

CASE STUDY

Transiting into the Singaporean identity: Immigration and naturalisation policy

MATHEWS MATHEW*
DEBBIE SOON♥

Abstract

Debates in Singapore about immigration and naturalisation policy have escalated substantially since 2008 when the government allowed an unprecedentedly large number of immigrants into the country. This essay will discuss immigration and naturalisation policy in Singapore and the tensions that have been evoked, and how these policies are a key tool in regulating the optimal composition and size of the population for the state's imperatives. It will demonstrate that although the state has, as part of its broader economic and manpower planning policy to import labour for economic objectives, it seeks to retain only skilled labour with an exclusive form of citizenship. Even as the Singapore state has made its form of citizenship even more exclusive by reducing the benefits that non-citizens receive, its programmes for naturalising those who make the cut to become citizens which include the recently created Singapore Citizenship Journey (SCJ) is by no means burdensome from a comparative perspective. This paper examines policy discourse, key symbols and narratives provided at naturalisation events and demonstrates how these are used to evoke the sense of the ideal citizen among new Singaporeans.

Keywords: Naturalisation; immigration; integration; Singapore.

Introduction

Debates in Singapore about immigration and naturalisation policy have escalated substantially since 2008 when the government allowed an unprecedentedly large number of immigrants into the country. While the city-state is essentially a migrant society, brought about through nineteenth century British colonial interests, Singaporeans have gained a heightened sense of national identity in the fifty years since independence. Being “Singaporean” is essentially, as in other post-colonial societies, manufactured through a series of founding myths and shared experiences. Founding myths include the meritocratic nature of the society, very different from its surrounding Southeast

* Mathews Mathew, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

E-mail: mathew.mathews@nus.edu.sg.

♥ Debbie Soon, Research Associate, Institute of Policy Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, Singapore. E-mail: debbie.soon@nus.edu.sg.



Asian nations where patronage, racial superiority and corruption are rife, and the importance of a strong state to ensure that the nation is able to survive against all odds (Rodan, 2004). Shared experiences, such as a gruelling education system, life in high rise and exorbitant public housing, compulsory military service for men and the melange of cultural celebrations and cuisine further define Singaporeans' identity.

The fact that identity is amorphous and often only well defined in contact with the "other" is clearly demonstrated in the Singaporean case as new migrants come onto its shores. Despite the fact that many of those who come to Singapore are racially similar - from China and India, and the reality that many local born Singaporeans were themselves in a lineage of migrants originating from these same countries several generations ago, local born Singaporeans have asserted the difference between themselves and the new-arrivals. There is some concern on the part of Singaporeans that this group of newcomers are not loyal to Singapore and do not share the essential characteristics of Singaporeans, particularly their unwillingness to adopt Singaporean norms and values (Yeoh and Lin, 2013; Chong, 2015). Rather, new immigrants are sometimes known to show contempt to Singaporeans and refuse to shed markers of their former nationality.

This essay will discuss immigration and naturalisation policy in Singapore and the tensions that have been evoked, and how these policies are a key tool in regulating the optimal composition and size of the population for the state's imperatives. It will demonstrate that although the state has, as part of its broader economic and manpower planning policy to import labour for economic objectives, it seeks to retain only skilled labour with an exclusive form of citizenship. Even as the Singapore state has made its form of citizenship even more exclusive by reducing the benefits that non-citizens receive, its programmes for naturalising those who make the cut to become citizens which include the recently created Singapore Citizenship Journey (SCJ) are by no means burdensome from a comparative perspective. However some of the additional tightening in recent years is a reflection of the need to shore up continued public support for immigration in the midst of growing strands of xenophobia and to continue manufacturing the ideal citizen.

We begin by outlining the context of discussing immigration in Singapore, before going on to trace the development of naturalisation policy. This essay defines naturalisation as the process of becoming a citizen, and hence, some discussion on the nature of Singapore citizenship is in order to inform an understanding of naturalisation policy.

Role of state in regulation

Singapore is often described as practicing a soft form of authoritarianism. While democratic elections are held, only one party, the People's Action Party has succeeded in forming the government since independence. The success of the PAP has been attributed to its ability to deliver economic and development

goals to the nation, a priority which many Singaporeans accept. Election after election, the PAP's track record in keeping Singapore's economy vibrant and shielding it from the full impact of global economic threats, allows it to return to power with few opposition parties making inroads. In order to maintain its hegemony on the Singaporean psyche, the party has not only captured the nation's political and civic discourse but also wields substantial control over individual lives. Through directing how people live their lives, although often intrusive, allows it to achieve its economic objectives and thereby maintain its power base. An important regulatory mechanism that the Singaporean state wields is over the make-up of its population. In Foucault's (2003) writing on governmentality this is described as "biopower"

"a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries to predict the probability of those events (by modifying it, if necessary), or at least to compensate for their effects. This is a technology which aims to establish a sort of homeostasis, not by training individuals, but by achieving an overall equilibrium that protects the security of the whole form from internal dangers" (Foucault, 2003: 249).

Immigration has been a key tool in this framework, in drawing and retaining skilled labour to the country with its exclusive form of citizenship (Vukov, 2003). Unlike in other polities where immigration and naturalisation are the consequence of fairly random events such as war, persecution or economic opportunity, in post-independence Singapore it has been the result of careful planning to ensure the survival of the economic miracle that the ruling party so desires to perpetuate in order to remain in government.

Attracting foreign talent to Singapore's shores

The nation of Singapore has always been acutely aware of its small size and lack of natural resources, which feeds into the often repeated narrative of vulnerability and survival (Chan, 1971). The narrative that human capital is the country's only natural resource often emerges in national speeches, where much has been invested over the years in the education system to ensure that its people are quality labour, with good skills sets to attract investors and global companies to its shores. Singapore has for at least two decades been mindful of the need to draw in skilled labour for it to compete on the global stage. In light of falling birth rates, the state has utilised the tool of immigration to ensure that it has sufficient skilled labour to compete in the global market (Low, 2001).

In 1997, the doors to immigration were opened in the National Day Rally when Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong articulated Singapore's crucial need for new immigrants:

"Gathering talent is not like collecting different species of trees from all over the world to green up Singapore. It is more difficult but absolutely crucial to sustaining Singapore over the long term. Singapore depends on a strong core of talent, in business, government and politics. We need this core, to be an exceptional country and to operate the way we do - rational,

forward looking, adaptable. Without this, we cannot run a clean and efficient government, build a professional and credible SAF, run a disciplined police force, train engineers to do R&D, or produce bankers, businessmen, entrepreneurs, managers.

“Because we are exceptional, we have become a key hub in the region, for goods and services, and for capital. This gives us influence beyond our physical size, and translates into a high standard of living.

To produce for world markets, and to be a successful knowledge-based economy, we need intellectual capital. In the information age, human talent, not physical resources or financial capital, is the key factor for economic competitiveness and success. We must therefore welcome the infusion of knowledge which foreign talent will bring. Singapore must become a cosmopolitan, global city, an open society where people from many lands can feel at home.” (Goh, 1997)

New immigrants from around the world, described by Prime Minister Goh as “foreign talent” would allow Singapore to be globally competitive, and make the transition to becoming a knowledge-based economy. Even before this there were programmes like the Professionals Information and Placement Service and the Committee on Attracting Talents to Singapore (Singapore Parliament Reports, 18 March 1981; Singapore Parliament Reports, 18 March 1983). However the 1997 speech saw the government pitting Singaporeans against the foreigner who was described as essentially more “talented” and less encumbered by the relative success that was apparent in Singapore. For instance in observing the need for Singapore’s national carrier, Singapore Airlines to recruit its star flight crew from outside the country, the Prime Minister remarked that his fellow Parliamentarian, “*Charles Chong, an SLA engineer and MP for Pasir Ris GRC, says that when he travels by SLA, he knows immediately which girls are Malaysians and which Singaporeans. The Malaysians fold blankets better. They do it at home, whereas the Singaporeans get maids to do it for them.*” (Goh, 1997)

The image of the able foreigner who was crucial for Singapore’s competitive edge was further illustrated through the Prime Minister’s discussion of soccer matches. As he aptly prognosed:

“Talent makes all the difference...And in football, for the S-league, every club has 5 foreign players. Without them, the quality of the teams would be much lower, and few fans would watch the games. In 1994, the Singapore team had local born Fandi Ahmad as striker. But without Abbas Saad and the other foreign players, we might not have won the Malaysia Cup. In the World Cup, no foreign players are allowed. So apart from countries like Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Germany or Italy which have naturally strong players, the others don’t really have a chance. Singapore will never have a chance, unless Romario (Brazil), Klinsman (Germany) and a few others like them become Singapore citizens.” (Goh, 1997)

The National Day Rally Speech in 1997 pointing to the great need for Singapore to compete in the increasingly competitive Asian environment marked the start of a concerted push to bring in more immigrants, and this most recent wave of immigration. Initiatives to draw skilled labour in included

the creation of the International Manpower Division within the Manpower Ministry, which oversees Contact Singapore offices that have been set up in global cities to attract competent individuals to work in Singapore (Ho, 11 November 2000). The attempt to invite skilled labour to Singapore was an overwhelming success. Its outreach efforts and its skilful positioning during the global financial crisis allowed Singapore to draw in a very large number of foreign professionals. In 2007 alone it recorded an increase of 19% of non-resident foreigners on the island. Two years later, there was an 11% increase in those who were granted permanent residency. Singapore's comparative advantage in attracting desirable immigrants is based on its population's cultural affinity with those in East Asia and South Asia, its economic success, low taxation rates and high levels of safety and public order. Table 1 shows how the resident population size has increased dramatically over time, even as fertility rates have been on the decline, and below replacement levels.

Table 1. Singapore Resident Population, 1970-2014 (in thousands)

Population	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2013	2014
Total	2,074.5	2,413.9	3,047.1	4,027.9	5,076.7	5,399.2	5,469.7
Population ^{1,2,3}							
Resident	2,013.6	2,282.1	2,735.9	3,273.4	3,771.7	3,844.8	3,870.7
Population ^{2,3}							
Singapore Citizens	1,874.8	2,194.3	2,623.7	2,985.9	3,230.7	3,313.5	3,343.0
Permanent Residents	138.8	87.8	112.1	287.5	541.0	531.2	527.7

Source: Department of Statistics, Singapore. Population Trends 2014, p.v. Notes: 1) Total population comprises Singapore residents (i.e. Singapore citizens and permanent residents) and non-residents. 2) Data for 1970 and 1980 are based on de facto concept (i.e. the person is present in the country when enumerated at the reference period). Data for 1990 onwards are based on de jure concept (i.e. the person's place of usual residence). 3) Data from 2003 onwards exclude residents who have been away from Singapore for a continuous period of 12 months or longer as at the reference period.

The exclusionary nature of Singapore citizenship

The efforts of the state were targeted at bringing in labour at all levels, from the high to low skilled (Yeoh & Lin, 2012). Lower skilled labour such as what is needed in construction, domestic caregiving and manufacturing are however not accorded an immigration status which will allow them to be ultimately naturalised. They are not permitted to bring in their families or start new ones with Singaporeans. Their residence in the country is tied to their employer's needs. This differential eligibility for naturalisation restricted to highly skilled immigrants, is congruent to the state's intentions to get the best and brightest to remain in Singapore. The state views low skilled migration as transient and makes no effort in retaining this category of labour as citizens (Yeoh, 2006; Yang, 2014).

Besides skill level, naturalisation is also tied with racial background. Singapore practices a hard form of multiculturalism where the state preserves

particular racial identities through language recognition policies, quotas in housing allocation and in political representation. Chinese, Malay and Indian identities form the core of Singapore's cultural policies. The state has maintained that to ensure social stability it is necessary that the citizen population maintain the current racial composition achieved by the middle of the nineteenth century with a 75% Chinese majority, 13% Malay, 9% Indians and a 3% catch-all, "Others". This has meant that there are quotas in place (although not made official) for the number of new immigrants who are granted permanent residency in the country. In recent years, for instance, the state has noticed its difficulty in attracting those of Malay origin to settle in Singapore partly because Bumiputera policies in Malaysia provide substantial benefits to Malays which they will lose if they accept Singaporean citizenship. Specifically, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Grace Fu (2013) said in Parliament that *"We recognise the need to maintain the racial balance in Singapore's population in order to preserve social stability. The pace and profile of our immigration intake have been calibrated to preserve this racial balance."*

The exclusionary nature of citizenship is also apparent in the disallowing of dual citizenship and through the means of scholarship criteria. In recent years, the Singapore citizenship has been made even more exclusive by means of the reduction of social benefits for non-citizens.

No option of dual citizenship

38

The suggestion of dual citizenship has surfaced multiple times in policy discourse, but the state continues to disallow such an option. Discussions of dual citizenship often touch on offering that option to local born citizens, but only threads that address immigration will be discussed in this paper. The suggestion of dual citizenship has been mooted so that immigrants will be more likely to naturalise and socially integrate: *"...allowing dual citizenship will enable us to attract more foreigners to take up citizenship, particularly when we have only 1.26 fertility replacement rate."* (Member of Parliament Leong Horn Kee, Singapore Parliament Reports, 8 March 2004).

"Sir, it can be argued that immigrant dual citizenship facilitates integration into our community by encouraging them to naturalise. By doing so, they share in the cause of Singapore, and feel a psychological and emotional stake in Singapore's progress, beyond the material benefits." (Member of Parliament Irene Ng, Singapore Parliament Reports, 10 November 2006).

However, so far, the option of dual citizenship has not been implemented for the view that Singapore is a young and small nation, and creating a situation of divided loyalties would spell trouble for the country. This is a narrative that has been consistent through the past two decades as pointed out by the government:

"Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government does not allow Singapore citizens to have dual citizenship."

Singapore is a young nation. We have not reached the stage of nationhood where a Singaporean with a second citizenship would still retain his identity and loyalty to Singapore as his homeland wherever he goes, his second citizenship being only of secondary importance.

Foreigners are granted Singapore citizenship only if they are committed to making Singapore their home, and see their long-term future with Singapore, in which case they should readily be prepared to give up their foreign nationality.” (Minister of State for Home Affairs Associate Professor Ho Peng Kee, Singapore Parliament Reports, 8 March 1999).

When skilled labour does commit to Singapore in the form of taking up citizenship, it would also entail buying into an exclusive form of formal national identity. Dual citizenship is disallowed, which would require any naturalising citizen to give up their former citizenship. Dual citizenship here acts as a mechanism that selects for individuals who would agree to an exclusive form of national identity and loyalty, at least in the legal sense of being a citizen.

Retaining skilled labour in Singapore

The clear intent of anchoring foreign talent to Singapore can be seen in narratives which touch on the fear that skilled labour may be in Singapore to better their chances of facilitating migration to greener pastures. This includes discussions on medical professionals like doctors and nurses who practise and gain registration in Singapore to better their chances of gaining employment in countries like the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom (Singapore Parliament Reports, 16 March 1973; 23 January 2007). The stepping stone phenomena also applies to foreign academics and students. Suggestions of the role of Singaporeans in creating a greater sense of belonging, so that these skilled immigrants would feel a connection and want to remain in Singapore have been raised in the policy discourse (Singapore Parliament Reports, 21 November 2005):

“On the issue of foreign students and academics who have temporarily made Singapore their home, they have made a commitment - maybe a temporary one - but I think it is the responsibility of our community and our universities to make them feel as comfortable and to develop as strong a sense of belonging as possible. If we do not do so, they will use our universities as a stepping stone for greener pastures. But since they have made this temporary commitment, I think that we should give them the same ability and the same sense that they can participate, analyse and criticise national issues as well as issues within their discipline.” (Dr Geh Min, Nominated Member of Parliament, Singapore Parliament Reports, 21 November 2005).

As a result, the state has made deliberate attempts to keep skilled labour in Singapore at several key points. It does this through the medium of government scholarships to non-Singaporeans, some of which require these individuals to take up Singapore citizenship in the process of completing their scholarship (Singapore Parliament Reports, 28 February 2005; A*Star Graduate Scholarship, 2015).

In a similar vein, Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong said in 2010 that the government was “going to approach some of them [permanent residents] to take up Singapore citizenship. If they don’t, then their PR will not be renewed”. He further said that out of some 500,000 PRs in the country at that point, “*maybe 50,000 can be selected to become Singapore citizens, the rest can be PRs contributing to the economy*” (Chang, 9 September 2010). A clarification on the statement was issued soon after PRs reacted on online forums, that “*the figure of 10 per cent...was only for illustrative purposes. It is not a target, nor is it the case that all PRs who turn down the offer of Singapore citizenship would not have their PR status renewed*” (Chang, 9 September 2010).

It is clear from a review of policy discourse that the state employs a strategy of both using formal instruments in the form of scholarships as well as persuasion in its strategy of managing the flow of skilled labour in its population.

Reducing benefits for non-citizens

The state has also moved to widen the gap between the social benefits that citizens and permanent residents receive, and in effect, creating a more exclusive form of citizenship. This had been in response to the public sentiment that skilled labour could receive the benefits that citizens could, without any of the obligations and burdens of citizenship. This section of the paper will take a look at the public and state discourse surrounding this development.

40

There had been the sentiment that many local born Singaporeans bear a disproportionate amount of the obligations of citizenship whilst receiving nearly the same amount of benefits as permanent residents (Hussain, 24 October 2009; Koh et. al., 2015).

This sentiment of inequity plays out especially with the perennial bugbear that new citizens beyond a certain age, as well as permanent residents do not have to perform national service, but that local born Singaporeans bear this burden.

Many public officials have then sought to reinforce the notion that immigration is for the benefit of all Singaporeans, in order to build popular and continued support for the inflow of skilled labour. In a speech to local university students that touched on immigration and population issues, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said:

“But in the midst of all this discussion about Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans, I think I should emphasize one point. And that is that in Singapore, the interests of citizens always have to come first. Not a short term interest but the long term interests of Singaporeans. And this immigration policy is to benefit Singaporeans in the long term, rather than to benefit non-Singaporeans at the expense of Singaporeans. It is to safeguard our long term interests that we need a sustained and a calibrated inflow of immigrants. But to make quite sure that there is no misunderstanding, we make a clear distinction between citizens and permanent residents and between PRs and non-residents. So when we have budget packages, CPF top

ups and so on, they are reserved for citizens. And among citizens, those who have done or who are doing NS will get more than those who have not. And if it comes to public housing, education and healthcare subsidies, we distinguish clearly between citizens and PRs. And I think people know this.” (Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Nanyang Technological University Student Union Ministerial Forum, 15 September 2009).

The state’s discourse has relied heavily on pointing out that immigration policies work for the long term interests of Singaporeans, although in the short term Singaporeans may feel the strain owing to the large number of migrants.

To clearly signal however that there is always a distinction between Singaporeans and foreigners, the state has also set out measures to provide differential subsidies whether it is with regards to Government-paid maternity leave and the Baby Bonus for new Singaporean citizen births.

The notion of “benefits” here corresponds to what is described as “rights” in most western liberal democracies. The government sought to reduce the social benefits that non-citizens would get in areas which include education, housing and healthcare. It also ensured various initiatives to recognise Singaporean contributions to national defence through the National Service Recognition Award that sees a sum of money (between \$9500 and \$10500) deposited into their Central Provident Fund and Post-Secondary Education accounts over a 10 year period. The various schemes would not only provide differentiation between Singaporeans and non-citizens but also the necessary nudge for permanent residents who have been in Singapore for some time to more fully commit to Singapore in renouncing their citizenship status from their countries of origin and becoming Singapore citizens.

Bringing new citizens into the fold

In the backdrop of issues of social integration, the government established the National Integration Council (NIC) in April 2009 comprising individuals from the people, private and public sectors to tackle the issue (National Integration Council, 26 April 2015). In September 2009, the NIC set up the Community Integration Fund (CIF) that Singapore-based organisations can apply to use to bring about programmes that facilitate the social integration of migrants. To facilitate the process of naturalisation, the state implemented the Singapore Citizenship Journey (SCJ) in 2011, so that new citizens would become acquainted with the history, norms and values of the country. Such attempts in Durkheimian fashion bring about social integration through invoking key symbols and narratives

The SCJ stands as a key bridging point where aspiring citizens are introduced to the national symbols, values and institutions of Singapore. The presentation of the content of the SCJ would mean that when aspiring nationals become citizens, they will be able to participate in and connect with key symbols and

narratives invoked in events like the annual celebration of the country's independence.

All citizens that naturalised after 2011 are required to undergo this journey as part of the process of becoming a Singaporean. The SCJ consists of four key components of an online component, a tour of historical landmarks and national institutions, a community engagement session, and culminates in a citizenship ceremony. From the comparative perspective, the requirements of the Singapore Citizenship Journey (SCJ) are not onerous. There are no compulsory language or citizenship quizzes, like in many receiving countries. The amount of time required to complete the citizenship journey is rather minimal, compared to some of the civic integration courses in other countries (Naturalisation, a better passport, 2011). There is even the deliberate effort to frame the SCJ as a rite of passage, or "journey" for new citizens.

Through the historical tour and online component of the SCJ, key national symbols and institutions are presented to aspiring citizens. The online component presents codified content on Singapore's "history and development as a country, key national policies, Total Defence, as well as...[the country's] efforts in building a cohesive and harmonious society" (National Integration Council, 2015b). The tour of Singapore's major historical landmarks and national institutions present physical symbols of Singapore's history and how the country "overcome[s] national challenges in the different domains of urban planning, transport, water resources, as well as security and defence" (National Integration Council, 2015b).

42

The third component sees aspiring citizens interact and engage with representatives and leaders from the community, which include appointed Integration and Naturalisation Champions (INCs), as well as grassroots leaders. It is described that new citizens will "learn how they can actively participate in the community", and that these community leaders will "*share their experiences living in a multi-racial and multi-religious society, and provide valuable information to help new citizens better settle into their community*" (National Integration Council, 2015b).

The Singapore Citizenship Journey culminates in a citizenship ceremony at the community or national level (National Integration Council, 2015b). A speech is usually made by a state official, which works as a mechanism for bringing new citizens into the fold of the national narrative, is the manner in which state officials frame naturalised citizens as very much part of the history of an immigrant nation, where they are simply the latest to arrive on Singapore's shores:

"Being a Singaporean has its benefits, but also its obligations. While you enjoy the privileges of a citizen, you also have a responsibility to contribute to your country, Singapore. Singapore, as you well know, is a small country. It has no natural resources like an abundant supply of land or oil; its primary resource are its people. It is the people who built up Singapore, with their drive, hard work, entrepreneurship and frugal habits. These were the values of our immigrant forefathers and I believe you share these values too. Without the will and hard

work of its people and leaders, Singapore would not succeed. Singapore today is, of course, better off than 50 years ago, but for it to continue to be better off for you and your children, we will have to work harder together as one united people, whatever our race and religion, and regardless of where we grew up. (Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong at the National Citizenship Ceremony 2013).

Key national values are communicated to new citizens at these citizenship ceremonies, which also serve as an opportunity for new citizens to demonstrate their alignment with them. Multiracialism, Singapore's variant of dealing with diversity sees the recognition and protection of four official racial groups of Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others. Multiracialism, as a national value is reflected in policy areas like public housing (ethnic quotas), political representation, and the celebration of national and community level events (Chua, 2007). New citizens are in the citizenship ceremony, required to verbally demonstrate their commitment and resonance with national values through the recitation of the National Pledge, and singing of the national anthem.

"We are a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. This diversity is what makes Singapore unique and we must celebrate this diversity. We must continue to strengthen the social cohesion that we have worked so hard over the years to build. We must continue to embrace and uphold the shared values that make us Singaporeans. When we recite the Pledge later, I hope that you will reflect upon what the words mean to you" (Minister for Manpower Gan Kim Yong and Adviser to Chua Chu Kang Grassroots Organisation, at the National Citizenship Ceremony 2010).

New citizens are also included in major national events, such as the country's 50th year of independence. These key historical points present opportunities for the state to delve into the traits that it is central to the success and story of Singapore, and to invite new immigrants to be a part of this tradition:

"Next year, we will celebrate our 50 years of independence. It has been an amazing and outstanding journey of nation building. It has very few parallels. Our Pioneer Generation dared to think big, make immense sacrifices, stay united and reach for the stars.

They worked hard to overcome the hardships during the early years to build modern Singapore. They lived and worked alongside one another, even though they were of different races and culture, spoke different languages and practised different religions. Over the years, they forged strong and lasting friendships across racial and religious communities. They treated one another with mutual respect, forged a strong community spirit and together built a common Singaporean identity, with a common vision for a better Singapore.

As a result, today we enjoy a strong economy, quality homes and an excellent health care system. We live in a peaceful country, raising our children in a safe environment with many opportunities for them to realise their full potential.

Our Singapore story is a story about individuals putting the society above self, and coming together to collectively build an endearing home for all. As PM Lee Hsien Loong put it in his National Day Rally, it is now our responsibility to continue and build upon their legacy.

He called on all of us to be "the pioneers of our generation". As new citizens, you too can do your part, and make your contributions.

Each of you has a unique story and you can make your own individual contributions to Singapore. Some of you are already contributing to the lives of our fellow citizens through the work that you do." (Minister for National Development Khaw Boon Wan, at the National Citizenship Ceremony 2014).

The citizenship ceremony also presents the opportunity for the state to communicate to naturalising citizens the behaviours that it views as desirable. The call to integrate into the community is made repeatedly:

"Singapore is particularly proud of its inter-racial and inter-religious harmony. Against the many racial and religious conflicts elsewhere that we read about daily, the state of affairs here is truly extraordinary. We must treasure it. We must not take our peace and harmony for granted. It requires every one of us to continue to preserve what is important to us - our social harmony; mutual respect for each other; and graciousness when sharing common spaces. We will also need to impart the values that we hold dear to our younger generation so that Singapore remains the peaceful and harmonious country that our Pioneer Generation had painstakingly built. Our ability to rise above our differences will define us, and reflect a Singapore society that is mature and progressive.

As new Singaporeans, you can play your part to reach out to those who have newly arrived on our shores and help them understand our customs and norms as you are better able to understand the challenges they face adjusting to a new environment. At the same time, you should continue building lasting relationships and widen your networks with your fellow Singaporeans." (Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Information, Communication and the Arts and Grassroots Adviser at the National Citizenship Ceremony 2011).

Another theme that clearly emerges is how aspiring naturalised citizens are encouraged to volunteer in the community, and that those who do have been held up as exemplars in a very public manner in citizenship ceremonies:

"I would also like to share the example of Mr Ooi Leong Chai, a gardening enthusiast who grew up in Malaysia. He became a Singapore citizen in 2009 and has been very active in the Community Garden Interest Group of Whampoa South Residents' Committee. Mr Ooi takes leave from work to host and interact with students on learning journeys to the RC garden. He also volunteers with the Citizen on Patrol team and joined RC members to promote and help put up the State Flag for residents in the estate during the recent National Day period. Mr Ooi is a good example of an active citizen who believes in being involved in the community." (Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Information, Communication and the Arts and Grassroots Adviser at the National Citizenship Ceremony 2011).

The call for citizens to contribute can be read as a policy balancing act, in response to the public sentiment that new citizens and permanent residents do not bear the burden of responsibilities that local born citizens do, as described earlier in this paper.

Conclusion

Citizenship scholars have written about challenges to the ability of national governments to control labour and capital flows (Sassen, 1996). In the Singaporean case immigration and naturalisation policy are very much tools in the government's belt of managing its population for broader state objectives that include economic growth. The state has sought to, with an exclusive form of citizenship, encourage skilled labour to remain in Singapore.

While in many European countries there are reservations about implementing overly prescriptive regimes to dictate the character of immigration flows, the Singapore case illustrates how a nation state can pursue the course of selecting ideal migrants to supplement its projected labour needs. However expecting these immigrants to transit smoothly into a new identity as Singaporeans by giving up their previous citizenship and accept their responsibility to defend the nation is understandably not uncomplicated.

The Singaporean government has been realistic about the demands it can place on prospective new citizens. It recognises that the high skilled candidates it is pursuing for naturalisation have many more options internationally which may be more appealing. As such the Singapore Citizenship Journey and other requirements for citizenship have not been onerous – they are light touches which are meant to facilitate a basic appreciation of Singaporean values and ideals as well as an avenue to cultivate the kind of citizenry the state desires. These requirements most importantly seek to demonstrate to local born and bred Singaporeans that the citizenship process seeks to communicate to new citizens important national narratives.

While the naturalisation process for immigrants that make the cut is not overly demanding, Singapore state leaders expect that over time new Singaporeans and their children who grow up in Singapore will develop a sense of national identity. There is at least some reason to expect this - Singapore's unabashed construction of the "imagined community" through media and public education channels is pervasive. However the extent that state discourse will be able to shape identities might be a naive supposition on the government's part when considering new waves of migrants. With China and India playing a part as dominant world powers and them extending their reach to the global diaspora from their respective nations, there is little guarantee that new citizens from these countries will not continue to feel a strong affinity to their countries of origin. The outcomes of governmentality in managing its population plays out less clearly for Singapore when it comes into contact with similar intentions of the governments in sending countries. In all likelihood, naturalised citizens and even second-generation immigrants will continue to maintain multiple identities and a connection with their sending country. It may be much more realistic for Singapore to merely expect that naturalised citizens and second-generation immigrants will feel enough of an emotional connection

to Singapore that will allow them to do their best to contribute substantially to the well-being of the city state.

References

- Agency for Science, Technology and Research (2015). "A*Star Graduate Scholarship," Accessed 27 April 2015, <http://www.a-star.edu.sg/Awards-Scholarship/Scholarships-Attachments/For-Graduate-PhD-Studies/A-STAR-Graduate-Scholarship-Singapore.aspx>
- Chan, H. C. (1971). *The Politics of Survival 1965-1967*, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press.
- Chang, R. (2010). "PRs Won't Be Forced to Become Citizens." *The Straits Times*, September 9, 2010. Accessed April 22, 2015. <https://global.factiva.com>.
- Chong, T. (2015). "Stepping stone Singapore: the cultural politics of anti-immigrant anxieties." In *Migration and Integration in Singapore: Policies and practice*, edited by Mui Teng, Yap, Gillian Koh and Debbie Soon, Routledge, 214-229.
- Chua, B. H. (2007). "Multiracialism as Official Policy: A Critique of the Management of Difference in Singapore." In *Social Resilience in Singapore: Reflections from the London Bombings*, edited by Norman Vasu, Singapore, Select Publishing, 51-67.
- Department of Statistics, Singapore (2014). *Population Trends 2014*. September. Accessed August 21, 2015. http://www.singstat.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/publications/publications_and_papers/population_and_population_structure/population2014.pdf.
- Durkheim, E. (1995). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, New York, The Free Press, Simon and Schuster.
- Foucault, M. (2003). "Eleven, 17 March 1976." In: "*Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, translated by David Macey, 239-264. New York: Picador.
- Fu, G. (2013). "Speech by Ms Grace Fu, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Parliamentary Debate on Population White Paper", 5 February. Accessed 21 August 2015 http://www.nptd.gov.sg/portals/0/news/Min%20Grace%20Fu%20Speech%20_Final.pdf
- Gan, K. Y. (2010). "Speech by Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Manpower and Adviser to Chua Chu Kang GROs, at the National Citizenship Ceremony 2010", 18 September. Accessed 26 April 2015. https://app.nationalintegrationcouncil.org.sg/Portals/0/Docs/National_Citizenship_Ceremony_2010_Speech_by_Mr_Gan_Kim_Yong.pdf
- Goh, C. T. (1997). "National Day Rally Speech 1997: Global City, Best Home." Accessed 15 April 2015. <http://www.moe.gov.sg/media/speeches/1997/240897.htm>
- Goh, C. T. (2013). "Speech by Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong at the National Citizenship Ceremony", 31 August. Accessed 26 April 2015. <http://www.nptd.gov.sg/portals/0/news/esm-national-citizenship-ceremony-2013-speech.pdf>
- Ho, A. (2000). "Is S'pore Inc Doing Enough to Help Foreigners Settle In?" *The Straits Times*, November 11. Accessed April 22, 2015. <https://global.factiva.com>.
- Hussain, Z. (2009). "Mind the Gap between the Pink and the Blue." *The Straits Times*, October 24. Accessed April 22, 2015. <https://global.factiva.com>.

- Ibrahim, Y. (2011). "Speech by Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, and Minister in-charge of Muslim Affairs, Grassroots Adviser and Member of Parliament for Moulmein-Kallang GRC, at the National Citizenship Ceremony 2011, 4 September 2011, Accessed 22 April 2015. <http://www.nptd.gov.sg/portals/0/news/Speech%20by%20Dr%20Yaacob%20Ibrahim%20at%20NCC%202011.pdf>.
- Koh, G., D. Soon, and M. T. Yap (2015). "Introduction." In: *Migration and Integration in Singapore: Policies and Practice*, edited by M.T. Yap, G. Koh, and D. Soon, 1-24. Abingdon, Oxon, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Lee, H. L. (2009). 15 September. "Transcript of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's speech at the NTU Students' Union Ministerial Forum, Prime Minister's Office, Accessed 22 April 2015, <http://www.pmo.gov.sg/mediacentre/transcriptprimeministerleehsienloong%E2%80%99sspeechntustudents%E2%80%99unionministerialforum>
- Low, L. (2001). "The Political Economy of Singapore's Policy on Foreign Talents and High Skills Society." December. Research Paper Series, National University of Singapore Faculty of Business Administration. Accessed 20 April 2015. <http://research.nus.biz/Documents/Research%20Paper%20Series/rps0136.pdf>
- National Integration Council (2015a). "About NIC." Accessed 25 April 2015. <http://app.nationalintegrationcouncil.org.sg/AboutNIC.aspx>
- National Integration Council (2015b). "Singapore Citizenship Journey." Accessed 25 April 2015. <https://app.nationalintegrationcouncil.org.sg/SingaporeCitizenshipJourney.aspx>
- Naturalisation a Passport for the Better Integration of Immigrants? (2011). Paris: OECD.
- Rodan, G. (2004). *Transparency and Authoritarian Rule in Southeast Asia: Singapore and Malaysia*. London: Routledge.
- Sassen, S. (1996). *Losing Control? Sovereignty in the Age of Globalization*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (1973, March 16). Budget, Ministry of Health. Parliament No.:3, Session No:1, Volume No.:32, Sitting No.:17 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports (1981, March 18) Budget, Public Service Commission. Parliament No.:5, Session No.:1, Volume No.:40, Sitting No.:9. Accessed April 21 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports (1983, March 18) Oral Answers to Questions: Expatriates. Parliament No.:5, Session No.:1, Volume No.:42, Sitting No.:9. Accessed April 21 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (1999, March 8). Oral Answers to Questions: Singapore Citizens Taking up Dual Citizenship, Parliament No.:9, Session No:1, Volume No.:70, Sitting No.:2 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2002, October 1). Motions: Stayers and Quitters. Parliament No.:10, Session No:1, Volume No.:75, Sitting No.:8 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2004, March 8). Debate on Annual Budget Statement. Parliament No.:10, Session No:1, Volume No.:77, Sitting No.:5 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.

- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2005, November 21). National University of Singapore (Corporatisation) Bill. Parliament No.:10, Session No:2, Volume No.:80, Sitting No.:14 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2006, November 10). Debate on the President's Address. Parliament No.:11, Session No:1, Volume No.:82, Sitting No.:4 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2007, January 23). Oral Answers to Questions, Public and Private Healthcare Institutions (Number of foreign nurses) Parliament No.:11, Session No:1, Volume No.:82, Sitting No.:8 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2009, May 29). Debate on President's Address, Parliament No.:11, Session No:2, Volume No.:86, Sitting No.:6 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2010, March 4). Budget, Prime Minister's Office. Parliament No.:11, Session No:2, Volume No.:86, Sitting No.:19 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2010, April 27). Benefits for Citizens and Permanent Residents. Parliament No.:11, Session No:2, Volume No.:87, Sitting No.:2 Accessed April 24, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2010, March 10). Budget, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. Parliament No.:11, Session No:2, Volume No.:86, Sitting No.:23 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2011, March 2). Budget, Prime Minister's Office. Parliament No.:11, Session No:2, Volume No.:87, Sitting No.:20 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2013, March 7). Oral Answers to Questions: Dual Citizenship, Parliament No.:12, Session No:1, Volume No.:90, Sitting No.:10 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Singapore Parliament Reports. (2013, March 11). Budget, Ministry of Defense. Parliament No.:12, Session No:1, Volume No.:90, Sitting No.:10 Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/publications-singapore-parliament-reports>.
- Vukov, T. (2003). "Imagining communities through immigration policies." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6(3): 335-353.
- Yang, P. (2014). "'Authenticity' and 'Foreign Talent' in Singapore: The Relative and Negative Logic of National Identity." *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 2014, 408-37. doi:10.1353/soj.2014.0023.
- Yeoh, B. (2006). "Bifurcated Labour: The Unequal Incorporation of Transmigrants In Singapore." *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 97(1): 26-37.
- Yeoh, B., & Lin, W. (2012, April 3). Rapid Growth in Singapore's Immigrant Population Brings Policy Challenges. Retrieved September 25, 2014, from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/rapid-growth-singapores-immigrant-population-brings-policy-challenges/>
- Yeoh, B., and W. Lin. (2013). "Chinese Migration to Singapore: Discourses and Discontents in a Globalizing Nation-State." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 22(1): 31-54.