DR CHIANG WAI FONG

Dr Chiang Wai Fong is focussing on research related to language use in Singapore. She is embarking on a project to document the work of the Goh Keng Swee Study Team in the late seventies and examine how education policies could be adjusted to contribute to the national development of Singapore. The project examines how this group of system engineer analyses challenges faced by the education service, processes inputs collected, as well as formulates recommendations for political leadership to make hard-nosed decisions on the future of education development for the country. The insight on the ways various societal forces, national consciousness and cultural considerations work together in education policy development has useful lessons for the new generation of policy makers in the Civil Service.

As an effort to examine the management of linguistic diversity in Singapore, a project is being planned to look at the impact of language policy on everyday living of speakers. Specifically, the official mother tongues have been promoted as a major tool for transmitting heritage cultures and values, this study examines the extent and ways to which this aim is being achieved in the classroom and within the family. The study also investigates the possible reasons for the observable outcomes. Results from this study will also have pedagogical implications for language teaching and learning.

## DR MATHEW MATHEWS

Dr Mathew Mathews is focussing on projects that take into account various social groups and how they interact and integrate in an inclusive and multicultural society. In a project funded by SINDA, he is studying low income Indian households with a special emphasis on those headed by single mothers. Here he is examining how this disadvantaged group is coping with the difficult circumstances that they are faced with. Besides trying to understand their personal coping strategies and the forces that help them to stay resilient, Mathew plans to document their interactions with social service agencies and providers. He considers the important dimension that culture plays in such interactions.

Mathew also continues to work on his long standing interest in aspects of religion. During the last year, among other papers, he was able to publish a paper in the journal *International Sociology* where he reviewed the work of over seventy scholars examining several important dimensions of religious resurgence. A major focus of many of these works was on fundamentalism and how it relates to secular society. This review article calls for increased attention to how religion is played out in the global sphere since such developments have profound impact on religious

communities in local communities. Mathew very recently presented a paper at the Asia Barometer Workshop in Seoul, Korea where he showed through using survey data of several Southeast Asian countries including Singapore that considerable proportion in each of these societies embraced a religious identity as one of their more important social identities. The data reveals that those who identify strongly with religion in some Southeast Asian countries placed greater trust in government institutions and desired for greater government involvement in social problems that affected their societies. They were likely to be more prosocial and pro-family in their orientation as well.

## DR QUEK GUAN CHENG

Dr Quek Guan Cheng is focussing her research on how Singaporean policies in earlier years played an important role in the development of the country. She is currently examining outdoor advertising policy in the 1960s and 1970s and its impact on Singaporeans. Her study includes interviews with officers from government institutions, advertising veterans, media owners, advertisers and members of the public. This study is significant since it provides a link to how past policies acted as important guiding posts for current policy making in Singapore. This will be an important contribution to showcase how often taken for granted policies have an immense power to influence the everyday lives of Singaporeans.

Besides projects which directly relate to the cluster's main research programme, cluster members have also been involved in projects in collaboration with other clusters.

*Dr Mathew Mathews* is examining integration within Singaporean neighbourhoods as part of a broader project on integration jointly organised by the Politics & Governance and Demography & Family clusters. He is attempting to showcase the challenges that are present in integrating the considerable number of new immigrants who have moved into public housing neighbourhoods throughout the island. His project which includes data from a survey and in-depth interviews with both local-born and foreign-born Singaporeans considers the multidimensional challenges to integration. These range from the disinterested nature of some residents towards integration attempts, to landscape planning considerations which make interaction between residents in some neighbourhoods negligible. This project aims to among other things, showcase the aspiration of citizens for greater integration in their neighbourhoods.

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# SPECIAL PROJECTS

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Apart from the five research clusters, IPS promotes better understanding of Singapore's foreign policy and international relations through various activities such as roundtable discussions, seminars and workshops. IPS also conducts briefings for foreign dignitaries, scholars and students when they visit Singapore. International organisations which IPS has worked with include the World Bank, the United Nations, the International Maritime Organisation, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, the ASEAN Secretariat and the APEC Secretariat. These exchanges form part of IPS' effort to raise public awareness on Singapore's role in regional and global affairs. The Institute also represents Singapore at international meetings and events, highlighting the Singapore perspectives and insights from IPS' research.

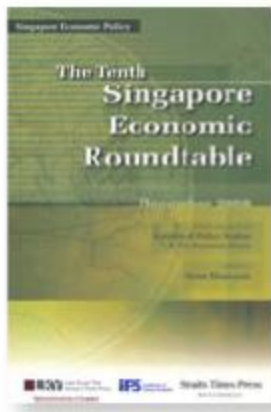
Over the last two years, IPS hosted a number of briefings for delegations from China, Kenya, Japan and Vietnam. In 2009, IPS co-organised the Seventh Japan-Singapore Symposium with The Japan Forum for International Relations, Inc, in Tokyo. The Institute also convened an international conference on "Economic Crisis and Recovery: Enhancing Resilience, Structural Reform, and Freer Trade in the Asia-Pacific Region" together with the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and Singapore National Committee for Economic Cooperation (SINCPEC) in October 2009. In 2010, together with The World Bank, IPS organised a conference on "Cross-Border Labour Mobility and Development in the East Asia and Pacific Region."

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# PUBLICATIONS 2009 / 2010

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IPS does not have its own in-house publishing unit. Hence, most books, conference proceedings and other major publication projects initiated by IPS are published jointly with commercial publishers or other institutions, which have publishing units.



## THE TENTH SINGAPORE ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE

*Edited by Manu Bhaskaran*

### THIS PUBLICATION INCLUDES:

#### **The Singapore Economy: Recent Developments & Selected Issues**

by Ms Erica Tay, Senior Economist, Economic Policy Department, Monetary Authority of Singapore

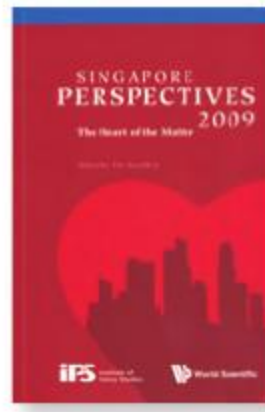
#### **Surviving Recession, Rethinking Globalisation: Confronting Challenges of a Post-Crisis World**

by Mr Sim Moh Siong, Director, Asia Pacific Economic and Market Analysis, Citigroup Global Markets Singapore Pte Ltd; and Mr Kit Wei Zheng, Vice President, Asia Pacific Economic and Market Analysis, both of Citigroup Global Markets Singapore Pte Ltd

#### **Competition Policy in Singapore**

by Dr Robert Ian McEwin, Visiting Professor, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore; and Commentary by Dr Yothin Jinjark, Assistant Professor, Division of Economics, Nanyang Technological University

The Tenth Singapore Economic Roundtable deals with a number of important policy issues such as the Impact of the global financial crisis on Singapore; Macro-economic policies and responses to the crisis in the medium and long-term and Competition policy - its purpose and benefits for a small and open economy like Singapore.

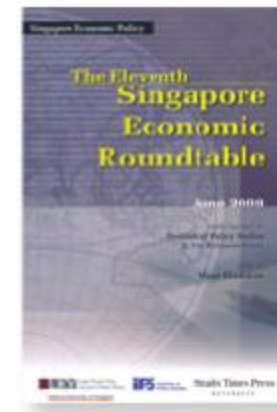


## SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES 2009: THE HEART OF THE MATTER

*Edited by Tan Tarn How*

The publication contains the 15 presentations made at the annual IPS flagship conference, Singapore Perspectives 2009, held on 19 January 2009. The presenters shared their responses to the following questions:

- *Can Singaporeans Afford a High-Cost Singapore?*
- *Can Singaporeans Remain Rooted?*
- *Can Singapore Preserve its Hub Status?; and*
- *Can Government do Less, and Singaporeans More?*



## THE ELEVENTH SINGAPORE ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE

*Edited by Manu Bhaskaran and Lee Yoong Yoong*

### THIS PUBLICATION INCLUDES:

#### **Recent Economic Developments**

by Ms Tu Suh Ping, Lead Economist, Economic Policy Department, Monetary Authority of Singapore.

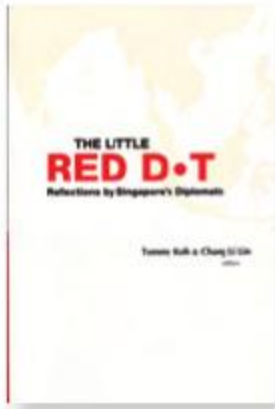
#### **Macro-Economic Outlook for Singapore and Implications for Policy**

by Mr Alvin Liew, Economist, Southeast Asia, Global Research, Standard Chartered Bank

#### **Assessment of the Singapore Budget 2009**

by Mr Song Seng Wun, Regional Economist, CIMB-GK Research Pte Ltd; and Commentary by Mr Gerard Ee, Director, Great Eastern Life Assurance Co Ltd, Mr Frank Debets, Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers WMS Pte Ltd and Mr Peter Foo, Chief Executive Officer, Fortis Bank SA/NV, Singapore Branch

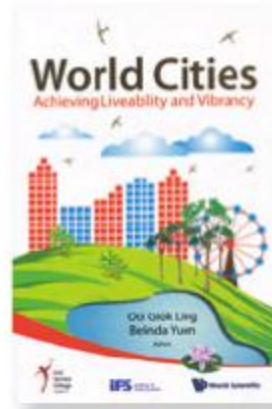
The Eleventh Singapore Economic Roundtable, which was held on 30 June 2009, dealt with a number of important policy issues such as the Macro-Economic Outlook and Implications for Policy; and a review of the Singapore Budget 2009.



## THE LITTLE RED DOT REFLECTIONS BY SINGAPORE'S DIPLOMATS VOLUME II

*Edited by Tommy Koh & Chang Li Lin*

This is the sequel to the bestselling book, *THE LITTLE RED DOT*, published in 2005. This volume is a collection of essays by the third-generation of young diplomats, with a Foreword penned by the Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Raymond Lim. It contains many inspiring stories that demonstrate the resilience and inventiveness of young diplomats. It also includes an updated and comprehensive Annex of the milestones of Singapore's external relations.

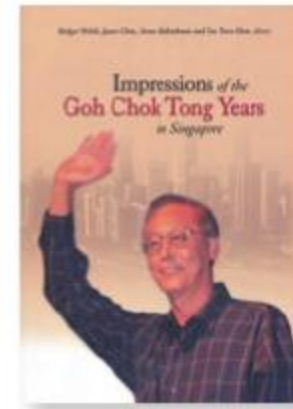


## WORLD CITIES: ACHIEVING LIVEABILITY AND VIBRANCY

*Edited by Ooi Giok Ling and Belinda Yuen*

**How does a city make sound policy decisions on sustainability and governance while simultaneously promoting economic growth and development excellence?**

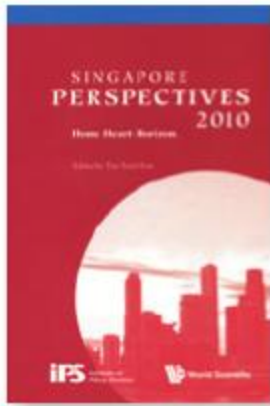
This book focuses on the major challenges that world cities are facing in such key areas as governance, social inclusiveness, infrastructural development, financial solvency as well as environmental and ecological sustainability. Based on case studies from cities in North America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific, this collection of essays brings together some of the top academics, professionals and policymakers from the world over and presents their views on how to best strike the balance between growth and sustainability. The range of perspectives, ideas and depth of information makes this an invaluable resource for researchers, city planning professionals and policymakers in environment, urban development and urban economic planning.



## IMPRESSIONS OF THE GOH CHOK TONG YEARS IN SINGAPORE

*Edited by Manu Bhaskaran and Lee Yoong Yoong*

Singapore experienced substantial changes during the 14-year tenure of the country's second Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong (1990- 2004). Coming after a long period of growth and stability, the period brought to office a new generation of political leaders who faced the task of sustaining and building upon the policies of their predecessors. There were social and cultural initiatives and significant challenges to the economy arising from the Asian crisis of 1998 and the SARS outbreak in 2003. This volume examines the changes that took place during the Goh premiership and assesses its legacy. The 45 essays in the volume review a range of issues from domestic politics and foreign policy to economic development, society, culture, the arts and media.



## SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES 2010: HOME.HEART.HORIZON

*Edited by Tan Tarn How*

The publication contains the 16 presentations made at the annual IPS flagship conference, Singapore Perspectives 2010, held on 25 January 2010. It includes the keynote address by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and views presented by speakers under themes of *Home. Heart.Horizon; One United People; One Gracious Society; One Global City* and *the Wrap-up Session*.



## THE TWELFTH SINGAPORE ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE

*Edited by Manu Bhaskaran and Lee Yoong Yoong*

### THIS PUBLICATION INCLUDES:

#### **Recent Economic Developments**

by Ms Tu Suh Ping, Lead Economist, Economic Policy Department, Monetary Authority of Singapore.

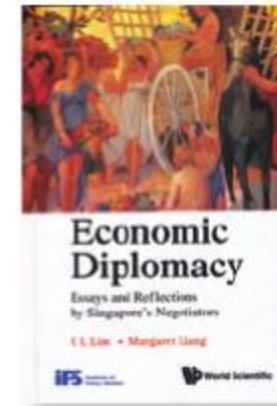
#### **Macro-Economic Outlook for Singapore and Implications for Policy**

by Mr Matthew L Hildebrandt, Economist, JP Morgan Chase Bank, NA, Singapore Branch; and Commentary by Mr Tai Hui, Regional Head of Research, SE Asia, Global Research, Standard Chartered Bank.

#### **Policy Implications of Climate Change**

by Dr Bindu Lohani, Vice President, Finance and Administration, Asian Development Bank (ADB); and Commentary by Dr Chang Young-ho, Assistant Professor, Division of Economics & S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University & Adjunct Senior Fellow, Energy Studies Institute, National University of Singapore.

The Twelfth Singapore Economic Roundtable, which was held on 26 November 2009, dealt with a number of key policy issues such as the Singapore Economy: Recent Developments and selected Issues; Macro-Economic Policy; and the Economics of Climate Change and its Impact on Policy



## ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY – ESSAYS AND REFLECTIONS BY SINGAPORE'S NEGOTIATORS

*Edited by C.L. Lim and Margaret Liang*

Singapore, a small Southeast Asian country with limited resources, transformed itself from a trading post to a successful, cosmopolitan nation with one of the most impressive growth rates in the world. Less well known, however, has been its role in regional and global trade negotiations. This book is a collection of sixteen essays written by a group of diplomats, policy-makers, and professors who became involved in international economic affairs, notably in GATT/WTO, regional and bilateral free trade negotiations. Here, they reveal their thoughts about the world economy and trading system, reflect on their experiences, and explain how they promoted national interests while advancing the global trade agenda. This book will appeal not only to professional diplomats, but to anyone interested in how international economic diplomacy works and Singapore's role and perspective as an open trading nation.

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# SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES 2009 / 2010

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Singapore Perspectives is the flagship conference of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) that seeks to engage thinking Singaporeans in a lively debate about the public policy challenges the country faces.

# SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES 2009

## The Heart of The Matter

MONDAY, 19 JANUARY 2009  
ISLAND BALLROOM, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

## CONFERENCE SUMMARY

The Institute of Policy Studies held its annual flagship conference, Singapore Perspectives 2009 today. It was attended by close to 630 participants.

The theme for Singapore Perspectives 2009 was *"The Heart of The Matter"*. The primary focus of the conference was on four major questions that Singapore needed to address in the medium to longer term.

- *Can Singaporeans Afford a High-Cost Singapore?*
- *Can Singaporeans Remain Rooted?*
- *Can Singapore Preserve Its Hub Status?*
- *Can Government Do Less and Singaporeans Do More?*

At the conference, the audience was also polled for their responses to these four issues. The summary of the polling results can be found in *Annex I*.

## THE BIG PICTURE

### SPEAKER

- *Peter Ong, Managing Partner, Gallup Singapore, Hong Kong, South-East Asia*

Peter Ong offered the participants an overview on where Singapore was placed in the global scheme of things. He concluded that Singapore would need to forge new paths, use new flying instruments and need new concepts to engage the different groups.

Countries, cities and communities with high psychological capital and social capital in addition to good national, financial, and com-

munity infrastructure would be better placed to attract, engage and retain the very best talents especially those who were highly mobile. These talents would lead the way in creating the next wave of innovation, creativity, business and economic success; and the sustainability of that success. Already, Singapore was at the apex of the world's stage in all aspects of national, financial and community infrastructure.

Moving forward, for Singapore to further move up the food chain and be a super strong magnet for talents and businesses, foreign and local, he felt that it was imperative that very high sense of Soul, Engaged Citizenry, Personal Expression and Well-Being on Singapore's shores, was created for all Singaporeans.

Psychological and Social Capital were important concepts for Singapore to leverage and ace in the next lap. In his view, every Singaporean would need to be highly engaged, and exhibit a strong sense of pride and passion for the country.

## PANEL 1

### "CAN SINGAPOREANS AFFORD A HIGH-COST SINGAPORE?"

#### SPEAKERS

- *Inderjit Singh, Executive Chairman, Tri Star Electronics Pte Ltd*
- *Laurence Lien, Chief Executive Officer, National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre*

#### CHAIR

- *Kevin Scully, Executive Chairman and Founder, NRA Capital Pte Ltd*

In Kevin Scully's opening remarks he noted that the current economic situation was complex with no ready solutions on hand that we could adopt. He thought that the high business and living costs were engineered by the government to promote economic restructuring and had indeed worked to attract global investments and keep the Singapore economy competitive. He wondered if greater investment in local enterprises would lead to a more stable economy and if a high cost of living was inevitable for Singaporeans.

In response, the first speaker Inderjit Singh traced the developments that led to Singapore having a high cost structure. Rising cost was the result of rapid restructuring. This was evidenced by Singapore's high and laudable Manufacturing Value Added Index, but high business costs, and a decreasing rate of productivity. Instead of driving out older mature industries that enjoyed a good

level of local participation for new high-value industries such as the bio-sciences, stretching these local capabilities, encouraging innovation and improving productivity in them could have made growth more sustainable and kept costs at more manageable levels. The result instead was a severe dislocation of infrastructure and human capital, leading to greater dependency on foreign labour and capital. At the lower levels, we also saw how general wages were depressed by greater access to foreign labour.

A more sustainable model for the future would be to rebalance the strategy of attracting multinational corporations here to one that was more focused on developing local enterprises. He also suggested introducing minimum wage system so as to give locals a better chance at job and improved wages. Perhaps there were sectors where a greater preference might be given to hiring local labour, as well. These measures might help us to achieve the right balance between economic growth and accommodating increases in the cost of living.

**The second speaker, Lawrence Lien** highlighted the problem of growing income inequality and the fact that those in the poorest 30% of all households suffered a double whammy of falling wages and higher costs of living. Any money in the Central Provident Fund accounts were insufficient to help such families cope. He recognised how much the government had done most recently with the introduction of the Work Income Supplement scheme and its clear redistributive effects. Even in a rising tide of economic growth, not every boat would be lifted and therefore it was good to have the gainers share something with those who did not do as well. It was also imperative to try to keep the cost of merit goods and essentials like transport, housing, healthcare, and even food as low as possible to encourage their consumption perhaps through continued subsidies. The less well-off should always feel that they have the choice of cheaper or subsidised goods – a situation where you have ‘two Singapores’.

Going forward, Lien argued that there was a limit to how much the government could do as its policies were unable to meet the specific needs of those wanting help nor could it be too generous. Payouts also tended to affect self-esteem and confidence of those on the receiving end, and we also wished to avoid developing a sense of entitlement.

It was therefore important to look to the role of the people sector that could do some things much better than the state. It had the moral authority, the flexibility to experiment with new intervention models and a bias towards catering to the holistic needs of individuals. This sort of action also helped to foster social capital, a sense of community and happy society. Judging only from the receipts of institutions of public character in 2007, Singaporeans committed the equivalent of 0.34% of the gross domestic product to philanthropy whereas the total level of charitable giving in the United States (US) was at a much higher level of 2.2% of its

GDP that year. The levels of volunteerism, both formal and informal, in Singapore, was 16.9% in 2008 in Singapore whereas the levels of just formal volunteerism in the US was 26.2%. There was certainly room to grow the level of giving here. Lien was heartened by the fact that private charitable giving rose in recession years of the past, and hoped that in the current downturn, Singaporeans would similarly give time and money to help those in need.

When asked if there was an alternative to having GDP (‘gross domestic product’) growth as a key performance indicator for the country as epitomised by how public sector wages were pegged to it. Lien responded that GDP growth of a country was akin to the profitability of a company therefore would not argue against it. It also meant that salaries could fall when there was poor performance and seemed responsive as a system. Another participant asked if Singapore could achieve the levels of charity and philanthropy as in the US. Lien responded that more was needed to communicate and educate the public on the gravity of the socio-economic situation in Singapore and the idea that every individual could make a difference. Another participant highlighted that there were four ways in which people could make a difference with ‘active giving’, first through charitable giving; second, through volunteerism; third, through business practices of corporate social responsibility; and, fourth through the setting-up of and support for social entrepreneurs.

On the issue about the feasibility of reducing GST (‘goods and services tax’) to mollify the impact of rising costs. Inderjit responded that lowering the impact of rising costs by supplementing income were a better solution compared to reducing GST. He also suggested that annual bonuses be given out in instalments throughout the year.

A participant suggested that the public housing policy should be reviewed for its over-emphasis on home ownership. This had three negative consequences: first, the debt culture where young people started life with a large mortgage to pay; second, it had the effect of siphoning off what would otherwise be liquid savings that could be used for investment or entrepreneurship; and third, it fed a speculative culture in housing. The model in Switzerland that had the highest per capita levels of home tenancy could perhaps be explored. There could be other ways of binding citizens to the country other than through home ownership. Inderjit added that the key factor that precipitated the rise in housing cost was the policy of ‘asset enhancement’.

In response to Lien’s notion of ‘two Singapores’ where one would cater to through subsidies to the lower income households and another for the well-off, one participant noted that this notion would be in tension with the desire to foster resilience and sense of community that Mr Lien hoped for.

## PANEL 2

### “CAN SINGAPOREANS REMAIN ROOTED?”

#### SPEAKERS

- *Tan Ern Ser, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology & Vice Dean, Office of Student Affairs, National University of Singapore*
- *Eleanor Wong, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore*

#### CHAIR

- *Norman Vasu, Assistant Professor, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University*

**Tan Ern Ser** introduced the concept of Rootedness. Using the analogy of a tree, it could be seen as ‘continuous nourishment’ through for individuals in a community through their one connection to the past, present and future. It was necessarily hinged to the sense of place, and operated on the logic of community, as opposed to the logic of the market and helped units of the community to move beyond concerns over self-interest to that of public good. He benchmarked the sense of rootedness to the Jewish diaspora, where members of the community did not necessarily have to be in the geographical locale of their heritage but felt strongly about the past, present and future of their community derived from their sense of place. In that regard, rootedness was sometimes fostered by negative collective experiences of prejudice and discrimination, sense of suffering and injustice and contested geographical terrain as was the case with the Jewish diaspora.

Possible barriers to rootedness included the mentality of self-reliance cultivated by meritocracy, the tendency to view citizens in terms of their value-add in the market place, the lack of a culture of affirmation. In Singapore in particular, a key barrier to the developing rootedness was the tendency to view Singapore as an economy first, and only then as a nation.

Tan shared findings of a 2005 IPS Survey where respondents scored 74 on a scale of 100 on an index of rootedness. He also gave a breakdown of the sense of rootedness for different segments of society. He highlighted how the government was concerned to help foster rootedness to the nation, from the Singapore 21 initiative in 1997 to the Committee on National Education’s 3H’s (Head, Heart and Hands) framework in 2007.

Looking to the future, the key challenges to developing the sense of rootedness were first that globalisation would offer Singaporeans choices and nudge them to decide forcefully if Singapore was ‘home’; also, if Singaporeans felt affirmed, accepted and secure in their sense of citizenship, they would be even more generous in welcoming foreigners into Singapore – this was not a mutually exclusive relationship.

**Eleanor Wong** argued that the way in which we seemed to make ‘rootedness’ a problem to be concerned about was a result of the narrative that was being applied – that of a story of an emperor who needed subjects and therefore was concerned about whether they would stay or leave. She proposed how there might be many other ways in which to speak about ‘rootedness’ or one’s place in the world, one of which could be the ‘narrative of the city’. This was a narrative of how people would be valued for the ‘project’ that they sought to achieve while resident in a certain place; giving their of their best for a finite period and moving on to the next place when they were done. Wong saw that the government had been ‘telling the wrong story’ with regard to foreign talent in drawing the artificial distinction between citizens and non-citizens, and should instead paint a narrative of a common purpose and community familiar to the immigrant population in early Singapore. Wong invited the examination of narratives that resonated within each member of our community, allowing for and celebrating something that was meaningful for each would be what was desired.

A participant suggested that rootedness should also be viewed through a narrative of love, as there were citizens (such as those in the European Union) who would stay in their country in spite of its imperfections, and not move on to other countries when the option of doing so arose. She agreed to say that when there was choice, which was only a recent phenomenon with globalisation, there would be there be the exercise of ‘love’. This was also what brought her home to Singapore when she had the option to be anywhere else in the world.

Referring to the earlier analogy of a tree, a participant asked what type of tree Singapore was looking at cultivating in terms of encouraging rootedness. Tan saw that it was trees that had roots which enabled people to draw sustenance, no matter where one was in the world, like the Jewish diaspora was his model. Wong said her mental model was something that lay between that of the analogy of a tree and a virtual network, where there was something substantive and also an equal and complex network, spread broadly.

A participant suggested that Singapore could tap into the foreign community not just for brains and talent but also for emotional attachment, and could contribute more to the feeling of being Singaporean. Tan said that Singaporeans must first feel secure in their own land for there to be a generosity of spirit towards foreigners to permeate. Wong saw that from the perspective of the community, the key issue was not so much about citizenship in national identity but rather a sense of shared purpose from working together that was important. The idea about ‘citizenship’ was therefore not as salient as that of being part of a ‘community’. There was therefore every potential for foreigners based here to contribute to that.

## PANEL 3

### “CAN SINGAPORE PRESERVE ITS HUB STATUS?”

#### SPEAKERS

- *Manu Bhaskaran, Director and CEO, Centennial Asia Advisors Pte Ltd*
- *Tan Chin Nam, Chairman, Media Development Authority*

#### CHAIR

- *Tan Kim Song, Practice Associate Professor of Economics, Singapore Management University*

In his opening remarks, **Tan Kim Song** highlighted that the concept of “Hub” was not new to Singapore, as the island-state had started off as a “Trading Hub”. In recent years, government attempted to broaden the hub functions of Singapore, through providing physical infrastructures, information communications.

**Tan Chin Nam**, in his presentation, drew a parallel between the definitions of “Hub” and “Global City”. He recalled that S Rajaratnam coined the term “Global City” in 1972, based on Capabilities; Connectivity; Culture; Community; Collaboration. Singapore was now “hubs” to arts, talents, logistics, transportation, oil and gas, media, education etc, under various initiatives of different Singapore ministries. Singapore was now ranked number 7 in the “2008 Global Cities Index”. Recounting the Economic Development Board (EDB)’s economic development path for Singapore as it moved from a “labour-intensive economy” in the 1960s to an “Innovation, Creative and Knowledge Economy” beyond year 2000. Reiterating Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew’s recent views that Singapore must embrace diversity in moving forward, and that Singapore should be a place for creation and innovation to grow. He highlighted some companies which EDB had succeeded in bringing in to make use of Singapore as a “home” to do business in the region/world. He added that EDB was using the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) in courting companies to invest in Singapore. Tan Chin Nam noted that with the concept of using Singapore as a “home”, and not a “host”, the emphasis was now on growing the GNP (and not GDP).

**Manu Bhaskaran** likened the idea of a “Hub” to a “Node” which managed economic flows. On the whole, he deemed that Singapore had done well but “it has not made it yet”. Singapore must do more with the increasing challenges. He highlighted that Singapore was ranked 4th in the world, based on the MasterCard Worldwide Centers of Commerce Index 2008. Singapore was now facing competitions from Amsterdam, Moscow, and Dubai on the global arena, as well as from cosmopolitan cities in China, India, and in Greater Mekong Sub-region, such as Bangkok. In his evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of Singapore as a hub, he found that there was insufficient critical mass/hin-

terland around Singapore, and there was thus an urgent need to gain scale. He reiterated that Singapore should continue to push for ASEAN integration. Singapore could look to new growth areas such as the Iskandar Development Region (IDR).

It was suggested that Singapore might have to relinquish some of its hub functions to its neighbours so that the region can progress as a whole, which would benefit Singapore. It was put forward that there should not be “double standards” but ethics and consistencies in Singapore’s ways of doing business with other countries and its internal message to its own people.

## PANEL 4

### “CAN GOVERNMENT DO LESS AND SINGAPOREANS DO MORE?”

#### SPEAKERS

- *Philip Jeyaretnam, Partner, Rodyk & Davidson*
- *Debra Soon, Chief Editor, Mediacorp News*

#### CHAIR

- *Mavis Chionh, Director (Legal & Compliance), The Kind Exchange*

**Mavis Chionh** opened the session by introducing various theoretical models of governance. According to her, theories of governance in recent years have tended to emphasise the place of civil society and the community in policy and decision-making. Noting a steady stream of Singaporeans over the years who entreat the Government to do more in matters in all areas of life, she recasted the framing question as: Are Singaporeans prepared to do more, and Government Less?

**Debra Soon** stated that in certain areas, Government action was still needed as certain initiatives and drives are highly dependent on the resources of Government and could not be carried out by the private sector. An example of this would be in the area of education: the Government must drive the development of creativity in our education system and establish a multitude of different education paths for our young people. The same goes for economic issues, especially in times of financial downturn such as in the current economic crisis.

In the area of political engagement, she observed that the Government may have no choice but to do more and engage Singaporeans who are better travelled and better educated, and who have ready access to the Internet. There may, however, an “inevitable collision course” between civil society and the Government

ahead, as issues such as workers' rights inevitably overlap with matters of Government policy.

While civil society has grown in recent years, she wondered if civil society initiatives are but the domain of a minority of Singaporeans. In reference to the panel theme, she recast the discussion as a question of if Singaporeans as a whole actually want to do more rather than focusing on bread and butter issues. Singaporeans, said Ms Soon, "must step up to the plate". Singaporeans deserve the government that they get, she said.

**Philip Jeyaretnam** prefaced his comments by what he characterised as "the triangle of suspicion" which may be responsible for holding the growth of Singapore's civil society back: a) different groups of people living together in close proximity; b) a philosophy within the ruling party that political competition is a negative process; and c) the resulting caution on the part of citizens of association and action, for fear of being nipped in the bud. For Mr Jeyaretnam, it is crucial that this vicious triangle, as he called it, be broken.

Speaking from his experience in the legal profession and ex-President of the Law Society of Singapore, Mr Jeyaretnam said that Singapore should move away from the current emphasis on efficiency at the expense of the social process of value-setting. For example, the legal profession needs to be not just independent, but also to be seen as being independent. While the Law Society's independence has not be compromised by the power given to the Minister for Law to appoint Council members to the Society and legislation which stipulates that the Law Society may only comment on legislation that it has been asked to comment on.

Singapore, said Mr Jeyaretnam, has reached the stage of development where we cannot afford not to have a protected space for Singapore civil society, and where we cannot afford not to have contributions from citizens banding together.

## ANNEX I

### POLLING RESULTS

The results of the polls conducted throughout the Institute of Policy Studies' annual flagship conference, Singapore Perspectives 2009 are shown below.

#### 1. Can Singaporeans afford a high-cost Singapore?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED: 299

Yes: 40.13%  
No: 59.87%

#### 2. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED: 294

- a) High cost is inevitable, it is okay if it is accompanied by strong social safety nets: 41.50%
- b) High cost is inevitable, it is okay if there is strong economic growth: 30.27%
- c) High cost is not inevitable: 28.23%

#### 3. Can Singaporeans remain rooted?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED: 198

Yes: 93.94%  
No: 6.06%

#### 4. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED: 205

- a) It does not matter where Singaporeans live so long as they remain emotionally attached to the country: 72.20%
- b) It does not matter where Singaporeans live so long as they do not give up their Singapore citizenship: 4.39%
- c) Singapore cannot be a nation without a Singapore born and bred majority in the country: 23.41%

#### 5. Can Singapore preserve its hub status?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED: 150

Yes: 62.67%  
No: 37.33%

#### 6. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED: 162

- a) It does not matter whether Singapore is a hub as long as economic growth is generally strong: 22.84%
- b) It does not matter whether Singapore is a hub as long as it is well-plugged into the global economy: 38.89%
- c) Singapore should work hard to preserve its hub status: 38.27%

#### 7. Can government do less and Singaporeans do more?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED: 131

Yes: 81.68%  
No: 18.32%

#### 8. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED: 137

- a) A strong role for the government is inevitable given Singapore's special circumstances: 40.88%
- b) Singaporeans are prepared to take care of their concerns if only the government would let them: 37.96%
- c) More government regulation and action is needed because of growing economic and social challenges: 21.17%

# SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES 2010

*Home.Heart.Horizon.*

MONDAY, 19 JANUARY 2009  
ISLAND BALLROOM, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

## CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Restructuring of the economy, dealing with population shortfall  
The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) at the Lee Kuan School of Public Policy held its annual flagship conference Singapore Perspectives 2010 today. It was attended by close to 900 participants from academia, business, civil society and government sectors.

Restructuring of the economy, dealing with population shortfall and updating the political system were listed as the three priorities for Singapore by **Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong** today. He added that the last one would be the most difficult to achieve. Lee made these points in his keynote speech at the annual conference of the Institute of Policy Studies entitled Singapore Perspectives

Economic restructuring was necessary to maximise Singapore's growth capacity and it has been made more urgent by the global crisis, he said. He added that the way forward lies in qualitative growth and that Singapore must improve its productivity growth from the current **1% to 2-3%**.

Lee also cautioned that the 5% growth rate average over the past decade would be difficult to sustain in the future. He said the Economic Strategies Committee would recommend a more realistic growth rate next week and the government would respond to it in the forthcoming Budget.

Pointing out that despite the government's best efforts to boost birth rates the total fertility rate in Singapore has not improved, Lee said topping up the population with immigration is necessary. However, because immigration has become a sensitive issue to Singaporeans, the immigration would be done in a "measured and calibrated manner."

Lee stressed that the most important factor in managing all the changes that Singapore is undergoing is a good political system. Acknowledging that updating the political system would be the most difficult challenge, he said the government is making

changes to the system in good time for the General Election which is due within the next two years. He added that the election is "not imminent".

Referring to IPS's contribution to the policy discussions in Singapore, Lee said informed debate among opinion leaders provide the essential backdrop to policy making. He encouraged the public sector to share more information with IPS for its research purposes.

The IPS conference also dealt with a number of critical issues under the theme "**Home.Heart.Horizon**".

**Dr Daniel Goh**, an Assistant Professor from the National University of Singapore, noted that while multiculturalism has succeeded to some extent in Singapore, there seemed to be some erosion in trust among the communities. He argued that a more open dialogue would help build trust among communities.

**Leong Ching**, PhD Candidate at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, stressed that a good narrative would be important to fuse a diverse society and build unity of purpose. She referred to the NEWater initiative as a recent example of a narrative which the government used to rally the different segments of society around a particular cause.

**Aaron Maniam**, President of MENDAKI Club, shared his life experiences as a person from a diverse multicultural family background. He explained that at an individual level, everyone had to juggle with multiple identities. Some of these identities were highlighted or pushed into the background depending on the context one was in. He argued that navigating diversity is an endless process in a multiracial society.

The second panel of speakers dealt with the issue of building a gracious society. **Dr Terence Chong**, a Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, said that the concept of graciousness has been rooted in a set of government-defined ideas like civility and courtesy. Dr Chong advocated less government involvement in the nurturing of a gracious Singapore as he felt government-driven campaigns would be prescriptive and alienate stakeholders.

**Braema Mathiapparanam**, a civil society activist, also argued for more space for other stakeholders — apart from the government — to drive any movement to instill graciousness in Singaporeans. She agreed that government-driven campaigns could be seen as prescriptive and may turn people off. She highlighted the distinction between 'living graciously' and gracious living.

**Dr Gan Su-lin**, an academic from Republic Polytechnic, suggested that the starting point for graciousness is oneself. She explained that knowing oneself and governing oneself would lead to a broader understanding within the community as a whole. She stressed the importance of personal awareness and sense of responsibility in nurturing graciousness.

The last panel discussed the prospects of Singapore as global city. **Lee Kwok Cheong**, from the private sector, said that it is imperative that Singapore become an “iconic place” to win over mobile international talent. In this regard it was very important that Singapore develops “aspirational attractions” that would distinguish the city from pure material benefits.

**Nizam Idris**, a banker, defined his vision of a global city-state as an entity that is driven not only by economic motivation, but also by the welfare of its denizens. He demonstrated the difficulties of living in a global city, particularly for those who would retire from participation in the workforce. He argued for more resources to be allocated for social welfare. Nizam stated that Singapore could succeed as a global city by providing more options to overcome the limitations of life in a global city.

**Professor Henry Yeung**, from NUS, sketched how Singapore could move from being a global city to become a global innovation cluster. To achieve this, Singapore must continue to leverage on the economy of agglomeration in areas such as research and development. He also noted that the Singapore economy must become more dynamic and less managed from the top down in order to maximise opportunities and ensure future success.

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SECTION

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**03**

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*The Institute's growth and success is a result of the collective effort by its leaders, supporters and staff. In this section we acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the people who made it possible.*

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IPS has been able to fulfil its mission with the continued and generous contributions from our Corporate Associates (CAs), supporters from the private sector who contribute to the Institute annually. The CA programme was launched in 1992 and over the years, a unique bond has been forged between the business community and IPS. The CAs has also become a strong network of business leaders for IPS to tap on for insights towards policy making from diverse viewpoints.

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